Turkish Journal of Middle Eastern Studies
ISSN: 2147-7523 E-ISSN: 2630-5631
Vol: 9, No: 2, pp. 167-206

Received: 09.07.2021
Accepted: 12.03.2022
DOI: 10.26513/tocd.969305

What makes democracy possible? Transitions in Egypt and Tunisia after the Arab Uprisings

Osman Şahin*

Abstract

This article studies Egyptian and Tunisian transitions by investigating the effect of two factors, namely *electoral system choice* and *the presence of competitive opposition parties*. It suggests that, between 2011 and 2015, the electoral system choice and the presence of competitive political parties contributed to the transition to democracy in Tunisia while the same two factors were causes of the failed transition in Egypt. It concludes by arguing that during transitional phases, electoral system choice and presence of competitive political parties help the institutionalization of normal, limited political uncertainty in a polity. Accordingly, these two factors compel cooperation and negotiation between different political actors, which in turn help democracy survive transitions.

Keywords: democratization; Egypt; Tunisia; electoral system; political parties

* Dr. Osman Şahin, Glasgow Caledonian University, UK, Department of Law and Economics, orcid.org/0000-0002-0815-9433, osman81sahin@gmail.com

Türkiye Ortadoğu Çalışmaları Dergisi
ISSN: 2147-7523 E-ISSN: 2630-5631
Cilt: 9, Sayı: 2, ss. 167-206

Geliş Tarihi : 09.07.2021
Kabul Tarihi :12.03.2022
DOI: 10.26513/tocd.969305

Demokrasiyi mümkün kılmak: Mısır ve Tunus'un dönüşümleri

Osman Şahin*

Öz

Bu makale, *seçim sistem tercihi* ve *rekabetçi muhalefet partilerinin* etkilerini merkezine alarak 2011 ve 2015 arasında Mısır ve Tunus siyasal dönüşümlerini çalışmaktadır. Makalenin iddiasına göre Tunus'ta demokratik dönüşümün arkasındaki önemli nedenlerden ikisi, seçim sistemi tercihi ve rekabetçi muhalefet partilerin varlığıyken Mısır'da seçim sistemi tercihi ve rekabetçi muhalefet partilerinin olmaması bu ülkedeki dönüşümün yeni bir otoriter rejime doğru evrilmesiyle sonuçlanmıştır. Akabinde bu makale, rejim dönüşümleri esnasında belirli bir ölçüde ve kurumsallaştırılmış belirsizliğin demokratik rejimin yerleşmesinde yardımcı olduğunu iddiasındadır. Bu bağlamda, doğru seçim sistemi tercihi ve rekabetçi muhalefet partilerinin varlığı bir taraftan bu kısıtlı belirsizliği yaratırken diğer taraftan da siyasi aktörlerin müzakere etmesini ve kritik anlarda iş birliği yapmalarını teşvik ederek demokrasinin dönüşüm sürecinde ayakta kalmasını sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: demokratikleşme, Mısır, Tunus, seçim sistemi, siyasi partiler

* Dr. Osman Şahin, Glasgow Caledonian Üniversitesi, Birleşik Krallık, Hukuk ve Ekonomi Departmanı, orcid.org/0000-0002-0815-9433, osman81sahin@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Arab Uprisings, which shook the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) between the late 2010 and the late 2012, refer to a series of social movements destabilizing authoritarian governments throughout the region. These uprisings brought about the downfall of reigning dictators in important MENA countries (e.g. Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen) while also causing eruption of civil wars (e.g. Libya, Syria, and Yemen). This article compares two important MENA countries; namely Egypt, which is the most populous country in the region and Tunisia, which has been the only country preventing another dictatorship at least until 2021. In particular, the article focuses on the factors determining the outcome of transitions by studying these two countries.

Egypt's transition to democracy failed with the 2013 military coup while the Tunisian transition had been successful. This is despite the fact that revolts in Egypt and Tunisia bore great resemblance with each other during the initial phases.[1] Both countries were shaken by the popular revolts in 2010 and 2011 that ousted long-reigning dictators. Furthermore, first elections brought Islamists to power in both cases. The political trajectory these countries followed after the Arab Uprisings however differed. Egypt has returned to its old ways with a new dictator, Al Sisi, who rose from the ranks of the military like his predecessors since 1952. Tunisia, however, has become the first Arab country to be defined as *free* by the Freedom House.[2] Different

[1] James Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015).

[2] A comparison of current evaluations of Tunisia with the past reports is helpful to put the Tunisian success in context. Twelve years before the publication of the Freedom House 2016 report, the first report to define Tunisia as *free*, the 2004 Arab Human Development Report defined Tunisia as a country where journalists were regularly prosecuted for expressing their opinions; the freedom to form associations was curbed; the principle of free and fair elections was violated; and the impartiality and fairness of courts were contested. See UNDP, Arab Human Development Report: *Towards Freedom in the Arab World*, accessed March 20,

transition trajectories in these two countries allow us to compare the factors that produced divergent regimes after the Arab Uprisings.

Egyptian and Tunisian experiences demonstrate that democracy is not the only outcome of transitions.[3] This article explores two factors determining the nature of the regime in Egypt and Tunisia during transitions. It studies the role of institutional choices (i.e. electoral system choice) and the role of institutionalized opposition in determining the regime trajectory in these countries. In particular, this article focuses on specific electoral arrangements and weak opposition parties as factors preventing transition to democracy.[4] It suggests that *electoral system choice* and the *presence of competitive opposition parties* made democratization viable in Tunisia while making it improbable in Egypt.

Democracy institutionalizes normal, limited political uncertainty over outcomes.[5] It involves a degree of uncertainty about who would get elected and which policies would be implemented.[6] Democratic institutions protect political competition by ensuring the possibility of governmental change through peaceful means. Democracy therefore flourishes where strong political actors are unsure of what to-

2021, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/rbas_ahdr2004_en.pdf; Freedom House. *Nations in Transit: the Anti-democratic Turn*. Accessed May 13, 2021, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/NIT_2021_final_042321.pdf

[3] Laura Landolt and Paul Kubicek, "Opportunities and Constraints: Comparing Tunisia and Egypt to the Colored Revolutions", *Democratization* 21, no.6 (2014): 984-1006.

[4] Vickie Langohr, "Too Much Civil Society, Too Little Politics: Egypt and Liberalizing Arab Regimes", *Comparative Politics* 36, no.2 (2004): 181-204.

[5] Adam Przeworski, Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[6] Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy is… and is not", Journal of Democracy 2, no.3 (1991): 75-88.

morrow would bring. This is because in the absence of limited uncertainty, incentives to negotiate with opposition actors decreases for stronger political actors. Indeed, research demonstrates the ways in which strong actors, dominating the system and rejecting negotiation with the opposition causes democracy to fail.[7] Electoral system and competitive political parties are two particular institutions injecting uncertainty into the system and securing competition between different political factions. These institutions create a political stage where even strongest political actors cannot be certain about the outcome. In cases where these institutions fail to create limited uncertainty, democratization is less likely and stronger political actors become more likely to dominate the political system.

Departing from these assumptions, this article suggests that electoral system choice and presence of competitive opposition parties are two factors explaining diverging outcomes in Egypt and Tunisia. Note that extant literature has already studied other factors in order to explain different outcomes in these countries. For instance, research documented the role of the army in different transition trajectories in Egypt and Tunisia[8] as well as the role that the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) and the National Dialogue Quartet played in keeping the Tunisian transition to democracy on track after 2011.[9] This article, while acknowledging the roles the army and the labour unions played in Egyptian and Tunisian transitions, explores the effects of electoral systems and competitive opposition parties.

