

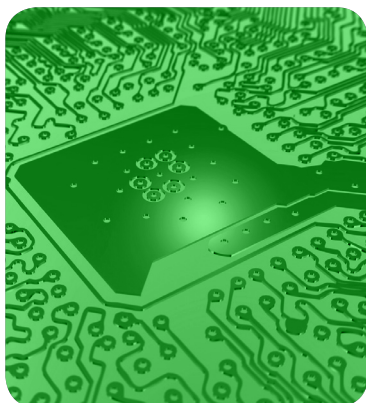
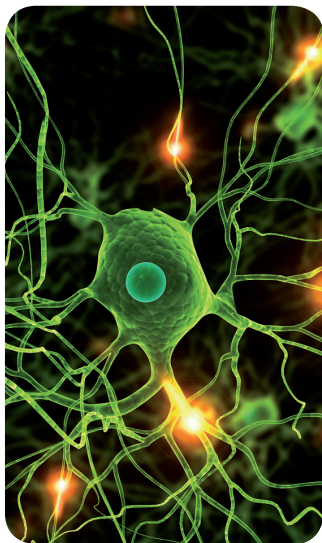
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**The Tunisian
Ennahdha Party
in transition from
“Islamic Democracy”
to “Democratic Islam”**
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Abstract

For the first time, three Islamist parties took power in the southern shore of the Mediterranean in 2012. The so called Arab spring seems to have given a big opportunity for Islamists to come back to the political scene in different countries around the Arab region. As a consequence, the subject of political Islam and Democracy gained again saliency in the media. The overall image that emerges from the “Arab spring” is negative. But, amazingly enough, the Tunisian Ennahdha Party played a key role in the success of the Tunisian Democratic transition. That is why it is very interesting to take a closer look at the evolution of Ennahdha within the Tunisian Democratic transition. In this paper, in which we rely not only on written sources but also on interviews conducted personally with prominent political actors in the Tunisian scene, we hold that while traditional Islamism is not compatible with Democracy, at the same it is not static. Political Islam is changing and could get democratised in a liberal political environment. The result of the study is that the relationship between Democracy and political Islam depends on the degree of freedom in each country. In dictatorships, the Islamists intend to Islamise Democracy according to the Nativistic paradigm and use it as a weapon against anti-Islamist dictators. But in democracies, the Islamists intend to democratise Islam to adapt themselves to the new political environment. From this perspective, the Ennahdha Party experience in the Tunisian Democratic transition can serve as an example in other Arab countries where the political transition seems to be in a standoff such as in Libya, Egypt, Yemen and Syria.

Key words

Tunisia, Ennahdha, Islamism, Democracy, Nativism.

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Introduction

The problematic relationship between Islam and Democracy has interested scholars for decades. Many studies have been published since the Iranian revolution and before the Arab uprising of 2011 (Carré, O. & Aubin, F, 1982); (Mernissi, F. & Jiménez Morell, I. 1992); (Sanson, H. 1993); (Kian, A. 1995); (Menéndez del Valle, E. 1997); (Bayart, J. 1997); (Martin-Muñoz, G. 2001); (Arkoun, M. 2002); (Volpi, F. 2003); (Hammoudi, A., Leveau, R. & Bauchard, D. 2007); (Mariscal Serrano, J. G. de 2008); (Ballester, M. & Elorza, A. 2008); (Mestiri, S. 2009); (Prado, A. 2010); (Parejo, M.A. 2010).

During the third wave of democratisation (Huntington, S.P. 1993)¹, the Arab region seemed to have not been deeply influenced by democratic ideals and trends. The Arab world has always been seen as a curious exception within such wave (Rose, R. & Shin, D.C. 2001). At the end of the eighties, a serious democratic transition seemed to have begun in many Arab countries such as Algeria and Tunisia. What was interesting at that time was the participation of Islamist trends² in such political transition. Unfortunately, Algeria ended up in a horrible civil war that put an end to the democratic change. Tunisia went back to dictatorship as well, and in both countries Islamism was brutally repressed and presented to the West as the big obstacle against a real democratic change in the region (Stora, B. 2002); (Camau, M. 2008).

¹ According to S. P. Huntington, the third wave of democratisation is the worldwide democratic transition that began with the “Carnation revolution” in Portugal in 1974 and extended to more than 60 other countries throughout Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

² The term “Islamist trends” in the context of democratic transition includes only the movements that participated in the elections as legal parties such as the Algerian Islamic Front of Salvation in 1990-91 or as independent lists such as the Tunisian Movement of the Islamic Trend in 1989.

Studies written from different perspectives tried to explain the failure to achieve Democracy in the Arab world by political Islam. The variety of movements covered by the expression ‘political Islam’³ were depicted by some authors as movements whose political culture was static and could not be changed (Lewis, B. 1990); (Tibi, B. 2005).. From this perspective, all Islamist movements look for re-establishing the ‘Islamic State’ - usually conceived as that in which shari`a dominates and in which rule is based on Islamic precedents - and they are motivated by a pre-modern culture that legitimises violence to control the State.

Other studies explained the failure to achieve Democracy in the Arab world by the international conjuncture. The ex-colonial empires could only support democratisation in the region if the winning parties weren’t Islamists. And this was so because the stability of this oil producing region is an important condition for the economic stability of Europe. So, the parties defining themselves as the antithesis of the ‘West’ are to be, at any price, prevented from controlling the State (Burgat, F. 1989); (Esposito, J.L. & Voll, J.O. 1996).

After the so called Arab spring, the subject of political Islam and Democracy gained again saliency in the media and academic works. That is because in 2012, three Islamist parties took power in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and even Libya at some extent (González del Miño, P. 2014); (Myard, J. 2014); (Davis, J. 2013; 2016); (Esposito, J.L., Sonn, T. & Voll, J.O. 2016; 2015). With this seminal change in the region, rethinking the relationship between Democracy and political Islam became a pressing issue. Put apart the Moroccan case, the other mentioned countries witnessed a change at the head of the State after a revolutionary process. Unfortunately, of all these countries, only Tunisia seems to have succeeded in its democratic transition. Interestingly enough, the Islamist Ennahdha party has played a considerable role in the Tunisian democratic transition. For those who believe that political Islam cannot be democratic, Ennahdha party is an exception. For those who believe that political Islam can be democratic, Ennahdha party is an example.

In this paper, in which we rely not only on written sources but also on interviews conducted personally with prominent political actors in the Tunisian scene, we hold that while traditional Islamism⁴ is not compatible with Democracy, at the same time, it is not static. Political Islam is changing and could get democratised in a liberal political environment.

³ The term “political Islam” cover all politicised movements based on Islam whether they accepted Democracy or not.

