Drew University
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A Labor of Love:
The Impact of Union Strength on Democratic Consolidation
in Post-Arab Spring Egypt and Tunisia

A Thesis in International Relations

by

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Abstract:

Given the widespread concern, both in the region and globally, surrounding democratic consolidation in the wake of the Arab Spring, how and why countries democratize is a critical topic to understand. This thesis seeks to answer the question: "After the Arab Spring, why did Tunisia successfully transition to greater democracy, while Egypt experienced a counterrevolution and regressed into an even more autocratic state?" I hypothesize that Tunisia's substantially higher union strength, evidenced by its history total unionization rate, and foreign influence contributed significantly to its relatively successful democratic consolidation beginning in 2011. In contrast, Egypt's lack of a strong history of union independence and engagement contributed significantly to the counterrevolution in July 2013, despite early signs of success in the immediate aftermath of the January 2011 revolution. In order to test my hypothesis, I adopt a most similar systems model in an effort to isolate union strength as the variable I am examining. The data presented supports my argument. Ultimately, my findings demonstrate the importance of an independent, robust, and unifying force in civil society, in the form of labor unions, as the key agent in the rise of democracy in Tunisia, and the lack of such a force in Egypt as the primary cause of its failed revolution. Finally, I argue that the different experiences of these two countries can serve as a bellwether when looking at other countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

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This project is dedicated to Mohamed Bouazizi, and to the scores of Tunisians, Egyptians, and beyond who sacrificed their lives and livelihoods in the pursuit of life, liberty, and democracy. Without their dedication to what is right, our world would be a much worse place.

I. Introduction

On December 10, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi, a Tunisian fruit vendor, set himself on fire in front of a government building in Sidi Bouzid, following the confiscation of his wares and public humiliation by a municipal employee loyal to the Ben Ali regime in a defiant act of protest. His act of self-immolation, captured on shaky cell phone cameras, ignited a region-wide conflict that was conveyed instantly across the world by cable news outlets, such as Al-Jazeera and CNN, social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, and by word of mouth. Inspired by the actions of their Tunisian counterparts, on January 25, 2011, Egyptians rallied in Cairo's Tahrir Square in solidarity and to demand political freedom and economic opportunity. Following bloody and sustained protests in both countries by combinations of students, Islamists, women, and the middle and working classes, both Tunisia's and Egypt's long-ruling autocrats were ousted. Soon thereafter, Tunisia and Egypt held truly democratic elections for the first time in their histories. However, since those elections, the fortunes of the democratic movements in the two countries have been quite different.

While the international community now recognizes Tunisia as the only country which has successfully begun implementing democracy following the Arab Spring, Egyptians faced a bloody return to authoritarianism. In July 2013, Mohammed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood-supported and first democratically-elected President of Egypt, was ousted amid widespread discontent and military pressure. Following Morsi's ouster, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the Minister of Defense appointed by Morsi, led a military coup and assumed power. Democracy receded quickly, especially after a brutal

crackdown on supporters of Morsi at the Rabaa al-Adawiya Mosque on August 14, 2013, where at least 1,000 people were killed. The Arab Spring, which had awed the entire world, suddenly turned into an Arab Winter.

This dramatic turn of events left many in academia and in the broader world questioning: How can two countries, with similar education, income, and development levels, which experienced uprisings at roughly the same time, and which had comparable colonial histories, see such different political outcomes? I seek to answer the question of why Tunisia successfully transitioned to greater democracy, while Egypt experienced a democratic retreat and regressed back to an even darker military authoritarianism. Ultimately, I argue that the existence of a stronger and more independent labor union movement in Tunisia played a pivotal role in the comparative success of Tunisia's transition to democracy compared to Egypt's experience.

II. Literature Review

Theory on democratic consolidation, particularly in the Arab Spring context, sits at the intersection of revolution[1] and democratization studies. My literature review and thesis address consolidation; however, I first briefly discuss the forces which lead to democratization, because it proves important to the focus of my work on democratic consolidation. Democratization refers to the transition in the political system of a country

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[1]Some academics question whether the Arab Spring uprisings constituted a true "revolution." Because the examination of a revolution requires a discussion surrounding counter-revolutions, it goes beyond the scope of this thesis, where Egypt's "counterrevolution" is merely a product of the consolidation process, and not the impetus. Because the nature of the events following continue to change, it engenders scholars to think about the effects in an evolutionary way. This thesis does not examine whether the Arab Spring constituted a revolution or a social movement; rather, it will use these concepts to inform it.

from authoritarianism to genuinely independent and participatory democratic institutions. Scholars of revolution argue that some combination of relative economic and social deprivation, such as the J-curve (Davies 1962, 9), the influence of hope, structural cohesiveness, a politically altering tipping point (Gurr 1973, 364), and a series of demands followed by strengthened organizational capacity (Tilly 1978) ignite uprisings. Many scholars underscore the importance of coalition-based revolutions (Goldstone 2011, 141; Beissinger, Jamal, and Mazur 2015, 3), with some emphasizing the importance of cross-class coalitions, most notably Theda Skocpol (1979, 9). While these factors inform what many look for in the post-revolutionary landscape, they insufficiently explain what drives consolidation.

Democratic consolidation involves the forces which move a society from an authoritarian state toward a democratic one, including the development of democratic institutions, the institution of the rule of law, and the pursuit of democratic norms. Some scholars understand democratic consolidation primarily as a function of timing, with an emphasis on outside factors which allow democratic proliferation through a "demonstration effect" (Huntington 1991, 99-101; Gillespie and Whitehead 2002, 192; Hagopian and Mainwaring 2005, 11). Beyond a demonstration effect, others maintain economic and political attitudes shift at varying speeds. This shift encourages countries which previously lacked a history of democracy to transition toward such a system, albeit with roadblocks (Huntington 1991, 209; Diamond 1999, 106; Gillespie and Whitehead 2002, 201; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, 22; Heo and Hahm 2014, 923). Exploring

what Lingling Qi and Doh Chull Shin (2011, 256) call "critical democrats"[2] proves

necessary for my argument. They argue that democratic deprivation directly triggers

citizen participation, as they have experienced a democratic deficit. The role of critical

democrats is woven throughout the literature on democratic consolidation. The following

review explores how these two forces played out in terms of the events post-Arab Spring.

However, before continuing this discussion, I first need to address an alternate

explanation for the relative successes and failures in the post-Arab Spring landscape -

Islamism.

What Role Does Political Islam Play?

Much of the academic discourse which attempts to explain the differing rates of

success of the post-Arab Spring consolidation process focuses on Islamism, otherwise

known as political Islam, in both Egypt and Tunisia. This section discusses political

Islam, both broadly and in Tunisia and Egypt specifically, and lays the groundwork for

why I believe the differences in Tunisian and Egyptian Islamist parties do not account for

each country's different trajectory.

Generally, political Islam appeals to socially conservative protest voters who

detest the repressive nature of autocratic and typically secular regimes, those who are

considered the "losers" in globalization, and those who seek to achieve unity of the state

and religion (Beinin 2005, 112; Brynen, et al. 2012; Kassem 2013, 67; Bonino 2016, 2).

Though political Islam has a long history, two important aspects of modern political

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[2]Qi and Shin (2011, 246) define critical democrats as those "who are committed to democracy-in-principle and respond critically to deficiencies revealed by democracy-in-practice." In effect, critical democrats are those committed to the ideals of democracy, and intend on counteracting those who wish to exploit it for their own gain.

Islam inform this thesis. The first relates to the theory of "twin toleration," which explains the tension existing between secularism and Islamism. Alfred Stepan (2012, 91) describes the "twin toleration" as the feelings the secular state has toward religious citizens and vice versa. This theory reconciles the ideological disagreements between secularists and Islamists by attempting to show how the state and religion can work together to further constituent interests. Stepan (2012, 96) further argues that fostering a stronger "twin toleration" leads to increased understanding of a country's diverse groups, and strengthens the democratic institutions which create the environment for religious expression. Ultimately, Stepan (2000) argues, religion and democracy are quite compatible, and only serve as obstacles when institutionalized intolerance exists.

The second point of interest is the repression-adaptation nexus.[3] In many Middle Eastern authoritarian regimes, particularly those born out of anti-colonial secular waves, the state bans political Islam and regulates mosques (Brynen, et al., 2012). Jillian Schwedler (2017, 8) and Khalil al-Anani (2017, 5) examine this phenomenon through two lenses: institutional access and how these groups are perceived as a result of their exclusion. Both Schwedler (2017, 8) and al-Anani (2017, 4) underscore how these two interlocking factors of exclusion and generalization prevent the rise of political Islam. They note that the exclusion of moderate Islamists actually makes Islamist groups *less* likely to compromise with the secular state, thereby increasing the chance for radicalization. Marc Lynch (2017) further argues that "lumping" these groups together make the more dangerous Islamist entities more likely to respond with violence. In sum,

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[3]al-Anani (2017, 4) explains the repression-adaptation nexus as the tipping point in which a repressed group (namely, Islamists) work to dissent against repression, and cause the state to adapt.

political Islam can and did play a critical role in the democratization process in both the aborted consolidation case in Egypt and and the successful one in Tunisia. However, this theory of the potency of political Islam begs the question: If this is the preeminent argument, what explains the differences in outcomes in both Egypt and Tunisia?

This question, in turn, leads to an argument raised twenty years before the Arab Spring by Samuel Huntington (1991, 309). He expressed concern about the political capacity and abilities of Islamist parties, whether the more mainstream parties would accept them, and whether Islamist parties simply act as a backlash against secular regimes. Huntington (1991, 309) considers capacity in terms of the means of implementing policy platforms. A gap in the literature exists here in regards to Islamist parties: Do Islamist parties fail because they are Islamist parties, or do they fail because an overwhelming majority of political parties fail in new democracies? This question will be explored more fully later. Ultimately, Islamist parties are simply vessels of mass motivation (Beinin 2005, 112; Brynen, et al. 2012; Kassem 2013, 17; Bonino 2016, 48), and ineffective ones at that.

Overall, the literature indicates that Islamist parties failed to play a major role in either country's move toward democracy. I align myself with scholars who argue that it was the role of organized labor, as the preeminent and distinctive democratic force in Tunisia, which advanced the consolidation of democracy in that country.

The Consolidation Actors

Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder (2007, 6) note the "sequence" of

democratization plays a critical role in its success, as the sequential development of

institutions allows for them to form in a more effective way. However, a new theory of

sequence emerged to explain the success of the Tunisian consolidation process and the

failure of the Egyptian one in contrast to Mansfield and Snyder's model: the theory of

critical junctures, proposed by Jamal and Kensicki (2016). They argue that the process

matters much less than what happens at each step, and explain that each state's "unique

political culture" produces a critical juncture. This conception of a critical juncture

dovetails with a theory articulated by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996, 6; 15) who note

three caveats to democratic consolidation: (1) transitions may actually never be

completed; (2) not all democratic transitions follow the same model; and (3) democracies

can break down. Huntington (1991, 101) explains this breakdown (or build-up) via the

snowballing effect. He (1991, 101-4) underscores three reasons why snowballing occurs:

(1) tremendous expansion in global communications; (2) geographic and cultural

proximity; and (3) democratic waves, or a rapid series of democratization movements

worldwide. As a result, the more "critical junctures" which exist during the democratic

process present more openings for failure. Overall, political culture and attitudes[4] play a

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[4]The literature surrounding political culture is immensely detailed. Though this thesis does not discuss political culture and attitudes in depth, it would be remiss to not include them at all. For reference, see the debate between Welzel, Inglehart (2003, 2006, 2010), and Diamond (1999), who hypothesize the importance of trust and personal attitudes, and Muller and Seligson (1994), who defend civic culture, on what drives a robust political culture. However, all can agree on the importance of critical citizens, as postulated by Norris (1999). Ultimately, trust in government is pivotal for democratic consolidation to occur (Huntington 1991; Rose, Shin, and Munro 1999; Geissel 2008). For the purposes of this thesis, consider it a given that trust in government and a robust political culture driven by trust are imperative to democratic transitions.

large role in democratic staying power (Huntington 1991, 258). The processes informing consolidation impacts the entirety of the argument below.

The Role of Labor Unions

When evaluating these three factors, the role of unions in the democratic consolidation process proves important because unions keep various groups together. In Tunisia and Egypt, many groups played a role in the attempt to establish democracy with varying success. Ideally, as Geoffrey Wood (2004, 34) writes, "[labor] unions are characterized by vibrant and internal debate," and perform outreach to broad constituencies. Union outreach stems from many factors. Ian Roper (2004, 76) explains the most important one, noting "links between unions and their local communities are prevalent." The role of the union in a community cannot be understated.[5] I refer to this trend of representing a wide swath of constituencies as serving as an "aggregation and articulation" function. "Aggregation" refers to labor groups collecting the beliefs of a wide mix of the rank-and-file, and "articulation" refers to distilling those complicated and often conflicting views into one message. After this distillation occurs, opinions are argued in the public political arena, providing power to many who would otherwise not have it individually. Labor unions also play an important role in building cross-class coalitions by aggregating distinct interests, in this case from cross-class coalitions, and by speaking truth to power; this trend is quite prevalent in the case of Tunisia.

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[5] While Islamist groups such as Hezbollah and the Muslim Brotherhood also seek to create links to the community, they oftentimes do so through handouts and other social services, while union groups seek to provide long-term economic opportunity.

Labor unions, and their interactions with society more generally, are the focus of this thesis. I make this argument because, as Samuel Valenzuela (1989, 450) writes, high labor mobilization at critical junctures creates a perfect opportunity in terms of labor's ability to support the transition. Mobilization at critical junctures leads directly into political culture, which shapes democracy. However, this emphasis on unions and the working class leading democratic consolidation efforts contrasts with more traditional schools of thought regarding these movements.

Who Leads the Transition to Democracy?

