ISLAM AND POLITICS IN TUNISIA:

A STUDY OF AL-NAHDA

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled **"ISLAM AND POLITICS IN TUNISIA: A STUDY OF AL-NAHDA"**, submitted by me for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

(Fauziya Ikram Beg Mirza)

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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DEDICATED

TO

Ammi & Abbu

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Chapter I

Introduction

The trajectory of Islamic political thought has a unique intellectual tradition. The relationship between religion and politics is the significant point. Many scholars adopted the term “political Islam” to differentiate between the practices of personal piety, belief and ritual from that of politics. Islam plays a big part in both society and politics of West Asia and North Africa (WANA). Islamist leaders and influences dominate the many human domains of the region. The resurgence of Islam in political life or the rise of political Islam is a common phenomenon nowadays in WANA countries with varying degrees of intensity according to the cultural necessity. This resurgence can also be seen in the Tunisian uprisings of 2010-11. Tunisia was the first country where the anti-regime protests and uprisings started, and its Al-Nahda Party came into power after President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali left the country.

Rachid al-Ghannouchi is the founder of Al-Nahda. He was born in a peasant family in southern Tunisia in 1941. Although he attended a traditional religious school in his youth, intellectually he grew up as a Nasserist. This attraction for Arab nationalist ideas directed him in 1964 first to Cairo and then to Damascus where he studied philosophy until 1968. He underwent a process of disenchantment with Arab nationalism in Damascus and moved closer to Islam. At the University of Damascus he completed his

graduation and went to Paris. He stayed in Paris for a year, where his new religious engagement increased, both intellectually and socially. It was in France that he became involved in activities with the *Tablighi* movement. After his return to Tunisia, while training to be a philosophy teacher at a secondary school, al-Ghannouchi continued these religious activities, which led together with those of some other younger intellectuals to the formation of the Islamist movement in Tunis at the beginning of the 1970s. The main influence on al-Ghannouchi's thinking in the 1970s came from the Muslim Brotherhood, but he was also inspired by the philosophical and political views of the Algerian thinker Malek Bennabi.

What later became Al-Nahda was established in 1970 under the name of the Qur'anic Preservation Society (QPS). At the time of establishment, it was not a political organisation. It worked for the promotion of piety in the Tunisian society. In the late 1970s, there was a growing social unrest among organised labour due to which the organisation shifted its political approach. The organisation's discourse and actions were politicised. When President Habib Bourguiba legalised multiparty politics in 1981, Rachid al-Ghannouchi and other former QPS members founded *Harakat Ittijah al-Islami* (Islamic Tendency Movement, MTI) in 1981. It was a coalition of several Islamist groups who wanted to change the political and economic situation in the country.

A significant number of the young Tunisians were joining the MTI, which thought that the society was morally depraved and wanted it to be based on Islamic principles. These young Tunisians had stopped participating in state functions and had turned to religion for guidance and self-fulfilment. In the 1970s *hijab* was worn by many women in the university as a sign of protest because it was banned in the schools by Bourguiba. Many male students began to go unshaven to express their sympathy towards the Islamist movement. It was a sign of solidarity with other students and protest against the government as it was an expression of piety. They saw Islam as way out of their perceived social, economic and political dissatisfaction. Most of them felt that they had to repudiate their origins and heritage to receive a modern education and be accepted in a secular environment.

In 1981, the government blamed the MTI for inflammatory sermons in university campuses and violent incidents. Many people were arrested, and 70 of them received between 1 to 11 years of prison sentences. At the beginning of 1984, the government started to deal with the MTI in the less suppressive method, but it still refused the registration of the group as a legal party and continued the ban on the group's journals, *Al Maarfa* and *Al Mujtamaa*. They were not allowed to hold public meetings, and MTI activists remained under surveillance, many of them were government-employed teachers or civil servants. Bourguiba's increasing hostility and violence towards Islamists and his insistence on a retrial of 89 Islamists arrested in 1987 and the imposition of the death penalty for all suspects, prompted Prime Minister Ben Ali to assume power, fearful of a possible breakdown in public order.

Ben Ali moved quickly to legitimise his regime and garner support from the Islamists. On 7 November 1987, immediately after the coup, he promised democratic reform and Islamists participation. He released most of the political prisoners which included 600 MTI members. In May 1988 Rachid al-Ghannouchi the most prominent leader of the MTI was pardoned and in September, the group's secretary-general, Abd al-Fattah Mourou was allowed to return home from exile. But the accommodation of Islamists was short-lived. The elections of April 1989 were a turning point in the relations between Al-Nahda and the Ben Ali regime. Ben Ali was alarmed by the increasing profile of Al-Nahda and the expansion of their support. Because of this, he wanted to keep religion and politics separate. The political parties based on religion were prohibited, thus re-banning Al-Nahda, as well as six other opposition groups. The MTI became Hizb al-Nahda (Renaissance Party) in 1988 to meet Ben Ali's requirement, but it was still prevented from participating in the June 1990 local elections. Ben Ali tightened the state regulatory and control policies, the ruling party's members infiltrated civil society organisations, and different measures were designed to promote the status of women in the family and their labour rights to gain support for the progressive image of the regime.

Al-Nahda became the focus of government campaigns against Islamism because it was the most influential Islamist actor and up to five years of imprisonment was the

punishment of its membership. In February 1991, the RCD (Constitutional Democratic Rally) office was attacked by militants and because of this Islamists lost the public support, and other opposition parties abandoned them. Three months later the regime accused some of Al-Nahda's leaders of plotting to overthrow the Ben Ali regime. The accusation was denied by Al-Ghannouchi, arguing that it was an excuse for the government to crackdown on his group; he went into self-imposed exile in London in protest. The level of repression during this time was much greater than it was during the rule of Bourguiba, and it had become clear that through the gradual process of exclusion and de-legitimisation, the government had succeeded in isolating the movement. By 1992, nearly all leaders of Al-Nahda were imprisoned or in exile, and its organisational competency was damaged. During the years in which the leadership was forced underground, they reflected upon the strong points and failings of movement's political agenda, strategies, and tactics.

In early 2004, the Al-Nahda started restoring its political force; it decided to participate in the coalition which was formed on 18 October 2005. Many different civil society organisations and political parties entered the coalition together. The coalition established a basis for working together. All the coalition members agreed on some principles which included the rights of women, political pluralism, freedom of religion and freedom of conscience. It included the Tunisian Coalition Workers' Communist Party, the Progressive Democratic Party, along with Al-Nahda and many independent figures who are opposed Ben Ali. The coalition demanded the legalisation of political parties, the release of political prisoners and freedom of the press.

The West Asia and North Africa in early 2011 witnessed series of anti-regime protests and uprisings. The social injustice and economical inequality felt by the people of this region for decades were the main reasons for the anti-regime protests and uprisings. During the protest different social movements came to the forefront and gathered more and more followers. Tunisia's Hizb al-Nahda was also one of them where these uprisings started. The combination of youth unemployment, widespread corruption as well as political and economic marginalisation had created discontent amongst Tunisians. This condition of discontent led to the revolution and ended the rule of the

president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia. When general strike unfolded, Ben Ali ran away from Tunisia to Saudi Arabia on 14 January 2011. It eventually led to free and democratic elections.

After the departure of Ben Ali, Rachid al-Ghannouchi returned from exile. He reorganised the party for political participation on a level playing arena. The previous laws were castaside. Even though the Article 8of the constitution prohibits political parties based on religion, Al-Nahda was officially legalised by decree of the interim government on 1 March 2011. It was seen that Al-Nahda was extensively busy in advanced mobilisation among the masses during the election campaign, and the mistakes of some of the secularist parties which were very outspoken during the campaign may have helped the movement. Al-Nahda party gathered a large following due to which it won the elections by popular votes. They formed the coalition with Congress for the Republic Party and the left-leaning Ettakatol (Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties).

Al-Nahda put forward proposals according to a set of values, like freedom or justice. According to al-Ghannouchi, Islam can mobilise people towards these same values. Islam is based on freedom, and that there is no compulsion in Islam. Islam is the crucial element of an identity. The religion of Islam protects religious freedom which also includes apostasy and he said that the Islamic state should also protect other religions along with the people of the book. He is opposed to state imposition of any practice on Tunisian society, including how one dresses, drinks or believes. But he also mentioned that “all Islamic regulations related to public order should apply to Muslims and non-Muslims alike”.

During 2012, the Al-Nahda Party announced that according to the old constitution of 1959, Islam is the religion of Tunisia so there was no need for specifically mentioning the *Shari’ah* as the main source of legislation. For reducing the tensions between secularists and Islamists, this step was important. Rachid al-Ghannouchi said that Al-Nahda is working for democratic transition and consolidating freedom in Tunisia. He believes that “democracy is a political system that derives legitimacy from the public”.

He explained that “in a democracy, the people elect, audit and, when necessary, replace the ruler using mechanisms that may vary from one democratic regime to another”. But the mechanism of free election is common in all such democratic models. According to him, democracy guarantees some basic liberties of the public which includes the freedom of expression, independence of judiciary and the freedom of forming political parties. Al-Nahda underlined in its platform that the movement will benefit from the enlightened understanding of Islam, and its doctrine is ready to take advantage from all the achievements gained by modern human and civilisation through *ijtihad* (independent juristic reasoning).

Review of the Literature

Since the 1960s, the politically-oriented study of Islam is characterised by its connection to general world politics and especially to the events in West Asia and North Africa. Therefore, the importance of the Arab-Muslim world has been emphasised in Western Islamic studies. This geographical area has become significant because of its political and strategic value. The growing importance of this area means that interest towards Islam has also risen (Linjakumpu 2008). Ayubi (1991) emphasises “the relationship between state and Islam when he analyses how Islam has taken over the state. There was indeed a connection between religion and politics throughout much of the history of the Islamic State, but this was the outcome of the State taking over religion as a legitimising shield for its activity.

Many West Asian and North African countries have been engaged in a brutal suppression of Islamist movements, causing them, some argue, to take up arms against the state, and more rarely, foreign countries. The use of political violence is widespread in the West Asia but is neither illogical nor irrational. In many cases, even Islamist groups known for their use of violence have been transformed into peaceful political parties successfully contesting municipal and national elections. Nonetheless, the Islamist revival in the West Asia remains in part unexplained despite some theories seeking to account for its growth and popular appeal. In general, most theories hold that Islamism is

a reaction to relative deprivation, especially social inequality and political oppression (Knudsen 2003).

For the Tunisian nationalist movement, Islam was not important ideologically. The French lost their right to rule simply by failing to live up to their liberal, republican standards but Islam was a crucial organisational device. Members of the nationalist party, the Neo-Destour, swore their allegiance on the Koran; for many of its adherents among the masses, the party resembled nothing so much as a religious brotherhood (Anderson 1991).

According to Donker (2013), a widening divergence is observed between Islamist activism aimed at societal change and Islamist activism aimed at political influence in post-revolutionary Tunisia. Both kinds of activism remain closely linked through an enduring common Islamist ideology that renders convergence in daily practice inescapable; a convergence that is most clearly observable, it is argued, through shared attempts at Islamizing specific public organisations and state administrations. These attempts are often highly contested between actors both internal and external to the Islamist project. These struggles will be central to defining the future position of public Islam versus state and politics in the country.

Arieff (2014) says that Al-Nahda, led by the Islamic scholar and activist Rachid al-Ghannouchi, the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) was founded in 1981. When multiparty politics were legalised under President Bourguiba the MTI organised demonstrations on university campuses and engaged in clashes with security forces and with leftist groups. The growing unrest, coming on the heels of mass protests and strikes by trade unions, weakened support for Bourguiba and laid the groundwork for Ben Ali's rise in 1987. Upon coming to power, Ben Ali promised greater pluralism and dialogue with opposition groups. Al-Nahda candidates were allowed to run as independents in the 1989 parliamentary elections, but Ben Ali initiated a crackdown when they received 15% of the national vote. Clashes between the government and Al-Nahda activists escalated, culminating in an attack on a ruling party office in 1991 that the government blamed on Al-Nahda. The government later claimed it had unearthed an Islamist plot to assassinate Ben Ali, and in 1992 Tunisian military courts convicted hundreds of Al-Nahda members.

Al-Nahda leaders denied the accusations, and some rights advocates criticised the case as biased and lacking due process. Al-Ghannouchi, who had left the country, was sentenced in absentia". Ben Ali's repression of Al-Nahda and others like it ultimately fed popular sympathy and support for Al-Nahda; Tunisians voted for it as much because of its ability to survive Ben Ali as for religious reasons.

Marks (2014) said that in spring 2012, Al-Nahda members devoted serious attention to the question of whether to include a direct reference to *Shari'ah* in the constitution. The very fact that Al-Nahda's leadership was discussing this matter horrified many Tunisians. "Many accused Al-Nahda of trying to impose *Shari'ah* "through the back window," especially since some top figures in the party had gone on record after the October 2011 elections promising that the party would not attempt to include *Shari'ah* or enforce a particular way of life in the Constitution".

Tarek Amara (2012) stated that the issue of women's rights – specifically the wording of Article 28 of the first constitutional draft – provoked a firestorm of criticism from local and international media. Even before the draft was released in Arabic on August 8, 2012, rumours and mistranslations had circulated in the Tunisian press, leading many observers to believe that Al-Nahda had defined women as "men's complements.

Structure of the Study

The study is based on historical analysis of Al-Nahda in Tunisia. It analyses the contemporary discourse on the involvement of Al-Nahda Party in the politics of Tunisia. This study utilises primary sources such as documents of the Al-Nahda Party, recordings of its leaders' speeches, statements and interviews. This analytical study also uses secondary sources, most notably books, journal articles and research papers. Materials collected from different sources would be processed systematically to get more refined outputs.

The research is based on three hypotheses. First, Al-Nahda was able to survive and play a leading role in the politics of Tunisia due to the failure of the prevailing political system. Second, Al-Ghannouchi's political ideas like social equality and gender

equality enabled to make the Al-Nahda Party a major player in democratic politics. Finally, Al-Ghannouchi's philosophy of compatibility of Islam and democracy helped in making Al-Nahda Party more attractive to the Tunisian society.

The first chapter of this study is the present introductory one. This chapter introduces the topic and give an overall picture of the proposed study. This chapter also contains the historical background of Islamic movements in Tunisia. The second chapter is titled as "Political System in Tunisia: An Overview". This chapter looks at the political system of Tunisia before the uprising. It also discusses the failure of the then prevailing system and the discontent felt by the people due to this. The title of the third chapter is "History, Evolution and Ideology of Al-Nahda". This chapter is a study of the history of Al-Nahda and its role in the Tunisian society and politics. The background of its origin, its socio-political position under both the presidents of Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba and Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali are also discussed. The evolution of its ideology and its contribution to the political system of Tunisia also form a major part of the discussion in the chapter.

The fourth chapter is "Al-Nahda's Agenda and its Participation in the Post-Uprising Politics of Tunisia". This chapter examines the role of Al-Nahda during the uprising in Tunisia. Al-Nahda Party's contribution to the politics of Tunisia, while it was in power, is also discussed. The chapter examines the participation of Al-Nahda in the post-uprising politics of Tunisia. This chapter analyses Al-Nahda Party's agenda and the principles it is founded on. The title of the fifth chapter is "Rachid al-Ghannouchi's Ideas and Leadership in Al-Nahda". This chapter is a study of the founder of the Al-Nahda Party, his life and personality. The chapter also discusses his political philosophy, his efforts to club Islamic political views with democratic values and his thoughts on human rights, minority and women's empowerment. The sixth chapter is the concluding chapter where major findings of the study would be provided.

Chapter II

Political System in Tunisia: An Overview

Tunisia was governed by the Ottomans who ruled the Maghreb for two centuries from 16th to the 18th century. Tunisia came under French rule in 1881, and it remained a protectorate for 75 years till its independence in 1956. After independence when colonisers left the country, Tunisia was still not fully independent. Habib Bourguiba took the government under his leadership and adopted policies which were similar to those of French colonisers. He was a very prominent figure in the struggle for independence of Tunisia from French colonisers, whose belief was that development and progress could only be achieved by emulating Europe. He named his new party the Neo-Destour Party following the regional trends that were set up by Egypt and consolidated single party rule under the pretext of promoting national unity.

Tunisia under Islamic Rule

In 647, the first Arab raid in pursuit of valuables was made into Tunisia. The Byzantine patriarch Gregory rallied a Berber army at Sbeitla but was easily defeated. The Arab leader Ibn Sa'd retired with the loot which became the objective of the raid. The next major incursion did not occur until after the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty at Damascus when it was led by Mu'awiya ibn Hudaij. Five years later, in 670 came a

third expedition, this time with the objective of establishing permanent Arab rule in Tunisia. It was led by Uqba ibn Nafi, and it was he who established a place d'armes- in Arabic Qairawan, or in the more familiar French transliteration, Kairouan-on the plain of Tunisia, inland from Sousse (Knapp 1970).

From 670 until the end of the next century, Kairouan remained a garrison city like Kufa and Basra in Iraq or Fustat in Egypt. This formed the prelude to the establishment of a new dynasty under the nominal suzerainty of the Abbasid caliphate. Its first ruler was an Arab regional governor, Ibrahim ibn Aghlab. He took the title of Amir and was in practice independent of Egypt. Aghlabid rule lasted undisturbed throughout the ninth century. It extended somewhat beyond the boundaries of present day Tunisia and included the greater part of Roman Africa (which passed into Arabic as "Ifriqiya"). The population was still mixed and divided as the Arabs had not yet mixed with the Berbers. The latter had accepted Islam, but this was far from adequate to win them the esteem of the Arabs; they remained a conquered people (Knapp 1970).

Kairouan was the capital of the Aghlabid emirate. At this time the city enjoyed its period of greatest splendour. The great mosque was once again rebuilt and was made twice as big, constructed in accordance with the architectural pattern established in the Arab east, as it can be seen today. Other mosques were built at Kairouan, including the Mosque of the three doors; so was the Zaytouna mosque at Tunis, and others at Sousse and Sfax. Kairouan became not only the settled and civilised capital of the emirate but one of the centres of devotion and learning of the Islamist world. Theological issues were ardently debated while legal debates were linked to theological. It was at this time that the Malikite code of law was established in Tunisia, later to spread throughout North Africa (Knapp 1970).

At the beginning of the tenth century, the Aghlabid dynasty collapsed before the onslaught of Shi'ism, which came from the east and then returned to establish the Fatimid rulers of Egypt. Fatimid rule weighed heavily on Ifriqiya. Whatever the short comings of the Aghlabids, the government of Ubaid Allah and his successors proved no less harsh than theirs; taxes were heavy and arbitrary, and the attempt to impose Shi'ite practices meant a deep disturbance of accepted theology and religion (Knapp 1970).

In 969, an army coming from the Maghreb occupied the capital and established a new capital close to the existing town of Fustat-the city of Cairo. This was the beginning of the two centuries of Fatimid rule in Egypt. The Caliph lost no time in moving there, together with his treasure, government officials and the coffins of his predecessors. Ifriqiya was left under the rule of a Berber governor- the son of a tribal leader named Ziri. This meant that the province was virtually independent, under the Zirids as tributaries of the Fatimids (Knapp 1970).

In the middle of the eleventh century, they altogether broke their allegiance to Cairo and transferred it to the Abbasids of Baghdad. Their intention was to gain greater independence from Cairo-but Baghdad was in no position to offer protection for such independence. Instead, the Fatimids in Egypt despatched towards the west the Bedouin tribes of the Banu Hilal and Banu Salaim. Nomadic peoples, they destroyed settled civilisation except in the most protected areas of the coast. Thus in the middle of the eleventh century, the society which had grown up under the Romans and substantially survived their departure was laid waste. The Hilalian invasion of Tunisia destroyed sedentary civilisation, by persistent demolition rather than a single battle. While the Hilalian invasion ravaged Tunisia, a great nomadic religious movement had swept into Morroco from the south and established the rule of the Almoravids in Marrakesh. After three generations they, in turn, succumbed to a fresh wave of military and religious invasion, led by a Berber Unitarian, Ibn Tumart and his successor Abd al Mumin. He not only drove the Almoravids from Marrakesh in 1147 but, with his son, extended his conquest to the eastern coast of Tunisia. For a brief while, the whole of Muslim north-west Africa, as well as southern Spain, was brought under the rule of a single dynasty - the Almohads that lasted until 1268 (Knapp 1970).

To govern this empire, the Almohads followed the obvious course of appointing governors, but the sequel of such appointments could be foreseen. In the each one of them, Abdul Wahid ibn Abu Hafs established his own autonomous rule and founded a dynasty which long outlined the Almohad Empire. This was the Hafsid dynasty which was to govern the successor to Ifriqiya and the forerunner of Tunisia for three centuries from 1207 onwards (Knapp 1970).

The Hafsid dynasty maintained its rule for three centuries until the Turkish invasion. Tunis was the capital and had become the capital at the time when the development of European commerce gave importance to ports which no inland city could rival. A trade treaty was signed with Pisa in 1157-possibly the oldest commercial treaty to be signed between North Africa and Christian Europe. In 1494, the decline of the Hafsid dynasty was accompanied by the extension of a fresh dominion over the greater part of the north-west Africa, and Tunisia, as well as Tripoli and Algeria, became regencies of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman rule was established on the borders of Morocco, approximately seventy years after the fall of Constantinople (1453) (Knapp 1970).

In 1529, Algiers itself now passed under the Ottoman rule, which was to last until the French occupation in 1830. The capture of Algiers by Barbarossa meant a decisive change in the balance of power in the Mediterranean: the Ottomans had established themselves as far west as Barcelona and Paris. More importantly, they had passed a decisive frontier from the moment they pressed beyond the narrow seas between Sicily and Tunis. So, soon after the re-conquest of its own territory, Spain was confronted with the intrusion of another great power into her own maritime sphere. The ports and coasts of Tunisia thus became the front line between Spain, its allies and the Turks (Knapp 1970).

In 1574, Tunisia went under Turkish rule. The frontiers of the western Mediterranean were now established for two and half centuries. The government of Tunisia had not yet become stable- it took a hundred years to do so, but its turbulence did not surpass that of the European states. The state, of which the frontiers were now established, was a Regency of the Ottoman Empire. Initially, a Pasha was appointed as governor, supported by a militia force composed at first of Turks and then of Levantine Muslims. This force was made up of 40 sections, each of 100 men and each commanded by a *dey* (ruler of regencies). In 1590, the *deys* revolted against their superior officers and elected one of their members as commander of the militia- a position from which successive *deys* quickly acquired the real authority in the land. However, the *Dey* depends on an admiral for the command of the fleet and, more importantly, a *Dey* who

was responsible for the raising of taxes and the government of tribes. This gave the *Deys* obvious levers of power which they exercised. A period of turmoil began while the civil conflict was made worse by war with Algeria and Tripoli; but in 1705 a military leader (agha) took power and drove out the Algerians, was proclaimed *Dey* and suppressed the title of *Dey*. His name was Husain ibn Ali, and in 1710 he founded the husainid dynasty, which lasted until the republic was proclaimed in 1957 (Knapp 1970).

Nominally under the Ottoman rule, Tunisia was in practice independent of the Turks, although it did not have the characteristic of a nation state. The government was in the hands of the *Dey* and his advisers, who were drawn from the Mameluke class- coming from almost anywhere around the shores of the Mediterranean or the borders of Turkey and making a career in the service of the sultan and his regents. The art of government remained at a rudimentary level and varied widely according to the talents and character of the ruling *Dey*. Taxation often succeeded in keeping the people poor without enriching the government. Defence forces were minimal; roads were not built. The country had repeatedly suffered invasion, its fate closely linked to that of a dominant power in the Mediterranean or the West Asia –Phoenicia, Rome, Islam, Spain or Turkey. In the nineteenth century, it was brought yet closer to Europe, as ships ceased to be at the mercy of wind and tide and could navigate in a straight line across the Mediterranean at the time of their choosing. The stability and an ordered succession of the Husainid dynasty was an achievement in itself. Before the middle of the nineteenth century, this stability began to break down until a new order was established in 1881 with the occupation of Tunisia by France and the establishment of the French protectorate (Knapp 1970).

Tunisia, in 1881, had a population of about 1.3 million - only half of whom lived in settled communities. In addition to thousands of true nomads, there were many semi nomads who farmed on a sharecropping basis until a rainless year, or suddenly increased taxes made a return to nomad-ism more attractive. To the wary Tunisian bourgeois or small farmer along the intensively cultivated coast line, the *deylical* state governed best when it governed least. A good ruler was one who managed to keep the Bedouins under control without raising taxes. What little public service existed was non-governmental. It centred in the guilds of urban artisans or tradesmen, which were closely allied with the

religious brotherhoods, and in the Islamic system of pious trusts (*waqf*). Under this system, a donor could provide for a hospital or a primary school (*kuttab*), maintain a mosque or a brotherhood headquarters (*zawiya*), or ensure his family's future by placing his property under religious trust, thereby safeguarding it against government confiscation and allowing designated heirs to live off the revenue until the family line was extinct (Micaud 1964).

The "government" consisted of a small group around the ruling *bey*, mainly of Turkish origin and tribal sheikhs whose loyalty to the *bey* hinged upon his ability to enforce his will. Taxes were collected in tribal areas by military campaigns. Since there were only 2.5 miles of paved roads in the *beylic*, it was often more economical to let the remoter tribes have their own way so long as they did not seriously disturb the settled areas. Everything in this system worked toward a cautious maintenance of the status quo. If a man got too rich in a trade or government, his property might be confiscated. The land and property placed in pious trusts as a protective measure fell into disuse because it was in no one's interest to maintain them (Micaud 1964).

Unlike many other states of West Asia and North Africa, Tunisia was blessed with a relatively homogeneous population with a long tradition of living together and of considering itself a single society. There was one national language, Arabic (only a few thousand Berber-speaking inhabitants remained at this time), and except for a fairly well integrated Jewish community, a single national religion, Islam. Furthermore, Tunisian Muslims, unlike those of Iraq or the Indian subcontinent, were not split into opposing sects; nearly all Tunisian Muslims belonged to the orthodox Sunni community. The pre-Protectorate Tunisia might appear as hopeless state; there was much in Tunisian society that was sound and could serve as a foundation for development (Micaud 1964).

Finally, although the settling of the nomad was a necessary prelude to any effective economic development, there was the unbroken tradition of settled life along Tunisia's long coast line, from Bizerte in the northwest around Cape Bon, and down the eastern coast as far south as Sfax. Particularly in the Sahel, Arabic for "coast" which extended north and south from Sousse, with a village every three or four miles, there was

a thriving civilisation dating from the time of the Carthaginian state. With a certain shared tradition and an orderly life based on a relatively high level of urbanisation, the Sahel, the real Tunisia, was much further along the road to modernization than the European might have realised. Great changes could be made with the addition of only two major ingredients, greater public security and the concept of the positive state (Micaud 1964).

Kheireddine Pasha had attempted a serious step toward modernising Tunisia a dozen years before the establishment of the French Protectorate. Later he was called "Abul al Nahda" (Father of the Reawakening). He was a Circassian Mameluke and member of the small Turkish ruling class. He was Premier of Tunisia from 1873 to 1877. Kheireddine, the author of a handbook of practical reforms for Muslim states, had much in common with such modernising statesmen as Mohammed Ali of Egypt and Sultan Mahmud II and Midhat Pasha, both of the Ottoman Empire. These men argued as follows: Islam is valid, yet Muslims today are weak; Western civilisation, although certainly less valid, appears stronger; to right the balance, Muslims must return to their true path, to the fundamentals of their religion, and must at the same time learn the technical skills that have given Western civilisation its temporary superiority (Micaud 1964).

Kheireddine and his followers never questioned the basic assumptions of Islamic culture. Impressed by the efficiency and strength of the West, they sought to integrate Western techniques into the indigenous culture. Education was to be their prime tool, and it is significant that the most important and lasting of Kheireddine's efforts was the founding, in 1875, of Sadiki College. Staffed with foreign and native teachers, the college was to provide the cadres of the new Tunisia. Still, it was less a modern secular school than one patterned after those that had trained the leaders of the medieval Mameluke regime in Egypt. Western Education came only after a thorough grounding in Arabic and Islamic studies. The establishing of Sadiki College expresses this clearly. The school was to teach the Koran, writing and useful knowledge, i.e., juridical sciences, foreign languages, and the rational sciences that might be of use to Muslims, being at the same time not contrary to the faith. By 1878, the school had a student body of 189. The

students' first years were spent in Islamic studies, after which the curriculum consisted of modern subjects taught by foreigners in French, Italian, and Turkish. On the whole, the college was superior to comparable French schools in Algeria. Sadiki College and the tutelage of the great Pasha largely formed the next generation of national leaders. Even more importantly, future reformers could refute accusations that they advocated foreign ideas by claiming to be the spiritual heirs of the Father of the Reawakening (Micaud 1964).

In a few years, however, most of the funds for the school were frittered away through mismanagement or syphoned off by corrupt administrators, and standards declined sharply. A similar fate overtook Kheireddine's other reforms, his attempts to modernise the army and to institute tax and land reforms. He was dismissed from his post as Pasha because of a combination of internal and external pressures and left for Constantinople, where he later became Grand Vizier. Ironically, the man who had tried to modernise the Tunisian state in time to avoid Western interference paved the way, through the sale of his large land holdings to a French joint stock company, for the real beginning of French colonisation four years before the establishment of the Protectorate (Micaud 1964).

French Protectorate

French troops entered Tunisia from Algeria. They met with no resistance from the Tunisians. In May the *Bey* signed an agreement with the French government which came to be known as the Treaty of Bardo, whereby France was given the right to military occupation and control over foreign affairs and finance. Two years later a further treaty, signed at La Marsa in June 1883, completed the establishment of the French protectorate (Knapp 1970). The *bey* was reluctant but was forced to accept the French Protectorate. The native leadership was either in doubt or cautiously studying how to come to grips with this new situation. The French Protectorate, which lasted seventy-five years, had immeasurable ramifications on the development of Tunisia. Independent Tunisia inherited from the Protectorate the rudiments of a modern economy, and this material

foundation played a vital role in conditioning the Tunisian mentality to modernism (Micaud 1964).

Tunisia did not thereby become French. On the contrary, Tunisian nationalism took shape in response to French rule. Tunisian thought about the nature, structure and purpose of government, which would surely have emerged anyway, took their particular form from contact with France; the ideology of Tunisia as part of France evoked counter-feelings of the independent nature of a Tunisian community (Knapp 1970).

With the French, Protectorate came a greater measure of public security. The Bedouins were largely brought under control, and within a few years, the area of sedentary cultivation began encroaching on their boundary-less domain. The regular, orderly collection of taxes was equally novel, although taxes continued to weigh heavily on the small cultivator. The French Administration in Tunisia was inclined to be conservative, carefully maintaining the *beylical* state and the various religious institutions going by the official French colonial policy that "It is necessary to have them evolve within the framework of their own civilisation" (Micaud 1964).

This attempt to shield Tunisia from the ruder shocks of Western penetration was nevertheless doomed by the steady flow of European settlers. By the 1890's, the French administrators, fearing the unmistakable Italian designs on Tunisia, inaugurated an official program of colonisation in order to settle more French citizens in the Protectorate. With this growing French and European community came demands for schools roads, a French legal system, and legislation to facilitate exploitation of land and resources-in short, a whole roster of claims designed to provide a modern, Western existence of the European of Tunisia (Micaud 1964).

Tunisia already had its own educational system. Higher education was centred in Zaytouna University, with nearly 1,000 students; below this was a network of about 1,400 Islamic primary schools, or kuttabs, with an attendance of almost 20,000. The enrolment was more impressive than the results, however. In the kuttab, a scarcely literate teacher drilled his little circle of Students, aged five to sixteen, in memorising the Koran. Graduates often could not read the simplest secular texts and seldom could write.

Even at Zaytouna University, only about 100 students pursued what might properly be called higher education. For most, their education fitted them only for the profession of Islamic teacher or *cadi* (judge) in *Sharia* (Islamic religious law) courts. Only Sadiki College educated Tunisians for the modern world (Micaud 1964).

The Protectorate policy was to leave the kuttabs and Zaytouna University alone; they were deemed private schools and were subjected to a minimum of inspection and state regulation. The clamour of the European community brought about a new national school system, completely French except for minor changes to fit the situation in Tunisia. All instruction was in French with Arabic and Italian as second languages; the history and geography of North Africa were also included in the curriculum. In the early years, there was a considerable intermixture of Europeans and Tunisians in the classes. Something approaching segregation began with the inauguration of the Franco-Arab schools designed especially for Tunisian Muslims (Micauds 1964).

The Franco-Arab system was basically French in its outlines, with some emphasis on Arabic and Islamic Studies; only about one-third of the instruction was in Arabic. The standards of these schools approached those of the completely French schools. Sadiki College had its ups and downs in the early years of the Protectorate, but by the mid-1890's it was recognised as the archetype for the secondary level of the growing Franco-Arab system. It had returned once again to fulfil the function intended by Kheireddine Pasha-that of preparing cadres for running a modern state (Micauds 1964).

The very European whose presence had the unintended result of giving Tunisia the basis of a sound, the modern educational system were at the same time giving her a serve jolt on the agricultural front. Coming to a country where land was an inheritance and agriculture an unchanging way of life, the French capitalists and colonies introduced, in addition to modern mechanised farming, the novel idea of land as a commodity and agriculture as a capitalistic venture (Micauds 1964).

One of the first actions of the French protectorate was to establish a legal framework for the acquisition of land in a European manner. It did so by an Act of 1885 which was based on the Torrens Act, passed for similar purposes in different conditions

in Australia. It was the first in series of legislative acts which made possible the private acquisition of land (Knapp 1970). The question of land ownership in pre-Protectorate Tunisia was often far from clear. Much of the land was state domain obtained by confiscation. Another large share perhaps as much as 40 per cent of the arable land, was given over to *habous*. There was also an independence amount of land held as private properly (*mulk*), but boundaries were poorly defined, and deeds were unregistered (Micauds 1964). Finally, there were the great areas of the Bedouins pastoral lands. Parts of this land might be claimed by the state, by *habous*, or even by private individuals, but the dominant fact was the existence of the tribe on the spot, convinced of its right of usage (Micauds 1964).

Within a decade after the treaty of Bardo, establishing the Protectorate, French holdings in Tunisia amounted to just over 1 million acres. This period of rampant speculation and large capitalistic holdings was followed by one of intensive colonisation. In 1897, a colonisation fund to purchase land for French settlement was set up, and the next year, an Ecole Coloniale d'Agriculture was founded to train colonies for settlement in Tunisia (Micauds 1964).

The old balance was irretrievably shattered. Land that had been surrendered to nomad-ism since the eleventh century was now returned to cultivation and the Bedouins were forced to settle down or withdraw. In addition, the sharecropper, or *khammas*, was jolted out of his old routine. Under the new European owner, he became an agricultural labourer, probably earning much more than before but exposed to the unaccustomed rigours of dynamic, capitalist timetable. Much like the English peasant in the early decades of the Industrial Revolution, the Tunisian farmer was pushed from a world of status to one of contract, and whether he was better off or more miserable depends on whether one agrees. For better or worse, the revolution was on, and the Tunisian farmer was learning modern techniques, French customs, and the French language (Micauds 1964).

As land gained in value, the loose system of landholding became intolerable. In 1885, the Land Registration Act was passed. Under the provisions of this act, a man

could present a property claim that would be registered if not challenged after due publicity and specified period of time; a title deed would then be issued by a special Tribunal Mixte, composed of French and Tunisian magistrates. Registration was not mandatory, because property law was very much tied in with Islamic *Shari'ah* law, and compliance with the act meant taking a broad step away from traditional Islamic law. A surprising number of Tunisians, as well as all Europeans seeking land, took advantage of this act (Micauds 1964).

Since all litigation involving registered property went before the French courts in Tunisia, the Tunisian had implicitly removed himself from *Shari'ah* jurisdiction in this important field. Land registration, therefore, spread the Western idea and downgraded the traditional courts-all without a direct attack on the Islamic legal system (Micauds 1964). The application of this legislation was of major importance in Tunisian development. Its immediate practical effect was to make colonisation possible; it had a far deeper impact on society. The administration of the 1885 Act was put in the hands of mixed tribunals so that French and Tunisians sat side by side deciding claims to ownership. They came from very different backgrounds and represented different systems of law. Their association provided fresh insight and fresh knowledge, which contributed on the one side to an understanding of European law and on the other to an awareness of Islamic civilisation. More important for the future, it set an example of the acquisition of a right by legal means which could be extended to the political sphere and contribute to the building of a nationalist movement. Later it also provided a legal framework in which young Tunisians could defend the interests of the underprivileged in their society, defending in a court of law the rights and status of sharecroppers and the like, developing thereby a social philosophy intertwined with the demand for political rights. The purchase of land tended to be on a large scale, and the French settlement was characterised by large colonial estates. Colonisation on a small scale never occurred in spite of French efforts, a fact which later made the transition to independence and Tunisian ownership much easier (Knapp 1970).

The French played a relatively minor part by the introduction of modern democratic government. Even the presence of a large French community demanding the

"rights of Frenchmen" was not enough to force the creation of the representative institutions in Tunisia. Tunis had possessed a municipal council since 1858. After the Protectorate had been established, other municipalities were granted councils, which remained, however, under central control and were assured French majorities. The same conservatism existed in national representation. A consultative conference was established, and in 1905, the French community gained the right to elect delegates to its three "colleges"-agricultural, commercial and a third that represented all other French interests, mainly the civil service. Two years later, native representatives were added, but the Protectorate Government appointed them. The consultative conference was to remain only an advisory body, with very limited powers (Micauds 1964).

The French penchant for highly centralised, the direct administration held sway. The Protectorate Government relied on the old ruling families, the provincial governors (caids) and religious leaders (ulema), to make its rule more palatable to the populace, finding support in the argument that since France was required by the Treaty of Bardo to protect the autocratic *bey*, French authorities could scarcely foster representative institutions or decentralization, which would reduce the *beylical* "sovereign" power (Micauds 1964).

Meanwhile, the governmental structure of Tunisia continued to be based on the fiction of a protectorate. The most important change in government was the extension of its scope, and this was necessarily in French hands. The *Bey* retained nominal sovereignty; but real authority rested with the French Resident-General, under the direction of the French foreign office. There was a Tunisian prime minister, and sometimes a "minister of the pen" and the traditional areas of Tunisian government came under their jurisdiction. These included the administration of Muslim law by Islamic judges, the administration of the *habous*, Muslim education and the religious brotherhoods. Even this sphere of government did not escape French supervision, exercised by a "delegate"; but the protectorate avoided interference with the personal law of Islam or with the exercise of religion. Secularisation had to wait for independence (Knapp 1970).

The Resident-General exercised legislative authority, and he prepared *Beylical* decrees, promulgated and enforced them. The government was divided into departments, including finance, public works, economic affairs, and public instruction, each headed by a "directeur". These directors, together with the Tunisian ministers, the army and navy commanders (French) and the Resident-General formed a Council of Ministers and heads of services (Knapp 1970). The decisive power of the Resident-General was supplemented by a primitive system of representation, of a consultative and advisory sort. In 1896 a consultative conference was established, and this was enlarged in 1907 to include sixteen Tunisian members appointed by the Resident-General (the French members being elected). In 1922 a Grand Council was created, consisting of two sections - French and the other Tunisian. The system of representation was devised to ensure the preponderance of propertied interests even in the French section, and by a complex system of indirect election in the Tunisian section. The government was not responsible to the Council, nor did the latter hold any final power (Knapp 1970).

The system of government thus had all the elements of instability and tension inherent in a moderately benevolent system of imperial rule. It could not have worked as it did have it not been grafted on to traditional authority. Local administrators, who exercised administrative, judicial and tax-gathering powers were protected from upheaval, disorder and expropriation in a way they had not been before the French came; but their position was not one to which ambitious young Tunisians would want to succeed. Nationalist aspirations would bring them into conflict with the old order of their own society as well as an imperial rule. The apparatus of the State was essentially French and protected settler interests; but the more truly French, and therefore reforming and democratic it became, the more it would meet resistance from its own settlers without being able to meet the full demands of the nationalists by the surrender of real power (Knapp 1970).

These sources of tension were only increased by the development of education. The protectorate created a school system like that in France, primarily for the benefit of the settlers but extended to take in a certain number of the Tunisian population. The education most worth aspiring to for young Tunisians was, therefore, Sadiki College (or,

in the last years of the protectorate, the Tunisian section of the Lycee Carnot) followed by higher studies in France. The political effect of this was immense. It created elitism with a strongly developed national sense, aware of French values. It brought them into contact with the efficiency of French institutions, a degree of efficiency which they found attractive but hardly likely to overawe them; it also introduced them to a France which was only weakly represented in the protectorate, the France of progressive ideas, a socialist party and intellectual freedom (Knapp 1970).

The Young Tunisians

For some reasons, it was graduates of Sadiki, not of Zaytouna, who formed the core of the modernising and nationalist movement. But the current of Islamic reform, in Tunisia, remained weak Khair al-Din had been a precursor amongst those Muslim thinkers who were inspired by the Islamic ideal of a virtuous society and sought to learn lessons from Europe to re-establish the vigour of Islam. But the religious elite of Tunisia produced no comparable thinker like Shaikh Muhammad Abduh, and the one great political leader who emerged from this class, Shaikh Abdel Aziz Taalbi, was rejected by them for his radicalism (Knapp 1970). The disciples of Kheireddine dropped temporarily into the background. Several of them went into exile, but most took a wait-and-see attitude. Considering outright resistance to Western domination useless, they concentrated on schemes of reform from within, while making the best of Western occupation and even, on occasion, taking advantage of it (Micauds 1964). Tunisian leaders, for example, were able to convince the French to recruit Sadiki College graduates for the administration as translators and minors officials, post formerly held by Lebanese and Syrians. Soon about thirty young men representing that element of the elite most disposed of by past training to understand and absorb Western culture were integrated into the administration, and especially into the Direction de I'Enseignement. This was a small step, but one of great symbolic importance: The Tunisian elite, the heirs of Kherieddine were willing to accept French tutelage in order to advance their aims of modernization (Micauds 1964).

Al Hadira, the first unofficial Arabic-language newspaper in Tunisia, was founded in 1888 in this same spirit. The paper was edited by a Sadiki College graduate, and the contributors included nearly all the former followers of Kheireddine. Al Hadira was political, seeing its task as that of educating the people in modernization (Micauds 1964).

Al Hadira's modernization and its refusal to engage in criticism of the Protectorate made it suspect in some circles; other newspapers that were suspended by the authorities probably reflected public opinion more faithfully. But Al Hadira represented an ideal-modernization – while other papers tended to lapse into an unimaginative standpoint. As a result of Al Hadira's influence, even the most conservative newspaper soon felt obliged to evoke the memory of Kheireddine and to talk of *islah* (reform) (Micauds 1964).

It was chiefly the Al Hadira group who, in 1896, founded the Khaldouniya (named for Ibn Khaldoun, the famous Arab historian, born in Tunis in 1332), an institution designed to offer modern studies to Zitouna University students, who were still completely submerged in a curriculum of medieval religious formalism. The founders worked closely with French authorities, and the school was begun with the active support of French Resident General Rene Millet. The Khaldouniya was an important landmark; it was not only an attempt to recruit the Zitouna youth to the idea of modernization but also the first organised attempt by private Tunisian citizens to achieve civic improvement. It was, in the Western sense, the first Tunisian "society" and it provided "the country's first experience with a system of elections, conferences, and peaceful debate on public affairs" (Micauds 1964). The Khaldouniya marks the turning point from the first to the second stage of Tunisian development under the colonial influence- the move from passivity to more dynamic self-assertion to a period in which an attempt is made to formulate a new indigenous ideology (Micauds 1964).