⁴ For the sake of this paper, we use the terms political Islam and Islamism as synonyms.

From this point of view, Ennahdha party can be shown to be undergoing a fast process of democratisation because through its political activities and actions it had to interact with other parties and sectors of the Tunisian civil society in a real environment of political freedom.

This possibility was already brilliantly presented in the works of François Burgat. In a study published in 1989 (Burgat, F. 1989), Burgat compared the different Islamist experiences in the Maghreb at the time and argued that Tunisia was a successful model for the other states of the region for the then new inclusive policies toward the Islamist Ennahdha that Ben Ali initiated at the beginning of his presidency in 1987-1989. However, this period of political openness did not last long, as Ben Ali eventually engaged in a process of brutal extermination of Islamism in Tunisia encouraged by the military intervention in Algeria against the winning Islamist party (FIS).

If the example of Tunisia, at that time, turned to be a false model, the Tunisia of the Arab spring seems to fit the theory Burgat expressed in 1989 and this is so because of the – this time – real political openness initiated after 2011. In addition to the works of the political scientist François Burgat, this paper is also based on the works of those anthropologists such as Ralph Linton, Wallace and Vittorio Lanternari who developed the theory of ‘Nativism’, as we shall make use of this theoretical framework in order to further the understanding of Islamism in its dynamic dimension.

Nativism was first conceptualised in 1943 in the framework of the centennial meeting of the American Ethnological Society thanks to Ralph Linton who contributed a paper on Nativistic movements in North America. He defined Nativistic movements as "*any conscious, organized attempt on the part of a society's members to re-vive or perpetuate selected aspects of its culture*" (Linton. R. and A. I. Hallowell 1943). For him, "*There is abundant information on nativistic movements among dominated groups and in discussing these we stand on firm ground. A dominated group which considers itself superior will normally develop patterns of rational nativism from the moment that it is brought under domination*" (Linton. R. and A. I. Hallowell 1943)⁵.

⁵ Interestingly enough, Ralph Linton considers that "*The situation in which a dominant group acknowledges its cultural inferiority to the dominated is one which must arise very infrequently*". In order to illustrate his idea, he gives the example of Goths at the time of their conquest of Italy.

Later, in 1956, A. F. C. Wallace wrote a paper entitled “Revitalization movements” in which he defined those movements as “*deliberate, organised, conscious effort by members of a group to create a new culture*”. Working particularly on the Iroquois revitalization movement, he explained that cultures change themselves through 5 major phases: 1. Phase of general satisfactory adaptation to the group’s environment. 2. Phase of increased individual stress. 3. Phase of cultural distortion. 4. Phase of Revitalization. 5. New phase of general satisfactory adaptation to the new environment. (Wallace, A.F.C. 1956). Wallace’s insights were later developed and updated by other scholars such as Vittorio Lanternari (Lanternari, V. 1974).

In the middle decades of the twentieth century, the theory of Nativism or Revivalism was very popular in academic circles interested in the analysis of acculturation. It will be contended here that some contemporary movements of political Islam seem to share many significant features with those Nativistic movements analysed in the anthropological literature. One important example is the Tunisian Ennahdha movement that has been constantly observed and reported by scholars, from the eighties till now, as a political Islamist trend. But why has the Islamist trend or, at least some of its movements, not been analysed as being Nativistic?

The most obvious response to this question is that classical examples of Nativistic movements - such as the Ghost Dance of the Native Americans or the Cargo Cult of the Melanesians - were basically approached as the hopeless resistance of “primitive” peoples against the “civilised” and “modernised” West which was evidently superior to them in terms of political, economic and military power (Hind, S. 2007); (Dalton, D. 2000). Very little academic attention was paid to these movements with the exception of anthropologists. The Nativistic movements were studied from the perspective of evolutionism. In other words, these Nativistic movements were expected to eventually succumb to Western civilization, to get modernised and civilised, otherwise, they would inevitably be defeated (Linton, R. and A. I. Hallowell 1943).

On the other side, Islamist movements have always been seen as being proud of the Islamic civilisation and of the Arabic language and culture. They have never been perceived as “pre-literate” or “primitive”. Therefore, in the nineteenth century, the Islamic civilisation was mostly studied not by anthropologists but by Orientalists. And later, the Islamist trend was mostly studied by political scientists. In the Muslim world, anthropologists were mostly

interested in studying some particularly local movements in North Africa, Soudan or eastern Asia (Geertz, C. 1971); (Ohtsuka, K. 1997). In other words, the ‘professional’ groups involved seem to have been crucial in determining that Islamist movements were not perceived as being – also - Nativistic.

In an excellent book entitled *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism*, Patricia Crone interestingly used the theory of Nativism in an Islamic context. She explains in it that she reserved the term Nativism to analyse pre-modern situations in contrast to modern contexts in which ‘Nationalism’ seems to offer a preferable framework (Crone, P. 2012).⁶ But ‘Nationalism’ does not exclude the existence of ‘Nativistic’ trends and by using this framework in a modern context a healthy shift is made regarding the assumption that only ‘primitive’ people were supposed to rise ‘senselessly and irrationally’ against Western modernity. Interestingly enough, religious Nativism in general and Islamic revivalism in particular unexpectedly emerged within the societies of the Maghreb at a time when the prevailing idea was that they were on the way of secularisation. Immanuel Wallerstein appropriately said that since the sixties of the last century the “division of labor” in the Humanities and in the field of the modern social sciences has been deeply unsettled (Wallerstein, I. 1991). None of the social sciences can claim today to be able to exhaustively cover the study of the Islamist movements. Different lenses should be used and through their convergence a better understanding of the behaviour and contents of such movements may be gained.

In this case, our focus will be the Ennahdha party. First, we will analyse the party’s traditional understanding of Democracy before the Tunisian political transition (I). Then, we will analyse the behaviour of Ennahdha within the Tunisian political transition (II) and finally we will focus on Ennahdha proper democratic transition out of its experience in power (III).

⁶ We do not disregard those studies approaching the modern history of the Islamic world through the perspective of ‘nationalism’, but our intention – as mentioned – is to put the focus in the Nativistic perspective that could be extended to other civilizations and regions, not being exclusive of the Islamic world’s path to modernity.

I

The birth of Islamic Democracy from a Nativistic-Islamist approach⁷

The Ennahdha movement can be taken as a good example of Islamist revivalism as it fulfils the requisites to be qualified as Nativistic. It is meaningful to recall that Ennahdha in Arabic basically means the Renaissance. It goes without saying that ‘Renaissance’ entails reviving some aspects of a past culture to face the challenges of the present. It is not because Ennahdha means Renaissance that it is Nativistic, it is rather because of the characteristics it has in common with the other Nativistic movements, as we shall see. We will first review the context of the emergence of Islamism in Tunisia. Then, we will see the formation of Ennahdha as an organised Nativist group. Finally, we will see the impact of Nativism on the way Ennahdha movement approaches Democracy.