---

[7] Berk Esen and Sebnem Gumuscu, "Rising Competitive Authoritarianism in Turkey", *Third World Quarterly*, 37, no.9 (2013): 1581-1606; Sebnem Gumuscu, "The Emerging Predominant Party System in Turkey", *Government and Opposition* 48, no.2 (2013): 223-244.

[8] Zoltan Baranzy, "Comparing Arab revolts: the Role of Military". *Journal of Democracy* 22, no.4 (2011): 24-35

[9] Joel Beinin, Workers and Thieves: Labor Movements and Popular Uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2016).

2. Methodology

This article uses the most similar systems design as Egypt and Tunisia bear important similarities in terms of economic, political, and social characteristics. Both countries were lower middle-income countries in 2010.[10] Egypt and Tunisia had moderate levels of unemployment rates in 2010, 8.76% and 13.05% respectively, although youth unemployment was well over 20% in Egypt and close to 30% in Tunisia. In both countries, income inequality was not a major issue as evident in low Gini scores, 30.2 in Egypt and 35.8 in Tunisia.

They were also similar in terms of the nature of their political system and the composition of the society. Both countries had a problematic relationship with democracy in the past. Autocratic leaders had ruled Egypt and Tunisia after acquiring independence from colonial powers. When the Arab Uprisings first erupted in December 2010, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak was in power for almost 30 years while Zine el Abidin bin Ali was in power for about 22 years in Tunisia. Despite the presence of strong Islamist movements in both countries (the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Ennahda in Tunisia), a considerable part of the society remained secular and liberal in both cases. Notwithstanding these similarities, Egypt ended up with another dictatorship while Tunisia avoided a similar fate despite experiencing important bumps along the way. Studying the effects of the electoral system choice and competitive opposition parties might contribute to our knowledge on the outcome of transitions in these countries.

3. Electoral System Choice

The electoral system choice determines the extent to which actors taking power during transitions will be perceived as legitimate and will elicit people's voluntary compliance with policy decisions.[11]

[10] World Bank, Accessed on May 6, 2021, https://data.worldbank.org/

[11] Laurel Miller, Jeffrey Martini, Stephen Larrabee, Angel Rabasa, Stephanie Pezard, Julie Taylor, and Tewodaj Mengistu, *Democratization in the Arab World:*

This is because electoral systems are major instruments with implications for party competition, the inclusiveness of legislatures, and the composition of governments, all of which having profound influences on democratic consolidation.[12] They provide rules for competition and determine how well elected bodies represent different social groups and interests.[13]

In terms of electoral formula, there is a distinction between proportional, majoritarian, and plurality formulae.[14] In plurality formula, the candidate who has the most votes (but not necessarily the absolute majority) among all candidates wins the elections. This system is widely used in the UK and its former colonies (e.g. Canada, India). The majoritarian system is associated with run-off elections. If no candidate can garner 50% plus 1 of the votes, a run-off round with the top two finishers from the first round is squaring off is held in a later date. This system is generally used to elect top executives in countries such as Argentina, France, and Russia. The most important advantage of this system over proportional representation system (PR) is government effectiveness as the system produces single-party governments.[15] Once elected with this system, the cabinet can pass the legislation they feel necessary during their term as long as they carry their own backbenchers with them. PR however, maximizes representative power by reflecting the composition of the electorate

Prospects and Lessons from Around the Globe. (Santa Monica, RAND Corporation, 2012).

[12] Pippa Norris, *Driving Democracy: Do Power-sharing Institutions Work*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[13] Miller et al., *Democratization*.

[14] John Ishiyama, Comparative Politics: Principles of Democracy and Democratization. (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2012).

[15] Pippa Norris, "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian, and Mixed Systems", *International Political Science Review* 18, no.3 (1997): 297-312.

in the legislature better than other systems do.[16] PR proponents argue that plurality formula and majoritarian systems put small parties in disadvantaged position by failing to represent them. They suggest that incentive is greater for people to turn out and vote in PR as fewer votes are wasted in this system.[17]

The second important factor in electoral systems is the district magnitude, the basic difference being between single-member districts (SMD) and multi-member districts. SMD is associated with plurality or majoritarian systems. In SMD, the country is divided into electoral districts, and each district elects one representative. There is no compensation for coming in the second place. SMD proponents argue that SMD allow voters to identify their representatives clearly and hold them responsible for their actions.[18] Others argue that SMD could produce distortions in the national legislature. Theoretically, a party, which consistently occupies the second place throughout the nation, could end up with no seats in the legislature. The system might also provide advantages to bigger parties at the expense of smaller parties.[19] Multi-member districts are associated with PR systems. Unlike SMD, multi-member districts, which often vary in size, elect more than one representative. The major advantage of multi-member districts over SMD is that it maximizes representative power by providing weaker candidates with the chance to be elected.[20] Therefore, this system enables smaller parties to win seats in the legislature.

Electoral systems chosen in transitional periods have profound effects including the number of parties (fragmentation) and ideological

[16] Norris, "Choosing"; Ishiyama, *Comparative*.

[17] Norris, "Choosing".

[18] Ishiyama, Comparative.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

distance among parties (polarization) in the legislature.[21] The scholarly orthodoxy argues that some form of PR is all but essential for democracy to survive in divided societies.[22] Lijphart suggests that the representation of all significant groups of a society within the legislature via PR is necessary to protect democracy.[23] Divided societies need PR to give minorities adequate representation, discourage parochialism, and force moderation on political parties.[24] Norris argues that PR is more democratic than majoritarian systems because it allows better power-sharing arrangements than majoritarian systems.[25] Accordingly, in fragmented societies, which try to emerge from regime instability, PR is more successful in accommodating diverse groups, reducing tensions, and promoting acceptance of peace-settlements.[26] Against the scholarly orthodoxy, centripetalists argue that electoral systems aiming to mitigate negative effects of societal fragmentations should not simply replicate those same divisions in the legislature. They suggest that electoral systems should encourage cooperation and accommodation between rival groups. For instance, the Nigerian electoral system used in presidential elections requires the winning candidate to gain support from different regions, thus breaking down the claims of parochialism and regionalism.[27] Both schools however agree that electoral systems should stimulate cooperation between different groups if democracy should survive transitions. It

---

[21] Jae Hyeok Shin, "The Choice of Electoral Systems in New Democracies: A Case Study of South Korea in 1988", *Democratization* 18, no.6 (2011): 1246-1269.

[22] Benjamin Reilly, Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[23] Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

[24] Arthur Lewis, *Politics in West Africa*. (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1965).

[25] Norris, *Driving.*

[26] Norris, Driving; Arend Lijphart, Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in 36 Countries. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999).

[27] Reilly, *Democracy.*

is particularly important at constitutional moments for systems of representation to disperse power and foster inclusiveness.[28] In this respect, electoral systems should prevent stronger actors to dominate other political actors in the transition. Instead, they should encourage compromise and negotiation between actors at different ends of the ideological/political spectrum.

Two electoral systems adopted in Egypt after 2011 were complex and allowed first Islamists and then Mubarak-era figures to dominate the legislature eventually causing an exclusion of secular/liberal actors from decision-making mechanisms. In contrast, the Tunisian electoral system adopted in 2011 did not allow the Ennahda (Renaissance), the largest party in Tunisia back in 2011, to control the majority in the assembly. Thanks to the use of PR with the largest remainder principle, Tunisian political parties had no choice but to form pacts with other political parties to rule the country after 2011.