Out of the Khalduniya grew the important movement of the turn of the century known as the Young Tunisians, with its own newspaper, Le Tunisien, founded in 1907 (an Arabic version followed under the direction of Taalbi in 1909). The Young Tunisians were few in number. They came from an aristocracy which found itself denied access to

government as a result of the protectorate. Many of them came from the Mameluke class, not those whose families still enjoyed the status and local power in rural Tunisia, but the sons of those who had formed a governing class under the *Beys*. Even so, the movement was not nationalist (few aristocratic movements are). It accepted the French protectorate and sought the extension of the benefits of the protectorate to Tunisians in every way. They wanted more French education, not to the exclusion of Arabic but as the means to modernisation and to give Tunisians greater access to government employment. The Young Tunisians had embraced an idea of the state which was remote from and ignored Islamic theory and traditional Tunisian practice. Many of them were hesitant about the value of the reformed Koranic schools, which they believed could not make sufficient progress in modern education. In this and every respect of their political thinking, they were in a different world from the limited state machine and the social role of the mosque and religious brotherhoods (Knapp 1970).

But their organisation came to an abrupt end just before the First World War. The immediate cause of the demise of the movement was trivial. The Young Tunisians sponsored a boycott of the street-cars in Tunis in March 1912 in pursuit of equal pay for Tunisian workers and better treatment of Tunisian passengers. In response, the government arrested seven of the leaders and deported four. The war and martial law came before the movement could reorganise itself. There is no more powerful catalyst to social change and the growth of a reforming ideology than war (Knapp 1970).

The Formation of Destour Party

The settler bourgeoisie was on the defensive against its own socialists and workers, who in turn wanted their primacy over the Tunisians. The country which had instituted legal tribunals as a powerful force of modernisation was now a conservative colonial power, defending established institutions against the legalistic attacks of the Tunisians. In these circumstances the nationalist movement took a striking turn, a new party was established, called the Destour, and a book published in Paris called La Tunisie Martyre. The leader of the party and the presumed author of the book was Shaikh Abdel Aziz Taalbi. He made a link with the Young Tunisians, and he had attended courses at

the Khalduniya and edited the Arabic Tunisien. But while the Young Tunisians had admired French government and efficiency, Taalbi attacked the French with bitterness and looked back to a golden age before the protectorate, the age of the Constitution of 1861, from which the name of the party was given (Knapp 1970).

The nationalist movement as a whole was full of confusion and false starts. The Destour party itself had no clear plan of action. It lacked the nerve and the resources to be an out, and out revolutionary party vowed to the overthrow of the protectorate, and it lacked the political acumen to make political capital out of otherwise trivial incidents. It drew up a long list of 'demands' and then rested its case. Although its branch organisation spread in the 1920s, it was ineffective in building widespread popular feeling into a mass party. The leaders of the Destour came primarily from Tunis and were drawn from the traditional governing class of religious lawyers and well to do merchants. The new atmosphere of the twenties was with the protests of the elite being taken up by ordinary people, but such people were only partially organised by the Destour (Knapp 1970).

The French trade-union organisation, the CGT, still at this time a socialist, not communist organisation, assumed that Tunisian workers would join the French unions, without trying very hard to persuade them to do so. Suddenly in 1924, an independent Tunisian union emerged, to be suppressed by the protectorate. It was created by a man named Mohamed Ali, who spent one year of his adult life in Tunisia at this time. While abroad he had formed ideas about the possibility of Tunisian development; coming back to Tunisia he had tried to establish cooperatives; then moved to the organisation of discontented dock-workers in Tunis. Rapidly a 'Confederation generale des travailleurs tunisiens' was formed and secured the adherence of dockers, streetcar workers, municipal employees and others; it spread from Tunis to Sfax, Bizerte and other towns, organising strikes and demonstrations, until it was suppressed and Mohamed Ali exiled (Knapp 1970).

The weakness of the Destour was amply demonstrated by its aloofness from this flowering of the national working-class organisation. In contrast, a small communist

party had tried to take advantage of the breakaway movement itself; it was given no chance to reappear until 1937; when it did, it was a powerful contributor to the movement for independence. It was this time, in the middle of these confused and conflicting initiatives in modernization and nationalism that a new party emerged under the leadership of Habib Bourguiba. Its novelty did not lie in a reconciliation of the ideological differences between different strands of Tunisian thought; it was rather in organisation and tactics (Knapp 1970).

Having done so much to create nationalist feelings and to express a nationalist case, the traditional leadership of Destour were unable or unwilling to proceed further. Younger men like Mahmoud Materi, Tahar Sfar and Habib Bourguiba, pressed impatiently for a more vigorous and demanding attitude and action against the protectorate. They ran a new newspaper, La Voix du Tunisien, in which they angrily attacked the French president, Doumergue, during his visit of 1931; two years later they founded a new paper, significantly called L'Action Tunisienne. In March 1934 the final break came, and at a historic conference held at Ksar Hellal, the Neo-Destour party was formed (Knapp 1970).

The revolt of the Neo-Destour came from a new social group. The old Destour had been led by men coming from the old families of Tunis: they had always been close to the governments of the *Bey* and the French. The leaders of the Neo-Destour, in contrast, came from a part of the country which had not been colonised, which had a profound North African character of its own. It was a village society where Islam had mingled with older traditions and where orthodoxy was tempered by popular mysticism, where the ethos of society was compounded of family and ancestral ties, a not very pious or devout acceptance of religion, and social customs stronger in force than religion itself. Coming from this background, the Neo-Destour also knew France; they were ready to seek support from others who had not previously entered into politics, from whom the Destour had remained remote (Knapp 1970).

The effect of the French occupation had been to create a proletariat, urban and rural peasants driven from the land by the development of French and large Tunisian

estates, urban poor drawn into the towns by the prospect of a slightly higher standard of living, men working on the docks or the mines. Even the southern tribes suffered as a result of colonisation, historically they had survived bad periods by incursions into the settled area of the coast, and this was denied to them by the establishment of French law and order. The material for the modern political organisation was thus readily available; inspired by such examples as the French socialist party the Neo-Destour took advantage of it (Knapp 1970).

The Neo-Destour was advancing on two fronts: it sought independence, and it wanted far-reaching reforms of Tunisian society. On both fronts, it proceeded step by step. The widespread commitment on the part of ordinary people in Neo-Destour cells to the cause of independence, led by Bourguiba as the "Supreme Combatant" or (in Arabic) "the greatest of the fighters in the holy war". The immediate issue which had preceded the break of the Neo-Destour from the old party had been the question of the right of naturalised Tunisians (under a law of 1923) to burial in Muslim cemeteries. Over a large perspective the Neo-Destour has been a secularising party and as soon as it achieved independence passed a law on personal status which established civil coded and ended religious custom in a way the French had not dared to do. Bourguiba at this stage supported the use of the veil as another distinctive sign of Tunisian nationality; it was after the independence that he called it a "filthy rag" (Knapp 1970).

The Neo-Destour leaders distinguished themselves by the way in which they avoided the isolation of so many of the intelligentsia from their own people. The party needed all the strength it could muster. Of the twenty years which followed the formation of the Neo-Destour in March 1934 until the promise of autonomy in 1954, Bourguiba spent half in prison. The party itself was dissolved six months after its formation; after that it was tolerated during the period of the Popular Front of 1936, and at the end of the war. Even then it did not have legal existence and toleration could be ended abruptly, as it was in January 1952 (Knapp 1970).

For some years the group dominated the Tunisian political scene by its demands for a representative assembly, the establishment of responsible parliamentary

government, and return to the true source of Islamic culture. These men were utterly opposed to French influence, yet they were soft and diplomatic in their dealings with the authorities. They claimed to be representing the Tunisian nation, yet they sought their recruits mainly among members of the old families and particularly among graduates of the famous Zaytouna Arabic University. Nonetheless, they could establish a fairly wide network of political activity in both towns and villages up and down Tunisia (Sylvester 1969).

It was soon apparent to many Tunisians that if anybody was going to do something about the unsatisfactory state of affairs, it was to be Bourguiba and his young friends and not the orthodox Destour leadership. Things came to a head in the nationalist movement as an extraordinary congress of the party was called by the new wing at Ksar-Hellal in March 1934. This was boycotted by the older leaders and the party split in two: Neo-Destour was born, with Habib Bourguiba as its secretary-general. From then on, two political organisations vied for the support of Tunisian nationalist opinion. But by 1937 it was already evident that the Neo-Destour had the majority behind it. By September 1934 it was clear to the authorities and European settlers that they were now facing a new political situation and were confronted by serious trouble makers. In that month the new party was dissolved, and Bourguiba and his closest associates were arrested. For Bourguiba himself a bitter succession of arrests had begun; during the next twenty-one years, between 1934 and 1955, he was to spend a total of ten years in jails and other places of confinement (Sylvester 1969).

By 1936 the political climate in France had changed with the advent of the Popular Front, and liberal tendencies prevailed in Tunisia. In the spring Bourguiba and his friends were freed, and Neo-Destour was allowed to resume its activities. For the first time, Paris recognised Bourguiba as a respectable nationalist politician whose views deserved to be heard. During a demonstration in Tunis on 9 April 1938, police opened fire, and many Tunisians died. Bourguiba, the suspected ringleader of the riots, was arrested and sent for trial. By 1945 Bourguiba had left Tunisia for Cairo, where he continued his campaign for international recognition of the Tunisian question. He also visited the United States and other countries (Sylvester 1969).

The new French-controlled administration in Tunisia was meeting sharp resistance. On February 1945 all Tunisian political parties and groups published a manifesto demanding self-government. A new, powerful force joined the nationalist movement: the UGTT, the first exclusively Tunisian trade union federation, was formed. By August 1945 a Tunisian National Congress, acting on the initiative of the Neo-Destour were bluntly demanding complete national independence. In July 1947 further important reforms were announced, giving the Tunisian Prime Minister effective power over government departments. After a great deal of violence, striking and rioting, Bourguiba was rearrested in January 1952 together with many of his supporters. He was first sent to a small island off Tunisia, and then to France. In October 1952 came some very positive news for Bourguiba: the problem of Tunisia had at last been placed on the agenda of the United Nations (Sylvester 1969).

Success came at last. Pierre Mendes-France, who had just signed an armistice agreement with Ho Chi Minh in Geneva, suddenly descended on Carthage in July 1954, bringing with him the pledge for internal self-government in Tunisia. Bourguiba himself did not take part in the ensuing negotiations. By now, however, he had been freed from prison and installed in a country house near Paris; from there he closely watched and supervised the talks. These were finally concluded on 3 July 1955, and two days before Bourguiba returned to Tunis to receive a welcome that had never been given to any other man on any previous occasion in Tunisia. The entire nation seemed to be caught up in a delirium of joy and enthusiasm (Sylvester 1969).

Independence was not long in coming. Bourguiba had made no secret to the French that he was after complete sovereignty for his nation. The process was speeded up when it transpired towards the end of 1955 that independence was about to be granted to Morocco. It would have been intolerable in such circumstances for Tunisia to wait any longer. The country became an independent State shortly after Morocco, on 20 March 1956. This was not yet, however, the end of troubles with France, which continued to maintain important positions in Tunisia in the general framework of the interdependence of the two countries. It was not till 1963 that the last French soldier left Tunisia soil, and there were at least three serious incidents which marred relations with France: the

bombing of the village of Sakiet Sidi Youssef by the French, in 1958, the Bizerta clash in 1961 and the nationalization of French – owned land in 1964 (Sylvester 1969).

It was now necessary to establish a legal framework and legitimacy for the new regime. Five days after independence had been declared, general elections took place for a national constituent assembly. There were 726,238 registered voters; 610,383 men cast their vote, and Bourguiba's National Front received 597,813 votes. The Communist party put up candidates in one constituency and an independent group in another. None of these candidates were elected. Similar results emerged from subsequent elections in 1959 and 1964. By July 1957 the *Bey* was quietly deposed without a ripple having been caused. A generous policy of the open door for all men of good will was the programme of the Neo-Destour party, whose membership now swelled to some 350,000 compared to 100,000 in July 1954 when the party was officially still underground (Sylvester 1969).

With the powerful backing of the party and its affiliated organisations it did not seem particularly difficult to decree the reforms which Bourguiba considered the most urgent. In the same year as independence was established, Tunisian women were given equal status with men. They were given the right to vote, which they soon exercised in a local government election. The principle of equal pay was laid down. Polygamy was abolished, although men who already had more wives than one could keep them. To be sure, polygamy as such had never been a great problem in Tunisia since only an insignificant minority practised it, mainly down in the south. But the importance of the new legislation was that a husband could no longer simply repudiate his wife and take on another without resorting to proper judicial proceedings. There was a large and rapid increase in the number of girls and women in schools and all manner of jobs. The new law certainly provided an important push in the direction of progress. It was now increasingly up to the women to use their freedom to the best advantage (Sylvester 1969).

Another important reform concerned education. By 1958 the pattern of three separate education channels, French speaking, mixed Franco-Arabic and purely Arabic, was abolished and a unified, national system put in its place. This was one of the least popular reforms among the conservative element of the population, who saw in the new arrangement a threat to the Arab character of the country. The new schooling was

essentially bilingual. French began to be taught in the third year of elementary school, and in later stages of schooling, this language became more and more important. Education was the cornerstone of Bourguibist philosophy in action; it was la promotion de l'homme - the advancement of man. Education was costing the country one-quarter of the national budget (Sylvester 1969).

In 1967 approximately 18,000 adults were taught to read and write, and the campaign against illiteracy and adult education generally were being rapidly expanded up and down the country. This gigantic schooling effort was to become one of Tunisia's proudest boasts: a tangible, non-controversial achievement. Another important early reform was to do away with the *habus*, the system of religious endowments under which land could be made inalienable. But it was now found to be standing in the way of progress and modernization, and both public and private *habus* were abolished by 1957 and much of the land handed over to individual ownership (Sylvester 1969).

By the end of the decade, a new situation was arising in Tunisia. The western world was sinking into an unprecedented economic crisis whose most serious consequence was massive unemployment. The country was deeply affected by the economic crisis and Tunisians, whose standard of living had been deteriorating anyway, now suffered more severely than ever. The old leaders of the Destour party, with their abstract ideas and smooth, genteel language, could find no rapport with the large sections of the population who had now become more articulate, more acutely aware of the unsatisfactory state of affairs, and ready for radical change. The time had come for new ideas and new leaders (Sylvester 1969).

It was in this situation that Habib Bourguiba began to assert himself, and by striking the right chord with the Tunisian people, he soon emerged as the leader whom at last they could love, trust and follow. There had never been such a man before in Tunisia, though the times in which he appeared were also unprecedented. He was one of them, yet was different from them, by his intelligence, education and immense zest for work. Habib was sent to the best school in Tunis, the Sadiqi College, he continued his schooling at the Lycee Carnot, obtained a scholarship and in 1924, enrolled at the University of Paris. He

studied law and political sciences, but also followed lectures in psychopathology. After passing his exams with flying colours, he set off for a home in 1927 to take up what proved to be a brilliant career as a lawyer. He had joined the Destour party back in 1922 but does not appear to have engaged in active political life until 1930, when he began writing for a nationalist newspaper. In 1932 he started his own newspaper, L'Action Tunisienne. He wanted to be on the side of the people and a spokesman of their grievances even when these might appear trivial or even unfounded (Sylvester 1969).

By June 1959 the constitution had been worked out and duly endorsed by a unanimous vote in the Assembly. The president was given extremely wide powers, exceeding those of an American President and British Prime Minister put together. He would nominate all the members of his government, appoint civil servants, initiate legislation and legislate himself by decree when the National Assembly was not in session. The National Assembly lacked in genuine debate. Through him, political power permeated the Neo-Destour party, subsequently renamed the Socialist Destourian party. Members of the National Assembly were in fact nominees of the party (Sylvester 1969).

It was true that Tunisian people were still mostly living in poverty and ignorance, in spite of giant strides of progress that had been made during the twelve years of the Bourguiba regime. Moreover, one was not encouraged by the political organisations which opposed the ruling Destour party until their activities were discontinued in the early sixties, notably the communist and the old Destour parties. The Communist Party had only 2,000 members when it was formally dissolved in 1963. Its appeal was almost entirely limited to students, especially those attending university courses in France, and to non-Moslem communities. That Marxism-Leninism had no wide appeal in Tunisia was not difficult to explain given the prevailing conservative and religious outlook of the people. Besides, people of Muslim faith or Background tend to dislike the materialist doctrine and regimentation of the communist way of life, for Islam lays stress on personal liberty and human individuality. The ideology of class war had never taken much root in Tunisia, and now Habib Bourguiba's philosophy emphatically rejected it. Thus, when Bourguiba said that nationalism was the best defence against communism in such countries as Tunisia, this was very true. The gap is separating Bourguiba, and Arab

reaction was too wide to be bridged in a framework of orderly democratic processes (Sylvester 1969).

The massive organisation of the Socialist Destourian party and its affiliated bodies, i.e. the Farmers Union, the Artisans Union, the Trade Union Confederation and Students entire adults population in political activity of some kind. This was doubtless to push forward the movement of modernization. If the regime was authoritarian, as it doubtless was, it was by no means totalitarian. In fact, the whole Bourguibist movement appeared a fairly easy-going, open and loosely-knit body of opinion, united chiefly by loyalty to its leaders (Sylvester 1969).

The Destour party itself was in 1968 organised into 1,000 basic organisation or cells, each of which had several hundred members. Increasingly members of the cells were being given a decisive say in the choice of their officers, as well as of the representatives to be sent to the supreme organ of the party, the congress which met, as a rule, every three years. The policy of the party leadership, particularly since the Bizerta Congress in 1964, was to draw in especially the younger and more articulate element. At a meeting in April 1966, President Bourguiba summed up this policy: ‘the doors of the party are wide open to all citizens willing to serve their country. An important change after 1964 had been the setting up of a Central Committee for the Party, which now served as its chief executive organ. The party Congress elected Thirty-two of its members, but all the Secretaries of the State, the thirteen Governors and indeed the President of the Republic himself attended the meetings of the Central Committee, at which the policies and views of the party were laid down. The Central Committee was also given the power to select a successor to the President if this became necessary. The Committee included all the people who mattered most in Tunisia from the political point of view, and its deliberations and decisions were given first-rate publicity. But it only met three times, and one of the meetings was ad hoc- between February 1965 and January 1968. The National Council and the Political Bureau of the party continued to act as more frequently available instruments of consultation for the Presidents (Sylvester 1969).

The Ben Yousseuf affair continued to cast its shadow over any schemes to decentralise the power structure of the party. As late as 1962 an attempt was made on the

President's life presumably by people inspired by Yousseufist ideas and apparently assisted by Cairo. Ahmed Ben Salah lost his job as secretary-general of the Trade Union Movement in 1956 (Sylvester 1969).

Being opposed to nepotism Bourguiba was also very strict with anyone attempting to use his official position for unwarranted personal gain. It is likely that Tunisia has had one of the lowest rates of corruption in public administration among developing nations. A promising political career could be brought to an abrupt end if the man in question was found guilty of taking bribes or committing a fraud. Another important aspect of Bourguiba's rule and political philosophy must be stressed: his dislike of militarism. In this, he differed profoundly from a galaxy of leaders in the developing world, not least in Arab countries. One of the chief roles of the army was to inculcate civic responsibilities upon servicemen. Only about 7 per cent of the national budget was earmarked for the army in Tunisia (Sylvester 1969).

In 1968 a Bill was submitted according to which adultery would carry a sentence of five years in jail for either guilty party, whether husband or wife, although charges could be dropped at the request of the aggrieved spouse. The family too was vigorously defended as the basic unit of society. There was little doubt that with the years, political and social organisation were increasingly encouraged to fall in line with central policies. The Trade Union Movement- the UGTT- was brought under the much stricter control of the authorities by 1965, following a dispute with some of the trade union leaders. In a speech which Bourguiba gave to trade union leaders in July 1965 he made it clear that it was, as he put it, their duty to support based on equality, their duty was to work with enthusiasm and mutual confidence for national progress. This, he added, implies a certain restriction of freedom of each to make possible a better co-ordination of the efforts of all. The press, too, was brought closer under government control and newspapers such as the two dailies written in French, L'Action and La Presse, faithfully reflected orthodox views in their editorial columns. News reports too were often tailored to suit political expediency: L'Action and La Presse were very similar in content to their Arabic counterpart El Amal (Sylvester 1969).

The most recalcitrant and difficult organisation to streamline proved to be that of the students, the UGET, and university students generally. It could fairly be said that students were causing more trouble and worry to the authorities than any other section of the population. The student appeared to have been behind the riots and outrages committed against the British and American Embassies and other buildings and road vehicles on 5 June 1967, Israel. It was understandable if the behaviour of this kind, repeated in a milder form in mid-March 1968, caused considerable embarrassment to the Tunisian Government. While clamouring for more freedom of expression and a greater say in the administration of their own and their country's affairs, they were also strongly anti-American, especially concerning Vietnam. They were in favour of the so-called "scientific socialism", the usual euphemism for a communist system of government (Sylvester 1969).

Much of the inspiration and indeed actual guidance of the movement originated from Tunisian student committees and circles in France. If at the time when Habib Bourguiba had studied in Paris Liberalism was in vogue, it was now the turn of Marxist and communist ideas, especially in circles in which Tunisian students and intellectuals were likely to move. Admittedly one of the problems here was that the type of effort and disciplined hard work now required in the difficult process of the country's economic and social development might have seemed tedious and uninspired to the youngest generation. There was also an inevitable gap between expectations generated by education and the reality of the low or slowly rising, the standard of living and restricted opportunities, something that was particularly apparent to those who had lived in France (Sylvester 1969).

In the Destour party, itself resolute moves had been set on foot, particularly after 1964, to bring in younger people to responsible positions. The average age in the Political Bureau dropped from fifty to thirty-five years. Most of the governors of provinces were young university-educated men in their early thirties. There was, however, one aspect of public life in Tunisia where particularly lively and constructive dialogues seemed more and more scope. Problems encountered in the economy, education, social welfare and other fields of development were becoming increasingly technical and complicated, and

growing number of people became involved in conducting discussions and making decisions on these issues (Sylvester 1969).

In March 1967 Bourguiba suffered a heart attack. He later fully recovered, as doctors were reported to have assured him; but the kind of inhumanly active and hectic life he had had in the past, which might well have caused illness, was now resumed. There was no immediate concern, but the question of his succession was in many people's minds. There was clearly nobody who could really replace him or match his outstanding qualities. The very nature of one-man rule made it difficult for another person of similar calibre to emerge. This was perhaps the most disturbing drawback of Bourguibism as a system of government. However, it was no secret that Bourguiba very much hoped that political life in Tunisia would in time become sufficiently institutionalised and entrenched in the rule of law to ensure the survival of his work and achievement and to enable the necessary changes to be made, in an orderly fashion and without upheavals (Sylvester 1969).

While Bourguiba was seeking international support, he did not abandon the time-honoured "dialogue" with France. In fact, his multiple contacts at the French embassy in Cairo led some of his compatriots to doubt him. More specifically, he was in contact with Michel Soulie, a counsellor at the embassy, who was of the Radical Party. Bourguiba defended, on the one hand, the sovereignty of Tunisia, but on the other hand realistically admitted an inevitable dependency on France. At that point in time, Bourguiba was not in principle against the Union Francaise promoted by the Fourth Republic on condition that the measure of independence given to Tunisia was credible. He claimed that the membership of Tunisia in the Union Francaise would not be in contradiction with membership in the Arab League. The difficulties of reconciling a double affiliation to the Arab-Islamic world and the west have political and economic consequences, beyond the psychological and the cultural. As the socioeconomic structure of Tunisia gradually changed, the various class-fraction alliances attempted to use one or the other option in order to strengthen their own position (Salem 1984).

At the same time, discussions had been opened between Ben Yousseuf, as Secretary General of the Neo-Destour, and the French authorities. Of course, if these had succeeded, the result risked to leave Bourguiba out in the cold. He practically had to return to demonstrate that he was the leader whom the Tunisian people trusted and consequently, the necessary "interlocuteur valable". Bourguiba's suspicions were raised higher when both Ben Youssef and his contacts at the French embassy in Cairo advised him not to return to Tunisia. Consequently, he decided to return and in fact, the monstrous crowds which appeared at the airport to welcome him amply demonstrated his popularity (Salem 1984).

According to Bourguiba, as early as 1948, Ben Yousseuf had been out to get him. It was at that time that Ben Yousseuf became Secretary General and Bourguiba was "promoted" to President of the Neo-Destour Party. Bourguiba blames Ben Yousseuf for organising the third Party Congress on 16-17 October 1948 at which the decision was taken to relieve Bourguiba of all financial responsibilities (Salem 1984).

Tunisia under Bourguiba and Ben Ali

For the Tunisian nationalist movement, Islam was not important ideologically- for them, the French lost their right to rule simply by failing to live up to their liberal, Republican standards but it was a crucial organisational device. Members of the nationalist party, the Neo-Destour, swore their allegiance on the Koran; for many of its adherents among the masses, the party resembled nothing so much as a religious brotherhood (Anderson 1991).

After coming to power, Bourguiba abolished the old institutions and created new ones to suit his own personality and the new environment that he wished to generate in Tunisia. The Tunisian state in 1955, apart from the French colonial presence, had the inbuilt attributes of an absolute monarchy. There was no constitution, and the *Bey* had full power (in theory) to appoint Ministers of his own choosing and to enact any law (Pandey 2005).

The period of the legal absolutism of the old system under the *Bey* came to an end with the proclamation of a new constitution, on 1 June 1959. The other important political components were the presidential form of government and the single Party system. Although the Constitution took effect from the day of its promulgation, it provided that the existing organisation of political power was to be prolonged until elections for the Assembly and the Presidency were held in November 1959. Electoral districts were revised, and the number of deputies was reduced from 98 to 90 each deputy representing about 40,000 inhabitants (Pandey 2005).

The first official act of the Assembly, on 25 July 1957, was to pass a unanimous resolution abolishing the monarchy and proclaiming Tunisia a republic. Habib Bourguiba, then President of the Council, was entrusted with the duties of head of state in its present form until the Constitution would be applied. From then onwards until the general elections of November 1959, the Tunisian State functioned provisionally under the stewardship of Bourguiba, who exercised the dual functions of President of the Republic and President of the Council (Pandey 2005).

The Constituent Assembly finally approved the draft constitution on 1 June 1959. It was ratified and promulgated on the same day by President Bourguiba. Its preamble contained the basic elements of Tunisian political belief and aspirations. An Economic and Social Council, sitting as a consultative body to advise on economic and social matters was appointed under Article 58. Municipal and district assemblies with local administrative functions were created under Article 59. Thus the fundamental characteristics of the Tunisian constitution were republicanism with a Presidential system of the executive; democratic institutions and systems of check and balances and unity of the Greater Maghreb (Pandey 2005).

The new constitution affirmed and consolidated the change in regime which had already taken place two years earlier when the Constituent Assembly, by the Proclamation of 25 July 1957 had abolished the *Beylical* monarchy and proclaimed Tunisia a Republic. By this move, the Assembly had sought to “strengthen the independence of the state and enhance the sovereignty of the people”. It also considered

the action as a step “in the evolution of a democratic order which is the aim of the Assembly in formulating the Constitution” (Pandey 2005).

The Tunisian constitution makers tried to provide for a system of checks and balances, so as to contain the arbitrary powers of the President under the Tunisian Constitution. The General Provisions of the Constitution provided the necessary securities of individual rights essential for a free society. The Constitution established the type of governmental processes essential for a democratic society. Both the President of the Republic as well as the members of the National Assembly was chosen by the people by means of a free, direct and secret ballot (Pandey 2005).

The independence of the judiciary was also guaranteed. It was observed, however, that the Constitution, while adopting the American form of Presidential executive does not provide for another American institution, the Supreme Court, empowered to pass judgement on the constitutionality of legislation. The constitution makers seem to have adopted English parties of the legislative supremacy of parliament but without the British system of the multiparty system (Pandey 2005).

The insistence on Greater Maghreb was important because of the nature of nationalist movement in the three Maghreb countries: Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. All three were struggling against the French colonial dominance. All had common cultural, religious, linguistic and political base. Their leaders were in constant touch with each other and for a long time had sought to coordinate their policies from the Maghreb Bureau in Cairo. The concept of Greater Maghreb evokes sentimental responses even today (Pandey 2005).

Thus the Constitution was made to suit the requirements of Habib Bourguiba who had already emerged as the dominant leader to Tunisia. The Constitution reflected the enormous power the President had invested in him, and members of the government were solely responsible towards him. He had the power to decree laws in the absence of the Assembly. The single party system was another institution which was created by Habib Bourguiba after Tunisia attained its independence. The Neo-Destour party was founded in 1934, but it continued to be suppressed by the French for a long time. It was given

official status only in 1954 when the French were prepared to negotiate a political settlement with the Tunisian nationalists (Pandey 2005).

Since 1955 “when the Neo-Destour took responsibility for a compromise agreement with France which did not meet all nationalist aspirations, the party became even less democratic than it used to be in the heat of anti-colonialist combat. The former Secretary General of the party, Salah Ben Yousseuf, launched a campaign against the agreement with France. By early 1956, the intraparty dispute almost developed into a civil war. Though Bourguiba, with the aid of faithful political elites and the UGTT, finally eliminated the Yousseufist threat, the experience conclusive domesticated that Tunisia was not ready for democratic completion within the party. Sensing need for a higher control over the party, the Neo-Destour was internally overhauled in late 1958. The federations were replaced by a smaller number of provincial offices headed by officials appointed by the Political Bureau. In a sense, the Neo-Destour previously closer in structure to the French socialist party was made to resemble a communist party, in which officials in charge of intermediate executive bodies, though in appearance elected, at regional congresses, in fact, were appointed by the central secretariat” (Pandey 2005).

The mission of the Neo-Destour, “according to the 1959 Covenant, was the apparent paradox of maintaining its political monopoly in order to preserve Tunisian independence and to modernise the economy and the society.” The Neo-Destour party was the basis of power for Bourguiba. Over the years he had made it into the dominant party in Tunisia. But for absolute power, he tried and finally succeeded in converting the dominant party system into a “single party” system. The single party system controlled by Bourguiba along with the Presidential form of government helped to consolidate the absolute powers of Habib Bourguiba (Pandey 2005).

The Neo-Destour party had been active since 1954 in trying to capture the state apparatus. “The party had placed its leaders and cadres in all key positions. It tolerated the existence of two opposition parties. The Communist Party with limited activities had little influence and was finally banned in 1963.” The other, the old Destour party, had no activities. Moreover, the autonomy of the UGTT was broken when many of its active

members were inducted in the Neo-Destour Party. Auxiliary organisations like the National Union of Tunisian Women and the National Union of Tunisian Students also mobilised and politicised the populace. Under the single party system of the Tunisian Constitution, no other political party could even contest elections. Hence the Neo-Destour as a party had the monopoly. Bourguiba as its president controlled the party and through it the Parliament (Pandey 2005).

There were certain other changes in the administrative system that strengthened Bourguiba's power base. The administrative system was centred on the President, as head of state and chief executive officer. His cabinet was composed of secretaries of state for the various departments like foreign affairs, agriculture, commerce, plan and finances, industry and transport, interior justice, etc. Coordination between the secretariats was provided by the secretary of state to the Presidency who was, in effect, the second most important figure in the administration. Control of security forces was transferred from the French to Tunisian hands on 18 April 1956. The system which emerged in 1956 divided the police force into urban police under the control of the Director of National Security and a small gendarmerie recruited from the National Guard, were attached to the secretary of state for the Interior. The defence forces included a small naval contingent to patrol coastal water, a selected group of officer pilots and elite parachutist unit. Parallel to the military service was a civilian corps to which part of the annual call-up of trainees was assigned. This corps had played a praiseworthy role in stimulating the unemployed who were engaged in works projects throughout the country as a part of the economic programme called the Battle against under development (Pandey 2005).

The local administration was headed by the governors. Tunisia was divided into thirteen governorates. Each governor was assisted by an elected advisory council whose powers were in reality quite limited, although they provided a local sounding board which somewhat reduced the otherwise sweeping powers of the governors. Municipal institutions remained decentralised as before. Municipal elections, in which women voted for the first time in Tunisian history, were held in May 1957 and resulted in an overwhelming victory of Neo-Destour everywhere. In 1955, two kinds of courts existed in Tunisia; French courts and secular Tunisian courts. The Judicial Convention signed in

1955 provided for a twenty-year transition for evolving a unified Tunisian system of justice. Moreover, forty Cantonal Courts each presided by a single judge were established to handle petty cases, and a court at the highest level was designed to assure a uniform and proper application of the law. A Nationality Code was promulgated in January 1956, and a new code of Personal Status also came into effect on 1 January 1957 (Pandey 2005).

The prestige of the newly independent government enabled it to embark on a policy of modernising old Islamic institutions. Under the laid inspiration of the Neo-Destour, the Constituent Assembly budged on the matter of religion and made the simple statement that "Tunisia's religion is Islam". Collective religious lands came under the control of the state, and the institution of the Habous was abolished. Polygamy was abolished. Women were granted full equality before the law. In the decade following independence literacy in Tunisia climbed from 15 per cent to between 35 and 40 per cent. Arabic was made the basic language of instruction in the primary stage. Different types of education like the modern education in French; mixed Franco-Arab education; Muslim education in Arabic was merged into one unified national system (Pandey 2005).

In the economic realm, Bourguiba's policies seemed noticeably inadequate. In fact, the policies pursued in the first half decade of independence proved unsuccessful either in attracting significant private investment or preventing a serious decline in the economy. As a result, the government turned to state planning, in order to encourage economic growth to break up the rigidities of social stratification to equalise opportunities and to increase social mobility. In May 1964 the Tunisian national assembly enacted legislation authorising the expropriation of all foreign owned lands, mostly French. Thus the period between 1960 to1964 was highlighted by the regime's gradual shift from reliance on the private sector to reliance on the public sector (Pandy 2005).

The agrarian policy was enacted by the Minister of Finance and Planning, Ahmed Ben Salah in the period 1964-1969. Ben Salah formulated an ambitious ten-year plan for economic development and reform almost completely based on state control and

initiative in industry and agriculture. However, Ben Salah's cooperative scheme was seen as a direct threat by the Tunisian landowners. His management became an issue, and ultimately in 1969 he was shifted to the Ministry of education and his agricultural plans abandoned. The Constitution clearly emphasised the monopoly of President in all important affairs. The President also controlled the Single party system. This combination, in turn, gave Bourguiba control over parliament. Moreover, he had control over labour union and local assembly. The UGTT was the strongest arm of the Neo-Destour and other organisations like UGAT etc. were also its affiliates. By 1965 Bourguiba had created institutions that gave him absolute power under the garb of constitutionalism (Pandey 2005). In February 1961 Bourguiba realised that the Neo-Destour party was decaying. Though this central instrument of the regime, in theory, represented the popular will, it had neither foreseen nor able stop the anti government Kairouan riots of 17 January 1961. Even though the relative traditionalist Kairouan masses were possible goaded to revolt by the city anti Bourguibist old aristocracy and it did not represent the national mood their agitation destroyed the regime's myth of popular cohesion and harmony. The incident also enlightened Bourguiba's significant loss of popularity since his attack on February 1960, on the sacred Islamic custom of fasting during the month of Ramadan. Bourguiba's persuasive tactics were not working. The legitimacy of the charismatic leader was in question. Many of Tunisia's pious Muslims considered him as an atheist (Pandey 2005).

The economic hardship that ensued in the 1970s, with weak agricultural performance and high urban unemployment, led to increased migration to Europe. In January 1978, the Union Generale Tunisienne du Travail (UGTT) organised a nationwide general strike to protest against the government's economic policies. "Over 50 demonstrators were killed and 200 trade union officials, including UGTT secretary-general Habib Achour, were arrested. In the 1980s, the economy continued to perform poorly, and in 1984 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forced the government to raise the price of bread and semolina (wheat flour), causing server hardship and a wave of food riots." In 1987, following a bloodless coup, Bourguiba was overthrown and replaced by his prime minister, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. The new president and his government

embarked on a series of economic reforms aimed at generating economic growth and accelerating development. (Honwana 2013)

The government sought to reduce its deficits and curb inflation. It privatised public enterprises; between 1987 and 2008, the sale of over 200 enterprises netted the state almost 6.1 billion Tunisian dinars (about US $3.8 billion). The corruption and nepotism that marked this process created many problems, however. The third reform was liberalisation of the economy through free trade agreements aimed at helping local enterprises cope with increased competition from foreign companies. This programme of reforms lifted the country out of the economic crisis of the late 1980s and stimulated economic growth. The dynamic of market-led growth generated serious regional economic imbalances. "The structural adjustment policies required a further opening of the Tunisian economy to foreign goods, investment and finance," leaving Tunisian society with greater levels of economic stratification and a proliferation of low-skilled jobs. "An increased number of Tunisians were living in poverty and unable to meet their economic needs or achieve their life aspirations" (Honwana 2013).

"The neoliberal economic policies of Ben Ali's regime led to a pattern of uneven economic development that has marginalised the central, western and southern desert regions and has concentrated wealth" in the northern and eastern coastal regions of the country. The decline in farming and mining in the inland regions has contributed to widening regional inequalities. Rather than making public investment in the inland regions the government offered "tax breaks and incentives to private business in the vain hope that this would encourage local development. The government's neglect angered Tunisians in the central, western and southern desert regions. They lacked such basic social infrastructure as schools, hospitals and roads" (Honwana 2013).

To deal with steady declines in state revenue, the government implemented unpopular programmes aimed at reducing subsidies on commodities including food. Popular dissatisfaction in the inland regions was widespread. Major revolts began in Gafsa, Sidi Bouzid and other economically marginalised regions. The January 2008 protests in Redeyef, Gafsa, constituted of the first open demonstrations against Ben Ali's regime. Protests were unable to get jobs in the phosphate mines. The government's

neoliberal economic approach resulted in lower wages and job insecurity and failed to generate enough jobs to employ young people entering the workplace. Unemployment skyrocketed among university graduates during the 1990s. The global economic downturn had especially serious effects on the Tunisian economy between 2007 and 2009: “rates of unemployment and underemployment, which were already high, soared. Each year about 140,000 people are ready to enter the labour market while only 60,000 to 65,000jobs created mainly in Greater Tunis and coastal regions. Even these figures underestimate the extent of youth unemployment, as they do not include many of those who, after failing to find work, enter the informal economy or migrate to Europe.” These socioeconomic disconnects, especially unequal regional development, massive unemployment and difficulties in labour migration and entrepreneurship, have been at the heart of young people’s discontent and were central issues in the youth uprisings of December 2010 and January 2011 (Honwana 2013).

The notorious excesses of the authoritarian regime in Tunisia played a major role in exacerbating popular dissatisfaction and in particular, alienating the middle class. Tunisians have long been aware of state repression, but in the last few years, they have become more conscious of the disproportionate power and influence wielded by a tiny elite concentrated on Tunisia’s first family. The release of the WikiLeaks memos in 2010 exposed the magnitude of the ruling family’s plundering of the country’s resources (Honwana 2013).

Ben Ali’s and Leila’s Families controlled all major business in the country and were known among Tunisians as ‘the family’. This closed groups interests extended to virtually every corner of the economy, from information and communication technology through banking to manufacturing, retail transportation, agriculture and food processing. The family gained control of several key industries through privatisation of state assets and benefited from the government’s efforts to encourage competition. The Ben Ali/Trabelsi family was increasingly flaunting its opulence in public, arousing outrage among the poor and unemployed. The pervasive and high-level corruption in Tunisia had negative consequences for foreign investment, which in turn hurt job creation. The Ben Ali/Trabelsi sociologist Slaheddine Ben Fredj pointed out, it discouraged direct foreign

investment and economic growth. The family also stifled the development of successful companies outside its control by intimidating legitimate businessmen and deterring any promising local entrepreneurial activity. “The Tunisian middle class was gradually excluded, in favour of a small, close-knit clique of relatives that included siblings and in-laws as well as more distant kin of Ben Ali and Leila Trabelsi” (Honwana 2013).

Corruption in Tunisia extended beyond the predatory activities of the president’s family and large business that supported or accommodated the family in order to preserve their own positions and status. In a broader sense, corruption in Tunisia also operated at a lower level. State nepotism and high-level corruption coupled with these everyday experiences created particular resentment among the youth, especially unemployed graduates, who were seeking some form of employment or livelihood- applying for jobs or subsidies to start a small business- in order to try and carve out a relatively decent future. The prevalence of these practices alienated young people from a state that was supposed to uphold the social contract with its citizenry but instead allowed the plundering of the country’s riches by a small clique (Honwana 2013).

Political repression and a lack of civil liberties were equally important sources of popular resentment against the regime. Ben Ali had pledged to respect human rights and to allow greater openness in the political arena when he took office in November 1987. His promises soon rang hollow, as his regime became more repressive than that of his predecessor. Civil liberties were severely restricted. Torture, arbitrary arrest and restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly were prevalent (Honwana 2013).

In a desperate attempt to depoliticise the Tunisian people, the regime closed the political space. No form of political dissent was tolerated. Freedom of association was almost non-existent. With few exceptions, civil society organisations that worked on political issues were denied legal registration. Opposition parties and civil society organisations suffered from periodic crackdowns and had a very limited margin to manoeuvre. Freedom of assembly was severely restricted, particularly for political parties and human rights organisations; they were not allowed to hold public meetings or engage in any sort of public criticism of the regime (Honwana 2013).

The number of detentions and political trials and the level of harassment of dissidents rose considerably during Ben Ali's regime. "Human rights activists, journalists and members of the opposition were subjected to constant surveillance, harassment and imprisonment. Ben Ali's main foes were Islamists who were summarily detained or imprisoned after sham trials in the early 1990s. International human rights organisation, as well as a small group of local activists, ceaselessly criticised Tunisia's human rights record. Torture and ill treatment continued to be reported. Hundreds of political prisoners sentenced after unfair trials in previous years, including prisoners of conscience, remained in prison. Many had been held for more than a decade and were reported to be in poor health" (Honwana 2013).

Moreover, the government tightly controlled "all forms of public expression and severely punished those who did not toe the government line. Journalists and dissidents who crossed the regime have been imprisoned, beaten, harassed, threatened or removed from their jobs." Indeed no critical press, radio or television was allowed. Legislation used to exert pressure on journalists and editors was amended to tighten restrictions on freedom of expression. In the late 1990s, the country entered the world of the internet, which offered Tunisians new forms of communication, including the instantaneous transmission of videos and photographs. The rapid spread of new technologies created a new community and a cyber society, made up mainly of young people who escaped the controlling mechanisms of the state. In response, the Tunisian government "developed a sophisticated approach to online censorship and blocked access to a number of internet sites. The authorities engaged in large-scale phishing operations of its citizens' websites and private accounts. In addition to suppressing the media and the internet, the regime repressed any popular criticism of the government and its leaders" (Honwana 2013).

Tunisia's struggle for modernization and to extend women's rights dates back to the nineteenth century when Tunisian thinkers and reformists began to call for women's emancipation and to lay the basis for a more modern Tunisia. Habib Bourguiba understood that his modernising and secular project would be compromised if women had no social or economic rights. A few months after independence on 13 August 1956, Bourguiba gave a famous speech in which he formally enacted an unprecedented piece of

legislation known as the Code du Statut Personnel (CSP), or *majalat* in Arabic that radically reformed Islamic family law in Tunisia. When it came into force in January 1957, it offered Tunisian women a set of rights and a degree of access to the public sphere that was unparalleled in the Arab world (Honwana 2013).