Many argue the middle class leads the charge for democracy. Barrington Moore (1966) famously summarized the seminal thesis of his book *Social Origins of Dictatorships and Democracy* as "no bourgeoisie, no democracy." Moore suggests five conditions for the rise of democracy: (1) the development of a political balance to avoid a too strong aristocracy; (2) a shift from sustenance to commercial agriculture; (3) a weakening of the landed aristocracy; (4) the prevention of an aristocratic-bourgeois coalition against the working class; and, (5) a revolutionary break with the past. Francis Fukuyama (2014) echoes the importance of the middle class in the transition process.

The literature also emphasizes the role of elites. Dankwart Rustow (1970, 345) and Samuel Huntington (1991, 165) underscore that, without buy-in from elites, democratic norms will not develop. Larry Diamond (1999, 172) argues that while mass and civic culture and "global" political attitudes are important, elites participating in political culture furthers democratic aims. In sum, Acemoglu and Robinson (2006, 116)

note natural tension exists between the elites and non-elites, and without elites acquiescing to democratic impulses, the balance will tip toward the elites' natural instinct: fascism.

However, both viewpoints (that of the role of the middle class and the role of the elites in leading the transition to democracy), excluding the prevention of a landed aristocracy and bourgeoisie alliance, have been disputed by a number of authors, most notably Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyn Huber Rueschemeyer, and John D. Stephens (1992). They underscore that the urban working classes are the most frequent proponents of democratic expansion, and that capitalism strengthens the working and middle classes, while weakening the landed classes, because the urban working class works to correct the balance of power between the middle and upper classes. Subsequent sections will further buttress this perspective.

III. The Most Similar Systems Model

Before examining the question of the role of labor unions in the democratic consolidation process in Egypt and Tunisia, understanding the similarities and differences between both countries provides needed context. Since Egypt and Tunisia are the most similar Arab Spring cases, I employ a "most similar systems" design.[6] First, as outlined by Figures One and Two, their development indicators at the time of the uprisings were similar, and second, their political histories follow similar trajectories.

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[6] The "most similar systems" design, or Mill's Method of Difference, "compares very similar cases which only differ in the dependent variable, on the assumption that this would make it easier to find those independent variables which explain the presence/absence of the dependent variable" (Anckar 2008, 392).

Figure One: Development Indicators: Tunisia and Egypt
(2012)

	Egypt	Tunisia
Date Dictator Deposed	1/14/11	2/11/11
Economic Indicators		
GDP Per Capita	$10,252.50	$10,601.00
Adjusted Net National Income Per Capita (Current US$)	$2,200.81	$3,068.80
Total Natural Resources Rents (% of GDP)*	10.8	6.9
Youth Unemployment	35.8%	38.5%
Social Indicators		
Life Expectancy (in years)	70.7	74.7
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	22.5	13.6
Adult Literacy Rate	73.9%	80.2%

Sources: World Development Indicators, 2018

*This indicates the low level of GDP reliance on natural resource rents compared to other countries in the region

As Figure One shows, Egypt and Tunisia have comparable economies. The service, tourism, and manufacturing sectors dominate economic life, and both countries derive relatively little income from natural resource rents. This similarity, coupled with the adjusted net national income per capita, shows that Tunisians and Egyptians have roughly the same income levels, situating them similarly in terms of middle class size. The World Bank (2017) classified both as middle income countries, and ranked them 95th and 102nd (2012) when assessing adjusted net national income per capita.

As mentioned above, Tunisia and Egypt have comparable natural resource rents. The role of natural resource rents in empowering autocratic governments to silence dissent is apparent when looking at other countries in the region[7] (Bank, Richter, and Sunik 2014, 166).[8] While both Egypt (petroleum) and Tunisia (phosphates) exploit their

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[7]For example, neither Saudi Arabia, which derived 47.6% of its GDP from natural resources rents in 2012, nor Kuwait, which gleaned 60.6% (WDI 2017), saw any meaningful reforms or widespread protests.

[8]Scholars including S. Mansood Murshed (2004, 11) and Kjetil Bjorvatn and Mohammad Reza Farzanegan (2015, 35) argue that natural resource rents lend themselves to democratic deprivation because governments with high rents can buy-off citizens through extravagant social welfare policies. In Egypt and Tunisia, social welfare spending dropping precipitously before the Arab Spring uprisings.

natural resources, World Bank (2017) data indicates that neither industry played an outsized role in either country's economy immediately before, during, or after the uprisings. Finally, Egypt and Tunisia had nearly identical youth unemployment levels.[9]

Though the two countries have many economic similarities, three important differences exist. First, although Egypt and Tunisia have a comparable reliance on natural resource rents, Tunisia historically relied on phosphate more than Egypt has relied on petroleum to attract foreign currency (OECD 2017, 2). During the Arab Spring, however, union unrest disrupted phosphate mining. Since the Arab Spring, the end of the Great Recession, and after European countries lifted their travel advisories to Tunisia, agriculture and tourism have rebounded and attracted an influx of foreign currency. Second, agricultural production differs dramatically in Egypt and Tunisia. In Egypt, which has little fertile land beyond a narrow band along the Nile and its Delta, sixty percent of agriculture is dedicated to cereals such as wheat, while the remaining forty percent is split between oil crops, fruit, vegetables, and other crops (Santos and Ceccacci 2015, 24). Tunisia, in contrast, relies much more heavily on oil crops, particularly olives, though its farmers also grow a fair amount of cereals. These agricultural production differences underscore where different sectors of labor are concentrated, even though agricultural workers did not play a major role in either uprising. Third, as will be discussed shortly, Egypt and Tunisia differ dramatically in terms of their landmass size. Predictably, this size differential impacts their population's response to political events and how each government governs.

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[9]Many scholars (Honwana 2011; LaGraffe 2012, 68) attribute youth anger to sparking the Arab Spring uprisings, and they subsequently played an oversized role in the transition to democracy. I use this indicator because many use it as a waterline in determining the success of the Arab Spring protests in terms of overthrowing the governments.

Figure One also examines social indicators, which underscore the quality of life in both Egypt and Tunisia. Regarding vaccination and local healthcare access, Egypt and Tunisia are effectively the same in terms of public health availability (Saleh, et. al. 2014, 638; Mokdad, et al. 2014, 315), indicated by their life expectancy and infant mortality rates. The regimes in both Tunisia and Egypt valued robust public health programs. Moreover, their adult literacy rates, indicating a fairly well-educated population, are comparable as a result of prior governments' long-term emphasis on education (Beissinger, Jamal, and Mazur 2015, 11). Beyond these indicators, data underscoring religiosity, including religious identification, are noteworthy because the more homogenous a country is in terms of social identifiers, the easier it is for its citizens to develop a functional democracy (Linz and Stepan 1996). Both countries are relatively homogenous, reducing the possibility this variable explains the outcomes of the Arab Spring.[10] Figure Two examines the religious and nationalist indicators of both countries:

Figure Two: Personal Indicators: Tunisia and Egypt (2013)*

	Egypt	Tunisia
Religious Indicators		
Those Who Pray Daily (as a %)	69.0	64.3
Those Who Identify As Sunni (as a %)	88.0	58.0
Those Who Identify As Shia (as a %)	0.0	0.0
Nationalist Indicators		
Those Who Identify As Ethnically Arab (as a %)	100.0	100.0
How Proud of Nationality (as a %)	96.5	93.6

Soures: Arab Barometer 2013, World Values Survey 2013

*While 2012 is the preferred year of this study, the Arab Barometer and WVS assessments occurred in 2013

These religious and nationalist indicators demonstrate two trends. First, the rates in which people in both countries pray exhibit similarly high levels of religiosity. More

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[10] An example of a heterogeneous society which impacted the speed of democratic consolidation is post-Apartheid South Africa.

importantly, the second and third categories under the first indicator show a fairly homogenous religious breakdown. In some countries, a sharp divide exists between the Shia and Sunni sects of Islam. While Tunisia has a much lower percentage of those who identify as Sunni than Egypt, the overwhelming majority of the other respondents answered "just Muslim," minimizing sectarian divisions, and both countries are considered "primarily Sunni."[11] The nationalist indicators show homogeneity in ethnic identification, which minimizes ethnic division. Beyond this homogeneity, both Egyptians and Tunisians are proud of being citizens of their countries at similarly high rates. In sum, both Egypt and Tunisia's development indicators informed their economic and political situations before the Arab Spring. Next, we explore Egypt's and Tunisia's political history.[12]

The Ghost of Nasser, the Soul of Sadat, and the Body of Mubarak: Egypt's History

While a British colony, Egypt underwent substantial economic and social transformation. As the British leaders soon realized, Egypt's geographic size is deceptive: the country's economic and social life is confined to a relatively narrow band of land on either side of the Nile River and its Delta (Mansfield 1991, 85). Even today, approximately 95 percent of the population lives within approximately 16 miles of the river (CIA World Factbook 2018). This lack of population dispersion throughout the country has historically made Egypt easy to control.

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[11]Unlike Tunisia, Egypt houses a sizable religious minority: Coptic Christians. The Egyptian government estimates approximately 5 million Copts live in the country, while the Coptic Orthodox Church argues there are between 15-18 million Egyptian Copts (Fitch 2015).

[12]I do not laboriously examine either Tunisian or Egyptian history. Instead, I survey relevant facts in an effort to provide context.

Under colonialism, cotton was Egypt's most important export and dominated economic life. Native Egyptians received few benefits economic benefits from the occupation (Mansfield 1991, 86), contributing to anti-British sentiment. While British colonizers rejected free education and job training for young Egyptians, they did not impose English culture on the wealthiest Egyptians, which differed from the French approach in North Africa (Mansfield 1991, 103). Post-World War I, Egyptians became increasingly aware of their right to self-determination, which corresponded with international trends. This period also saw the rise of organized labor in Egypt. After Egypt received nominal independence in 1922, it rapidly industrialized as the workforce became more educated. The interwar period also gave rise to the Muslim Brotherhood, which appealed to the country's youth (Mansfield 1991, 194). Throughout the remainder of the 1920s and into the 1930s, the strength of Egyptian labor was tied to the strength of the Wafd Party, a nationalist political party which supported transitioning Egypt from a dynastic monarchy to a constitutional one (Beinin and Lockman 1987, 177). After the Wafd Party gained power in May 1936, and regained power in February 1942, Egyptian labor felt increasingly emboldened, particularly as Egypt continued to industrialize (Beinin and Lockman 1987, 219). However, in the aftermath of World War II, growing resentment of British occupation coupled with anger over the creation of Israel led to dramatic political changes following the the 1952 military coup against King Farouk..

The overthrow of the monarchy resulted from extreme displeasure toward the king's personal corruption and subservience to the British authorities, as many Egyptians viewed this cozy relationship as an opportunity for the British to re-colonize Egypt

(Mansfield 1991, 244). General Gamal Abdel Nasser led the coup and realized the power which Egypt could exert in regards to its interests globally (Mansfield 1991, 245). He recognized Egypt sat at the center of what Nasser called "the Arab, African, and Islamic Circles," which gave him instant global credibility, and his ambition made him a hero to many in the Arab world.

Egypt's modern-day labor union, the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), formed in 1957 (Ramadan and Adly 2015, 3) under the name the Egyptian Workers' Federation (EWF), coinciding with Nasser's political peak between 1956-1959 (Mansfield 1991, 258). This timing is no coincidence, since Nasser, a staunch believer in the "average Egyptian," was immensely popular with younger and working-class Egyptians, making them the mythical foundation of his regime, though his support for them was merely to achieve political ends. Nonetheless, Nasser suffered diminished influence after the United Arab Republic (UAR) collapsed in 1961 (Mansfield 1991, 265). Staying true to his vision for "Arab socialism," he attributed the failure of the ill-fated union with Syria to the Syrian bourgeoisie.

However, following discord in Syria, and fearing a similar outcome in Egypt, Nasser explicitly defined what Nasserism meant to Egypt and the Arab world by nationalizing key economic sectors in 1962 (Mustafa, Shukor, and Rabi 2005, 11). This move contributed to the rise of central planning and the confiscation of assets from many well-to-do Egyptians, culminating with his 1962 Charter of National Action (Mansfield 1991, 266). The Charter condemned the European-style parliamentary system and endorsed economic nationalization, empowering authoritarianism (Mansfield 1991, 266).

However, many Egyptians viewed his projects and foreign policy agenda as ill-conceived. In an effort to regain sway, Nasser implicated Egypt's boogeyman, the Muslim Brotherhood, in a national scandal. Ultimately, Nasser began to lose influence within Egypt, particularly after the military sustained heavy losses against Israel in 1967. Nasser died in September 1970, and Anwar Sadat was his successor.[13]

The Sadat Years

Nasser appointed Sadat as his sole vice president in 1969 as the former's health declined. Upon Nasser's death, Sadat took full advantage of the political vacuum. While he originally promised to follow in Nasser's footsteps, Sadat won over the military and public, and charged seven ministers who had hoped to use him as a figurehead through his own preemptive coup in May 1971. In the following years, Sadat's popularity escalated, especially after the 1973 War. Domestically, Sadat positioned Egypt toward the West, accompanied by *infitah*, an economically liberal open-door policy which hurt labor unions, and controlled political pluralism. The aim of *infitah was* to increase Western investment and aid. On the foreign policy front, he expelled the Soviets from Egypt in 1972 and made peace with Israel in 1978, thereby further improving his standing with the Egyptian public and the West.

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[13]Nasser, and to a lesser degree Sadat, ruled Egypt as a "Pharoah," inspired by Soviet-era brutality, and thoroughly rejected Islam (Kepel 1984, 74; Sivan 1985, 17). Nasser conceptualized Egypt as monolithic, a country in which the "true believers" of workers and peasants' rights should be exalted, and all others should be condemned. Nasser approved the creation of camps, compared to concentration camps for dissidents, and advocated for "firing squads and gallows" in 1966 for opponents. In 1974, 1977, and 1981, Sadat followed his lead (Kepel 1984, 27). In fact, Kepel and Sivan both argue that Egypt's brand of political and radical Islam was inspired by the camp experiences of a dissident named Sayyid Qutb, who was brutally executed by the Nasser regime in 1966. This cruelty, coupled with an omniscient state police which turned neighbor against neighbor, created an environment of fear. Though Nasser inspired a generation of Arab socialists, it costed the state significantly.