3.1. Egypt

Before the Arab Uprisings, Egypt's electoral system had serious flaws causing important problems for free and fair elections.[29] The electoral system was designed to grant a competitive edge to Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP), which was a non-programmatic party offering voters nothing but executive competence and stability in the political and economic system. In Mubarak's Egypt, elections for the lower legislative body employed a modified

[28] John Carey, "Electoral Formula and Tunisian Constituent Assembly", Accessed on May 3, 2021, http://sites.dartmouth.edu/jcarey/files/2013/02/Tunisia-Electoral-Formula-Carey-May-2013-reduced.pdf

[29] Democracy Reporting International, *Assessment of the Electoral Framework: The Arab Republic of Egypt*. Accessed May 3, 2021, http://democracy-reporting.org/files/dri_egypt.pdf

nation-wide SMD, in which two winners were chosen from each district.[30] This system had considerable flaws in its application, large and intentional malapportionment being the most significant one.[31] For instance, rural areas were privileged with small size districts while urban centres such as Cairo, Alexandria, and Aswan were given fewer representatives per person, as larger cities were more likely to accommodate liberal parties.

After Mubarak's fall, major political actors were aware that the electoral system would deeply influence the outcomes and shape of the upcoming political struggles. While the revolutionary actors pushed for a change in the electoral system and replacement of SMD with PR, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF)[32] suspended the 1971 constitution in February 2011 paving the way for new legislation. The new electoral system that was implemented in September 2011 did not encourage cooperation and competition among the political actors of Egypt. Instead, it enforced divisions between Islamist and secular groups and furthered polarization inside the society. Despite the pressure of revolutionary actors, the SCAF introduced a complicated mixed-system using PR and the majoritarian system simultaneously. The new law stated that 2/3 of the legislature (332 seats) was to be elected with PR in closed and blocked lists. Only registered political parties were allowed to compete for these 332 seats. The remaining 1/3 of the legislature (166 seats) was to be

[30] David Faris, "Constituting Institutions: Electoral System in Egypt", *Middle East Policy* 19, no.1 (2012): 140-154.

[31] Ibid.

[32] The Egyptian army was the major actor controlling the transition process in Egypt. It was the decision of the Army to force a resignation of Mubarak causing the end of the Mubarak regime. The SCAF controlled the 2011 elections and determined the candidates that could join elections. See Eberhard Kienle, "Egypt without Mubarak, Tunisia after Bin Ali: Theory, History, and the 'Arab Spring'", *Economy and Society* 41, no.4 (2012): 532-557; Thanassis Cambanis, *Once Upon a Revolution: An Egyptian Story*. (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2015).

elected with SMD where each electoral district elected two members.[33] Party candidates and independents were allowed to contest for these seats. Each two-seat majoritarian district had to elect at least one candidate who was either a worker or a peasant. The same rule applied to the candidates who were elected through PR; at least 50% would be either workers or peasants.[34] Consequently, in 2011 parliamentary elections, 332 lower house seats were elected through PR. The remaining 166 seats were elected with SMD. In these elections, the SCAF opted for a 0.5% threshold (the lowest of its kind) for proportional list districts, which was deliberately designed to disincentivize the formation of electoral coalitions.[35] This strategy worked well as more than 40 parties competed in the 2011 elections.

The electoral system formula designed by the SCAF had provided an electoral cushion to the strongest party in the country.[36] Under the system, small and still-forming parties were seriously disadvantaged. The largest remainder system[37] made it virtually impossible for smaller parties to compete against larger parties since only those parties that met or exceeded the quota of votes for a given district would

[33] Inmaculada Szmolka, "Political Change in North Africa and the Arab Middle East: Constitutional Reforms and Electoral Processes", *Arab Studies Quarterly* 36, no.2 (2014): 128-148.

[34] The Carter Center, Final Report of the Carter Center Mission to Witness the 2011–2012 Parliamentary Elections in Egypt. Accessed on March 5, 2021, http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/egypt-2011-2012-final-rpt.pdf

[35] Daniel Tavana, *Consensus after Conflict: Electoral System Choice in Revolutionary Egypt*. Accessed on June 13, 2021, https://www.innovations.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/2296222.pdf

[36] Ibid.

[37] In the largest remainder system the first step is calculating a quota of votes that entitles parties to seats in the parliament. A party will get as many seats as it has quotas of votes. Any unallocated seats are given to those parties having the largest number of unused votes.

have been able to win seats in this system.[38] Even before the November 2011 elections, scholars warned that the closed party-list structure that was envisaged for the election of 2/3 of the legislature might significantly favor the pro-MB Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), which was the only political force with organizational capabilities after the abolishment of Mubarak's NDP.[39] The results of the elections proved their predictions right.

In the November 2011 parliamentary elections, the top five political parties (FJP, Al-Nour, Egyptian Bloc, Al-Wafd, and Al-Wasat) received 84.6% of the popular vote. Other than the Egyptian Bloc, which received 8.9% of the vote, these parties were either affiliated with actors such as the Muslim Brotherhood (FJP) and Salafis (Al-Nour Party) which had a strong presence in Egypt before the Uprising , or were political parties with roots going back to the pre-uprising Egypt (e.g. Al-Wafd). The Egyptian Bloc, the only party with revolutionary credentials, failed to show a strong presence in the first free elections of Egypt. The FJP, despite getting 36.4% of the vote, now controlled 45.2% (235 seats out of the 498 contested) of the legislature. The two biggest parties, the FJP and the Salafist Al-Nour Party, controlled 70% of the legislature thereby eliminating any chance of a meaningful party competition in the legislature. Consequently, smaller but liberal parties, which were unwilling to cooperate with Al-Nour Party, failed to challenge the hegemony of the FJP. Hence, after the first free elections of Egypt, there would be no legislation by consensus or even minority consultation.[40] The FJP and Al-Nour

[38] Eric Trager, *Egypt's New Elections Laws: Another Democratic Setback*. Accessed on March 7, 2021, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/egypts-new-elections-laws-another-democratic-setback.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Esen Kirdis, "Wolves in Sheep Clothing or Victims of Times? Discussing the Immoderation of Incumbent Islamic Parties in Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia", *Democratization* 25, no.5 (2018): 901-918.

installed supermajorities on every committee, excluding liberal/secular actors from policy-making right from the beginning.[41] The situation became more untenable after Morsi's election to the presidency in June 2012 with slightly over 51% of the votes in the second round of the presidential elections. After this victory, the FJP became even more uncompromising,[42] and excluded liberal/secular actors from the political process thereby effectively blocking any chance for a negotiated transition to democracy.

To sum up, several features of the 2011 electoral system prevented a smooth transition to democracy. First, it was extremely complex. The system accommodated both the PR and majoritarian system. 2/3 of the legislature was elected through PR, while the rest was elected by a majority run-off formula where each district elected two candidates. Second, the largest remainder system in the districts, where PR was used, provided large parties such as the FJP and Al-Nour Party with important advantages vis-à-vis small parties. Accordingly, the FJP did not need to negotiate the terms of the transition with liberal/secular actors. This contributed to a political atmosphere where Islamists dominated the legislature and the constituent assembly that drafted the 2012 Egyptian constitution.[43] This situation alienated other actors causing a considerable part of the frustrated opposition to support the Tamarod (rebellion), a movement enjoying support of the army and the police as well as funding by Mubarak-era business tycoons.[44] Ta-

[41] Cambanis, *Once.*

[42] The Supreme Court's decision to dissolve the parliament in June 2012 just before the election of Morsi contributed to the uncompromising attitude of the FJP between June 2012 and June 2013. The FJP wanting to protect its government against the encroachments from the judiciary and the army increased its pressure on the opposition.

[43] Cambanis, *Once*; Gelvin, *The Arab*

[44] Joshua Stacher, "Fragmenting States, New Regimes: Militarized State Violence and Transition in the Middle East", *Democratization* 22, no.2 (2015): 259-275.

marod that allegedly collected more than 22 million signatures demanding Morsi's resignation took it to the streets in 30 June 2013, on the first year anniversary of the inauguration of Morsi. The clashes between the supporters of the MB and the Tamarod continued for several days. The military used these clashes and Morsi's increasingly authoritarian tendencies including his 23 November 2012 presidential decree granting him powers *to issue any decision or law without any alternative authority in the country having the power to oppose or revoke it*[45] [emphasis added] as excuses to stage a coup in July 2013.