The CSP's provisions dealt directly with issues relating to the position of women in the family and society. It abolished polygamy. Bourguiba equated polygamy with slavery. The CSP established the equality of men and women with regard to divorce. Talaq or extra judicial divorce was prohibited. The CSP declared that marriage could not take place without the consent of both spouses and set the minimum age at 20 for men and 17 for women. Following the provisions of the CSP, the Tunisian Constitution promulgated the "principle of equality" of men and women in relation to citizenship. As a consequence of Bourguiba's reforms, from the late 1950s, Tunisian women enjoyed the right to vote, change their place of residence, seek public office, work outside the home, open bank accounts and establish businesses without the permission of their husbands. In 1962 same year Tunisian women gained access to birth control, and contraceptives were made freely available. Abortion was legalised in 1965 and women were entitled to obtain abortions for personal as well as medical reasons without permission from their husbands. Bourguiba initiated a family planning campaign through clinics and educational programmes. A law limiting to four the number of children per family that were allowed to benefit from state subsidies helped reinforce the state's family planning policies (Honwana 2013).

Bourguiba denounced women's veiling and confinement to the home as hindrances to the new nation's modernising and development goals. Bourguiba's regime developed an official discourse of women's rights that broke fundamentally with some existing cultural and religious traditions. Conservatives did not well receive his reforms of women's and family rights. Although he was careful to ground his reforms on a modern reading of Islamic texts, his critics saw then as an affront to Islam. The CSP failed to reform inheritance laws, and women continued to be adversely affected by the preference for male heirs. Indeed scholars have shown that the CSP preserves and promotes masculine privileges. Thus from their inception, Bourguiba's reforms appeared

to be both revolutionary and restricted. In fact, Bourguiba's policies have been called feminism de'etat (state feminism), and the CSP has been deemed a mechanism for replacing the traditional, patriarchal model of the extended family with the nuclear family and an individual rights model (Honwana 2013).

During the 1990s, feminist groups lobbied to reform some critical issues concerning women's rights that the CSP failed to address: the view that women have a duty to obey their husbands, and the inequality between the sexes in relation to inheritance. They were successful with the first provision, which was modified by Ben Ali in 1993, but they did not manage to change inheritance laws. In 1992, Ben Ali created the Office of the Secretary of State for Women and Family and appointed several women to high political positions. However, Ben Ali did not remove the provision stating that women must relate to their husbands 'in accordance with custom and tradition', an ambiguous clause prone to conservative interpretations (Honwana 2013).

Many Tunisian women have pointed out, however, that in practice women are not always able to exercise those rights. Because of the regional imbalances in contemporary Tunisian society, most women in the impoverished areas of the country are not aware of their rights. A number of legal procedures create difficulties for women seeking to file complaints and hinder their access to the courts. Feminist groups recognise the disconnect between state policies and the situation of most Tunisian women (Honwana 2013).

When Ben Ali took over power from Bourguiba, he promised to liberalise the regime and allow greater pluralism and dialogue with opposition parties. He was initially tolerant of the activities of Al-Nahda, allowing its members to run in the 1989 parliamentary elections as independents. They performed well in the elections garnering an estimated 13 per cent of the national vote and accused the regime of manipulating election results; the RCD claimed victory with 90 per cent of the votes. Clashes between the regime and the Islamists escalated which led to the banning of Al-Nahda in 1991. Following claims of an Islamist plot against the government and a plan to assassinate the president, an open "war" was declared and the regime initiated a crackdown on the

Islamists. From 1992 onwards thousands of Islamists were detained and convicted in military courts without due process. Many received steep sentences and remained in prison until 2006. Those who managed to leave the country were sentenced in absentia, while others went into exile after serving long prison sentences. As part of the strategy to repress Islam in Tunisia, more than 5,000 mosques were placed under government surveillance and submitted to rigid control s by government officials who appointed prayer leaders and censored the topics of Friday sermons (Honwana 2013).

For Tunisians outside the Islamist camp joined the LTDH in expressing reservations about the state's dealings with Al-Nahda. "In exchange for protection from the "green threat" of Islamic radicalism, the majority of secular Tunisians turned a blind eye to excesses committed by the authorities." Leaders of the opposition political parties contented themselves with the collapse of so formidable a rival as Al-Nahda and anxious to shield their own organisations from a similar fate, suppressed whatever misgivings they may have harboured (Perkins 2004).

In the 1999 presidential elections, Ben Ali faced opposition, albeit of the most perfunctory nature, for the first time since coming to power. Revisions in the election law permitted the heads of political parties represented in the outgoing parliament, who also met qualifications based on age and the length of their service as party leaders, who stand for the presidency. In the end, most opposition voters preferred to support Ben Ali's inevitable victory rather than to cast a vote for the leader of a rival party, a clear indication of the opposition's resistance to pooling their meagre resources against an entrenched power no one of them could hope to defeat by itself. As a result, Ben Ali received 99.44 percent of the votes cast (Perkins 2004).

In 2003 Ben Ali's "government promulgated far-reaching anti-terrorism legislation, and many Islamists were on the radar of the security services because of their physical appearance and attire or because of their regular visits to mosques. Many were continuously brought to police stations for questioning, were always under pressure for the security services, and felt marginalised socially." Human rights activists criticised this legislation for preventing the exercise of fundamental freedoms. They also accused the

Tunisian government anti-terror trials of relying on “excessive pretrial detention, denial of due process and weak evidence”. It is estimated that about 2,000 Tunisians were detained charged or convicted of terrorism-related offences between 2003 and the fall of Ben Ali. Some were tried and sentenced in absentia. Confessions under duress and torture were accepted as evidence in court without proper investigation (Honwana 2013).

Among the most significant consequences of the repressive campaigns against Islamism in both the 1990s and the 2000s was the absence of religious freedoms and open forms of religious socialisation for Tunisian Muslims. The marginalisation of “public religious displays together with an increasing culture of soulless materialism had deeply affected a number of young people during the 2000’s, giving rise to what can be termed as “spiritual needs”.” The worsening socioeconomic conditions in the country compounded the high rates of youth unemployment fostered a quest for religious identity and spirituality (Honwana 2013).

Although political Islam did not have a prominent role in the revolution the unprecedented openness of the transition in the post-Ben Ali period favoured the emergence of new and diverse political actors and Islamist movements have been able to take advantage of the democratic process. It is within this context that Al-Nahda was able to become a key actor and perform well in the October 2011 elections. Economic grievances have caused widespread discontent among Tunisians, especially in the impoverished areas of the country and among unemployed graduates. The rise of a mafia-like group around the president and the corruption that surrounded it affected entrepreneurs and created disaffection among the middle class. Islamists and secular opposition groups alike were banned or marginalised; civil society activists were censored and controlled. The stifling of the media and the aggressive repression of the cyber community were unprecedented and generated antipathy towards the regime. The top-down political and legal reforms to women’s rights and the absence of solid mechanisms for implementing those reforms would come back to haunt Tunisians. The heavy-handed repression of Islamism and the lack of religious freedom may have forged radical forms of religious extremism and may have created a quest for identity and spirituality among the young generation. “The toxic combination of widespread political

and religious repression, economic stagnation and social exclusion deprived the regime of popular legitimacy and provided a fertile ground for a series of uprisings that culminated in the December 2010-January2011 revolution" (Honwana 2013).

Chapter III

History, Evolution and Ideology of Al-Nahda

The tension between Islamists and government is nothing novel in the Muslim world, but the repression of Tunisia's Al-Nahda party was unique in its total eradication of any organisational presence within Tunisian society. Unlike Egypt, organised Islamism in Tunisia began in the throes of an economic crisis in the late 1960s, catalysed by a failed change from socialism to economic liberalism. This transition left thousands unemployed and in economic straits, leading to an identity crisis that the Islamists were quick to fill (Hamidi 1998). In 1970, three young professionals, Hammida Enniefer, Abdel Fattah Morou and Rachid al-Ghannouchi met and gave birth to the idea of a Tunisian Islamist movement. They targeted the youth that had been marginalised by the modernization policies of the Bourguiba regime (Hamidi 1998). Under cover of the Association for the Safeguarding of the Holy Quran, the new group organised meetings and offered public lectures until the government ordered the new members out for being too "enthusiastic" (Hamidi 1998). That first cell established under the moniker of *Jamaa al Islamiyya* was based at the University of Tunis, the only university in Tunisia.

The university acted as the perfect breeding ground for activism as the student unions were becoming increasingly political and the new Islamist group were repeatedly and violently attacked by the Marxist organisations (Hamidi 1998).What is now called

"Black Friday", January 26, 1978, marks the first instance of political posturing by the Islamists, who had up until this point pursued the only *da'wa*, the call to Islam. Due to rising economic disparity, the labour unions chose to strike, and the army was called in to shut the uprisings down. The result left hundreds massacred. The Islamists felt compelled to take sides, denouncing the government's action (Hamidi 1998).

In 647, only seven years after the Arabs had brought Egypt under their rule and fifteen years after the death of the Prophet, the first Arab invasion reached what is today Tunisia, the centre of the Roman province of Africa Proconsularis, known to the Arabs as Ifriqiya. The invasion rather took the form of a voyage of discovery. The Arabs came again eighteen years later and this time pillaged and plundered but did not stay. Finally, in 670, Okba Ibn Nafi arrived at the head of the considerable force, pitched his tents and called the place Kairouan, an armed camp. It took the Arabs right into the beginning of the eighth century before they could safely claim to be masters in their new house. They had to fight many Berber armies, and it was only in 702 that the legendary Queen Kahina was finally crushed and the backbone of Berber resistance broken. Nevertheless, "Berbers took to Islam like fish to water"; they liked the simplicity, and apparent logic of the new creed and the kind of posthumous rewards it promised in return for a virtuous life appealed to them. Besides, by accepting Islam, Berbers were jumping on the bandwagon of a patently dynamic and successful enterprise. A dependency of the Baghdad caliphate, Ifriqiya in 800 acquired a large measure of self-government and its own ruling house, the Aghlabids (Sylvester 1969).

The beginning of the tenth century opened a period of considerable strife and confusion, with strong religious overtones among the contending princes and potentates of North Africa. Before the end of the century, Ifriqiya had become a province of Egypt, under the ruling house of the Fatimids. In 1048, links with Cairo were broken, and the country again emerged as an independent entity, under the Zirids. But this had a fateful sequel. The Egyptians under their ruler, a Fatimid, were incensed at Ifriqiya's breakaway. To give vent to their fury, they played a trick on the unfortunate Ifriqiya. The Egyptians encouraged some nomadic tribes, including the Beni Hilal, who had for long been an embarrassment to Egypt to look for promising new pastures in the west, in Ifriqiya.

According to the famous Tunisian historian of the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldun, the Beni Hilal and other descended on the country like locusts, pulling out olive trees, breaking up waterworks and devastating urban settlements. In short, they are said to have lay waste the entire country, causing irreparable damage to installations that had endured since the best years of Roman rule (Sylvester 1969).

The situation was gradually restored after the Almohads; a Moroccan dynasty took over in the mid-twelfth century. Then for a short while, the entire Maghreb was brought under one rule, for the last time, although an attempt to that effect nearly succeeded again in the fifteenth century. In 1270 King Louis IX of France invaded Ifriqiya a t the head of a crusade; but after his sudden death at Carthage, the campaign was broken off. This was but a short episode in what was otherwise an exceptionally peaceful and satisfactory period for Ifriqiya. Lasting for about half a century between the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the period brought much fruitful enterprise under the ruling house of the Hafsids. It was then that Tunis reached a very high degree of influence and prosperity and the city's port became the most important trading post in the entire Maghreb (Sylvester 1969).

The Mediterranean world became polarised between the two emergent great powers, Spain and Turkey. Ifirqiya became an object of campaigns and battles initiated by each of the two superpowers in turn. A Turkish organised invasion succeeded in bringing much of the country under the sway of the Porte, an event that promptly led to a violent reaction on the Christian side. In 1535 Charles V recaptured Tunis, putting a Hafsid back on the throne and establishing Spanish protectorate. This lasted for some years, but the Christian power and its Muslim protégé were intensely unpopular. To this day the name of Hafsid in Tunisia has signified "weakness". The Turks, in the end, triumphed capturing Tunis from the Spanish in 1574. The modern boundaries of Tunisia date from 1587, the year of the Turkish division of the Maghreb. Not until the establishment of the French protectorate in 1881, did the Turkish suzerainty over Tunisia end, and the Turks themselves did not formally acknowledge the fact until after the First World War (Sylvester 1969).

At all events, Tunisia enjoyed an increasingly large measure of self-government under Turkish suzerainty. At first the country was ruled by military oligarchies, but eventually, Mourad Bey emerged as the unchallenged ruler, securing, by 1612, a right of succession for his descendants. Then in 1702, an officers' plot overturned the dynasty, and all the ruling family were wiped out. In 1705 the officer commanding the *spahis* or light cavalry Husain Ben Ali established himself as *Bey* and Pasha. His descendants kept the throne till 1957 when Tunisia became a republic (Sylvester 1969).

Increasingly close relations which Tunisia cultivated with European business interests, however also drove the country into a fatal dependence on richer nations. The tragedy of Tunisia as indeed of the entire Ottoman Empire was that it seemed to be slumbering away in apathy and decay while the more ambitious Christian nations grew in strength. Looking back on their life in the three centuries preceding the French protectorate, Tunisians now particularly recall the process of decadence and the state of impotence in which the country found itself. Some Tunisians tried to arrest and reverse the process. Ahmed Bey (1839-55) was imbued with a reforming spirit. He abolished slavery, discontinued the special regime applying to Jews and allowed the opening of Christian schools. Mohamed Bey, inspired by similar stirrings in Turkey proper, decreed a Fundamental Pact in 1857, declaring all Tunisians to be equal before the law and reaffirmed freedom of belief and rights enjoyed by foreigners. He built roads, instituted public works, and attempted to modernise the country in other ways. But he strained his resources too much. When he attempted to raise more money by a levy, a serious rebellion broke out in the country. Much money was borrowed abroad at exorbitant rates of interest. The country went bankrupt in 1869, and a control commission of creditor powers, Britain, France and Italy from now on supervised public administration. Tunisia was evidently slipping under foreign control (Sylvester 1969).

When the sands were already running out for Tunisia, the Bey entrusted the Government to very remarkable statesman. Khaireddin, Prime Minister from 1873 to 1877, was a Circassian by birth. He had been given many important assignments before in the army and diplomatic service. He was well-educated and had an unusually broad vision. He knew the European scene very well, especially Paris where he was a frequent

visitor. Knowing what was brewing for Tunisia, he was determined to put the country on its feet by sound fiscal reforms and measures. Among his lasting achievements was the foundation of the Sadiqi College, in which Habib Bourguiba and most of his close associates were educated. He was unable to stop the drift. In 1881, France invaded the country on the pretext that some Tunisian tribesmen had been raiding Algeria. An agreement was extorted from the Bey to the effect that the country's defence and foreign policy were to be entrusted to Paris. Two years later an additional agreement was signed, giving France substantial powers in the domestic administration of Tunisia. The Bey himself offered no resistance. Perhaps he thought that a French protectorate was a good way out of his own troubles. But there was some fighting before Tunisia was finally pacified under the new regime (Sylvester 1969).

In a bunker in a small village close to Hamma and to the province of Gabes in south-eastern Tunisia, Rachid al-Ghannouchi was born on 22 June 1941. As Tamimi writes,

> His family, along with several other families, had been escaping from the bombardment of the Axis powers during the Second World War. It was a time of turmoil and transformation. The tribes of the region had been rebelling against the French colonisers since before the war. By 9 April 1938, the day anti-French demonstrations were organised throughout the country, the tribal uprising had reached the political elite, injecting it with courage and hope after having ignited the people's passion for independence. When France and Britain responded to the German invasion of Poland with a declaration of war on3 September 1939, French colonial authorities in Tunisia had been struggling to contain a situation that threatened to get out of hand. Hundreds of Tunisians had been arrested and scores of their leaders banished. However, by the end of June 1940 France collapsed and surrendered to the Germans and a new French puppet regime was set up at Vichy. The impact on the Tunisians was enormous. They saw with their own eyes the downfall of a colonial power that to them was arrogant and confident. France, which claimed political, military, and

> cultural superiority, had been vanquished by Germany, which, being the enemy of Tunisia's enemy, had been seen by many as the new friend of Tunisia. Since then and until the end of the war, Tunisia had come under the control of the pro-German Vichy regime. In spite of mixed feelings among members of the political elite, this was a period of relative relief (Tamimi 2001).

Bey Muhammed el-Muncef, who acceded to the throne on 19 June 1942, resisted pressure from both the Axis powers and the Allies to take sides in the war. Tamimi writes,

> He identified with the grievances of his people and sought the release of activists detained inside Tunisia or outside it in Algeria or France. His reign witnessed renewed political activism and the return to Tunisia of some banished political leaders including Bourguiba, who returned to the country on 7 April 1943. As the Bey was engaged in consultation with the New Desturian Party to form a new cabinet that would have included Bourguiba and Saleh bin Yousef, allied troops defeated the Germans and conquered Tunis, the capital, on 7 May 1943. On 13 May, the French forced the abdication of Bay el-Muncef in favour of his son Muhammad el-Amein. El-Muncef was initially detained in the south of Algeria, then moved back to Tunis; upon the liberation of France, he was banished to southern France where he remained until he died on 1 September 1948 (Tamimi 2001).

Following the removal of Bey el-Muncef and for several years after the end of the war, the Tunisians were made to pay for what the French believed as a betrayal. According to Tamimi, the Tunisians were held responsible for providing support to the Axis powers in the war and not siding with the French. The French loss did make the Tunisians evidently happy and boosted their confidence. The armed forces saw a quick desertion while the farms owned by colonial powers were attacked rapidly as well. There was a striking increase in the size of the anti-colonial armed movement called *fallaga*. Villages were ruined under the pretext of searching for remnants of Axis troops;

approximately thousand Tunisians were forcefully sent to detention, trials were organised for those accused of allying with the Germans (Tamimi 2001).

Evolution and Popularity of Al-Nahda

Al-Nahda was established in 1970 under the name of the Qur'anic Preservation Society (QPS). At the time of establishment, it was not a political organisation. It worked for the promotion of piety in the Tunisian society. In the late 1970s, there was a growing social unrest among organised labour due to which the organisation shifted its political approach. The organisation's discourse and actions were politicised. For three more years, Al-Ghannouchi remained focused on the call to Islam, until finally in 1973 he realised that *Da'wa* as a function of Islamist groups did not operate as intended in non-democratic Tunisia. Instead, he shifted the group's focus to secret meetings and lectures, adapted from Brotherhood ideology, which remained the primary influence of the group from 1973 onwards (Hamidi 1998).The clandestine nature of the group worked until its discovery by the government in1980. This prompted the group to preempt government action by going public. The same year, an attack on the city of Gafsa led to a slaughter of many in response by the army. Public disgust incited Bourguiba to claim a new era of openness and potential for a multiparty system (Hamidi 1998).When President Bourguiba legalised multiparty politics in 1981, Rachid al-Ghannouchi and other former QPS members founded *HarakatIttijah al-Islami* (Islamic Tendency Movement, MTI) in 1981. It was a coalition of several Islamist groups who wanted to change the political and economic situation in the country.

A significant number of the young Tunisians were joining the MTI, which thought that the society was morally depraved and wanted it to be based on Islamic principles. These young Tunisians had stopped participating in state functions and had turned to religion for guidance and self-fulfilment. In the 1970s *hijab* was worn by many women in the university as a sign of protest because it was banned in the schools by Bourguiba. Many male students began to go unshaven to express their sympathy towards the Islamist movement. It was a sign of solidarity with other students and protest against the government as it was an expression of piety. They saw Islam as a way out of their

perceived social, economic and political dissatisfaction. Most of them felt that they had to repudiate their origins and heritage to receive a modern education and be accepted in a secular environment.

The Islamists had long declared Bourguiba the "enemy of Islam", and the MTI envisioned themselves as saviours of Islam. In 1956, Bourguiba shut down the Islamic courts as well as the historic Zaytouna University. Zaytouna was one of the leading centres of Islamic authority. The following year, he prohibited the *hijab* in government offices and courts and prohibited fasting during Ramadan in 1960. In fact, Bourguiba took deliberate efforts to publicly drink orange juice every morning on national television, citing fasting as a detriment to the economy (Hamidi 1998). The Islamic Tendency Movement immediately chose to be confrontational with the ruling regime stating a desire to ultimately overthrow the regime in power (Allani 2009). The group applied for official registration as a political party under the name of the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) on June 6, 1981.The new Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) claimed to reformulate Islamist thought, establish itself as a political force, create a new system of social justice, and revive the unity of Islam (Hamidi 1998). Not surprisingly, the authorities responded to the open threats of ousting with harsh series of prosecution for key Islamist members beginning in 1981. This began the "period of hardship" for the Tunisian Islamic movement where nearly 107 of its top activists were imprisoned for almost eleven years (Allani 2009).

Over the next six years, the MTI committed itself to expansion and changed through nonviolence and democratic means (Hamidi 1998). The secret meetings continued and were discovered again in 1983, leading to yet another series of arrests. However, in 1984, the government issued amnesty to the members (Hamidi 1998).The prosecutions led to divisions within the MTI that in turn created three strains of Islamist groups in Tunisia. Some leaders left to create an organisation that prioritised ideology over politics, focusing instead on the *da'wa* call. This group became the Progressive Islamists of Tunisia. The remaining members splintered into two groups: one moderate and one radical. Abdel Fattah Morou, who abdicated violent positioning against the government, headed the moderate trend. The other, led by Salah Karkar called for a

continued and intensified revolt against the regime. During this time, Al-Ghannouchi continued to forge his own movement between that of Morou's and Karkar's (Allani 2009).

In January 1984 Prime Minister Muhammed Mzali fired the Minister of Interior over the January Bread Uprisings. The price of bread, a staple in Tunisia, skyrocketed during this time and Mzali thought the uprisings that occurred in response was a conspiracy by the Minister of the Interior and members of the trade union. He proceeded to fire the Minister and sentence the secretary general of the labour union, an active political force, to prison. These moves alienated many of his political constituents, and he decided to improve relations with the Islamists as a peace offering. He reached out to the Islamists in prison, while Morou continuously attempted to convince Bourguiba of the passiveness of his movement (Allani 2009). With Mzali as an official ally, the government began releasing members of the MTI and Mourou was officially invited for a visit to the Prime Minister's house in 1984. Mzali further agreed to legalise the Islamic movement in 1985 for its assurance that it would not politicise Islam. This temporary success proved short lived. The Movement faced a second round of prosecutions from the Bourguiba government in 1987 ending with a life sentence for Al-Ghannouchi and arrests of over 200 members. Al-Ghannouchi's absence put the more radical and oppositional Karkar in charge in his place (Hamidi 1998).

The Tunisian state had fallen into disrepair after the Mzali government, with the economy and security of the state continuously deteriorating (Allani 2009). In August of that same year, four bombings took place in the cities of Sousse and Monastir, and the government charged the Islamists. They had purportedly "received" a confession from a man claiming to have been given instructions from the MTI, though leaders of the group claimed not to know any such person (Hamdi 1998). A new assault led by Bourguiba put the Islamists on public trial for a slew of charges including treason, amassing arms, and colluding with Iran to name just a few. It was at this point that the Islamists and the world realised that Bourguiba would never settle for simply prohibiting the growth of the movement, but the total annihilation of it. International and domestic media and

opposition groups stood by the Islamist's innocence while international governments secretly pled with Bourguiba to not use the death penalty (Hamidi 1998). Karkar and other leaders began planning a military coup as their final attack on the Bourguiba regime but were instead beaten by Ben Ali only twenty-four hours prior (Hamidi 1998).

Ben Ali Regime and Al-Nahda

On 7 November 1987, then Prime Minister Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali toppled Habib Bourguiba, who claimed to be the president of Tunisia for life. Ben Ali assumed the responsibilities of chief executive of the Tunisian state. Ben Ali's “constitutional coup” was followed by promises of official liberalisation, evidenced by his initiation of a “National Pact” in August 1988. The stated objective of “the National Pact was to establish traditions of loyal competition and convinced that we have a legitimate right to differ which signifies neither sedition nor division, we declare our supreme objective to reaffirm the foundation of the state, the state of all Tunisians”. The change was welcomed by opposition groups and leaders, notably Al-Ghannouchi (at the time imprisoned by Bourguiba) and the rest of the MTI leadership. In the immediate aftermath of Ben Ali’s coup, Al-Ghannouchi’s overriding priority was the legalisation of his party and signature onto the National Pact. Months before Al-Ghannouchi’s release from prison in May 1988, Abd al-Fattah Mourou, MTI’s chief public spokesman, announced the movement's support for Ben Ali's new government. Al-Ghannouchi himself expressed confidence that an agreement could be reached with Ben Ali which would lead to the legalisation of his party. Upon his release from prison, Al-Ghannouchi told Al-Sharq al-Awsat: I consider my release another step by President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on the road to implementing the national change and salvation plan, especially as important decisions have been made to restore hopes to the people and work toward turning over the dark pages of the previous era’s file.The Islamic Tendency Movement's confidence in God and President Ben Ali is great; it hopes the new step will be the effective beginning of a solution to the Islamic Tendency problem as a whole so its proponents can find a suitable place within a united, harmonious, cooperative Tunisian family inspired by great motives

in facing the future and engaging in the battle of development and destiny in isolation from grumbling, frustration, and spite (Elgindy 1995).

When Ben Ali assumed office, a new era of relations began. Ben Ali was aware of how close the Islamists had come to taking power and chose to seek a peaceful resolution to the existing government-Islamist relations. He offered amnesty to Al-Ghannouchi and other sentenced members, while also allowing exiled members to return. At the same time, Ben Ali sought to restrict the MTI's access to power once and for all by banning all political parties with a religious base (Hamidi 1998). It also became illegal to give public lectures in mosques, a key facet of Islamist recruitment, without preapproval by the government (Hamidi 1998). Ben Ali was not interested in removing Islamic influence from public life. He frequently utilised Islamic rhetoric and promoted Islamic values as a tool to strengthen his new regime's legitimacy (Torelli 2012). In 1988, the MTI changed its name to Al-Nahda, while deciding to restrict its use of Islam so as not to breach the rules of the new party law (Hamidi 1998). Seizing the opportunity to participate in Ben Ali's new era of "openness", Al-Nahda quickly wrote a constitution that reflected its position on all aspects of Tunisian life. At the core of these was the promotion of Arab and Islamic identity, protecting civil society, improving the status of women, and promoting *shura* (council) as a foundation for democracy (Davis 1997).

Ben Ali's acceptance of the Movement was threefold: he allowed the movement to participate in the High Council in 1988 and he permitted the Movement to have representation in the Islamic High Council in 1989 and also granted its participation in the 1989 parliamentary elections. Al-Nahda's work in the high council accepted a modern political regime along with the need to safeguard previously acquired rights for women. Its membership in the Islamic High Council signalled a path of working with political opponents. It was in the parliamentary elections where Al-Nahda squandered any traction it had previously earned with the regime. Though banned from running as a party, Al-Nahda candidates could still run as independents, and they did. The electoral system in Tunisia guaranteed that the ruling Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) would win every seat, but Al-Nahda still won almost fifteen percent of the vote while

other opposition groups won none. This gave Al-Nahda a legitimate claim as the only group capable of challenging the RCD (Davis 1997).

In 1981 the government blamed the MTI for inflammatory sermons in university campuses and violent incidents. Many people were arrested, and 70 of them received between 1 to 11 years of prison sentences. At the beginning of 1984, the government started to deal with the MTI in the less suppressive method, but it still refused the registration of the group as a legal party and continued the ban on the group's journals, Al Maarfa and Al Mujtamaa. They were not allowed to hold public meetings, and MTI activists remained under surveillance, many of them were government-employed teachers or civil servants. Islamists have been the focus of state violence and hostility in the Bourguiba regime, but they have also been placed at the centre of political consciousness in Tunisia. Bourguiba's increasing hostility and violence towards Islamists and his insistence on a retrial of eighty-nine Islamists arrested in 1987, and the imposition of the death penalty for all suspects prompted Prime Minister Ben Ali to assume power under Article 57 of the Constitution, fearful of a possible breakdown in public order (King 2012).

Ben Ali moved quickly to legitimise his regime in order to garner support from the Islamists. Immediately after the coup, on 7 November 1987, he promised democratic reform and Islamists participation. He sought to resolve issues that formed the catalyst of the mainstream Islamist opposition, namely the lack of political expression, economic opportunities, moral laxity, corruption and mismanagement. Measures implemented that sought to legitimise the regime and garner Islamist support included abolishing the State Security Court, used by Bourguiba to trial Islamists and other opposition forces. Ben Ali released most of the political prisoners which included 600 MTI members. In May 1988 Rachid al-Ghannouchi the most prominent leader of the MTI was pardoned and in September, the group's secretary-general, Abd al-Fattah Mourou was allowed to return home from exile. Islamists were also allowed to take part in the Islamic High Council and to establish the Islamic Student Union. Ben Ali also instituted other symbolic measures such as launching an Islamic ethics campaign, which increased surveillance of cafes, malls and other public places to prevent "un-Islamic" behaviour and Islam was given a

more visible presence in everyday life through the broadcasting of the call to prayer and religious programs and increasing the use of Islamic references in official rhetoric. Furthermore, symbolic changes such as the presidential prize for Qur'anic learning and Ben Ali's highly publicised pilgrimage to Mecca as his first trip as President were part of a concerted drive for symbolic re-Islamisation of the RCD and Tunisian society, while simultaneously undercutting Islamist appeal (King 2012). But the accommodation of Islamists was short-lived. The elections of April 1989 proved to be a turning point in the relations between Al-Nahda and the Ben Ali regime. Ben Ali was alarmed by the increasing profile of Al-Nahda and the expansion of their support. Because of this, he wanted to keep religion and politics separate. The political parties based on religion were prohibited, thus re-banning Al-Nahda, as well as six other opposition groups. The MTI became Hizb al-Nahda (Renaissance Party) in 1988 to meet Ben Ali's requirement, but it was still prevented from participating in the June 1990 local elections. Ben Ali tightened the state regulatory and control policies, the ruling party's members infiltrated civil society organisations, and different measures were designed to promote the status of women in the family and their labour rights to gain support for the progressive image of the regime.

The popularity of Al-Nahda during the elections concerned the Ben Ali government and incited the most severe crackdown to date. This was the effective end of Al-Nahda's formal existence within Tunisia. The year 1990 saw the arrests of nearly one hundred Islamists and in 1991 Al-Nahda was accused of conspiring to overthrow the regime (Hamidi 1998). Al-Nahda members were abrasively arrested and banished from Tunisian political and social life (Torelli2012). Al-Ghannouchi left the country a month after the 1989 elections, and the government took a series of actions to permanently ban the Movement from ever re-entering Tunisian politics. The 1990s saw the eradication of the Al-Nahda newspaper, *Al Fajr*, and the dissolution of its student union. The government also discovered an Islamist presence in the security establishment leading to the third round of prosecutions in 1991 (Allani 2009). The eradication of an Al-Nahda presence was so complete that the only place Al-Ghannouchi could find political asylum was London. The international campaign launched by Ben Ali was intended to keep him out of the Arab world and isolated from the international press (Hamidi 1998). In August

of 1993, Great Britain granted political asylum to the exiled Tunisian Islamist who has lived in London since 1991, much to the displeasure of French officials who continue to regard Al-Ghannouchi as a radical. The move was regarded as a slap in the face to Tunisian authorities who were incensed by the British government's decision. Tunisian officials have gone to great lengths to portray Al-Ghannouchi as an extremist and a terrorist (Elgindy 1995). Such allegations reveal a deep-seated lack of understanding of the Islamist phenomenon and Al-Ghannouchi himself. To these accusations, Al-Ghannouchi has responded, “I know Shaykh Hasan al-Turabi very well, but I have not met ShaykhAbdal-Rahman at all, and my methods differ completely from his.” He further adds his hope that, "no serious quarter will pay any attention to these trivial accusations, which any judicious person can refute.” He has also denied having links to Tehran, the centre of the alleged “Fundamentalist-International”. For Al-Ghannouchi, such allegations are politically motivated: We feel that security organs are trying to distort the image of the Islamic movement and to give the impression that there is international fundamentalism, to make people frightened of it, and to portray it as a dangerous spectre (Al-Ghannouchi 1993).

In the elections of 1989, the independent Al-Nahda candidates received approximately 14 percent of the popular vote were dismissed by the movement as “falsified.” Moreover, Al-Ghannouchi maintains that the May election was the primary factor in the government's decision to deny the party's application for legal status just one month later. The evidence indicates that President Ben Ali was prepared to deal with the Islamists and had agreed to negotiate the status of the movement's “file” with Al-Ghannouchi. Al-Ghannouchi was further encouraged by the news of the long-awaited release of twelve MTI prisoners. Indeed, Ben Ali, in an interview with Le Monde, confirmed that nothing stood in the way of recognising the MTI if the group abided by the party law. In an interview with Al-Sharq al-Awsat, Al-Ghannouchi declared: I emphasise once again that the movement on behalf of which I am talking seeks to perform organised political work that does not violate the law. And it abides by the terms laid down by Law 300 of 1988, known as the party law. Moreover, outside observers perceived the Tunisian government as having a “strong inclination to recognise the Islamic Tendency Movement officially before the first anniversary of the 7 November

change." The formal change came in December, as the movement changed its name to "Al-Nahda," omitting all references to religion by the law (Elgindy 1995).

Repression of Al-Nahda under Ben Ali Government

There is no doubt that the regime feared a challenge to its authority, regardless of the source. This is demonstrated by Ben Ali's desire to move slowly and cautiously on promised political reforms, choosing cooptation of the opposition over genuine political liberalisation. All six recognised parties participated in the elections with four endorsing Ben Ali as president. In March 1990 elections, in which Ben won an otherwise unremarkable 99 percent of the vote, for a second five-year term, drew criticism from Al-Ghannouchi whose party "boycotted" them. Just four days before the scheduled 20 March elections, Al-Ghannouchi dismissed them as "worthless" and went on to say, "they're a joke, the government has prevented any credible opposition from taking part." Even Al-Ghannouchi's most avid critics would find it difficult to disagree (Elgindy 1995). Al-Nahda became the focus of government campaigns against Islamism because it was the most influential Islamist actor and up to five years of imprisonment was the punishment of its membership. In February 1991, the RCD (Constitutional Democratic Rally) office was attacked by militants and because of this Islamists lost the public support, and other opposition parties abandoned them. Three months later the regime accused some of Al-Nahda's leaders of plotting to overthrow the Ben Ali regime. The accusation was denied by Al-Ghannouchi, arguing that it was an excuse for the government to crackdown on his group; he went into self-imposed exile in London in protest. The level of repression during this time was much greater than it was during the rule of Bourguiba, and it had become clear that through the gradual process of exclusion and de-legitimisation, the government had succeeded in isolating the movement. By 1992, nearly all leaders of Al-Nahda were imprisoned or in exile, and its organisational competency was damaged. During the years in which the leadership was forced underground, they reflected upon the strong points and failings of movement's political agenda, strategies, and tactics.

In addition to the legalisation of his party, Al-Ghannouchi has put forward several social and political demands which are both tactical and ideological. Rachid al-Ghannouchi is the intellectual and ideological fountainhead of Al-Nahda and as such has elaborated upon the party's objectives on numerous occasions. However, in view of allegations that Al-Ghannouchi, out of sheer expediency, has attempted to mask his "true" aims, it then becomes necessary to distinguish between what is said and what is meant. This is no easy task, nor do the texts lend themselves easily to such an endeavour. Nevertheless, by taking into consideration the contexts and intended audiences of particular declarations, in addition to casting a critical eye on "official" party statements, we can better understand Al-Ghannouchi's intentions. On 19 March 1991 Al-Ghannouchi issued a press release containing the party's official demands: Organising free and democratic general elections. Also, Al-Ghannouchi has called for the dissolution of "the parliament that was an outcome of the falsified 1989 elections. These demands and objectives have been repeated at various times in different foray that the Al-Nahda movement, in its capacity as a political party, will continue to adhere to its cultural and political program despite the continual torture, imprisonment, hunger, and homelessness that it has had to endure. It is interesting to note that all of these demands are reasonable from a democratic point of view. Moreover, they are entirely consistent with previously made statements before an entirely different audience. Despite the use of highly charged and religiously motivated language throughout the Iranian interview, even when speaking to a Muslim and presumably more militant audience, Al-Ghannouchi's commitment to democracy and pluralism remains intact (Elgindy1995).

In the autumn of 1992, almost 300 Islamists, all of whom were members or sympathisers of Al-Nahda, were brought to trial. The defendants were charged with, among other things, plotting to "change the form of the state, overthrow the government and install a religious totalitarian regime. However, Al-Ghannouchi has never called for the establishment of an Islamic state and the imposition of *Shari'ah*. Al-Ghannouchi's demands are not of a religious nature, and he has often expressed his desire to operate within the secular system. Al-Ghannouchi is forced to defend himself: I remind you that we have never demanded the application of the *Shari'ah*. Moreover, for the time being, the Tunisians' problem is not that of implementing Islamic law but simply the law. All

the accusations being made against us on this subject amount to questioning our intentions. In fact, most of Al-Ghannouchi's writings and speeches refer to the establishment of an "Islamic society" or a "Muslim state" and not an Islamic state in Tunisia. Critics of Al-Ghannouchi point to statements made during the Gulf War and calls for *jihad* against the "enemies of the Islamic ummah" as evidence of his double-talk. Some have taken such statements to be a direct call for violence on the part of Al-Ghannouchi. More often than not such critics take the word *jihad* to mean "holy war". By ignoring the essence and nature of *jihad*, such charges amount to little more than anti-Islamist alarmism. Jihad is more accurately defined as a "sanctified struggle" against oppression, corruption, and immorality and may be carried out in any number of ways, including self-discipline and social mobilisation. In any case, to point to the use of the word "jihad" only as an indication of an inclination toward violence is groundless (Elgindy 1995). According to Tamimi (2001),

> the challenge for contemporary Islamic thinkers is to establish an Islamic theory of governance based on democratic process. An Islamic model of democracy, which is a marriage between the Islamic value system and code of ethics on the one hand and democratic processes on the other, will, in Al-Ghannouchi's opinion, not only solve the problem of oppression rampant in Muslim countries but also fulfil the many broken promises of liberal democracy.

Tunisia's Hizb al-Nahda or "Renaissance Party," is both like and unlike other Islamist parties and movements. Under the leadership of philosopher-theologian Rachid al-Ghannouchi, the party has combined two increasingly popular trends democratisation and Islamism. Al-Nahda is Islamist in ideology and affirms a commitment to democracy, political pluralism, and human rights. Arab regimes and movements, both secular and Islamist, often pay lip-service to be civil and political liberties while ignoring them in practice. However, Al-Ghannouchi has remained relatively consistent over the years, even in times of official repression and violence against his movement. Al-Nahda must thus be seen as a classic opposition movement as well as a religio-cultural force striving to create a more "authentic" society in Tunisia (Elgindy 1995).

The political, historical, and cultural crises which initially served as the impetus for the emergence of Tunisian Islamism coupled with the movement's political marginalisation and exclusion by the regime and the violent suppression of the movement made Al-Nahda a classic candidate for radicalization. However, because of Tunisia's relatively mild political climate and other tactical and ideological concerns, Al-Ghannouchi has resisted espousing violence as a means to achieve the party's objectives. Furthermore, despite a deep split in the party's ranks as a result of the Gulf Crisis and the emergence of hard-liners in the party, Al-Nahda remains relatively moderate in its socio-political agenda. While there are Islamists more moderate and more democratic than Al-Ghannouchi, he remains the most influential in the Tunisian context and is a powerful symbol for both democratic reform and Islamic revival (Elgindy 1995).

Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, a detailed account of Al-Nahda's participatory methodology does not exist. What constituency Al-Nahda was able to amass before its complete eradication stemmed from a class of young, educated professionals, Tunisians in the lower socioeconomic strata, and women. The students the MTI attracted were most often students of technology from which the regime usually drew its own support making the organisation even more politically threatening (Waltz 1986). The women viewed the MTI as a channel through which to become more politically visible in ways that they were not in other political and social organisations (Waltz 1986).

The antagonism between Al-Ghannouchi and Ben Ali, which characterised Al-Nahda government relations, did not emerge until the summer of 1989 when the government rejected the movement's application for legalisation immediately following Tunisia's legislative elections. Al-Nahda members were forced to run as "independents" and, by conservative estimates, won 14 percent of the popular vote (though Islamists place the figure at around 19 percent) making them among the most popular Islamic movements in the Arab world and Tunisia's most potent opposition to government rule (Elgindy 1995). The government's decision to deny Al-Nahda legalisation on 6 June must be seen within the context of the Islamists' electoral success and the regime's subsequent insecurity. The April 1989 elections thus marked a turning point in Tunisia's democratic

evolution and in the state's relations with the Islamists, as well as in Al-Ghannouchi's attitudes toward the regime and even secularism in general. As long as the Islamists and Al-Nahda in particular presented a challenge to the secular regime of Ben Ali, political liberalisation would have to be delayed indefinitely. Subsequently, Al-Ghannouchi grew increasingly cynical in his attitude toward the regime and secularism. To government claims that the elections were "free and fair," Al-Ghannouchi responded: "nobody in Tunisia believed it" (Elgindy 1995).

Al-Ghannouchi objected to the government's decision to exclude his movement from political participation and issued what would be the first attack on the regime by Al-Nahda, embarking on a campaign of relentless criticism of Ben Ali and his administration. In a virulent communique, Al-Ghannouchi listed numerous "injustices" Al-Nahda members and sympathisers suffered, "simply because of their religious convictions," and noted the "harassment" of other unofficial movements. Most alarming for the Tunisian government, however, was Al-Ghannouchi's declaration that these practices "make the administration alone responsible for the consequences of inciting people to take action outside the legal framework". Not quite a threat, Al-Ghannouchi's statement reflected the frustration of his followers and other disenfranchised political groups. Thus began a series of charges and counter charges, challenges and crackdowns that came to constitute a growing rift between Tunisian state and society. Al-Ghannouchi left the country in May 1989, following the legislative elections. Upon receiving news of the denial of his party's application for legalisation, Al-Ghannouchi decided not to return. He remained in exile in Britain. Al-Ghannouchi soon emerged as one of Ben Ali's foremost critics, denouncing human rights abuses, economic mismanagement, and accusing Ben Ali of bold-faced dictatorship. Mass arrests fabricated charges, and harsh sentences for convicted Al-Nahda members soon followed and only exacerbated matters. The first of these actions against the Islamists took place following student demonstrations in January and February 1990. Further repression included government censorship and confiscation of Al-Nahda's publication, *Al-Fajr*, on June 1990, drawing strong criticism from a host of local journalists. The Gulf crisis added fuel to the fire as many Islamists took to the streets to protest the Western "invasion" of Muslim lands. In

December 1990 and Spring 1991, Islamist students and security forces clashed on Tunisian campuses, sparking a severe crack down by Ben Ali in March. In a unified display of opposition to the violence, a communique issued on 10 May condemned the government's handling of the demonstrations and included signatories from various political persuasions, including Rachid al-Ghannouchi. The signatories accused the police of firing live ammunition at university students, killing two and injuring many others. They further charged that "the dangerous events reflect the determination of the regime to use oppressive methods against the people and all its forces, and will lead Tunisia to more violence and instability" (Elgindy 1995).