The controlled pluralism and benevolent "strongman" model extended into political parties as well. The Political Parties Law of 1977, the first legislation discussing political participation in post-Nasser Egypt: (1) required all parties to conform to the same governing principles, thereby stymying opposition; (2) gave Sadat's ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) complete control over the Committee on Political Parties; and (3) gave the government control over the media and civil society, thus laying constraints on mass political activity until 1983 (Mustafa, Shukor, and Rabi 2005, 12). Sadat's popularity declined after Egypt's economic growth cratered and the peace process with Israel stalled. On October 6, 1981, Islamist extremists assassinated Sadat in Cairo, and Vice President Hosni Mubarak succeeded him. Ultimately, Sadat's legacy stoked Islamist anger and raised workers' awareness as both groups were diminished. Though the Political Parties Law of 1977 was viewed as a step in the right direction, it did not go far enough to sate Egyptians' desire for a genuinely representative political system.

Mubarak and Beyond: Egyptian History in the Present Day

Characteristic of many authoritarian states attempting to save face with their citizenry, the implementation of electoral systems was tumultuous, and the Egyptian Supreme Court[14] ruled the 1983 and 1986 Election Laws unconstitutional because of their exclusionary nature (Mustafa, Shukor, and Rabi 2005, 13). The 1983 law stipulated the creation of a proportional representation system and required a party to receive at least eight percent of the votes to receive any parliamentary representation. This led to a

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[14]Many scholars (Erdem and Grisham 2009, 5; Pillay 2014, 140) discuss the potency of Egypt's judicial system, which in many ways has served as a calming force when politics in each grows chaotic; however, they assuredly favor the military and other secular forces, occasionally forming an alliance with them when the need arose.

toothless opposition, the continued NDP parliamentary monopoly, and the public perception that elections were rigged. Following the 1984 unconstitutionality ruling, a 1986 law created a parallel system with party lists and forty-eight single member districts. This arrangement combined elections based on candidate-focused seats and party lists with the election of the remainder of the representatives in a district; though it was supposed to let more parties run, it actually did not (Mustafa, Shukor, and Rabi 2005, 14).

Following a second unconstitutionality ruling in 1989, Egypt enacted the Election Law of 1990. This iteration allowed all qualified people to run without constraint, and changed the entire system from a proportional representation system to single-member districts (Mustafa, Shukor, and Rabi 2005, 13). This change meant weaker political parties were systematically denied the opportunity to gain meaningful representation as a result of their inability to gain the most votes in a single member district. In the 1990 election, voter turnout was low and relatively few candidates ran. Observers attributed this to a lack of a familiarity with the election processes and other bureaucratic factors. Subsequent elections saw higher turnout and more contested seats (Mustafa, Shukor, and Rabi 2005, 14). In the 2005 election, the last before the Arab Spring reforms, Hosni Mubarak received 89% of the vote, and his party "won" the vast majority of parliamentary seats (Lagorio 2005). Most Egyptians assumed electoral fraud occurred.

While controlled pluralism rendered political opposition impotent, it also created a space for members of the fourteen professional syndicates, or *nikabat*, which had existed prominently in Egypt since the 1940s, although they were diminished by Nasser

and Sadat, to express their opinions democratically.[15] Donald Reid (1981, 92) explains

the best example of a *nikaba*, the Egyptian Bar Association. Reid argues that Egyptian

lawyers valued Western law because of their training and education. The lawyers'

influence on Egyptian society, and their reverence for the rule of law, carried over to

other professional syndicates, which also valued democratic participation (Reid 1981,

114). This became particularly clear under Sadat, Nasser, and Mubarak. As Moustapha

El-Sayed (1990, 233) notes, while the pro-government members usually led the

syndicates, Sadat's outlawing of Islamist parties led to higher political participation

within the professional syndicates. Islamist candidates would now successfully compete

with pro-government candidates and anti-government candidates for syndicate control.

For many Egyptians, this was their first and only taste of democracy. Some academics[16]

viewed the professional syndicates as Egypt's last great hope for democracy.

Interestingly, as has been discussed, the Egyptian uprisings in 2011 were predominantly

led by the middle class, without substantial union support.

After the 2011 overthrow of the regime, a number of changes occurred. Two new

constitutions were successively drafted, one in 2012 and one in 2014, both attempting to

restrict political strongmen.[17] However, many opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood, led

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[15]Robert Springborg (1978, 278) lists the fourteen Egyptian syndicates: lawyers, doctors, dentists, pharmacists, scientists, accountants, cinema actors and stage actors, veterinarians, teachers, agricultural engineers, engineers, and journalists. Syndicates differ from labor unions because they represent educated, middle class industries. I does not seek to richly explore syndicalism, as that exploration can be a thesis itself. Rather, I use syndicalism as an opportunity to highlight the differences in the civil societies of each country. While syndicalism impacts political outcomes, I maintain that the working class, not the middle class, drive democracy.

[16]Afaf Lufti al-Sayyid Marsot (1990, 293) underscores that syndicates conflicted with the regime, and had the chance to be proponents for increased political liberalization within the country. In hindsight, this was not the case. Appropriately, I align myself with scholars such as Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyn Huber Rueschemeyer, and John D. Stephens (1992) who maintain that the working class play the preeminent role in agitating for and sustained democratic movements. As I explain in my literature review, I recognize that this runs counter to a significant body of literature.

[17]Among other changes, the 2012 Constitution term limited the president, required the president to appoint a vice president, made it easier to run for president by decreasing the number of eligibility requirements, and allowed for more input from the judiciary and less from the People's Assembly, which had historically been dominated by one, non-democratically elected majority party (Feuille 2011, 244).

by Mohamed Morsi, did not believe the 2012 Constitution went far enough in securing democratic freedoms. By 2013, Egyptians had grown dissatisfied with the Morsi regime. Taking advantage of this popular disapproval, anti-Islamist forces supported by the military and judiciary ousted him, and Egypt returned to its pre-revolutionary state of political affairs: a military dictatorship. With Morsi's ouster came a new round of constitutional questions. The 2014 Constitution established a semi-presidential system supported by 98% of Egyptians (BBC 2014), and though international observers deemed the proceedings as legitimate, only forty percent of eligible voters actually voted (BBC 2014), calling into question whether the vote truly indicated the majority opinion. Some criticisms of the measure include that the 2014 Constitution gives too much power to the military, and it reverts Egypt back to the Mubarak years (BBC 2014). Others commented that the constitutional drafting committee lacked diversity of opinion, as the the 50-person drafting committee only included two Islamists. Under the new Egyptian constitution, only secular parties can field candidates. Egypt's current president, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, assumed power after ousting the Muslim Brotherhood, temporarily dashing hopes for democracy.

Similar Country, Different Story: Tunisia's History

Like Egypt, Tunisia's political, economic, and social history is quite complicated. Geographically, Tunisia's location near France, its former colonizer, puts it within the latter's sphere of influence. Moreover, in contrast to Egypt, Tunisia's population is much more dispersed (CIA World Factbook 2018). Tunisia has a history of political

independence which differs from Egypt's. In the mid-eighteenth century, the Ottoman

Empire ruled Tunisia, though the latter enjoyed great autonomy (Abadi 2013, 305).

However, France and Great Britain fought to control Tunisia, culminating with British

acquiescence to the French in 1878, when France invaded the country with the additional

consent of the German government. The French successfully created a Tunisian

protectorate in 1881 (Abadi 2013, 325). Three characteristics dominated the French

occupation: the youthfulness of the colonial leadership, the importance of Tunisia to the

French colonial system, and limiting the Tunisian military (Abadi 2013, 330). This

provides a stark contrast to British occupation of Egypt, which focused predominantly on

military strength, underscoring the immensely different roles of the military in Egypt and

Tunisia in the present day.

A further contrast between how the British and the French viewed their colonies

is settler-colonies, in the case of France, versus resource extraction bases, in the case of

Great Britain. Egypt exported cash crops to Britain and served as a military stronghold.

Beginning in 1857, French merchants and land speculators colonized Tunisia to take

advantage of increased investment opportunities (Perkins 2015, 25). The influx of French

colonists, who lived and worked in Tunisia, particularly in urban centers near the coast

such as Tunis, created a stratification between native Tunisians and European colonizers.

Thus, while the British viewed the loss of Egypt as an economic loss, the French

considered Tunisian independence as a loss to France's national fabric.

Beyond political developments, French occupation led to brisk industrialization

and robust phosphate, zinc, and iron mining industries (Abadi 2013, 343). Unlike in

British-dominated Egypt, the French had much less land to divide, which made the

distribution of resources far easier when comparing Egyptian and Tunisian landmasses

(Abadi 2013, 331). In contrast, Egypt focused exclusively on cotton as a cash crop.

Similar to Egypt, the first calls for Tunisian independence occurred in the aftermath of

World War I, and democratization across Europe stoked Tunisian anger that they did not

even have a representative parliament (Abadi 2013, 358). Just as in Egypt, organized

labor began to emerge, and the General Confederation of Tunisian Workers (CGTT), the

precursor to the UGTT, was established. Throughout the early twentieth century,

Tunisia's economy diversified, with wheat, wine, and other agricultural commodities

gaining popularity, and the role of minerals declining (Abadi 2013, 374). Following

revolts led by future Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba in the late 1920s and early

1930s, the French colonizers recognized their precarious position on the eve of World

War II, and even attempted basic reforms, which were rejected (Abadi 2013, 371). After

the Tunisian nationalist leadership supported the Allied powers in World War II (Abadi

2013, 385), Bourguiba and his allies demanded more autonomy. However, different from

the founders of the Egyptian system, the UGTT, which had been established in 1946,

rejected Sovietism (Abbasi 2014, 3), providing a natural point of entry for the West.

After World War II, the French tried to maintain control - but, after angering the Sfax

branch of the UGTT by interfering with their local chapter autonomy and how they ran

the phosphate mines, the French lost political capital. Bourguiba, seeing an opening,

campaigned worldwide for Tunisian independence, culminating with a 1955 return from

exile (Abadi 2013, 422). Upon Tunisian independence, Bourguiba assumed the presidency.

The Bourguiba and Ben Ali Eras

Following independence in 1956, the president of Tunisia enjoyed a wide range of powers (Choudhry 2013, 3). Although Tunisia enacted a semi-presidential system in 1969, with the addition of a prime minister, the president retained an array of powers, as the parliament "received a list of enumerated competencies" (Choudhry 2013, 4), and the president did all else, though the public considered the elections rigged. Moreover, before the constitutional review process post-Arab Spring, electoral law ensured that minority parties could not win a significant number of seats. In fact, the Tunisian constitution stipulated that those seeking the presidential office needed the endorsement of thirty deputies or mayors, deterring many Tunisians from voting, as they presumed that the elections were undemocratic (Khechana 2009, 4). As a result, Tunisia, like Egypt, featured a strongman leader and a weak parliament. In 1987, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali overthrew his boss, Bourguiba, in a bloodless military coup.[18]

In 1989, constitutional amendments were introduced to create a more credible parliament. However, the changes kept the main flaw of the previous system: the slate of candidates from a single party that received the most votes won all the seats in a given governorate (Khechana 2009, 6). In 1994, Ben Ali ran unopposed, though his party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally (CDR) lost Parliamentary seats. In 1999, the recognized

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[18]While both Bourguiba and Ben Ali had spy programs and a military police, neither were as robust as in Egypt. As a result, more radicalized Islam was less prominent. While state resentment toward the state regarding economic and representative issues existed, those grievances were not life and limb ones.

"tame opposition" won 34 seats in the parliament, and formed a coalition. However, the CDR eliminated exemptions that allowed the minority coalition to run, and imprisoned their leader (Khechana 2009, 8). Though an exception was later made to allow a different person to run on behalf of the minority, little changed. In 2004, more exceptions allowed four opposition candidates to run for parliament (Khechana 2009, 8); the majority party won 80% of the Parliament, and the other five opposition parties shared the remaining seats. Before the uprisings, Tunisia's democratic status was superficial.

The Post-Arab Spring World

Coming on the heels of the Jasmine Revolution and the removal of Ben Ali, parliamentary elections were held on October 23, 2011, the first genuinely democratic election in Tunisia's history. In order to ensure a legitimate election, two measures were implemented: (1) in April 2011, the Independent High Authority for Elections was created to ensure free, fair, and representative elections; and (2), the number of parties and individuals running increased dramatically. While in previous years the numbers had been limited, the 2011 parliamentary election featured robust election lists. On election day, voter turnout was 52%, and voting procedures lacked irregularities and were representative (Carter Center 2011). The results indicated that Ennahda, the Islamist party, won the most seats, and formed a governing coalition known as the Troika with the Congress for the Republic (CPR) and Ettakatol. The parliament voted to install an interim president until permanent elections could be held in 2014. The most recent election, for president and the parliament, occurred in 2014. Both elections were considered generally

transparent, and the results were taken seriously. In contrast to the 2011 election, a newly formed party, Nidaa Tounes, won the most seats in parliament, as well as the presidency, and entered into a grand coalition with the now-minority party Ennahda.

Tunisian and Egyptian similarities are to be expected. In both countries, former colonial legacies empowered political strongmen, demonstrating how legal systems can systematically co-opt interest groups. Both Ben Ali and Mubarak either encouraged or demanded legislative changes in an attempt to placate the opposition parties to maintain power, while remaining loyal to their key constituencies. On the eve of the Arab Spring, the overwhelming majority of the international community considered Egypt and Tunisia relatively stable, and as a result, the world was surprised by the swift collapse of the political establishment in both countries.

Why Islamism Is Not the Defining Difference

Earlier, I explained Islamist parties lack the capacity to enact their broad and socially conservative agendas once they lose the distinction of serving as a direct repudiation of the regime because they struggle to maintain their governing coalition. I also raised two questions regarding political Islam's role in the Arab Spring transitions:

1. If the differences between the Tunisian and Egyptian Islamist parties are so dramatic, why do these differences not explain the present success of one democratic transition and the failure of the other?