The impact of the de-Islamisation policies of Bourguiba

Undoubtedly, the factors leading to the emergence of Islamism in Tunisia are multiple. However, there is a particular reason that is specific to Tunisia and rarely emphasised the way it should be. Actually, of all the political élites in the Arab world, there is not any that publically attacked institutional Islam the way Bourguiba did in Tunisia after the independence from the French protectorate⁸. In the name of social and cultural modernism, Bourguiba dismantled the whole old cultural order (al-Taher, A. 2016). As a matter of fact, Bourguiba was not alone, his project was supported by a new generation educated in accordance with French values and aspiring to modernism. This project was also accepted by the people almost only because of the charismatic personality of Bourguiba himself. Actually, there was a real contemptuous position towards both institutional and traditional Islam at that time.

⁷ We have opted for using both « Nativist » and « Nativistic », taking into account that Ralph Linton used “Nativist” and Lanternari used “Nativistic”. As to the term “Revivalistic group”, it is a category within the “Nativistic groups” according to Ralph Linton. For more on this see below.

⁸ Even if Turkey is not a part of the so called Arab world, it has an important symbolic influence on it. The only comparable case to Tunisia in the field of de-islamisation is Turkey in the Ataturk era, as Ataturk actually was a model for Bourguiba at the time of the building of the new Tunisian state.

It is illustrative to see how foreign observers not involved in the internal Tunisian political struggle described Bourguibas's policies at that time. For instance, Douglas K. Magnuson, who was a teacher at Bourguiba Institute of Modern Languages in Tunis, wrote:

“In the years after independence, Bourguiba embarked on a series of bold initiatives of religious reform affecting law, family life, education and personal religious practice. His dissembling of the infrastructure of institutional Islam in Tunisia was so complete that social observers in the 1960s questioned whether Tunisia might have entered a post-Islamic or de-Islamised age” (Hamdi, M.E. 1998).

There is no doubt that Tunisian society radically changed after independence. Both Islamic scholars and institutions were undermined by the abolition of the traditional Habus or Awqaf sector that had always financed the activities of mosques and religious schools. In addition, religious judges did not find support in the new regime and Islamic courts called al-Majalis al-shar`iyya were abolished in order to let new civil courts preside over family law cases in accordance with a new positive law. Last but not least, Bourguiba closed the Zeitouna University established in the second century of Islam. For the political élite, this historical Islamic centre was not needed for the building of the new independent and modern State. It was rather seen as an ideological and political threat to the modern values the new State should embrace and promote (Hamdi, M.E. 1998); (Krichen, Z, 1995).

For the founders of Enahdha, Bourguiba was anti-religious and pro-Western. In an interview given to *al-Arabiyya*, Rashed el-Ghannouchi described Bourguiba as follows:

“In 1957, once in power, he prohibited the use of the hijab and once uncovered a woman and tore her veil in public. Later, in 1981, a law was passed forbidding women employed in government offices or those entering universities and colleges to wear the hijab. In 1957, he forbade polygamy. These civil laws are still in force. In 1960, Bourguiba prohibited fasting in Ramadan, alleging that it was harmful to the country's economy... In 1974 he stated that the Qur'an was self-contradictory and ridiculed the miracles of the Prophet Moses” (Hamdi, M.E. 1998).

In order to fully understand the way Enahdha leaders look to Bourguiba, it is illuminating to keep in mind the definition of Nativistic and socio-religious movements given by Vittorio Lanternari. According to him:

“ Social and ethnic groups in many different societies have often created socio-religious movements to express their malaise, dissatisfaction with present living conditions and desire for regeneration. These movements, which still arise today, normally result from social, economic, cultural and psychological pressures produced by internal and/or external factors. They reflect the anxieties and hopes of the groups that participate in them for a sudden and total transformation of their physical, social and psychological environment” (Lanternari, V. 1974).

Against the background of V. Lanternari’s definition of Revivalistic groups, the few people gathered in 1970 around al-Ma`rifa magazine were clearly reacting to Bourguiba’s de-Islamisation policies. This opens new room to understand Enahdha movement’s behaviour: they needed, at that time, a framework to exchange viewpoints about their cultural alienation.

Ennahdha as an organised Nativistic group

For R. Linton, the decisive point at issue when it comes to define a Nativistic group is the fact of being a *“conscious, organised effort”* (Linton, Ralph, and A. Irving Hallowell 1943). Societies in general try to perpetuate their own cultures - which they do naturally and unconsciously as part of a long tradition and through an intuitive education process affecting each generation. However, if members of a society feel that the culture they relate to is threatened by the presence of an alternative in the same space, only then such *“conscious, organised effort”* would appear to defend the culture to which they are attached. This conscious reaction derives naturally from a close and continuous conflictive contact between two different cultures sharing the same space (Lanternari, V. 1974).

In the sixties and seventies of the last century, the most secularized public space in Tunisia was by far the university, and in it the first conflictive contact between Islamists and secularists took place. That conflictive contact, above all with the leftists, was decisive for the ideological evolution of Enahdha movement. But, can a Nativistic movement eventually arise from a university context? To ask this question implies that Nativistic movements can only be primitive and irrational while a university context is a rational space that can never produce unrealistic thoughts. But this assumption reveals a partial understanding of what Nativism is.

As a matter of fact, Nativistic movements can not all be put in the same category so that we can actually talk about Nativisms in plural. For Ralph Linton, Nativistic movements can be “magical” or “rational”, “revivalistic” or “perpetuative”. According to the categories proposed by R. Linton, Ennahdha would be a rational Revivalistic movement, a type described by the author as follows:

“Rational revivalistic-nativistic movements are, almost without exception, associated with frustrating situations and are primarily attempts to compensate for the frustrations of the society's members. The elements revived become symbols of a period when the society was free or, in retrospect, happy or great. Their usage is not magical but psychological. By keeping the past in mind, such elements help to re-establish and maintain the self-respect of the group's members in the face of adverse conditions” (Linton. R. and A. I. Hallowell 1943).

The discourse of Ennahdha movement matches this description. It has, like any traditional religious discourse, a natural propensity for lamenting today’s Muslims fate and a nostalgic glorification of the predecessors, but at the same time it goes beyond that to give birth to an organised Islamist movement. Clearly influenced by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the seventies, the members of Ennahdha movement believed that Tunisian society was losing its Islamic character under the authoritative exclusion of religion from daily life by the government.