In addition, the government accused members of Al-Nahda of attacking a local office of the ruling Rassemblement Constitutionel Democratique (RCD); the Tunisian Court of Appeals sentenced five of the accused to death and seven to life imprisonment on 27 June 1991. In an interview with Radio France Internationale, Al-Ghannouchi labelled the indictments "verdicts of revenge against some Tunisian youths." He went on to describe the process as "political trials" before which "we were submitted to a media campaign and television trials, Stalin style." Al-Ghannouchi, perhaps exaggerating his censure, further denounced the government's action as one of "liquidating a known opposition in Hitlerite style." The coup de grace came when Ben Ali's government claimed to have uncovered and thwarted a "plot" by Al-Nahda to overthrow the government and replace it with an "Islamic theocratic regime." However, the timing of the "plot" was all too convenient, given the recent unrest and the upcoming by-elections. It provided Tunisian authorities with the security pretext to maintain a large police presence on university campuses where Islamist activists were strong (Rowland 1991). Thus the accusations were received with scepticism by Western diplomats and journalists, as well as by the population. As for Tunisian democracy, one Western journalist noted at the time: With the by-elections boycotted by most of the opposition, a heavy police presence on the streets, and Al-Nahda all but wiped out, President Ben Ali's repeated commitment to democratic reform is becoming increasingly hard to take seriously (Rowland 1991).

However, Al-Ghannouchi did not hesitate to exploit public scepticism on the matter and used the “plot” to further his own political ends. On 28 May, just six days after the government's announcement of the “plot,” Al-Ghannouchi issued his public response to the government's allegations. Both the language and direction of Al-Ghannouchi’s response is significant in that they reveal an underlying strategy about Al-Nahda's perceived goals. Also, the statement provides an excellent example of Al-Ghannouchi’s rhetorical style and idiom. Al-Ghannouchi’s response came in two parts. The first part deals with a “historic overview” in which the events since Ben Ali’s assumption of power are placed into perspective that is Al-Ghannouchi’s perspective. The second part is a masterful refutation of the government’s allegations that Al-Nahda was involved in a “plot” to overthrow the government. We may overlook the harshness with which Al-Ghannouchi criticises Ben Ali and his regime as expected and unremarkable. After all, Al-Ghannouchi’s movement is engulfed in a confrontation with government forces. Furthermore, Al-Ghannouchi is as poignant a critic of Ben Ali in Western circles as he is to a Muslim audience. Of more critical importance are Al-Ghannouchi’s language and terminology. In the text of his statement, he refers to the “people” at least as often as he does to the “movement” (Elgindy 1995).

Furthermore, Al-Ghannouchi describes the government as an irrational actor that has stepped outside the bounds of legality. Thus the announcement of the “plot” shows beyond a doubt the hysterical nature of the General which has propagated to the government institutions which are acting without moral, legal or even logical restraint. At the same time, Al-Ghannouchi has dubbed the unrest of early 1991 “popular uprisings” and twice asserted that the confrontation in Tunisia is between a dictatorship of the worst kind and people which seek nothing but to establish a government which protects its interests and respects its human rights. “Al-Ghannouchi’s intentions are clear: to place the situation of unrest within the context of a rift between state and society, depriving the government of its legitimacy vis-a-vis the people.” By so doing, Al-Ghannouchi does not fall into the trap of being perceived as a single-minded “interest group”; nor does he criticise the government on purely religious grounds, for fear of alienating those who do not espouse his Islamist ideology (Rowland 1991).

Instead, Al-Ghannouchi has couched his disapproval of the regime in the language of democratic reform and purports to speak on behalf of the Tunisian opposition and the Tunisian people. Therefore, Al-Ghannouchi's disaffection with Ben is not just his but all Tunisians', as evidenced by the second part of his 28 May statement: "The Tunisian people who had lent their support to Ben Ali when he promised democratic reforms, have now revoked it after being deeply disappointed by a man who has led the country to disaster." In other words, Ben Ali has breached the social contract with which he came to power (i.e., the promise to democratise), and must, therefore, be removed. These liberal notions are prominent in Al-Ghannouchi's writings, particularly those designed for Western consumption. Furthermore, the alienation felt by Tunisians from their state and society is a direct result of the Bourguibist legacy (of which Ben Ali is a continuation) which, according to Al-Ghannouchi, assumes that civilization can neither exist nor prosper unless, on a premise of agnosticism, it immerses itself in the scientific and industrial fields; and the progress in these areas is directly proportional to the alienation of our people from their ancestral and contemporary heritage. Al-Ghannouchi's cynicism toward the regime is highlighted by the harsh language he uses and the imagery of association. In one interview, when asked about the Tunisian National Pact, Al-Ghannouchi retorted: One of the distinctive and obvious traits of political life in Tunisia has been the great difference between the word and the deed of its ruling parties. While the regime proclaims itself the adherent of freedom and democracy, facts and figures prove the situation otherwise. At the same time, he does not hesitate to link the Tunisian regime with that most hated and often-invoked enemy of the Arabs and Muslims, the Zionists. Al-Ghannouchi seeks to undermine the legitimacy of Ben Ali in any way possible (Elgindy 1995).

In early 2004 the Al-Nahda started restoring its political force; it decided to participate in the Coalition which was formed on 18 October 2005. Many different civil society organisations and political parties entered the coalition together. The coalition established a basis for working together. All the coalition members agreed on some principles which included the rights of women, political pluralism, freedom of religion and freedom of conscience. It included the Tunisian Coalition Workers' Communist Party, the Progressive Democratic Party, along with Al-Nahda and many independent

figures who are opposed Ben Ali. The coalition demanded the legalisation of political parties, the release of political prisoners and freedom of the press.

Ideology of Al-Nahda

Al-Nahda's political positioning was also enabled by the tightening grip and aggressive secularisation policies of the ruling regimes. In theory, Tunisia has always been an Islamic state. However, since its 1956 independence, the *shari'ah* courts have been abolished, only state-prepared sermons can be taught in the mosque, and the code of personal status is only a very loose interpretation of Islamic law. Even religious education has been compromised, through the creation of a faculty of theology that replaces Tunisia's equivalent of Al Azhar. When creating their platform, the MTI did not have to offer a comprehensive Islamic solution to Tunisia's problems. Rather, by merely rejecting the way Islam was practised in Tunisia, they positioned themselves as an anti-system organisation that responded to Tunisia's neglected Muslim population (Waltz 1986).

While the movement oscillated between moderation and radicalization, Al-Ghannouchi ultimately sought reform through means of nonviolence and democracy, but his absence during exile put the more radical Karkar in a position of power (Hamidi 1998). However, Karkar was prevented from implementing any violently confrontational policies by Ben Ali's firm control over all aspects of Tunisian society. In fact, Ben Ali had maintained one of the most severe levels of control over the media, allowing him to also effectively control public discourse (Lynch 2012). The mobility of the Muslim Brothers within Mubarak's regime, though restricted at times, never achieved the level of rigidity as it did in Tunisia. Al-Nahda had not been around long enough to develop a presence in the social sector and was of no significance or necessity to Ben Ali once he had vested himself with complete authority. Al-Nahda was entirely disposable, and Ben Ali had the means to ensure they could never return. The political development of any Islamist group is dependent on two crucial factors: time and regime characteristics. Al-Nahda underwent similar cycles of tolerance and repression, and it evolved into the

distinct political entity. The only real connection Al-Nahda has with the Muslim Brotherhood is nominal. Al-Ghannouchi was influenced by the experiences and documents of the movement and chose to transition his primarily religious organisation into a functioning political one. Al-Nahda was completely expelled from Tunisian public life through Ben Ali's extensive control of politics and the media, which whittled its existence to a less than twenty-year life. From the 1990s onwards, Ben Ali effectively silenced the Al-Nahda voice and maintained an aggressive international campaign that muted an exiled Al-Ghannouchi. The forcefulness of the Ben Ali regime towards the Islamists is also a critical tool for evaluation for analysing Al-Nahda's development. As is usually the case, Islamist groups exist within particular political frameworks, and this existence is contingent upon those regimes in power. What most Islamists truly want is to be granted legitimacy by the existing regimes, not necessarily to entirely change the regime in power (Ghanem and Mustafa 2011).

Al-Ghannouchi envisions a strictly reformist function for his movement. Therefore, chief among Al-Ghannouchi's objectives is "a return to Tunisia's Arab Islamic heritage, demonstrated by his call for Arabisation and Islamisation of Tunisian education. For Al-Ghannouchi, cultural and religious authenticity must go hand in hand with institutional and technological progress". This is a direct response to the Bourguibist legacy, which "forced renunciation of Tunisia's cultural, ideological heritage". Despite Al-Nahda's relatively moderate positions on various issues, the question of violence as a means to achieve party demands remains to be addressed. The issue emerged as a result of the violent confrontations between Islamists and government forces throughout 1991 and 1992. According to the Tunisian government, it is Al-Nahda's alleged espousal of violence that led to the confrontation in the first place. Of critical importance, however, is that Al-Nahda was denied legal party status in June 1989, and the first Islamist-Government confrontations did not take place on any large scale until early 1990. Rather, it is more likely that the exclusion of Al-Nahda from Tunisian politics and subsequent crackdowns were themselves factors in any radicalization undergone by members of the movement's rank and file. Al-Ghannouchi does not deny that some party sympathisers or supporters have engaged in violent acts against the government. However, he does not approve of such tactics. Instead, he accuses government intransigence of provoking

people into a confrontation and directs blame back onto the regime for not opening up the political system. Both of these statements were made in October, in the midst of a massive crackdown against Al-Nahda in the summer and autumn of 1992. Al-Ghannouchi himself was tried in absentia in July and sentenced to life imprisonment. In addition, Al-Nahda has used documented cases of human rights abuses in Tunisia under Ben 'Ali to its advantage, marring Tunisia's image as an “oasis of openness,” and Western journal ists and observers have noted with disappointment the repressive measures taken by Ben Ali’s regime against Islamists (Elgindy 1995).

This attribute causes the movements to learn to work within the existing political frameworks so as to offer political competition to the ruling government, without credibly threatening its power. Though each leader aggressively sought to prevent any real political challenge, each administration also condoned periods of lenience towards the Islamists when it suited their credibility to do so. In the case of Tunisia, the restrictions of the Islamists by the authoritarian regime were undoubtedly greater than those experienced by the Muslim Brotherhood. Ben Ali became so fearful of Al-Nahda’s influence that he effectively eliminated the movement from all facets of political and social life through continual arrests and unyielding control of Tunisian media and politics. Political participation by the Islamists achieves several milestones that mark their political development. Participation establishes a precedent and a right to a political presence; it increases the visibility of Islamic culture, it demonstrates Islam’s ability to solve a diverse set of problems and strengthens the Islamic leadership while also adding to a group’s experience (Ghanem and Mustafa 2011).

After the departure of Ben Ali, Rachid al-Ghannouchi returned from exile. He reorganised the party for political participation on a level playing arena. The previous laws were cast aside, and Al-Nahda was officially legalised by decree of the interim government on 1 March 2011, despite the fact that Article 8 of the previous constitution prohibits political parties based on religion. It was seen that Al-Nahda was extensively busy in advanced mobilisation among the masses during the election campaign, and the mistakes of some of the secularist parties which were very outspoken during the campaign may have helped the movement.

The rise of Islamic political ideologies and movements has captured the attention of many Western governments and intelligence services. Islamism or as commonly but erroneously referred to as “Islamic fundamentalism” is seen as a malignant form of religiosity built upon principles of hatred for the infidels and violent confrontation with the West and democracy. It is thus viewed as a retrogressive trend which rejects all that is “modern” and “civilised.” While this view is simplistic and essentially inaccurate, it is nonetheless prevalent. Islamic political movements are extremely diverse in their ideologies, methods, and objectives (Elgindy 1995).

Tamimi (2001) explains that Al-Nahda underlined in its platform the movement’s enlightened understanding of Islam. They said that very few rulings in *Shari’ah* are fixed, and specific Islamic texts govern the authenticity of these rulings. They claim that these rulings cannot be changed. Apart from these rulings, others are derived through *ijtihad* in the guidance of *Shari’ah*. According to Al-Ghannouchi, Islam will contribute code of ethics and morality which does not find a place in democratic practice. This deficiency of spiritual morality turns democracy into “rule of the people by the rich and powerful for the interest of the rich and the powerful”.

Chapter IV

Al-Nahda Party's Agenda and its Participation in the Post-Uprising Politics of Tunisia

West Asia and North Africa witnessed series of anti-regime protests and uprisings in late 2010 and early 2011. The social injustice and economic inequality felt by the people of this region for decades were among the main reasons for the anti-regime protests and uprisings. During the protests, different social movements came to the forefront and increasingly gathered followers. Tunisia's Al-Nahda party was also active during and after these uprisings. The combination of youth unemployment, widespread corruption as well as political and economic marginalisation had created discontent amongst Tunisians. In due course this condition of discontent led to the revolution and ended the rule of Tunisia's President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali. Moreover, as a general strike unfolded Ben Ali sought refuge in Saudi Arabia on 14 January 2011. This led to free and democratic elections in Tunisia. At this crucial juncture the Al-Nahda Party gathered a large following resulting in a win the general elections. They eventually formed the coalition with Congress for the Republic Party and the left-leaning Ettakatol.

Al-Nahda put forward proposals according to a set of values based on freedom and justice. According to Al-Ghannouchi, Islam can mobilise people towards these same

values. To him, since Islam is based on freedom, there is no compulsion in Islam. Islam is a major element of Tunisian identity. Religious freedom is protected in Islam, and he said that other religions should be protected in the Islamic state. As Tamimi says, "he is opposed to state imposition of any practice on Tunisian society, including how one dresses, drinks or believes. But he also mentioned that all Islamic regulations related to public order should apply to Muslims and non-Muslims alike" (Tamimi 2001).

National Constituent Assembly and Constitution Drafting

The history of Islamic political thought has a unique intellectual tradition. The relationship between religion and politics is the significant point. Many scholars adopted the term "political Islam" to differentiate between the practices of personal piety, belief and ritual from that of politics. Islam plays a big part in West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region. Islamist leaders and influences dominate the region. The resurgence of Islam in political life or the rise of political Islam is a common phenomenon nowadays in WANA countries with varying degrees determined by cultural necessity. This resurgence can also be seen in the Tunisian uprisings in 2011. Tunisia was the first country where the anti-regime protests and uprisings started, and as pointed out above, its Al-Nahda Party gained power after President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was ousted from the country.

In 2011 elections, "Al-Nahda won 41% of the votes and 89 out of 217 seats in the Parliament. In December 2011, a coalition of Al-Nahda and two secularist parties, the Congress for the Republic (CPR) and the Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties (*Ettakatol*) was formed. Since its election, the National Constituent Assembly has been criticised for its composition, as Islamists prevailed. Also, the government that was formed after the election showed an overwhelming majority of Al-Nahda members; of a total of 41 ministries, Al-Nahda represented 19 and its supporters 11" (Longo 2013).

Michalak (2013) says that while Al-Nahda "won a larger plurality than expected with 41% of the seats", the "secular-left PDP won only 7% of the seats. Many analysts had overestimated the appeal of Western-style secular parties against a well-organized moderate Islamic alternative". Further,

> two parties that had not demonised Al-Nahda, CPR and Ettakatol, won 13% and 9% of the seats, respectively, and joined Al-Nahda informing a three-party majority coalition. After a low-profile campaign, Aridha Chaabiya ("Popular Petition") finished a surprising third. However, they were charged by the Election Commission with violating campaign regulations (for illegal contributions, campaigning during the blackout period, and one ineligible candidate). Nine of their elected Assembly members were disqualified, but eight were restored on appeal, giving them 12% of the Assembly seats. Because of the controversies surrounding the Aridha Chaabiya, the leaders of Al-Nahda did not invite anyone from Aridha Chaabiya to join the ruling coalition (Michalak 2013).

Pietro Longo (2013) states that "shortly after the NCA was formed, a debate broke out on whether to make Islamic law the basis of the new Constitution".

> After the party's victory, a group of deputies, including some of Al-Nahda's conservative members proposed adopting *Shari'ah* as "a source among sources" of the law. In the end, Al-Nahda announced its support for a similar article to Article 1 of the 1959 Constitution: Tunisia is a free, independent, sovereign State; Islam is its religion; Arabic is its language, and the Republic is its form of government. This particular clause was supposed to affirm Tunisia's Arabic and Islamic identity. Another debate between Islamists and opposition took place when Al-Nahda's deputies issued a formal statement calling for the criminalisation of the offences against religious belief. In opposition with initial statements, the party declared that the revolution was fought in the name of Tunisia's Islamic identity and that freedoms must be executed in conformity with these values.

Monica Marks (2014) says that in spring 2012, Al-Nahda members devoted serious attention to the question of whether to include a direct reference to *Shari'ah* in the constitution. The very fact that Al-Nahda's leadership was discussing this matter horrified many Tunisians. Many accused Al-Nahda of "trying to impose *Shari'ah*

'through the back window', especially since some top figures in the party had gone on record after the October 2011 elections promising that the party would not attempt to include Shari'a or enforce a particular way of life in the constitution" (Marks 2014). Inevitably though, Al-Nahda's inconsistencies on the *Shari'ah* question appeared as mistakes.

> When one of its legislators proposed enshrining *Shari'ah* as the main source of Tunisian law, the resulting public outcry forced al-Ghannouchi to retract the proposal publicly. The party's critics accused it of going soft on religious extremists, which they said made it responsible for mounting political violence. On the place of *Shari'ah* in the constitution, the party ultimately opted not to include the word. While Al-Nahda members do look to *Shari'ah* as an ideal ethical framework, most members accept a more abstract, ethical definition of Islamic law focusing on social justice, equality, and good governance. Key members of the *Shura* Council were persuaded that this was the appropriate course of action for the party, keeping itself a relevant and viable political player (Goldstein 2016).

During 2012, the Al-Nahda Party announced that according to the old Constitution of 1959, Islam is the religion of Tunisia so there was no need for specifically mentioning the *Shari'ah* as the main source of legislation. For reducing the tensions between secularists and Islamists, this step was important. Rachid al-Ghannouchi said that Al Nahda is working for democratic transition and consolidating freedom in Tunisia. He believes that "democracy is a political system that derives legitimacy from the public". He explained that "in a democracy, the people elect, audit and, when necessary, replace the ruler using mechanisms that may vary from one democratic regime to another". But the mechanism of free election is common in all such democratic models. According to him, democracy guarantees some basic liberties of the public which includes the freedom of expression, independence of the judiciary and the freedom of forming political parties. Al-Nahda underlined in its platform that the movement will benefit from the enlightened understanding of Islam, and its doctrine is ready to take

advantage from all the achievements gained by modern human and civilisation through *Ijtihad* (independent juristic reasoning) (Tamimi 2001).

The issue of women's rights was another area where these tensions surfaced. Amara (2012) stated that "the issue of women's rights – specifically the wording of Article 28 of the first constitutional draft – provoked a firestorm of criticism from local and international media. Even before the draft was released in Arabic on August 8, 2012, rumours and mistranslations had circulated in the Tunisian press", leading many observers to believe that Al-Nahda had defined women as "men's complements".

Though reports that the article reduced women to men's "associates" and "complements" were, at best, misleading, there was no question that the language of Article 28 represented a problematic departure from clear, equality-affirming legal language, and that it stood at odds with a more standard template of international human rights norms. "The state guarantees the protection of women and supports their achievements, considering them as men's true partners in building the nation," the article said. "Their [men's and women's] roles complement one another within the family." Al-Nahda representatives on the Rights and Liberties Committee had acted quickly, instinctually inserting more relational, conservatively oriented wording into an article on women's rights. The article's language sincerely reflected many members' honest perspective on men's and women's roles – namely that men and women are indeed equal under God, but that they have different biological roles and familial obligations, and therefore "complement" or "fulfil" one another within the family (Marks 2014).

This "muddling of Al-Nahda's stance on a critical issue came at a time when the party needed to be doing everything in its power to build confidence in its handling of women's rights. During the 2011 election campaign, women's rights became a lightning-rod issue that some secular opposition parties used in an attempt to isolate Al-Nahda as backward and patriarchal". Further, "Al-Nahda's unclear handling of Article 28 less than one year after the elections spooked many secularists, particularly women, and fueled fears that Al-Nahda might ultimately attempt to roll back Tunisia's comparatively

progressive 1956 Personal Status Code, a key piece of women's rights legislation in the Arab world" (Marks 2014).

Al-Nahda swiftly retracted the language of complementarity it had inserted into Article 28. Members of the Rights and Liberties Committee who had helped draft the legislation replaced its ambiguous language with clearer wording guaranteeing *musawa* (equality) between men and women. For all the alarm, the issue of women's status proved surprisingly uncontroversial within Al-Nahda itself. "What we tried to say between Article 22 [a separate article which had affirmed the equality of all citizens] and Article 28 was that men and women are equal and complementary… there is no contradiction there, so it won't be a problem to change the language," said committee member Monia Brahim in September 2012, shortly before the draft was revised. Al-Nahda members excused the article as a naïve misstep, the combined product of a rushed drafting process and their own failure to anticipate just how controversial the draft would be. Representatives on the Rights and Liberties Committee regretted not releasing a translation of the draft in French or English to curb mistranslations that arose in Western media sources (Marks 2014).

Though the party quickly stepped away from the language of complementarity, reverting to the simple term 'equality' instead, the damage of the first draft had already been done. Through subsequent drafts, the constitution was revised to include stronger protections for women's rights. On January 9, 2014, Tunisia's NCA made international news by passing a groundbreaking article calling for gender parity in elected bodies (Marks 2014). Noah Feldman, a professor at Harvard Law School who observed the article's passing, said: "There wasn't a dry eye in the house." Despite the trailblazing nature of the parity provision, and the vocal support that some Al-Nahda members, including many Al-Nahda women, expressed for it, Tunisians secularists and many outside analysts remember the party more for its behaviour during the complementarity debates of Article 28. Though Al-Nahda quickly backtracked on Article 28, its failure to build confidence with secularists on the matter of women's rights during the first

constitutional draft represented an important lost opportunity to allay opponents' fears (Feldman 2014). Khalil Al Anani (2012) mentioned that the

> Al-Nahda Party's leaders have stressed that they respect women's rights and rejected any changes that might affect their personal status. Al-Ghannouchi affirmed that his party promotes gender equality …in education, jobs and holding public office. It is worth mentioning that 42 out of the 49 women in the Tunisian constituent assembly are members of Al-Nahda. Al-Nahda leaders also expressed the freedom of women to choose to wear the veil or not. More significantly, Al-Nahda rebuked Salafis for their attempt to impose the veil in Tunisian universities.

While its leaders have imposed secular policies at times, Tunisia is still enthusiastically Islamic and this Islamic nature continues to be enshrined in the country's national constitution.

> Al-Nahda favoured maintaining the country's progressive personal status codes, which grant Tunisian women the same rights as Tunisian men. Al-Nahda has also publicly expressed its unwillingness to impose a conservative dress code upon Tunisian women and showed its commitment to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In the Tunisian election on October 23rd, women won around 25% of the seats in the new Constituent Assembly, whereas they had won only 11% under Ben-Ali's secular regime (Muhanna 2012).

Pietro Longo (2013) discusses that "after the revolution, Al-Nahda advocated positions on women's personal freedoms that provoked harsh criticism, especially from feminist groups and from secular parties". Longo notes,

> Although Al-Nahda promised to leave unchanged the Personal Status Code or the rules defining men and women as equal citizens, other members of the same party have proposed laws that mitigate some of the gains provided by the same Code. One demonstration of Al-Nahda pluralistic positions on gender issues is the debate on the proposal of an NCAsub-committee, which

> defined women as 'complementary to' rather than 'equal to' men. The subcommittee approved the clause in question by a vote of 12 to 9. Nine of the twelve total positive votes were cast by Al-Nahda. After strong demonstrations, the article has been replaced by Article 37 of the current Constitutional draft, which simply declares equal rights for men and women. On 11 April 2011, Essebsi's apolitical government approved a gender parity law requiring an equal number of alternating male and female candidates on all party lists for the October elections for the NCA. As a result, 42 of the 49 women in the Assembly now belong to Al-Nahda. The 2011 electoral platform affirmed the political equality of men and women, stating that women should be granted equal access to all public administration and political positions.

Holding true to the promises made during their campaign, the group has also maintained the secular freedoms guaranteed to Tunisian citizens, particularly women, within the already established Personal Status Code of Bourguiba. This was a crucial step in allaying secular fears and upholding the Islamist's legitimacy. Al-Nahda leaders have stated that the movement will hold to the gains of the modern state and the rules previously established by the code (El Issawi 2012). All changes to the code have been rejected, and Al-Nahda continues to espouse the role of gender equality within the movement, politics and the state more generally. As cited earlier, forty-two of the forty-nine female members of Tunisian Constituent Assembly are members of Al-Nahda. The group has also made public commitments to the rights of Jewish and Christian minorities within the state (Al Anani 2012). Moataz El Fegiery (2012) writes that "on polygamy, the Al-Nahda does not oppose restricting the practice of polygamy, but it takes the view that the abolition of polygamy should not be the norm. Most Egyptian Islamists maintain that polygamy is permissible in Islam and cannot be subjected to legal restrictions, as long as men are committed to a just and fair treatment of their wives".

While Al-Nahda had little trouble giving ground on Article 28, agreeing on how to address the matter of blasphemy proved far more challenging. Al-Nahda members of the Rights and Liberties Committee threw their weight behind "language that would

criminalise blasphemy in Article 3 of the first constitutional draft, which stated that 'the state guarantees freedom of religious belief and practice and criminalises all attacks on that which is sacred,' specifically defining the three Abrahamic faiths (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity) as faiths that would be protected from blasphemous attacks." Such broadly defined efforts to restrict criticism of religion represented a serious threat to freedom of expression. In its original, murkily worded formation, Article 3 would have significantly restricted the range of free expression in Tunisia and may have even served as a convenient vehicle for political repression. Though, Al-Nahda members were reacting defensively after decades of having been targeted and abused by the old regime, this was largely because of their religiously oriented activities or sartorial styles (Marks 2014). Regarding the issue of blasphemy, George Sadek (2013) says that

> Al-Nahda condemned provocations at the exhibit and in a statement urged the Constituent Assembly to add a provision to the Penal Code criminalising blasphemy. Also, the party proposed inserting a constitutional provision to prohibit blasphemy. The stated reason for such a proposal was to protect Tunisia's Islamic identity. In an official statement, Al-Nahda announced that it endorses freedom of expression; however, such freedom must adhere to Islamic values and pay appropriate respect to religion and religious figures.

Al-Nahda members ultimately managed to overcome their defensive stance and after much debate with figures within and outside the party, removed the language of criminalisation. Al-Nahda members of the Rights and Liberties cited spending more time thinking, participating in extended meetings with local and international experts, and having opportunities to discuss the issue in more relaxing contexts outside the NCA (without filming equipment and microphones) as factors that led them to change their opinion. Some Rights and Liberties Committee members from both Al-Nahda and opposition parties reported that such private meetings, away from the lights and cameras, enabled drafters to "step back from political theatre" and begin identifying their

similarities. Though some still deeply sympathised with the initial wording, all ultimately agreed that constitutions are "not the place for penalising legislation" (Marks 2014).

Discussions in the *Shura* Council regarding this issue – which proved to be one of the most challenging to reconcile from an intra-party perspective – forged more agreement among the party's leadership, enabling Al-Nahda to work out explanatory rationales for moving away from criminalising language. The committee members' and *Shura* Council's justification for not criminalising blasphemy filtered down through the party's regional ranks. Local representatives of Al-Nahda in Sfax, Sousse, Le Kef, and Tataouine, on this issue all echoed the rationale shared by the committee members and the national leadership – namely that constitutions should reflect positive, rights-affirming ideals rather than restrictive, prohibitory language (Marks 2014).

Interestingly, various regional party representatives, notes Marks (2014), employed the same anecdote from Islamic tradition to explain why criminalisation of blasphemy was, at the end of the day, undesirable. "The caliph Omar was presented with a man who had stolen goods," said the director of Al-Nahda's office in Sfax when he was narrating the story. "Omar was expected to cut off his hand as a punishment. But instead of cutting off his hand, Omar asked himself 'What did I do wrong as a leader so that this man has to steal for the things he needs?'" Abeyda, along with the other representatives who told this story, used it as a justification for taking an approach to *Shariah* based more on *maqasid* (higher objectives) and *masalah* (human interests) than *hudud* (rigid rules). Terrible as blasphemy might be, the constitution was not the place for outright prohibitions. They concluded that a gradual approach of "convincing, not coercing" the public to respect Islamic values was ultimately better for Tunisia (Marks 2014).

As a result, Article 6 of Tunisia's passed constitution, which deals most directly with matters of religious belief, upholds *huriyya al-dhamir* (freedom of conscience) with respect to beliefs, even if it also maintains vague language regarding the state's role in religion. Along with the absence of *Shari'ah* in Article 1 and Article 45's call for gender parity, this represents another first for constitutions in the Arab world and a compromise on the part of Al-Nahda. Though Al-Nahda introduced problematic legislation early on, starting from a poorly organised position that reflected short-term, defensive thinking, it

managed to walk back its ideology and reactive statements, ultimately opting for a more calibrated, pragmatic approach. Tunisia's new constitution sets up a mixed presidential – parliamentary system; a crucial political compromise hastened by Tunisia's political assassinations, which placed Al-Nahda in a weaker bargaining position (Marks 2014).

Al-Nahda and the Political Transition

Al-Nahda was not thoroughly organised, and yet it appeared to be handling Tunisia's political transition much better than the other countries in the Arab region. It has emerged as a strong political force that has demonstrated repeated commitment to pluralism, cooperation and democratic transition. Al-Nahda has moderated itself in spite of its forced exclusion, and it is this political isolation that has allowed it to remain untainted from limiting effects of authoritarian politics. It didn't shy away from specificity and definitive positions. An evaluation of several key policies and changes undertaken since Al-Nahda took control shows that it has thus far taken decisive action in regards to policies and opinions that are necessary for political transition. The greater potential for democratic transition, as well as continued Islamist presence in power deems Al-Nahda more successful than its Egyptian counterpart. The Tunisians gave voice to a force long ago suppressed through the decades of complete isolation under Ben Ali. The Islamist Al-Nahda party claimed 41.5% of Tunisian votes in the October 2011 election and gave rise simultaneously to doubtful and hopeful citizens across the region (Wolf and Lefevre2012).

Al-Nahda however, began in the throes of a political crisis between leftists and the ruling regime, acting first not as an agent of political clout but as a protector of religious principles. This was then followed by nearly thirty years of tremendous seclusion. The protests that proliferated in the Arab World in 2011 consumed international attention. Every state of the WANA region watched carefully as Tunisian dictator Ben Ali succumbed to the revolution cries of the Tunisian people. The success of this outing inspired the Egyptians, who then quickly overtook Tahrir Square for eighteen days until dictator Hosni Mubarak fell like his contemporary. Since 2011, academics and diplomats alike have taken turns speculating what unique phenomenon caused the first

successful Arab uprisings in decades. However, upon closer inspection, the uprisings of 2011 are themselves no novel occurrence. The Arab World, particularly Tunisia and Egypt, have long resisted the decades of repression, poverty and unemployment. As Marc Lynch points out, the difference of the 2011 protests is not that they happened, but that they were successful in driving both Ben Ali and Mubarak from power, that traditional regime responses backfired, and how rapidly the protests spread to nearly every country in the region (Lynch 2012).

The democratic openings created by the ouster of the authoritarian regimes afforded the Islamists ample opportunity to insert themselves into leading roles of the public sphere visibly. Though apparently similar on the surface, these revolutions occurred within very different political contexts. Egypt, with its population of over eighty million, is nearly six times larger in the land than the country of Tunisia. In contrast, Tunisia has a highly urbanised population of only ten million with an income that is two times higher than Egypt's average (Gelvin 2012). These factors were distinguishing characteristics of each revolution and will remain challenges to the new Islamists regimes. When Mohamed Bouazizi set himself in the rural town of Sidi BouZid on December 17, 2010, Tunisians took notice. Mohamed Bouazizi was a street vendor whose produce cart had been confiscated earlier in the day by regime officials who proceededto harass him repeatedly. Ben Ali used Bouazizi's act to enhance his political reputation by visiting him in the hospital, even after he reportedly responded to the news of Bouazizi's immolation with, "Let him die." Instead, Ben Ali's presence only further enraged Tunisians who were insistently calling for Ben Ali's departure. One of Ben Ali's greatest errors was authorising the use of deadly force against the protesters (Schraeder 2011). In the end, approximately three hundred Tunisians were killed in response to the uprisings, until the army eventually sided with the opposition, ultimately forcing Ben Ali out (Hamid 2011).

The protests cited a number of grievances including unemployment, food inflation, corruption, poor living conditions, lack of freedoms and lack of government responsiveness. While many Tunisians quickly took to the streets, it was not until the

Tunisian General Labour Union joined in that the protests truly gained momentum. Ben Ali initially tried to pacify the protesters with a promise of 300,000 new jobs, new parliamentary elections, and a “national dialogue”, but to no avail (Gelvin 2013). A symbol of the Tunisians’ resolve was the protestors holding up baguettes to symbolise that they could not be bought off with bread and a middle-class existence alone (Smith 2013).

On January 14, 2011, following a month of protests, Ben Ali stepped down after nearly twenty-three years in power (McCaffrey 2012). The army surrounded the presidential palace while Ben Ali appointed his prime minister to head the caretaker government (Gelvin 2013). Ben Ali fled the country, eventually,finding refuge in Saudi Arabia (Clancy Smith 2013). Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi asserted he would be assuming power upon Ben Ali’s departure, which instigated uproar amongst Tunisians who claimed that, per the constitution, the speaker should actually assume control. Tunisians were ever fearful that they would lose their revolution to remnants of the old regime and as it turns out, this was a very justified fear. Ben Ali had never formally resigned and was planning a comeback. At this point,the demonstrators could have left Tunis. Throughout the entire month, however, their call had not been for the fall of the president, but “the people the demand the fall of the regime!” (Noueihed2012). Following Ben Ali’s leave, Tunisian parliamentary elections were held in October 2011 with nearly ninety percent voter turnout (Gelvin2013).

Al-Nahda’s leader Rachid al-Ghannouchi finally returned to Tunisia after twenty years in exile on January 30, 2011. He was met at the airport by hundreds of supporters (and a small group of protesting secularists) who climbed and pushed their way for even a glimpse of the renowned leader. Throughout the uprisings, Al-Nahda was very careful not to take an active role. No statements were issued, Islamist sloganswere not raised, and al-Ghannouchi deliberately waited two weeks to return so as not to be perceived as a Khomeini style return to claim victory (Noueihed 2012). Al-Nahda gained legal recognition as a political party on March 1, 2011 (Hamid 2011). The interim government granted its leaders amnesty, and the organisation was quick to establish itself as a leader

within Tunisian society (Lynch 2012). One young volunteer at al-Ghannouchi's return was asked how, after so many years, the group was able to organise so quickly and effectively. He replied, "Our activities were stopped. But you cannot stop an ideology" (Noueihed 2012).

As has been noted, protests were nothing new to Tunisia. The corruption of Ben Ali and his family, rising rates of unemployment, limited opportunities for economic advancement and the growing economic disparity between the coast and interior regions have instigated perpetual resistance by Tunisians (Lynch 2012). Another unique factor of Tunisian society was Ben Ali's total control of media and public discourse. Ben Ali was perhaps most famous for two things; the corruption of his family, and his *mukhabarat* (intelligence based) police state. Ben Ali's regime seemed to many to be impervious to change. He relied on a massive network of nearly 35,000 military troops, in addition to a security apparatus of an estimated 130,000. The size of Tunisia's security apparatus was large enough to create a police presence in the country the size of France (which has approximately six times the population) (Schraeder 2011). Also, Ben Ali's wife, Leila Trabelsi and her family were notorious for consuming significant portions of Tunisia's economy. Leila helped her ten siblings to gain control of businesses throughout Tunisia, while one of her brothers illegally assumed control of numerous businesses. By the end of Ben Ali's term, his extended family owned nearly 180 major Tunisian companies across a variety of sectors (Schraeder 2011). When these controls finally broke down, the regime became extremely vulnerable to public dissent (Lynch 2012).

Another defining feature of Mohamed Bouazizi's act of protest was that it occurred in Sidi Bou Zid. Dozens had immolated themselves in years prior, but the communal ties in a rural town such as Sidi Bou Zid should have been strong enough to protect Bouazizi from the humiliation he received. As a political scientist, Christopher Alexander put it, "In a place like Sidi Bou Zid, half the town or more is likely the cousin of Mohamed Bouazizi. His actions suggest that corruption of the regime had tainted Tunisia to its core" (McCaffrey 2012).

Despite Ben Ali's seemingly secure control of Tunisian society, anti-regime political expression did not entirely disappear. Citizens began engaging with political dissent in media which were beyond regime control, by expanding online and through targeted journalism. For ordinary citizens, the safest and most accessible way of practising their right to political dissent was by moving it into the private sphere and making subtle lifestyle changes. Tunisians began adopting lifestyles that defied the secular regime's accepted values and behaviour, leading to a discreet but significant increase in Islamisation. Turning to Islam was not overtly political. Years of secularist policies had left many Tunisians clamouring for their more traditional Islamic values. However, Islam and Islamism always carried distinctly anti-regime overtones (Haugbolle 2012). Ben Ali's forced secularisation policies combined with the repression of Islamists ignored the fact that a majority of Tunisia's population cherished Islamic values. Thus, despite its exclusion, Islamism remained a powerful social force and its absence in Tunisian society was a primary factor in the rise of the Salafis (Haugbolle 2012).

Tunisia held its first democratic elections on October 23, 2011, and almost ninety percent of the voting population turned out to participate in the long awaited event. There was a little complaint of fraud either (Lynch 2012). In the lead up to the elections, polls showed the Islamists, who had only recently returned to Tunisian political life, as the most popular party with twenty percent approval (Usher 2012). Much to the surprise of everyone, the Al-Nahda party claimed 89 out of 217 parliamentary seats and proved to be the most popular party in Tunisia. Despite this fact, Al-Nahda only gained approximately thirty-seven percent of the popular vote due to the extreme fragmentation of votes across almost one hundred political parties (Sprusansky 2012). Even still, its share of the popular vote was more than the next eight parties combined (Arieff 2011). The movement proceeded to form a national unity government with two leading secular parties (Lynch 2012). Hamadi Jebali, the secretary general of Al-Nahda, would be Prime Minister, with Moncef Marzouki as President and Ben Jafaar as leader of the Assembly (Haugbolle 2012).

Al-Nahda's victory was largely a surprise primarily because Al-Nahda had little time to prepare for the elections. It had no social sector to provide badly needed services, no authority within the religious establishment, no political office, and no media empire. In fact, Al-Nahda had to reconstitute itself completely from scratch (Lynch 2012). Ben Ali's successful crackdown of the Al-Nahda party meant that most Tunisians under the age of thirty, which is more than half the population, had no recollection of or first-hand experience with the Islamist group (Hamid 2011). The interim government announced a week after Ben Ali left that the government would lift its ban on political party and recognise all parties, including the Islamists. The group was finally legalised on March 1, 2011 and immediately began restoring its presence.

Al-Nahda's campaign centred on its role in restoring the place of Islam in Tunisia, not in the form of a religion, but more as an integral facet of Tunisian culture. Though Al-Nahda had long been absent from the political scene, their name was widely known for the abuse they suffered under Ben Ali (Churchill 2011). The group began reaching out to thousands of former activists and putting offices in every Tunisian province (Lynch 2012). Al-Nahda also supplied better information to the Tunisian public than most of its secular opponents. In an atmosphere that had long been ruled by the absence of media, it proved very challenging for voters to find adequate information on parties and candidates. What ads did appear, were strictly regulated and Tunisians complained afterwards that all the candidates sounded the same. In order to differentiate itself, Al-Nahda relied heavily on grass roots mobilisation and direct contact with voters, especially in rural areas. Secular parties were reluctant to meet voters beyond the city, and thus any voter seeking information on other parties had to take a bus to the regional capital. Instead, Al-Nahda had posters, rallies, and offices in almost every district (Churchill 2011). Al-Ghannouchi visited twenty-two of the twenty-four provinces personally during the campaign (Lynch 2012). Perhaps the key to Al-Nahda's electoral victory was not only where they supplied their party information, but what information they supplied. Parties often distributed long pamphlets of literature about their platforms, ideologies, etc. Al-Nahda instead described where exactly voters could find Al-Nahda's logo on the ballot and how to mark their choices. This strategy was essential, as the election ballots did not

identify party leaders or candidates, but names and insignias. In a country with a limited literacy rate, a distinctive logo was also a critical component of the campaign process (Churchill 2011).

Fully aware of Tunisia's long history of secularist policies and the increasing caution with which Tunisians viewed them, Al-Nahda was deliberate in emphasising its moderate and democratic orientation. Party leaders have gone so far as to refrain from referring to themselves as "Islamist" and instead use the term "Islamic" in light of the negative connotation of the Islamist label (Lewis 2011). At their final campaign rally, Al-Nahda once again tried to emphasise the party's Muslim identity by correlating the compatibility of Islam and democracy while expressing a commitment to both. The group claimed it is focused on the rhetoric of national unity and national consent (Zouari2011). Al-Ghannouchi stressed, "Our vision of Islam is a moderate one and since 1981 we have declared that we accept democracy without any restrictions and accept the decision of the people whether they come with us or against us" (Lewis 2011).

Furthermore, Al-Nahda's official stand on democracy is made clear in party statements. According to Elgindy (1995), seldom does Al-Ghannouchi give an interview or deliver a paper without paying homage to the democratic ideal, recognizing that: "All democratic systems agree on the principle of equality, elections, separation of authorities, political pluralism, freedom of expression, syndicate, majority right to lead, and minority right to oppose through deliberations".

The extended absence of Al-Nahda under Ben Ali proved challenging to the group upon his removal. However, the organisation was entirely uncompromised by the existing regime and could claim clean hands (Lynch 2012). In addition, many Tunisians claimed to have voted for Al-Nahda because its experience under systematic oppression and who conducted it made it better situated to ensure former regime members could not infiltrate the new political space (Robbins and Tessler 2012). It is important to note too, that though many secular parties did well, the parties that employed an explicitly anti-Islamist campaign lost badly (Cammett 2012). As Shadi Hamid notes, Islamists in Arab

countries have rarely been given the opportunity to rule so it is difficult to assess how they would act if they ever were in power. Along the same note, however, Islamist organisations are and will continue to be essential operators in the politics of transition countries. They are more eager and capable of mobilising against any Arab regime, making them centres of opposition in states where the regime refuses to democratise or reform (Hamid 2011). As political space continues to open as it did with the Arab Spring revolutions, Islamist parties will persistently thrive, and non-Islamist parties will find a need to adopt more conservative policies to align with voter sentiments if they hope to win (Hamid 2011).

