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„State resilience in post-Arab Spring settings:

Case of Tunisia "

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Declaration of authorship

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. All direct or indirect sources used are acknowledged as references.

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<div align="right">Barbora Spáčilová</div>

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Abstract

As it seemed in the initial stage of this research, the only countries, relatively capable of being the security and stability "guardians" of the Middle East and North African region could be Tunisia and Morocco. Yet, neither of them remained unaffected by the recent changes. The main goal of this work is to identify and describe the degree of resilience of Tunisian state: against mainly internal but to some degree also external destabilizing factors.

This thesis will research the topic based on the concept of political settlements. It will identify the core political settlement relevant actors and factions of society, then separately look at their interests. These encompass both formal institutions, state agencies and their special engagements, as well as omni-societal organizations, private sector interests, elite groups threatening the stability of the political settlement and so on. Parks and Cole, who represent a starting point for the analysis, characterize political settlements based on four elements: actors, power, interests, and institutions. The conflict and connected changes in the North African region are ongoing, primary sources might be therefore scarce or fairly unavailable. Nevertheless, the author will look into think-tanks' analyses, indexes, and national, regional and foreign media perspectives to map the political settlements' outlines.

The country's system reached a point where political parties are a major, although not the only, carrier of political will and process. The inner circle of influence has developed hand in hand with of both formal and informal elites, rather than exclusively amongst one of these. As one can see from the research, majority of the indicators show severe concerns over the resilience of the settlement. Those that show positive outlooks are rather of an institutional than informal character and, unfortunately, often remain only on paper.

Key words: Mapping Political Settlements, Tunisian state, State resilience, Politics in Maghreb

Abstrakt

Die Anfangsphase dieser Forschungsarbeit führte darauf hin, dass die einzigen Staaten, die relativ in der Lage wären, die Sicherheit und Stabilität in der Region Mittlerer Osten und Nordafrika bewahren zu können, Tunesien und Marokko seien. Jedoch blieb keiner der beiden von den jüngsten Veränderungen unbeeinflusst. Das Hauptziel dieser Arbeit ist es, herauszufinden und zu beschreiben wie stabil der tunesische Staat ist: entgegen hauptsächlich interne, aber zu einem bestimmten Grade auch externe destabilisierenden Faktoren. Die Forschungsbasis für diese Arbeit ist das Konzept der Politischen Settlements.

Zuerst werden die für die Politischen Settlements am meisten relevanten Akteure und Interessensgruppen der Gesellschaft bestimmt, dann wird individuell auf ihre Interessen eingegangen. Dazu gehören sowohl formale Institutionen, staatliche Einrichtungen und ihre besonderen Einheiten, als auch omnigesellschaftliche Organisationen, das Interesse der Privatwirtschaft, elitäre Gruppen, die die Stabilität des Politischen Settlements gefährden usw. Als Ausgangspunkt für die Analyse dient Parks und Coles Charakterisierung von Politischen Settlements, die auf vier Elementen basiert: Akteure, Macht, Interessen, Institutionen. Da der Konflikt und die daraus folgenden Veränderungen in der Region Nordafrika fortlaufend sind, sind Primärressourcen karg oder gänzlich nicht verfügbar. Nichtsdestotrotz befasst sich der Autor mit Thinktank-Analysen, Indexen und nationalen, regionalen und ausländischen Medienperspektiven um die Grundzüge der Politischen Settlements festzulegen.

Das System des Landes hat einen Punkt erreicht, an dem politische Parteien zwar wesentliche Träger des politischen Willens und der Prozesse sind, aber dabei nicht die einzigen sind. Der innere Einflussbereich hat Seite an Seite sowohl formale als auch informale Eliten entwickelt. Wie man der Forschungsarbeit entnehmen kann, zeigen die meisten Indikatoren schwerwiegende Bedenken gegenüber der Stabilität des Settlements auf. Diejenigen Indikatoren, die positive Aussichten aufzeigen, sind eher institutionellen Charakters und bleiben leider oft nur in Debatten und auf dem Papier bestehen.

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1. Introduction

Rather later than sooner has the European Union recognized the strategic importance of the Middle East and North African (MENA) region, especially when talking about its stability and the effect on security of the continent. In *Towards a new European security strategy? Assessing the impact of changes in the global security environment* also the European Parliament admits it overlooked the problem for several years, maybe decades. Currently, interests in the region are addressed through the Southern Dimension, which in practice means mostly economic injections or packages rather than direct involvement. (Directorate-General for External Policies 2015) In the recent past, shortly before the outburst of the Arab Spring, EU co-established the Union for the Mediterranean to enhance the civil society and strengthen the governance in certain countries. This more or less failed initiative often received criticism. (Pace 2009) At that point of time, this hesitant effort to change the approach has also manifested in the reluctance of the western academic community to focus their lenses on the region.