For Ennahdha leaders, official Islam was imperfect, because it was limited to the ritual aspects of Islam and had, for a long time, forgotten its role of supervising the rulers’ action in all the domains. For them, Islam has, also, a key role to play in finding a solution to the political, economic and cultural crisis experienced by the Tunisians. They propose to get back to that time when Islam presided over all private and public aspects of Muslims’ live and to do exactly how the “Umma” did when it was glorious and prosper. The Umma is sometimes understood as being the nation. Even if it is anachronic to assimilate the modern concept of nation to the medieval concept of Umma, the contemporary Islamists seem to have invented a new Umma the way nations were invented according to Benedict Anderson’s theory. In his book *Imagined Communities*, he describes the nation as a cultural artefact of a particular kind. For him, *“It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”* (Anderson, B.R.O. 2006). The Umma has been imagined by the Islamists in the same way.

In addition, Ennahdha movement promoted the idea that Islam should be understood as a whole, including faith and law, state and religion as it was in the Golden Age of Islam. This constant comparison between past and present is the basis of Ennahdha Revivalistic thought. At the same time, according to R. Linton's categories of Nativism, Ennahdha would rather be a rational Nativistic movement than a magical one, even if these two categories in the religious field are not really exclusive. The main difference between them is that rational Nativism intends to defend the threatened culture at issue through argumentation while magical Nativism presumably tends to defend it in a rather irrational spectacular way (Linton. R. and A. I. Hallowell 1943).

Keeping in mind the rational Revivalistic nature of Ennahdha movement, it is particularly interesting to analyse its reaction to Democracy given that, from the beginning of the eighties of the last century, the latter has become the unique universally recognised political alternative to dictatorship. Surprisingly enough, instead of rejecting Democracy as other religious groups did in the eighties, Ennahdha intended to legitimise Democracy by rationally reinterpreting the primary Islamic sources: Qur'an and Sunna. By doing so, Ennahdha actually Islamised Democracy in order to integrate it in its ideological environment.

“Islamic Democracy” as a reinvention of the Islamic tradition

The historical Ennahdha leader, Rashed el-Ghannouchi, wrote a book in the mid-eighties entitled “*Public freedoms in the Islamic State*”. In it, he described Democracy as the best political system ever, putting aside – of course - the Islamic one. For him, Democracy is a useful tool to overthrow the dictatorships of the Islamic world. In addition, he argued that Islam would be much better served in a democratic system than in a dictatorship. However, he explained that Democracy, as it is practiced in Europe, is not the perfect political system because of the following reasons:

“The problem is not actually in the mechanisms of Democracy: elections, parliament, majority, multiparty and freedom of press, but in the western political philosophies which are nationalist and materialist: the philosophy that separated soul and body (Descartes' philosophy), then ignored the soul and buried it and fought against God and struggled a lot to put human being in his position. So, nothing is still in the universe and in human being but

material, movement, pleasure, domination, conflicts and the law of the most powerful”⁹ (el-Ghannouchi. R. 1993).

For Rafik Abdessalam, Democracy could be a wonderful system to put an end to absolutism and modern slavery, but only if it is guided by a good philosophy that recognises all the aspects of human being including the spiritual one (Abdessalam. R. 2011). According to him, the human being is always in need of the Creator and cannot pretend being independent of him without losing human dignity. For Rashed el-Ghannouchi, of all the philosophies of the world, one can never find better for Democracy than the Islamic one (el-Ghannouchi. R. 1993).

So, he regretted that many Islamist groups reject Democracy and still see it as a suspicious Western product. He considered that Democracy is the system that better carries out the Islamic principle of al-Shura. Therefore, he saw in Democracy the perfect mechanism able to convert al-Shura from a general set of values to a concrete political system. In order to legitimise Democracy, Rashid el-Ghannouchi wrote the following:

“If the mentioned democratic system functioned within Christian values and brought about Christian democracies, within the socialist philosophy and brought about socialist democracies, and within Jewish values and brought about a Jewish Democracy, why would Democracy not function within Islamic values to produce an Islamic Democracy? We support this orientation...This will make sure that the Islamic alternative is not an interruption with regard to the contemporary civilizational legacy, but an extension that conserves all the positive aspects it contains and outstrips all the destructive ones, as they are the principles of evolution (conservation and overtaking) and as it is the work of the Prophet: the completion of the work of the previous prophets peace upon them all”¹⁰ (el-Ghannouchi. R. 1993).

Surprisingly enough, al-Shura had never been a political system until Islamism emerged in the Middle East (Crone. P. 2001). So, it had absolutely not the centrality in Islamic political thoughts that it has nowadays. Besides, the word Shura itself and its derivatives appear in the Quran very few times, and a literal or even contextual interpretation of al-Shura in the Quran obviously cannot reveal any Islamic political system because it has actually very little to do

⁹ This is a personal translation from the original source in Arabic.

¹⁰ This is a personal translation from the original source in Arabic.

with public affairs in the Quran. Here are the only two extracts that could concern public affairs (Mohamad Saleh, N. 2010); (Al-Arbi, 2016).

From Sourat al-Shura:

“And those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, and when they are angry, they forgive, (37) And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation¹¹ among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend. (38) And those who, when tyranny strikes them, they defend themselves, (39)”

And from Sourat al-‘Imran:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult¹² them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him] (159)”

For Patricia Crone, “*Shura means consultation, usually between a person in authority and his subordinates, as in Q. 3:159 (shawirhum fi ‘l-amr) and occasionally between peers sharing power, as perhaps in Q. 42:38 on those ‘whose affairs are decided by consultation’ (amruhum shura baynahum). Either way, it is a procedure leading to a decision by people in charge of government”* (Crone. P. 2001).

All what Muslim scholars could deduce from these two passages concerning al-Shura is that consultation is a good behaviour (Al-Charfi, A. A. 2015); (Al-Arbi, 2016). So, after reading the Quran over and over, can one really find a clear response to the following important questions? The above mentioned consultation, is it obligatory or only recommendable? Who is eligible to be consulted before taking a decision, every one or only a limited number of qualified experts should be consulted? When can the ruler consult the people, on all issues even those decided by God in the Quran or only on a limited number of question yet to be specified?

¹¹ The underlined word is the translation of the word Shura in Arabic according to TANZIL.net <http://tanzil.net/#trans/en.sahih/42:37>

¹² The underlined word is the translation of the Arabic verb *shawara* according to TANZIL.net <http://tanzil.net/#trans/en.sahih/3:159>

According to Patricia Crone, “*Shura has also a second and more specialized meaning, however. In sources related to the Rashidun and the Umayyads, it is normally a procedure for deciding who should be in charge of government. The participant here deliberate in order to elect a ruler, not to convey their advice to one or to act as joint rulers themselves; and ‘al-amr shura is a call for the ruler to be elected by this procedure, not for affairs to be decided by consultation in general. Shura in this sense is a highly distinctive institution*” (Crone. P. 2001).

