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Post-Islamism in Tunisia and Egypt: Contradictory Trajectories

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Abstract: In the wake of the Tunisian Revolution of 2011, Ennahda leader Rached Ghannouchi distanced his party from the main Islamist paradigm, which is spearheaded primarily by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and announced the separation of the religious movement entirely from its political wing (al-Siyasi and al-da'awi). In addition to reassuring Tunisians that Ennahda's socio-political project is rooted in its "Tunisianity," these measures aimed at signaling Ennahda's joining the camp of post-Islamist parties and Muslim democrats such as the AKP in Turkey and the JDP in Morocco. In this article, using the comparative case studies, I examine the patterns, similarities, and differences between the Tunisian Ennahda party and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in terms of their evolutions from an Islamist to a post-Islamist discourse and identity. I argue that the Ennahda party outpaced the Muslim Brotherhood in that shift considering the local/regional realities and the new compromises dictated by the post-revolutionary political processes in both countries. Although the Muslim Brotherhood managed to come to power and govern for only one year before being deposed by the army, Ennahda's political pragmatism (consensus, compromise, and coalition) enabled it to fare well, ultimately prodding the party to adapt and reposition itself intellectually and politically.

Keywords: Ennahda party; Islamism; Muslim brotherhood; post-Islamism; political Islam; Rached Ghannouchi

1. Introduction

In the wake of the major political upheavals that shook the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, the "Arab Spring" enabled the comeback of the Islamist groups to the stage of Arab politics, thus generating an urgent need to re-examine moderate Islamism and its commitment to pluralistic democracy, individual liberties, and women's rights.

Moreover, as the dramatic evolution of the uprisings unfolded, there have been significant changes within different Islamist movements at the levels of their visions, discourses, and standpoints towards some of the most critical themes such as the concept of a civil state, political pluralism, civil rights and freedom, women's issues, and the relationship between the state and religion. This led several analysts and experts to categorize and differentiate between the various groups of political Islam. In this article, the terms "political Islam" and "Islamism" are used interchangeably, as is commonly done. Islamism refers to more militancy-oriented ideology, whereas political Islam is about ideology without a commitment or militancy engagement. That said, I acknowledge that Islamism may also be deemed a broader and more "capacious category" (Badran 2013, p. 112). There is a fundamental difference, for instance, between the Islamist movements that are involved in the political game within the framework of the national state (the Ennahda party in Tunisia and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt) and jihadist groups of all kinds (Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb or Jabhat al Nusra). In other words, Islamism, as "a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations that pursue political objectives" (Ayoob 2008, p. 2), spans a broad spectrum since some parties claim that they believe in electoral democracy whereas others believe in creating a global caliphate by force. Although they all aim to blend religion and politics, they are not monolithic, as they often

differ distinctively on how to attain their goals. Greg Barton indicates that Islamism covers "a broad spectrum of convictions, at one extreme are those who would merely like to see Islam accorded proper recognition in national life in terms of national symbols. At the other extreme are those who want to see the radical transformation of society and politics, by whatever means, into an absolute theocracy" (Barton 2004, p. 2).

The victories of the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Moroccan Islamist parties in the elections that followed the Arab uprisings, together with the primordial role they played in Syria, Libya, and Yemen, have brought political Islam to the forefront of the scholarly debate (Hamid 2011, p. 40). In Tunisia, the success of the Ennahda party and its focus on forging new political arrangements during the transitional period prompted more discussion about the transformation of an Islamist party to a post-Islamist one. The party reiterated several times that it adopted the values of political modernity such as civil state and democratic rights, accepted a constitution that aims at neither establishing an Islamic state nor imposing sharia law, and separated its political and religious work. The concept of "political modernity" refers to a new configuration/organization of power and individual freedom. For Domingues (2019), democracy has been an integral part of political modernity besides liberalism. Briefly, the concept embodies the commitment to self-determination, personal liberties, citizenship, and democracy. Nevertheless, Ennahda kept an Islamic reference as its source of inspiration. This can also be understood as an attempt to harmonize Islam and secular democracy in the sense that the party's post-Islamist discourse "incorporates the sacred within the framework of the secular state" (Rahim 2011, p. 2). In Egypt, the Freedom and Justice Party (the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood)—despite its short-lived rule until its overthrow in 2013 through a coup d'état—expressed its commitment to a modern civil state and electoral democracy (used interchangeably with the concept of Shura in the FJP platform), as well as its willingness to embrace freedom, human rights, and gender equality.[1] These significant rhetorical changes could be contextualized within the framework of "post-Islamism," a concept coined by Asef Bayat. Post-Islamism is defined as:

> an endeavor to fuse religiosity and rights, faith and freedom, Islam and liberty. It is an attempt to turn the underlying principles of Islamism on their head by emphasizing rights instead of duties, plurality in place of a singular authoritative voice, historicity rather than fixed scriptures, and the future instead of the past. It wants to marry Islam with individual choice and freedom (albeit at varying degrees), with democracy and modernity, to achieve what some have termed an alter modernity. Post-Islamism is expressed in acknowledging secular exigencies, in freedom from rigidity, in breaking down the monopoly of religious truth. I concluded that whereas Islamism is defined by the fusion of religion and responsibility, post-Islamism emphasizes religiosity and rights. Yet, while it favors a civil and nonreligious state, it accords an active role for religion in the public sphere. (Bayat 2013, p. 8)

It can be inferred that post-Islamism accounts for the transformations of socially conservative parties towards accepting the rules of a civil and democratic political system and renouncing the Islamization of society from above. Nevertheless, post-Islamist parties keep an Islamic reference as their source of inspiration. Although it embraces a significant role for religion in the public space, post-Islamism acknowledges the prospective "danger of the idea of the religious state to both religion and the state" (Boubekeur and Roy 2012, p. 5).

In this article, I employ a comparative case study to delineate the similarities and differences between the Tunisian Ennahda Party and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in terms of their evolutions from an Islamist to a post-Islamist rhetoric and identity. By examining ideological stances on various issues as well as their political performances after the revolutions, I argue that the Ennahda party outpaced the Muslim Brotherhood, as the former was more conciliatory and pragmatic in the transitional process and collaborating

with other political forces. Moreover, Ennahda proved to be more committed to inclusive governance, liberties, democracy, pluralism, and a civil state.

2. A Post-Islamist Turn

The concept of post-Islamism can be traced in the works of Asaf Bayat and Olivier Roy, who present two different but interrelated understandings of post-Islamism. According to Roy, Islamism, as a project that aims at capturing the state and transforming both politics and society through religion, had run its course and exhausted its revolutionary dynamic (Roy 2013, p. 16). In other words, Islamism as an ideological and political project had failed. Consequently, Islamism "degraded into neo-fundamentalism" (Roy 1994, p. 87), which denotes a strict return to purely religious norms in its political activism. However, one can argue that the electoral programs of Islamist parties that were based on religious norms had some public appeal despite the state repression in the 2000s. For instance, in the 2005 legislative elections, the Muslim Brotherhood performed relatively well in Egypt. In the wake of the Arab Spring, Islamist parties engaged quickly and efficiently in massive mobilization efforts due to the power vacuum that ensued after the fall of the regimes. The Brotherhood in Egypt and Ennahda in Tunisia mobilized their electoral bases and sympathizers, set up party branches across the country, developed a political manifesto, selected candidates, and designed their media campaigns.