In the meantime, the region underwent a rampant turmoil. As it seemed in the initial stage of this research, the only countries relatively capable of being the security and stability "guardians" of the region could be Tunisia and Morocco. Yet, neither of these remained unaffected by the changes. The present work will aim to analyze the resilience of the Tunisian state within the settings of post-Arab Spring environment, reflecting especially on the presence of the failed Libyan state and undemocratic Algeria as direct neighbors and the involvement of the Gulf countries in this regions' affairs. As will be explained below, the assessment of the political settings will happen on volatility-stability and inclusiveness-exclusiveness axes. Provided the current state of the political settlement of Tunisia with numerous non-state actors influencing the society and the political milieu, the inclusiveness of the settlement will be considered of high importance.

The apparatus I am going to turn to in this work is the framework of political settlements. As described in the further sections, political settlements are, according to

many, connected closely to the stability and resilience of the political system and operate with (in)formal arrangements of power. The assessment of resilience of the Tunisian state towards external forces will happen primarily based on the methodology developed by Parks and Cole in their paper *POLITICAL SETTLEMENTS: Implications for International Development Policy and Practice.* Taking into consideration several various actors of the Tunisian settlement, the analysis will look into their actions and dynamics both within and beyond the institutional/legal polity of the country.

Goals and structure of this work

The main goal of this work is to identify and describe the degree of resilience of Tunisian state against mainly internal but to a certain extent also external destabilizing factors. The conclusions of the analysis will contain outlook for both national and regional situations. Therefore, this text might be used in two ways – as a stepping-stone to further analysis of the Maghreb region, or as a further developmental stage of applied political settlements concept.

As the instable situation is still ongoing, not much has been done in the academic field to recognize and analyze this issue. When the Arab Spring came, the society was mostly empowered enough to push for a regime or government to change, yet not enough to provide for a transition to a reformed state. The degree to which the citizens of the given country possessed the civic "know-how" reflected to a certain extent on the development of the transition. So while in some countries this has led to fast-paced, relatively peaceful changes, in others it caused severe problems (Libya, Egypt), ending in some cases with wars or, on the other hand, had purely cosmetic effects (Algeria). (Salamey 2015, Lesch & Haas 2013)

As for the structure, the author will first state the research questions. Second, the work will explain the concept of political settlements, its current status in both conceptual academic research, applied research and its functional application. More importantly, it will lay out the concept as understood for the purposes of this work, as well as the methodology of this research. Since political settlements are rather a new framework, with extensive labor-pain, the second chapter will aim to narrow these struggles down

in order for this work to be able to connect it with the methodology used. It will check how do the political settlements connect with open-polity models when looking at stability and resilience of states and explain the different understandings of it. Moreover, political settlements might tend to picture a specific moment of a given society; yet, Parks and Cole offer also a point of view of how the different interests change a given settlement. Third, the work will briefly describe the settings in which the current Tunisian state operates externally. This involves looking at the other western MENA countries. Mostly, the chapter focuses on picturing the political and historical setting of Tunisian immediate neighborhood. The recent history of Maghreb was rather a storming one: witnessing both iron-fist authoritative regimes, as well as situations not far distant from the Hobbesian natural order, which logically affected Tunisian domestic matters. Furthermore, some space will be given to the understanding of Tunisian political reality from the historical perspective, as this fundamentally formed the identities that today's settlement is operating with.

The focal point will be naturally the analysis itself, encompassing rather secondary, but also primary data analysis. It will identify the core political settlement relevant actors and factions of society, then separately look at their interests. These encompass both formal institutions, state agencies and their special engagements, as well as omni-societal organizations, private sector interests, elite groups threatening the stability of the political settlement and so on. As will be explained below, the final assessment of the political setting, actors and forces amongst them will happen on volatility-stability and inclusiveness-exclusiveness axes. Provided the current state of the political settlement of Tunisia with numerous non-state actors influencing the society and the political milieu, the inclusiveness of the settlement will be considered of high importance. Towards the end, the author will stress the development within the country in the course of the work on this paper. Finally, the work will briefly give out a handful of options for further research both from the theoretical and applied perspective.

Research Questions

What is the degree of resilience of the Tunisian state against corroding forces from both external and internal sources?

Sub-questions:

A) What are the actors in the primary political settlement of Tunisia?

B) What are the institutions of the primary political settlement of Tunisia?

C) What are the interests of the primary political settlement of Tunisia?

D) How does the primary political settlement of Tunisia look like?

E) What stability gaps are present in the current primary political settlement of Tunisia?

The main research question allows the author to examine the overall ability of the Tunisian state to resist forces. Be it coming from the outside or from within, they could destabilize the country far more than would be desirable. The sub-questions will then serve to approach the phenomena from different perspectives. These will enable the understanding of current political settlement's map, its actors, forces and institutions. Last but not least, the final question will look into the gaps of the settlement in terms of stability-volatility axes.