2. Apropos Huntington (1991), do Islamist parties fail because they are Islamist parties, or do they fail because an overwhelming majority of political parties fail in new democracies?

The argument in support of Islamist parties[19] being the defining difference in the

Egyptian and Tunisian consolidation question is, on its face, quite compelling. In short,

proponents articulate the two distinct paths taken by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

and Ennahda in Tunisia to explain the different outcomes. For generations, Islamist

parties had been outlawed in both countries, as secularist military governments hostile to

political Islam ruled. As discussed previously (Chomiak 2014), the Egyptian Muslim

Brotherhood was a hardline, and in many ways exclusionary, political party driven

extensively by Islamic teaching and Sharia law. Morsi's and the Muslim Brotherhood's

unwillingness to negotiate with those who believed he should take a less aggressive

position on political Islam and its role in the public sphere ultimately led to their

downfall. In Tunisia, by way of contrast, Ennahda (which had a number of connections to

the international network of the Muslim Brotherhood) saw what happened to their

counterparts in Egypt, and days after the countercoup in Egypt separated religious and

political activities (Chomiak 2014). Many viewed this move as a way to seem more

politically inclusive (Ottaway 2014, 4; Hamid, McCants, and Dar 2017, 17). Moreover,

following the beating they took in the 2014 parliamentary elections and their

unwillingness to run a presidential candidate in that same race, Ennahda entered a grand

coalition with Nidaa Tounes. Many members of Ennahda's rank-and-file criticized this

decision (Marks 2017, 40), viewing the diminished role they had in the new government

as less meaningful than the opportunities they could have had in the opposition.

However, in a move lauded by Western observers, and in an effort to ensure the

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[19]The focus on Islamist parties compared to other political parties comes from a number of scholars (Sadiki 2011; Volpi and Stein 2015, 7; Alsoudi 2015, 42) who argue the fall of a number of Middle Eastern, secular despots, as well as Islamists' appeal to young people, provided an opening for the reemergence of political Islam in the public sphere post-Arab Spring.

sustainability of Tunisian democracy, Ennahda's leadership refused to bow to internal pressure.

Nonetheless, the argument which posits the difference in how Islamist parties changed the outcomes in Egypt and Tunisia fails to account for the overall weakness of political parties in a post-uprising space. Beyond political grandstanding, ideological strictness, and the negative connotation of "Islamist parties," the Muslim Brotherhood and Ennahda are, or were, simply modern-day political parties attempting to placate their base, appeal to the broader peripheries of their respective countries to win enough votes to hold power, and pass political promises into law. In effect, they are simply political parties yoked to a social service apparatus and do not have any distinctive archetype which make them more than that. Most damningly, the aforementioned argument regarding the inability of Islamist parties to function as a paradigm for democracy in the region does not account for a basic truth: post-Arab Spring, after generations of abuse by strongmen, the everyday Tunisian or Egyptian does not trust political parties, Islamist or otherwise. A governance and trust gap stacked the deck against Islamist parties from the start.

In terms of real-life governance, as mentioned, Islamists won substantial majorities in the democratic elections immediately following the overthrow of the Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes. However, these Islamist parties lacked support during the consolidation process because of their heightened political ineptitude, a dismal state of affairs in each country, and a policy plank unpalatable to the broader public. In Tunisia, as the economy and national security took a turn for the worse and the Troika coalition

struggled (Boukhars 2015, 10; Marks 2015, 17; Dworkin 2014, 4), Ennahda markedly

increased religiosity to play to their base (Omri 2013). As a result, another group

emerged to help codify the democratic ideals of the uprisings: the National Quartet, led

by the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT), with support from the Tunisian

Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), Tunisian Human Rights

League (LTDH), and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers. Egypt took this failure by the

Islamist government to effectively govern to another level, where the military took

advantage of popular impatience with Muslim Brotherhood ineptitude and mounted a

countercoup, deposing a deeply unpopular Muslim Brotherhood-led government (Hilal

2012, 8; Brown 2017, 46; El-Sherif 2014, 21; Guenaien 2014, 11). Overall, neither

Ennahda nor the Muslim Brotherhood had political bases big enough to ensure

meaningful democratic governance, and they both faced a gap in popular trust.

As Figures Three and Four demonstrate, using comparative public opinion data

for Tunisia from October 2014, and for Egypt from September 2013, there is a distrust of

all political parties, especially the Islamist parties and their coalition partners, in both

Egypt and Tunisia:

Figure Three: Favorability of Political Entities in Tunisia (2013)
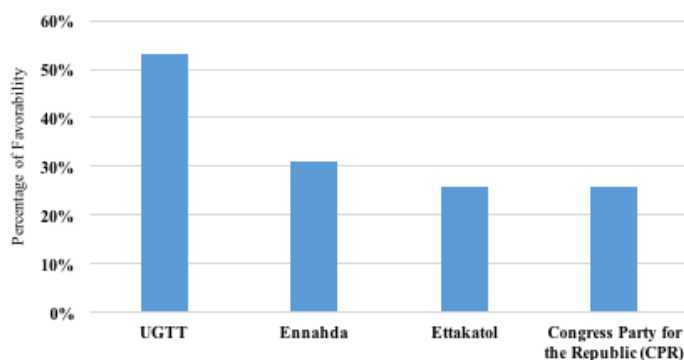
Source: Pew Research Service 2014

Figure Four: Favorability of Political Entities in Egypt (2013)
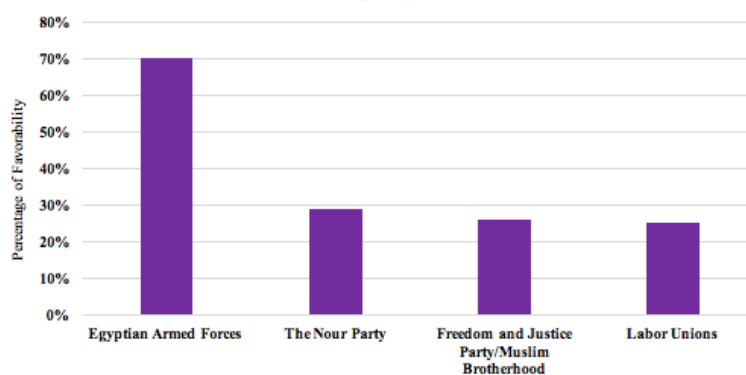
Sources: Zogby Research Services 2013; World Values Survey 2013

Across the board, distrust of political entities in Tunisia, excluding the UGTT, indicates yet another similarity in terms of the structure of the political atmosphere in both countries: certain groups and individuals held more sway than others over the national consciousness. The events which transpired immediately after the uprisings laid bare the lack of trust which existed in the system before the revolution and how the parties reacted. In Egypt's case, the group which enjoyed the greatest public support was the military, which led to a predictably non-democratic outcome. However, in the case of

Tunisia, one component of civil society opened the door for the first sprouts of

democracy to grow: organized labor, headlined by the National Quartet.

IV. The Role of Labor Unions in Explaining Democratic Transitions

In the Middle East, as a whole, the power of the labor unions declined after the

end of Nasserism (Clark and Khatib 2016, 257). However, Clark and Khatib argue that as

more citizens pushed for democracy, including in some semi-authoritarian states like

Morocco, civil society, including organized labor, enjoyed a rebirth in the Arab world,

positively impacting governance. A number of scholars[20] further corroborate this

sentiment, particularly through the lens of organized labor's role in encouraging good

governance and democracy. In particular, Lee (2007) hypothesizes that labor unions: (1)

increase the number of and strengthen institutions; (2) can lead to democracy; and (3)

serve as a check on the political establishment. Moreover, Robertson (2004) notes that

the *structure* of the unions themselves can play a major role, which impacts public

perception of unionization; unions which allow autonomy in local and regional chapters,

such as in Tunisia, encourage stronger governance and increased engagement in union

activities. This overall consideration of the role of humans in public life led to four

conclusions, which affect the process of democratization in a country from a union

perspective: (1) multiple routes exist for union strength; (2) competition between and

within unions can be both bad and good, such as when labor unions are allied with the

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[20]See Graeme Robertson (2004) and Cheol Sung-Lee (2007), who find labor unions indeed encourage democracy, though they may not always be a side effect *of* democracy, can work directly with the government in ways other interest groups cannot as a result of countries' vested economic interests, have the potential for strong internal democracies which can model government, and work for the lower classes.

political parties in power; (3) mobilization efforts can be tempered; (4) and they *must* be well organized before political uprising or turmoil in order to yield meaningful effects. Generally, labor unions support broad human rights, including freedom of speech, press, and organization, as they take advantage of these rights for their members; as a result, organized labor has the ability to serve as an aggregator of various local, regional, and national ideas, and provide an easily disseminated and uniform strategy.

Beyond this aggregation of ideas, organized interest groups such as labor unions articulate the implications of these ideas and ideals in a meaningful way (Eterovic and Eterovic 2012, 334; Kanol 2016, 347);[21] because labor groups have a narrower mission and oftentimes have a cozier relationship with their governments. Articulation is key in ensuring the union genuinely succeeds. As has been discussed at length, Qi and Shin's portrayal of "critical democrats" underscores how important peaceful, dissenting voices are to the longevity of democratic institutions. In the event unions or other civil society groups become state puppets, the rank-and-file call their ability to serve as effective aggregators and articulators into question. Overall, a robust, independent civil society, which includes organized labor, is important because: (1) it is concerned with public ends; (2) it relates to the state; (3) it encourages pluralism and diversity; (4) it does not seek to represent the complete set of interests; and (5) is more organized than a "civic community" (Diamond 1999, 222-5). While the qualitative impact is clear, quantitatively measuring the effectiveness of civic groups in bringing about change, including

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[21]Situating Egypt and Tunisia (and the Arab World more broadly) in the work done by these authors is important. Eterovic and Eterovic (2013), inspired by a study done by Aidt and Eterovic (2011) of 18 Latin American countries following the Third Wave of Democratization, look at over 100 countries in an effort to get a suitable cross-section. Similarly, Kanol (2016) looks at 129 countries, and specifically discusses Tunisia, arguing that interest groups only do well once they were free from regime corporatism.

organized labor, presents a challenge. As a result, a number of perspectives inform my analysis of labor union effectiveness, including Samuel Valenzuela's (1989, 453). He outlines four criteria which determine union strength, though I only examine two:[22] historical characterizations of the union itself and density of union affiliation in the total labor force. I also account for the impact of external forces on labor legitimacy. Ultimately, labor unions play a powerful role as a method of strengthening the new democratic institutions.

The View from 40,000 Feet: Labor Unions and Arab Spring Outcomes

Before diving intimately into the two cases, a broad look at the Middle East and North Africa's union data, as well as the revolutionary outcomes in the post-Arab Spring world, provides context for my central argument: union strength explains Tunisia's and Egypt's different outcomes. In order to examine broad trends and establish a "bellwether," I look at the density of union affiliation (Valenzuela 1989, 453) in the total labor force, which is important to note because it demonstrates whether unionists can compose a critical mass of the population and can pressure the government. As mentioned, measuring union strength is extremely challenging, as a number of factors affect the notion of strength, including the willingness of the union to act as an arm of an oppressive government, such as in Romania after the fall of the USSR, or whether the percentage of organized labor is superficial, such as in Algeria. In the Middle East and

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[22]Valenzuela specifically examines countries which democratized or re-democratized between the mid-1970s until the late 1980s, predominantly in Argentina, Brazil, Greece, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Spain, and Uruguay. However, he underscores (1989, 447) that his paper "does not examine in detail any one situation; rather, it refers to the cases only for illustrative purposes." I do not discuss density of union affiliation in key sectors of economic activity, his third factor, as that data is not made publicly available by the UGTT or ETUF.

North Africa, organized labor typically serves as an arm of the state and has become

corporatist[23] in nature. In effect, as states economically liberalize without the presence of

democratic norms, authoritarians co-opt special interests and civil society in an effort to

kneecap resistance. Thus, some argue that size is an ineffective barometer, and at times,

union size might *threaten* democratic governance and a robust civil society.[24]

To investigate, I compare each country's unionization of the total with their EIU

Democracy Index Score, as represented in Figures Five and Six[25] below. These two

figures examine union strength quantitatively and qualitatively:

Figure Five: Unionization as a Percentage of the Working Age Population (2012)

Source: Author calculations; UTIC (2012, 2013); WDI (2012, 2013)

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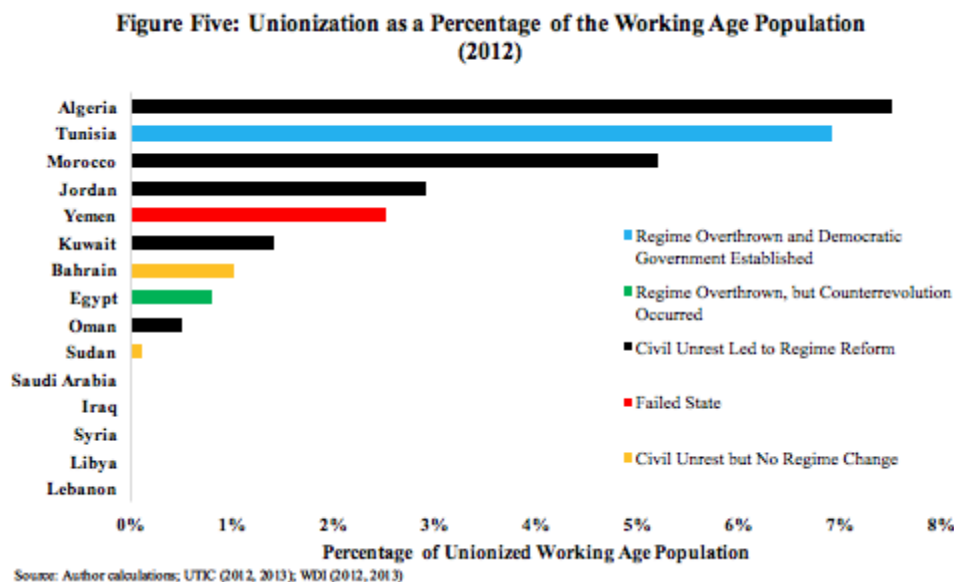
[23]Robert Bianchi (1989, 11) describes corporatism as the combination of the "denationalization of economic decision-making, state-manipulated systems of interest representation, and the appearance of authoritarian regimes that employ rising levels of coercion to advance the interests of increasingly narrow social coalitions."