Bayat conceptualizes post-Islamism more comprehensively, as he refers to this phenomenon as both "a condition and a project" (Bayat 2007, p. 10). It refers to a condition where Islamism "becomes compelled, both by its own internal contradictions and by societal pressure, to reinvent itself, but it does so at the cost of a qualitative shift [...] [towards a project] that emphasizes religiosity, individual choice, and human rights, as well as plurality in place of a singular authoritative Islamist voice" (Bayat 2007, pp. 10–11). In other words, Islamists came to realize their movements' inefficiency, internal contradictions, and the inadequacy of their top-down model of spurring sociopolitical change. Hence, they were compelled to re-assess and rethink their ideology through democratic competition and negotiation with diverse intellectual, political, and religious movements. Hence, post-Islamism is an attempt to update Islamism and merge it with individual freedom, democracy, and modernity. Nevertheless, it is safe to argue that if a party is post-Islamist, that does not guarantee it will advance certain civil rights and liberties. In the Tunisian case, Ennahda rejected the law proposed by President Beji Caid Esbesi to codify parity in inheritance between men and women on the grounds that it contradicts existing Islamic laws. In Egypt, although the Muslim Brotherhood rejects a theocratic form of government, it remains "a religiously and socially conservative party" (Zollner 2019). Its position on women's rights is a pertinent example (Al-Anani 2018, pp. 31–32). Bayat further defines post-Islamism as "a conscious attempt to conceptualize and strategize the rationale and modalities of transcending Islamism in social, political, and intellectual domains" (Bayat 2007, p. 11). Post-Islamism accepts secular exigencies and emphasizes religiosity and human rights, thus advancing an "alternative modernity" or "multiple modernities." As an alternative approach promoting a "bottom-up, minimum, inclusive universalism," Mojtaba Mahdavis deems it "a call for a grassroots and homegrown universalism from below to materialize Muslim modernities and Muslim democracies" (Mahdavi 2013, p. 67). It also debunks the monopoly of religious truth and the ideological absolutism of "Islam is the solution." Consequently, although post-Islamism can be a bridge towards a form of "civil Islam," it remains vulnerable to authoritarianism. The Turkish Justice and Development Party is a good example of this fall into authoritarianism through jailing journalists and the crackdown on political dissidents after the failed coup in 2016. Theoretically, the concept of post-Islamism raises several questions as to what it really means, who uses it, and for what reasons. Is it a descriptive, interpretive, or explanatory term? Characterized by a certain degree of ambiguity as well as "fluidity like every post-term" (Imad 2019, p. 3), it probably requires more clarity and explanatory power to analyze, deconstruct, and interpret the transformations of Islamist groups and movements. Moreover, the concept suggests in

some way a historical determinism, as it presupposes that there is a certain ideological or intellectual time trajectory to be followed by Islamist currents and movements in order to transition from the stage of Islamism to post-Islamism, something that is disputable. Although Bayat's concept of post-Islamism addresses the interplay of democracy, secularism, Islam, and politics, it does not fully include the principle of social justice—an ideal closely tied to political emancipation and religious enlightenment—as a key element in its theoretical articulation (Al-Arabi 2018). Another concern worth raising about the concept revolves around its potential instrumentalization by Islamists when dealing with the international community so as to appease worries about their policies and discourses. Despite its shortcomings, however, post-Islamism is a useful conceptual tool to examine the transformation of the discourse and politics of contemporary political Islam.

3. Methodology

The comparative case studies involve the analysis and synthesis of the similarities, differences, and patterns between cases sharing a common focus or trait. A small number of cases can be used to generate a useful analysis and to test the hypothesis of a given study (Collier 1993). This paper uses this approach to study similarities and differences between the Ennahda Party and the Muslim Brotherhood. It shows that although these two parties witnessed a relatively similar historical context in regard to their reactions to European modernity, post-colonial top-down autocratic regimes, and the Arab revolutions, they responded differently to the political opportunities and challenges, and thus ended up with two different political and ideological trajectories. The comparison will include declarations, political statements, and positions revolving around issues such as the relationship between religion and the state as well as women's and minority rights.

4. Background and Context

4.1. Historicizing Ennahda in Tunisia

The 1960s witnessed the emergence of the first nucleus of the "*Mouvement de la tendance islamique*" (Harakat alittijah al-islami, MTI), which would be known later as the Ennahda party. Founded initially as "Al Jamaa al Islamia," it focused mainly on religious issues with only a marginal interest in politics. More specifically, it concentrated on religious ethics, Quranic studies, and proselytizing in reaction to the top-down modernization policy led by the first Tunisian president, Habib Bourguiba (Pargeter 2016, p. 186). This aggressive form of modernization led to the marginalization of religion and mosques and the spread/adoption of Western lifestyles. Consequently, the Islamists deemed this form of "Westernization" as a serious deviation that threatened the religious identity of the nation. This idea of Islamism, argues Burgat (2003), was an attempt to construct an alternative Arab identify with an Islamic lexicon in order to counter the European conception of modernity adopted by the first generations of post-colonial leaders. In the mid-1970s, "Al Jamaa al Islamia" became the *Mouvement de la tendance islamique* (Harakat alittijah al-islami, MTI) and "the influence of 'Ikhwen' (Muslim Brotherhood) would prove to be decisive on almost all levels" (Hamdi 1998, p. 21). In an article published in *Foreign Affairs*, Rached Ghannouchi acknowledges that he and Abdelfattah Mourou, the Ennahda co-founder,

> were influenced by thinkers in Egypt and Syria linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, such as the movement's Egyptian founder, Hasan al-Banna, and Mustafa al-Sibai, the leader of its Syrian branch. But as the MTI developed, they increasingly drew inspiration from thinkers in the Maghreb region, such as the Algerian philosopher Malek Bennabi and Al Zitouna University's own Mohamed Tahar Ben Achour, one of the fathers of the rationalistic approach to Quarnic exegesis, which emphasizes the importance of maqasid al-sharia: the objectives, or ends, of Islamic law. (Ghannouchi 2016, p. 60)

Some of the earliest members left the movement in the late 1970s to form a progressive Islamist group, as they thought the then-MTI was not yet ready for a political path (Allani 1998). Among their prominent leaders were Ahmida Enneifer, the second in rank

after Ghannouchi, and Salaheddine Jourchi, a member in the Consultant Council of the movement. In 1981, MTI stepped into the political arena by challenging the authoritarian rule of Habib Bourguiba (Shahin 1998, pp. 86–87). It should be noted that although the 1981 manifesto of MTI called for cultural and religious revivalism, it did not encompass any references to an Islamic state or the application of sharia; it also "committed the movement to the democratic process, free elections, political pluralism, and the peaceful alternation of power" (Pickard 2014, p. 7) several years ahead of similar movements elsewhere in the region. Rachid Ghannouchi confirmed that manifesto/statement after the 2011 revolution by saying, "we drank the cup of democracy in one gulp back in the 1980s while other Islamists have taken it sip by sip" (Hamid 2014, p. 191). In other words, some elements of post-Islamism were already present from the early years. In the following years, MTI committed itself to the principle of democracy and to working within a civil, democratic state (McCarthy 2015, p. 449). Despite some violence committed by a radical wing within MTI, such as the bombing of tourist resorts in Monastir and Sousse as well as attempts to overthrow the regime (Pargeter 2012, pp. 78–80), Ghannouchi began honing his conciliatory approach to democracy and Western civilization by "looking for a social, human and civilizational model that reflects its religion and heritage and answers the current needs and challenges" (Hamdi 1998, p. 48).