The second electoral system was implemented in 2014, one year after the June 2013 military coup. The new law was perceived as a serious setback from democratic hopes.[46] The 2014 election law again established a mixed electoral system, and it increased the number of representatives in the legislature from 508 to 567.[47] Of 567 members 420 would be elected as individuals while the rest (120 members) would be elected from closed lists out of which the winning list in a district takes all seats in that district. The 2014 electoral system empowered patronage networks of the Mubarak era, which were based on family and business ties. It also contributed to the weakening of political

[45] Bassem Sabry, "Absolute Power: Morsi Decree Stuns Egyptians, *Al-Monitor*. Accessed January 10, 2021, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2012/al-monitor/morsi-decree-constitution-power.html

[46] Ahmed Morsy. "The Egyptian Parliamentary Elections 101". *Middle East Institute*, Accessed December 9, 2020, http://www.mei.edu/content/article/egyptian-parliamentary-elections-101; [46] Ahmed Morsy, "Individuals before Parties in Egypt's Elections", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* Accessed April 22, 2021, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/?fa=56157; Jan Volkel, "Why Almost Nobody Participated in the Egyptian Parliamentary Elections", *Open Democracy*, Accessed December 9, 2020, https://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/jan-v-lkel/why-almost-nobody-participated-in-egyptian-parliamentary-elections; Khaled Dawoud, "Egypt's Elections Law: A Setback for Democracy", *Atlantic Council*, Accessed December 10, 2020, http://www.atlantic-council.org/blogs/menasource/egypt-s-parliamentary-elections-law-a-setback-for-democracy.

[47] Morsy, "Individuals".

parties since the law stipulated that the majority of the legislature would be elected through the individual candidacy system.[48] The individual candidacy system has always been a major disadvantage for opposition parties in Egypt as it prevented the establishment of party programs offering credible alternatives to the ruling parties.[49] Unsurprisingly, independent candidates in the 2015 elections tried to appeal to the voters through their personality or promise of economic benefit rather than advertising a political program that could foster hopes for democratization.

The coup-makers designed the 2014 election system in a way that its emphasis on the individual candidacy system gave them leverage over who stands a chance to enter the legislature amidst a crackdown against the MB.[50] The new electoral system and district divisions tainted by suspicions of gerrymandering provided actors who were associated with Mubarak's National Democratic Party with the upper hand in the elections. After the suppression of the MB, these actors were recognized as the most organized and experienced group not only due their good relations with state institutions and but also thanks to their links to prominent tribes and families of Upper Egypt.[51] Furthermore, for 120 seats allocated to political parties, the 2014 electoral system preferred closed lists to proportional lists. In this formula, a winning party or coalition could win all seats in the designated district if it takes 50% plus one vote. If no party or coalition can garner enough votes, two lists with the highest number of votes would compete in a run-off round. Hence the new electoral system was a major departure from the principle of popular representation and the people's vote.[52]

[48] Ibid.

[49] Langohr, "Too Much".

[50] Dawoud, "Egypt's".

[51] Morsy, "Individuals"; Morsy, "The Egyptian".

[52] Morsy, "Individuals"

The extremely low turn-out rates in the 2015 parliamentary elections[53] was an indicator that Egyptians lost hope in political change through elections only four years after the uprisings. The turnout rate after the first two days of elections was a ridiculous 2.27%. A significant number of voters decided to vote only after the authorities paid them.[54] Furthermore, the state decided to give public employees a half-day off in order to encourage them to vote. Despite these measures, after the first round of the elections, the turnout rate was only at 16%, which was then raised to 26.6% by the officials.[55]

3.2. Tunisia

Before 2011, the electoral system in Tunisia was a majoritarian system with a party block vote to win all seats in every constituency, as the regime party. Electoral fraud was common, and falsified results secured more than 90% of the seats for the Constitutional Democratic Rally Party (CDR). A review of voter registration conducted in October 2011 found that of the 4.5 million names on the voter rolls, only 2.5 million was accurate. Two million registered voters were either deceased or double-counted but used by the Ben Ali regime to pad election results in CDR's favor. Furthermore, three million voters who met the eligibility requirements were missing from the rolls.[56]

In 2011, the interim government led by Beji Caid Essebsi (later the leader of the Call of Tunisia and the president of Tunisia until July 2019) set up a new legal and institutional framework. The new law on elections was adopted in May 2011 with the *Decree Law 2011-*

[53] The 2015 parliamentary elections were held under the pressure of the army, and MB candidates were not allowed to compete in the elections. These factors also contributed to extremely low turnout rates in these elections.

[54] Volkel, "Why".

[55] Ibid.

[56] Miller et al., *Democratization*.

35.[57] An important difference between the Egyptian and Tunisian electoral systems was that the latter was the result of negotiations between Tunisian political parties and civil society organizations, whereas the 2011 and 2014 Egyptian electoral systems were imposed by the army.[58] For example, the individual candidacy system that was associated with patronage and personalities rather than policies and programs was kept intact both in the 2011 and 2014 electoral systems. In contrast, the Tunisian political actors overhauled the old electoral system, and opted for PR that has empowered political parties in post-2011 Tunisia. This decision contributed to a balance of power between Islamists and seculars in the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly (NCA); fostering a political atmosphere in the country that encouraged dialogue, inclusiveness, and cooperation between the actors.

Unlike Egypt, the new electoral system in Tunisia avoided employing PR and majoritarian formulas simultaneously. Tunisian political actors opted for PR that would reflect the choices of the electorate without confusing them while preventing stronger parties to dominate the legislature. Decree Law 2011-35 replaced the majoritarian system with a closed-list PR system. Seats were allocated in regional districts using the largest remainder method. Consequently, the Islamist Ennahda won 41% of the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly (NCA) with around 37% of the votes in the 2011 elections. These results caused Ennahda to negotiate the terms of coalition with two social democrat parties; namely the Congress for the Republic (8.7%

[57] Amor Boubakri, "Inclusiveness Policies in the Transitional Elections in Tunisia", In Raul Cordenillo (eds.) *Improving Electoral Practices: Case Studies and Practical Approaches* (pp. 141-161). (Stockholm, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2015).

[58] John Carey, Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds, "Institutions as Causes and Effects: North African Electoral Systems During the Arab Spring", *HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series RWP16-042* (2015).

of the votes) and the Democratic Forum for Labour & Liberties (7% of the votes). The district-level data demonstrates that had Tunisia employed other most commonly used electoral formulas, Ennahda would have been awarded a super-majority in the NCA and would be able to impose a constitution without any assistance from other political parties.[59] For example, if the 2011 NCA elections were to be conducted with using one of the so-called 'divisor' or 'highest averages' methods, Ennahda would have earned seats ranging from 47% (under the divisor system) to 69% (under the D'Hondt divisor)[60]. The choice of largest remainder system allowed Ennahda to win 41% of the seats forcing it to forge coalition with seculars.[61]

Another major difference between the Egyptian and Tunisian electoral systems was that the Tunisian electoral law excluded remnants of the old system while the 2014 Egyptian election law revived Mubarak-era patronage networks through the individual candidacy system. Decree Law 2011-35 provided safeguards in order to exclude actors affiliated with Ben Ali. First, more than 100 people who were relatives of Ben Ali or who had unduly gained assets due to their connection with the Ben Ali family were denied voting rights. Second, a larger number of people who were involved with the Ben Ali regime were announced ineligible to compete in the 2011 elections.[62] Lastly, Decree Law 2011-35 included clauses to boost political inclusion by enhancing the representation of the economically marginalized regions of the country. Traditionally, the interior regions of

[59] Carey, "Electoral"

[60] The D'Hondt system gives larger parties a bigger share of seats than their share of the votes. The goal of this system is to guarantee that a party with the majority of votes gets at least half of the seats in the legislature. See Michael Gallagher, "Proportionality, Disproportionality, and Electoral Systems", *Electoral Studies* 10, no.1 (1991): 33-51.