2. Theoretical framework

Looking at political settlements in an externally centered view

For a long time, the concept of civil wars was understood in the academic research as a fully internal matter. The framework of closed polity did focus on internal actors, histories, but also effects of civil wars. Recently, however, scholars who put the phenomena into the framework of open international system are gaining grounds. Although, as Gleditsch puts it, often we can hear about the effects of international structures on the spread of conflicts rather than about complex analysis of both internal and external factors. (Gleditsch 2007) According to De Maio, both the domestic environment and international rules and patterns play a crucial role. We have been witnessing severe regionalization and transnationalization of conflicts in the past decades. (De Maio 2010) By the 9/11 the latest, the international community had to admit that these "troubling" states might have profound effect on the global international environment. (Geiss 2009) According to Salehyan, they even possess the unique ability to "shelter" rebels of a domestic conflict, against various threats:

> *"Although the state is constrained by international borders, social actors— including migrant diasporas and opposition groups—can and often do organize transnationally, indicating that they are less constrained by such boundaries. This incongruence between territorial nation-states and mobile citizens suggests that transnational opposition groups can engage in activities that would normally be proscribed domestically; the laws of the state (with rare exceptions) apply to only its territory. If rebel groups can use other territories as a base of operations, thereby escaping the jurisdiction and repressive capabilities of the state, they can significantly lower the costs of mobilizing and sustaining an insurgency."* (Salehyan 2007: 221)

However, needles to go as far as a spillover of a war is. Others emphasize also likely economic impact. Although there are without question cases in which one country can economically benefit from their neighbor's turmoil, evidence shows it is rather sporadic.

Chua rather implies that there is a correlation between the regional instability and economic growth:

> *"First, regional instability disrupts trade flows. [...] Second, regional instability forces substantial increases in military outlays, which draws resources from other productive activities. Third, [...] this shift from equipment towards machinery and transport investment is likely to reduce economic growth."* (Ades & Chua 1993: 23)

This work is an attempt to connect the framework of political settlements with the ability of a given state to defend itself both politically and economically against changes of power settings connected to presence of an unstable environment.

Political settlements

Political settlements theories emerged only quite recently in both the fields of political science and practice. (Richmond 2013, Menocal 2015, Bell 2015) The concept has been criticized for long time for not having conceptual clarity, as well as for not being able to bridge the gap between the theory and its translation into specific methodology. Some would even argue it is a face-lifted and renamed concept rather than a new one. (Bell 2015, Kelsall 2016) Yet, as some say today, eventually it helped to connect peacebuilding theories with statebuilding efforts. (Ingram 2014) In any case we talk about a concept which operates with a) the common sense of the term, b) the academic milieu wanting further research and c) the peace seeking and building practitioners. (Bell 2015)

The different understandings

The concept itself turned at first to the instrumentarium of political economy. The authors North, Wallis and Weingast, for example, speak of categorizing of social "orders" based on the extent of their openness for non-elite actors. Meant quite clearly in terms of access to rents and power distribution first of all. (North et al. 2009) Yet, others look at it rather as a developmental stage of understanding of how a state becomes to be in both historical and polit-philosophical sense. Richmond implies the existence of four

historical stages of peace establishment process. In the beginning, the states operated in the scope of negative peace and security dilemma. Second, statebuilding approaches introduced also the prosperity and market access measures. Third, the liberal peacebuilding efforts referred to peace as anchored in international norms and democratic framework. While this approach was highly complex and multi-dimensional, it was inherently missing the political aspect of peace. Moreover it was blindly looking at peacebuilding norms as universally fitting, which has lead in numerous cases to failure of these efforts. Richmond then suggests that the peace formation process based on understanding of local political settlements is the fourth stage. It takes into consideration local and indigenous actors and dynamics, making it sensitive towards the environment. (Richmond 2013) This understanding based on previously mentioned economics approach as well as initial Khan's work *State Failure in Weak States: A Critique of New Institutionalist Explanations* constitutes the fundamental basis of political settlements approach. Khan attempted to explain why similar institutions work differently (or fail) in different situations. He came to the conclusion that this has to do with power dynamics running in the background of those institutional settings. (Khan 1995)

Probably the most widely and commonly accepted way of understanding says that political settlements are "a common understanding, usually forged between elites, how power is organized and exercised." (Department for International Development 2015: 22) In other words it might be as well simply power settings, or informal distribution of power as is perceived by elites of a given formation. Some note that this scientific agenda then can be used to serve building communities to enhance resilient state. (DiJohn & Putzel 2009) Focusing on statebuilding paradigm, as means to achieve building of western-type states is then put aside.[1] (Gutierrez 2011)

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[1] From previous experience we see that such thinking often leads to failing programs. While in mid-1990`s peacebuilding was considered of incremental importance, the 2000s with their state failures prooved the community to be on a wrong path. (Pospisil 2013) Gutierrez lists five common underlying causes: 1. Underestimating the reach and impact of corruption, 2. Insufficient understanding of legitimacy sources in the settlement, 3. Confusion about understanding of the state capture, 4. Inability to tell symptoms from causes, 5. Overly emphasizing of elections and their outcomes, endorsing some or other form of authoritarianism. (Gutierrez 2011)

Parks and Cole, who will be a starting point for the further analysis characterize political settlements based on four elements: actors, power, interests, institutions. Actors are usually not to be seen as lone individuals (organizations) but rather as "coalitions of elite groups". In situations, which are relatively stable, usually one dominant coalition emerges alongside alternative competition. Power depends heavily on the context and can spring from several sources such as traditions, control over violence, production, etc. Interests then are the glue, which holds political settlements together, as elites (power holders) are rational actors. At the same time the might ignite PS re-negotiation if a certain agreement or is unsettling for central elites. Last, but not least, talking about both formal (laws, procedures, etc.) and informal (implicit norms, habits, agreements, etc.) institutions we are dealing with an element that is highly affected when a PS is unstable. In weaker situations, institutions are often either tied closely to informal system or they lack the capacity to assert authority on the elite alliances. (Cole & Parks 2010)