To sum up, presenting al-Shura as genealogically related to today’s Democracy is a contemporary intellectual construction that doesn’t have much to do with the original meaning or the past interpretation of this Arabic word (Buhaha, `A. 2006); (Arkoun, M. 2002); (Al-Charfi, A. A. 2015). Thus, the way some Islamist movements, including Ennahdha, approach Democracy reveals that these movements are Nativistic because they intend to revitalise some elements of their past culture to get modernised without recognising the re-interpretation of such elements that they are carrying out within a context that is actually that provided by the new dominant culture they are claiming to fight against.

II

Ennahdha's role in the Tunisian democratic transition

From the last episode of Bourguiba's rule till the uprising of 2011, Ennahdha leaders were either imprisoned in Tunisia under Ben Ali's rule or exiled in various European countries. From 1991 to 2011, the historical leader of Ennahdha, Rashed el-Ghannouchi, was living in London. As many of his colleagues, he was practically disconnected from the recent social, cultural and political trends of Tunisian society. The movement was completely absent from the local political scene for decades. The only political activity during that period was publishing some declarations from time to time or giving an interview to the media outside Tunisia.

After the 2011 revolution, the Tunisian Islamists got back to their country and actively took part in the democratic transition initiated after the departure of Ben Ali (Bildhiafi, M. 2014). This political transition could have given Ennahdha movement an extraordinary opportunity for the first time to put its Islamist democratic theory into practise because they won the first free elections in Tunisia's history and took control of the State in 2012-2013. However, it appears that Ennahdha did not really take advantage of this particularly favourable position. Actually, they left the government under a great pressure. In addition, they did not come up with an Islamic Constitution as one could have imagined. Why did Ennahdha behave this way once in power? Many explanations have been given by political scientists. Some stressed the role of the old regime in making it difficult for Ennahdha to carry out its Islamist project (Feuer, S. J. 2012). Others talked about a "bargained competition" between Ennahdha and the old regime (Boubekeur, A. 2015). Others pointed out the role of Tunisian civil society in pushing Ennahdha-led coalition to give in and make room to a technocratic cabinet (M'rad, H. 2014). Certainly, all these explanations are relevant and well documented. However, it is by taking into account the Nativistic nature of Ennahdha that one can understand what guided the movement all the way through the democratic transition. Actually, the psychological factor that really determined Ennahdha's behaviour all that time was the deep fear of exclusion and repression.

How Ennahdha behaved in government and within the elected Constituent Assembly is extremely illuminating. If the Ennahdha-led coalition revealed the practical difficulties to implement the Islamic Democracy, the drafting of the Constitution revealed the theoretical challenges faced by the movement.

Last but not least, it is also illustrative to evaluate Ennahdha's role in the national dialogue initiated by the Tunisian civil society. The National dialogue allowed Tunisia to get out of the political standoff that could have led it to a civil war on the Libyan model or a military coup on the Egyptian one. The National debate actually reveals another aspect of Ennahdha's Islamic Democracy and marks a transition between the old Nativistic approach to Democracy and another emerging approach that is yet to be defined.

The Ennahdha-led government

Nativism is a reaction to a systematic exclusion of a part of a specific society. It is also a potent alternative when a social group loses its previous good position or cannot get integrated into a new dominant social group. In this respect, the nature of Nativism should be recalled when it comes to observe the behaviour of Ennahdha after the revolution, because the guideline of its behaviour was always the fear of exclusion and marginalisation of both the movement and the culture it represents. In an interview we made with Lotfi Zitoune, the political chancellor of the Ennahdha leader Rashed el-Ghannouchi, he told us that Ennahdha had previously experienced the open confrontation with the regime and as a result it was driven away from the political, social and cultural scene for two decades. According to him, the most important goal is to protect the movement from exclusion. This goal for him is more important than winning any elections.

In October 23th, the elections gave Ennahdha almost 41% of the votes, thus becoming the most important party in the country taking 89 of the 216 seats of the Constituent Assembly (Reinaldo, M, 2014). However, Ennahdha could not have governed if it had not made a coalition with other parties to reach the minimum of 50% required to form a government. Surprisingly enough, the Ennahdha-led government was joined by The Congress for the Republic and Ettakatol which were two well-known secular parties. Actually, just after the publication of the elections' results, Ennahdha invited all the parties represented in the

Constituent Assembly to help it with forming a National Unity government (Reinaldo, M, 2014).

In traditional democracies, if the winning party did not have 50% of the votes, it would form a coalition with parties that at least share with it the same background and vision. This scenario was possible in Tunisia because there were other parties in the Constituent Assembly that had a lot in common with Ennahdha and enough seats to reach 50% with it. So, why Ennahdha didn't make a coalition with the Popular Petition for example? Putting aside the personal problems between the leaders of the two movements, it appears that Ennahdha did not want to form a pure Islamist government because it actually feared a situation that would put it again against all the political parties and civil society (M'rad, H. 2015). Moreover, a coalition with other secular parties would enable it to avoid bearing the whole political responsibility alone (Bildhafi, M. 2014). In addition, forming a coalition with the largest number of parties could be interpreted as Ennahdha having obtained recognition from the Tunisian political community given that just after the revolution, one of the main public political debates was whether Ennahdha should be recognised as a legal party or as a dangerous organisation for the nascent Tunisian Democracy (M'rad, H. 2014).

The history of Ennahdha can be resumed as a struggle against exclusion, and once in power, it appeared to have been guided by this same fear of marginalisation (Al-Zghal. A. A. & Moussa, A. 2014). Ennahdha's dream of gathering all the parties in a national unity government, that means practically a government without any opposition, could not be realised because this open invitation was accepted by only two parties to reach almost 60%. The other 40% was most of the time a ruthless opposition backed by a powerful secular civil society (M'rad, H. 2014).

The drafting of the Constitution

The Constituent Assembly was elected to write a new constitution for Tunisia. This experience allowed the nation to enjoy a real public debate over the nature of the State and whether it should be Islamic or secular, the nature of the legal sources and whether they should officially include Islamic law, and also over the extent of private and public freedoms in the new Tunisia. The Constitution is a set of laws that are supposed to be the highest expression of the people's will on the most important issues related to the State (Kanovitz,

J.R. 2012). Ennahdha, with its majority though, could not decide alone the strategic constitutional choices. It was forced again to make difficult compromises on very controversial issues (Boubekeur, A. 2015). The main question that divided the Tunisian people in 2013 was whether to maintain the first article of the 1959 Constitution or to change it, and if it had to be changed what would the alternatives be?