[24]For example, while Algeria trumps Tunisia in percentage of unionized labor, the former did not see meaningful democratic reform post-Arab Spring, as Algeria's organized labor is nothing more than a "paper dragon." Chelghoum, et. al. (2016) explain that Algeria's organized labor suffers from union weakness, excessive government intervention, low regard for human rights, and skepticism of organized labor. This indicates that a more robust look at factors beyond total labor force unionization is important because the union simply might be an arm of the state.

[25]Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Lebanon have either outlawed labor unions entirely, or the ITUF does not recognize any unions in any of the former countries.

Figure Six: Union Size in the Post-Arab Spring Middle East and North Africa (2012)[1]

	Percentage of Population 15-64, Unionized	2017 EIU Democracy Index Score
Regime Overthrown and Democratic Government Established		
Tunisia	6.9%	6.32
Regime Overthrown, but Counterrevolution Occurred		
Egypt[2]	0.8%	3.36
Civil Unrest Leading to Regime Reform		
Algeria	7.5%	3.56
Jordan	2.9%	3.87
Kuwait	1.4%	3.85
Lebanon[4]	0.0%	4.72
Morocco	5.2%	4.87
Oman[2]	0.5%	3.04
Failed State		
Libya[3]	0.0%	2.32
Syria[4]	0.0%	1.43
Yemen	2.5%	2.07
Civil Unrest but No Regime Change		
Bahrain	1.0%	2.71
Iraq[4]	0.0%	4.09
Saudi Arabia[3]	0.0%	1.93
Sudan[2]	0.3%	2.15

[1] Cyprus, Iran, Israel, Qatar, Turkey, and the UAE were essentially unaffected by the Arab Spring
[2] 2013 Data
[3] Labor Unions are Banned
[4] No Labor Unions Recognized by ITUC
Sources: Author calculations; World Development Indicators (2017), International Trade Union Confederation (2012) and (2013); EIU Democracy Index (2017)

The data above make it clear that higher rates of total labor force unionization point to a higher likelihood of a successful democratic transition. By these metrics, Tunisia remains the only case which shows any chance of transitioning toward consolidated democracy. The remainder of this section will look at three factors determining union strength:

1. A historical comparison;
2. Unionization of the total labor force;
3. The role of outside actors.

Factor One: A Historical Comparison of Tunisian and Egyptian Labor

As discussed above, Egypt and Tunisia have distinct political histories, which inform the decisions the unions have made as institutions. Previous sections looked at the role of professional syndicates and other non-labor organizations, briefly, in both countries. This section will: (1) discuss Egypt's and Tunisia's different levels of corporatism and whether they are state-driven or driven by individuals; (2) examine the historic differences which drive the different hierarchical natures of both unions; and (3) consider how the unions exerted (or did not exert) influence on their respective governments.

Egyptian Labor History

Before the 1952 military coup against King Farouk, Egyptian organized labor was fairly strong, and organized along nationalist, Islamist, and communist lines. However, once Nasser assumed power, the new revolutionary government forced the communist faction to take a backseat, and outlawed Islamists altogether (Bayat 1993, 67). The first post-coup labor union of note in Egypt, the General Federation of Egyptian Trade Unions (FCGF), supported the military uprising led by Nasser, though they expressed concern when military leadership attempted to dissuade workers from joining unions. In response to a public statement made by the FCGF questioning this action, the Interior Ministry forbade the meeting of trade unions (Posusney 1997, 45). Though the Nasser government dissolved the FCGF, Nasser still had a place in government for organized labor, because, as mentioned, Nasser venerated the working-class and placed the "working man" on a

pedestal. The earliest laws that governed organized labor in post-revolutionary Egypt were Laws 317, 318, and 319,[26] approved in December 1952, only five months after the Young Officers coup. This period saw rampant conflict among the individual unions in Egypt as a result of ideological exclusion and differing perspectives on how to interface with the regime, and the leadership of individual unions realized moving toward a trade union confederation would be an effective tactic in developing bargaining power.

In an effort to build a coalition of labor unions which could aggregate and articulate diverse interests, the first Egyptian trade union *confederation*, the Egyptian Workers' Federation (EWF), which represented seventeen large unions and federations (Posusney 1997, 63), came into being. However, while this new confederation seemed like a victory for Egyptian labor, its corporatist nature ultimately hampered their efforts.[27] Nasser allowed this core constituency to exist only to allow the labor unions to "blow off steam" and to keep them politically loyal and supporting the illusion of genuine political participation, while also giving Nasser the opportunity to hear what average Egyptians actually wanted from their government. For example, Nasser strove for fifty-percent representation in the Egyptian parliament by workers and peasants. However, corporatism stifled democratic consolidation because the new confederation owed its entire existence to a state which suppressed dissent. In January 1961, the EWF changed its name to the Egyptian Trade Union Confederation (ETUF). Nasser's continued

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[26]Law 317, the Individual Contract Act, regulated increases in severance and other benefits, though it quadrupled the probationary period. Probationary workers did not receive the same wages and benefits as permanent workers, and were often fired at the end of the probationary period. As a result, many Egyptian workers worked for longer with fewer benefits. Moreover, Law 318, on Arbitration and Conciliation, provided for "speedier hearings and improved representation for workers in grievance cases," was viewed positively, though it required all disputes go to arbitration, effectively barring protests and restricting lockouts. Law 319 protected unions, though it prohibited union investment without government permission (Posusney 1997, 47-52).

[27]Early Egyptian labor was corporatized because: (1) the government chose the EWF's leaders; (2) funding came from the Labor Bureau; and (3), the confederation was not allowed to disclose "information and ideas" (Posusney 1997, 63-64).

interference with unions occurred well into the 1960s, particularly with the passage of

1964 legislation which allowed the government to interfere with union affairs by

requiring unions to have state permission in order to hold conventions. The government

provided input and oftentimes insisted that certain individuals be placed on executive

committees, and also denied unions the right to invest portions of their dues without the

regime's permission (Posusney 1997, 76). The state also imposed a requirement that all

unionists who ran for political office be members of the Arab Socialist Union, the only

legal political party in Nasser's Egypt. The government clearly wanted to continue to

ensure its interests were protected. More notably, as Harbison (1959) and Goldberg

(1986) argue, the Nasser regime co-opted whatever successes early unions had, as the

emphasis on lessening the burden of the working class remained a central tenet of the

regime and Nasserism more generally. As Posusney (1997, 175) concludes, the unionists

avoided taking a more aggressive position toward Nasser, even though Nasser was in a

position of weakness during an economic downturn as a result of Egyptian aggression

toward Israel.

Government control over union leadership continued into the early 1970s

following Nasser's death. Posusney (1997, 80) notes the trends which this exposed: the

regime controlled all senior leadership, the ETUF remained the only recognized union

confederation per Law 35 of 1976, strikes remained illegal, and unionists attempted to

affect government policy not as a part of civil society, but through being a part of the

government. This captive state of organized labor in Egypt underscores that the entire

sustainability of the ETUF was predicated on complying with government demands.

However, Assef Bayat (1993, 72-74) notes three flaws in the government's logic in terms of the ETUF: (1) the economic and political aspirations of the working class to create their own future, independent of the agenda of Nasser's, and subsequently Sadat's governments; (2) the inability to meet people's' rising expectations as industrialization increased; and, (3) the conflict between the authoritarian nature of the state and the push for the democratic principle of employee participation. Social and political aspects of civil society were frozen as a result of the corporatist nature of the state, which encouraged bureaucracy, favoritism, and authoritarianism (Bayat 1993, 74). This conflict between the state and the workers, as well as the inability to read the desires of the rank-and-file, led to a credibility crisis for the ETUF and its senior leadership, as local chapters realized they lacked maneuverability in terms of the ability of their own individual local chapters to make decisions. The strict hierarchical structure of the ETUF's national leadership and the neglect of local chapters soon became unacceptable for local leadership.

The rise of Sadat led to the disbandment of the ETUF and all other organizations subordinate to the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) because of attempts by Ali Sabri, a political competitor of Sadat's, to undermine him. After the ETUF's, and ultimately the ASU's, disbandment, the government called for new leadership elections. The ensuing elections were simultaneously exceptionally representative and unrepresentative. On one hand, Sadat placed an ally, Salah Gharib, in charge of the ETUF, while ETUF unionists simultaneously regarded the elections of local chapter leadership as fair and legitimate, and campaigning was "enthusiastic" (Posusney 1997, 95). As discussed in preceding

sections, this enthusiastic campaigning is similar to what occurred in syndicates - in effect, Sadat, like Nasser, treated the professional syndicates as self-governing, in order to truly learn the opinions of everyday Egyptians. In the ETUF, Gharib sowed discord inside the organization to prevent what Sadat characterized as "undesirable elements," mostly hardcore Nasserists on the political left, from obtaining positions in leadership (Posusney 1997, 96). This government-manufactured infighting kept local chapters weak, empowering the regime to continue its strategy of state corporatism. This continued strategy, coupled with Sadat's emphasis on economic liberalization, frequently led to wildcat strikes,[28] though these protests were ultimately placated in part by the removal of Gharib from Labor Department leadership and by making some minor concessions to the unionists (Posusney 1997, 183).

In January 1977, Sadat won over unionists by increasing wages and bringing about "production committees," which gave more representation to lower-level unionists (Posusney 1997, 110). Concurrently, the regime barred left-wing unionists from running for public or union office, diminishing the ETUF's senior leadership standing in the eyes of the rank-and-file. While the union leaders affiliated with the government received power, influence, and wealth, low-level unionists were pushed to the side and received few economic benefits as Egypt liberalized. While organized labor detested Sadat (Posusney 1997, 95), his free market policy prerogatives revitalized internal dialogue in internal union affairs. In October 1981, Sadat was assassinated and his vice president, Hosni Mubarak, another general, assumed office.

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[28]"Wildcat" strikes are those in which individual chapters of larger labor unions protest, strike, or demonstrate without the support of the central governing body of the organization.

Noting that Sadat's rapid push for economic liberalization contributed to his unpopularity (Posusney 1997, 184), Mubarak lifted some restrictions on unionization, and the far left in the country regained the right to organize. However, Mubarak continued his predecessor's strategy by controlling who assumed senior leadership of the ETUF, with the added requirement that all candidates now belong to the NDP (the National Democratic Party). This co-option of the ETUF's senior leadership, the lack of buy-in and disaffection from members of the rank-and-file, and laws which reduced subsidies and increased expenses for workers in 1984, 1985, 1986, and 1989, led to protests at a number of factories (Posusney 1997, 143) and limited the reach of the ETUF beyond serving as a corporatist arm of the state. A major breaking point in terms of Mubarak's relationship with Egypt's organized labor came in 1988, when the regime sold the San Stefano Hotel in Alexandria, marking the onset of an increased pace of privatization throughout the 1990s. Though the ETUF eventually endorsed privatization in the mid- to late-1990s, the government and its puppets in senior ETUF leadership positions worked to repress wildcat strikes throughout this time, and because of the federation's corporatist and hierarchical nature, little stopped them.

The turn of the millennium brought about a new set of circumstances for Egyptian labor. As the Egyptian economy became increasingly business- and industry-focused, led by Prime Minister Atef Ebeid, who worked on behalf of Mubarak, the power of labor unions declined, increasing rank-and-file protests (Beinin 2009, 452). While collective actions mostly occurred on the local and regional level, and not nationally, a copycat effect (Beinin 2009, 452) occurred throughout the mid-2000s. While friction increased

between trade organizations, which seemingly supported workers' interests more effectively than the ETUF, they gained little leverage, even as thousands quit the ETUF following the Ghazl al-Mahalla debacle.[29] At the onset of the Arab Spring, the ETUF remained the only state-sanctioned union and claimed a plurality of Egyptian union-affiliated workers. However, disagreement between the central organization and locals as a result of the top-heavy, statist corporatist structure decreased the ETUF's effectiveness on the eve of the revolution.

During the 2011 uprisings, three independent trade unions unaffiliated with the ETUF, the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU), the Egyptian Democratic Labor Congress (EDLC) and the Permanent Congress of Alexandria Workers (PCAW), played a major role as the working class were significant in the uprisings (Beinin 2013). These unions formed in response to the ETUF's failure to serve as an effective aggregator and articulator of organized labor's interests. While local ETUF chapters played a role in rallying their members to join the protests, they were fairly disorganized, which stemmed from the previous three decades of deeply hierarchical and top-heavy management. However, after the uprisings concluded, the ETUF filed a lawsuit to protect its autonomy and to outlaw these independent unions. This lawsuit, coupled with rapid changes in the political sphere of Egypt, stymied the development of independent unions, as they could not make the necessary connections with political officials like the ETUF could. As a result, the ETUF continued to play the preeminent

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[29]As Beinen (2015, 76-80) explains, in 2006, security forces intervened in local union elections, and replaced local leaders with those sympathetic to the regime. In response, the popularly-supported ousted leaders were elected to an unsanctioned strike committee. In December 2006, nearly ten thousand textile workers in Ghazl al-Mahalla striked. The government acquiesced to the strikers' demands, which were increased bonuses and a promise that state companies would not be privatized, among other demands. A second strike occurred later after the ETUF national leadership refused to support the impeachment of the non-democratically elected local leadership.

role in ostensibly representing Egyptian labor, through the state's control of the federation made them representatives of rank and file union members in name only.

As Hartshorn (2018, 126) underscores, the ETUF lacked the political clout which the UGTT had, and the costs of defecting from the union were quite low as there were other, smaller unions to join, albeit less effective ones in terms of advocating for policy since they were (and remain) outlawed. Moreover, as has been alluded previously, secular unionists (Posusney 1997, 207) detest Islamism and the economic liberalization favored by the Muslim Brotherhood. As a result, the ETUF supported al-Sisi's overthrow of Morsi in 2013 (Acconcia 2016). Despite objections from ETUF leadership, al-Sisi continued negotiations with the International Monetary Fund, capped income taxes for the top bracket, and outlawed the right to strike (Acconcia 2016), which labor groups opposed. Ultimately, the al-Sisi regime, like the regimes before it, is no fan of organized labor, and has taken steps to limit it.