After coming to power in 1987, Bourguiba's successor, President Ben Ali, was moderately tolerant of MTI in the early years of his rule and held an election in 1989 (Wolf 2017, p. 67). MTI changed its name to Ennahda "to reassure its opponents that it was not trying to monopolize Islam" (Allani 2009, p. 263). It ran several candidates in the election. This electoral success, with 14.5 percent of the vote[2] behind the ruling party *Rassemblement Constitutionel Democratique*, alarmed the regime. Hence, Ben Ali "painted the Islamists as a critical threat to Tunisia, just as Bourguiba had done before him" (McCarthy 2018, p. 64). Because of a crackdown on the party, Ghannouchi and other Ennahda leaders fled to London while others were imprisoned and tortured. Although Ennahda's political activities in Tunisia were curtailed during the 1990s and early 2000s, it participated in the 2005 opposition coalition organized by the Progressive Democratic Party (Guazzone 2013, p. 43). This alliance, also known as the 18 October Collective for Rights and Freedoms, drafted a text in late 2007 representing an agreed upon cross-party vision of a future democratic Tunisia. Although this opposition movement mobilized different ideological and conceptual references, they all agreed on women's rights, freedom of political organization, freedom of conscience, freedom of press, the release of and amnesty for political prisoners, and an affirmation of the place of Islam in Tunisian society and culture. According to Angrist, this movement "pursued a unifying rather than exclusionary approach that focused on common political interests shared by opposition groups" (Angrist 2013, p. 558). By explicitly embracing a charter that enshrines key individual freedoms, Ennahda seemed to be engaging in a slow, post-Islamist ideological evolution. Although the opposition alliance dissolved by 2009, Ennahda incorporated many of these demands in its 2011 election platform, where it endorsed freedoms of thought, conscience, and belief as well as a pluralistic political system. Although this pact was certainly an important milestone in the history of Tunisia's opposition in the sense that it built an entente between Islamist and non-Islamist political forces, its achievements were overrated. Practically, the opposition to Ben Ali was frail and fragmented and did not hold sway on the street, and its participation in the revolution was limited.

In the wake of the 2011 parliamentary elections, Ennahda achieved a stunning comeback to the national political landscape. After being banned and oppressed for several decades, the party received the official license in March 2011 following the fall of the Ben Ali dictatorial regime and won the first free and fair elections in Tunisia with impressive results of 89 seats out of 217 in the Constituent Assembly. This impressive victory surprised many Tunisians as well as the international community. After the elections, Ennahda opted to form the Troika coalition government with two different ideological center-left parties.

Despite a loss in the 2014 parliamentary elections, Ennahda continues to be a key player in the Tunisian political scene.

4.2. Historicizing the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

The Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna in 1928, aimed initially at spreading Islamic morals, establishing an Islamic state through Islamization from below, and implementing sharia law. It later spread into several Muslim-majority countries such as Jordan, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen, etc. Over the next decades, the MB had a complex and troubled relationship with consecutive regimes, portrayed once as a struggle between a "cobra and a mongoose" (Springborg 2012). After the revolution of 1952, the movement suffered from a harsh crackdown after it was allegedly accused of plotting to assassinate President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Consequently, the latter sought to squelch the group, executing leaders and imprisoning thousands of its members (Ashour 2015, p. 2). Sayed Qutb, a leading ideologue and theorist in the movement, was hung. Nasser and the MB had contradictory conceptions of the nation: The former sought to modernize Egypt along socialist and secular lines, whereas the latter advocated for a more important role of religion in politics and public life (Hibbard 2011, p. 90). On the contrary, Anwar Sadat loosened the restrictions on the Muslim Brotherhood and sought its support in the 1970s by freeing its members and allowing them to operate with relative freedom. Nevertheless, the organization itself remained illegal. This was done partly in an attempt to use the group as a bulwark against communist and Nasserite elements on university campuses (Kepel 2003, p. 134). Despite the disagreements with the MB over Saadat's endorsement of the Peace Treaty with Israel as well as some elements of his "infitah" (opening) policy, the organization adopted a nonviolent and moderate path, intensified its political efforts and influence, and resisted the trend towards radicalism that other Islamist movements were undergoing (Aly and Wenner 1982, pp. 355–56). Hosni Mubarak's regime took a relatively accommodating approach to the MB and that enabled it to boost its political activism as well as social and religious engagement. As a result, the organization managed to substantially increase its influence at all layers of the Egyptian political arena and society and metamorphosed into a staunch opposition force with well-structured grassroots. In the 1984 elections, it ran candidates as part of an electoral alliance with the Wafd Party, which won 58 seats, whereas the Brotherhood won just 8 of 454 seats (Hamzawy and Brown 2010, p. 35). It also began to develop a strong presence in professional syndicates. Members of the organization even came to dominate some syndicates, including those that were once politically liberal (Fahmy 1998, pp. 551–52). For the 1987 parliamentary elections, the MB formed a tripartite alliance with the Liberal and the Socialist Labour parties and elaborated an electoral platform that called for economic reform, more democracy, and the application of sharia law. The alliance obtained 78 seats, 36 of them belonged to the Brotherhood (Thabet 2006, p. 15). The MB's political gains had been hit by the mid-1990s as Mubarak became concerned about the Brotherhood's rising influence within professional associations, unions, and civil institutions. After the 1990 elections boycott by oppositional forces, including the Brotherhood, the regime started targeting the movement's cadres. Moreover, the MB was highly critical of the Mubarak government's endorsement of the October 1991 Madrid peace talks between parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In 1995, a government crackdown led to the prosecution of a group of former MB parliamentarians, leading civic activists, and parliamentary candidates (Campagna 1996, p. 279). In the elections of the same year, the MB won only one seat. In his seminal book *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*, Carrie Rosefsky Wickham underscores that the MB, in addition to being not "monolithic," went through a gradual and fluctuating ideological transformation. He states that the movement "traced a path marked by profound inconsistencies and contradictions, yielding agendas in which newly embraced themes of freedom and democracy coexist uneasily with illiberal religious concepts carried over from the past" (Wickham 2013, pp. 3–4). Another key element that has marked the MB's evolution was the increasing disagreement between the so-called "old guard" and the

much younger reformist generation over issues related to the internal restructuring of the organization and the status of its *da-wah* branch and social service networks in the case of the establishment of a Brotherhood political party. Interestingly, this younger generation of MB activists moved beyond calling for an explicitly Islamic state that fully applies sharia law to embracing the notions of pluralism and a civil state with an Islamic point of reference. With their demands rejected by the "old guard" and the deepening of an internal schism between the two tendencies, young reformist members withdrew to form the Wasat party (center party). The newly born party abided by its moderate political path where popular sovereignty, party pluralism, and civil liberties for both genders and all religions were endorsed (Altman 2009, p. 22). Under the Mubarak reign, members of the MB's "old guard" were more cautious in their political engagement as they went through the repression under the rule of Nasser and Sadat. They advocated a bottom-up approach in which the MB would pursue the goal of making society more "Muslim" before trying to acquire power through politics (Ghafar and Hess 2018, p. 7). Indeed, the group continued participating in Egypt's elections, and in 2000 its candidates won 17 seats as independents. Starting from 2004, the MB devoted more attention and resources to conducting parliamentary work and contesting elections. Capitalizing on a limited liberalization of the political scene, it managed in 2005 to win 20 percent of the seats, making it the biggest opposition bloc despite widespread rigging of the vote.[3] In 2011, President Hosni Mubarak had to step down after millions of Egyptians demonstrated in the streets demanding freedoms, better living conditions, and the fall of the regime. Parliamentary elections, which were held between 2011 and 2012, allowed the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) to dominate the upper and lower chambers of the parliament with a crushing majority. In June 2012, after a narrow election victory, Mohammed Morsi became Egypt's first democratically elected president. However, after one turbulent year at the reins of the government, Mohammed Morsi was deposed by the chief General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. The intervention of the Egyptian Army was the prelude to the restoration of authoritarian rule. Leading Muslim Brotherhood members and cadres were imprisoned, and the party ended up being declared a terrorist organization (Laub 2014). Such upheavals halted the democratization process in Egypt.