[61] Carey et al., "Institutions".

[62] Boubakri, "Inclusiveness".

Tunisia were economically, socially, and politically marginalized.[63] These impoverished regions were also subject to direct central government interference in nominating and selecting local officials. The integration of these regions into the decision-making processes was a priority for the lawmakers in the post-Ben Ali era. Article 33 of Decree Law 2011-35 took into the demands of the interior regions, and granted additional seats in order to enhance their representation in the NCA. As a result, in comparison to the composition of the 2009 legislature, marginalized regions (e.g. Tataouine and Tozeur) doubled their representation in the assembly.[64]

The cooperation between major political actors has continued after the October 2014 elections. In the 2014 elections, the secular Nida Tounes (Call of Tunisia) garnered 37.6% of the votes followed by Ennahda with 27.8% of the votes. The third party was another secular party, the Free Patriotic Union with 4.1% of the votes. Contrary to the expectations of Wolf,[65] Nida Tounes formed a unity government that included members from the rivaling Ennahda and other opposition parties.[66] This coalition was also necessitated by the electoral system that denied both Nida Tounes and Ennahda majority in the legislature. Consequently, unlike the Egyptian constitution of 2012, which was the work of a committee dominated by Islamists, the 2014 Tunisian constitution was the work of the pragmatic coalition of Islamists and seculars, who negotiated each and every term on the new constitution.

---

[63] Mohammed Bouazizi, who self-immolated himself, was from Sidi Bouzid, which was a city in a marginalized region.

[64] Boubakri, "Inclusiveness".

[65] Anne Wolf, "Power Shift in Tunisia: Electoral Success of Secular Parties Might Deepen Polarization", *SWP Comments* 54, Accessed April 17, 2021, http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2014C54_wolf.pdf

[66] Al Jazeera, "Tunisia Parliament Approves Unity Government", Accessed on April 13, 2021, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/02/tunisia-approves-coalition-government-150205123748042.html

The electoral system forms a necessary but insufficient condition for a transition to democracy. In the absence of competitive opposition parties, the electoral system choice may prove insufficient to lead to democracy. When opposition is weak and fragmented, stronger actors are unlikely to compromise and more likely to exploit their dominant position. The presence of competitive opposition parties are therefore the second condition for successful transitions to democracy.

4. Competitive Opposition Parties

In contemporary political systems, only a few countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia) do not have political parties.[67] Political parties perform several important functions including the articulation and aggregation of interests, elite recruitment, and governance.[68] 'Democracy is a system in which parties lose elections' against each other,[69] making organized opposition probably the most distinctive characteristic of the regime.[70] Therefore, the institutionalized dichotomy of government and opposition separates democratic regimes from non-democratic regimes.[71] Unsurprisingly, studies found that political parties, which are the means of political organization and channels of representation

[67] Robin Pettitt, *Contemporary Party Politics*, (Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

[68] Peter Burnell and André Gerrits, "Promoting Party Politics in Emerging Democracies", Democratization, 17, no.6 (2010): 1065-1084

[69] Przeworski, *Democracy*, 10.

[70] Eric Schattschneider, *Party Government*. (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1942); Robert Dahl, *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1966); Julian Garritzman, "How Much Power do Oppositions Have? Comparing the Opportunity Structures of Parliamentary Oppositions in 21 Democracies", *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 23, no.1 (2017): 1-30.

[71] Garritzman, "How".

in democracies,[72] are critical to the achievement, performance, and stability of democracy.[73]

Despite the importance of competitive opposition for democracy, the literature does not pay due attention to this factor. In the absence of competitive political parties, the executive power remains unchecked. Political parties provide a bulwark against the despotism of an over-weening executive through the right of inquiry, censure and oversight.[74] More importantly, they allow democratic opposition to present a united front against undemocratic forces. Political parties organize large numbers of people behind a leader with a governing program and voice the concerns of ordinary people in governance.[75] By facilitating coordination and imposing discipline on members and individual leaders, political parties solve problems such as lack of coherence, limited mobilizational capacity, and being vulnerable to co-optation and the 'divide and rule' strategies of autocratic incumbents.[76] When opposition parties are weak, pro-democratic elites lack national-level infrastructures and are unable to establish strong ties within the society.[77] Hence, competitive political parties increase democratic forces' power to resist and overturn authoritarian encroachments during transitions. They do so by allowing the opposition to present a united front against the authoritarian rulers. They

[72] Scott Mainwaring, "Political Parties and Democratization in Brazil and the Southern Cone", *Comparative Politics* 21, no.1 (1988): 91-120.

[73] Steven Levitsky and Maxwell Cameron, "Democracy Without Parties? Political Parties and Regime Change in Fujimori's Peru", *Latin American Politics and Society* 45, no.3 (2003): 1-33.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Raymond Hinnebusch, "Political Parties in MENA: Their Functions and Development", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no.2 (2017): 159-175.

[76] Javier Corrales, "Strong Societies, Weak Parties: Regime Change in Cuba and Venezuela in the 1950s and Today", *Latin American Politics and Society*, 43 no.2 (2001): 81-114.

[77] Levitsky and Cameron, "Democracy".

also do so by presenting a credible alternative to the government in times of crisis, and thereby limiting the excesses of the government and encouraging negotiation and compromise.

Previous research underlined the weakness of political parties in the Middle East.[78] Hinnebusch argued that the Middle East suffers from a 'deficit of party competition associated with democracy'.[79] Seven years before the Uprisings, Langohr noted that this weakness was most prevalent in Egypt and Tunisia.[80] Electoral fraud, repression of opposition candidates, lack of media coverage, financial fragility, and the prevalence of independent candidacy were cited as causes of party weakness and lack of competition in the Middle East.[81] Some research, for instance, suggested that weakness of political parties was a significant factor accounting for the failure of democracy in Egypt.[82] Kirdis argued that incumbent parties in Egypt and Tunisia faced different external constraints shaping their actions during transitions.[83] While in Egypt, the FJP was unchallenged; Tunisian Ennahda faced formidable political opposition forcing it to be more open toward the demands of the political opposition.[84]

[78] Hinnebusch, "Political"; Langohr, "Too Much".

[79] Hinnebusch, "Political", 159.

[80] Langohr, "Too Much".

[81] Ibid.

[82] Hinnebusch, "Political".

[83] Kirdis, "Wolves".

[84] Ibid.

4.1. Egypt

"*In Egypt, there are two political parties: Ahly and Zamalek*" (two popular soccer teams in Egypt).[85] This joke in Egyptian politics provides good insight into the state of party politics in Egypt. Egyptian autocrats destroyed organized political parties in Egypt since 1952. Al-Wafd (Delegation) Party, the most popular political party of the 1930s was dissolved in 1952 after the coup of the Free Officers, as Gamal Abdel Nasser argued that a regime with multiple political parties bore the risk of harming the revolution. Thereafter, the Nasser regime strictly controlled candidate lists for the legislature censoring people who could threaten the rule of the Free Officers. In 1962, Nasser encouraged the foundation of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) that included different interest groups under its umbrella, which claimed to encourage the participation of the people in politics, an aim that has never materialized.[86] Anwar Sadat, the new leader of Egypt after Nasser's death in 1970, did not change the policy regarding political parties. Sadat split Nasser's ASU into three different platforms in 1976, and created the National Democratic Party (NDP) in 1978.[87] This move however did not empower political parties in Egypt. The newly founded parties were allowed to compete not for governing power but for the access to power.[88] The policy had hardly changed under Mubarak. Right before the Arab Uprisings, around 20 parties were registered in Egypt. These parties were handicapped both by the tight control imposed upon them by the state and by their own organizational deficiencies. Their relations with the regime heavily tainted

[85] Virginie Collombier, "Politics Without Parties: Political Change and Democracy Building in Egypt Before and After the Revolution", *EUI Working Papers MWP* 2013/ 35 (2013).