The article at issue defines the nature of Tunisia as following:

“Article 1

Tunisia shall be a free, independent and sovereign State; its religion shall be Islam, its language shall be Arabic and its form of government shall be the Republic” (Constitutions of the Countries of the World, Oceana Press).

This article has always been controversial because it would appear to be the proof that Tunisia is an Islamic State. On the other hand, another relevant interpretation insists on the fact that it is the society that is defined as Islamic, not the State because Islamic Law is not an official source of law in Tunisia (Charfi, M. & Instituto Europeo del Mediterráneo 2003). Article 1 does not give a clear idea about the nature of the State. It was written in this ambiguous way in 1959 precisely to postpone the debate on identity. Since 2011, that debate that had been then feared reopened and divided the Tunisians. From the beginning, Ennahdha wanted to integrate Shari`a law as a formal source of law in the new Constitution. That would have actually closed the debate by affirming the Islamic nature of the Tunisian State. On their part, the secularist parties wanted to take out all references to Islam in the Constitution, but neither the secularists nor the Islamists could obtain what they wanted. The first article is still almost the same in the new 2014 Constitution:

“Article 1

Tunisia is a free, independent, sovereign state; its religion is Islam, its language Arabic, and its system is republican.

This article might not be amended”. (Translated by UNDP and reviewed by International IDEA)

Interestingly enough, a second article was added to clarify the meaning of the first article:

“Article 2

Tunisia is a civil state based on citizenship, the will of the people, and the supremacy of law.

This article might not be amended”. (Translated by UNDP and reviewed by International IDEA)

Given that all references to Shari`a law were taken out, these two articles make sure that Tunisia will not be a religious State in which God’s will would prevail over the people’s will. The pressure of civil society and the boycott of the Constituent Assembly sessions by many deputies obliged Ennahdha to give in and accept the actual Constitution. However, the word Islam did not completely disappear from the text. Apart from the already mentioned first article, Islam is present as a set of values rather than a legal corpus in the following extract of the preamble:

“Expressing our people’s commitment to the teachings of Islam and its aims characterized by openness and moderation, and to the human values and the highest principles of universal human rights, and inspired by the heritage of our civilization, accumulated over the travails of our history, from our enlightened reformist movements that are based on the foundations of our Islamic-Arab identity and on the gains of human civilization, and adhering to the national gains achieved by our people” (Translated by UNDP and reviewed by International IDEA).

At the same time, Islam appears also as a condition for those who want to stand for the presidency of the State:

“Article 74

Every male and female voter who holds Tunisian nationality since birth, whose religion is Islam shall have the right to stand for election to the position of President of the Republic”. (Translated by UNDP and reviewed by International IDEA).

Once again, Ennahdha found itself obliged to make compromises with other secular parties to the detriment of its ideological background. As to the drafting of the Constitution, the compromise appears to be this intentional shift from Islam as a legal corpus for the State to Islam as a set of values and principles for the society. In other words, Islamic prescriptions won’t have a normative value *per se* in Tunisia. For this particular reason, many Islamist

groups and even the grassroots of Ennahdha were upset by the final version of the Constitution because it doesn't include any explicit reference to Shari'a law. To understand what pushes the Tunisian Islamists to agree on such incoherent choices with its basic ideology, we should analyse the experience of the national dialogue initiated in 2013.

The National Dialogue

2013 was the most difficult year for the democratic transition. Terrorist attacks went up, the frontiers with neighbouring Libya weren't secure anymore and a sort of Salafi armed groups seemed to have invaded the country. This year is characterised by two unprecedented political assassinations against the leftist leader Shokri Belaid and the panarabist leader el-Brahmi. The opposition held Ennahdha responsible for the rise of Jihadi trends and the assassination of the two political leaders (M'rad, H. 2015). The economic stagnation worsened the situation and poverty went up as never before. The people took the streets and the public parks, demonstrating against the governing political élite. For them, two years after the revolution, nothing got better at the social and economic scales. What is worse is that the demonstrators, gathered in front of the Constituent Assembly in Bardo, proclaimed the departure of both the government and the deputies. Among the demonstrators there were more than 60 deputies who had boycotted the sessions of the Constituent Assembly and joined the people's cause (M'rad, H. 2015).

At the regional level, it is crucial to recall that there was a military coup in Egypt that put an end to the Muslim Brotherhood's rule. Curiously enough, the military coup seems to have been supported by a large number of Egyptians. This dramatic event had a significant impact on the Tunisian demonstrators (Bildhafi, M. 2016). Alarmingly enough, many of them began to call for a military intervention to throw-out Ennahdha-led government. At that time, the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) called for a national dialogue to prevent Tunisia from going the Egyptian way. Backed by the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), the Tunisian Order of Lawyers (ONAT) and the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH), the UGTT entered in intensive rounds of negotiation with all the relevant political parties in the country to come out with a convincing solution to all parts (M'rad, H. 2015).

At the beginning, Ennahdha was firmly against any initiative that would weaken the role of the democratically elected Constituent Assembly and government (M'rad, H. 2015). Like the Egyptian brotherhood, Ennahdha was all the time defending legality against the streets' occupiers. The Islamist movement had not recognised the legitimacy of the demonstrators until the Muslim brotherhood was thrown out by the Egyptian army. Only then, the Tunisian Islamists accepted to join the national dialogue that was negotiating the best way for Ennahdha to peacefully leave power (M'rad, H. 2015).

Ennahdha accepted to leave the government with some important conditions. The most important one was the return of the Constituent Assembly as the only elected assembly in the country and the symbol of Democracy. Another important condition was to have a new technocratic cabinet independent from all political parties to lead the country toward the coming legislative elections.

The National dialogue pushed Ennahdha to give unprecedented concessions to save not only Democracy but also the Islamist experience in Tunisia. For a Nativistic movement that had been excluded for decades, the most important thing to do was to be definitely recognised and legitimised. Ennahdha was aware that it was the last chance for Islamism in the region after the dramatic military coup against the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt. Ennahdha leaders were also aware that the only way to protect the Islamist trend was to fully democratise it.

III

The emergence of a Democratic Islam from the political transition

Since 2011, Ennahdha has undergone very urgent changes both in its speech and behaviour due to external pressure coming from Tunisian civil society and even due to the international and regional balance of power. Ennahdha movement had had to deal with such pressures in the past, but after 2011 the situation has been radically different. Ennahdha has always been a fierce opponent to the State with a Nativistic protesting discourse. However, after the Tunisian revolution, Ennahdha represented the most important party within the new governing political class. In other words, the basic conditions for Ennahdha's Nativism were not relevant anymore as this Islamist movement was not any longer excluded or frustrated. On the contrary, since 2011 Ennahdha has been rather dominant on the political scene. Moreover, as a governing party within the State, Ennahdha had to adapt its previous revolutionary discourse to the new situation. Becoming a powerful legal political party in a democratic regime, Ennahdha is actually trying to put an end to its original Nativistic approach and looking for a new background to legitimise its changing attitude (Bildhafi, M. 2016); (Al-Arbi, K. 2016).