5. The Post-Islamist Evolution: Similarities and Differences

5.1. Compromise, Consensus, Reconciliation, and Coalition-Making

After the victory in the 2011 elections and obtaining 89 seats in Parliament, the Ennahda party pioneered "a new era of inclusiveness by establishing the first coalition government in the history of Tunisia" (Yildirim 2017, p. 206). Ennahda portrayed itself to Tunisians as a moderate, civil, and democratic party that advocated for dialogue and cooperation with all parties for the sake of securing a democratic transition and the establishment of post-revolution institutions. Rached Ghannouchi and other cadres who returned from exile regularly highlighted parallels with Germany's Christian Democrats, saying that Ennahda saw itself as a conservative democratic party with a religious reference that favored a liberal, open economy (Marks 2017, p. 36). Having to deal with an electoral system that prevented any party from gaining an overall majority, but also keen on discarding any fears about its political agenda—that is, being a Muslim Brotherhood franchise, monopolizing the political landscape, applying sharia law, and Islamizing the state—Ennahda forged an alliance with secular parties such as Ettakatol and the Congress for the Republic (CPR). Under what become known as the Troika, Hammadi Jebali was appointed as the prime minister, Mustapha Ben Jafar as the speaker of the Constituent Assembly, and Moncef Marzouki as the president. According to Allya Alani, Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Manouba in Tunis, "the Troika has effective control over the formation of the government and the passing of the laws it wants passed and it put in place a constitution that does not contradict its orientations. Throughout discussions of the laws regulating public authorities, the Troika tried to adopt a reconciliatory and consensual approach to the views of the minority. It has often listened to,

and even implemented, the minority's recommendations" (2013, pp. 133–34). This Troika partnership has revealed that Ennahda transcended ideological divides and reached out to different parties to avoid a monopoly of governance in the post-revolution period. Unlike Egypt, where the Muslim Brotherhood's majoritarian mindset and reluctance to cooperate with the opposition led to its downfall, Ennahda was politically savvy (Chamkhi 2014, p. 466). Nevertheless, this Troika came under fire in the wake of the decision by Ennahda's then-prime minister Hamadi Jebali to extradite former Libyan prime minister Baghdadi Mahmoudi against President Marzouki's will. Although the prerogative to perform this procedure lies within the president's duties, Ennahda's actions revealed that it is the dominating party within the Troika and that it had the final say on several issues. As Anne Wolf argues, "Ennahda's dominance within the Troika was reinforced by the fragility of secular parties" (Wolf 2014, p. 6).

During this Troika period, Ennahda had to make several concessions and compromises either with the deep state,[4] its political opponents, or with civil society. In fact, when drafting the constitution, Ennahda—due to enormous pressure by civil society groups—compromised on several ideological issues. For instance, it refrained from using language that described men and women as "complementary," withdrew an article that would have criminalized blasphemy, and abandoned efforts to add sharia as a source of legislation (Marks 2014, pp. 20–26). Another critical compromise that Ennahda had to offer was the lustration law. This legislation, referred to as 'قانون تحصين الثورة' (law to immunize, or protect, the revolution), would have banned former affiliates of Ben Ali's dismantled party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD), from participating in Tunisia's 2014 elections. This law could have also prevented Beji Caid Essebsi, founder of Nidaa Tounes and the leader of anti-Troika opposition, from running in the elections and holding office. In a local/regional context that was marked by the 2013 Egyptian coup, Mohamed Brahmi's assassination, and the Bardo crisis,[5] "pursuit of lustration had become especially dangerous, something which Rached Ghannouchi realized" (Marks 2017, p. 48). Taking a rigid position on these critical issues would not only undermine the entire constitution-making process but would have put the whole process of democratic transition in jeopardy. Finally, there was the risk that the secular-oriented strands of Tunisian civil society might respond with a counterrevolution, similar to what happened in Egypt with the "Tamarod movement." Considering these circumstances, Ennahda's leadership realized that backing down was the best way out.

During the constitution drafting process, Ghannouchi himself said, "It is not suitable that Islamists and Muslims in general fear that freedom would harm Islam. The greatest danger to Islam would be the absence of freedoms and the unavailability of sufficient guarantees for the freedom of conscience, the freedom of expression, the freedom of belief, the freedom of movement, and all social freedoms" (Ghannouchi 2013). As he capitalized on his religious leverage, he embarked on a mission to persuade the party's rank and file that the compromises were genuinely Islamic. Sharia was framed and articulated in terms of values rather than binding legal norms, and that it was salient in the semantic choices adopted in the Tunisian constitution's preamble by opting for the "teachings" rather than the "laws" of Islam (Netterstrøm 2015, pp. 119–20). Freedom of conscience has been embedded within the comprehensive understanding of freedoms in Islam.

In January 2014, and in light of the assassinations of two opposition leaders, Chokri Belaid (6 February 2013) and Mohamed Brahmi (25 July 2013), Ennahda's government under Ali Larayedh's premiership stepped down. Unlike Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi's reluctance to step down in the wake of the vast protests that erupted against his government and that led to the coup, Ennahda proved that it was willing to give up power in order to safeguard the whole process of democratic transition.

During the 2016 Ennahda Party Congress, Rached Ghannouchi invited Beji Caid Essebsi to deliver the keynote speech. The latter endorsed Ennahda as a key political player in Tunisia. For Ghannouchi, preserving a seat at the political table and ensuring the normalization of his party in Tunisian politics would guarantee the survival of the party

and the consolidation of the country's fragile democratic transition. Although Ghannouchi praised his cross-party coalition (primarily with secularists) as well as his inclusionist attitude towards members of the old regime, he avoided indicating that this was part of a deal between himself and Beji Caid Essebsi that allowed the latter to ascend to the presidency. In addition to that, I contend that this entente, which continued until 2018, was similar to a "marriage of convenience." To put it differently, there was a monopoly of power between two parties that resulted in the concentration of the decision-making process in the hands of a few individuals (Yerkes 2018, pp. 1–2). *Le Monde* journalist Bobin (2018) compared the consensus to both an impediment to the ideals of the Jasmine Revolution and a secret chamber of transactions between individuals sharing positions of influence. Ennahda benefited widely from this arrangement, as it enabled it to sweep certain issues (exportation of Tunisian youth to fight in Syria under the Troika government and Ennahda's alleged secret apparatus[6]) under the rug and avert being investigated and held accountable for them.