Tunisia has proved on multiple occasions that it will choose to refer to democratic and constitutional principles when administrative or policy decisions arise. The constitutional draft is still being negotiated in Tunisia, and in this matter, it may be the case that 'no draft is better than a forced draft'. Al-Nahda faces increased contestation from the countrymen who remain dissatisfied with the state of their economy and the lack of progress. This is not a problem easily solved and may take several years before showing marked improvement. However, each group is also facing challenges to their authority. In Tunisia, Al-Nahda is facing the most violence from the Salafis who feel that Al-Nahda is too moderate in its political program and they are providing security challenges by attacking Tunisian citizens and Al-Nahda supporters. It is easy to classify the ongoing chaos and instability in each of the states as a failure on the part of the newly elected Islamist governments (Flenar 2013). As Sheri Berman (2012) observes, "critics are quick to interpret post transition violence, corruption, confusion and incompetence as signs that countries are not ready or incapable of democracy". This implies that other historical democratic transitions have been a smooth, direct and stable process. But examples from history prove that this is not the case.

> Stable liberal democracy usually emerges only at the end of long, violent struggles with many twists, turns, false starts and detours. These troubles are evidence of the difficult, messy process of political development through which societies purge themselves of dictatorship and create new

> democratic order. Failed democratic experiments are usually critical positive stages in the political development of countries (Berman 2012).

Thus in order for things to get better, they often - and sometimes necessarily so - get worse first. Viewed in this light, Tunisia may very well be on their way to be a functioning democracy under Islamist governance. As most authoritarian regimes suppressed dissidence and prevented institutions that would create atmospheres for political discourse, it is normal that citizens in new democracies express their dissatisfactions in violent and disorganised ways (Berman 2012). The size and influence of Islamists as political forces cannot be ignored, and even if they underperform in elections or government, they will continue to play integrated roles in their respective societies. Islamists in Egypt and Tunisia will either be leading governments or comprise a significant part of them. If they are not actively involved in the government, they will most certainly influence the course governments to take (Hamid 2011).

Islamists have been invariably shaped by their active role in these new governments. The Al-Nahda, as apolitical entity, face a new phase of development that capitalises on their current experiences in power, just as they have learned and evolved from their years under authoritarian rule. From now on, the narrative of being the oppressed as a means of justifying political positions will no longer work. The ordeal is over, and the emerging political organisations will undergo a trial by fire. The Brothers and Al-Nahda will be held accountable for their decisions and will quickly learn to compromise, bargain and negotiate in order to maintain support. This will inevitably lead to further change and transformation (Flenar 2013). Khalil Al Anani (2012) notes that "the Arab Spring is proof that Islamists, as well as Muslims more generally, are eager to build eager and accountable demonstrations." To this, Lynch adds, "Islamist movements have been actively informing the public culture of the Middle East for decades and have long been, and continue to be, the best organised and most popular political movements in most Arab countries" (Lynch 2012).

Though not perfect, as rarely political transitions are, Al-Nahda was forging ahead with its political duties in the way it knows best. Their strategies for dealing with crises and discontent will differ as much as their organisations differ. Islamists have participated in authoritarian political systems for many years. However, post-Arab Spring Tunisia and Egypt represent the first time Islamist groups have been democratically elected to power in constitutionally Islamic states. It is clear from a review of Al-Nahda's and the Brotherhood's behaviours since the elections that Al-Nahda is more politically capable of managing the current democratic transition. The atmosphere surrounding the Islamist's ascension to power has increasingly soured as both Egyptians and Tunisians marked the first year anniversary of the uprisings without marked improvement in the economy. Yet, the opening of the Tunisian public sphere has created an environment in which Tunisians no longer fear harsh reprimand for having a voice. The press and political parties have thrived in post-Ben Ali Tunisia while Al-Nahda has maintained its campaign promises. There were no changes to the Personal Status Code, guaranteeing women that they would continue to be protected under the policy for the remainder of Al-Nahda's term. The group refused to implement sharia, despite the fervent push of the Salafis and has struggled to preserve the fragile tri-party coalition through the drafting of the new constitution (Maddy-Weitzman 2012).

Al-Nahda was forcibly excluded from the Tunisian public sphere before they ever truly had the opportunity to choose to participate or not. Their leaders continued to develop their political strategies and policies from abroad, as Ben Ali firmly controlled Tunisian political life with an iron fist. When Al-Nahdawas able to return for the first time since the early 1990s, the quickly posited themselves to offer stability in a reeling post-Arab Spring Tunisia. It is from this observation that this thesis concludes that Al-Nahda's total isolation from Tunisian political life and the limits of the Ben Ali regime have allowed it to be a more effective guide of political transition, as well as an overall political leader. Instead, Al-Nahda has thus far remained true to its democratic commitments, realised a pluralist cooperation and takes strategic steps in transitioning Tunisia from an authoritarian to a democratic system. Al-Nahda and the Brotherhood are simply products of the regimes in which they developed. Both faced similar rounds of

tolerance and repression until Al-Nahda was compulsorily eradicated in all aspects of Tunisian public life. Al-Nahda has always positioned itself in opposition to the regime. When it saw from the Brotherhood that violent opposition led to repression, Al-Nahda under the leadership of Rachid al-Ghannouchi chose to adhere to peaceful engagement with the government for its brief existence. When Ben Ali came to power, he even allowed Al-Nahda to participate in elections for the first time, until they were then eradicated and forced into exile (Allani 2009).

The Struggle to Improve Economy

Despite the marked improvements in the civil state, the underlying causes of the revolutionary protests of 2011 remain far from unchanged, causing the fruits of Al-Nahda's labour to be overshadowed by the stewing discontent of an impoverished nation. The greatest issue cited by Arab voters was and remains the economy (Hamid 2011). In this regard, Al-Nahda has fallen short of the noble expectations set by protesters in 2011. Almost thirty-three percent or 170,000 of 400,000 college graduates remain unemployed. Every year since 1980, 70,000 college graduates compete for only 33,000 positions (Zelin 2013). These students also comprise the core constituency of Al-Nahda, as they are conservative, educated, and religious (Usher 2012).

In the eyes of the Tunisian people, economic prosperity has become synonymous with democratic transition. Therefore, stagnant economic progress signals a lack of improvement in the political realm as well. Citizens in both Tunisia and Egypt feel that a primary objective of the government should be to provide people with basic necessities while reducing economic inequality (Benstead, Lust, Malouche, Soltan and Wichmann 2013). Al-Nahda has sought to rectify the situation through targeted financial aid packages, which has also received much criticism as an ineffective means of solving the underlying problems. Labour unions and secularists alike continue to take to the streets in protest, often causing in more challenges by blocking critical access roads that lead in and out of Tunisia's interior cities (El Issawi 2012). Furthermore, the tourism industry, which employs over 400,000 Tunisians, has suffered a great deal owing to Tunisia's

crippled security apparatus. The Tunisian security service is divided amongst three factions: one that remains loyal to Ben Ali, one loyal to Al-Nahda, and another that claims no loyalties whatsoever (Zelin 2013). Tourism numbers are down by about two million from 2011 (El Issawi 2012) and in an industry that relies on foreign visitors "security is the first condition for real and sustained economic and political progress" (Zelin 2013). The assassination of popular opposition leader Chokri Belaid had begun a cry among some for the dissolution of the government (Benstead, Lust, Malouche, Soltan and Wichmann 2013).

A young Tunisian man named Adel Khedri once again set himself on fire. He chose to self-immolate as an act of desperation at the despairing rate of unemployment and lack of improvement since the Arab Spring. Just hours later, Parliament approved the new government which made Ali Larayedhy the new Prime Minister in Jebali's place. This is merely the latest in an ongoing cycle of protests and violence in Tunisia that express the discontent at the government's lack of economic reform. When President Marzouki went to Sidi Bou Zid rally to mark two years since the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, he was met with stone pelting and tomato throwing and had to be evacuated by security personnel. The protesters' biggest accusation was that the government had failed to improve the lives of Tunisians.

Flawed as they may be, the fact that Tunisia's institutions are established, and functioning put it one step ahead of Egypt and provide an institutional forum for the expression of dissenting ideas. However, if Al-Nahda hopes to remain successful, it must address the foremost concern of Tunisian citizens, which is the economy and unemployment. A policy package will not be enough as Tunisians expect to see results. The catalyst of the Arab Spring revolutions could very well be the demise of the Tunisian democratic experiment, and Al-Nahda's survival is dependent on marked improvement in this area. For decades people felt the discontentment with the government that's why they wanted immediate changes, but Al Nahda was not able to fulfil the hopes of people. This could have been one of the reasons for the failure of Al Nahda in the next election (Zelin 2013).

Al-Nahda and the Rise of Salafism

As the issues discussed above remained unresolved, protestors began attacking Al-Nahda headquarters around the country in response. Representing the greatest concerns of the Tunisian public, security and economic development required increased attention on the part of the ruling coalition, but for Al-Nahda, it was actually the enduring ideological battle with the Salafis which proved to be the greatest detriment to a peaceful progress. Al-Nahda has been accused time and again by the conservative Salafis of being too moderate and betraying their Islamic commitments. The Salafis were outraged by Al-Nahda's decision to not impose *Sharia'ah* law on the state, and they continually provoke violent outbursts in clashes with secularists, particularly over the rights of women. The issue of veiling has been an ongoing debate in Tunisian society for several months. Manouba University experienced an attack by Salafis who thought that women should be allowed to wear the *niqaab* on a university campus. Studies were suspended, faculty attacked, and the dean's office was even occupied for nearly a month (Maddy-Weitzman 2012).

The challenges posed by the Salafis to Al-Nahda's legitimacy began early on. In the run up to the 2011 elections, a private television station aired the movie *Persepolis*, which has a scene where God is depicted in human form. Thousands of Salafis organised a Day of Rage when police entered mosques and began arresting those who were organising the protests. The owner of the station's house was later attacked by the angry mob, inciting secularists to also take to the streets in the protection of freedom of speech. As Al-Nahda was often painted with the Salafi brush, they were quick to denounce the demonstrations and distance themselves from them (Zelin 2013).

Al-Nahda has proceeded to take a conciliatory approach to the Salafis, offering them a framework for incorporation into state norms instead of having to criticise the group directly. It can be noted that Al-Nahda wants to appease all parties by allowing Muslims to express their faith freely, while also not appearing too close to the Salafis for the sake of their national and international credibility as a moderate representation of

Islam. Al-Ghannouchi characterises the violence of the group as a direct result of the oppression they suffered under the former regime, though the Salafis were tolerated a greater deal than Al-Nahda. Why does Al-Nahda tolerate such a blatant challenge to its authority? Based on the results of the previous election, it is unclear how many of the Salafis voted given their ambiguous relationship with Al-Nahda, and thus their support in the proceeding elections may prove decisive (El Issawi 2012). Now, there are an estimated two hundred mosques under Salafi control that Al-Nahda has tried to downplay (Maddy-Weitzman 2012). Alaya Allani (2012) says that

> with the Arab Spring revolutions, the Salafist movement in Tunisia has grown. Firstly, all the prisoners of the movement and other Islamist parties were released. An alliance began to develop between Al-Nahda and the Salafis. This special relationship between the two movements was reinforced after the 23 October 2011 elections. Moreover, the Troika government, headed by Al-Nahda, continued to repeat that the Salafis have the right to express themselves and organise politically.

Merone (2012) states that “since the departure of Ben Ali, Salafism has acquired a public presence in urban centres, with Salafist from a variety of different movements involved in numerous high profile incidents: holding demonstrations against blasphemy, targeting films and art exhibits, or challenging dress-code regulations in universities”. Merone (2012) further points out that "while the actual number of Salafist activists is relatively small, their highly mediatised activities have placed Salafism at the centre of both political and scholarly attention”. According to Torelli (2012),

> the rise of Salafism in Tunisia has been both surprising and problematic. Unlike in Egypt or Yemen, there was very little evidence that such a phenomenon even existed in Tunisia. Policy analysts, secular politicians and civil-society activists still claim today that it is an imported phenomenon, completely extraneous to Tunisian political, intellectual and social history. It is also problematic because its public presence in a democratising environment can, according to some, negatively affect the way in which

> Tunisia will build its new political system and deal with the question of its identity and core values. Surprise and wariness characterise as well the reaction of the international community, whose attitude towards Salafism is extremely negative. It is perceived to pose a danger to liberal democracy and the stability of the international system (Torelli 2012).

The tolerant attitude which Al-Nahda continues to take towards the increasingly radicalised Salafi attacks grows concerns for seculars and moderates. Al-Nahda faces fragmentation not only amongst the Islamists but also within its own coalition government. The drafting of the new constitution has sparked public unrest in addition to the slow collapse of the seemingly capable coalition. The original draft of the constitution was scheduled to be finished by October 2012 and had since been delayed to February 2013. Arguments began with the type of government Tunisia would adopt, with Al-Nahda pushing for a parliamentary system that would benefit its existing electoral strength and the secular partners advocated for a mixed presidential, parliamentary system. The partners have also had trouble respecting the limits of each other's ascribed responsibilities. In July, several key government officials resigned over disregarding political boundaries. President Marzouki began pushing for enhanced presidential powers at one point in response to Prime Minister Jebali's decision to extradite a former Libyan official without his notification (the president has total powers of extradition) (Maddy-Weitzman 2012). This was the beginning of several ministers' resignations and debates that culminated most recently with the resignation of Prime Minister Jebali when Al-Nahda prevented him from installing a technocratic government (Zelin 2013). In addition, debates continue over legislative and constitutional matters such as women's rights, and freedom of religion (Maddy-Weitzman 2012). George Sadek (2013) states that

> the influence of religion on society has become more prominent under the current Tunisian administration than it was under the regime of ousted President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Throughout the Ben Ali era, the ruling party, known as the Constitution Democratic Rally, tried to curb any religious influence on Tunisian society by prohibiting the formation of

> religious, political parties to operate in the country. In fact, the role of the religious parties was enhanced after Al-Nahda's win in the elections for the Constituent Assembly in October 2011 (Sadek 2013).

Moataz (2012) says that "Al-Nahda has chosen to defer controversial political issues likely to divide Tunisian political society so as to steer the country through the fragile political transition successfully".

> Unlike their counterparts in Egypt, Tunisian Islamists havebeen confronted with a strong secular opposition and the feminist movement. These actors pressure the Islamist movement and its political leadership to emphasise their reformed understanding of Islamic law. Al-Nahda has not rejected the doctrine of the supremacy of *Shari'ah* and the traditional methods of Islamic law. But it has exhausted the ability of these methods to develop many of its comparatively progressive views on human rights. There are still tensions between its Islamist agenda and international human rights norms. But compared to the thought and practice of Islamists in Egypt, Al-Nahda has so far introduced a relatively soft version of Islamism. Political leaders of Al-Nahda have engaged in dialogue with secular Tunisian political forces and reached an agreement with them on many sensitive issues (Moataz 2012).

Al-Nahda's Participation in the Post-Uprising Politics

The central roles played by the Al-Nahda and Muslim Brotherhood in their respective societies following the removal of the authoritarian powers demonstrate that citizens of the region do identify with Islamist politics. In some cases, this means a more conservative program, while in others it simply means a commitment to reform through an Islamic frame of reference. As it did in Tunisia, stoking fears of a pending theocracy or assuming an explicitly anti-Islamist program would likely backfire in a country like Egypt. Nearly sixty-seven percent of Egyptians claim that laws should follow the Quranic teachings and another twenty-seven percent say laws should in some way follow Islamic principles (Hamid 2012). The most recent election results suggest that the alternative to

moderate Islamists may well be more radical Islamists. The Salafis in Egypt outnumber the Muslim Brothers five to one, and Tunisia has faced increasing challenges from the Salafis during their rule (Hamid 2012). Though many espoused fears of an impending "Islamist takeover" the groups were extremely cognizant of these international concerns and actively held back in their Islamist nature during and after the uprisings. Al-Ghannouchi once claimed before the election that even if Al-Nahda were to claim an absolute majority, they would choose to partake in a coalition government. He stated, "We don't want people to perceive that they have moved from a single party dominant in the political life to another single party dominating political life" (Lynch 2012).

In the wake of the post-Arab spring elections, the opportunity for reform appeared great. Two very different Islamist political entities had very similar social problems to address that they had assumed the leadership roles within the irrespective state. Whether these reforms are truly democratic or not remain to be seen with an analysis of the government's actions. However, a close review of political strategy in the lead up to the elections proved to be a useful tool in determining Democratic outlooks. True to its political development, Al-Nahda had much less visibility and had to work much harder to establish its political credentials and assert itself as a political front-runner. Al-Nahda's biggest advantage has also been its greatest detriment. The extensive and complete removal of any Islamist presence within Tunisia has allowed the movement to assert itself as an anti-regime organisation with no ties to the old regime whatsoever. One of the greatest fears of any pro-democracy movement is arguably that those efforts will recede into the hands of the former regime, or worse, another dictator (Hamid 2011).

Rikke Haugbolle and Francesco Cavatorta (2012) cite three primary reasons for Al-Nahda's shocking sweep of the elections. The movement was quick to reorganise itself in spite of the fact that it had been absent for several decades. As one Al-Nahda member had put it, "Given that we are an old party, we have been able to revive our structures immediately after the revolution in January. Militants who were in prison for a long time started working for the party again, together with those who had operated underground". In addition, even in the throes of its repression, Al-Nahda has held a

reputation as an uncompromising opponent of the Ben Ali regime. This characteristic would reassure those who are wary of a slip back into authoritarian hands. Thirdly, the secular parties did not meet the needs of the voters and would not indulge the undecided rural voters by meeting them outside of the cities (Haugbolle 2012). The authors also claim that private Islamic activism has been on the rise in Tunisia, leading the development of dozens of Islamic social and charitable organisations that have renewed the Islamic character of Tunisian society (Haugbolle 2012). Al-Nahda has been able to capitalise on this Islamic reawakening while also revitalising its initial political goals. Though Al-Nahda was absent for most of the demonstrations, the Islamic nature of the economically depressed Tunisian people made it a prime audience for the moderately Islamist Al-Ghannouchi and Al-Nahda. People long corrupted by the "kleptocracy" of Ben Ali left Tunisians longing for a clean start (Haugbolle 2012).

The Islamists in the Tunisian government continued to grapple with reconciling competing national interests. Tunisia's Al-Nahda Movement had been vested with an electoral mandate to usher in a new era of democracy to their politically starved countries. However, after several months in office, both groups were struggling to maintain the optimism, and the unity of their newly liberated countries as the steeping economic disparity and divergent political interests threaten to tear the countries apart amongst contested political aims. The election of these groups to power marks the culmination of their political development. The formative years of Al-Nahda acted as the training ground for Islamist political participation to be applied real time once the authoritarian regimes that restricted these groups were removed. The period of time immediately following the Arab Spring elections up until several months after the revolution had been the political experiment on which the overall efficacy of these groups as political agents was analysed. Taking into account the different cultural and social environments in which the Islamists were ascending to power, the Arab Spring uprisings created the necessary democratic openings for which Al-Nahda's and the Brotherhood's true governing capabilities could be tested. The ability to organise and do well in polls is meaningless under an authoritarian regime in which the group poses no real political threat. Thus, a democratic transition proved the ultimate litmus test as to how Al-Nahda

and the Muslim Brotherhood actually behaved as a governing political entity and how they chose to employ the political skills they had learned (Arieff 2011).

Many analysts would agree that Al-Nahda is more suited for democratic transition than its Egyptian counterpart. Society has been noticeably opened, there is a viable political arena for contestation, and most of all Al-Nahda has upheld the secular policies of the Bourguiba era. The greatest concern in both societies following each group's ascendance to power was the fear of an impending Islamist takeover combined with the forced imposition of *Shari'ah*. In spite of all this, Al-Nahda now faces new obstacles to a peaceful and continued democratic transition, markedly the growing violence and confrontation of Tunisia's Salafis. As the ideological battles continue, Al-Nahda must find a way to incorporate the more conservative Salafis within the secular framework of the Tunisian state, all the while progressing towards substantial economic improvement (Hamid 2012).

The coalition government of Al-Nahda in Tunisia is often hailed as the model of post-Arab spring governments, especially in comparison with its much more troubled Egyptian neighbours. Tunisians have witnessed a blossoming of Tunisian political and civil society through the rapid increase in the number of political parties, as well as the increased mobility of these groups in and around society. There are now over one hundred recognised political parties, a much more open press, and what appears to be a genuine commitment to eradicating corruption as former Ben Ali officials have been arrested and charged (Arieff 2011). In addition, a law was created that gave amnesty to over five hundred political prisoners, and existing restrictions on political activity were eliminated through decree. The media too has enjoyed a very deliberate reform policy. Tunisia's media, up until recently, has been one of the most repressive in the Arab World. A new press code recently introduced removes prison sentences for speech offenses, except in the case of religious or racial hatred (El Issawi 2012).

The potential democratic trajectory for Tunisia seems attainable when looking at the constitutionalist commitments of the Tunisian government and people. When Ben Ali

first left, Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi made a public announcement that he would assume the role of President in accordance with article fifty-six as Ben Ali was no longer able to handle his duties. This spurned outcries from lawyers, who challenged that since Ben Ali actually left, the duties of President should actually be turned over to the Speaker of the House Fouad Mebazaa. Ghannouchi ceded the position to Mebazaa the following day, resorting to constitutionalism over coups or further revolutionary chaos (Murphy 2013). Al-Nahda has also been committed to a democratic government from the start. They have repeatedly declared their support for the principle of power separation between the branches, commitment to freedom of expression, democracy, political pluralism and power rotation. It was an advocate for limiting the power of the president and vesting more authority in the government. Al-Nahda even supported using a proportional representation system even though it was advantageous to much smaller groups (Noueihed 2012).

Al-Nahda and its coalition government have made good on many of their campaign promises including the promise to maintain the secular policies of the Bourguiba era, protect women's rights and include a plurality of voices in the new government. In fact, their inclusion of all voices and providing a seat at the table to even the minorities is arguably the most defining feature of their success. At this critical stage in the transition, it is important that no groups in society are excluded, or the tension that arises from this isolation will eventually rip the fledgeling democracy apart. Al-Nahda is struggling as it is continuously restructuring the government to maintain its coalition but has so far maintained democratic elements. Al-Nahda has not chosen to forego the inclusion of minority groups and has taken definitive stands on its political positions on critical issues such as minority rights (El Issawi 2012).

Al-Nahda was absent during the Arab Spring. It was not until Ben Ali fled in 2011 that al-Ghannouchi was able to return and initiate an extensive grassroots campaign that led to its electoral victory at the polls. Since then, Al-Nahda government has struggled to pacify its citizens who are discontented with the shape of their economies. Al-Nahda too suffers from renewed discontent from the state of the economy but seems

to have impressed international observers as they continue with their coalition, protect personal freedoms, and keep a firm schedule regarding the transfer of power and upcoming elections. Tunisia and Egypt are just two of the most recent examples of Islamist political participation. Islamist political participation to varying degrees can be seen throughout the region, but Tunisia and Egypt were the only two cases in which Islamists have been elected as heads of state in a democratic atmosphere. Yet, despite the logical assumption that experience would produce ability, the Muslim Brotherhood appears to be incapacitated by its uncertainty. Al-Nahda has never had to negotiate its political interests with the limits of an authoritarian regime and therefore feel free to act as they see fit. The inclusion-moderation hypothesis, being the primary tool of analysis by which Islamist participation is measured, proves to be of little use in this analysis (Arieff 2011).

Both Al-Nahda and the Muslim Brotherhood are considered to be moderate Islamists, but they have developed into very different political bodies. The fact that Al-Nahda has moderated outside of political inclusion also presents an addendum to the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. Al-Nahda, a group that is arguably more moderate than the Brotherhood, regulated itself in response to the brutal repression faced by the Brotherhood under Nasser more so than its very limited exposure to Tunisian politics. Therefore, in order to study what effects moderation has on Islamist political behaviour, it is necessary to look at the context within which a particular group moderated. Based on the observations in this thesis, it is clear that in the case of Al-Nahda and the Muslim Brotherhood, the political agency is a direct product of the environment in which they developed. The Brotherhood was included for a majority of its being while Al-Nahda barred from participation. In spite of this, it is Al-Nahda who became the most competent at supervising a political transition to democracy. Consequently, while the inclusion of Islamist groups in political systems does indeed lead to moderation, it can be argued that the resulting moderation impedes the political behaviour of these groups in a democratic or transitioning system by training Islamists to avoid specificity and retain vague political platforms. Al-Nahda has the advantage of never having to reconcile its own political

actions with the interests of a despotic regime and therefore is free to act of its own accord without fearing repercussion (Zelin 2013). According to Schaar (2012)

> the Islamist Renaissance Party, Al-Nahda, organised 7,000 of its own people to monitor the voting in every polling place throughout the country. Overseas 202,177 Tunisians flocked to vote at their embassies and consulates. The Congress for the Republic (CPR), with 30 seats (13.82%), led by Dr. Moncef Marzouki, a human rights activist and perpetual opponent of the deposed dictator, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, has publicly demanded control of the Ministry of Interior in order to reform the nation's police force and security apparatus and wants the interim government to hold on to power for three years, instead of one year proposed by the post revolutionary interim government whose functions will end when the new government is installed (Schaar 2012).

Schaar (2012) further notes that,

> in North African history some of the most intense political squabbles have revolved around who controls the interior ministry. The CPR will have to fight hard to get that post, for whoever heads that ministry maintains power over one of the major coercive forces of the state. Al-Nahda may not be willing to give the post up readily, and the outcome of that struggle will tell us a great deal about how much the party is willing to concede to make coalition politics work. Mustapha Ben Jafaar, the leader of Ettakadol, or the Democratic Forum for Work and Liberty (FDTL), with 21 seats (9.68%), has made it known that he would accept the presidency of the Assembly as part of an alliance deal. Prominent French political leaders have supported him in his bid to head that body, which may or may not hurt his chances for success. Marzouki, however, may have the same ambition, since he proclaimed upon arriving back to Tunisia from years of French exile that he wanted to be president of the country (Schaar 2012).

After the elections had taken place “many feminists Tunisians wanted to see a secular alliance form in the Assembly to prevent Al-Nahda from controlling the government. They opposed the formation of any coalition with the Islamists” (Schaar 2012). Further, “this didn’t seem possible since both the CPR and the FDTL leadership refused to demonise the Islamists during the campaign and made it clear that they wanted Al-Nahda to be accepted as a major political force in the country. This position most likely contributed to their electoral gains, since the population, having undergone extreme trauma during and after the Arab Spring revolt, does not seem to want confrontational politics and sent a message that they desire a transitional government based on consensus. The popular will gave Al-Nahda victory in every circumscription of the country and 50% of Assembly seats in voting overseas. They remain the political force to contend with in the country” (Schaar 2012).

Schaar (2012) observes that “another party, the Democratic Progressives (PDP) led by the lawyer, Ahmed Nejib Chebbi, had demonised Al-Nahda late in the campaign, expecting that his party’s high scores in polls taken before the election reflected real strength. To everyone’s surprise, the PDP came in fifth with 17 assembly seats (7.83%). The polls, conducted by phone with 1,034 respondents on September 22-24, were wrong on almost every count, giving the Islamists 25% of the vote. In ex-dictatorships people polled maintain extreme discretion, as if the old order still existed in which no one dared to speak the truth for fear of police retribution. This lacklustre result disappointed the PDP since it had the support of the Tunisian equivalent of the Chamber of Commerce, UTICA, and the country’s business elite. With lavish funds to spend, Chebbi launched an expensive campaign that backfired. His demonization of Al-Nahda turned many voters away from his party”. According to Roko (2011),

> the winter and spring months of 2010 and 2011 proved momentous in contemporary West Asian history. Beginning in Tunisia in December 2010, mass protests spread like wildfire and took the autocratic regimes of Tunisia

> and Egypt completely by surprise. The wave of contention has touched almost all Arab countries in what has been termed 'The Arab Spring'. With presidents toppled in Tunis, Cairo, and Tripoli and the leaders of Syria and Yemen under unprecedented pressure, the events have also challenged many previous postulates about the resilience of authoritarian regimes in Arab states. The events of spring 2011 prove that the social, economic, and political pressures of the last years have become a burden too heavy to bear for a growing number of people and that the authoritarian regimes in the region had been incapable of addressing the grievances of those people (Roko 2011).

According to Paczynska (2010), "the protests in Tunisia reflected the economic grievances of an increasing number of people, grievances that were echoed by calls for political reform. Arab states had been compelled to liberalise their economies over the last three decades, and this, in turn, has made them less able to deliver on their end of the authoritarian bargain". Bellin (2015) states that "Tunisia is enjoying a higher level of urbanisation, a larger middle class, and a higher rate of literacy. Hence it is tempting to attribute Tunisia's greater success at democratisation to the country's superior performance along with standard indices of modernization". Tunisia also "has a small military, very professional, with little experience of political engagement. It has over time developed an institutional culture that accepts civilian supremacy". According to Bellin (2015),

> the reasons for this have deep historical roots: the negligible role played by the military in the struggle for national independence; Tunisia's distance from the Arab-Israeli crisis and other regional wars that in other Arab states swelled the prestige and self-importance of the military. The restraint of the Tunisian military is also a consequence of deliberate policy adopted by Habib Bourguiba and later Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, both former presidents who starved the military of resources and limited its operations. In Tunisia,

> the military elite early on announced that it would submit to civilian control and stay out of politics (Bellin 2015).

Bellin (2015) further observes that "in the case of Tunisia, civil society played a central role in nudging the country along in a democratic direction". Its role had two dimensions:

> First, it played a watchdog function, keeping tabs on the regime's performance and holding the regime's feet to the core when it strayed from democratic ideals. Second, it facilitated dialogue and compromise across the political divides when the normal course of politics in Tunisia's formal political institutions hit an impasse. Evidence of civil society playing the watchdog function was salient at any number of critical junctures in Tunisia. It was evident during the cobbling together of the constitution – liberal and feminist, civil society organisationsmobilised thousands of people to protest in the streets of the Tunisian capital of Tunis when religiously conservative elements proposed an article endorsing the principle of gender "complementarity" rather than equality. It was evident in the institutionalisation of freedom of the press – the journalists union organised a strike that forced the Al-Nahda-led government to retreat from the appointment of political cronies to leadership posts at national newspapers. Evidence of civil society organisations facilitating dialogue and compromise across the political divide was also notable: The national trade union movement (the UGTT) played a central role in hosting national dialogues to bring all the parties together and force them to talk through their issues when the political discussion over the constitution and governance stalled in 2012. These efforts proved key to getting a rather liberal constitution ratified in early 2013 (Bellin 2015).

It should be noted, as stated by Bellin (2015), that "both of these factors, the character of the military and the strength of civil society, are largely beyond the control

of individual leaders and theexercise of individual choice and initiative. But even this should not be overstated". Bellin (2015) says,

> the UGTT ultimately proved successful in negotiating dialogue and compromise between opposing political forces in Tunisia and facilitating the ratification of a rather liberal constitution. But the UGTT's success in this venture was never a sure thing, ordained by its institutionalised strength. By the report of participants, the UGTT's success at delivering a political bargain was a consequence of the unique authority, charisma, and persistence of the UGTT leader Hussein Abassi who relentlessly insisted on discussion and compromise, virtually hectoring his fellow elites into agreement (Bellin 2015).

Bellin (2015) notes that "the different degrees to which leading political actors were committed to democratic institutions and the different degrees to which leading political actors were committed to dialogue, compromise, inclusion". Further,

> With regard to normative commitment to democratic institutions, in Tunisia it was absolutely clear that the political elite, secular and Islamist, were committed to the establishment of democratic institutions in the country; free and fair elections, freedom of speech, and freedom of association. The desire to break with the authoritarian past and embrace a democratic path was evidenced in their declarations and behaviour (Bellin 2015).

According to Bellin (2015),

> there was a commitment to dialogue, inclusion, and consensus building across the political divides. For example, Rachid al-Ghannouchi distinguished himself by reaching out to the non-Islamist camp and by pressing his base to compromise on key issues such as the role of *Shari'a* in the constitution, the ban on blasphemy, and the issue of gender equality. He

> argued quite eloquently that even if Al-Nahda had had the power to push through its views unilaterally, it should not, that in building the country's foundational political institutions the country ought to come together and strive to build consensus. He counselled his base to take the long view, not to win in the short term only to lose in the long (Bellin 2015).

It is interesting to note that "there were over a hundred parties competing in Tunisia– most completely unknown with no reputations. People were baffled by the choices, and they did not have strong policy preferences for one or the other. In the end, 37 percent of the seats went to Al-Nahda (but no one would say that 37 percent of Tunisian society were hard core Islamists)" (Bellin 2015). It should be kept in mind that "a good portion of this vote was likely a protest vote".

> And Al-Nahda benefitted from that, unlike so many of the pop-up parties, it had an established reputation and was not a totally unknown quantity. That public opinion polls in 2012 and 2013 showed a great deal of political ambivalence, and lack of party commitment in Tunisian society confirms just how random these first election results were. Still, this "random" outcome failed to deliver a majority to any party, including Al-Nahda. As a result of this lucky outcome, a coalition of parties, secular and religious, had to work together in order to govern. The electoral results fostered accommodation and compromise (Bellin 2015).

Boukhars (2014) states that "Tunisia faced a critical choice (to ratify a liberal constitution) several months after the Egyptian military had ejected (and repressed) the Muslim Brotherhood meant that Al-Nahda could "learn" from the Egyptian experience". As the above author notes, "the Egyptian experience served as a cautionary tale for the Al-Nahda leadership in Tunisia, and it persuaded the party's elite to make difficult compromises that they had resisted for the year prior" (Boukhars 2014). Halimi (2014) says that

> the IMF, the World Bank, the European Union, and the United States held concerted carrots and sticks over the Tunisian regime in late 2012-early 2013, just as it was deciding the constitution and whether to embrace a "technocratic" interim government. This was one more finger on the scale nudging it toward compromise and democratic accommodation. Although international factors such as these are certainly secondary in importance (relative to domestic variables) they clearly play a role in shaping the distribution of resources on the domestic front which in turn shapes the calculations and capacities of elites on the ground (Halimi 2016).

It has been noted by several observers that during the protests and uprisings in Tunisia the Islamists were missing. "Unlike in Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, and most other secular Arab autocracies, the main challenge to the Tunisian regime has not come from Islamist opposition but secular intellectuals, lawyers, and trade unionists" (Koplow 2011).

> The absence of a strong Islamist presence is the result of an aggressive attempt by successive Tunisian regimes, dating back over a half-century, to eliminate Islamists from public life. Ben Ali enthusiastically took up this policy in the early 1990s, putting hundreds of members of the al-Nahda party, Tunisia's main Islamist movement, on trial amid widespread allegations of torture and sentencing party leaders to life imprisonment or exile. Most influential Tunisian Islamists now live abroad, while those who remain in Tunisia have been forced to form a coalition with unlikely secular and communist bedfellows (Koplow 2011).

Koplow (2011) believes that "the nature of the opposition and the willingness of the Tunisian government to back down are not coincidental. If it had been clear that Islamist opposition figures were playing a large role in the current unrest, the government would likely have doubled down on repressive measures". The government in Tunisia had been professing secular Arab nationalist ideology and it "has long taken its

secularism and its nationalism more seriously than its neighbours. Habib Bourguiba, Ben Ali's predecessor and the father of the postcolonial Tunisian state, took over lands belonging to Islamic institutions, folded religious courts into the secular state judicial system, and enacted a secular personal status code upon coming to power" (Koplow 2011).

According to Koplow (2011), "Bourguiba, like Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in Turkey, viewed Islamists as an existential threat to the very nature of the Tunisian state. He viewed the promotion of secularism as linked to the mission and nature of the state, and because Islamists differed with him on this fundamental political principle, they were not allowed into the political system at all". Koplow (2011) observes that

> Bourguiba displayed no desire for compromise on this question; calling for large-scale executions of Islamists following bombings at tourist resorts. He was also often hostile toward Muslim religious traditions, repeatedly referring to the veil in the early years of Tunisian independence as an "odious rag." Ben Ali, who served as prime minister under Bourguiba, has taken a similarly hard line. He has been unwilling to adopt any sort of religious title or utilise Islamic imagery to justify his rule. Most importantly, Ben Ali never attempted to co-opt Islamists by controlling their entry into the political system, but instead excluded them entirely from the political dialogue. This history is vital to understanding why the protests were successful in removing Ben Ali's government. There is an appreciation within the corridors of power in Tunis that the Islamists are not at the top of the pile of the latest unrest. The protesters, though they represent a threat to the political elite's vested interests, have not directly challenged the reigning creed of state secularism. Ben Ali's fate may have been sealed when military officers — who had been marginalised by the regime as it lavished money on family members and corrupt business elites — demonstrated a willingness to stand down and protect protesters from the police and internal security services. However, a military coup would also

> represent no ideological challenge to the regime — the state's mission of advancing secular nationalism will continue even after Ben Ali's removal from power (Koplow 2011).

According to Marks (2015), "conventional wisdom in academic and policy circles asserts that Tunisia's Islamist party, Al-Nahda, compromised only after, and as a direct result of, the July 2013 coup that deposed Egypt's then President Mohamed Morsi". He views that "such assumption often accompanying that Egypt centric projection presumes Al-Nahda would have necessarily adopted a Muslim Brotherhood style maximalist approach had Islamists won a numerical majority in Tunisia's 2011 elections". The above propositions

> dismiss critical specificities of the Tunisian scenario, including Al-Nahda's historically long term logic, the importance of domestic anti Islamist pressure from leftists, secularists and groups associated with the former regime, and the extent to which Al-Nahda ceded key compromises well in advance of formally handing power to Mehdi Jomaa's caretaker government on Jan. 28, 2014. Rather than fundamentally altering Al-Nahda's overall strategy, the coup that toppled Morsi and subsequent crackdown on Brotherhood oriented groups reinforced pre-existing postures of pragmatism and gradualism inside Al-Nahda that have been crucial to its survival in Tunisian society (Marks 2015).

Marks (2015) points out that "unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, which took a majoritarian approach to power in the wake of Egypt's revolution, Al-Nahda adopted a number of farsighted, participation oriented positions that evinced a much thicker understanding of democratic politics".

> In early 2011, for example, when Tunisia's transitional body, known …as the Ben Achour Commission, began debating what type of electoral system Tunisia would have, Al-Nahda's leadership contributed to creating the

> conditions for coalition building – and their own electoral marginalization – by supporting a proportional representation (PR) over a Westminster style first past the post (FPTP) system. Al-Nahda leader Rachid al-Ghannouchi, who experienced FPTP elections first hand during his 22 years of exile in London, correctly predicted that deploying this system in Tunisia would result in a coalition and democracy inhibiting landslide victory for Al-Nahda. Political scientist Alfred Stepan has written as well that a Westminster style FPTP system would have resulted in Al-Nahda sweeping approximately 90 percent of seats in the October 2011 elections, instead of the nearly 40 percent plurality it won. Al-Ghannouchi and other Al-Nahda leaders instead supported a PR system that benefitted smaller parties, reducing Al-Nahda's own share of votes in the 2011 election by a staggering 50 percent (Stepan 2012).

For al-Ghannouchi and other top leaders in Al-Nahda, the touchstone moment shaping this minimalist decision was Algeria's 1990 and 1991 elections, when the Islamic Salvation Front's (FIS) dominance in municipal and the first round of parliamentary elections alarmed the regime, which then cancelled elections and initiated a broad crackdown against Islamists. This experience, and the bloody civil war that ensued in Algeria, powerfully impacted Al-Nahda's thinking during the 1990s and 2000s. Survival, Al-Nahda leaders surmised, meant stepping slowly and strategically, careful to reassure vested interests and society at large that it did not intend to wrest control of democratic institutions to impose something resembling an Islamic state. In Tunisia, however, Al-Nahda leaders practised more restraint. Regularly referencing the experience of FIS in Algeria, they remained sensitive to suspicions that Islamists would instrumentalise electoral victory as a means towards illiberal, majoritarian dominance. Al-Nahda, therefore, adopted a more minimalist approach and, unlike the Brotherhood, stayed true to its pre-election promises of supporting coalition governments and not running or officially endorsing presidential candidates in 2011 and again in 2014 (Marks 2016). According to Marks (2015),

> immediately after Tunisia's 2011 elections, in which Al-Nahda won an approximately 37 percent plurality, the party moved to form a coalition government. After reaching out to various secularly oriented parties, it ultimately partnered with two: Congress for the Republic (CPR), led by long term human rights activist Moncef Marzouki, and the Democratic Forum for Labor and Liberties, known in Tunisia as Ettakatol, led by opposition politician Mustapha Ben Jaafar. Though accusations were made that Al-Nahda marginalised its partners, this three party "Troika" coalition stayed together from 2011 to 2013. During the Bardo crisis of August 2013, in which protests led by unelected leftist, secular and former regime oriented figures threatened to dissolve Tunisia's Constituent Assembly, CPR and Ettakatol stood alongside Al-Nahda to preserve the institution of the Constituent Assembly until constitution writing was complete (Marks 2015).

Marks (2015) notes that importantly, Al-Nahda's coalition with CPR and Ettakatol didn't come together for the first time after the 2011 elections, but rather had roots in a long series of cross ideological talks between Tunisian opposition actors in the 2000s. These talks involved dozens of independent opposition activists, human rights defending civil society groups and political actors opposed to the regime of then President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, including leaders of Ettakatol, CPR and Al-Nahda. In documents produced in Aixen Provence and Rome in 2003 and 2005, parties to the talks signed onto core principles – including commitments to create a democratic political system with popular sovereignty (*sayadetal-shaab*) as the sole source of legitimacy (*ka-masdarwahidlil-sulta*) and to realise equality between men and women. In 2007 theseactors – who in 2005 formed a movement called the October 18 Collective – released a document titled "Declaration on the Rights of Women and Gender Equality" strongly reaffirming support for Tunisia's 1956 Personal Status Code, which prohibits polygamy and gives women the right to divorce. Al-Nahda leadership's willingness to not just talk across the table with secular actors, but codify key commitments with them – such as the primacy of popular sovereignty over *Shari'ah*, excluding any mention of

Islamic law – was therefore expressed formally through a series of negotiations and signed agreements well in advance of both the 2011 elections and Egypt's 2013 coup. In the opinion of Marks (2015), "Al-Nahda's stint in power following the 2011 elections tested its leaders' commitments to pragmatism and gradualism. During decades of oppression and exile, Al-Ghannouchi – who wrote for three decades on the compatibility of democracy and Islamic political thought – along with a handful of other leaders, had elaborated a flexible, ethically based understanding of *Shari'ah* that prioritised social justice over specific rules (*hudud*). Soon after the revolution, key figures in Al-Nahda's leadership, including Al-Ghannouchi and veteran negotiators of the crossparty2000s negotiations, stressed that Al-Nahda would not seek to codify the word *Shari'ah*. The concept was "*shumuli*," or broad enough, to encompass a democratic polity that respected core principles of popular sovereignty, social justice and human dignity. Not all Al-Nahda members, however, understood or agreed with the views of Al-Ghannouchi, whose writings were banned and largely inaccessible in Tunisia throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Following Tunisia's revolution, Al-Nahda, therefore, began an arduous process of becoming reacquainted with itself personally, ideologically and organisationally. This process played out very publicly, as a more inflexible, maximalist wing inside Al-Nahda, led most vocally by former MPs Sadok Chorou and Habib Ellouze, agitated for restrictive interpretations of constitutional language concerning key issues, such as whether or not to tighten wording that would have defined Tunisia as an Islamic state and whether to criminalize blasphemy" (McCarthy 2015). Marks (2015) explains that

> as the drafting process began in early 2012, suspicions that Al-Nahda secretly harboured fundamentalist, even fascistic aims ran high amongst leftist and secularly oriented segments of Tunisian society – demographics that are much larger in Tunisia than in Egypt, Algeria and many other Arab countries. Determined and vocal pushback from such citizens, backed by well networkedTunisian civil society groups, some of whose leaders held similar reservations about Al-Nahda, put popular pressure on the party to compromise on more permissive formulations of constitutional articles. Such important pushback prompted swift responses from Al-Nahda leaders,

> including Al-Nahda MPs who re-caucused in the Constituent Assembly and even the party's governing Shura Council itself, whose 150 members sometimes held meetings to discuss and vote on whether and how to reformulate more controversy creating positions (Marks 2015).