The history of organized Egyptian labor yields three noteworthy conclusions. First, a lack of truly independent representative union leadership exists on all levels, save for minimal independence on the local level. Nationally, the state's capture of the ETUF, and the Faustian bargain undertaken by the ETUF to ensure its monopoly in terms of organized labor power, prevented any meaningful discourse between organized labor entities. This lack of discourse and of democratic, national leadership diminished their credibility. Originally, the executive leader of the ETUF served concurrently as the of the Minister of Labor, and beginning in 2011, the state outright appointed the head of the ETUF. In the context of burgeoning democracies, the importance of organized labor is

not predominantly to serve as an advocate for economic interest; rather, the role of labor groups is to serve as a mouthpiece of the working masses. While the ETUF worked as pseudo-policymakers, such as when it did or did not endorse specific legislation, the ETUF failed to perform the primary functions of a genuine civil society organization: independent aggregation and articulation of the authentic views of labor.

By failing to serve as the legitimate and independent voice of organized labor, and by working to fulfill state interests first, the hegemonic labor confederation stood little chance of making a meaningful impact during any transition to democracy in Egypt. The ETUF's only possible saving grace, in terms of playing a meaningful role in Egypt's aborted transition to democracy in the post-Mubarak landscape, would have been through its local organizations, as in Tunisia, which will be explored more fully below. However, ETUF leadership did absolutely everything in its power to prevent grassroots organizing at the local level. As a result, when the uprisings came and low-level unionists demonstrated, the organization of a truly independent labor movement hardly existed. National leadership, knowing they had the upper hand, refused to budge, which differs dramatically from the case of Tunisia, where the individual chapters compelled the executive leadership of the UGTT to act in accord with the real interests of labor. Much of this national-level leadership stubbornness can be attributed to the structure of the ETUF - even *local* leaders, who theoretically should be accountable to the rank-and-file, were more loyal to the regime than to their constituents. As Posusney (1997, 152) articulates, the local union chapter leaders, from Nasser to Mubarak, were "at best not involved, and at worst actively hostile to [the local protests]." Thus, Egyptian workers

could not force ETUF leadership to support the uprisings and play a meaningful role in the transition, precisely because: (1) union elites and leaders in Egypt benefited from the close relationship to the regime; (2) were skeptical of the Islamist underpinnings of the revolution; and (3) had no reason to change, as there had been little beyond a few minor victories to compel them to change the status quo. The failure to nurture young union leaders, to provide a meaningful forum to discuss disagreements with the national organization, and to hamstring the ability to meaningfully "report up" to the executive committee diminished the rank-and-file, which is critical to ensuring the success of any organization. In contrast, while the UGTT is the only *real* labor union in Tunisia and executive leadership was also captured by the state, local chapters were fostered and the groundswell could compel nervous senior leadership to "get on the bus" in terms of the uprisings.

The second conclusion centers on the role of regime corporatism as a barrier to democracy. The very notion of top-down corporatism diminished the trust and political capital of the ETUF. Trust is a critical function for any institution in civil society, and the point of civil society, and organized labor more specifically, is to represent a set of interests, which at times might run antithetical to the state's prerogative. In the case of Egyptian labor, the control demanded by three generations of Egyptian autocrats was antithetical to the local union interest. However, because the state retained such tight control over civil society in general, and labor specifically, the ETUF could not serve as an effective advocate of Egyptian labor's interests. This inability to effectively advocate on behalf of organized labor rendered the ETUF impotent as a mediating body in the

aftermath of the 2011 uprisings, because very few in the country viewed them as an independent or trustworthy entity. As Adam Seligman (1992, 12) underscores, voluntary associations and other components of civil society, like labor unions, are critical avenues for building trust among key groups; however, if the low-level unionists and their families cannot trust the unions to work in their interests because of undue influence from the state, the union will not be an effective mediator. While in Tunisia, the unions, at least at the grassroots level, demanded a real seat at the table, the Egyptian regime demanded total ETUF loyalty at all levels. As a result, corporatism occurred to the detriment of the people within the labor unions and failed to promote the real interests of union members.

Finally, because of their historical co-option by the previous state, Morsi and al-Sisi left independent Egyptian labor unions out of their governments (Kindt 2014). Thus, labor unions lacked a seat at the table to provide input from workers. Each regime had its own reasons. Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood distrusted any entity affiliated with the former regime, coupled with a long-standing rivalry which existed between the secular organized labor movement and the Islamists. In the case of the al-Sisi regime, the military had very little use for the ETUF beyond their nominal support, which aligns with the historic place of the ETUF in the Egyptian political arena. Coupled with the erosion of human rights in Egypt following the return to autocracy, very little room existed for the ETUF to maneuver, much less play a role in contributing to democracy. Ultimately, the ETUF had little chance of being anything more than the hollow shell of a puppet organization from a previous unpopular regime.

Tunisian Labor History

Tunisian labor history underscores the critical role it played in advancing post-Arab Spring democracy. The roots of the first labor organization (a French and Italian labor group, the CGT, was founded in 1919) with native Tunisians as members of the rank-and-file can be traced to August 1924, when Tunisian dock workers struck to demand wages equal to those of their French and Italian counterparts (Beinin 2015, 13). This protest gave birth to the Tunisian General Confederation of Labor (CGTT). However, in 1925 French authorities, who consolidated their power in Tunisia under a protectorate, viewed the CGTT as a vehicle for waging anti-colonial warfare, disbanded the organization, and exiled its leadership from the country. Indeed, the Tunisian labor movement has deep anti-colonial roots (Beinin 2015, 13). While the CGT and its membership eventually came around in the early 1930s to "equal pay for equal work," many Tunisian workers disaffiliated with the CGT due to its multinational composition and the organization's opposition to Tunisian independence (Beinin 2015, 14). As a result, in 1946, the southern and northern breakaway union groups from the CGT merged and formed the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT). Early in the UGTT's history, its leadership aligned with the Neo-Destour party, led by Habib Bourguiba, the first President of Tunisia after independence. The support he provided gave the UGTT institutional clout and the ability to lead an effective partnership leading up to democracy. In 1952, French operatives assassinated the UGTT's president, Farhat Hached, fortifying the union's nationalist nature. Early in Tunisia's history, the UGTT saw most of its success in southern Tunisia, predominantly in Sfax and Gharbia (Beinin 2015, 15),

coincidentally the same cities where many of the mid-2000s protests occurred leading up to the 2010 uprisings.

After independence, many of the original members of Bourguiba's cabinet and the Parliament were UGTT members, and the union predictably enjoyed a strong relationship with the president. Subsequently, the regime attempted to undermine the UGTT in the late 1950s in an effort to neutralize what Bourguiba perceived as a possible political threat (Beinin 2015, 19). Following an unsuccessful push by Bourguiba to further socialize Tunisian industry, accompanied by pressure from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to transition the Tunisian economy toward capitalism, a major internal conflict broke out within the UGTT between middle class and working class union members. As a part of a the IMF's deal with the Bourguiba regime to receive credit assistance, Tunisian authorities reduced the value of the Tunisian dinar by 25%, leading to widespread economic suffering. While the wealthier, white-collar wing of the UGTT "tightened their belts" (Beinin 2015, 22), phosphate miners and other blue-collar workers could not afford to do so. When UGTT leadership attempted to speak on behalf of the working class, Bourguiba launched a shakeup of senior leadership of the UGTT.

Throughout the 1960s, UGTT leadership worked to regain and maintain its credibility. While the UGTT retained a cordial relationship with the Bourguiba regime, it also opposed wage austerity, initiated in response to increased unemployment and stagnant wages. Coupled with Bourguiba's overwhelming private sector support, despite his socialist roots, the UGTT resisted the regime. Despite the UGTT's historic ties to the regime, it attempted to maintain an arms-length relationship, keeping it autonomous from

the state, receiving praise from unionists throughout the country and the world (Beinin 2015, 24). Although Bourguiba moved on from the socialist experiment following the collapse of Pan-Arabism and Arab socialism in the 1970s, his regime continued to attempt to control organized labor. One important development during the 1970s, spearheaded by the Bourguiba regime, were negotiations between the UGTT and UTICA, the national association of employers, a prominent Tunisian syndicate. The negotiations allowed for open communications between two groups which disagreed on a range of subjects (Beinin 2015, 32). Concurrent with these conversations, the rise of white collar workers in Tunisia created a more economically diverse UGTT, which grew to represent a wider range of labor interests in the mid-1970s.

As Tunisia faced economic struggles, workers began to strike with more regularity as they correlated striking to wage increases (Beinin 2015, 34). While the regime attempted to buy off these workers and make agreements with the executive leadership, the threat of local "wildcat" strikes compelled senior leadership to rebuke the regime in January 1978. Following a series of strikes, the UGTT national council passed a resolution condemning the government for its antagonistic nature toward the organization, and forced regime loyalists to resign from central leadership (Beinin 2015, 35). On January 26, 1978, dubbed "Black Thursday," the regime arrested UGTT executive council members and replaced them with regime loyalists. However, the UGTT rank-and-file perceived these replacements as puppets, and continued in their own local union chapters to resist the regime. The 1980s were a tumultuous time in both Tunisian labor and history. In April 1985, the Tunisian government changed a policy which had

previously tied minimum wages to the cost of living to reflect productivity; the UGTT

publicly opposed this change (Beinin 2015, 49). Opposition provided a pretext for the

Bourguiba regime to curtail the UGTT's rights, including the ability to publish their

periodical without infringement and to gather peacefully, among others. The government

then occupied the UGTT headquarters several times in an effort to restore order, and

UGTT national leadership faced repression for the rest of the decade. Moreover,

resistance to government policy ensured legitimacy for the national leadership of the

UGTT among the rank-and-file (Beinin 2016, 10).

Ben Ali overthrew Bourguiba in 1987, changing how the UGTT interacted with

the state. During the late-1980s and early-1990s, the UGTT and the Ben Ali regime found

common ground: distaste for Ennahda. During this time, Ben Ali made modest changes

to the electoral system of Tunisia, and a "tame opposition" emerged, providing more

leverage for the UGTT, especially as its new leadership, appointed by Ben Ali, had an

anti-Bourguiba streak (Beinin 2015, 52). As the 1990s progressed, the UGTT cooperated

with the Ben Ali regime in order to continue to secure collective bargaining rights and to

achieve modest increases in wages. This history underscores that, in terms of civil society

throughout the Middle East and North Africa, some degree of top-down corporatism is to

be expected. Throughout the 1990s, increased liberalization in Tunisia was stymied in

part by the UGTT, which attempted to use their relationship with the state to slow down

privatization to provide workers the chance to find different forms of work (Beinin 2015,

58). The changes in the economic system resulted in structural unemployment, which

explains the UGTT's efforts. However, as the world entered the 2000s, the UGTT grew restless regarding the treatment of unionists by the Ben Ali regime.

In September 2000, the UGTT secretary was ousted following corruption charges, and though his replacement, Abdessalem Jrad, and the eight other executive board members elected in 2002 were considered more respectful of democratic norms, senior leadership still fell under state corporatism (Beinin 2015, 71). In 2004, younger unionists sparked debate, forcing the UGTT to reckon with whether it wanted to stay so close to the regime (Beinin 2015, 72). In 2005, the UGTT protested Ben Ali's decision to invite Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to the country, and supported the Tunisian Order of Lawyers when it conflicted with the regime. This support of a professional association proved significant in 2012 as the UGTT attempted to build a coalition to facilitate the democratic transition. While the executive committee split between those loyal to the regime and those considered "dissidents" in 2007, nearly 500 leaders of the UGTT and local chapters discussed quitting the UGTT and forming a new labor union in protest.

The major tipping point in terms of Tunisian labor during the Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes occurred in 2008 at the Gafsa phosphate mine in southern Tunisia. This protest represented a bellwether for what would happen in 2010. Teenagers and young men protested for more economic opportunities. An economic downswing resulted because of structural adjustment and displeasure by the French, Tunisia's main trading partner, with the Ben Ali regime's excessive human rights violations. In response, local unionists revolted against UGTT leadership they viewed as too tied to the regime (Beinin 2015, 84). Moreover, many in Gafsa believed local UGTT leadership ignored the

democratic election results for each local chapter, and were instead appointing family members.

Unionists protested and demanded the release of political prisoners, forcing the hand of the local union affiliates. Ultimately, the dissident local leaders in the UGTT, coupled with its intellectual and institutional history, prepared them to stage meaningful protests and strikes in an effort to neutralize the regime (Beinin 2015, 93). These riots put the Ben Ali government on notice. In December 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi triggered the Jasmine Revolution through his act of self-immolation in Sidi Bouzid. In Gafsa, local UGTT officials coordinated a protest in opposition to the government, which responded with disproportionate force against protestors, only fueling anti-government sentiment in southern and central Tunisia (Beinin 2015, 102). While senior UGTT leadership originally did not openly support the demonstrations, a speech made by Ben Ali saying the protesters were "foreign agents" offended many of the rank-and-file members of the UGTT. The tension culminated with increased pressure from the bottom, and the executive committee of the UGTT approved, belatedly, protests in Sfax, Kairouan, Tozeur, and eventually in Tunis itself, culminating in the deposition of Ben Ali.