Political Settlements and state resilience

So unlike in preceding concepts, in political settlements state can not be understood as a separate concept, because as Khan notes: "Where political stability can not be maintained, a more or less rapid descent to fragmentations appears..." (Khan 2006). According to OECD, fragility of a state correlates with: the state of the political settlement, capability of the state to fulfill its minimal functions and key services, and the ability to address broader societal expectations. (OECD 2011) Putzel also offers another set of reasons why political settlements might be useful when looking at durability of states:

> „It provides a better understanding of the factors that are most likely to provoke or sustain violence in fragile states, enhance instability in others, or simply maintain the 'business as usual' politics that prevent the achievement of faster economic growth.
>
> It can lead development actors to support and value state-building, particularly achievements that underpin state resilience, such as elite bargains, or keeping

executive and legislative offices as the central sites of decision-making. This may also mean that certain policies that enable central governments to build popular support especially in the peripheries (for example, provision of extension services, review of mining contracts, land reform) will be better considered.

By appreciating the differences between fragility and resilience, development actors can avoid advocating inappropriate reforms that may actually aggravate fragility. Elections will not be seen as an automatic panacea. Downsizing and privatising state enterprises will be more carefully considered." (Gutierrez 2011: 14)

Besides, as previously described, the framework could allow for understanding of statuses and dynamics in an ever-most open-polity milieu the world is facing in the 21st century.

Method

If we say the initial obstacles of defining what political settlements are has been slowly pushed to the ground, the challenge of measurements still remains. While some institutions are working on development of indexes; others are criticizing them at the very moment. (Gutierrez 2011) In this environment, probably most comprehensive assessment methodology as of now has been introduced by Parks and Cole in *POLITICAL SETTLEMENTS: Implications for International Development Policy and Practice.* It is important to mention here that Parks and Cole themselves understand political settlements (PS) as something which is constantly being renegotiated and changed. Therefore no study can capture a settlement of a given country with validity for longer than a limited period of time. At the same time, they distinguish between so-called primary and secondary political settlements. While primary settlements refer to the national level of functioning, secondary settlements look into sub-national political milieu. These vary country to country, but in general we can say that secondary settlements are at least as complex as (sometimes even more than) the primary ones. They might interact both on peer-to-peer basis or primary-secondary settlements basis. As they open a completely new variety power settings, for the purposes of this work, these will stay out of focus.

A political settlement consists of several segments. The coalition of inner circle is the dominant one, leading the country. In general, political parties, institutions, powerful business elites, influential individuals, etc. might be part of the inner circle. In the outer circle, groups that are included, but not influential, interact with both the inner circle and general population. The so-called challenger coalitions are groups influential enough to eventually challenge both the inner and outer circle. Any system might contain more than only one challenger coalition from different positions. The different segments of population are tied with stronger or weaker links to either of these.
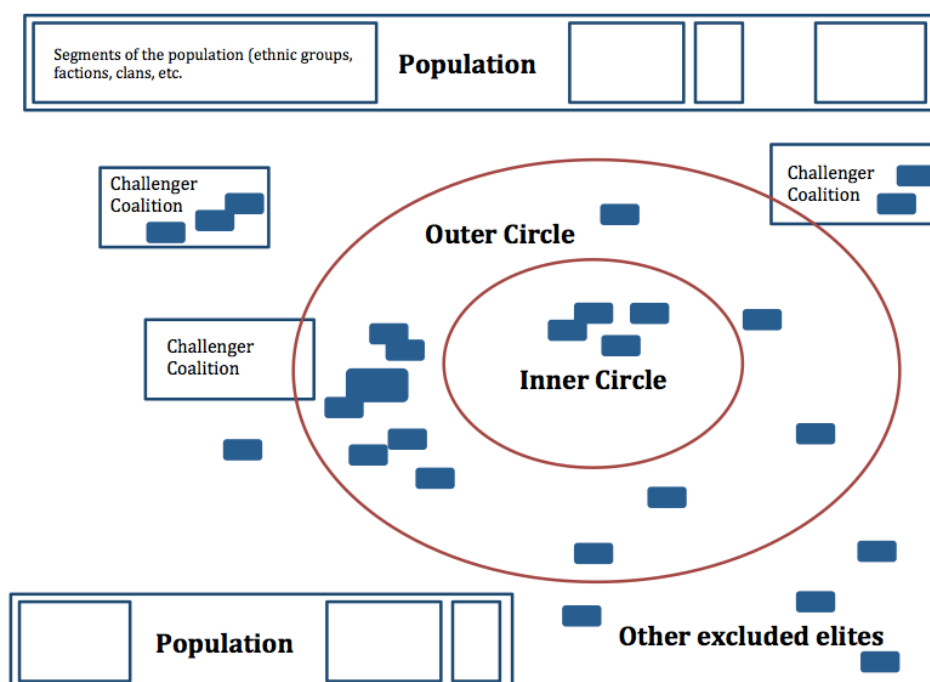
Figure 1: Political Settlement Mapping (Parks & Cole 2010)

Status quo and change in political settlements

Previously, I listed the different elements of a PS, but how is it maintained? Just like with sub-atomic particles, which are both mass and movement, also political settlements are partly a setting and partly a process. We can barely capture both at the same attempt. In the analysis below, the work mostly focuses on the static part of PS in Tunisia. Yet understanding, how a PS remains stable and/or undergoes changes helps to understand the bigger picture of causes and consequences.