[86] Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *Mısır Tarihi: Arapların Fethinden Bugüne*, (İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2007).

[87] Collombier, "Politics"; Tarek Osman, *Egypt on the Brink: From Nasser to the Muslim Brotherhood*. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2013).

[88] Hinnebusch, "Political".

their image, making them illegitimate in the eyes of the citizenry to the extent that they were seen as actors playing roles in regime maintenance and durability.[89] Thus, when the protests erupted in January 2011, protesters on the Tahrir (Liberation) Square could not find any competitive political party to voice, defend, and advance their agenda against the ruling elite.

Some celebrated the Arab Uprisings as a leaderless social movement that was joined by the idealist youth.[90] However, this fact formed the soft belly of the protesters at Tahrir. When institutional politics started to gain pre-eminence over street politics, the loosely organized liberal/secular actors failed to form competitive political parties. Their agenda was not homogeneous, and many at Tahrir argued against the foundation of political parties. Only a few of the protesters understood that people needed leaders and institutions in order to exercise leverage over the political process.[91] This weakness of the liberal/secular actors in Egypt gave remnants of the old regime (foremost the army) the time to take counter-action. One major reason why the army pushed for parliamentary elections before the drafting of the constitution was its desire to leave little time for protesters to organize themselves into an organized political party. It was extensively documented how candidates from the Tahrir Square were not going to the polling stations to vote or how they forgot their identity cards that were required to vote.[92] Accordingly, it was no surprise that candidates representing youth coalitions born in the protests obtained no more than a single digit fraction of the vote and the seats in the 2011 elections.[93] The number of revolutionary youth who made

[89] Collombier, "Politics"; Holger Albrecht, "How Can Opposition Support Authoritarianism? Lessons from Egypt", *Democratization* 12, no.3 (2005), 378-397.

[90] Cambanis, *Once.*

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Kienle, "Egypt".

it to the parliament was only three in the 508-member parliament.[94] The MB organization however offered a striking contrast to the protesters of the Tahrir.

While political parties in Mubarak's Egypt were weak and considered illegitimate by the people, the MB was the only organization outside the NDP that had a real experience in institutional politics. Before the Uprisings, MB members ran for and were elected to the parliament. For instance, in 2005, MB-affiliated candidates won 20% of the parliamentary seats.[95] The MB also commanded the resources allowing their organizations to make their presence felt in different parts of the country. MB-affiliated hospitals, doctors, and charity organizations turned the MB into a recognizable and organized political actor for Egyptians.[96] Accordingly, in the 2011 parliamentary elections, it was no surprise that the MB erected tents at every polling station while the liberal/secular youth was fighting the police at Mohamed Mahmoud Street.

Rather than allying with liberal/secular actors that could threaten the institutional interests of the military in the long run, the SCAF decided to forge an alliance with the MB, and used it to demobilize the population.[97] The army and the MB, which were the only institutionalized actors in the absence of competitive opposition parties, condemned the 'anarchists' fighting on the streets, stopping the flow of the traffic at Tahrir Square, and disrupting the lives of Egyptians by refusing to go back to their homes.[98] The MB, the SCAF, and the members of the old NDP forced constitutional reforms in March 2011 despite the protesters' demand to completely overhaul the previous

[94] Cambanis, *Once.*

[95] Gelvin, *The Arab.*

[96] Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013).

[97] Stacher, "Fragmenting".

[98] Cambanis, *Once*.

constitution prior to parliamentary and presidential elections. The MB and other Islamists also opted for quick elections counting on their organization to win substantial shares of the votes.[99] The MB-affiliated FJP reneged on its promise not to contest for more than 35% of the parliamentary seats in the November 2011 elections, to dominate the constitutional assembly, or to run for the presidential seat.[100] As soon as the members of the legislature had taken their oaths, the MB sidelined everyone who opposed them. Islamists dominated every committee and excluded liberal/secular actors from active policy-making.[101] For instance, the newly elected MB president Mohamed Morsi called for a referendum on the constitution that was sanctioned by the Constituent Assembly dominated by Islamists.

Morsi's ruling style had estranged non-MB voters from him before he celebrated his first year in office.[102] The Tamarod movement, claiming that they had 22 million signatures demanding the resignation of Morsi, took it to the streets on June 30, 2013. Clashes between the supporters of the MB and the Tamarod continued for several days. Retrospectively speaking, it was Morsi's and the MB's continuing unwillingness to include other actors into political processes that would strengthen Tamarod, an organization with shady democratic credentials. The army used the clashes between the two camps and

[99] Stephan Roll, "Managing Change: How Egypt's Military Leadership Shaped the Transformation", *Mediterranean Politics* 21, no.1 (2016): 23-43.

[100] Landolt and Kubicek, "Opportunities".

[101] Cambanis, *Once.*

[102] The 2012 Egyptian constitution exemplifies the failure of political actors to build a pro-democracy coalition after 2011. The constitution came into force after a referendum with only a 32.9% turnout rate. It included aspects that contradicted with the demands of secular/liberal actors. Article 2 was citing Sharia as the main source of law. Article 195 was stating that the Minister of Defense would be from the army. Seven of the fifteen members of the Higher Defense Council, which has the authority to control the army budget and to review the laws affecting the army, would be from the army, too. Article 198 stated that military courts could judge civilians accused of crimes against army members. See Szmolka, "Political".

exploited the fears of liberal/secular actors to stage a coup against Morsi in July 2013, thus ending Egypt's short experiment with democracy. Egypt, by the late 2014, was under a more repressive regime than in the pre-2011 period.[103] The Egyptian case therefore testifies that democracy is not the only possible outcome of transitions. It shows how established actors with a stake in authoritarianism might reverse a democratization process in the absence a competitive opposition party.

4.2. Tunisia

Unlike in Egypt, in Tunisia competitive political parties presented viable alternatives against each other. In pre-2011 Tunisia, competitive party politics did not exist. Political opposition was reduced to a facade first by Bourguiba (1959-1987) and then by Ben Ali (1987-2011).[104] Bourguiba banned all political opposition between 1959 and 1981, while during his reign, Ben Ali only encouraged political parties that would serve as loyal opposition to the CDR. Between 1990 and 2010, nominal opposition parties were granted a fixed quota of seats, however they were unable and unwilling to compete with the CDR.[105] In the first elections under Ben Ali, Gannouchi's Islamist Renaissance Party (MTI) was not allowed to enter the elections. When the MTI members ran as independents, they won 14.5% of the votes after which the MTI was forbidden to participate in elections, and its members were subjected to severe pressure.[106] The MTI was then closed down in 1992.

The Ben Ali regime envisaged the CDR as the main institution that would reconcile different views in Tunisian society, and his regime

[103] Roll, "Managing".

[104] Boubakri, "Inclusiveness".

[105] Miller et al., *Democratization*.