After overthrowing Ben Ali, Tunisians had to figure out what would happen next. Recognizing the role of the UGTT, and the National Quartet (which will be explored more in-depth below) more broadly, is critical to understanding why Tunisia's transition to democracy has been more successful than Egypt's. Following the uprisings, the prime minister under Ben Ali formed an interim government, which the UGTT opposed (Beinin 2015, 106). However, after Beji Caid Essebsi was appointed the new interim prime

minister, the UGTT expressed their support and engaged in efforts to form a new, unified government in an effort to protect democratic gains post-uprisings. After the Troika government failed to lead effectively, the UGTT, leading the National Quartet, facilitated dialogue between the Troika government and Nidaa Tounes. With assistance from the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH), and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers, the UGTT came to the table with the goal of rectifying three conflicts which had been brewing in Tunisian politics in the post-uprising landscape: bureaucratic stacking by Ennahda, political violence, and controversy over a draft constitution (Chayes 2014). UGTT leadership, particularly General Secretary Houcine Abbassi, facilitated negotiations, and coerced political leadership from the major parties into reaching an agreement amenable to all (Chayes 2014). In 2015, the National Quartet won the Nobel Peace Prize.

The effects of Tunisian labor were clearly substantial in a number of ways. First, as Beinin (2016, 5) explains, Tunisian workers compelled the UGTT, despite the wishes of its pro-Ben Ali national leadership, to join the rebellion, because, at the local level, the UGTT has a history of autonomy. Beinin (2015, 90) describes the relationship between the state and the submissive senior UGTT leadership and a restless base - and in times of great discord, leadership was forced to change its allegiances to placate the rank-and-file. In effect, the UGTT acted as a quasi-democratic force in a country which had absolutely no legacy of formal political democracy (Bishara 2013, 6). This "quasi-democracy" prepared regional UGTT chapters to advocate for common goals without state influence. This autonomy allowed the UGTT to straddle a unique line, because it acted as a civil

society organization which owed little to, though was close with, the state, and it aggregated and articulated the interests of its constituents.

Though the state controlled the UGTT's senior national leadership for the overwhelming majority of its history, the structural autonomy afforded to local chapters played an important role in developing the skills of political organization. Complete state corporatism, and the rigid hierarchy which accompanies it, impacts the legitimacy of an organization. Because the local aspects of the organization were autonomous (including, at times, from national leadership), the UGTT could rightfully claim that it was a legitimate and representative actor in the political instability which followed the ouster of Ben Ali. Historically, this claim was not out of step for the UGTT (Bishara 2013, 6). Under the Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes, both private and public enterprise, including its labor force, had a modicum of say in the affairs of the country, even though the state co-opted upper-level leadership. However, because the UGTT straddled the line between autonomous and corporatist, it became a "kingmaker" and a steady hand when the established political order collapsed.

Second, throughout its history, tracing back to the 1973 agreement with UTICA, the UGTT has successfully built partnerships across the spectrum of Tunisian civil society. While I already explored the ability of the UGTT to build those relationships with the Bourguiba and Ben Ali administrations, the relationships the UGTT formed with civil society groups and syndicates in particular were immensely important in the Arab Spring's aftermath, and culminated in its leadership role in the National Quartet. While the UGTT took steps to maintain its status as the preeminent group representing workers

in Tunisia, the organization also worked to build relations with the various professional syndicates, unions, and civil rights groups, including the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH) and the National Order of Lawyers, which have distinctly different economic and political interests. The unification of all of these groups in the National Quartet was pivotal to the Quartet's success, as all these groups appealed to very broad constituencies. Unifying on a political agenda, instead of an economic one, strengthens the argument that in budding democracies, the primary function of organized labor should be to serve as a *political* force with an economic focus, not the other way around. This emphasis on coalition-building around a political agenda makes the UGTT unique, and underscores its willingness to buck the government whenever it suits the interests of the organization's working constituents. Ultimately, the UGTT's senior leadership took steps to capitalize on its historical credibility and the unique opportunity the Jasmine Revolution provided.

Put simply, Tunisians trusted the UGTT. As the data cited above indicates, UGTT political favorability was higher than that of any other entity in Tunisia, and comes from a number of sources. Though the UGTT's co-opted national leadership undoubtedly made a number of mistakes and acquiesced to the policy objectives of both Bourguiba and Ben Ali, the political landscape in Tunisia after the revolution was in utter chaos, and Tunisians wanted a political force which they trusted and which had familiarity with the political arena, but which was not entirely tied to the former regimes. Beyond the chaotic political landscape, and the associated assassinations which emerged in the wake of the caretaker and interim governments, displeasure with the Troika coalition opened the door to press forward on creating a genuinely democratic framework for Tunisian politics.

However, because significant parts the UGTT acted for generations in a way which evoked trust, at least at the grassroots level, crisis was averted. Though the UGTT clearly had political ambitions, particularly once Nidaa Tounes emerged (which faced criticism that it too was too closely tied to Ben Ali), the UGTT acted as honest mediators.

Historical Considerations in Sum

When considering the histories of both Egyptian and Tunisian organized labor, a number of stark contrasts appear. First, the ETUF was clearly much more thoroughly attached to the state apparatus than the UGTT, though UGTT senior and national leadership also worked closely with regimes at the expense of other labor groups (Wilder 2016, 316). The perception of corporatism and its willingness to crush other labor unions for its own gain hampered the ETUF's ability to develop any trust among its constituents and the middle class, which formed the backbone of the UGTT's coalition. Overall, the UGTT did a much better job than the ETUF at building bridges with other actors in civil society, particularly other employers and human rights groups. As a result, the UGTT and its partners assumed a leading role in the transition process, while the ETUF remained the lapdog of a failed regime. The UGTT straddled the line between being a puppet nationally and autonomy locally.

Second, the different hierarchical structures of the UGTT and ETUF contributed to the UGTT's success and the ETUF's failure to exert meaningful change during the attempt to transition toward democracy. While the ETUF fostered a system of strict hierarchy at the regime's behest, limiting the ability for local unionists to provide their

input and organize, the UGTT, advertently or otherwise, allowed for the rise of localized "democracies" within many of its regional chapters. This democratic experience pushed local unionists to challenge the co-opted national organizational hierarchy, eventually leading the national leadership to fold during the Arab Spring uprisings. Tellingly, senior ETUF leadership never officially endorsed the protests, while their counterparts in the UGTT did.

Third, Tunisians may have felt more emboldened to buck the desires of the state than Egyptians in two ways. First, the geographical distribution of both countries impacts the ability to influence civil society policy. In Egypt, as has been mentioned, the overwhelming majority of the population lives concentrated in 4 percent of Egypt's territory, along the Nile River and its Delta, underscoring why leaders for over three thousand years have been able to exert a remarkable level of control. In contrast, while Tunisia is much smaller (about the size of the state of Georgia in the U.S.), and the northern half of the country was and arguably is much more committed to the former regimes, the southern half of the country has historically had a higher proclivity for independence, particularly because the state under Bourguiba and Ben Ali failed to invest in that part of the country. As a result, rank-and-file unionists and local leadership in southern Tunisia did not feel beholden to the state. Second, as has been mentioned in the section regarding Tunisian and Egyptian history, Egyptians were subjected to brutal punishments if they were caught undermining the state or the "Arab socialist" cause under Nasser and later "Egyptianism" under Sadat. The ETUF simply felt less emboldened to to thumb their nose at state leadership. The concern of going the way of

the Islamists, communists, and other groups in Egypt kept them in line, and a culture of fear resulted in total ETUF cooptation. While professional syndicates may have served as a release valve to some extent in Egypt, Egyptian leaders were more likely to be more heavy-handed than their Tunisian counterparts. In contrast, the population feared Tunisian leaders less, particularly because they were less brutal than their Egyptian counterparts, though brutality and state-sanctioned political murders certainly existed. As a result, while corporatism existed in the upper leadership of the UGTT, local chapters may have felt emboldened to act independently of national leadership, simply because they were less concerned with being arrested by the secret police and carted off to concentration camps, as was often the case in Nasser's Egypt. Ultimately, local, and to some degree national, leadership of the UGTT felt comfortable tugging on the leash held by the state in an effort to assert themselves, while ETUF leaders did not feel the same degree of security in their positions.

Factor Two: Unionization of the Total Labor Force

While the historical contexts of both the ETUF and the UGTT are crucial in understanding the impact of organized labor in the attempted transitions to democracy in Egypt and Tunisia, examining the role of total labor force unionization also serves as a significant indicator of union strength. "Total labor force unionization" refers to the percentage of the total labor force which belongs to labor unions.
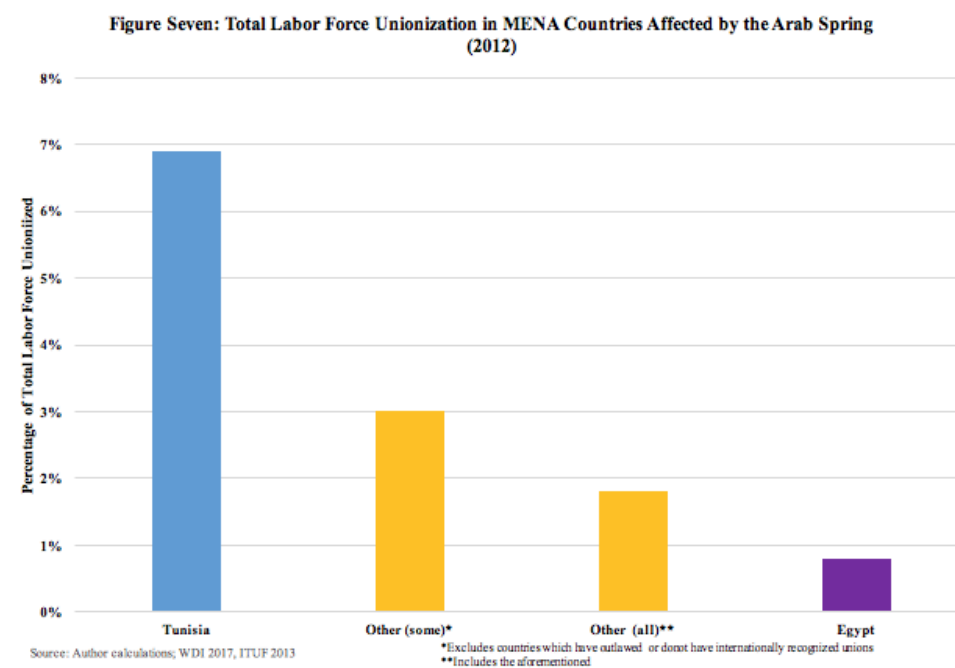
Both the UGTT and ETUF are loosely considered legacy unions[30] - though they were not both created by the state, they each worked with the state in non-democratic ways. Though legacy unions are lucky because they have a consistent base, they have to adjust to new political realities. By definition, union leadership is no longer co-opted under a democratic system because in order for a democracy to be legitimate, an independent civil society must exist. However, before examining the critical and effective nature of using total labor force unionization as a metric to determine union strength, I consider a common criticism of using union size. Some scholars, including Levitsky and Mainwaring (2006, 38), argue that using the metric of total labor force unionization is problematic for two major reasons: corporatism, and size may not necessarily indicate strength, as indicated in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s. They argue that because regimes can compel workers to join a co-opted union, size misrepresents strength. They argue that the actual *engagement* of the workers matters more. I partially agree. The notion that the size of a union is the sole deciding factor of union strength would be foolish. However, I reject Levitsky's and Mainwaring's (2006, 38) notion that total labor force unionization should not be considered at all - while in some cases "small but mighty" is the rule, burgeoning and new democracies require a critical mass and substantive buy-in. Without the consent of the many, civil society has a very low chance of bringing about change.

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[30]One key advantage of "legacy unions" is their size. As Caraway (2008, 1373) notes, using the case study of Indonesia, the size of unions which either participate in the transition to democracy or simply exist after the transition is their size. Moreover, Levitsky and Mainwaring (2006, 39) found union size is particularly impactful when the rank-and-file unionists generally have similar interests and goals, which, as aforementioned in the case of the UGTT (and not in the case of the ETUF) is significant.

Why Does Size Matter? The Impact of Union Size in Determining Their Strength

The theory that "size matters" applies more broadly in the case of new democracies generally. Valenzuela's (1989, 453) analysis of organized labor's role in Latin American democratization notes that most countries which consolidated had low to moderate rates of unionization compared to more established democracies, ranging from 10% to 30%. While Tunisia falls just outside that range, demonstrated by Figure Seven, in aggregate the county outperforms its Middle Eastern and North African peers, and *dramatically* outperforms Egypt.

Figure Seven: Total Labor Force Unionization in MENA Countries Affected by the Arab Spring (2012)

Source: Author calculations; WDI 2017, ITUF 2013

*Excludes countries which have outlawed or donot have internationally recognized unions
**Includes the aforementioned

The importance of total labor force unionization is two-fold. First, as Gene Adler and Eddie Webster (1995, 82) explain, the wide range of campaigns, protests, sit-ins, and disruption on the shop floor open the door to wider and more meaningful political changes, either when national and local leadership align, or when neither bows to

pressure initiated by the other. In order for the efforts of the democratic consolidation to work, many need to be engaged. While Adler and Webster write in the context of South Africa, which had much deeper ethnic and sectarian strife than either Tunisia or Egypt, these two cases confirm that strength in union numbers exists. In order to affect meaningful change, a critical mass must exist. Ultimately, sheer volume matters in terms of compelling decision-makers to listen to the opinions of organized workers.

Beyond critical mass, national, regional, and/or local union leadership need to have the ability to directly impact communities in order to ensure union vibrancy. Ensuring this impact generally requires manpower, resources, and supporters who can rapidly mobilize the population. Larger labor unions are able to achieve this outreach far better than smaller and less connected organizations. In Tunisia, the size and local autonomy of the UGTT allowed for organizational strength and influence both during the uprisings and the consolidation process (Angrist 2013, 555). Size mattered as a means of moving bodies and exacting influence. The effort to mobilize individuals is especially helpful if the size of a labor union is supported by robust union leadership on all levels, though I argue above that even the ability to legitimately and meaningfully mobilize on the local level is sufficient. Coupled with the UGTT's history of stronger local labor union democratization than the ETUF, the size of the former on a total labor force basis allowed more people to be exposed to the notion that the UGTT, or at least the local chapters, were doing an effective job in recognizing the needs of membership. In effect, I argue that greater decentralization of power, combined with proportionately more people, empowered the UGTT to serve as a critical conduit for democracy.