Presumably, settlements do hold together under various circumstances: amongst others, local elites might use coercion to secure their control over military and police in order to

defend themselves against competing coalitions. Second, through cooptation it is possible to include competing groups into the settlement. Such a formal re-distribution of power might silence voices against the status quo. Third, ruling elites can work on building and maintaining legitimacy of institutions. In the long run this is the most sustainable solution directly linked to the stability of political settlement and its future prospects of impersonal continuity. Last but not least, the PS might be enforced from the outside through actions of the international community. (Cole & Parks 2010) As much as this way might be effective in short-term (by pumping additional capacities to the system), such actions might be in direct conflict with the potential legitimacy sources of a given PS.

Understanding how the settlements hold together tells us only half of the story. The other half, i.e. how do they change, is maybe even more complex one, dealing again with both internal and external factors:

1. Powerful, but excluded elite group "opts in" to the political settlement. This might have both positive and negative impacts, but often the PS becomes more inclusive and consolidated.
2. A new alliance emerges between excluded groups and a faction of the ruling elite. As with the previous case, also here the impact might be twofold. The danger remains in situations where the ruling coalition resists the change and might turn to coercive power as a means to remain in power. Often the case in countries with growing yet underrepresented middle-class.
3. Rise of a new and influential group.
4. Non-elite groups unite around a shared interest in wide reforms.
5. Previously state agency gains power and becomes independent from the establishment. Mostly referring to military coups, such a change is often initial, but fairly unstable.
6. Changes in legitimacy of the leadership or state emerge.
7. The coercive capacity of the dominant coalition changes.

8. Newly formed alliance of excluded elites does not opt in the system, but rather challenges the status quo. Such an action might lead to a collapse of the settlement.

9. An outside force intervenes. This might mean both coalitions of international actors, or neighboring countries, in certain sense also exile elite groups.

For purposes of this work, the sixth point is of special importance as "[...] public perceptions of the legitimacy of the state and its leadership have important implications for the resilience of a political settlement. As legitimacy erodes, potential opponents of the ruling coalition, especially excluded factions or factions within the ruling coalition, may see opportunities for changing the settlement. As a result, there is a higher chance that excluded groups will organize to challenge the status quo. If the legitimacy of the state and its leadership increases, the ruling coalition may be able to strengthen its position vis-à-vis other competing elites."(Cole & Parks 2010: 13)

Capturing the forces of change

In order to locate the forces able to change the political settlement, Parks and Cole developed a methodology plotting the PS on axis volatility/stability and inclusiveness/exclusiveness of the PS. The tool might serve to simply assess the status quo, compare one settlement in a time or compare one settlement to another.

In the table below, factors influencing the different directions of change of a political settlement are described. These will help the author in the upcoming stage of research to assess the current state and forces in the Tunisian political settlement. For general understanding, political settlements have not evolved through linear progress, but were rather a result of different forces pushing in different periods to often-opposite sides. As we will see in the upcoming chapters when looking at the development of Tunisian settlement, its` landscape underwent turbulent changes throughout the de-colonization.

Direction	Factors
Stability	- More elites opt-in - Challengers are co-opted or weakened - Increased legitimacy of the PS