Marks (2015) further mentions that "throughout four successive constitutional drafts, Al-Nahda – affected by popular pressure, debates within the drafting committees and the advice of Tunisian and international experts – softened or walked back its most problematic positions, compromising on a number of important issues long before the Egyptian coup". He notes that "the language that ultimately made its way into the constitution – the final version of which was ratified by an overwhelming 200 out of 217 total votes on Jan. 26, 2014 –reflected compromises on both political and ideological issues". The leadership of Al-Nahda had

> ceded ground on their core issue of contention: whether Tunisia should have a parliamentary system, as Al-Nahda wanted, or a presidential system, as opposition parties had sought, ultimately supporting a mixed parliamentary, presidential model in which the president possessed more powers than Al-Nahda leaders had intended. Compromises on ideology oriented issues had also been made: The constitution defines Tunisia as a civil rather than an Islamic state and omits proposed language that would have criminalised blasphemy and asserts men and women's roles "complement one another within the family." The bulk of these compromises had been worked out in fall 2012 and spring 2013 and was already written into the third draft of the constitution, released in April 2013 – months before the coup (Marks 2015).

However, Marks (2015) argues that "Egypt's July 2013 coup, had knocked on effects in Tunisia; It emboldened opposition activists, some of whom formed a copycat Tunisian Tamarod (Rebellion) movement in an effort to force the Troika government to leave power". Such activists argued that "the Troika had lost all legitimacy and should hand overpower to an apolitical, technocratic government immediately. Sensing

opportunity, unelected leaders of the main opposition party, Nidaa Tounes, issued calls to dissolve the Constituent Assembly and replace the Troika with a government of technocrats". It is noted that "the Tamarod movement and corresponding calls to dissolve the Assembly, however, remained somewhat marginal until Tunisia experienced its second political assassination: the July 25 murder of Mohamed Brahmi. Brahmi, a low profile Arab nationalist politician, hailed from the same electoral coalition as Chokri Belaid, a prominent leftist whose assassination just five months earlier, on Feb. 6, 2013, shook Tunisian society. Belaid's assassination provoked huge demonstrations against political violence and spurred widespread speculation in Tunisia that the Troika government and particularly Al-Nahda, which Belaid had often criticised, was directly or indirectly responsible" (Marks 2015). It should be noted that

> if the deeply seated disillusionment with the Troika's ability to govern provided the fuel, Tunisia's second political assassination – that of Mohamed Brahmi – lit the fire. Throughout August 2013, tens of thousands of protesters gathered outside the Constituent Assembly in the Bardo district of Tunis to demand the dissolution of the Assembly and resignation of the Troika government. Dozens of opposition MPs resigned. This was a time of great test for Al-Nahda and its coalition partners. On Aug. 6, Mustapha Ben Jafaar, then President of the Constituent Assembly, made the controversial decision to temporarily suspend the Assembly's work and began spearheading the Troika's efforts behind the scenes to find a negotiated path towards compromise. Members of Al-Nahda and CPR opposed Ben Jaafar's decision, viewing suspension of the Assembly as a capitulation to street protesters' anti-democratic demands. Ben Jaafar himself felt differently. In an interview, Ben Jaafar explained that decision as a strategic step necessary to preserve the institution of the Constituent Assembly *against* the anti-democratic demands of pro-dissolution protesters". "Putting the Assembly on recess wasn't giving the pro-dissolution camp legitimacy, he said. These people weren't as democratic as they said. Instead, it showed that I'm

> sticking with the rule of law, I'm sticking with this Assembly. I protected the Assembly (Marks 2015).

Marks (2015) points out that "Al-Nahda party leaders – with the crucial mediation of Tunisia's prominent trade union, UGTT, and three other members of the so called negotiation "quartet" – worked out a plan to complete the constitution, select an elections board and transfer the reins of government to a technocratic caretaker cabinet.On January 28, 2014, just two days after signing Tunisia's new constitution into law, Al-Nahda Prime Minister Ali Laarayedh officially handed over power to technocratic Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa". According to Marks (2015),

> Al-Nahda ceded a number of key government ministries to technocrats in March 2013. Opposition to Jebali's decision was initially widespread in the leadership ranks of Al-Nahda, with some individuals suspecting him of being pressured by figures close to the old regime. Still, Al-Nahda's eventual acceptance of Jebali's decision, demonstrated by the imposition of a mixed technocratic political government months before the Morsi coup, represents another piece of evidence that Al-Nahda's concessions – both political and ideological – were part of a pragmatic pattern that preceded the Morsi coup.

Marks (2015) states that "the overthrow of Morsi had a palpable impact on Tunisia, emboldening the Tamarod protests, fuelling – though not actually sparking – the eventual fire of the Bardo protests, and reminding Al-Nahda just how unique and fragile its position as a free, democratically elected Islamist party really was". It is noted that "Al-Nahda party leaders, who had been critical – even derisory – towards the Muslim Brotherhood from 2011 to 2013, characterising the movement as retrograde, uncooperative and recalcitrant, were deeply moved by the attack on Brotherhood sympathisers in Cairo's Rabaa Adawiya square" (Marks 2015). In such a contex, Al-Nahda leaders "began voicing messages of sympathy, saying that no matter their mistakes in power, the Brotherhood did not deserve its undemocratic ouster or the rights

abusing crackdown it received" (Ibid.). Marks (2015) notes that "the coup may have also softened Al-Nahda MPs overwhelming support for lustration, which would have excluded persons who held a position in Ben Ali's Constitutional Democratic Rally party (RCD), which had been officially dissolved in March 2011, from running in Tunisia's 2014 elections". He says that "Al-Ghannouchi and other key leaders' ultimate opposition to lustration legislation was motivated more by longterm commitments to political inclusion and gradualism grounded in the lessons of Algeria and the spectacular failure of Libya's lustration law than the coup in Egypt" (Marks 2015). Marks (2015) explains that

> the coup against Morsi reinforced and offered new justification for Al-Nahda'spragmatism, gradualism and support for long terms compromise, tendencies manifested in Al-Nahda's historical negotiations and internal evolution, as well as the key compromises it made after the 2011 elections.It is, therefore, a historical to characterize Al-Nahda's compromises, particularly its decision to formally relinquish power in January 2014, as mere by products of the "Egypt effect," or to assume that Al-Nahda would have necessarily adopted the Brotherhood's domineering, maximalist approach had Islamists held a higher proportion of seats following the 2011 elections.Al-Nahda's logic of long termism and track record of cross ideological compromise indicate that its leadership's operative logics have been crucially different than the Brotherhood's. The vocal pushback from secular civil society organisations, the leftist trade union and unelected old regime associated actors between 2011 and 2013 likewise indicated that Tunisia's more anti-Islamist oriented social situation created a very different set of constraints for Al-Nahda outside the halls of elected office than the Muslim Brotherhood faced in Egypt (Marks 2015).

According to Young (2015), "Tunisia faced the challenge of an increasingly diverse religious landscape. Following the Jasmine Revolution, prisoners, including Al-Nahda Islamists and Salafis, were released and Tunisia faced an uninitially unregulated field of religious groups and discourses that had previously been banned". The above

author notes further that "for several months the Ministry of Religious Affairs worked to replace many Imams, both those appointed by Ben Ali and Salafis who had gained control of mosquesfollowing the revolution. There were a number of public confrontations on the role ofIslam in public life including what could be shown on television and whether the previouslybanned niqab, a headscarf that exposes only the eyes, could be worn in the classroom". Young (2015) says,

> by summer 2013, many Tunisians had lost confidence in the Troika-government, a coalition of Ennahada and two secular parties, due to increasing economic issues, the protracted constitutional drafting period, and a belief that Al-Nahda was too soft on terrorism and theactivities of the Islamist militia Ansar al-Sharia, which resulted in attacks on Tunisian security forces and the assassination of leftist political leader Chokri Belaid the previous February. The Tamrod protest movement and July 2013 coup in Egypt sparked organized demonstrations in Tunisia demanding that the government step down. In this already charged atmosphere, the assassination of opposition leader Mohamed Brahmi on July 25, allegedly by Ansar al-Sharia, led to public demonstrations against the Troika-government, a parliamentary walkout, and a five-month political deadlock. Only with the Troika's agreement to step down from ministry positions, but not from elected parliamentary seats, was Tunisia able to finalise the constitution and pass the electoral law to pave the way forpresidential and parliamentary elections (Young 2015).

According to Young (2015), "early on the legislative election was framed as a showdown between "Islamist" Al-Nahda and "secular" Nidaa Tounes, which ultimately won and 69 and 89 seats in the 217-seat parliament".

> However, despite the highly charged political environment that preceded the elections, each campaign to some extent rejected these labels, and both parties tried to portray themselves as Islamic without necessarily being

> Islamist. While it is not a surprise that each party might seek to expand its level of support, the degree of overlap that emerged in their discourse is surprising. Al-Nahda's campaign focused on portraying the party as a responsible, consensus-oriented actor that shepherded the country through a difficult period of institutional change. For example, Al-Nahda's political platform had no significant identifiably-Islamist element, with the exception of promoting the development of Islamic banking options. Compared to the 2011 program, the 2014 program made subtler references to Tunisia's Islamic heritage than its predecessor, which listed the importance of "Islam as a supreme reference point" in the platform. This is not to indicate the religion or religious identity is less important to the party or its voters, but that Al-Nahda, unsurprisingly in the wake of both political tensions in Tunisia and the banning of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, has focused on itself presenting itself as a mainstream political party rather than as an Islamist political party. In addition to this mainstreaming, the party affirmed both before and after the election its willingness to continue working with other parties, including Nidaa Tounes (Young 2015).

Young (2015) explains that "this discourse of Tunisian Islam as a particularly pluralistic and moderate practice has been utilised by multiple political actors ranging from former President Habib Bourguiba to members of Al-Nahda to Nidaa Tounes. During the election, Nidaa Tounes and Essebsi sought to associate themselves with this tradition". It should be noted that

> with this convergence in electoral rhetoric, the parliamentary campaigns focused primarily on issues of economic growth and security. This isn't to say that fundamental issues on the role of Islam in public and political life don't exist. They do. Nidaa Tounes was founded following the 2011 elections in direct opposition to Al-Nahda's electoral victory. There are many constituents of Al-Nahda and Nidaa Tounes that see the other party as an existential threat to Tunisia's future, including Nidaa Tounes supporters

> who view Al-Nahda as responsible for past terrorist attacks and a danger to the country's civil nature, and Al-Nahda supporters who see Nidaa Tounes as a continuation of the former dictatorships that jailed and exiled any dissidents (Young 2015).

According to Young (2015), "these divisions have not been wiped away, instead, as evidenced by the political rhetoric during the electoral campaigns these issues are not as immediately pressing as economic and security issues". Young (2015) argues that "as this can be seen in the broad convergence of discourse that parties used surrounding the issue with both Al-Nahda and Nidaa Tounes largely echoing each other on the centrality of a moderate, reformist, national Tunisian Islam to counter violent extremism. Rather than being monopolised by Islamists alone, this discourse is being normalised by major political actors who have shifted their attention to more immediately pressing public issues such as improving the economy and national security". According to Young (2015), "the second sign is that Al-Nahda made the strategic choice to actively try to become part of a unity government and not to remain in the opposition. During the presidential elections, Al-Nahda, looking to play the long game, declined to support a presidential candidate, which left open the possibility of becoming part of the government, which it did in February, albeit with only one full ministerial portfolio". Young (2015) argues that

> however, while religion seems to be de-emphasized in the current political landscape, the elections revealed three other societal divisions that will be critical in addressing during the current political mandate. First, political actors must address the disenchantment of Tunisian youth with politics. Throughout the country, observers noted that youth, the drivers of the revolution voted in startlingly low numbers. Second, regionalism, more than religion, became the major societal divide during the presidential elections with the more economically-prosperous coastal and northern regions supporting Essebsi and the more economically marginalised south voting for Marzouki. Both campaigns emphasised the need to develop the interior

> regions and now must follow through. Third, the competition between Nidaa Tounes and Al-Nahda and between Essebsi and Marzouki highlighted the tensions between figures representing the old regime and revolutionary ideals. Even with these tensions, the current government must find solutions to address the pressing issues of economic development and especially terrorism as the Islamic State expands in Libya and as Tunisians who left to fight in Syria return to Tunisia (Young 2015).

According to Piser (2016) “the rise of the Islamic State, which continues to boast a startling number of Tunisians in its ranks, compounded the perception that Al-Nahda had been too lax about security and further undermined the public reputation of political Islam”. Piser (2016) notes that “all this helps to explain why Al-Nahda has decided to downplay its origins in “political Islam.” Yet to depict that move as an across-the-board rejection of religious politics would be misleading. A large segment of Tunisia’s population, especially outside the relatively cosmopolitan capital, still yearns to see a government infused with Islamic values. Al-Nahda’s followers in the poorer and more conservative interior continue to view it as a political force that represents them, regardless of its careful ideological recalibrations. When Al-Ghannouchi announced the move away from traditional Islamism, he also proclaimed a separation of the party’s political and religious activities”. The separation of the party’s political and religious activities allows party leaders to focus on politics in the capital while other members in the provinces continue to engage in the civic and religious spheres. By some accounts, Al-Nahda is already far more engaged in preparations for the municipal elections set for next spring than any other political party — raising the possibility that it could end up dominating grassroots politics while its competitors remain focused on manoeuvrings in the capital. In this respect, the May decision can be seen as Al-Nahda’s latest attempt to cater to the country’s diverse population and sustain itself as a major political force as Tunisia consolidates its new democracy (Piser 2016).

McCarthy (2015) says that “Tunisia’s government has been quick to announce steps to prevent more terrorist attacks after the tragic shooting in Sousse in 2015, which

left at least 39 tourists dead, many of them Britons". Such events "raise serious questions about the future of Tunisia's once hopeful democratic transition". McCarthy notes,

> The shooting on the beach at the Imperial Marhaba Hotel in Port El Kantaoui, on the northern end of the Sousse coastline, was the worst terrorist incident Tunisia has faced. In addition to the cost in human lives, the economic impact is likely to be devastating. Coming just three months after 22 tourists were shot dead in the Bardo museum in Tunis, this attack could mean serious, long term damage to the important tourism industry, which is worth up to 15 percent of Tunisia's economy. Thousands of tourists have already flown home, and more will follow. The tourism sector has one-quarter of all of Tunisia's bad loans, according to the World Bank. That means the impact will be felt across the wider economy, which is already suffering weak growth and persistent unemployment – officially at 15 percent, but unofficially much higher (McCarthy 2015).

According to McCarthy (2015), "in the wake of the political vacuum that followed the 2011 uprising, Salafi preachers took control of about 1,000 of Tunisia's 5,000 mosques. Gradually,the state has regained control over nearly all these mosques, but precise figures vary". For Al-Nahda, as McCarthy (2015) points out, "this perception exists in part because Al-Nahda is relatively well-organized, at least compared with Tunisia's other political parties. Al-Nahda possesses a clear, democratic internal structure, with regular party conferences, strong organisational ties between grassroots supporters and party leaders, and a governing Shura Council that determines major party decisions".

Young (2015) points out that "Nidaa Tounes, in contrast, made concerted efforts to emphasise its Islamic credentials, and in particular Tunisian Islamic credentials, throughout the campaign. In contrast to Al-Nahda's public program that deemphasized religion, Nidaa Tounes issued a 20-page platform on religious issues that critiqued the Troika's actions, particularly the relationship between Al-Nahda and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and put forward its own platform". Young (1015) further notes that in

the foreword of the above platform, “then-presidential candidate Beji Caid Essebsi drew a distinction between two opposing views on Islam. The first, represented by Nidaa Tounes, is ‘an authentic, national view based on ijtihad, renewal, and reform’ is contrasted with the second view of Islam ‘based on tradition, inertia, violence, and terrorism,’ which the campaign associated with Salafi-jihadism that Al-Nahda failed to stem”. McCarthy (2015) points out that

> Nidaa Tounes, the political party which swept legislative and presidential elections on a promise of security and prosperity, is still struggling to present a coherent strategy for economic reform and renewed investment. In the past, Nidaa, which has links to the political and economic interests of the former regime of Zine el Abidin Ben Ali, was constantly critical of its rival, the Islamist movement Al-Nahda, which led a coalition government until early 2014. It accused the Islamists of security lapses, including over the assassination of two prominent politicians in 2013, and for the slow pace of economic recovery. Now Nidaa finds itself facing the same criticism.

Thus, one can observe diverse challenges that the Al-Nahda Party has to face in the post-Arab spring phase. In spite of such challenges, it could maintain its relevance in Tunisian politics and society.

Chapter V

Rachid al-Ghannouchi's Ideas and Philosophy

Rachid al-Ghannouchi is the founder of Al-Nahda. He was born in a peasant family in southern Tunisia in 1941. Although he attended a traditional religious school in his youth, intellectually he grew up as a Nasserist. This attraction for Arab nationalist ideas directed him to the Arab East in 1964; at first to Cairo, then to Damascus where he studied philosophy until 1968. He underwent a process of disenchantment with Arab nationalism in Damascus and moved closer to Islam. When he graduated from the University of Damascus, he spent a year in Paris where his new religious engagement increased, both intellectually and socially. It was in France that he became involved in activities with the *Tablighi* movement. After his return to Tunisia, while training to be a philosophy teacher at a secondary school, al-Ghannouchi continued these religious activities which led together with those of some other younger intellectuals to the formation of the Islamist movement in Tunisia at the beginning of the 1970s. The main influence on al-Ghannouchi's thinking in the 1970s came from the Muslim Brotherhood, but he was also inspired by the philosophical and political views of the Algerian thinker Malek Bennabi.

Early Life of Rachid al-Ghannouchi

Rachid al-Ghannouchi's family was a traditional Muslim family far from modernity with no modern means of communication and transportation. There was no significant impact of Western values on village life as it was in cities. Al-Ghannouchi had ten brothers and sisters, and he was the youngest one. Sheikh Muhammad was al-Ghannouchi's father who had memorised the Holy Qur'an. Although he was not educated, the people in the village thought of him as a knowledgeable person. They used to call him an imam and a mufti. Al-Ghannouchi and his elder brothers learned and memorised the Qur'an under the guidance of their father.

Al-Ghannouchi was raised in a big family until he reached the age of sixteen. His maternal-uncle al-Bashir was a follower of Arabism, and he used to admire its leader, Egypt's President Nasser. Al-Ghannouchi's family members used to sit together at al-Bashir's house and listen to the Egyptian radio broadcasts and Nasser's talks. His uncle would talk about the political events of the country and what is happening in the West Asia and around the world. Al-Ghannouchi was more interested in al-Bashir's analysis of Egyptian President's effort against "Western foes". Al-Ghannouchi enjoyed these get-togethers because through these meetings he experienced the world outside of his village. These political discussions left an impression on his young mind. Al-Bashir would describe Jamal Nasser as the *bikbashi* an army major. Al-Bashir was also a member of the national liberation movement led by Bourguiba against France who had been controlling his country since 1881. However, after independence, seeing Bourguiba's anti-Nasser and anti-West Asian approach, al-Bashir stopped supporting him and started to criticise the national leader and his party.

When he reached the age of eighteen in 1959, al-Ghannouchi went to the ancient Arabic-medium Az-Zaytouna in pursuit of education by following his brother's footsteps. Throughout the years of his education at Az-Zaytouna's Ibn Khaldoun Centre from 1959 to 1962, al-Ghannouchi did not show much interest in Islam. Nevertheless, he had to confront the violent clash between his religious education and the thoroughly secularised society which was a by-product of French rule and the regime of President Bourguiba.

"The term "secularism" here refers to an idea of a lifestyle that was restrictive of the engagement of religion in public with Western in outlook and appearance." To al-Ghannouchi, and to the traditional Muslim community of Tunisia, this secularisation process was perceived as a colonial project to westernise the country to make it easy to integrate it into French cultural and political system. The years al-Ghannouchi spent at Az-Zaytouna made him understand the identity dilemma and political turbulence which secularisation had created in his country. "In the final year of his high school education, al-Ghannouchi studied philosophy" and indulged in engaging philosophical debates (Tamimi 2001: 11).

Upon graduation, still, he was not interested in Islamic issues except what he studied from his father at home. He even considered himself as an atheist. Rationally, al-Ghannouchi grew up as an admirer of Jamal Nasser. Nasser's ideology was a form of pan-Arabism between 1952 and 1970. Like all Tunisians who left home for the West Asia inspired by the revolutionary idea, al-Ghannouchi arrived in Egypt. In 1964, al-Ghannouchi enrolled with the Faculty of Agriculture at Cairo University. He chose this course by being inspired by the desire to help his villagers who relied on laborious and primitive farming techniques. After studying for three months, he was compelled to quit. In the wake of Tunisian President's Egyptian trip, and by order of the Tunisian embassy in Egypt, the Egyptian government prepared to expel al-Ghannouchi and his friends from the country whom the Tunisian regime referred to as "the fugitives". The unpleasant incident did shake al-Ghannouchi's preconceived thinking about Nasserism as an anti-colonial and pan-Arab unionist movement (Tamimi 2001).

Al-Ghannouchi's life in Egypt for few months exposed him to a different image of Jamal Nasser. He could not find there what he thought of "ambition for progress, of Arab solidarity, and of unwavering support for the causes of justice and equality". Al-Ghannouchi was compelled to leave Egypt when he came to know that the Tunisian embassy was intending to track him and his friends down. Al-Ghannouchi went to Syria where he once again made up his mind to continue the study of philosophy. He lived in Damascus from 1964 to 1968; where the Ba'athist rule had still been in its early phase and had not fully controlled the country yet, therefore there was a considerable margin of

freedom existed. At Damascus University, al-Ghannouchi faced a fierce intellectual conflict among students on different political trends. The nationalist trend had a monopoly over the debates. In the meantime, there was a conflict between Islamists and secularists over the position of religion as a foundation of guidance and legislation in both private and public spheres.

Al-Ghannouchi was very much impressed by the prestigious publication *Al-Ma'rifah* (means knowledge or cognizance), that he established in Tunisia in the 1970s (which according to him, it stays unparalleled by any other Islamic publication he has come to know yet). He intended to imitate *Al-Hadarah al-lslamiyah* (The Islamic Civilization) by concentrating more on intellectual and less on political issues. The *Al-Ma'rifah* was first established by Dr Mustafa as-Siba'i, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria who passed away prior former's arrival to the country. A strong debate over the illegal Israeli control of Palestine and its implications was taking place among the academia and students. As the prospect of war appeared in 1967, al-Ghannouchi joined demonstrations organised by the Syrian nationalists to require the training and arming for the students to defend Palestinian soil from the occupation (Tamimi 2001).

In June 1965, "at the closing stages of the academic year, al-Ghannouchi travelled from Syria to Turkey, then to Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands." This tour lasted seven months. The faculty did not make attendance compulsory, so he felt free and left the university. Having had a desire to live in the West, he travelled from one state to another, working something to cover the expenses of his travel. Throughout this travelling, he resided in youth hostels where he could meet young people from around the world. The effect of the long travel was enormous, and it made him change many pre-assumptions about the West, and he came to have a more realistic image of the region. His observations over the experiences in the West were asserting the Islamists' perception on the issue more than the nationalists' view towards which he still leaned. In sum, the European travel had interestingly contributed to his intellectual migration from Pan-Arabism to Islamist framework a year later (Tamimi 2001: 19).

Al-Ghannouchi accepts Malik Bennabi's idea that democracy is a holistic concept, that is to say, democracy is more than a declaration that the people are sovereign, and more than an institutional system. Al-Ghannouchi writes:

> The problem is not in the democratic system: elections, parliament and majority... etc. but in Western philosophies that have separated the spirit and the body. Western philosophy ignored the spirit, and fought God, and struggled to replace Him with a man (Abdelkader 2011: 81).

The European tour and the study of philosophy and nuanced readings shook the nationalist ideology. Al-Ghannouchi felt weaker in the fierce debates with the members of the Islamists. He came to know that the opinions of the nationalist camp were weak. They could not give him reasonable replies to his questions. He questions about the Arab Nationalism and difference between Nasserism and Ba'athism were left unanswered. So he came to the conclusion that apart from history and language, Arab nationalism was just a set of passions and slogans.

Al-Ghannouchi understood that "Arab nationalism traced its roots in Western political thought. In fact, the European impacts, through the philosophies of French and German nationalism, were patent in the writings of Sati' al-Husri and the other ideologues of Arab nationalism." The attitude of nationalists toward religion is another factor to change al-Ghannouchi's confidence in the nationalist ideology. In this regard, the Arab and Muslim cultural background left an impression on him so he could distant with Arab nationalism. "His Syrian experience caused to believe that in the West Asia, the concept of Arabism was often opposed to Islam. The Arabism he had known in North Africa did not clash with Islam and was therefore not the Arabism upon which the party he had joined in order to serve the Arab Ummah was founded" (Tamimi 2001: 20-21). Al-Ghannouchi did not stop his pursuit to find

> a camp that could accommodate both his Arabism and faith in Islam. He joined a group of Syrian nationalist students who, after spending several hours discussing the Arab situation and the ways of bringing about an Arab renaissance, started having their doubts about the nationalist discourse.

> They met with members of different Islamic groups in the Syrian area including the Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood), the group of Sheikh Nassir ad-Din al-Albani, some of the scholars who were active in Damascus such as Sheikh Habannaka, and some elements of Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami (the Islamic Liberation Party). Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami was established in Jerusalem in 1953 by Taqiy-ud-Din an-Nabhani (1909-1977) which declared itself to be a political party with Islam as its ideology and the revival of the Islamic *Ummah* as its aim. It was to achieve this goal by creating a single Islamic state, erected on the ruins of existing regimes" (Tamimi 2001: 21).

In Tamimi's analysis,

> Al-Ghannouchi's tour in search of an alternative to nationalism gave an opportunity to meet and learn from several prominent Islamic scholars in Syria. Sheikh al-Buti, Adib Salih, and Wahbaaz-Zuhayli were all lecturers at the Shari'ah College at Damascus University. Although al-Ghannouchi was not registered with the college, he developed an interest in attending the lectures of these three scholars. He also made the acquaintance of Jawdat Sa'id whom he thought was a very distinguished personality and described as an "active volcano". Sa'id had been a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria and was an outspoken critic of the political situation both in Syria and in the Arab region. Later on, he left the Ikhwan and became increasingly influenced by the ideas of Algerian thinker Malik Bennabi. Sa'id's discourse gradually changed, and his focus was on philosophical and psychological studies, having come to the conclusion that the problem with the Muslims was not political but intellectual. The divorce with nationalism led al-Ghannouchi to the rediscovery of Islam (Tamimi 2001: 22)

Al-Ghannouchi called the "night of 15 June 1966 as a turning point and a landmark moment in his life. That was the night he embraced what he called the true

Islam. It was during the third year of his stay in Syria that al-Ghannouchi divorced the *al-Ittihad al-Ishtiraki* and moved to the Islamic camp. He boasts of having deserted Nasserism while still at its climax, which is before the 1967 Arab defeat" (Tamimi 2001:22).

The starting point for al-Ghannouchi's writing about democracy is a strong relationship between Islam and politics. He cites compelling evidence that links Islam as a faith to political life, namely, the historic precedence of life in Medina after the Prophet's migration to it, and an intrinsic agreement that Islamic law handles private and public life. According to al-Ghannouchi:

> One of the good aspects of democracy is how it views humanity, an issue that was of importance in the Enlightenment and Reformation eras in Europe. However, the inability of those philosophies to balance between the material and the spiritual on the individual level, the balance between individual and group rights, the balance between strong versus weak nations makes the enlightenment philosophy incomplete. The Enlightenment era's separation of spirit versus reason and religion versus life: all of this resulted in the deification of reason so that new religion was born, a religion that is built on materialism and individualism, a religion that has no place for a reason (Abdelkader 2011: 80-81).

In Syria, al-Ghannouchi had not achieved any practical Islamic movement experience; neither he joined any group or party or even practised *da'wah* work (preaching). He was preoccupied with a reading of contemporary Islamic thinkers. During the last two years of his study in Damascus, he read some of the writings of Mawdudi, Muhammad Iqbal, al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad Qutb, as-Siba'i, Malik Bennabi, and an-Nadwi. He attended *tafsir, hadith,* and *fiqh* sessions. He was invited by more than one organisation, including the Muslim Brotherhood to join in but he refused because he aimed to return home and could not understand what kind of Islamic activity he would engage there upon returning. He sought it inappropriate to commit himself and return to his country Tunisia with an organisational affiliation. Nevertheless, he had familiarised himself with all sorts of groups, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Sufi orders,

Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami, and the Salafiyah. For one whole year, al-Ghannouchi joined the circle of Nasiruddin al-Albani, a prominent leader of the as-Salafiyya, whose work in *tahqiqar-riwayah* (the authentication of narration and the attempt to cleanse the reports attributed to the Prophet) had greatly impressed him (Tamimi 2001: 22-23).

Immediately after graduation from Damascus University in the summer of 1968, al-Ghannouchi went to France to pursue his postgraduate studies in philosophy at the Sorbonne. He enrolled for a master's degree in the philosophy of education, and registered under the supervision of Professor Sanders for a dissertation entitled "The Qur'anic Approach to Education". Al-Ghannouchi had not been back to Tunisia since he left it in 1964. He was afraid that the returning to home might drag prosecution for leaving the country to go to the *Mashriq* without permission, and could consequently have faced a ban from leaving again. At this stage in his life, France seemed the right place to study. On the one hand, the news from his country was much worse than before. Islam, al-Ghannouchi was given the impression, had already been uprooted, and the whole country had been completely tried to be Westernised. On the other hand, France was still the major source of "cultural legitimacy" in Tunisia." In other words, al-Ghannouchi needed to obtain an academic qualification from France to be recognised in Tunisia. Furthermore, France was the natural choice for the Tunisian students (Tamimi 2001: 23).

As a newcomer, al-Ghannouchi was nervous to settle down and familiarise himself with this new situation before becoming involved in French politics. He felt that it was important to acquaint with the North African life style, so he frequently visited the cafe shops in Boulevard Saint Michel, then commonly recognised as the "students road", inside the Latin Quarter it was a famous place for North African where "debates among students from different trends over intellectual and political issues took place. No Islamic trend existed among the students yet; Tunisian students were either Communists or Arab nationalists, that is, Ba'athists or Nasserists" (Tamimi 2001: 24). Tamimi states thus:

> Al-Ghannouchi commenced his *da'wah* activity in a very poor Paris district. His *tabligh* unit used an Algerian trader's house in the district as the centre for its *da'wah* activities. Since most of the community consisted of

> labourers, al-Ghannouchi was the most qualified person among its members to be the *imam*, even though he insisted he had no previous *da'wah* experience at all. Along with the members of his *tabligh* group, he pursued the recommended method of the *tabligh*. He would go out to the streets and call on labourers in their houses, in pubs, and in cafe shops, inviting them to a simple version of Islam that focused mainly on rituals and prayers such as *salaat* (prayer), *tilawah* (recitation of the Qur'an), *dhikr* (praise of God), and on moral and spiritual aspects such as generosity, compassion, brotherhood and giving a helping hand to sinners until they repented (Tamimi 2001: 25).

Al-Ghannouchi sees harmony between Islam and reason and believes that both should inform theology and law. It is al-Ghannouchi's belief that reason and religion are co-dependent, that one cannot exist without the other. Al-Ghannouchi views the ties between rationalism and faith through the concept of "rational religiosity". That is, the interpretation of religious textual sources is dependent on human reasoning and judgment, and therefore, rationality and religion are inseparable (Abdelkader 2011).

His life in Paris and its "social environment contradicted the Islamic values he believed in, particularly with regard to the relations between the sexes." To avoid such a situation, al-Ghannouchi frequently visited "a club of Catholic students in the vicinity of the Sorbonne. He felt more comfortable with this surrounding," and he was impressed with the culture of the club. Al-Ghannouchi used to visit the club's library, spend some time in its group discussions or the sightseeing trips organised by its members. "He felt this was a good chance for him. Firstly, he interacted with the Frenchs to improve the communication skill in French and secondly, he involved in a dialogue about Islam with the Catholic students; and thirdly, he enjoyed the whole situation as he describes as the "clean, seduction-free and acceptable" atmosphere of the club. Out of curiosity, al-Ghannouchi sometimes used to attend "mass at the Catholic Church. He wanted to study about Catholic rituals and worship and explore its impact on the psyche" (Tamimi 2001: 26). Further, Tamimi says:

> The Islamic society was headed by an Iranian student through whom al-Ghannouchi became familiar with the thoughts and ideas of Mehdi

> Bazargan, some of whose works had already been translated from French into Arabic. A prominent Iranian reformer and modernist, Bazargan (1907-1995) was one of the major players of Islamic opposition in both the pre- and post-Islamic revolution periods in Iran. He played an important role in the revolutions that toppled the Shah when Khomeini sent him to lead the oil workers' strike in mid-1978. The fact that the Islamic Society was headed by the only Iranian student in the society impressed al-Ghannouchi. This student was a staunch Ja'fari, that is a follower of the al-Ja'fariyah, which derives its name from Abu Ja'far Muhammad al-Baqir and Ja'far as-Sadiq, the fifth and sixth of the twelve Imams of Shiism. For al-Ghannouchi, the special occasion reflected a high degree of tolerance. Iranian student was the leader, and all other members were Sunnis. Eventually, Abu Bakr threw the students out of the mosque, forcing them to go to a rented accommodation in the Latin Quarter, which they made it as a centre for the society, of which al-Ghannouchi had become the general secretary. In addition to the debates that went on among students in the Latin Quarter's cafe shops, the Tunisian left had been witnessing a visible boost in its strength and influence. The leftists managed to organise a series of big meetings at the Mutualite Hall to condemn the policies of President Bourguiba and call for a revolution against his rule. In the same hall, al-Ghannouchi participated in a rally in support of the Palestinian resistance movement, which had just started. He was impressed by a speech given by French historian Vincent Monteuil, who later became Muslim and called himself Mansur (Tamimi 2001: 27).

According to Tamimi,

> Al-Ghannouchi had just started writing his thesis for the master's degree in the Philosophy of Education in Islam when his elder brother, al-Mukhtar, came to take him back to Tunisia. Al-Mukhtar had heard about al-Ghannouchi's active involvement with the *tabligh* community. Some Tunisian workers, who happened to know al-Ghannouchi and his *Tablighi*

> activities, informed his family. Fearing that al-Ghannouchi might have gone astray, they sent their eldest to take him back home. At the time Islamic behaviour was sought as some kind of idiocy. Al-Ghannouchi's brother, who was a senior judge, came to France with the story of the serious sickness of his mother, whom al-Ghannouchi had not seen for three years. The mother's illness was enough reason to convince al-Ghannouchi to halt his "idiotic" activity (Tamimi 2001: 27-28).

Al-Ghannouchi and his brother went to the city of Cordoba in Spain and they visited the grand mosque and remnants of the Islamic civilisation there. Tamimi notes that "the visit affected the brothers enormously". Tamimi says:

> Due to the influence of secular atmosphere of Tunisia in the 1950s and 1960s, his elder brother grew as less religious. But after that tour of Spain, his elder brother returned to prayer and had until he passed away. He became a staunch supporter of al-Ghannouchi and Islamic Movement. Along with his elder brother, al-Ghannouchi travelled through Algeria where he could meet Bennabi for the first time. He had been impressed with Malik Bennabi's great skill of social and historical analysis and had eagerly wanted to listen to him directly. When al-Ghannouchi sat before him; he felt like he was overwhelmed by the notion that he was sitting in the company of great philosopher Ibn Khaldoun's successor (Tamimi 2001: 28).

Al-Ghannouchi was impressed with Afghani, Kawakibi, Muhammed Abdu, and other scholars and liberal thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was attracted to their analytic approach, inspired by the spirit of the Islamic texts, rather than the literal word of the texts. The growing influence of writers such as Khayr el-Din al-Tunis, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi and their contemporaries reflected a shift in the international balance of power. Western Europe was growing stronger as the Ottoman Empire was falling apart. Many scholars from Ottoman territories chose to travel to France, especially to obtain a military education. When scholars like Tahtawi joined the vibrant and highly-politicised student community in Paris, they began to rethink and reinterpret their faith to accommodate perceived European "modernity". They called for more liberal

interpretations of the *nusus* (texts), that is, the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. Al-Ghannouchi's admiration and promotion of the ethos of the texts over their literal words have caused some Tunisian Islamists to split from his movement. (Abdelkader 2011). Tamimi describes the influences on Al-Ghannouchi in the following words:

> Malik Bennabi attracted al-Ghannouchi to his Islamic philosophy and influenced him very much, which he judged as stemming from "scientifically" analysing reality and then conducting a dialogue between such analysis of reality and the religious text. This, in his opinion, was different from what he had been reading in the works of Maulana Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb, where a vision of reality is derived solely from the text. Al-Ghannouchi's wish to meet Bennabi was granted surprisingly, and the unexpected turns in his life enabled him to meet Bennabi not only once but many times. After their meeting, al-Ghannouchi was to become not only a major game player in Tunisian politics but also one of the most well-known personalities in current Islamic political thought (Tamimi 2001: 29).

Al-Ghannouchi advocates utilizing reason and logic in the reinterpretation of the texts (the Qur'an and the *sunnah*). This reinterpretation pertains to *al-dhaniyat*, that is, issues left to human interpretation within the spirit of the law found in the texts. These include matters such as governance or the evolution of practices that pertain to the adoption of new technologies. Al-Ghannouchi criticizes "traditional Tunisian religiosity" because of its adherence to rigid interpretations that do not allow for the free practice of *ijtihad*. Al-Ghannouchi's conception of *ijtihad* goes hand in hand with his notion of theoretical space, or *faraghat*. He argues that the faith's claim to universality and eternalness is built on its flexibility, and that adaptability is dependent on *ijtihad* and the renewal of textual interpretation. Clearly, al-Ghannouchi perceives *ijtihad* as necessary for the survival of the faith itself (Abdelkader 2011).

Al-Ghannouchi critiques Western political thought as: "the product of the grinding war, which took place in the West between reason and religion". Recalling the Epic struggle that "took place in Europe between reason and religion", al-Ghannouchi recognizes how the "despotic" authority of the Church eventually led to a loss of

legitimacy. God's words were therefore replaced by man's. Al-Ghannouchi perceives the legislative system and ethos as part a democratic process that includes justice, Islamic law and public freedoms. He insists on the necessity of pluralism, especially as it relates to the interpretation of Islamic law (Abdelkader 2011: 82).

Al-Ghannouchi is emphatically against the monopolization of religious interpretation and the utilization of those interpretations for worldly purposes. The Islamic political order is neither theocratic nor "totalitarian because not only does the community concede very little power to the government, but also because sovereignty, within the framework of the supremacy of the next, lies with the Muslim community and not with the state." Ghonnouchi emphasizes the importance of the holistic nature of governance as well as the importance of accountability. He sees the mechanics of democracy as secondary, stressing instead the functionality and spirit of democracy rather than elections and institutions of democratization. He believes that Western democracy offers guidelines for the selection of leaders and political systems, and that it would be a mistake to reject it because of its deficiencies. A society based on inadequate law is preferable to the domination of tyrants-especially those claiming to speak for democracy. (Abdelkader 2011: 83)

Al-Ghannouchi's contribution to contemporary Islamist thought is based on his study of public freedom. He believes that freedom is not merely a Western concept and rejects the common perception that Islam as a civilization does not advocate freedom. He writes:

> The reason that Islam is excluded in the discourse about freedom is that they (the West) conceive the individual as the center of those universe, while in Islam God is the center of the universe. Those opposing viewpoint could only be reconciled through re-examining Islamic law so that one does not have to choose between faith and freedom. (Abdelkader 2011: 84)

Al-Ghannouchi notes the divisions that exists in the Western-Islamic discourse for example, modern/traditional, and rational/irrational, and adds another-faith/freedom. In his view, the Western perspective of freedom stands in contradiction to faith. However,

al-Ghannouchi stresses the importance of freedom as a necessary foundation for democratic processes and a fundamental principle of liberty and civility in Islamic discourse. He believes that opposing tyranny is necessity because tyranny is the worst enemy of the Islamic faith. Clarifying his interpretation of the word "freedom", al-Ghannouchi writes: "Freedom in the Arabic language is the opposite of slavery". Therefore, freedom in the Arabic context is a given, unless it is mentioned in opposition to slavery. Al-Ghannouchi's comment is supported by historical precedence. He cites al-Khalifa Umar Ibn al Khattab's saying: "since when did you enslave people when their mothers have born free?" Umar uses the word "free" specifically as the opposite of slavery (Abdelkader 2011).

Al-Ghannouchi further argues that, as a gift to humanity, freedom is the only tool that allows mankind guardianship of the earth (*istikhlaf*). Therefore, faith protects freedom rather than curbs it, to preserve the welfare of people. This notion of public welfare (*maslaha*) is well documented in Islamic legal texts, in which the basic principles of welfare are the protection of the faith, the self, the mind, posterity and wealth. References in Islamic law to justice, freedom, equality and propagation of mankind as parts of public welfare also exist. According to al-Ghannouchi, the most important freedoms guarded by Islamic law are: freedom of faith; political freedom (the freedom to create political parties, freedom of the press, freedom to participate in elections as a candidate or as a voter, that is, governing should always take place with the people's consent; social freedoms, such as justice, housing and transportation; and freedoms for non-Muslims in a Muslim state , which should guarantee them the right to abide by their own laws in matters that pertain to family laws, food consumption, appearance, etc. (Abdelkader 2011).

Al-Ghannouchi bases those rights on the Islamic legal principle of public welfare. He says: "Al-Shatibi writes that Islamic law ensures the pursuit of public welfare. Essential public welfare is clarified in the end goals of Islamic law by protecting the faith, the self, the mind, posterity and wealth". The basis for Islamic governance stems from the principle of the guardianship of the earth because man is created proud, with intellect, with a free will and with responsibilities. Thus constitutionally, guardianship translates

into two principles: the primacy of Islamic law and the right to consultation (Abdelkader 2011).

Al Ghannouchi addresses specific, practical problems. He focuses on five themes: education, the mixing of the sexes, Islamic female dress, work, and polygamy. He takes issue with those who want to keep the education of women at a minimum that qualifies them to be good housewives. He maintains that such a position is incompatible with the precepts and intentions of Islam, which encourage women to gain as much knowledge as they want. In his view, education is vital in many respects. Through education, both women and men can be liberated from the dominant legacy of the age of inhitat and the horizons of women can be significantly expanded their bondage to their present world of trivialities broken (Netton 2007).

As regards the mixing of the sexes, al-Ghannouchi views complete segregation as foreign to Islam. He draws a sharp distinction between two conditions of gender mixing. The first is a condition conducive to sexual seduction (such as the presence of a man and a woman in a "suspicious circumstance," in an atmosphere likely to induce "licence," or in a posture of physical contact). The second, by contrast, is a condition under which sexual temptation is unlikely to arise (such as in a mosque, a session of learning, a field of jihad, or a protest march). Inasmuch as he indicts the presence of women under the first condition, he defends their right to be present (and even effectively so) under the second (Netton 2007).