This new background seems to be the pre-colonial reformist trend. For many regions of the so called Islamic world, the nineteenth century was the symbol of the big reforms in administration, education and military affairs. These reforms on the European model were intended to catch up with the powerful European States at that time. Like Muḥammad 'Alī Bāshā in Egypt, Khayr ed-Din Pasha et-Tunisi is the symbol of this modernist or reformist movement of the nineteenth century in Tunisia. The proponents of this background shift present this era of "big reforms" as being interrupted by the beginning of the colonial era. For them, it is a high time, after the revolution, to retake this modernist national efforts rooted in the Tunisian reformist background. However, this referential shift is far from being completely accepted by all the party's member. In spite of this, there are many clues that make this alternative possible for the future. First, we will analyse in which conditions this paradigm shift has been debated within the Islamist movement. Then, we will see how this new perspective would affect the nascent Tunisian Democracy. Finally, we will analyse the position of Ennahdha within the Islamist spectrum after the changes it decided to undertake.

The alliance between Ennahdha and NidaaTounes

After Ennahdha left the government to an interim independent group of technocrats, its popularity fell down as never before. Ennahdha was criticised by its own grassroots and even by some of its leaders. Rashed el-Ghannouchi intended to explain what happened by saying that Ennahdha had left the government for a while but not the power. Actually, the nomination of Mehdi Jom`a, the new prime minister, seems to have been backed by Ennahdha leaders (M`rad, H. 2015).

Jom`a government succeeded in organising free legislative and presidential elections in the fall of 2014. Surprisingly enough, the winning party wasn't Ennahdha but the secularist Nidaa Tounes. This was the first time in history when the winning party out of free elections in the Arab world was not Islamist. However, Nidaa Tounes could not form a government without seeking allies because it had not achieved absolute majority in the parliament. Against all expectations, Nidaa Tounes choose to govern the country with Ennahdha and two other secular parties.

For many analysts, this alliance would have already been prepared between Rashed el-Ghannouchi and Beji Caid Essebsi in Paris before the electoral campaign (M`rad, H. 2015). Probably, this surprising alliance would have already been agreed by the USA and the most influential countries in Europe and in the Gulf. As to Beji Caid Essebsi, henceforth the President, he explained his party's choice as if it was obliged to govern side by side with Ennahdha because the later had the biggest number of seats in the new Parliament just behind Nidaa Tounes.

At first sight, all these aspects indicate that the alliance between Nidaa Tounes and Ennahdha was not really strategic, but rather tactic. At least, this is what the ex-Prime Minister Ali Larayedh confirmed to us in an interview we arranged with him in March this year. However, this recent reconciliation between the two parties created a new conception for the relationship between Destourians and Islamists.

The Destourian party is the movement that fought against French colonialism and liberated the country. Its original background was the reformist movement of the nineteenth century in the Arab world and more specifically Kheiredine Pacha, Ibn Abi Dhiyf and Taher Ben

Ashour (Mahjoubi, A. 1982). The Destour party was first founded by Abd al-Aziz al-Tha`albi in 1920. In 1934, the movement split to give birth to the New Destour Party led by a younger generation. This party took the control of the state in 1956 after the independence. Habib Bourguiba, henceforth the president, got rid of all references to traditional Islam or Panarabism within the party so that it become the symbol of westernisation (Hibou, B. 2010).

Since the eighties of the last century, this party entered in a merciless war against Islamism in Tunisia represented by Ennahdha movement. It was not until 2014 that the two opposed movements made an alliance to rule the State side by side. In an interview that we made with the ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ennahdha leader D. Rafiq Abdessalam in March this year, he told us that Ennahdha discovered its Tunisian 'reformist' roots after the experience of repression and imprisonment, and that the project of Ennahdha can be resumed as a reconciliation between Abdelaziz el-Tha`albi, Salah Ben Yousef and Habib Bourguiba. This declaration would have been shocking if it had been made in the eighties, when Ennahdha was still basically affected by the doctrines of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. It is interesting to note that Bourguiba, who put in prison the majority of the Islamist leaders in Tunisia, is being re-estimated by his victims and reconsidered as a figure of the reformist Tunisian movement that Ennahdha would like to become part of it.

The separation between religious and political activism

The 10th National conference of Ennahdha was held between 20 and 22th of May this year. In 25th May, the final report was signed by the president of the conference Ali Larayedh. According to this important document, Ennahdha officially choose to leave the field of religious activism and concentrate only on political activism. For Ennahdha, the choice of specialization in political action and the return of the rest of the areas of reform back to civil society seek to achieve efficiency. For Ennahdha, the reform in one area can only achieve its goals if the movement gets specialised in the targeted area. This doesn't mean that Ennahdha would leave the field of reform, it only means that the reforms Enahdha will be working on will strictly concern the political field. Its project is to get specialized mainly in political and administrative reforms, public affairs, governance, Law and the rebuilding of the political scene on the common values of all Tunisians.

In this new orientation, it is up to the civil society to assume completely and independently its reforming role in the rest of the fields. This would put the Tunisian civil society in position to develop and grow away from the partisan polarization and the frequent crisis of the political scene. In this new panorama, religious activism pertains to the civil society according to the final report of the 10th National conference of Ennahdha.

D. Rafiq Abessalam told us, in the interview we made in March, that Ennahdha was a totalitarian movement interested in education, culture, religion and politics all together. For him, that was a logical reaction to the Bourguiba's totalitarian regime. But in a democratic regime, Ennahdha should get rid of this idea of global reform and concentrate only on political reform.

This decision of specialisation was probably made to put a distance between Ennahdha as a political party and the other Tunisian Islamist movements that work in both the political and religious fields. Actually, Ennahdha suffered a lot from being compared to other extremist movements such as Ansar al-Shari`a or Hizb at-Tahrir. In the interview we made with the D. Rafiq Abdessalam, he told us that Ennahdha first intended to integrate these extremist movements in the new democratic system but they refused to participate democratically in the building of the new Tunisia. Those who preferred to use terrorism were repressed and those who peacefully refused to get integrated in the democratic system were left free. This new relationship between Ennahdha and the other movement of political Islam needs further deep analysis.

The position of Ennahdha within the spectrum of Islamisms

In the 10th National conference of Ennahdha, the expression "democratic Islam" was given an illuminating emphasis. Many leaders of Ennahdha talked actually about how Ennahdha want to pass from political Islam to Democratic Islam.