|		
	- Strong institutions	
	- Increased coercive capacity	
Volatility	- More elites opt-out	
	- Challengers gaining strength	
	- Deteriorating PS legitimacy	
	- Weakened institutions	
	- Deteriorating coercive capacity	
Exclusiveness	- Narrow elite consolidates power	
	- Authoritarian rule	
	- Central elites impose rule on excluded group	
	- Political process weakened or eliminated	
Inclusiveness	- Broader coalition of elites	
	- Excluded groups gain influence	
	- Elite interest in rules-based system	
	- Elites agree to limits on power	
	- Political Process strengthened	
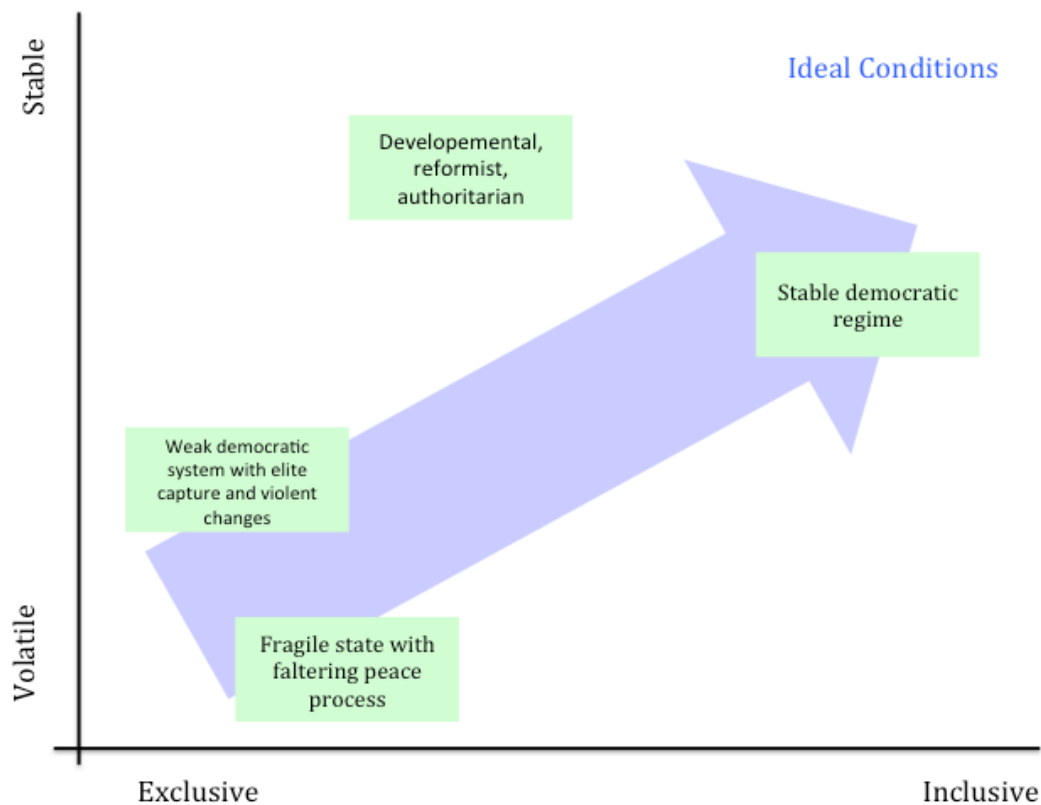
Figure 2 Rate and direction of changes (Parks & Cole 2010)

Mapping

Below is a detailed procedure of how the research was carried out. As mentioned above, this work is only focusing on the primary political settlement of Tunisia and capturing its resilience or possible forces ready to be involved in a change.

1. Identifying the elite groups. Listing key political actors with influence, both individuals and groups.
2. Plotting the constellation. Who is a member of an inner cycle of influence, who might be the challengers, etc.
3. Identification of interests of these key actors.
4. Institutional analysis. IA is the key to assessment of the level of resilience and identification of possible change agents.
5. Evaluation based on the chart Nr. 3

Criteria	Indicators	Poor Assessment	Positive Assessment
Inclusiveness	Diversity of elites included in settlement (ethnic, geographic, clan/tribal, political faction)	- Narrow elite coalition - No influence by excluded groups or non-elites - Discrimination and marginalization of excluded groups - Widespread perceptions of illegitimacy	- Diverse elite coalition - Influence by non-elite groups - Political space for dissent and debate - Political settlement widely perceived as legitimate
Stability	Level of violent contestation of political power	- Frequent violent challenges to political settlement - Presence of armed non- state actors that do not accept authority of	- Non-violent political competition - State monopoly on coercive force - Strong incentives for elites to accept

		political settlement - Risk of political settlement collapse, and emergence of new elite coalition	the political settlement
Elite Predation	Frequency and scale of predatory elite behavior	- Overt signs of elite resource capture - Elite monopolization of economic activity - Tight limits on political space, including suppression of opponents and dissent	- Limits on elite power - Institutions have adequate power of enforcement to reduce predatory behavior
Conduciveness to Development	Rates of economic growth, income, and investment Institutional capacity and independence	- High rates of poverty - Excessive concentration of wealth in narrow elite circle - Limited opportunities for entrepreneurs outside of political settlement - Low levels of external investment	- High rates of economic growth and income growth - Presence of independent regulatory institutions with substantial power of enforcement - Positive governance indicators

Sources for data analysis

The conflict and connected changes in the North African region are ongoing, primary sources might be therefore scarce or fairly unavailable. Notwithstanding, the author will

look into think-tanks' analyses, indexes, and national, regional and foreign media perspectives to map the political settlements' outlines. The challenges in this respect are mostly as mentioned above connected to the fact that we are talking about an ongoing process. This refers not only to the changing situation in the region but also, and more importantly, to the understanding of a PS as a process rather than a situation. Therefore, the settings might be changing throughout the course of writing. Second, data provided by organizations might be inaccurate due to security situation as well as due to the available infrastructure for data collection and the nature of actors, which naturally do not always publicly state the things as they are. Third, talking limitations to the analysis, language barrier should be taken into consideration: predominantly, the local media and academic research do most commonly use Tunisian Arabic and French.

In the upcoming chapter, brief introduction to the history of the state formation in Tunisia describes the settings the current settlement evolved from. Yet, in order to comprehend the situation it is important for us to take into consideration the implications the past events had for the understanding of politics in the country.