Taking these factors into consideration, Ennahda was determined to shun any clash with the affiliates of the old guard in Nidaa Tounes, and instead participated in the coalition government under Nidaa Tounes. Furthermore, Ghannouchi supported the law proposed by the president of the republic on economic and financial reconciliation, despite sharp criticism and objection from civil society (Miller and Wolff 2015). Thus, it gained the image of a party that could advance via dialogue and compromise, rather than an outdated party chained by an unchanging radical ideology. In this way, Ennahda won the battle for the normalization of relations with the state and secured its presence in a predominantly secular-liberal government. This also paved the way for the institutionalization of an Islamist party in exchange for the latter's renunciation of the Islamic State and the implementation of sharia law as well as its recognition of the status of women and of a pluralistic society. In other words, this marked the failure of Islamism as a political ideology in favor of the normalization of Islamist parties as legitimate actors in a pluralistic political scene (Roy 2011). In this regard, Anouar Jamaoui contends that "with the coalition government, Ennahda was able to protect itself against the possible exclusionary attitude of the mainstream secular leftist current in Nidaa Tounes and the Popular Front—parties that enthusiastically defended the exclusion of Islamists from governance" (Jamaoui 2015).

What could explain these moves is Ennahda's engagement in a long-term game, avoiding any dissension and promoting itself as a non-threatening actor to stay in power and eventually seize it. As Netterstrom argues, "What mattered [for Ennahda] was political calculation geared toward gaining and keeping power. For the sake of the party's overarching goals, some elements of Islamist ideology had to be left behind . . . Ennahda made these compromises out of political necessity, and only later developed an ideological rationale for them" (Netterstrøm 2015, p. 120). This proclivity towards a form of compromise-oriented radical pragmatism spawned several disagreements inside Ennahda, which threatened the party's cohesion. Some of the disenchanted radical strands of Ennahda ended up joining the newly established Salafi right-wing populist al-Karama Coalition (Dignity Coalition).[7] This political coalition, which won 21 seats (or 5.94% of the popular vote) and emerged as the fourth prominent force in the 2019 parliamentary elections,[8] blended populism with a conservative religious ideology that intersects with Salafism across various lines (Lorch and Chakroun 2020).

In the aftermath of the 2019 presidential and legislative elections, this spirit of pragmatic alliances and consensus took a new shape with a new political adversary that turned out to eventually become a coalition partner, Nabil Karoui's Qalb Tounes party. Nabil Karoui is the owner of a popular television channel, Nessma TV, and a philanthropist who won the support of many of Tunisia's downtrodden in the most marginalized areas of the country thanks to his charity's distribution of money and food. Before the October 2019 elections, Rached Ghannouchi affirmed that his party "will not ally itself with the party of Qalb Tounes, neither in the presidency nor in the legislative elections, because Ennahda does not form alliances with the forces of corruption."[9] In return, Qalb Tounes vilified

Ennahda by depicting it as an extremist party involved in political assassinations, terrorism, and sending Tunisian youth to fight abroad.[10] However, Ennahda later made a deal with Qalb Tounes to aid Ghannouchi in securing the position of parliamentary speaker. It goes without saying that this deal is reminiscent of the same agreement that was concluded between Enanahda and Nida Tunis in 2012 under the tutelage of Rached Ghannouchi and Beji Caid Essebsi.

In a more recent turn of events, Ghannouchi continued championing reconciliation with ousted president Ben Ali's old guard, who opted for reintegration in the post-revolutionary political scene and compliance with the new principles of the constitution. Ghannouchi appointed Mohammad al-Ghiryani, a former high-rank official of Ben Ali's RCD party, as an adviser in charge of reconciliation and the transitional justice portfolio. Although Ennahda's president may have seen this decision as a masterly move of political cunning that aimed at weakening Abir Moussi's climb in the polls by stripping her of part of her base hailing from the RCD, he was in fact using taxpayer money to conduct political maneuvering in the context of his struggle with another party. In addition to that, such a move raised concerns over the ethicality of appointing a stalwart of the ousted regime to handle the delicate issue of reconciliation.

In Egypt, over several decades, the Brotherhood strived to present itself as a political force with views compatible with electoral democracy. This was done in an attempt to not only discard its image as a reactionary and rigid movement, but also to avoid alienating other political forces as well as the West. At the beginning of the 1980s, the MB claimed it embraced political pluralism and became engaged in electoral politics. For instance, it reached out to different political and ideological forces, building coalitions with liberal, secular, and leftist parties in the 1984 and 1987 elections (Thabet 2006, p. 15). Under an authoritarian regime, cooperation and alliances, however strictly confined to election periods, were the only pathway for the MB and parties such as New Wafd and the Liberal Party or Labour Party to maximize their chances and get seats in the parliament (Abed-Kotob 1995, p. 328). In 1990, the MB, along with opposition parties, coordinated an elections boycott (Hamid 2010). Between 2000 and 2005, the cooperation between the MB and the opposition forces was solely oriented towards the area of foreign policy where they bonded to support the Palestinian Intifada and protest the American invasion of Iraq (Shehata 2010, p. 55). In the wake of the 2005 elections that were deemed "rigged"[11] by opposition parties from a wide variety of ideological trends, including leftists, Islamists, and liberals, more rapprochement between secular and religious forces saw the light and a spade of protests/rallies was spearheaded by the MB and Kefaya movement (Browers 2007, pp. 69–70).

After the 2011 revolution, the Muslim Brotherhood came to the fore as an important player, thus dominating Egypt's new political order. As the movement cashed in on its religious appeal, potent organizational structure, the weaknesses of the other political parties, and the fragmentation of the young movements, it became "driven by a hunger for power fueled by the immense vacuum left after the fall of Mubarak" (Al-Anani 2015, p. 530). As Nathan Brown pointed out, "the various forces that participated in the revolution spent little of the ten months since their stunning victory in Tahrir Square party-building, with many of eschewing party politics on principle and others focusing, instead, on the politics protest rather than of party or organization" (Brown 2012, p. 4). Seeking legal political party status, the MB launched the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). The FJP's initial membership turnout was nearly 9000 members, including 1000 women and 100 Copts.[12] In the first parliamentary elections of 2011, the FJP formed a coalition with non-Islamist parties[13] and pledged not to present candidates for more than 50 percent of the seats in parliament. The FJP also promised not to field a presidential candidate (Ghanem 2016, p. 21). As the FJP failed to maintain its promises, the secular camp became more suspicious of the Brotherhood's intentions. With a crushing victory in the elections, the new Brotherhood-dominated parliament elected a constituent assembly to draft Egypt's postrevolutionary constitution. The constituent assembly included 66 Islamists out of 100 members and only

six women and five Copts.[14] The secular parties, along with Coptic Church representatives, boycotted the assembly because it did not fairly reflect all forces in society. The rift between the Islamists and the other political forces appeared to be getting deeper. Furthermore, when Morsi won the presidential elections in 2012, he promised to head a government "for all Egyptians"[15] and to appoint two vice presidents, a woman and a Copt.[16] However, those promises were not kept.

On November 22, Morsi issued a seven-article constitutional declaration that gave him full executive, legislative, and constitution-writing powers. Article 2 stated that all decrees, constitutional declarations, and laws issued by Morsi since his inauguration on June 30 could not be appealed or suspended. Article 6 authorized the president to take any measure he saw fit to protect the revolution and safeguard national unity.[17] These measures sparked vehement opposition and spurred people to protest what they deemed a "dictatorial" move by the Brotherhood (Mabrouk 2013, p. 1).