It is interesting to see how Ennahdha's leaders explain this idea of Democratic Islam. In the final report of the 10th National conference, Ennahdha insists on using the term specialisation instead of separation because they have always been against the idea of separation between the political and religious fields. In the same mentioned report, Ennahdha explains its new conception of relationship between Islam and politics as following:

“This reference is based on innovative and ijthadi reading by reference to the primary sources of Islam: Quran and Sunna. It benefits also from the cultural legacy of Islam as well as from the large cumulative knowledge of humanity. It believes that implementing values and orientations in daily life shouldn’t be by above-bottom instructions at any case. The application should always be by means of Ijtihad and taking into account the final purpose of the values to be implemented. Finally, all this should be understood within the framework of the Reformist Tunisian School”¹³.

While Islam is still the very centre of Ennahdha’s thought in politics, this Islam seems to be very different from the Islam conceived by Hizb at-Tahrir or the Salafists (Al-Arbi, K. 2016). For D. Rafiq Abdessalam, the Salafist trend is excessively concentrated on the exegesis of the sacred text and Hizb at-Tahrir still believe in the theory of global conspiracy against Islam. For him, the world is changing and Ennahdha is adapting its ideas to the changing world.

It is crucial to recall that Ennahdha accepted the democratic principles since the eighties of the last century and even the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt did so. What has really changed in Ennahdha after 2011? All Islamists that accepted Democracy in the twentieth century wanted to islamise the state peacefully through general elections. For them, violence is no longer legitimate if the global Islamic reform of the state can be carried out through Democracy. In addition, these Islamist movements had suffered a lot from violently fighting against anti-Islamist dictatorships. So, they saw in Democracy the real solution for their exclusion from the political scene. They intended to convert their fight against non-Islamist regimes in a fight for Democracy, as this later has been an internationally recognised and supported cause (Krichen, Z. 1995); (Hamdi, M.E. 1998); (Al-Buni, A. 2014).

However, Democracy cannot function without democrats. The Islamic Front of Salvation (FIS) in Algeria won the first democratic elections in Algeria without being really democratic and entered in a merciless fight against the army. The consequence was a horrible civil war in the nineties (Stora, B. 2002); (Volpi, F. 2003). After the Arab spring, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood won the first democratic elections in Egypt but the Egyptian Islamists did not learn enough from the Algerian experience and got in the same crisis. Since 2012, they intended to islamise the State and entered in an open war with the army and sections of the Egyptian people.

¹³ This is a personal translation from the original source in Arabic.

Ennahdha was the exception because it changed its conception of Democracy to prevent a civil war in Tunisia in 2013. The memory of the Algerian civil war and the shock of the Egyptian experience helped Ennahdha to change. Actually, Ennahdha left back the idea of officially converting Tunisia in an Islamic State. For Rashed el-Ghannouchi, the authentic Islamic State is nothing but a democratic State for a Muslim people. In an interview we arranged with the ex-Prime Minister Ali Larayedh, he told us that the perfect society he would like to achieve is one that is Muslim but politically democratic. According to this new paradigm, it doesn't pertain to the State to islamise the society. That would rather be the role of the religious civil society represented in the network of proselyte associations and religious schools in the country.

This allows to understand better why Ennahdha accepted to take out the reference to Shari`a law from the Constitution. For Ennahdha, the more the Tunisian society gets Islamic, more Shari`a law gets respected, and this, without the need of any official reference to Shari`a law in the Constitution. In an interview we made with the Ennahdha spokesman, Oussema Esghair, he told us that the application of Shari`a law has never been the obsession of the Islamist movement in Tunisia. According to him, after the revolution, Ennahdha intended not to use this ambiguous concept that can be interpreted in many different ways. For Ennahdha, the reference to Islam in general is actually sufficient for the new Constitution.

Taking into account this new paradigm, what would be the position of Ennahdha within the spectrum of Islamist movements? In the interview with the ex-Prime Minister Ali Larayedh, he told us that Ennahdha is the most progressive movement within the Islamist spectrum. However, in an interview we made with Lotfi Zitoun, the political chancellor of Rashed el-Ghannouchi, he told us that he refuses to classify Ennahdha as an Islamist movement because Ennahdha is not Islamist any more. He confirmed that Ennahdha became a national Democratic Party with Islamic culture as a source of inspiration. In another interview we made with Ali Larayedh, ex-Prime Minister and the president of the 10th Ennahdha conference, he confirmed to us that Ennahdha would like to become an Islamic democratic party on the model of democratic Christian parties in Europe.

This wish was confirmed one month later in the 10th National conference of the party. In this same conference, Rashed el-Ghannouchi was re-elected as the president of Ennahdha with a mandate to achieve this goal.

Conclusion

To sum up, after a traditional Islamist experience influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Tunisian Ennahdha seems to have been liberated from its first Nativistic approach to modernity. Ennahdha seems to have entered in a new era: the era of political modernity with all its components including Democracy. While many political scientists considered Democracy and Islam incompatible, Ennahdha intended to give an example of an Islamic Democracy. At the same time, Ennahdha's leaders insist on the fact that Ennahdha is not any more Islamist but rather a modern democratic party with Islam as a source of inspiration.

From this previous summary, one can at least extract four conclusions.

The first conclusion is that a frustrated Islamist movement in a dictatorship is Nativistic and Islamism is a particular form of Nativism.

The second is that when Dictatorship is removed and Democracy set up instead, the Islamist movement is no longer frustrated and gets liberated from its initial Nativistic approach. The freedom Democracy gives to all movements, including the Islamist one, helps the later to democratise its approach to Islam.

The third is that, in dictatorships, the Islamists intend to Islamise Democracy according to the Nativistic paradigm and use it as a weapon against anti-Islamist regimes. But in democracies, the Islamists intend to democratise Islam to adapt themselves to the new political environment.

The fourth is that the democratisation of Ennahdha is not an exception within Islamists in the Arab world but rather a model. What prevented the Islamists from getting democratised in Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria after the Arab spring is the lack of a real democratic environment like the one Ennahdha had enjoyed in Tunisia after the Revolution.

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- ☐ <http://tanzil.net/#trans/en.sahih/>

Interviews

- ☐ Ali Larayedh, ex-Prime Minister, March 27th2016, at 8h, at Ennahdha headquarters.
- ☐ Dr Rafik Abdessalem, ex-Minister of foreign Affairs, March 25th 2016, at 13h, at the Centre for Strategic and Diplomatic Studies, Tunis.
- ☐ Lotfi Zitoun, ex-Minister of political affairs, March 28th2016, at 9h, at Ennahdha headquarters.
- ☐ Osama Alsaghir, deputy and spokesman of Ennahdha, March 25th 2016, at 10h30, in the Parliament. Tunis.