3. Settings – backgrounder

Broader milieu of the Maghreb

The so-called Maghreb region, stretching all the way from Mauretania to Libya, has historically evolved having included and excluded different areas. Yet, it is clear that these post-colonial states share certain traits. Plenty of these traits stem from the geographical positioning: The Atlas range together with Ahaggar Mountains cut the coastal areas away not only from their southern neighbors, but as well divide the countries itself into relatively rich north and the severely dry and traditional south. (Pearson Education 2003) From there we can trace also the presence of historical European influence, which otherwise left most of the continent untouched. Second, the term Maghreb itself comes from the term "al-Maghrib al-ʿArabī", which stands for "the Arabic West". This refers to the Islamic conquests, which turned the formerly mostly Berber region into an Islamic, Arab-speaking territory. Unlike the Middle East, where Islam has been for long endemic, Maghrebians took over the religion with modifications according to their former heritage. This gives these countries traditionally a bit distinct understanding of the religion compared to the Middle Eastern countries, its ideas as well as its place in the society and daily life. (Hourani 2003)

Figure 3 The map of broader Maghreb. Source: maps.google.com

As we can see from the map above (Fig. 2), Tunisia neighbors directly with the two biggest countries of the region and oil mammoths: Libya and Algeria. The current

political order of Algeria resembles a pseudo-democratic system with a super-predominant party called National Liberation Front (FLN). (Volpi 2013) Algeria is the only country of Maghreb, which was not severely affected by the events of the Arab-Spring. According to some, the routes of the durability could be traced back to the 1962, when Algeria gained independence from France. After eight years long warfare, in which tens of thousands Algerians as well as French died or repatriated to mainland France, the country was left exhausted and drained. (Shepard 2009) From the turmoil following the independence a strong one-party system emerged. Over decades, the regime kept its stability based on "pseudodemocratization, redistributive patronage, and an effective use of security apparatus." (Volpi 2013: 104) In another words, the state was skillfully navigating through the waters of social contract by combining the use of formal institutions, socio-economic tools and security services.

Direct neighbor: Algeria

After series of riots, Algeria held the first multi-party election in the early 1990s, leading to appearance of further parties in the system. However, the establishment was dealing with opposition parties through patronage and cooptation, and we could barely speak about opposition in the real sense. Additionally, in the 1999, president Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected as the only candidate, for the other six withdrew their candidacy prior to the elections. The regime appeared relatively stable throughout the time, although it was receiving criticism from the international environment. The first wave of unrests connected to the Arab Spring events started at the very end of 2010 connected to the effects of economy deregulation. The liberalization of market meant inflation and this drew young people into the streets. However, unlike in other countries, Algerian leaders reacted quickly and not only canceled reforms, but in the following months created changes in national budget, which brought 25% increase in public spending. This move, together with the fact that Algerian military never turned to violence against protesters, gave a way to a slow loss of momentum to these unrests (Volpi 2013). As a result of these events, the regime deployed new electoral system, which was supposed to give the state the lure of further democratization. However, as elections in 2011 showed, the effect of reforms was quite opposite: the leading FLN won with striking 45% of seats in the lower chamber of parliament, giving as well the way to Bouteflika to

be re-elected twice above the common legal term. (Volpi 2013, Cheriet 2014) Looking thus at the western border, Tunisia is wrapped so far with neither democratic, nor problematic, but rather closed-polity system. Its relations with Algeria are rather cold, yet hundreds of thousands of Algerians come to Tunisia yearly for trade or tourism purposes. However, these have only a very low significance for the political settlement of Tunisia.

Libya: failure of the eastern boarder

While on the one side of the Tunisian border there is a country characterized by pseudo-democracy with autocratic tendencies and society with extensive yet low-level mobility, the other border is marked with completely different story. Throughout more than 40 years of leading the country, Muammar Gaddafi has developed a system of thorough bureaucracy, which was governing the lives of most.

Historically speaking, Libya has never been a united area, as the first attempt to (at least administratively) connect the two formerly separate provinces dates back only to 1934. Benito Mussolini tried to put together the only two urban areas, which are currently part of Libya and are separated by merely 650 kilometers of desert. Tripolitania in the north-west, Fezzan in the south-west and Cyrenaica in the east have previously been rather independent. In the case of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, both of them have been trade centers inhabited by different tribes of diverse customary laws and family ties. The troubles of todays' war-torn Libya are, according to many, severely connected to the lack of national identity rooted in these historical settings. (van Genugten 2011) The common Libyan identity comes only from the times of Gaddafi, who developed his idea of how the nation should look like. When the state gained independence in 1951, the king, Idris el-Samussi, ruling from the Cyrenaica area, was hesitant to take over Tripolitania, as he was aware of the differences. (Lesch & Haas 2013)

Nevertheless, Muammar Gaddafi took over the country after a successful coup in 1969. He directed plentiful efforts to turn this tribal, pro-western state into what he thought was a modern state. He started politics of active nation-building, consisting of, but not limited to rewriting history books, moving tribes from villages to newly built cities, etc.