In addition to that, Morsi tried to quickly push through a new constitution that embodied an Islamist vision of Egypt rather than a broad societal consensus. As a reaction, Copts rejected it because it did not provide enough protection to minority rights. Women's groups opposed it because it did not guarantee equality between sexes, and the media opposed it because it did not enshrine freedom of the press (Ghanem 2016, p. 26). All these missteps accelerated the emergence of the Tamarod movement, which organized massive anti-Morsi demonstrations across Egypt (Solomon and Tausch 2020, p. 177). Morsi's defiant insistence on his legitimacy as a president and his reluctance to reach a compromise with the opposition forces pushed the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to step in and depose the president.

Unlike the Ennahda party in Tunisia, which endorsed a spirit of reconciliation, consensus, compromises, and coalition in order to safely manage the transitional process, the MB was rigid, exclusive, and unable to adapt and handle the fast-changing transitional period. The lack of real effective interparty cooperation, a cross-ideological consensus building with opposition forces, the domination of the hardliners at the expense of the reformists in the movement, and the failure to concretize and fulfil the demands and aspirations of the revolution all led to the fall of the Brotherhood. As Brown and Dunne point out, "the one-year tenure of Mohamed Morsi was rocky for the Brotherhood, which was unprepared for governance. It was even more difficult for the movement's political opponents and allies alike, who were infuriated by the Brotherhood's majoritarian style, insensitivity to non-Islamist input into the constitution, confrontation with the judiciary, and tendency to isolate itself or bandwagon with Salafists" (Brown and Dunne 2015, p. 5).

5.2. The Separation of Religious and Political Activities

During the Party Congress of May 2016, Ennahda leadership decided to separate out the religious and political, or to "specialize" in party politics and to devote the party purely to political activities (Shems 2016). Ennahda's president, Rached Ghannouchi, declared in an interview that this specialization meant that the party was "leaving political Islam and entering democratic Islam. We are Muslim democrats who no longer claim to represent political Islam" (Bobin 2016).

This significant shift implies that the top-down process of state-led Islamization has been replaced by the project of democratizing the party and political Islam, which ushers in the shift from Islamism to post-Islamism. The final statement of the congress highlights that Ennahda ended its dual identity of a party and a movement, thus becoming a national democratic political party with an Islamic reference, open to all Tunisian men and women. It also grants primordial priority to issues of social justice and national development and is situated at the center of the political spectrum.[18]

It can be safely asserted that this congress marked a turning point not only in the history of the Ennahda party, but also in Islamism as a sociopolitical project. There are five remarks that are worth underscoring in light of Ghannouchi's speech as well as the motions adopted in this congress:

- As parties gain more political maturity, specialization (التخصص) leads to profession-alization inside the party. As Larbi Sadiki argues, "by defending a new identity that separates the religious and the political, Ennahda has turned an important learning curve on the way to a fully-fledged civic political party. The amendments that have all passed with absolute majority—800-plus votes by the conferences—all prove that several months of internal debates have come to full fruition for the reformists within the party" (Sadiki 2016, p. 8). This not only reinforced and strengthened the practice of democracy inside the party itself, but also sent a message to all Tunisians, regardless of their background, that the party had opened up to a new blood and was reaching out to new electoral bases. Tunisian researcher Hamza Meddeb points out that "by strategically adopting specialization, Ennahda also targeted another reluctant audi-ence: Tunisia's international partners" (Meddeb 2019, p. 9). This reflects Ennahda's commitment to democratic politics/governance. In May 2018, the Ennahda party nominated Simon Salama, the 54-year-old Tunisian Jew, as its candidate for the munic-ipal elections in the coastal city of Monastir. This was a powerful symbolic message from an Islamic party to the Jewish component of Tunisia. Ironically, secular parties rushed to accuse Ennahda of exploiting the Jews in its political machine. Although this may be considered an act of propaganda, it remains a smart move that pulled the rug from under the legs of the liberal/secular parties who champion religious pluralism (Bar'el 2018).

- The transition from Islamism to Muslim democracy is not merely a tactical maneuver, as many Ennahda detractors claim, but constitutes a profound and ongoing intellectual adaptation. On the one hand, it represents an attempt to rethink the role of Islam in politics as well as what it means to be an Islamic party that competes within a secular democratic framework. In this regard, Hannah Pfeifer asserts that "Ennahda's inclusion into Tunisian political processes exposed it to secularism's normative power to which it reacted, among others, by adapting its discourse on religion, politics, and the state" (2019, p. 479). Practically, Islam was neither purged from the political power nor the public sphere, but rather embedded in the state apparatus (Cesari 2014, p. 275). On the other hand, it helps Ennahda to distance itself from other violent forms of Islamism that have bad reputations in the West, such as ISIS (Hearst and Obrone 2016). Domestically, this highly crucial transition turned out to be costly for the party, as it lost sympathizers and members "who were disappointed by the party's ever less Islamic trajectory and oriented themselves toward other options, i.e., Salafist groups" (Pfeifer 2019, p. 494).

- Ennahda's commitment to a civil state (الدولة المدنية) challenges traditional Islamist plans to apply shariah (Islamic legal system) and highlights Ennahda's normalization with the deep state. Put differently, it became integrated into the very same state against which it spent years fighting (from the Habib Bourguiba era to Ben Ali). As a result, Islamism ceases to be the reference that guides political goals in the quest for power, but rather a synonym of the "practice of making moral judgments about political action" (Thompson 2018).

In Egypt, the relation between the Brotherhood and the FJP was marked by ambiguity and confusion, as it was difficult to distinguish between the two. Unlike the Ennahda party's decision to bifurcate its *da-wah* activities from politics, the Brotherhood and the Freedom and Justice Party remained intertwined. The FJP was formally founded in April 2011 to be the Brotherhood's political arm. Its leadership included Mohammed Morsi, Muhammad al-Beltagi, Saad Katatni, and Essam el-Erian. Katatni and el-Erian left the MB's Guidance Bureau to lead the new party (Pioppi 2013, p. 57). This raised doubts about the FJP's real status as an independent entity from the Bureau (Martini et al. 2012, p. 15). Because the Shura council of the movement issued the order to form the Freedom and Justice party and chose the party's top leaders without elections, there were concerns that the movement had tried to impose its guardianship over the party since its creation (Al-Anani 2011). Practically, the FJP leadership was dominated by the conservatives, not

the reformists of the Brotherhood. Tension and quarrels between the conservatives and the reformists simmered for almost two decades. However, it reached a tipping point after the January uprising when the Brotherhood expelled many of its reformist figures (Al-Anani 2015, p. 537). One of the manifestations of that tension was the expulsion of Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh who decided—against the brotherhood's will—to run for the presidency as an independent candidate. Moreover, the Guidance Bureau dominated the decision-making process, and that was obvious on many occasions. First, it was the movement and not the party who wrote the political platform for the elections, approved the party's bylaws, and determined the number of candidates fielded (Brown 2011). Second, in February 2012, the movement, not the party, tasked Khairat Al-Shater, deputy leader of the Brotherhood and a major financier of the group, with conceiving the giant developmental program of the "Renaissance project."[19] Although a nomination of this political nature was supposed to be made by the party, it is worth noting that Al-Shater did not have any official position in the state. Third, the party could not make any decision regarding talks or prospective coordination initiatives with other political actors without first consulting with the Brotherhood Guidance Bureau (Ban 2014). Overall, the practices of the Brotherhood after coming to power laid bare that they favor the type of relation in which the party is just a political arm of the movement.