In discussing the way a Muslim woman should dress, al-Ghannouchi does not come up with new suggestions that could upset the traditionalists. He concedes that "a woman's dress should be long enough to cover the body and that her head should always be covered". The key concepts given prominence in this connection are *'iffa* (chastity, virtuousness, probity) and *hishma* (decency, propriety). He also refers to concepts of *al-shakhsiyya al-quamiyya*, the national character, in opposition to a process of *maskh* (distortion, alienation) that has been taking place over a long period of time. Regarding the issue of women working in urban centres, he notes that his more conservative co-religionists have never opposed the involvement of women in a cottage industry in rural

areas and their mixing with men under the conditions of agricultural production. He says that "as long as a woman puts on her Islamic dress and behaves in accordance with the religious teachings, she has earned the right to take an active part in the process of social production" (Netton 2007: 287-88).

In addressing the question of polygamy, al-Ghannouchi puts across the familiar arguments advanced by modern Islamist thinkers. Polygamy is seen as a safety valve when the numbers of female and male populations are upset by exceptional events like wars. The Islamic legislator has, however, given the woman in a marriage the right to lay a condition in her marriage contract obligating the man not to take another wife. In discussing the issue, al-Ghannoushi is keen to stress the "precautionary," "remedial" and "exceptional" nature of Islamic polygamy and states that the practice is admissible, with certain restrictions, without being obligatory or recommended (Netton 2007).

Islam, Democracy and Pluralism

Al-Ghannouchi once likened his party to the Christian Democrats of Europe. "If there are Christian Democrats, then why not Muslim Democrats?" he asks. According to him, Islam is compatible with democracy, and democratic values are so much familiar with Islamic understanding of human rights. He elaborates and interprets rights of practising religions, gender issue, pluralism and freedom of expression within an Islamic framework. According to al-Ghannouchi, even non-Muslims can criticise Islam itself and praise their own religions and even grants "pagans" the right of asylum in a Muslim state. This stance of al-Ghannouchi is very pivotal and different from traditional Muslim scholarship. He declares that while some secularists are "the devil's advocate," those who are "educated and who put their brains and their talents in the service of an oppressive regime have made their own decisions. They must bear the responsibility of their choice". As regards the status of women, a controversial issue for Islamists everywhere, al-Ghannouchi does not advocate changing the Personal Status Code, which has come to symbolise female emancipation in Tunisia. Al-Nahda's official line, however, holds that the Law is "not sacred" (Elgindy 1995).

Tamimi says that,

> following lengthy discussions, a small team of Tunisian students came into being in early 1969. It included Ahmida Enneifer, al-Ghannouchi's senior in Syria and a Nasserist who started having doubts about Arab nationalism after arriving in France one year before al-Ghannouchi. The group also included Ahmed Manai, who was then a postgraduate student and who later (in 1995) authored a book about Tunisian President Ben Ali entitled *Le jardin secret du general Ben Ali.* For al-Ghannouchi, this circle formed another field of activity equivalent to the one he frequented at the local mosque, where he became actively engaged with the *tabligh* group. Life in France did not have an important impact on al-Ghannouchi's thought or conduct. He reckons he must have been lucky to meet the *tabligh* group soon after his arrival: Living with the *tabligh* community provided me with immunity and protection from fierce winds and added a new dimension to my moulding. Never before had I had such an experience? (Tamimi 2001: 24-25).

Rachid al-Ghannouchi suggested that "until an Islamic *shura* (consensus) system of government is established, the second best alternative for Muslims is a secular democratic regime that respects the fundamental rights of all people without discrimination and commitment to a religious frame of reference. What matters in such a system is that despotism is averted. A secular democratic system of government is less evil than a despotic system of government that claims to be Islamic" (Al-Ghannouchi 2002).

While many from Islamist camp have sought the case of democracy as either adversative to Islamic fundamentals or as supporting the ideas of the Qur'an and Sunnah, al-Ghannouchi approached it with more nuanced understanding. For instance, the issue of sovereignty (i.e., popular vs. divine) has been an especially thorny one for Islamic political theorists. Those who believe democracy is inimical to Islam subscribe to the notion that only God can be sovereign, while democracy gives the people, as such,

sovereignty (Elgindy 1995). Al-Ghannouchi has mediated the two views in the following manner:

> When we say "God's rule," we do not mean that God comes down and governs directly. Divine law, as applied by the Muslim state, is based upon constitutional statutes conforming to Islamic ethics. In addition, it disallows monarchies or oligarchies from controlling governmental affairs. Therefore, it is clear that "God's rule" correlates to the rule of the people or their representatives (Al- Ghannouchi 1993).

Al-Ghannouchi is critical of Western "hypocrisy" in its dealings with Muslims; the Gulf war, Bosnia, commitment to democracy, and respect for human rights are all cited as examples. Simultaneously, however, he expresses hope in the possibility of mutual understanding and cooperation. It is the difference between the real and the potential. He criticises Western (in) actions, not through the lens of Islam and Islamic values, but rather through Western values and ideals themselves. According to al-Ghannouchi, while secularism may be the ideal in the West, given the repressive nature of the Church historically, the relationship between Islam and political power has not obviated the need for secularism in the Muslim world. His ideas about the West transcend differences in culture and values. He censures the Western powers for not abiding by their own principles, the principles conceived by the European Renaissance. In particular, "al-Ghannouchi is deeply critical of Western support for the oppressive regimes of the region and criticises the West for not being true to its commitment to support democratic movements" (Mahan 2011).

Al-Ghannouchi's approach towards "modernity," as the term is used in the West is quite interesting. So al-Ghannouchi considers Islamism as a "merger between modernism and Islam" at the same time portraying the current rule as despotic and pre-modern. He further accuses Bourguiba, a French-educated and a staunch follower of French liberalism, of missing the teachings of the French Revolution which taught its citizens the way of the uprising against oppressive dictatorship; it accelerated the beginning of democracy in the Western region, and it started the way to flourish human

liberty and progress.This is an exact vision which al-Ghannouchi has dreamt of for Al-Nahda. Through this approach, al-Ghannouchi connects himself to the Western signs of the French revolution and reformation (Elgindy 1995).

Al-Ghannouchi notes that Al-Nahda does not seek a "reinstatement of the inherited model" nor de-emancipate Tunisia's women. Rather he asserts that Islam guarantees equality between the sexes: "The Quran says that men and women are equals. Women have the right to education, work, choice of home and marriage, ownership of property and political participation." I insist on the equality of opportunity between men and women. This does not contradict the specific roles of men and women, for instance, in war men fight and women help them. I don't believe in forcing the *hijab* on women. It's a personal matter, not a duty of the state (Al-Ghannouchi 1993). Al-Ghannouchi does express, however, considerable distaste for the 1981 law barring women from wearing the *hijab*, calling it an example of the "modernism of Bourguiba", which only seeks to mimic the West without consideration for indigenous religious and cultural norms (Elgindy 1995). On the other hand, the Tunisian government and others depicted it as pre-modernist, neo-European fascists, i.e. the mentality by which the Church and monarchy oppressed European citizenry centuries ago has supplanted the age of democracy in our geopolitical sphere. They depicted al-Ghannouchi and his movement as "traditional", "backward-looking", and "repressive". For al-Ghannouchi, Bourguiba and Ben Ali both represent a "superficial modernity," seeking the Westernization, while al-Ghannouchi and his movement demonstrate a more genuine and authentic modernity which is compatible with Tunisia's Arab Islamic heritage. He opines that the modernity can also coexist with Islamic values and modern tools provide better situation. Al-Ghannouchi categorically rejects references to Islamism as "fundamentalism" or as backward-looking. Instead, he has made the analogy of the oppressive /backwards/ outdated Church which eventually pave the way the liberal/ new/modernist Reformation. In fact, al-Ghannouchi prefers such a comparison between his movement and the Protestant Reformation precisely because it was characterised by revolutionary social, political and economic activity, an intellectual revival, a deep commitment to social and civil liberties and the dawn of pluralism. The similarity has occurred because these values have also been incorporated in the Islamic organisations' agenda within the context of

Muslim ideals. In other words, his peculiar reading of Islam represents not only change from the past but a total reformation in and of itself (Al-Ghannouchi 1993).

For the issue of pluralism, he asserts that it is a vital value inherent in democracy, Islamic civilisation already pioneered in its implementation, preferring the treatment of Jews and Christians in Islamic lands and the Qur'anic injunction dictating that there be "no compulsion in religion" as evidence. Al-Ghannouchi further explains that the virtue of pluralism not only to Islamic heritage (turath) but also to Islamic law (shari'ah): "Fundamental values inseparable from Islamic law, religious, cultural, political and ideological pluralism are emphatically sustained within Muslim societies." The inclusion of ideological pluralism is significant in that it is an ideal usually ignored by the majority of Islamists today, who chose instead to elaborate on "rights" of religious (i.e., Christian and Jewish) minorities (Al-Ghannouchi 1993).

The fact that an Islamic movement has chosen to project its political ideas within the phrase of democracy and freedom is recognition that these principles represent a dominant legitimising force in the eyes of their constituents and the population at large. Al-Ghannouchi's significance, however, lies not with his thought provoking arguments nor even with his acceptability or unacceptability to the West. Rather, al-Ghannouchi and the movement he represents are another link in the chain in the evolutionary process of creating more accountable and stable political systems while preserving a sense of historical and cultural authenticity. While he was not the first Islamist to hold the democratic ideal and will unquestionably not be the last, al-Ghannouchi must be credited with setting a precedent on a considerable scale (Elgindy 1995).

What sets al-Ghannouchi apart from other Islamists in the region is "the relative ease with which he speaks the two languages of democracy and Islam fluently and simultaneously, almost taking them for granted". Consequently, al-Ghannouchi's writings and public statements reveal a deep-rooted appreciation for democratic principles. Furthermore, he appears to be well read in Western political philosophy. Al-Ghannouchi defines democracy in the following manner: a system that permits the masses to demand and obliges the state to advise; a system where the masses decide their

future, not just by electing their representatives but by being actively involved and influential in administering the public affairs (Al-Ghannouchi 1993).

Moreover, despite continued government accusations that al-Ghannouchi wishes to install an authoritarian Islamic state by force, he reaffirmed his commitment to democracy just days before the elections last March: "This is just an excuse to exclude us from political life. Since our foundation, we have always made it clear that we fully embrace the democratic system." The following passage demonstrates the extent to which al-Ghannouchi's ideas on democracy are based on Western political theory: "Democracy reduces the gap between the rulers and the masses, in political, economic, and educational terms. The ruler should become a true servant of the people and an ordinary individual in the social family." The social and political participation and not the representation is the model that democracy strives for. The ideal is achieved when the masses become the real rulers. The degree of political participation in running public affairs is the criterion for evaluating a democratic system. The higher the participation rate, the closer the system to its ideal (Al-Ghannouchi 1993). Even Tamimi (2001) also describes al-Ghannouchi's advocacy of democracy and pluralism as:

> Al-Ghannouchi believes democracy to be a set of mechanisms for guaranteeing the sovereignty of the people and for supplying safety valves against corruption and the hegemonic monopoly of power. While insisting on the compatibility of democracy with Islam, he believes that because of their secular foundations, contemporary forms of liberal democracy may not suit Muslim societies (Tamimi 2001: 80).

In his speeches, al-Ghannouchi displays a willingness to acknowledge, even praise, the Western model as one to be emulated, though not adopted wholesale. This is a crucial point in that it demonstrates that he is not afraid of openly borrowing a Western ideal, an act which many Islamists would find objectionable. Ordinarily, Islamist apologists couch their acceptance of democracy (if at all) in historical assertions that Islam is the real source of democracy and that Muslims practised it in the days of the Prophet and the four Rightly Guided Caliphs. While many Arab countries have opposition movements which are either democratic or Islamist, usually on opposite ends

of the spectrum, al-Ghannouchi has consistently claimed to be both. Thus, al-Ghannouchi not only boasts the largest opposition movement in Tunisia but also claims the democratic opposition in Tunisia. It should come as no surprise that Al-Nahda and its leader reflect the moderation and mildness which are (or were) characteristic of the Tunisian political landscape (Elgindy 1995).

Nation-State in the Thought of Rachid al-Ghannouchi

In many parts of the Islamic world, freedom movements used Islamic symbols, parties, slogans, and prominent leaders to legitimate their attempts and mobilised people's support. By the mid-twentieth century, most of the Islamic world had gained political independence from the external occupation. This era witnessed the emergence of modern states whose mould of development was greatly influenced by the European secular paradigms. The majority of Muslim states borrowed nation-building ideas from the Western framework and relied on Western-educated elites and foreign advisers (Esposito 2014).

While the separation of religion from politics is not there in the Muslim world, the position of Islam in state and society as a basis to legitimate leaders and government establishments was seriously shortened. Most states have taken a modest Islamic cover-up, adding in some sort of reference to "Islam in the constitutions such as that the ruler should be a Muslim or that the Sharia law was a source of rules, even if it was not." The governments also tried to bring Islamic institutions (mosques, religious courts and *awqaf*, religiously endowed properties, etc.) under their control. "But while most Muslim states replaced Sharia to western secular codes, Muslim family law (marriage, inheritance and divorce) remained in force" (Esposito 2014: 2).

Rachid al-Ghannouchi is a significant instance of an "Islamist say in the political conflict between post-colonial secular states and their opposition. Al-Ghannouchi has witnessed first hand the attempts of the secular Tunisian government, or, as he calls it, "pseudo-secular", to suppress any voice that suggests an alternate vision of modernity.

Al-Ghannouchi asserts that secularism in the Arab Muslim world and tyranny always go hand in hand. Authoritarian states take the worst of secularist idea and use it against Islamists by comparing Islam with fundamentalism and fanaticism and projecting secularism as a qualification to democracy. The brand of secularism that the dictatorial states of the West Asia and North Africa enforce does not endorse civil society but rather is "an impediment to the preservation and development of civil society." Al-Ghannouchi puts forward an ideal, Islamic civil society as an alternate to that of "pseudo-secular" and "pseudo-modern" regimes" (Esposito 2014: 8-9).

Al-Ghannouchi insists that foundations of a modern political society and the laws should foster and respect the dignity of its citizens

> just as the companions of the Prophet lived the relationship between *ad-dini* (the religious) and *as-siyasi* (the political). He persists that Muslims must also employ their human capability for *aql* (reason) and *ijtihad* (context bound judgements) and effort to create, renovate and foster civil society institutions (al mujtama' al-ahli) (Rees 2011: 41).

The word "laïcité" does not mean secularism. In Britain, for example, there is a queen who represents the church, and she is the "Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England," while France prohibits Muslim French females, citizens and immigrants, from wearing *hijab* in public places. The *hijab* has not created a problem in any European country except for France. This deep-rooted enmity toward anything related to religion originated in the caesarian birth of the French state and its struggle with the church. The French state considered itself the maker of the nation, not an expression of it, and it is the guardian of its identity. That is in contrast to the British state, which is an expression of its pluralism (English, Scotch, Irish, and Walsh); the British state is the result of this pluralism. France does not allow the establishment of a royal party because it is believed that such a party constitutes a threat to the republic and undermines its foundations. Therefore, freedom has certain limits that it should not exceed, taking into consideration that the state is considered the official guardian of

identity. The Tunisian elite was cast within this French mould, making its coexistence with Islam difficult, especially with Islam regarding inclusiveness. Islam does not accept to be reduced to an individual creed practised in the narrow space left by the state especially if it follows the French model (Jebnoun and Esposito 2014).

"In an Islamic civil society, citizens obey the law because of their faith in it, not in spite of it. They elect people to lead and serve the common interest rather than their own desires; it is not out of fright of worldly sentence, but to follow a sense of righteousness and *taqwa*, closeness to God as well as for the promise of everlasting reward in the afterlife. Al-Ghannouchi connects secularism with liberalism and sees the failures of European secularism," i.e., crime, violence, isolation, lack of trust and mutual cooperation and association between neighbours, as undermining civil society: "Allied with liberalism, which is synonymous with selfishness, greed and individualism, secularism will eventually do away not only with the notion of civil society but with society itself, turning it into terrifying isolated islets, conditions which resemble those prevailing in today's big cities of the West." "Rejecting the secularist theory that religion breeds extremism and violence and should, therefore, be exempted from policies, al-Ghannouchi admits that while theoretically, an Islamic state based on its fundamentals would be a nonviolent one, but his idea is very hard if not impossible to gain under current conditions. Therefore, he says that until a true Islamic state can be founded based on principles of *shura*" the consultation, the next best choice is a "secular democratic regime which fulfils the category of the rule of reason, according to Ibn-Khaldun because such a regime is less evil than a despotic system of government that claims to be Islamic" (Esposito 2014: 9).

Islam, since its beginning, has not separated politics with religion or from state affairs. The Prophet Muhammad was the torching figure of the Islam as well as the state. While the first pledge of allegiance made by the Madinian group who visited the Prophet in Mecca was a religious, to believe in Allah and His Prophet. But the second pledge was to guard the Muslims and protect them. This political expression of Madinians implies that Islam is not merely a cluster of religious rituals but also bears a civilizational

meaning. It is also transferring people from Bedouin life to urban/civilisational life. This is why there was a notion that "bedouinisation" is great sin once urbanisation had been gained. This is why wherever Muslims spread, they established towns and cities (Ibrahim 2012). Hence, Madina of Prophet is a clear cut sign that Islam is a religion of civilisation, whereby it transferred the scattered tribes from a Bedouin status to a united position on a state and civilised one (Al-Ghannouchi 2013).

The Prophet was an imam and a political leader who dealt with people's disagreements and led wars and signed several treaties and accords. It is very vital fact to this discussion that upon his coming to Medina he established a *masjid* and formed a constitution that was renowned as *Al-Sahifah*. This *Al- Sahifah* which is one of the oldest constitutions in the world contained a collection of agreements regarding the relationships between *Muhajirs* Meccan immigrants and their hosts Madinian people known as *Ansaris* and the Madinian Jewish tribes. This constitution considered these both *Muhajirs* and *Ansaris* and other tribes of Madina as comprising one nation and entity that is different from others (Al-Ghannouchi 2013). Al-Ghannouchi further explains this notion that "The distinction between that which is political and that which is religious is clear in the Sahifah in that Muslims are a religious nation (ummah) and the Jews another, but the combination of the two plus other polytheists made up a nation in the political sense. This distinction could be witnessed in the Prophet's dealings even if the boundaries were not always clear. Whereas the religious is the sphere of observance and obligation, the political is the sphere of reason and *Ijtihad*. At times when the ambiguity confused the companions, they would ask the Prophet (PBUH) whether this is a divine revelation (*wahy*) or a mere opinion. In the case of the former they would obey, and when it is the latter, they may differ and offer alternatives" (Al-Ghannouchi 2012).

Throughout history, the kingdoms and governance of Muslims have always been influenced by Islam in one way or another in its laws and practices and were implemented by the inspiration of the Islamic values as understood at that specific place and time. Despite this, all these ruling systems remained Islamic framework, but it does not mean that their procedures and laws were divinely revealed. But these human endeavours to legislate in terms of time and space dragged the challenge and criticism.

“They have also implied a degree of neutrality, and when they attempted to impose one interpretation on Muslims, like what happened in the Abbasids era,” it caused to an uprising. It is very interesting fact that the Abbasid Khalifah “al-Mansour had become much worried with the different interpretations and religious views deriving from one religion and he feared their troublesome effect on the monarchy. So he discussed with Imam Malik about the issue and requested him to amalgamate all these various views in one to unify people’s perspectives. When Imam Malik wrote his prominent book al-Muwatta’, al-Mansour was wholly pleased” and wanted it to implement to bind all Muslims under a codified law. But Imam Malik commanded the Khalifah not to do so because the Imam explained that the companions of Prophet have travelled to various places and took with them much knowledge, so it is necessary to allow people to select what they see right for them. This is why Ghnnouchi advocates for the plurality of the opinions and respecting them (Ibrahim 2013).

There is no dominance of one central power in Islam, and this particular situation nurtures more interpretations and freedom of thought. According to al-Ghannouchi, there is no harm in that, but when we need to legislate and form new systems, we need a productive mechanism, and “the best one that humankind has produced yet is the democratic and electoral one which creates representatives of the society” and makes their participation in legislation interpretations as collective effort. Again, with the absence of any religious dominance representing God and “a spokesperson of the Qur’an, the nation is the only manifestation of divinity through its exchanges and not any particular party, state or scholar” (Ibrahim 2013).

As a result of al-Ghannouchi’s open commitment to democracy as a viable “method of preventing those who govern from permanently appropriating power for their own ends”. In other words “it is a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives”. He maintained that democracy and Islam were not incompatible and that “it was preferable to live in a

secular state where freedoms existed rather than a strictly religious state with *Shari'ah* law where freedoms did not exist" (Esposito 2014).

Al-Ghannouchi asserted that a violent, Iranian-styled revolution was not the answer. Rather, the change would be most successful if it came from the bottom up — a slow process that gradually transformed society and used increased political participation and democratic principles to bring about the desired goal: "a state that was both Islamic, and democratic". Al-Ghannouchi's later writings argue that "*Shari'ah* provides a broad set of guidelines that are compatible with democratic governance" (King 2012), and that democracy is needed in order to implement the Islamic concept of *Shura*, meaning consultation between the political authority and the people. While al-Ghannouchi accepts to borrow perceptions of western notions of civil society, he is also careful to highlight that civil society should not be based on the passive secularism that suppresses and marginalises religious consciousness. Al-Ghannouchi accepts that democracy is one of the West's positive contributions and accomplishments. To him, any secular democratic state where religious freedom fairly exists is not *dar al-harb* (house of war) (Vitola and Pisecky 2015).

Al-Ghannouchi advocates that in all states where Muslim communities are a minority, they should create fruitful socio-political "alliances with secular democratic groups to establish a system of respect for individual rights and freedom which are definitely Islamic goals. In Muslim majority states ruled by tyrants, Islamic organisations should also make an alliance with secular democratic groups to struggle to bring down despotisms and to establish secular democracies that will respect liberties and human rights." The foremost target for Muslims is to "remain positive and actively engaged in the effort to implement the revealed laws of Allah, whether partially or in their totality, depending on the circumstances and resources. However, since such a goal may not be easily accomplished, Islamic groups may forge alliances with non-Islamic groups, with the main task being to combat despotism in favour of a genuine and true transition to democracy". In another way, for Al-Ghannouchi, a democratic ruling system does not

serve well, but rather it will help to achieve the final goal, an Islamic government (Vitola and Pisecky 2015).

> Devichand (2012) describes al-Ghannouchi's vision of an Islamic government:
> Al-Ghannouchi's vision for the model of an Islamic nation is built heavily on the idea of values; he goes back to the values of the Koran rather than a literal reading of it. He then argues that these values - such as justice, public consultation and human rights - are encapsulated in modern democratic states (Devichand 2012).

While Islamist attention to state power does not rely on the Islamic "authentication" of the nation-state form, it does involve an interest in increasing the "availability" of Islam. While Islamists like al-Ghannouchi are transformed by their mobilisation of concepts like "democracy" and "the people," it is clear that Islamists who place the modern state within an Islamic discourse are enacting more than a mere imitation of "ready-made" nation-states inherited from Europe (Vitola and Pisecky 2015).

The secular background of the Tunisian elite was formed under special circumstances during the colonial era: a foreign force invaded a segment of the Tunisian society, interfered in its lifestyle, and transformed this segment into political elite, which was controlled by those in power. Therefore, two societies operated in parallel in Tunisia: that of the countryside, an old rural society which used all of its power to preserve the traditional values on which it was raised and grew; and a modern society of special idiosyncrasies represented in the French way of modernisation, which faces specific problems with regard to its relationship with religion. These problems vary between societies and are not the same in other secular ones (Jebnoun and Esposito 2014).

The Muslims understanding of monotheism means Islam is the centre of life and God is the supreme authority, which means Islam is religion, worldliness and state (Dīn, DunyāwaDawla). Therefore, the coexistence of those two views of the role of Islam in the Tunisian society is not easy; as if the society is made up of two nations living as one nation. Al-Nahda worked on its exegesis of Islam to maximise tolerance in order to

achieve a formula of coexistence with the moderates on the other side and worked to consider the conflict not as an identity or ideological conflict but as a political conflict between two extremisms: secular extremism and Islamic extremism. The country belongs to all its citizens at equal footing, it is comprised of all its citizens on the basis of citizenship, and nobody can claim to be the trustee of this country. Accepting this idea is not easy for everyone, in particular, the extremists in the Tunisian society. Each side, the Islamic extremism as well as the secular extremism, claims that they have a mission and seek to impose it on the majority of the people (Jebnoun and Esposito 2014).

In spite of these extremisms, most of the Tunisian people adhere to the concept of citizenship, which is based on peaceful coexistence in one home country, which is large enough for all despite their religious differences. For example, secular extremism does not respect the feelings of the majority, who are Muslims, when they consider fasting in Ramadan as an individual ritual that should not affect the society's lifestyle during that month. This exemplified the opinion of the late President Bourguiba, who ordered the people not to fast because he believed Tunisians' fasting would have a negative effect on the country's productivity cycle and the overall economy. "In 1958 during Ramadan, when I was in secondary school, the institute's administration refused to give us our food immediately after sunset, which was around 5 pm, to break our fast. They tried to force us to have dinner at the scheduled time during the school year, which was 8 pm and three hours after sunset. Also, Suhoor (pre-dawn meal) was forbidden by the institute's administration." This indicates a lack of understanding on the part of the state of Tunisia, represented at that time by its educational institutions, that the month of Ramadan changes the lifestyle of the society, and that the state and all its institutions should take such temporary, lifestyle changes into consideration. This is a form of guardianship that the state of Tunisia, under Bourguiba's rule, tried to impose on the Tunisians — without any consideration of their religious sensitivities and values — in order to say that Tunisian society is "civilised" and "modern" (Jebnoun and Esposito 2014).

Ibn Khaldun (1332- 1406), who is the most important author among those who wrote about Arabs, as described in his Muqaddimah (An Introduction to History) that they are "a savage nation, fully accustomed to savagery and the things that cause it.

Savagery has become their character and their nature". Thus, the individualistic mentality that encouraged such savagery is very dominant among Arabs. Islam benefited from this characteristic among Arabs based on pride (courage, bravery, and dignity) which sometimes becomes self-conceit. However, this individualistic mindset does not make civilisation unless the people who have this mindset learn how to live by a system that specifies limits to this mentality. Therefore, it was incumbent upon Islam to create a system capable of building relations among individuals based on the group concept and to caution always against disbanding. This system was aimed at helping the Arabs to transform from the desert culture, which was governed by the strength of tribes' alliances, to the culture of the city and civilisation, which are bound by law and social contracts between the governors and governed (Jebnoun and Esposito 2014).

The Arab individual was in need of group loyalty and distancing himself/herself from individualism. In this regard, the importance of the religious inclination represented by Islam can be seen in its important role in building the social relations. This inclination is a value system that emphasises the inevitability of developing a system enlisting compliance by all to overcome the individualistic culture in Arab societies, which are extremely individualistic, or nationalistic. Therefore, a freedom which is not enforced by a framework of law, society, behaviour, or values makes the individual tends to assert his/her own one sided concept of freedom without taking into consideration the interest and values of the society in which he lives (Jebnoun and Esposito 2014). Al-Nahda's social and political goals have remained rather nebulous, because whilst with a clear intent to influence public policy in a way that is consonant with their vision of Islam, and that there is a need to reform the understanding of Shari'a so that it can better respond to the modern questions and problems (thus not denying the imposition of *Shari'ah*), they have stated they do not seek to monopolize political expression, for this only replaces one dictatorship with another (King 2012).

Since the beginning of the democratic transition in Tunisia, Rachid al-Ghannouchi called for the importance of inclusive process as possible, in spite of the political differences between the different parties. This, he claimed, was the best way to

secure the political transition. This shows clear commitment on the part of Al-Nahda leaders by inviting all parties to participate in the political process. Al-Ghannouchi and party leaders extremely value political inclusion as an instrument to reinforce democratic institutions (Marks and Ounissi 2016). For al-Ghannouchi, Islam reaffirms the concept of Tawhid, and it is also itself a source of liberation. “The “Islamic Movement” wants to revitalise, rebuild, and re-Islamize Muslim societies. Simultaneously it is a liberation movement from westernisation, and cultural alienation, moral corruption, economic exploitation and the movement produces policies based on Islamic principles of equality, equity and social justice.” Al-Ghannouchi concluded that Arab nationalism is western product and it was “ultimately empty”. Regarding the principles of democracy, al-Ghannouchi follows the idea of “Hasan al-Turabi, claiming that western democracy is a by-product of medieval Europe, which in turn this era was greatly influenced by Islamic civilisations” (Vitola and Pisecky 2015).

Rachid al-Ghannouchi supported the parliamentary system, not the presidential one. Originally, this was Al-Nahda’s program, but they lost to those who are influenced by the French model and the concept of the centralised state. They hold to this concept even though Tunisia is not threatened by separatist tendencies, which could justify resisting Al-Nahda’s program that calls for a parliamentary system. However, with what was agreed upon in the fourth version of the Constitution, the political system that Al-Nahda accepted for the country is closer to the parliamentary system rather than the presidential system. But, the text still has some ambiguity, even some landmines, because mixing the two systems strips them of their advantages. The state motto is a part of reconciling contradictions necessary for life because the human being is not a one-dimensional creature, but a multi-dimensional creature, who attempts to reconcile these contradictions at various intervals. Therefore, it is not surprising to find in the same motto “freedom” and “order”. We say yes to freedom, but it should be “responsible” freedom. That is, freedom within specified parameters as it is spelt out in the case of Tunisia in a word “order” (Jebnoun and Esposito 2014).

Whether in state affairs or election process, Al-Nahda adopted the inclusive political activism putting the national interest above the party’s interests, as a result of al-

Ghannouchi's open commitment to democracy as a viable "method of preventing those who govern from permanently appropriating power for their own ends". Al-Nahda's platform reflected al-Ghannouchi's long held progressive positions, advocating political reforms, and democracy, a civil state marked by equality of citizenship, political pluralism and inclusion, pluralism freedoms and human rights. As a result, Al-Nahda attracted votes from its followers and many others (Esposito 2014).

There is a tremendous strategic change in the Al-Nahda's policy post Arab spring. The party decided to concentrate on the political aspect solemnly and leave religious activities to other religious organizations. This was a historical turning point in terms of any Islamic movement of West Asia and North Africa. Rachid al-Ghannouchi himself declared this vital statement during the party congress. This significant step as Tarek Amara (2016) says "ideological movement engaged in the struggle for identity, to a protest movement against the authoritarian regime, and now to a national democratic party." Al-Ghannouchi said that they are going to keep Islam far from party's political activism and declare complete neutrality. But this does not mean that they totally avoid the Islamic principles of political activism. This statement only means that they are avoiding the religious activism like preaching and call to Islam (Amara 2016).

Al-Ghannouchi still derives his political thought from Islamic principles. Al-Ghannouchi clarifies the designation of his party saying that the party is now best understood as the party of Muslim Democrats but not as an Islamist movement. He further elaborates that "we seek to create solutions to the day to day problems that Tunisians face rather than preach about the hereafter. To be clear the principles of Islam have always inspired Al-Nahda, and our values will continue to guide us. But it is no longer necessary for Al-Nahda (or any other party) to struggle for religious freedoms; under the new constitution, all Tunisians enjoy the same rights, whether they are believers, agnostics, or atheists. The separation of religion and politics will prevent officials from using faith based appeals to manipulate the public. It will also restore the independence of religious institutions: religion will no longer be hostage to politics, as it was before the revolution when the state interfered in and repressed religious activities" (Al-Ghannouchi 2016). He claims that his party holds the idea of Muslim democracy.

Muslim democracy to him respects personal rights, promotes economic and social opportunities and protects and preserves Arab Islamic identity and values. Al-Ghannouchi believes that "the successful consolidation of democracy in Tunisia will serve as a rebuke to secular tyrants and violent extremists alike" (Al-Ghannouchi 2016).

Al-Nahda party's strategy post Arab spring era election process shows the commitment of the party and its founder to maintain the spirit of Jasmine Revolution. They avoided announcing the presidential candidate declaring that it is the choice of members to elect right person as president who strongly guarantees the Tunisian democracy. After losing the majority, Al-Nahda party analysed that it was the best result for the party's future. If the party got the majority, then it will have to face many crises that unprecedented in the Tunisian society.

The Al-Nahda party grew up in Tunisia witnessing suppression of decades by the socialist regimes and went through difficult times. But as a strong organization that has stronghold in the grass root level did not lead to any illegal or violent activism as we see in the other part of the West Asia and North Africa. Al-Ghannouchi's concept of inclusive political activism and moderate stance towards the society really helped to accelerate the consolidation of party in Tunisian society. He ideas about the political pragmatism, inclusion of every strata of society, discourse of justice, balanced views regarding the gender issue, political pluralism, nuanced elaboration of modern ideas like democracy and public consent according to Islamic political terminologies like *Shura* and *Shari'ah*, affected the policies of the party and contributed to the popular acceptance of both the founder and the party in Tunisia and around the world. He accepted democracy as practical system for the emancipation of the people in state affairs. He has vehemently criticised the secularism that does not recognise the role of religion in the society. He criticised the stand taken by many political leaders and thinkers from West Asia and North Africa who stand for the separation of politics from religion. His concept of Muslim democracy made his party to be similar in orientation to the Christian democrats in Europe. This is another significant contribution of his to Islamic political thought. He asserted that the Muslim democrats value individual rights and work for social and economic progress of the society. At the same time, they preserve and protect the Arab

Islamic identity and values. He suggests other Islamic movements to adapt this peculiar political aspect, so they can preserve their own traditional background and on the other hand, they can actively engage in political activism avoiding the extremist tendencies.

Al-Ghannouchi and his party give priority to the stability and the creation of a peaceful atmosphere in the Tunisian political scenario. They want to sustain the spirit of Arab spring, which started from their own country. He acknowledges that any move from his party that takes it away from the aspiration of the Arab spring will cause unprecedented political losses. The religious and political background of the party and its ideological linkage with world's Islamic movements, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, is also significant, even though there is a whole lot of difference in the way politics is practiced by the Brotherhood and Al-Nahda. The secularist camp accuses the Islamic movements as a source of fanaticism and extremism in the region. Therefore, Al-Nahda party carefully decides their political policies by foreseeing their consequences. Due to the suppression of political activism during former regime of the pre-Arab spring era, Al-Nahda party could not develop enough political experiences in the electoral process and administration. This is what they analysed when they lost majority in the second term election. They admitted that the society always expects more fruitful result after a revolution and they were in rush to achieve that expectation. This analyse shows that the party is ready to accept the socio- political realities of the state and it is likely to follow the same path of political introspection and influence in the future.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

Al-Nahda Party embraced Islam as its basic ideology. They are of the view that Islam encompasses all spheres of human activity like social engagement, spirituality and political activism. They expanded their theoretical framework by accepting democratic values, political pluralism and other significant elements of modern socio-political engagement. In fact, the word Islamism is generally understood as a cluster of "anti" elements like anti-West, anti-women, anti-progress and anti-reform. But the party showed how Islamic preference could be articulated for the proper social and political purposes with a contemporary outlook. The party rejected the concepts in the "anti" mode as they found most of the concepts such an understanding were not in terms with Islamic values. The party, therefore, stood for social justice and political activism that deliver solutions in every field in the present conditions.

Rachid al-Ghannouchi is the intellectual leader of Al-Nahda. He contributed significantly to developing the notion of compatibility of Islam and democracy in Islamic thought. He gave much priority to gender equality in his political thought. After the Arab spring, one could witness such an attitude in the Tunisian parliament. Generally, Islamic movements project a double-faced conception of gender equality in the public sphere. But when it has to be implemented, they face many problems. But Al-Ghannouchi did not care much about traditional conservative concerns with regard to those issues. Political pluralism is one of his major thoughts. According to him, without political pluralism,

good governance and fair justice can't be implemented. With it, different voices of the society can be heard, and justice can be provided. Then the voice of minorities and different political perspectives will have a chance to engage and coexist in an atmosphere of political pluralism. He includes it in the notion of *shura*; the Islamic political concept *shura* does not mean that it is a group of some Muslim elites. In Islam *shura* means the full fledged participation of representatives from all walks of life in decision making. In this context, he elaborated the concept of *shura* and included elements of political pluralism to it.

The way of activism of Al-Nahda was the major factor in its continued existence. Even after its ban for twenty years, the Tunisian society could not forget the movement. The suppression by the Ben Ali regime and his torturous strategy could not put down the spirit and ideology of Al-Nahda completely. In the 1960s, Arab people found refuge in Nasserist thought; even Rachid al-Ghannouchi was also an admirer of Nasser. But this movement later became the cause of suppression of human rights through military regimes. In this socio-political vacuum created by the decline of Arab nationalist and secular thought and leadership, the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups emerged as an influential movement in the Arab Islamic world. Al-Ghannouchi was inspired by Ikhwan's ideas but didn't follow its organisational structure. He tailored the movement's ideas and strategies regarding socio-political activism to suit Tunisian society. The main influence on Al-Ghannouchi's thinking in the 1970s came from the Muslim Brotherhood, but he was also inspired by the philosophical and political views of the Algerian thinker Malek Bennabi.

Al-Ghannouchi closely observed the concept of democracy and planted it in his political thought describing it according to Islamic principles. Due to this, he was called as moderate Islamist, and some even called him post-Islamist. While discourse of democracy with Islamic framework is still a stigma within Islamic movements, he, without any hesitation, adapted this political system and advocated for its proper implementation. Acknowledging the limitations of democracy as it is practised in many countries, he wants to read it through the prism of Islamic framework. He believes in this way of combing Islamic and democratic principles; the democratic process will perform

the best. He put forward proposals according to a set of values, like freedom and justice. According to Al-Ghannouchi, Islam can mobilise people towards these same values. Islam is based on freedom, and that there is no compulsion in Islam. Islam is the crucial element of an identity. He is opposed to state imposition of any practice on society, including how one dresses, drinks or believes.

The history of Islamic political thought has a unique intellectual tradition of tackling problems associated with the coming together of Islamic religious practice and the realm of politics. The relationship between religion and politics has remained a significant point in the Islamic tradition over several centuries. In modern times, many scholars adopted the term "political Islam" to differentiate between the practices of personal piety, belief and ritual from that of politics. Islam plays a big part in the lives of people in the West Asian and North African (WANA) region. Islamist leaders and influences dominate the region in recent times. The resurgence of Islam in political life or the rise of political Islam is a common phenomenon nowadays in WANA countries with varying degrees of influence according to the necessity of each society. This resurgence can also be seen in the Tunisian uprisings in 2010-11. Tunisia was the first country where the anti-regime protests and uprisings started, and its Al-Nahda Party gained power after President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was ousted from the country.

After the departure of Ben Ali, Rachid al-Ghannouchi, the leader of Al-Nahda, returned from exile. He reorganised the party for political participation on a level playing arena. The movement was quick to reorganise itself in spite of the fact that it had been absent for several decades. The previous laws were changed, and Al-Nahda was officially legalised by decree of the interim government on 1 March 2011. He saw to it that Al-Nahda was in a busy mode of advanced mobilisation among the masses during the election campaign. Al-Nahda party gathered a large following due to which it won the elections by popular votes, and the mistakes of some of the secularist parties which were very outspoken during the campaign may have helped the movement. Al-Nahda put forward proposals according to a set of values, like freedom and justice. According to Al-Ghannouchi, Islam can mobilise people towards these same values. Islam is based on freedom, and that there is no compulsion in Islam. Islam is the crucial element of an

identity. The ideology and the mobilisation strategies of Al-Nahda and its leader helped it win the election in post-Ben Ali Tunisia.

Since its inception, Al-Nahda was popular among the young Tunisians. In the 1980s, many people were joining Al-Nahda, because they thought that the society was morally depraved and wanted it to be based on Islamic principles. These young Tunisians had stopped participating in state functions and had turned to religion for guidance and self-fulfilment. They saw Islam as a way out of their perceived social, economic and political dissatisfaction. Most of them felt that they had to repudiate their origins and heritage to receive a modern education and be accepted in a secular environment. The same thing happened after the revolution. People wanted to distance themselves from the torturous past, and they didn't want anything that connects them to the old regime.

Through the gradual process of exclusion and de-legitimisation, the government had succeeded in isolating the movement. By 1992, nearly all leaders of Al-Nahda were imprisoned or sent into exile, and its organisational competency was damaged. During the years in which the leadership was forced underground, they reflected upon the strong points and failings of movement's political agenda, strategies, and tactics. Ben Ali's repression of Al-Nahda and others like it ultimately fed popular sympathy and support for Al-Nahda. Tunisians voted for it as much because of its ability to survive Ben Ali as for religious reasons. Ben Ali knew that his regime had lost legitimacy, but still he was very confident that he would be able to overcome the growing unrest in the country. The people were disenchanted with Ben Ali's secularism and authoritarianism, but for many of them, no other Islamic alternative was there except Al-Nahda. The regime failed in its attempts to stop the unrest, and the fall of the system became inevitable. This is the situation in which Al-Nahda became an appealing choice in the 2010-11 uprising and beyond.

The social injustice and economic inequality felt by the people of this region for decades were the main reasons for the anti-regime protests and uprisings in the Arab world. During the protests, different social movements came to the forefront and gathered more and more followers. Tunisia's Al-Nahda party was one of the major platforms, in spite of its lack of a well-structured organisational machinery, that could attract a large

chunk of followers when these uprisings started. The combination of youth unemployment, widespread corruption as well as political and economic marginalisation had created discontent amongst Tunisians. This condition of discontent led to the revolution and ended the rule of Ben Ali.

It should be noted that Al-Nahda didn't take the leading role in the Jasmine revolution. They were taking precaution, but they were very active in making the uprising successful. Al-Nahda was not that much organised, but still, it appeared to be handling Tunisia's political transition much better than other countries in the Arab world where the uprisings happened. It has emerged as a strong political force that has demonstrated repeated commitment to pluralism, cooperation and democratic transition. Al-Nahda has moderated itself in spite of its forced exclusion over a long time.

After coming to Tunisia, Rachid Al-Ghannouchi declared the revolution as the aspiration of the society for human rights and dignity. Even after the electoral success, he upheld the Tunisian society's political consciousness not the political hegemony of Al-Nahda over other Tunisian parties. He is unique in the way discussions of the *sharia* law, and its application was conducted. He put forward the concepts of good governance and welfare state in his interpretation of the *sharia*. If there is good governance and proper application of justice, it means *shari'ah* law is being implemented according to today's requirements of the Tunisian society and, in this sense, he is strongly against the literalist reading and application of religious texts. This is why he has been able to lead Tunisia to a peaceful and orderly transition in the aftermath of the Arab uprising.

The research was based on three hypotheses. Firstly, Al-Nahda was able to survive and play a leading role in the politics of Tunisia due to the failure of the prevailing political system. An in-depth study on the history of Tunisian political culture makes us easily understand this assertion. Autocratic ruling system and their policy of suppression of opposing voices caused to create a considerable influence of Al-Nahda in the Tunisian society. Secondly, Al-Ghannouchi's political ideas like social equality and gender equality enabled him to make the Al-Nahda Party a major player in Democratic politics. As the founder and the central figure of the party, Al-Ghannouchi's political thought and strategies are major factors that helped the party to be a foremost game

player in the Tunisian political process. Among the Islamic movements, Al-Nahda undoubtedly showed influences of gender and social equality in the party apparatus and electoral politics. Finally, Al-Ghannouchi's philosophy of compatibility of Islam and democracy helped in making Al-Nahda Party more attractive to the Tunisian society. His interpretation of democracy according to the Islamic principles and nuanced elaboration of its application accelerated the popularity of the movement in the society. He re-defined the ideas like Political pluralism and *Shura* which means each and every individual's representation in the decision making for the welfare state under the theory of democracy in terms with Islamic political thought. These political ideas of Al-Ghannouchi have provided undeniable social acceptance in the Tunisian political sphere.