[106] Langohr, "Too Much".

did not allow other parties to challenge its hegemony. Hence, Tunisians, who were alienated from the regime and the CDR, were not able to identify with a political party when the Uprisings started. The first major poll after January 2011 showed that only half of the Tunisians could name any political party. Five months after the protests, another poll demonstrated that only a quarter of Tunisians said that they had sufficient knowledge about Tunisian political parties.[107] This situation changed after the establishment of several important political parties. The interim government passed a decree on political parties (Decree 87-2011) and on associations (Decree 88-2011). This new legal framework and scheduled elections resulted with a party system characterized by pluralism and competition.[108]

Two main ideologies vied for power in Tunisia after 2011. One was Islamism represented by Ghannouchi's Ennahda. The other was secularism represented by Beji Caid Essebsi and his party after 2012. Essebsi served the regime in the past, but had a reputation as someone who tried to limit the Ben Ali regime in its excesses.[109] Essebsi's reputation as a moderate figure was the main reason behind his appointment as the prime minister of the interim government between February and December, 2011. During his term as the head of the interim government, he dissolved the CDR, dismissed officials that were affiliated with the old regime, seized the assets of more than one hundred members of the Ben Ali-Trabelsi (Ben Ali's wife's clan) clan, which monopolized the economy in the past.[110] Essebsi also established a 170-members strong High Commission for the Realization of Revolutionary Goals, a committee that was envisaged as an inclusive forum to ensure that the country moved forward in implementing

[107] Ibid.

[108] Szmolka, "Political".

[109] Gelvin, *The Arab*.

[110] Ibid.

the demands of the protesters.[111] Therefore, when he resigned from his post and founded the secular Nida Tounes in 2012, his party provided the people with a credible option where seculars and liberals could find a representation of their interests.

Political parties' willingness[112] to form alliances with each other was present throughout the Tunisian transition to democracy.[113] In the first elections for assembly in October 2011, Ennahda garnered around 37% of the votes and so gained 89 of the 217 seats. A coalition government was formed by Ennahda, the secular CPR, and the secular-leftist Democratic Forum for Labour & Liberties. As the largest party in Tunisia, Ennahda could try to push for Islamization of the constitution. Instead, Ennahda showed pragmatism and willingness to work with other political actors that was contrary to the expectations of secular intellectuals.[114] In August 2012, Ghannouchi removed one item of conflict by explicitly rejecting the adoption of Sharia law.[115] He stated that Ennahda would uphold Tunisian laws on women's rights (most progressive rights in the Arab world), and accepted the requirement that electoral lists feature male and female candidates in alternating slots. Another example demonstrating Ennahda's pragmatism was the September 2013 agreement between Ennahda and opposition parties after jihadists assassinated left-wing

[111] Landolt and Kubicek, "Opportunities".

[112] A major factor making this possible in the Tunisian case is the presence of a strong and independent trade union that remained influential despite restrictions imposed by Ben Ali. The UGTT continued providing channels of communication between Ennahda and Essebsi's Nida Tounes when it became clear that negotiations over a new constitution had reached an impasse. See Gelvin, *The Arab*; Kienle, "Egypt".

[113] Gelvin, *The Arab*; Landolt and Kubicek, "Opportunities"; Szmolka, "Political"; Kienle, "Egypt".

[114] Lutfi Maktuf, *Tunus'u Kurtarmak: Çalınan Arap Baharı*, (İstanbul, Modus Kitap, 2013).

[115] Landolt and Kubicek, "Opportunities".

secular leaders Belaid and Brahmi, and thousands protested the Ennahda-led government in response. With this agreement, Ennahda accepted a roadmap including resignation from the government, the formation of the non-partisan transitional government, adoption of the constitution, a new electoral law, and the prompt holding of presidential and legislative elections. A couple of months later in January 2014, Tunisia's parliament approved a technocratic caretaker government, which remained in power until November 2014.[116]

The presence of a competitive opposition was a major reason behind the compromising attitude of Ennahda, as Essebsi's Nida Tounes, which was established in April 2012, was a credible alternative to their rule. After its foundation, Nida Tounes became the major stronghold of liberal/secular actors in Tunisia. When one considers that in the previous October 2011 elections, the largest secular party garnered only 8.7% of the votes, the importance of Nida Tounes becomes more obvious. Nida Tounes was a party, which aimed at forming an all-secular coalition.[117] The presence of this party as another power hub and a competitive alternative for the government forced Ennahda to be more open to compromise and negotiation.

In the October 2014 parliamentary elections, Nida Tounes proved its credentials. It garnered 37.6% of the votes to be followed by Ennahda with 27.8% of the votes. The third party was the secular Free Patriotic Union with 4.1% of the votes. Contrary to the expectations,[118] Nida Tounes chose to form a unity government including members from the rivaling Ennahda and other opposition parties.[119] Therefore, in Tunisia, competitive opposition parties were much more powerful than opposition parties in Egypt forcing first the Islamist Ennahda

[116] Szmolka, "Political".

[117] Wolf, "Power".

[118] Ibid.

[119] Al Jazeera, "Tunisia".

and then the secular Nida Tounes to re-evaluate their positions, and negotiate with their rivals rather than excluding them from the process.

5. Conclusion

Overthrowing dictators does not guarantee democratization. Although dictatorships collapsed in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen during the revolts, it was only in Tunisia where democracy has survived. This article focused on two specific factors influencing the outcomes in Egypt and Tunisia after their dictators were overthrown. Egyptian and Tunisian experiences suggest that the electoral system choice and the presence of competitive opposition parties are important factors in determining the difference between failed and successful transitions, as the nature of these factors compel otherwise uncompromising actors to cooperate and compromise with other actors. These cases therefore bear important lessons for students of democracy.

Democracy survives when institutions protect a certain degree of uncertainty about who would get elected and which policies would be implemented.[120] Electoral systems in democracies should guarantee that no actor singlehandedly dominates politics, and opposition parties should be in a position to successfully challenge and threaten the power of strong political actors. The examination of Egypt and Tunisia between 2011 and 2015 revealed that Egyptian electoral system enabled stronger actors to sideline opposition actors and disregard the demands of them. In the absence of competitive political parties in Egypt, the combination was deadly for democracy. The SCAF, which exploited the fears of liberal/secular actors who could not voice their demands through institutional channels, staged a coup against Morsi thus putting an end to the democratic experiment in Egypt. In Tunisia, however, the electoral system based on PR guaranteed that stronger political actors would not dominate Tunisian

[120] Schmitter and Karl, "What".

politics. This factor combined with the presence of competitive political parties both on the Islamist and the secular camps fostered political uncertainty for both camps, and forced them to negotiate and compromise after the elections.

The Tunisian 'miracle' continues to surprise pundits, as Tunisia held its third general elections successfully in 2019. These elections witnessed the rise of another alternative to Ennahda after Nida Tounes lost its once-strong position following the death of Essebsi in July 2019. Despite Ennahda's electoral victory in the 2019 elections with 19.6% of the votes, the newly founded Qalb Tounes (Heart of Tunisia) came second with 14.6% of the votes. What is more, another coalition government that included political parties from different ends of the political spectrum was formed. This is not to say that democracy is perfectly consolidated in Tunisia as corruption, issues related to gender inequality, and persisting economic problems still occupy the country's agenda.[121] More importantly, in July 2021, Tunisian President Kais Saied suspended the parliament and assumed executive authority making the future of democracy more uncertain in the country. Nevertheless, Tunisia remains the most important candidate country for the consolidation of democracy in a region that is besieged by civil war (e.g. in Libya, Yemen, and Syria), military coups (e.g. Egypt, Turkey), incumbent takeover of democracy and apartheid-like regimes (i.e. Israel).

[121] Freedom House. *Freedom in the World 2021: Tunisia*. Retrieved from https://freedomhouse.org/country/tunisia/freedom-world/2021

Bibliography

Albrecht, Holger, "How Can Opposition Support Authoritarianism? Lessons from Egypt", *Democratization* 12, no.3 (2005), 378-397.

Baranzy Zoltan, "Comparing Arab revolts: the Role of Military". *Journal of Democracy* 22, no.4 (2011): 24-35

Beinin, Joel, Workers and Thieves: Labor Movements and Popular Uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2016).