5.3. Gender and Minority Rights

Ennahda's inclination to expand its understanding of Islam so that it appears moderate and progressive is manifested in topics such as the role of women in society. Wolf explains that for Ennahda to show its modern vision of gender politics, its leaders have encouraged more and more women to join the party and to run as candidates. In the 2011 elections of a constituent assembly, it was the only party to fully respect the requirement to alternate male and female candidates on their lists (Marks 2013, p. 225). It even appointed Meherzia Labidi as the vice president of the Constituent Assembly, the highest government position of any woman in the Arab world (Wolf 2013, p. 567). In addition to that, there are several female leaders within Ennahda's internal institutions, such as the Shura Council and the Executive Bureau. Many of these women—Saida Ounissi, Yamina Zoghlami, and Meherzia Labidi, to name a few—have taken on major roles, chaired committees and commissions, and collaborated with other parties in regard to several issues, including women's issues. For instance, in 2014, Meherzia Labidi, the then-speaker of the parliament, hosted in her office a group of prostitutes who work in the Brothel of Sousse. She pledged to consult with the ministries of interior and social affairs in order to provide a livelihood for the women and address their housing and health problems.[20] In 2017, Ennahda was a major proponent of Tunisia's landmark law "to end violence against women," which was ratified by the parliament.[21] Meanwhile, although Ennahda did not make any moves to revise Tunisia's relatively progressive personal status code (family laws), it appeared to have a limit when it came to supporting gender equality. In fact, some Ennahda members disapproved of a legislative proposal by President Beji Caid Essebsi to establish full equality between men and women in inheritance.[22]

Besides, in August 2012, a backlash over a proposed constitutional description of women as "complementary to men" in family life sparked divisions between Islamists and the secular opposition. This spurred thousands of Tunisians, both women and men, to take to the streets to protest Article 28. Bouchra Belhaj, a famous lawyer and human rights activist, labeled the proposed article as "demeaning and unfair to all women in Tunisia."[23] Consequently, Ennahda quickly revised the article to instead emphasize equality.

Another theme that is not in line with Ennahda's ideological background is linked to sexual minorities and, more precisely, to LGBT rights. The position of the party in regard to this issue was remarkable despite the fact that it could potentially anger the radical Islamists. In a 2018 interview with the French-language magazine *Jeune Afrique*, Rached Ghannouchi was asked whether homosexuality was a deviance or a natural tendency. He replied that "everyone is free to make their own choices. We do not have to wonder what

people do at home, nor to interfere in personal and individual choices."[24] Although he framed it as a matter of privacy and personal freedom, Ghannouchi did not hesitate to state his opposition to criminalizing homosexuality. This discourse presents him locally and abroad as a democratic and moderate politician who respects human rights. Nevertheless, this position is not devoid of intellectual maneuvering, notably if we examine this statement made in 2019 on the Al Zeitouna channel (supposedly affiliated with Ennahda), where Ghannouchi noted that "homosexuality is forbidden by law and religion. The party complies with the law and religion. Tunisia is a civil state and that does not contradict religion."[25] It can be inferred from the previous statements that although Ghannouchi the cleric rejects homosexuality, Ghannouchi the politician highlights the fact there is no need to follow people in their private lives or to have their personal freedoms and liberties infringed upon. It seems that Ghannouchi's thinking has evolved due to two factors: first, his involvement in the societal debates about individual liberties and freedoms during the transitional period and, in particular, the crafting of the constitution. Second, being in power and governing can have "a debilitating effect on ideological parties" (Roy 2012). That explains the tactical tendency to stay in line with the prevailing societal norms and to avoid the pitfalls of confrontation with civil society, the secular elites, and international partners.

In Egypt, although the FJP initially strived to appear appreciative of the values of democracy, political pluralism, and civil rights, it was unable to materialize that. The Brotherhood's views and rhetoric on citizenship and political rights of women and non-Muslims has been ambiguous and ambivalent (Al-Anani 2007; Lynch 2008). Unlike the Ennahda party and the effect of its leaders' experiences of asylum in secular European countries on their ideological moderation, the Brotherhood has been slower in fully adopting the equality of all citizens before the law regardless of religion, sex, and ethnicity. This subtlety may be explicated by the disparate historical experiences of Egyptian and Tunisian Islamists, as well as the influence and clout that the conservative "old guard" such as Mohamed Badie and even Khairat al Shater have inside the Brotherhood. Many scholars have examined the discursive and ideological evolution of the movement over the past few decades (Al-Anani 2007; Brown 2012; El-Ghobashy 2005). The MB's social views on women still subscribe to conservative male-dominated literalist interpretations of the sacred, as they consider a woman's essential role in society as that of a mother, who should only work or run for office when her main family obligations are fulfilled.[26] In its political platform, the FJP claimed to endorse women's rights within the limits determined by sharia law and to ensure a balance between their rights and duties towards the family. In regard to women's political role, the MB leadership affirmed on one occasion that the FJP would only support male candidates for the position.[27] This position was preceded by statements voiced by the MB male leaders describing women as "unfit" for the role of the presidency (Tadros 2012, pp. 147–50). Furthermore, the party did not allow women to participate in its internal elections and denied them representation and a say in its decision-making bodies.[28] Far from being discouraged by such illiberal statements, the famous Egyptian anchorwoman Bothaina Kamel decided to run as a potential candidate in the 2014 presidential elections.

This attitude continued to mark the MB's behavior after it came to power in 2011. Mohammed Morsi promised that he would appoint a woman as a deputy president if he were elected, but he did not abide by that promise (Arafat 2017, p. 35). Moreover, when a series of horrendous acts of sexual assaults occurred during protests in Tahrir Square in February 2013,[29] some FJP members blamed the victims, not the perpetrators. Although Reda Saleh al-Hefnawy,[30] a parliamentarian representing the FJP, called on women not to stand among men during protests, former prime minister Hesham Qandil declared that women who chose to partake in protests bore the responsibility of being sexually harassed (Guirguis 2013). The MB's conservatism on gender issues came again to the fore when the Islamist-led parliament was drafting the new constitution. Particularly in relation to Article 36, which promotes women's equality within the limits of Islamic sharia, the insertion of

language thought to impose limits on women's rights alarmed civil society activists and NGOs. The proposed Article 36 reads:

> The state is committed to taking all constitutional and executive measures to ensure equality of women with men in all walks of political, cultural, economic, and social life, without violation of the rules of Islamic jurisprudence. The state will provide all necessary services for mothers and children for free, and will ensure the protection of women, along with social, economic and medical care and the right to inheritance, and will ensure a balance between the woman's family responsibilities and work in society.[31]

By adding the phrase "without violation of the rules of Islamic jurisprudence," legislators made the state's commitment to gender equality seem questionable. Because of the backlash, the entire article was scraped. On another occasion, the Brotherhood reacted vehemently to the United Nations (UN) Women's Rights initiative titled "End Violence to Women." The campaign, which was launched by the United Nations, aimed at the "elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls."[32] The Muslim Brotherhood reacted by slating and labelling the initiative as "misleading and deceptive" and "violating Sharia principles."[33] It also denounced the statement's call to grant girls full sexual freedom, grant equal rights to homosexual people, and allow wives to file legal complaints against husbands for marital rape.[34] According to the movement, such provisions would lead to "complete disintegration of the society and would certainly be the final step in the intellectual and cultural invasion of Muslim countries, eliminating the moral specificity that helps preserve cohesion of Islamic societies." Clearly, the response of the Muslim Brotherhood to the initiative did not embody the egalitarian and post-Islamist values that inspired and permeated the Arab revolutions. Hizb al-Wasat/the Centre Party, which split from the Brotherhood, has been a better example of a progressive egalitarian trend, as it "privileged modern democracy over Islamic shura, embraced pluralism in religion, welcomed gender mixing, and supported women's high public roles and ideological diversity" (Bayat 2013, p. 13).