Second, by legitimately representing more people, organized labor was and is regarded as more trustworthy by both the rank-and-file in Tunisia and by the regime, and thus has more sway. In other words, labor unions will be regarded by the population as an integral part of a country's national fabric. In the case of well-regarded unions, they constitute a major power resource for the masses, who lack power. By mobilizing more people through the organization, large unions can exert more power and influence (Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens 1997, 324), and serve as a more effective voice for the nation. This difference in organizational capacity and ability to mobilize is no more apparent than it was during the Arab Spring. As Beissinger, Jamal, and Mazur (2015, 15) note, 58 percent of union and professional syndicate members in Tunisia participated in the revolution, compared to 15 percent of non-members, while in Egypt, only 19 percent of Egyptian union members participated in an effort to support the uprisings compared to 7 percent of non-members. Beissinger, Jamal, and Mazur (2015, 5) underscore that the composition of the protests were different - the uprisings in Egypt were youthful and middle class in nature, while the protests in Tunisia featured a coalition of youth, the middle class, and the working class. Additionally, both ETUF and UGTT senior leadership supported their respective regime patrons early on in the protests. However, as the protests evolved, UGTT senior leadership belatedly took the side of their local union chapters. While professional syndicates in Tunisia might pale in comparison to their Egyptian counterparts, the lack of a robust and organized working class in Egypt hamstrung efforts by those advocating for democracy, while the former could leverage existing relationships.

Moreover, in the aftermath of political discord in Tunisia in 2012, the ability of the UGTT's unionists to voice displeasure, and to demand that the Troika government make changes to be more representative, was strengthened by their appeal across the country. As has been discussed and defined previously, the role of peak organizations, labor groups, and civil society more broadly is to aggregate opinions and then articulate them in a way which powerbrokers respect or at least understand. While size alone does not determine an organization's effectiveness as a megaphone, if enough people *believe* that the union acts as an effective advocate of communal interests, and subsequently workers join and stay actively engaged in union activities, the size of the union *does* matter. This reality can be seen clearly when comparing Tunisia and Egypt. In Tunisia, the public trust vested in the UGTT made them a "kingmaker" (Omri 2013), as the UGTT opted not to form their own political party and instead threw their support behind democracy more broadly.

As mentioned above, the UGTT alone had the public credibility to serve in this role, as enough people, including those in political positions, trusted their motives. In contrast, because of the proportionally and relatively small size of the ETUF, and its failure to keep local unionists engaged in a meaningful way, the Egyptian public considered the ETUF an empty and totally co-opted shell (Bellin 2004, 139). When comparing the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, the percentage of unionization of the total labor force clearly plays a significant role in determining the union's effectiveness in the consolidation process. Much of this is foundational - without the UGTT's historic strength, the level of interest in joining the union and being active in it would have been

less. In contrast, because the ETUF failed to keep it's small ranks engaged, they could not gain momentum.

Factor Three: The Role of Outside Actors

External factors also hindered the ETUF, while benefiting the UGTT. Broadly, international labor cooperation is critical to the sustainability of each individual country's labor movement, as global interconnectedness allows for greater collaboration and the discussion of best practices (Sengenberger 2013, 10). International trade union solidarity has a history of being on the forefront of global economic and political issues, though as globalization has expanded and free market capitalism has beaten back socialist impulses around the world, particularly in developing countries, international labor has been weakened. However, in developing countries which lack democracy (and, typically by extension, robust human rights), this solidarity plays an important role in determining which unions survive and make a difference in the democratic arena and which do not. Successful domestic unions take their cues from their international counterparts, and from standards set up by the organizations which govern international labor.[31]

In the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, the "picking and choosing" with whom to engage by international labor groups and the international community can be viewed through two distinct lenses. First, the level of integration into the global labor community has been quite different for Tunisia and Egypt. The UGTT was the first independent labor

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[31]Richard Hyman (2005, 140) outlines the four items international labor groups teach less established unions: "agitation, organization, bureaucracy, diplomacy." While many labor groups do well with "agitation," many in developing countries with less of a history of democracy fail to develop robust organizations and bureaucracies. In these cases, international labor groups provide support and guidance, though they typically require a commitment to certain norms, such as a fair and free elections in the leadership process.

union in Africa and was a founding member of the International Trade Union

Confederation (ITUC). Furthermore, Tunisian labor has a genuine history of

independence from political elites, in spite of the authoritarian tendencies discussed. As a

result, the UGTT had the credibility to be active participants in the International Labor

Organization's (ILO) deliberations, and to participate in drafting its governing documents

(Hartshorn 2018, 126). Moreover, the UGTT received support from a number of Western

and other global sponsors, including the AFL-CIO and the Solidarity Center in the United

States (Toensing 2011). By choosing the UGTT as a gold standard in the Middle East and

Africa when it comes to labor strength, the global community helped the UGTT succeed.

In contrast, while international labor organizations recognized the value of the

ETUF upon its founding in 1957, internal and governance failures of the ETUF beginning

in the mid-1970s precipitated a movement by the international community to remove

support for the ETUF. This change began in 1992, when USAID (Sullivan, Barrett, and

Iskander 1992, 10) published a report underscoring the lack of a truly independent

Egyptian labor movement. While both the UGTT and the ETUF had murky records of

independence from autocratic leaders of their respective countries, the ETUF failed to

capitalize on internal reforms like the UGTT did. In 2003, the Solidarity Center shut

down its Cairo office, and the Egyptian labor movement was left to fend for itself in an

increasingly volatile environment. Egyptian organized labor still has no international

recognition today, as the international labor community determined that recognizing the

ETUF would de-legitimize organized labor more broadly, because of the concerns

regarding how the lack of democracy in the ETUF's leadership (Bishara 2014, 2). The

failure of Egyptian organized labor to integrate with the international community, and receive its support, underscores the disadvantage the ETUF faces. This disadvantage particularly comes to light when states, such as Egypt, do not have a sound labor infrastructure on which to build a robust organization (Acconcia 2016). These political "externalities" (Acemoglu and Robinson 2013, 173) play a substantive role in determining the success of these organizations. In this way, groups like the AFL-CIO can pressure the U.S. government to support efforts in Egypt and Tunisia; but, if the global link does not exist, little can be done, and credibility is lost.

These credibility considerations also affected the international community's reaction to the events which unfolded immediately following the revolution and in the subsequent consolidation process. On one hand, the international community lauded the National Quartet for its role in the consolidation process, reflected in the awarding of the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize to the Quartet. Obviously, this honor was well-received in Tunisia across party, ethnic, and religious lines, as many attributed the success of the National Dialogue Quartet to preserving the country's democracy (Ben Salem 2016, 104). Many in the Arab World and the West consider the National Quartet as a "model for other countries" to achieve democracy (Chayes 2014). The UGTT clearly deserved this international support and domestic credibility. In contrast, the ETUF has effectively no legitimacy in the country or abroad, as a result of the ETUF's history of total subjugation to government control and its attempted control over truly independent labor groups in Egypt (Beinin 2012). This legitimacy gap essentially hamstrung Egyptian labor

from playing any meaningful role in democratization. Ultimately, the ETUF's failure to truly reform as a body diminished international interest in investing in it.

V. Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have sought to answer a straightforward question: "After the Arab Spring, why did Tunisia successfully transition to greater democracy, while Egypt regressed back to an authoritarian state?" My argument, that the ability of organized labor to serve as a unifying and democratizing force plays a large role in the success of democratic transition, has been robustly supported. I underscored that no other factor - not Islamists, not youth participation and not any other civic group - played as large of a role in the transition toward democracy. I demonstrated that the UGTT, buoyed by its historical legitimacy, centered on rank-and-file resistance to the state, overall size, and support from outside actors, had the ability to bring about change in one of the most tumultuous political periods of our time. Meanwhile, the ETUF, which lacked all of the above, failed to secure democratic freedoms for the members it ostensibly represents. While in the eyes of Western observers Tunisia and Egypt seemed to run parallel to each other for nearly sixty years, Mohamed Bouazizi's fearless act inspired a generation, a community, and a critical part of civil society to rise above the fray and to act to meaningfully change their nation.

This study concludes after the UGTT won the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize following the 2014 parliamentary elections. However, in the past three years, much has changed in both Tunisia and Egypt. In Tunisia, the UGTT has returned to serving as an economic

conduit, and as a check on the Nidaa Tounes government, which many view as too similar to the Ben Ali regime. In September 2017, the Tunisian parliament, ruled by the Nidaa Tounes-Ennahda grand coalition (with the minority parties boycotting the proceedings) passed a law which granted amnesty to officials accused of corruption under the Ben Ali regime - even this legislation was a more watered-down version of an original plan which would have extended amnesty to corrupt businessmen as well (Amara 2017). While proponents argued that exclusion of these actors hinders Tunisia, detractors such as opposition lawmaker Ammar Amroussia have referred to this legislation as a "counter-revolution" (Amara 2017). Predictably, political unrest broke out in response to the law. This unrest coincides with a number of problematic considerations for Tunisian democracy. First, the Essebsi government has pushed back municipal elections four times in the past six months, from September 18, 2017 to May 6, 2018; the last round of municipal elections in Tunisia were held in 2010. This postponement of elections has called the democratic nature of Tunisia into question, and activists are excited to go back to the ballot box.

Second, Tunisia's national security is at a higher risk than at any point before the revolution. Although Bourguiba and Ben Ali were autocrats, their heavy-handed nature ensured some degree of stability within the country (Caryl 2016). Curiously, Tunisia has the highest number of foreign nationals enlisted in the Islamic State's forces (Kausch 2015), and as the Islamic State continues to run amok in neighboring Libya, now a failed state, many have grown concerned that the Essebsi government will revert to hard-liner, anti-Islamist tactics perpetrated by his political forbearers. Finally, Tunisia's state of

economic disrepair has also contributed to mild democratic backsliding (EIU 2018). Eighty-nine percent of Tunisians believe that corruption is worse now than it was in 2011 (Miller and Taylor 2017), but the government is bloated with unnecessary workers, and terrorist attacks in the city of Sousse have led to a 20% decrease in foreign tourism compared to the same period in 2014, contributing to a two percentage point lower than predicted growth in the economy (Kim 2015). As a result, unemployment has increased, and a clamoring for economic opportunity, which brought down Ennahda, has reared its head once more. Unfortunately, many have begun to make the case that the UGTT contributed to this backsliding. Mischa Benoit-Lavelle (2016, 2) argues that Tunisia's bloated public sector of 800,000 workers out of four million nationwide holds the country back. She underscores that the UGTT's push for wage increases, a heavy reliance on strikes, and all-around absenteeism by UGTT-supported workers has stifled the economy and ballooned inflation and debt. Because the country's economy and the government are so intertwined, the latter has increased wages instead of invested in infrastructure and human capital programs.

This state of affairs returns us squarely to an argument I made above: the UGTT best serves Tunisia as a political support system, and not as an economic one. In the coming months and years, the different arms of the Tunisian government, business community, and civil society must reach some sort of consensus so the country can move forward. These groups must work in concert to avoid democratic backsliding.

On the other hand, Egypt has continued its sustained democratic backsliding since al-Sisi assumed power. Egypt's latest round of elections were held between March 26-28,

2018. To nobody's surprise, al-Sisi blocked or coerced a number of potential presidential

contenders from joining the race (El-Tablawy 2018), and "won" the election by a wide

margin. Moreover, a number of political and social setbacks have continued to sew

discontent within the country. The poverty rate has jumped to 25% in two years, currency

devaluation led to a steep increase in the cost of living, and Egypt is one of four countries

out of 115 where respondents said quality of life has decreased every year since 2014

(*The Guardian* 2018). In classic autocrat form, al-Sisi has moved to build a $41 billion

new capital city, appropriately called "New Cairo" (Kingsley 2015). As one would

expect, after a poll was released in January 2017 showing that al-Sisi's popularity had

fallen by 14% since the counter-coup in 2013, the Egyptian government warned

Egyptians not to participate in public polling - transparency be damned (Ismail 2017).

Egypt's downward spiral can be explained by three factors: political sclerosis, the

threat of radical Islam, and "al-Sisi's iron grip" (Stevenson 2017). In his article,

Stevenson notes that unemployment has rapidly climbed and prices for food staples have

increased dramatically. He continues by noting that a 2016 IMF campaign to loan Egypt

$12 billion affected Egyptian structural issues by privatizing too rapidly, and caused

steep increases in the price of cooking oil and sugar. An attempt to increase the salaries

of those in the civil service simply increased government debt, and inflation leaped to

31.5% - making everyday life exceptionally hard for Egyptians. The second and third

factors play into one another: al-Sisi's iron grip, which includes similar tactics seen under

Mubarak, Sadat, and Nasser, have increased the amount of foreign and domestic terrorists

attempting to wreck havoc across the country. Ultimately, al-Sisi's brutality feeds

directly into extremist narratives, and his brutal crackdown on moderate Islamist parties in Egypt has stymied any chance to form alliances.

As I discussed in the literature review, broad coalition building is immensely important, on all levels.[32] Clearly, the coalitions in both Tunisia and Egypt are suffering, and the democracies are regressing. Both countries are at a critical juncture: how can state governing institutions and civil society work to either preserve democracy or assist in its demise in both Tunisia and Egypt? This question also should be asked in regards to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa, as the role of organized labor and other stalwarts of civil society can likely play a role in the consolidation process. Ultimately, this study underscores how important institutions truly are in supporting the transition toward democracy. Future research could and should examine when economic and political corporatist groups begin to move away from a newly-democratic state in favor of their own interests, as well as to how these research findings can apply to the broader Middle East.

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[32]Among others, forming cross-class coalitions is an important aspect of creating the necessary circumstances for democracy to grow. Jack Goldstone (2011) writes about the importance of cross-class coalitions and the role which organized labor plays in building those coalitions. He deduced that coalitions of unionists, joined by other associations and certain age demographics, played a major role in determining the success of the transitions. Goldstone alludes to the importance of cross-demographic coalition building and outlines three possible outcomes: the creation of a constructive opposition, political paralysis, or polarization.

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