Appendix I

Al-Nahda Statute (Revised from the Tenth Congress)

In the name of Allah the Merciful

Section 1: Party Identity

Chapter 1: Definition

The Renaissance Movement is a national political party with an Islamic reference operating within the framework of the Constitution and in accordance with the provisions of Decree No. 87 of 2011 of 24 September 2011 on political parties and within the framework of the republican system to contribute to the building of modern Tunisia, a prosperous and interdependent democracy that cherishes its religion and identity and seeks to consolidate the values of citizenship, freedom and responsibility Social justice and the struggle for the unity of the Arab Maghreb as a step towards achieving Arab unity, Islamic unity and the liberation of Palestine, and working to cooperate with all peoples in the framework of mutual respect.

The party relies on responsibility and democracy in making decisions, assigning responsibilities, and setting visions and programs.

Chapter 2: Nomination

Party Name: Renaissance Movement

Chapter 3: Symbol

Party Code: Dove - star - olive branch according to the fee attached to this system.

Chapter 4:

Party slogan: Freedom of Development.

Chapter 5: Party Headquarters

The headquarters of the party shall be at the following address: The Lille Montpellier approach, Tunis 1073. It may be transferred by decision of the Executive Office to any other place and the competent authority shall be informed by law.

Section II: Objectives and Means

Chapter 6: Objectives

The Nahdha Movement works to achieve the following objectives:

- Protecting the national independence, completing its dimensions, developing its gains, maintaining national unity, activating the unity of the Arab Maghreb and supporting the unified tendencies between the Arab and Islamic peoples.
- Contribute to the consolidation of the culture of moderation and moderation and the rooting of Arab Islamic identity.
- To consolidate the principle of the sovereignty of the people through the building of a democratic, civil and just state, and to strive for equality between citizens and the development of civil society structures and the liberalization of its mechanisms to play its full role in contributing to comprehensive development.
- To achieve public and individual freedoms and justice as central values in the embodiment of the meaning of honoring God for creation and the realization of human humanity and the establishment of rights and assertion of political pluralism and freedom of the media and the press and the freedom of creativity.
- Promote the status of women and activate their role and work to preserve the family entity and support.
- Providing appropriate conditions for the care of children and young people, development and preparation for the future.

- Building a strong and integrated national economy that balances the parties and groups, provides broad operational areas and contributes to the integration and integration of Maghreb, Arab, Islamic and global openness.
- Encouraging scientific research and honoring scientists, researchers and inventors in the belief in their role in achieving the country's growth and strengthening its independence. 9. Adopting Arabic as a basic language in the fields of education and management and upgrading it to be a tool of cultural renaissance that contributes to the unification of the nation and facilitate positive and creative interaction with the cultures of the world.
- To contribute to the establishment of a foreign policy based on the country's pride, unity and independence from all influence and the establishment of international relations based on mutual respect, cooperation, justice, equality and the right to self-determination and to work for the support of vulnerable peoples and just causes,

Chapter 7: Means

The party adopts the legitimate means to achieve its objectives within the framework of the laws in force.

Section III: Membership

Chapter 8: Membership Conditions

Every Tunisian or Tunisian may apply for membership in the Nahdha Party if the following conditions are met:

- The age of sixteen is complete.
- Absence of legal impediments.
- To be honest, good behavior and virtuous morality
- Belief in the principles and objectives of the party and work to achieve its options.
- Commitment to the Party's program, statute and rules of procedure.
- Not belonging to any other political party

Chapter 9: Determination of the Membership Requirement

The local or sectoral office shall decide upon the acceptance of the membership application after ascertaining the availability of the above conditions within thirty days from the date of submission of the application.

Those who refuse their application may appeal the rejection decision to the Regional Office or the Central Sector Office no later than thirty days from the date of receipt of the rejection decision or from the expiry of 30 days from submitting the membership application without an answer.

The Regional Office or the Central Sector Office may also cancel the decision to accept the membership of the local office or sectoral office no later than 30 days from the date of notification of membership.

The new Member shall be registered in the Register of Members and shall notify the Regional Office in accordance with procedures and formats governed by the Rules of Procedure.

The party reserves the right to reject the membership application without explanation.

A person who refuses his application can not submit a new application until one year has elapsed since the request is denied or once the impediment has disappeared.

Chapter 10: Extraordinary Membership

The Executive Office may exceptionally assign the status of the member to national figures or competencies proposed by the Party Chairman, the Speaker of the Shura Council, the Executive Committee Member or a Regional General Secretary without complying with the requirements of Chapter 9 of this Law.

Chapter 11: Honorary Membership

The Chairman of the Party may propose to the Speaker of the Shura Council or from a member of the Executive Bureau or from one of the Regional General Bookmakers to assign the honorary membership of the Party to persons who have provided great services to the country or to the Party.

Honorary membership is not allowed to run for party leadership.

Chapter 12: Rights of Members

Each member is entitled to:

- Get membership card.
- See the party's rules, laws and decisions.
- To give an opinion on the political, organizational and financial issues of the party within its institutions.
- Participate in the activities of the party and benefit from its training programs.
- Election of party officials in accordance with the requirements of the statutes and internal regulations.
- Candidate for leadership responsibilities after fulfilling the requirements of each responsibility.

Chapter 13: Duties of Members

Party members should:

- Commitment to party principles and values and discipline.
- Commitment to the statutes and internal regulations and the requirements of the various structures of the party.
- Not to hold any political post except after the approval of the Shura Council or the Executive Office in accordance with the provisions of the party's regulations and regulations.
- The party is represented only by a formal mandate from its institutions.
- Work on the proper implementation of party programs and tasks assigned to them.

- Paying a financial contribution A salary that is controlled by the executive office.
- Keep party secrets.
- To be honest, good behavior and virtuous morality.
- Commitment to participate in the training activities organized by party bodies.

Chapter 14: Termination of membership

Membership ends with one of the following reasons:

- Loss of legal capacity.
- Resignation in accordance with the rules of procedure.
- As required by the rules of procedure.
- Death.

Chapter 15: Restoration of Membership

It is not possible for Rift from the party to submit a new membership requirement one year before the Rift decision is issued.

Any party who resigns from the party due to the inadmissibility of combining partisan and public responsibilities shall be returned to its membership by informing in writing the cancellation of the objection to the Central Organization Office.

Section IV: Structures

Chapter 16: Classification

Party structures are classified as follows:

- Central Structures
- Decentralized structures

Part One: Central Structures

Chapter 17: The Party's central structures are:

- General Conference
- Consultative Council
- Party leader
- Executive Office

The annual symposium is a consultative central structure.

Section I: General Conference

Chapter 18: Ordinary General Conference

The General Conference is the highest authority in the party and consists of deputies of the participants according to the ratios and representation determined by the Shura Council and added exclusively to the party president and the chairman of the Shura Council and the members of the executive office.

The parties or localities in which the Party lists won seats in the House of Representatives or the regional or local councils shall receive additional seats in accordance with the percentage determined by the regulations governing the conference.

The Conference shall normally be held once every four years in the presence of an absolute majority of the two conferences. In the absence of a quorum, the meeting shall be held 24 hours later.

The Shura Council selects two committees under its supervision, the first being the substantive preparation of the conference. The second, in coordination with the executive office, will prepare the material for the conference.

Chapter 19: Extraordinary General Conference

The Extraordinary General Conference shall be convened at the request of the Chairman of the Party or two-thirds of the members of the Shura Council or one third of the members. It can only be held in the presence of the absolute majority of the two conferences.

Chapter 20: Agenda of the General Conference

Chapter 20: Agenda of the General Conference The Shoura Council shall prepare for the General Conference and shall propose its agenda if it is ordinary, while the Extraordinary General Assembly shall propose its agenda.

Section II: Shura Council

Chapter 21:

The Shura Council is the highest authority between two conferences.

Chapter 22: The Composition of the Shura Council

The Shura Council is composed of 150 members, two thirds of whom are elected from the National Congress by direct secret ballot. The remaining third is elected in the first session of the Shura Council on the basis of representation of the sectors, parties, party members abroad, youth, women, parliamentary bloc and the government team.

The representation of both the youth and women categories can not be less than 10% of the total number of members of the Shura Council. The vacancy in the Shura Council is as follows:

- If the vacancy is related to an elected member of the Conference, it shall be immediately compensated by reference to the results of the Congress elections in the order in which they are presented.

- If the vacancy is attached to an elected member of the Shura Council, the Council shall elect a new member on the same basis as the first paragraph of this chapter.

Chapter 23: Conditions for candidacy for membership of the Shura Council

Candidates for the Shura Council must:

- Be a member for at least three years.
- To be a conference.
- Have at least one year membership of a central or decentralized office.
- Not to be in breach of membership duties.
- That he should not have been subjected to second-degree punishment during the last two years or under penalty of deprivation of party responsibility

The first and third conditions of each member, such as the party, shall be exempted for at least one year from the People's Assembly, the Presidency of a Regional Council, the Presidency of a Municipal Council, or the appointment of a Minister, Secretary of State or the President of the General Assembly, Or certified.

Any member who has been a member for more than ten years and every member who has not attained the age of 35 years in the history of the Conference shall be exempted from the third condition.

Members elected by the Shura Council are not required to be among the two.

The chairman of the party may nominate when filling the vacancy within one-third of the Shura Council as a member who does not meet the first three conditions. The proposed member shall recommend the majority of the Shura members present, provided that such majority shall not be less than one-third of the members of the Council.

Chapter 24: Election of the Speaker of the Shura Council.

The first session of the Shura Council is headed by the oldest member with the assistance of the younger members. In the absence of a quorum, the session shall be held for a week

and shall be held valid if attended by a majority of the members. If the quorum is not achieved, the members present shall determine the date of the meeting, but not later than one month from the date of the meeting. Action on appeals relating to the Conference

- If more than two members of the Presidency nominate or nominate and one of them does not obtain a majority of the votes of the first session, he shall resort to a second session in which the two candidates or candidates who hold the most votes in the first session shall participate.
- The candidate or candidate who holds the most votes shall be declared the President of the Council. In the form of equality, the oldest members are members.

The Council may exempt the Chairman of the Shura Council or accept his resignation, in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure.

Chapter 25: Powers of the Speaker of the Shura Council

The President shall represent the Council, speak on its behalf, preside over the plenary meetings, the Bureau of the Council and the meetings of the Committees if attended.

The President of the Council shall ensure respect for the rules of procedure and the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the plenary and the decisions of the Bureau and shall supervise the functioning of the Council and shall take the necessary measures to maintain order within the plenary.

Chapter 26: Office of the Shura Council

The Chairman of the Shura Council shall elect the members of the Council and submit them to the Shura Council for their approval.

Chapter 27: Committees of the Shura Council

The Shura Council shall hold competent regional committees to assist it in carrying out its tasks. The Council may also establish temporary special committees.

The rules of procedure shall govern the work of the Council, its President, its Bureau and its committees.

Chapter 28: Periodicity of the Shura Council

The Shura Council shall convene every three months and whenever necessary, at the invitation of its President or one third of its members or at the request of the Party Chairman.

Chapter 29: Functions of the Shura Council

- Adjusting the major policies and determining the general orientations of the party.
- Recommending the candidate for the post of head of state or head of government or head of parliament proposed by the party chairman in the form of the latter abandoning his right to run for the said responsibilities by a majority of those present, provided that such majority is not less than one third of the members of the council.
- The government team of the party shall recommend the majority of those present, provided that such majority shall not be less than one-third of the members of the Council.
- Determining the conditions and procedures for selecting party candidates for parliamentary, regional, municipal and other elections.
- Audit the work of central executive structures and decentralization after coordination with the Executive Office
- The members of the Executive Board shall recommend a majority of those present, provided that such majority shall not be less than one third of the members of the Board.
- Withdraw confidence from the Executive Office or one of its members by a majority of those present, provided that such majority shall not be less than one third of the members of the Council.
- Adjusting fiscal policy and following up on its implementation.
- Ratify the rules and regulations provided by the Executive Office.
- Proposed amendment of the Statute to the General Conference.
- Interpretation of Articles of the Statute and Rules of Procedure.

- Preparation for the General Conference as determined by the rules of procedure.
- Election of the heads of the higher and central bodies and their members.
- Election of the Chairman of the Financial Supervisory Authority and its members.
- Set the party's rules of procedure.

Section III: Party Chairman

Chapter 30: Conditions for candidacy for party leadership

Candidates for the post of party leader must:

- A person must be at least thirty five (35) years old
- To have been at least ten years of membership.
- Not to be in breach of membership duties.
- To be employed for four consecutive years, one of the following plans:
  - Membership of the Shura Council
  - Membership of the Executive Office
  - Presidency of the system
  - Head of the Financial Supervisory Authority.
  - Regional General Writing

The periods adjudged to each other in the above-mentioned plans include the calculation of the seniority clause in liability.

Chapter 31: Election of the Party Chairman

The General Conference shall elect the President of the Party by direct secret ballot. In the absence of any of the candidates more than half the votes of the voters in the first session, a second round shall be taken between the first and second rank. In the case of equality, the oldest candidate is provided.

No member is entitled to assume the chairmanship of the party for more than two consecutive sessions. The head of the party is appointed immediately after his election.

Chapter 32: Functions of the Party President

The party chairman is the chief executive officer and legal representative of the party

The President of the Party shall undertake the following tasks:

- Presidency of the Executive Office.
- To run for senior positions in the State and has the right to nominate those who he deems appropriate in his place after the nomination of this candidate from the Shura Council.
- Proposing the party's plans and curricula together with the executive office.
- Implement Party policies and decisions.
- Management of the executive structures of the party.
- Representing the party in its internal and external relations.
- Issuing pardon or commutation of penalties
- Call for an extraordinary conference.

Chapter 33: Vacancy in the Presidency of the Party

A vacancy in the position of head of the party shall take place in the following cases:

- A deficit that prevents him from performing his duties is appreciated by the Shura Council.
- Submit the resignation and then accept it from the Shura Council.
- Death.

In the case of a vacancy in the presidency of the party, the Shura Council for one month from the date of vacancy invite the two previous conference last year to elect a new head of the party to complete the pledge.

In the event that the remaining period of the General Conference is less than six months, the Majlis al-Shura shall elect by its majority a new chairman to complete the remaining period.

The Chairman of the Shura Council shall assume the chairmanship of the Party until the election of a President in accordance with the provisions of the preceding two paragraphs.

The jurisdiction at the head of the party to fill the vacancy shall not be considered as a session on the meaning of the provisions of chapter 31 of these rules.

Section IV: Executive Office

Chapter 34: Executive Office

The Chairman of the Party shall propose to the Shura Council the members of the Executive Board, including a Secretary-General, a Deputy or his deputies, from among the members who meet the requirements of Article 23 of this Statute except for the second.

Any candidate nominated by a majority of the members of the Shura Council present shall be considered a member of the Executive Office provided that such majority shall not be less than one third of the members of the Council.

Members of the Executive Board are recommended individually and by assignment.

The Chairman of the Party may exempt or accept the resignation of any member of the Executive Office from his duties and the Party Chairman shall inform the Shura Council thereof.

The membership of the Shura Council and the Executive Office can not be combined.

The Shura Council can withdraw confidence from all the members of the executive office or from one of its members and with the same majority required to recommend them.

Chapter 35: Functions of the Executive Office

Under the responsibility of the Party President, the Executive Office shall undertake the following tasks:

- Implementation of decisions of the General Conference and the Shura Council.
- Develop annual work programs.
- Setting the regulations governing the executive structures and submitting them to the Consultative Council for approval.
- Draft the general budget and follow up its implementation after it was approved by the Shura Council.
- Take positions on various issues at the national and international levels.
- The formation of central offices according to the tasks, competencies and sectors in accordance with the formulas stipulated in the rules of procedure.
- Forming permanent or temporary specialized committees.
- To approve the party candidates for the parliamentary, regional, municipal and other elections in accordance with the conditions, powers and procedures determined by the Shura Council.

The Executive Office can meet in an expanded framework by being a member of the Regional General Book.

Section V: Annual Symposium

Chapter 36: Annual Symposium.

The annual symposium is an advisory body, which is held once a year and at the invitation of the head of the party or the chairman of the Shura Council.

- Party leader
- Executive Board members
- Members of the Shura Council
- Members of the government belonging to the party
- Party members of the People's Assembly
- Heads of central bodies
- Regional General Book
- Heads of regional blocs
- Presidents of the Regional Shura Councils

- Heads of regional bodies
- Local public writers
- Heads of local blocs

The annual seminar discusses the general choices of the party and reports on the annual activity of the Executive Office and the Shura Council and issues recommendations of a consultative nature, which are based on the structure of the party and the Shura Council seeks to turn them into decisions.

The organizing body shall be responsible for organizing the annual symposium and circulating its recommendations on the party structures.

Part two: Decentralized structures

Article 37:

The decentralized structures of the Party consist of terrestrial and sectoral structures.

Article 38:

The earth structures are divided into regional and local structures and, if necessary, temporary or permanent branches may be formed after the approval of the Regional Office.

Sectoral structures are mainly the student sector and the party's members abroad. The executive office can add what it deems necessary for the proper functioning of sectors after the approval of the Shura Council.

Part I: Earth structures

Section I: Regional structures

Chapter 39:

Regional structures are divided according to the administrative division of the states and regions and can be changed by decision of the executive office according to the need of work.

Chapter 40: Regional Conference

The Ordinary Regional Conference is the highest authority in the region and convenes periodically every four years.

Chapter 41: Extraordinary Conference

The Extraordinary Conference shall be convened at the request of the Executive Office or two-thirds of the members of the Regional Bureau or of the majority of the members of the Regional Shura Council or of one third of the members of the Council, provided that the remaining period of the Ordinary Conference shall not be less than six months.

Article 42:

The conference participants are divided into two categories:

Category I: Elected delegates from the members of the organization at local conferences.

The second category:

- Members of the Regional Office
- Local public writers
- Members of the Shura Council
- Members of party blocs in the region

Article 43: Powers of the Regional Conference

The powers of the Regional Conference are as follows:

- Discuss the literary report and approve the regulations and decisions of the region.
- Election of the Regional General Secretary
- Election of the first category of members of the regional Shura Council
- Election of representatives of the party in the General Conference of the Party
- Give an opinion on the issues and regulations presented by the Central Command

Chapter 44: The Regional Shura Council

The Regional Shura Council consists of 30 to 40 members divided into two categories of members:

First Category:

Members elected by the Regional Conference, taking into account the representation of each local member at least. The Regional Council may add competencies for its composition, provided that it does not exceed five members, subject to the conditions stipulated in Article 45 of this Law.

Second Category:

- Members of the Shura Council residing in the region.
- Members of the People's Assembly resident council.
- Heads of regional and local councils.

The number of members of the regional Shura Council can not exceed one third of the members of the Majlis, otherwise they shall elect their representatives in the Shura Council within the limits of the said ceiling in accordance with a list issued by the Consultative Council.

Members of the regional bureau and local public prosecutors have the right to attend and have no right to vote.

The membership of the Executive Office, the Regional Office or the Local Office and the membership of the Regional Consultative Assembly shall not be combined.

Article 45: Conditions for candidacy for membership of the Shura Council

The candidate for membership of the Shura Council must:

- Party membership for at least two years
- At least 19 years of age on the day of the Conference
- Not to be subjected to a second degree penalty during the two years preceding the candidacy and not to be punished under the penalty of deprivation of responsibility in the structures of the party.

Chapter 46: President of the Shura Council

The Regional Shura Council shall convene in its first session under the supervision of the President of the Regional Conference or his representative and shall be elected by an absolute majority as Chairman and Vice-President.

The President of the Shura Council shall have the conditions stipulated in Article 23 of this Law except for the second condition.

Chapter 47: Powers of the Regional Consultative Council

The powers of the Shura Council are:

- Discuss policies and plans of interest to the Authority and report thereon, in a manner that does not violate the decisions of the Shura Council
- • Resolve disputes between members of the Regional Office and local offices and the Regional Office.
- To give an opinion on the issues and issues raised by the Central Command.
- Election of a regional system committee by an absolute majority and dismissing and dissolving its members by the same majority.

- The members of the Regional Bureau shall recommend the majority of those present to not less than one-third of its members and withdraw confidence in them by the same majority.
- Withdraw confidence from the members of the elected local offices by a majority of those present, provided that such majority shall not be less than one-third of its members.
- Payment of vacancy in the membership of local offices for elected members.
- Election of the Regional General Secretary upon vacancy in office, provided that the remaining period of the Conference shall not exceed six months

Chapter 48: Regional General Writer

The candidate is required to write to the regional general:

- Membership for at least five years
- At least 30 years of age on election day
- The conditions provided for in Article 23 of the Statute shall be satisfied with the exception of the First and Second Conditions.

Article 49:

The general writer can not take over the regional general writing for more than two consecutive sessions. If the Secretary-General resigns from his or her functions, the session is considered to be a full session.

Chapter 50:

In the case of the vacancy of the post of General Secretary Regional and the remaining period of the ordinary conference more than six months, the Regional Consultative Council to invite the last two regional conference to elect a regional writer to complete the mandate. If the remaining period of the regional conference is less than six months, the Regional Consultative Council is elected by a majority of its members as a new regional general writer to complete the remaining period. The President of the Regional Shura Council shall be the Regional General Secretary until the election of a Regional

General Clerk in accordance with the provisions of the preceding two paragraphs. The custody of the public in the regional public registry for filling the vacancy shall not be considered as a session on the meaning of the provisions of Chapter 49 of this Law.

Article 51: Powers of the Regional General Author

The powers of the Regional General Secretary are as follows:

- Representing the party on his behalf and speaking on his behalf.
- Supervision of the Regional Office.
- Distribution of tasks among members of the Regional Office.
- Oversee the implementation of the party's decisions and download its policies in the region.
- Follow up the activities of the local offices and their branches.

Chapter 52: Number of members of the Regional Office

The regional bureau has 10 to 15 members.

Chapter 53:

The General Secretary shall nominate the members of his office and submit them to the recommendation of the Regional Shura Council by a majority of those present, provided that such majority shall not be less than one third of the members of the Council.

Chapter 54:

The Regional Bureau shall be held by a majority of its members and shall take its decisions by a majority of the members, provided that such majority shall not be less than one third of the members of the Bureau.

Chapter 55: Powers of the Regional Office

The main responsibilities of the Regional Office are as follows:

- Implementing the party's decisions and lowering its central, regional and local policies and orientations.
- Proposing visions, programs and policies concerning the Authority in coordination with the Central Command.
- Report on the activity of the Central Command Office.
- Certified records keeping.
- Preserving Party property in the region.
- Keep the membership file up and running.
- Withdrawal of confidence from local members appointed by the local general secretary.

Section II: Local structures

Chapter 56:

The regular local conference is the highest authority in the local and convenes periodically every two years.

Chapter 57:

Local delegates are local members for at least one year from the date of the conference.

Chapter 58: The Extraordinary Local Conference

The Extraordinary Conference shall be convened at the request of the Regional Office or of the majority of the members of the local office or of one third of the local members, provided that the remaining period of the ordinary conference shall not be less than 6 months

Chapter 59: Functions and Powers

The powers of the Local Conference are as follows:

- Election of the local General Secretary
- Election of local officers

- Election of local representatives at the regional conference
- Discussion of the literary report

Chapter 60: Local General Writer

In the local general writer:

- Membership for at least three years
- At least 30 years of age on the day of the Conference
- Have at least one year of membership of a central or decentralized office.
- His file shall be free of the first and second penalties during the last year preceding the candidacy.

Article 61:

Public writing can not be taken for more than two consecutive consecutive sessions.

If the Secretary-General resigns from his or her functions, the session is considered to be a full session.

Chapter 62:

The General Secretary shall undertake the following tasks:

- Represent the party in its local and speak on its behalf.
- Supervision of the local office.
- - Strengthening his office with a qualified staff within the limits of 3 members after the recommendation of the Regional Office.
- Distribute tasks among office members.
- Management of the Bureau and its subcommittees.
- Ensuring the proper functioning of the branches in case they exist.
- Oversee the implementation of party decisions and download policies in the local.

In the event of a vacancy in the plan of the local general writer and the remaining period of the ordinary conference is more than six months, the Regional Office shall invite the two previous conferences of the last general conference to elect a local writer to complete the contract.

If the remaining period of the local conference is less than six months, the regional Shura Council is elected by a majority of its members as a new local general writer to complete the remaining period.

The custody of the local public office for filling the vacancy shall not be considered as a session on the meaning of the provisions of chapter 61 of these rules.

Chapter 63: Local Office

The local office is composed of 7 to 10 members, one third of whom are women and young people.

Chapter 64:

The meetings of the Bureau shall be valid only in the presence of a majority of its members. The Bureau shall take its decisions by a majority of those present, provided that it shall not be less than one third of the members.

Chapter 65:

The main functions of the local office are:

- Implementing the party's decisions and lowering its central, regional and local policies and orientations.
- Propose local plans, plans and policies in coordination with the Regional Office.
- Report on the activity of the Office of the Regional Office.
- - Framing and forming party members according to the approved program.
- Certified records keeping.
- Preservation of party property.

- Keep the membership file up and running.
- Formation of branches according to the development of work in coordination with the regional office.

Chapter 66: Branches

The branch structures are:

- Election session for branches.
- Branch Office.

Chapter 67: Election of the Branch.

The election session shall be held for the election of the branch office in the presence of the members of the designated territorial division every two years and whenever necessary, the local office or a third of the members concerned shall be invited.

Chapter 68: Branch Office:

- The branch office shall be composed of at least three members according to the necessary and necessary tasks, based on the development of the work.
- The office of the member branch chosen by the local office shall be supervised by the members of the branch.
- Tasks are distributed by consensus if voting is not possible.
- Decisions shall be taken within the branch office by majority and, on equal terms, the branch supervisor shall vote.
- The branch office implements the party's decisions and downloads its policies in the branch office.

Part II: Sectoral structures

Section 1: Student Sector

Chapter 69:

The Executive Office shall review all regulations and procedures in force in the student sector and rectify what is incompatible with the Party's basic and internal systems.

Section II: Party members abroad

Chapter 70: Office of party members abroad

Consists of the heads of the major departments after the adoption of the electoral division and supervisors to the rest of the other tasks and the head of the office addition of five members recommended by the Council of Party members abroad

Chapter 71: Council of Party Members Abroad

It consists of two categories:

- First Class: Three quarters of the members of the Council shall be composed of the directors of the countries, the Shura Council members, the deputies of the People's Assembly on the outside, and representatives of youth and women.
- Second category: A quarter of the members of the Council shall be appointed by the members of the first category

The Council is competent to discuss policies and plans of interest to party members abroad and to report on them in a way that does not violate the decisions of the party's institutions.

He also nominates three members, including the head of the party, who is a member of the executive office in charge of party affairs abroad.

Section 5: Bodies

Part One: Center for Strategic Thinking

Article 72:

The Center for Strategic Thinking is an institution of party institutions that conducts studies, research and assessments in the political, economic, social and cultural fields.

Article 73:

The Party shall provide the Center with sufficient funds to carry out its functions.

Article 74:

The center of strategic thinking is the chairman of the Shura Council, who appoints its director.

He may be invited to attend the Shura Council sessions without the right to vote.

Chapter 75:

The Center for Strategic Thinking is a list of activities whose activities are approved by the Shura Council.

Part II: Academy of Training and Leadership Qualification

Chapter 76:

The Academy of Leadership Training and Training is one of the party's institutions that oversees the basic, technical and political training of the party members and qualifies its leaders.

The Academy can also provide services to non-party members with arrangements that will be determined later by special regulations of the Shura Council.

Chapter 77:

The party provides the Academy with sufficient funds to carry out its tasks.

Chapter 78:

The Academy of Training and Leadership Qualification is responsible for the head of the party, who appoints its director.

He may be invited to attend the meetings of the Executive Office and the Shura Council without the right to vote.

Chapter 79:

The Academy of Training and Leadership Qualification is a regulation of its activities approved by the Shura Council.

Chapter Three: Disciplinary Bodies

Chapter 80:

Disciplinary bodies are bodies of a disciplinary nature that enjoy administrative and structural independence from the rest of the institutions and consider violations committed by members of the party and the conflicts that occur between them.

Chapter 81:

Disciplinary bodies consist of the higher system, a central system, and a regional system.

Chapter 82:

Members and heads of the disciplinary structures shall take the oath before the Shura Councils.

Article 83:

Members of disciplinary bodies can not combine membership of bodies with central or regional executive responsibility.

Article 84:

Candidates for membership of disciplinary bodies are required:

- Familiarity with party systems, regulations, decisions and policies.
- Be discreet and balanced.
- Impartiality, impartiality, independence and objectivity.
- Their records shall be exempt from disciplinary penalties.

Chapter 85:

The term of office of each body shall be the parliamentary term of the body that elected it. The suspension of its work shall not be suspended or suspended except by the election of a new body.

Chapter 86:

The work of the bodies of the system shall be regulated by internal regulations prepared by the Supreme System and approved by the Shura Council.

Chapter 87:

Each member shall have the right to ask an associate to be held accountable regardless of his organizational position.

Chapter 88:

No disciplinary body may take a decision on the assignee without giving him the opportunity to defend himself or to appoint a person to defend him from among the members.

Chapter 89:

The disciplinary bodies shall make the peaceful attempt between the parties to the dispute, even after the authorization to open an investigation.

Chapter 90: Bodies of the regional system

Are the disciplinary bodies in the territorial authorities and consider firstly the violations committed by the resident members in reference to their land.

Article 91:

The regional system is composed of a president and six members, including a woman, a member of a legal formation, and a member with at least three years of organizational and administrative experience nominated by the regional office and elected by the regional Shura Council by a majority of its members present in accordance with the rules of procedure.

The candidate for membership of the regional system is required:

- The age of 30 years.
- Five years seniority in membership.

The candidate for membership of the regional system of the student sector is required to attain 23 years and a seniority of three years in membership.

Chapter 92: Central System Authority

The central system shall consider the offenses committed by:

- Members of the Shura Council.
- Executive Board members.
- Government members.
- Members of the diplomatic corps.

- Members of the parliamentary bloc.
- Members of the Financial Supervisory Authority.
- Regional General Book.
- Members of the governing bodies.
- Members of central offices.

Chapter 93:

The Shura Council shall elect the Central System Authority and its Chairman.

Article 94:

The Central System is composed of a president and six members, including a woman, a member of a legal formation, and a member with at least five years of organizational and administrative experience elected by the Shura Council in accordance with the rules of procedure.

Chapter 95:

The candidate for membership of the central system body is required:

- 35 years of age
- Collect eight consecutive seniority years in membership.
- To be one of the following tasks: (membership of the Executive Office, membership of the Shura Council, membership of a disciplinary body, regional general writing).

In addition, the President shall be required to carry out the said tasks for at least three years.

Chapter 96: The Supreme System Authority

Is the supreme disciplinary body and considers final appeals for decisions issued firstly by the central system and regional system bodies.

Chapter 97:

The Higher System Authority shall assume administrative supervision and training functions in the various disciplinary bodies

Chapter 98:

The Supreme System shall be composed of a President elected from the Shura Council and eight members, including at least one woman, three members with legal composition and four members having at least five years of organizational and administrative experience elected by the Shura Council in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

Chapter 99:

- The candidate for the presidency and membership of the Supreme System shall be:
- The age of forty
- Collect ten consecutive years in senior membership.
- To be one of the following tasks: (membership of the Executive Office, membership of the Shura Council, membership of a disciplinary body, regional general writing).

In addition, the President shall be required to carry out the tasks mentioned above for at least four years.

Chapter 100: Investigation

The validity of the investigation shall be vested in the disciplinary bodies, in accordance with their competence, in accordance with the rules of procedure.

Chapter 101: Sanctions

Disciplinary sanctions are classified as original penalties and supplementary penalties:

- 1 / The original penalties
  - First-class penalties are:

- Draw attention.
- Blame.
- Reprimand.

o Second class penalties are:

- Pause the activity from month to year.
- Rift.

- 2 / Supplementary Penalties:

o Deprivation of candidacy or nomination of party responsibilities for up to four years.
o Deduction of responsibility in party structures for a maximum of four years.

Section Four: Financial Control and Auditing Authority

Chapter 102:

The Financial Supervisory Authority is a financial control and audit body elected by the Shura Council and accountable to it.

Article 103:

The Board shall be composed of seven members elected by the Shura Council from among its members or from outside by a majority of the attendees, provided that they shall not be less than one third of the members of the Council, including legal and accounting specialists who meet the conditions stipulated in Article 23 of the Statute except for the second condition.

Chapter 104:

Members are nominated by the Shura Council and the Executive Office.

The Shura Council shall elect the members of the Board and its Chairman, who shall supervise the distribution of the tasks.

Members of the Commission shall take the oath before the Shura Council.

Chapter 105:

The Consultative Council shall dissolve the Commission or terminate the membership of one of its members upon the request of the President of the Council or five of its members. The decision shall be taken by the same majority required for election.

In the case of vacancy, the Shura Council shall be appointed after its knowledge and examination.

Chapter 106:

The Authority shall prepare an internal regulation regulating the way it is organized and run and submitted to the Consultative Council for approval.

Chapter 107:

The duration of the Commission's work is the duration of the Shura Council.

Section VI: Elections

Part One: Participation in the general elections

Article 108: The power to decide on general elections.

The Shura Council is the body authorized to take the decision to participate in various elections in whole or in part, and the decision is taken by a majority of those present, not less than one third of the members of the Shura Council.

Article 109: Conditions for candidacy on party lists in general elections.

The candidate on the party's lists in the general elections must:

- Provide the conditions specified by the electoral law.
- Good attitude, honesty and good reputation.
- Party membership.

- To be a resident of the electoral district or its original.
- The settlement of the financial position towards the party when submitting the application for candidature.
- Radiation in the constituency or country.
- Commitment to party policies and decisions of its institutions.
- Commitment to the rules of democratic action.
- Efficiency and ability to manage, communicate and work within a team.

Non-member figures and competencies may be nominated on the Party's lists and in this picture they are exempted from the third and fifth conditions

Chapter 110: Submission of candidacies

The Executive Office shall issue a communiqué announcing the opening of nominations for the membership of the various elected councils on the Party's list and mentioning the conditions and deadlines for nomination, nomination and the components of the file.

Candidates are offered at the regional party headquarters.

Anyone who meets the conditions can stand for party membership in the general elections.

The local office or regional office may also nominate those they deem fit to be elected to an elected council after taking the consent of the concerned party.

Article 111: Compensation for vacancies in lists

When a vacancy occurs in one of the lists after it has been definitively determined due to death, resignation or disciplinary decision, the vacancy compensation shall be by adopting the result of the voting and choosing the next one in the ranking of the members of the supplementary list.

Chapter 112: Special Selection Authority granted to the Executive Office

The Executive Office shall finalize the lists.

The Executive Office has the power to change the order and has an exceptional addition of a member to the list and has a very exceptional addition of a head of the list.

Part two: Procedures for running on the party list in the elections of the People's Assembly or regional councils

Chapter 113: Preliminary study of candidates on the party list

After the deadline for the submission of candidacies, the Regional Office shall appoint a committee to study them in terms of legality and suit the nature of the task to be nominated and decide on the list of names likely to participate in the election by the party structures residing in the electoral district concerned. The list provided by the Regional Office contains at least double the number of seats contested and at least three times.

The representation of localities in the list shall be taken into account in accordance with a memorandum issued by the Consultative Council.

Chapter 114: How to identify and rank candidates

The list presented by the Regional Office shall include the vote of the members of the structures to choose the candidates of the party in the elections and arrange them, taking into account the representative representation of the localities in accordance with the memorandum mentioned in the previous chapter.

All members of party structures registered in the constituency in which the general elections are held shall participate in the voting. The voting shall be in the same manner as the deputies of the parties to the General Conference.

Members of the party structures shall be considered as members of the constituency concerned with the meaning of this chapter:

- Members of the Shura Council
- Ministers and members of the House of Representatives and former members of the House of Representatives.
- Representatives of the elected party at the last general congress of the party.
- Members of the local Shura Council.
- Members of regional offices and members of local direct offices.
- Chairman and members of the regional system.
- President and members of the regional and local party blocs in the region.

Chapter 115: Ranking controls in the list.

List order:

- The requirements of the electoral law.
-
- The demographic weight of localities.
- demographics.
- The electoral weight of the party in the localities.
- Balance between the center of the circle and its edges.

Part Three: Procedures for Candidacy on the Party List in Municipal Council Elections

Article 116: Preliminary study of the application for candidacy

After the deadline for the submission of candidacies, the local office shall appoint a committee to study them in terms of legality and suit the nature of the municipal task and decide on the list of names likely to be participated in the election by the party members in the electoral district concerned.

The list provided by the local office contains at least double the number of seats contested and at least three times.

In the case of major municipalities, as determined by the Executive Office, the decision to form the list shall be submitted to the Regional Bureau for ratification, if necessary.

Chapter 117: How to identify and rank candidates.

The list submitted by the local office displays the vote of party members in the constituency to choose the party candidates in the elections and their ranking.

All members of party structures registered in the constituency in which the general elections are held shall participate in the voting. The voting shall be in the same manner as the deputies of the parties in the General Conference.

The Regional Office has the power to change the order and it has an exceptional addition of a member to the list and has a very exceptional addition of a head of the list.

Section VII: Blocks

Part One - parliamentary bloc

Article 118: The parliamentary bloc shall be formed

The parliamentary bloc of the party is composed of deputies who run on the party lists.

MPs who have not run on party lists can join their parliamentary bloc after they are accepted by the bloc's bureau and recommended by the executive office.

Chapter 119: Parliamentary bloc structures and rules of procedure

The mass structures are the plenary of the bloc, the head of the bloc, the bureau of the bloc and the members of the bloc in the structures of the People's Assembly, its legislative and private committees and the coordinators.

In a public meeting held under the supervision of the executive office of the party, the bloc elects three of its members to elect its chairman, including the head of the party as head of the bloc.

Re-nomination at the beginning of each parliamentary session.

The head of the bloc selects two deputies from among the members of the bloc and then submits them to the executive office for recommendation.

The office of the bloc shall be composed of its chairman, deputies and assistants, and the rapporteur of the bloc.

The bloc proposes its rules of procedure to the executive bureau for deliberation before submitting it to the Shura Council for discussion and voting.

The internal rules of the bloc regulate its work in a way that does not contradict the party's statutes.

The rules of procedure of the bloc are guaranteed within the party's bylaws.

The bloc has an administrative and financial body headed by an executive director.

Chapter 120: The relationship between the parliamentary bloc and the party.

The bloc is working to reduce the party's electoral platform and public policies through the activities of the People's Congress.

The party's executive office and its institutions must consult the bloc in advance in all matters that are to be downloaded and implemented through the activities of the People's Congress.

The party puts the human and material resources necessary for its proper functioning.

The bloc submits monthly reports on its various activities to the Executive Office for an opinion, as well as the first session of the National Shura Council.

Part II - Local elected power blocs

Chapter 121: Classification of elected local power blocs.

Local government blocs are represented in each of the blocks of the municipal council and the blocks of the regional council and blocks of the provincial council.

The bloc of the elected local authority of the party is composed of deputies who are nominated on the party lists for the elections of the council concerned.

MPs who did not run on the party lists can join the bloc after they are accepted by the office of the bloc and recommend the executive office for the blocks of the regional council and blocks of the regional council and the recommendation of the regional office for the blocks of the municipal council.

The bloc of the elected local authority shall exercise its functions after selecting its president and two deputies by voting. The president shall coordinate between the bloc and the regional or local office of the party, as the case may be.

And in the form of affiliation of the President of the elected council to the party, it shall be the president of the mass concerned.

Issues within the bloc are discussed within the party's electoral program, its systems and political options, and positions are taken after a majority vote. Members of the bloc are bound by the decisions they make.

Chapter 122: Joint provisions concerning the blocks of the Regional Council and the Municipal Council.

The heads of local authority blocks shall have the right to request the convening of the regional office or the local office, as the case may be, in order to determine the policy of the party in any matter presented to the council concerned.

The Convening shall be convened by the Chairman of the Bureau concerned who chairs the meeting.

Section III - Government Group

Chapter 123: The power to decide on forming a government.

The decision to form a coalition government or a majority, as well as the decision to leave the government or the coalition, goes back to the Shura Council.

Article 124: The power to form a government.

If the party is not in charge of the formation of the government, the executive office shall have the task of consulting with the party head in charge.

If the party is mandated to form a government, the candidate for prime minister is the one who chooses the members of his government team in accordance with the Executive Office.

In the event of a decision to leave the coalition government, ministers belonging to the party are obliged to resign from the government.

Chapter 125: Composition of the Governmental Group.

The government team is composed of members of the government belonging to the party.

The government team is headed by the highest-ranking government official from the party under a letter of assignment, which assures the full contents of its members.

Article 126: Duties of members of the governmental team

The member of the party's government must adhere to the laws in force and the government's program, as well as the general principles, regulations and political options of the party.

Article 127: Withdrawal of confidence from the members of the governmental team

The Shura Council may vote to withdraw confidence from a member of the Government who does not comply with the previous two terms by a majority of those present, provided that such majority shall not be less than one third of the members of the Council.

Chapter 128: Governing Council

A Governing Council is established that deals with coordination between the party and the executive and legislative branches. Its functions are to assess the positions related to the ruling file and to supervise the downloading of the decisions and policies of the party's institutions.

The functions, composition and working mechanisms of this Council shall be governed by a regulation prepared by the Executive Office, approved by the Shoura Council and guaranteed by the Party's bylaws.

Section VIII: Financial Provisions

Chapter 129:

The financial resources of the Party shall consist of all proceeds authorized by law and the resources and expenses shall be documented in accordance with the law.

Chapter 130:

The party funds are spent to achieve its objectives in accordance with the principles of transparency and good governance.

Section IX: General Provisions

Chapter 131:

In the period prior to the Ninth Congress, the number of periods of responsibility is not significant.

Chapter 132:

The Party's activity may be suspended temporarily on the basis of a proposal submitted by the absolute majority of the members of the Shura Council and endorsed by a two-thirds majority of its members.

The decision to suspend the suspension shall determine the duration and conditions for lifting it.

Salt is aware of this decision. At the expiration of the term or upon fulfillment of the conditions for lifting the suspension, the Party Chairman shall call upon the various structures of the Party to reconvene and resume normal activities.

A quarter of the members of the Shoura Council, if it considers the conditions for lifting the suspension, may request the convening of the Shura Council no later than 15 days from the date of the request to review the fulfillment of the conditions of lifting the suspension and inviting the various structures to resume normal activity.

The party can be dissolved by a decision of a two-thirds majority of the two at an extraordinary conference.

In case of approval of the proposal to dissolve the party, the conference will be a committee to liquidate its funds in accordance with the laws in force.

Chapter 133: Referendum

The President of the Party, or the majority of the members of the Shura Council, upon request by one third of its members, may call for a referendum.

The referendum shall be held in accordance with a list prepared by the calling party and approved by the Shura Council by a majority of those present, provided that such majority shall not be less than one third of the members of the Council.

Chapter 134: Revision of the Statute

This Statute may be revised by an absolute majority of the two Conferences.

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