Just as with the issue of women's rights, the MB's rhetoric and actions toward Christian Copts raised questions about its commitment to respecting equality for all citizens and civil rights. In fact, although Morsi reneged on his promise of appointing a woman vice president, he did appoint Samir Morcos, a well-known Coptic figure, as his assistant for democratic transition. Disgruntled with his exclusion from decision-making processes, Morsi's autocratic turn, and the FJP's mishandling of the democratic transition, Morcos resigned after few months.[35] More broadly, reports by the United States Department of State pointed out that the Morsi administration "generally failed to prevent, investigate, or prosecute crimes against members of religious minority groups, especially Coptic Christians, which fostered a climate of impunity." In addition to that, the government "routinely failed to condemn incendiary speech, including anti-Semitic and anti-Christian speech."[36] More broadly, the climate of mistrust and tension between the MB and Egypt's Christians was exacerbated during the FJP's time in power, with both groups standing on the opposite sides of the political spectrum. For example, a member of the Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau named Abdul Rahman al-Bar issued a fatwa that prevented Muslims from greeting Copts of Easter (Trager 2013).

The moments of intercommunal cooperation and solidarity that marked the revolution gradually turned into tense sectarian rhetoric and incidents. For example, MB and FJP leaders tried to discredit the opposition against the constitutional referendum of December 2012 by accusing the church of mobilizing nuns and residents in the monasteries to vote down the draft.[37] On a more dramatic turn, sectarian tensions flared in April 2013 when five Copts and a Muslim were killed in the city of al-Khusus in the Qalyubiyya province of northern Cairo. This sparked a cycle of violence between Muslims and Copts, leading to another two deaths and 89 injuries.[38] A few days later, the situation was aggravated by clashes at St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral during the mourning ceremony of the victims of the al-Khusus incident.[39] Although Morsi reached out to the Coptic pope, called

for an immediate investigation, and pledged to protect the cathedral and Christians, Coptic Pope Tawadros II blasted Morsi's presidency and accused it of not taking any real action to stem the violence against the Copts.[40] In an interview with Reuters, Tawadros mentioned that "there is a sense of marginalization and rejection, which we can call social isolation."[41] As the wave of dissidence against Morsi's government mounted in mid-2013, notably with the emergence of the grassroots Tamarod (rebellion) movement, Morsi lambasted the Copts for being "Islamophobic."[42] This spurred them to join the protests of 30 June that led to Morsi's removal only days later by the military. Fahmi (2014) argues that the church's role in ousting Morsi angered Morsi's supporters and fueled acts of violence and retaliation. Since 14 August 2013, attackers have burnt and looted dozens of churches and Christian property across Egypt, leaving at least four people dead.[43]

In sum, Ennahda's more inclusive and post-Islamist policy towards religious minorities was evident in nominating a Tunisian Jew, Simon Salama, as its candidate for the 2018 municipal elections. The MB's Islamist government, however, failed to guarantee equal rights, political inclusion, and protection for minorities.

6. Conclusions

This article delineated the similarities and differences between the Tunisian Ennahda party and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in terms of their evolutions from an Islamist to a post-Islamist discourse and identity. By examining ideological stances on various issues as well as their political performances in post-2011 revolutions, one can notice two distinct trajectories with converging outcomes. On the one hand, the Ennahda party managed to escape the fate of the MB in Egypt and learnt the lesson behind the latter's one-year-rule experience. Ennahda learnt that in order to achieve political survival and to secure its active presence in the political arena, it had to adapt to the challenges of the complex transitional sociopolitical scene. It has also demonstrated flexibility in making compromises, building cross-ideological alliances, and drawing the dividing lines between its *da'wah* activities and politics even when such move prompted defections from the party. Ennahda's support for a constitution that accepts the notion of a civil state and the inclusion of freedom of conscience while renouncing references to sharia and the establishment of a classic Islamic state speaks volumes of the party's post-Islamist evolution. These feats enabled the party to succeed in calibrating the right dosages of Islamism, democracy, pluralism, secularism, and "Tunisianity." When it comes to democracy, Ennahda appears to be the sole political actor in Tunisia who has understood the key dynamics of Tunisian politics: reconciliation, consensus, compromise, and coalition. These strategies enabled the party to secure a seat in the political landscape and to consolidate Tunisia's democracy. However, Ennahda needs to move beyond political maneuvers and tackle "the tough challenge of creating coalitions that are not just comfortable, but are also concretely constructive, to translate its learning into actual advancements in Tunisia's fight against terrorism, administrative inefficiency, corruption and youth unemployment" (Marks 2016).

In Egypt, despite a remarkable electoral success, the MB failed to translate that victory into effective governance that could help tackle Egypt's structural problems. The movement did not take time to grasp the intricacies of the new actualities of Egyptian society; instead, it rushed to force its vision and policies, thus mishandling a fragile transitional period. Besides, it failed to forge a state of consensus or real cooperation with the forces that are committed to achieving a real political change in Egypt. Particularly, the rigid and exclusive character of the Muslim Brotherhood, Morsi's lack of governing skills and tactics, the miscalculations of secular forces, and Al Sisi's military coup were impediments to a post-Islamist evolution in Egypt.

The comparison between the Tunisian and Egyptian experiences of "post-Islamism" helps to elucidate the debates on Islam, secularism, human rights, and democracy while bringing to light the changing goals, policies, and discourses of Islamist movements. As Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood evolved from opposition movements into parties holding power, they faced significant challenges related to engaging in real politics and

conducting practical governance. Furthermore, post-Islamism, as a significant paradigm shift from Islamism, is not monolithic. There is not a single predefined trajectory or path to it. Post-Islamism encompasses a wide variety of social, political, and cultural positions, some arguably more moderate and democratic than others. Although Ennahda championed cross-ideological partnerships and consensual politics, and blended democracy into the structure of Islamic thought and sociopolitical practices, the "unsuccessful experience of the Muslim Brotherhood suggests that post-Islamist movements may have a tough time consolidating power through contentious politics" (Hoyle 2016, p. 205).

Nevertheless, as Mahdavi (2019) argues, the Egyptian Spring was a post-Islamist movement even though the post-revolutionary polity failed to represent the spirit of the revolution. Cited by Cole (2014), the following poem, entitled "ana 'almani" ("I am secular"), which was published in April 2012 on an Egyptian website, encapsulates such a post-Islamist climate in Egyptian civil society:

> *I am secular: That is, for me, religion is for God and the nation is for all. I am secular: that is, for me, there is no religion in politics and no politics in religion. I am secular: that is, your name, your title, your religion, your color, your sex are not important for me: all of us are Egyptian and equal before the law.*[44]

Notes

1. See the political platform of the FJP party. Available online: https://kurzman.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1410/2011/06/FJP_2011_English.pdf (accessed on 15 January 2021).
2. "Le scrutin a été tout à fait régulier," La Presse, Tunis, 4 April 1989.
3. Available online: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-brotherhood-profile-idUSTRE75T4NB20110630 (accessed on 20 February 2021).
4. According to Elharthi (2016), the concept of "deep state" applies to the "counterrevolution," "invisible party," or "remnants" (*foloul*) of an old regime. Partuclarly, a network of corrupt politicians, businesspeople, officials, and security officers determined to keep the privileges they enjoyed under a previous regime.
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