Boubakri, Amor, "Inclusiveness Policies in the Transitional Elections in Tunisia", In Raul Cordenillo (eds.) *Improving Electoral Practices: Case Studies and Practical Approaches* (pp. 141-161). (Stockholm, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2015).

Burnell, Peter and André Gerrits, "Promoting Party Politics in Emerging Democracies", Democratization, 17, no.6 (2010): 1065-1084

Cambanis, Thanassis, *Once Upon a Revolution: An Egyptian Story*. New York, Simon & Schuster, 2015.

Carey, John, "Electoral Formula and Tunisian Constituent Assembly", Accessed on May 3, 2021, http://sites.dartmouth.edu/jcarey/files/2013/02/Tunisia-Electoral-Formula-Carey-May-2013-reduced.pdf

Carey, John M., Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds, "Institutions as Causes and Effects: North African Electoral Systems During the Arab Spring", *HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series RWP16-042* (2015).

Collombier, Virginie, "Politics Without Parties: Political Change and Democracy Building in Egypt Before and After the Revolution", *EUI Working Papers MWP* 2013/ 35 (2013).

Corrales, Javier, "Strong Societies, Weak Parties: Regime Change in Cuba and Venezuela in the 1950s and Today", *Latin American Politics and Society*, 43 no.2 (2001): 81-114.

Dahl, Robert, *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1966)

Dawoud, Khaled, "Egypt's Elections Law: A Setback for Democracy", *Atlantic Council*, Accessed December 10, 2020, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/egypt-s-parliamentary-elections-law-a-setback-for-democracy.

Democracy Reporting International, *Assessment of the Electoral Framework: The Arab Republic of Egypt*. Accessed May 3, 2021, http://democracy-reporting.org/files/dri_egypt.pdf

Esen, Berk and Sebnem Gumuscu, "Rising Competitive Authoritarianism in Turkey", *Third World Quarterly*, 37, no.9 (2013): 1581-1606.

Faris, David, "Constituting Institutions: Electoral System in Egypt", *Middle East Policy* 19, no.1 (2012): 140-154.

Freedom House. *Nations in Transit: the Anti-democratic Turn*. Accessed May13, 2021, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/NIT_2021_final_042321.pdf

Freedom House. *Freedom in the World 2021: Tunisia*. Retrieved from https://freedomhouse.org/country/tunisia/freedom-world/2021

Gallagher, Michael, "Proportionality, Disproportionality, and Electoral Systems", *Electoral Studies* 10, no.1 (1991): 33-51.

Garritzman, Julian, "How Much Power do Oppositions Have? Comparing the Opportunity Structures of Parliamentary Oppositions in 21 Democracies", *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 23, no.1 (2017): 1-30.

Gelvin, James, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015).

Gumuscu, Sebnem, "The Emerging Predominant Party System in Turkey", *Government and Opposition* 48, no.2 (2013): 223-244.

Hinnebusch, Raymond, "Political Parties in MENA: Their Functions and Development", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no.2 (2017): 159-175.

Ishiyama, John, Comparative Politics: Principles of Democracy and Democratization. (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2012).

Kienle, Eberhard. "Egypt without Mubarak, Tunisia after Bin Ali: Theory, History, and the 'Arab Spring'". *Economy and Society* 41, no.4 (2012): 532-557.

Kirdis, Esen, "Wolves in Sheep Clothing or Victims of Times? Discussing the Immoderation of Incumbent Islamic Parties in Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia", *Democratization* 25, no.5 (2018): 901-918.

Landolt, Laura, and Paul Kubicek, "Opportunities and Constraints: Comparing Tunisia and Egypt to the Colored Revolutions", *Democratization* 21, no.6 (2014): 984-1006.

Langohr, Vickie, "Too Much Civil Society, Too Little Politics: Egypt and Liberalizing Arab Regimes", *Comparative Politics* 36, no.2 (2004): 181-204.

Levitsky, Steven and Maxwell Cameron, "Democracy Without Parties? Political Parties and Regime Change in Fujimori's Peru", *Latin American Politics and Society* 45, no.3 (2003): 1-33.

Lewis, Arthur, *Politics in West Africa*. (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1965)

Lijphart, Arend, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974)

Lijphart, Arend, Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in 36 Countries. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999)

Mainwaring, Scott, "Political Parties and Democratization in Brazil and the Southern Cone", *Comparative Politics* 21, no.1 (1988): 91-120.

Marsot, Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid *Mısır Tarihi: Arapların Fethinden Bugüne*, (İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2007).

Maktuf, Lutfi, *Tunus'u Kurtarmak: Çalınan Arap Baharı*, (İstanbul, Modus Kitap, 2013)

Miller, Laurel, Jeffrey Martini, Stephen Larrabee, Angel Rabasa, Stephanie Pezard, Julie Taylor, and Tewodaj Mengistu, *Democratization in the Arab World: Prospects and Lessons from Around the Globe*. (Santa Monica, RAND Corporation, 2012).

Morsy, Ahmed, "Individuals before Parties in Egypt's Elections", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* Accessed April 22, 2021, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/?fa=56157.

Morsy. Ahmed, "The Egyptian Parliamentary Elections 101". *Middle East Institute*, Accessed December 9, 2020, http://www.mei.edu/content/article/egyptian-parliamentary-elections-101

Norris, Pippa, "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian, and Mixed Systems", *International Political Science Review* 18, no.3 (1997): 297-312

Norris, Pippa, *Driving Democracy: Do Power-Sharing Institutions Work*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Osman, Tarek, *Egypt on the Brink: From Nasser to the Muslim Brotherhood*. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2013).

Pettitt, Robin, *Contemporary Party Politics*, (Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

Przeworski, Adam, Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991)..

Reilly, Benjamin, Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Roll, Stephan "Managing Change: How Egypt's Military Leadership Shaped the Transformation", *Mediterranean Politics* 21, no.1 (2016): 23-43.

Schattschneider, Eric, *Party Government*. (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1942)

Schmitter, Philippe, and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy is… And is not", *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 3 (1991): 75-88.

Shin, Jae Hyeok, "The Choice of Electoral Systems in New Democracies: A Case Study of South Korea in 1988", *Democratization* 18, no.6 (2011): 1246-1269.

Stacher, Joshua, "Fragmenting States, New Regimes: Militarized State Violence and Transition in the Middle East", *Democratization* 22, no.2 (2015): 259-275.

Szmolka, Inmaculada. *The Fifth Wave of Democratization? Processes of Political Change in the Arab World from a Comparative Perspective*. Accessed February 19, 2021, http://paperroom.ipsa.org/papers/paper_8229.pdf

Szmolka, Inmaculada, "Political Change in North Africa and the Arab Middle East: Constitutional Reforms and Electoral Processes", *Arab Studies Quarterly* 36, no.2 (2014): 128-148.

Tavana, Daniel, *Consensus after Conflict: Electoral System Choice in Revolutionary Egypt*. Accessed on June 13, 2021, https://www.innovations.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/2296222.pdf

The Carter Center, *Final Report of the Carter Center Mission to Witness the 2011–2012 Parliamentary Elections in Egypt*. Accessed on March 5, 2021, http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/egypt-2011-2012-final-rpt.pdf

Trager, Eric, *Egypt's New Elections Laws: Another Democratic Setback*. Accessed on March 7, 2021, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/egypts-new-elections-laws-another-democratic-setback.

UNDP, Arab Human Development Report: *Towards Freedom in the Arab World*, Accessed March 20, 2021, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/rbas_ahdr2004_en.pdf

Wickham, Carrie Rosefsky, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement*. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013).

Wolf, Anne, "Power Shift in Tunisia: Electoral Success of Secular Parties Might Deepen Polarization", *SWP Comments* 54, Accessed April 17, 2021, http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2014C54_wolf.pdf.