(Belica 2014). Simultaneously, he was constantly re-building state institutions. The Jamahirya direct rule was supposed to function through committees suited for many different areas. In fact, it was only a system of merely executive power for the country. Led by Gaddafi himself and his crew, this was missing any kind of checks and balances or division of power. (Davis 2013) Just as in the case of Algeria, also here the state was keeping the people silenced by providing life-long social benefits financed by oil-profits. Some sources estimate that around 70% of population was directly or indirectly on the payroll of the state. (van Genugten 2011) Despite all the efforts, Gaddafi did not rule fully undisturbed. This extensive network, operating both domestically and internationally, even devised assassination attempt on Gaddafi himself. (Belica 2014) Although these efforts did not bring the regime down, sometimes to suppress the opposition, Gaddafi was turning to terror. The sever criticism he was receiving from the international community for his methods was, however, silenced no later than after the 9/11 attacks. That is when the leader of Libya became a hope of the U.S. and an ally in the counter-terrorist war. (BBC a 2001, van Genugten 2011) Put into simple words, at the outset of the Arab Spring we are talking about country with severely dissatisfied (yet not mobilized) inhabitants, lacking any constructive opposition and without internalized common identity.

Libya was the third country after Tunisia and Egypt to openly break into the happenings of the Arab Spring. The outbreak came after an imprisonment of five human rights activists in February 2011. The wave of unrest, which started in Benghazi, the center of Libya's eastern territory, caught the regime surprised and rather unprepared. In the course of weeks, the situation escalated and changed into an open warfare. The course of the civil war, which broke out in Libya between the rebel-lead east and pro-governmental west, took a bloody direction. Throughout 2011 several international players took part in proliferation of the conflict on either side of it. From the West it was mainly France, the U.S. and the U.K., backed by the U.N. resolution 1973. The continental involvement of the African Union then was building on the premise that Africans themselves should solve African issues. Gaddafi left Tripoli to hide in his birth-town, Sirti, in August 2011. He was captured and assassinated in October the same year as he was trying to flee the country. (Davis 2013)

Although the country has witnessed certain progresses, the NTG was unable to unify the people(s) of Libya. Numerous diverse cleavages and low level of internal legitimacy did not allow it to disarm opposition and rebel groups. In the meantime, these groups still live in the fear of oppressions as known from the Gaddafi-period. That is how the country broke into violence and further waves of civil war soon after Gaddafi's death. Today, the NTG is stationed in Tobruk, a city in the east of the country, as Tripolis was taken over by competing government group (Sherlock & Freeman 2015).

Although some call Libya the next failed state (Economist 2015, Kuperman 2015), the Fragile State Index shows there are others ranking far below the country's performance. Yet, this is barely a sign to cheer. Although the NTC got recognized by tenths of countries even before the fall of Gaddafi's regime, its ability to rule over the whole area was severely limited. During the perpetrated chaos, different groups acquired weapons and were now refusing to come under the governmental control. The NTC was simply too weak to enforce unity and as the violence broke out again in the winter 2011/12, it left these militias of approximately 200 thousand men to operate in absolute power vacuum. Any attempts of the NTC to disarm the population have only lead to a comparative strengthening of the militant groups. (Davis 2013)

This unlucky history of the 1973 resolution only points out how misunderstood the realms of MENA in 2011 were. The case of one of the biggest proponents of the military reinforcement – the United Kingdom – can serve as an illustration. The UK's proposal and following vote for the resolution of United Nations Security Council was one of the major milestones. According to some, the then Prime Minister David Cameron took the Libyan issue as a personal quest for the support of patriotic tendencies. (Watt & Wintour 2011) With a strong mandate of the House of Commons, the PM went far beyond the original aims and supported process that lead to authorizing "All Necessary Measures". (UN 2011) Only years later, the investigation lead by the UKs Foreign Affairs Committee openly revealed and admitted that not only was the decision based on limited and false information, but also pushed through for base reasons: "This policy was not informed by accurate intelligence. In particular, the Government failed to identify that the threat to

civilians was overstated and that the rebels included a significant Islamist element. By the summer of 2011, the limited intervention to protect civilians had drifted into an opportunist policy of regime change." (The Foreign Affairs Committee 2016) The rather logical consequence – the absence of a roadmap for the time after the fall of Gaddafi's regime – thus only sealed the country's dim destiny.

According to *Le Monde*, as of May 2014, between 600 thousand and a million refugees fled the country into the neighboring Tunisia only. Another up to 700 000 people are estimated to have landed in Algeria and Morocco. Amongst those who fled the country for security reasons are also numerous former Gaddafi's flunkeys and followers or other members of political opposition. We have witnessed how such an influx of people from conflict-torn areas could be potentially dangerous for the receiving country. On a smaller scale, such spread of conflict happened for example in case of Colombians in the U.S., Sikhs in the UK or Kurds in Germany, but we also witnessed the Zaire army fighting the Hutu militia as they crossed the borders of Rwanda. (de Maio 2010, Ansorg 2014) To put it simple, thanks to numerous examples we know, wars and intra-societal conflicts do spill over. The resilience of a given environment is then one of the central factors defining to what extent the conflict will spread in the other state.

Going back to the history, the area has always been on the crossroads of trade trails to illegal goods. For hundreds of years both the coast and the desert of what today lays on the Libyan territory was a key spot for these activities. Today, drugs, counterfeits, arms and migrants are being smuggled in order to finance local communities as well as armed groups. Aside from the fact that likely this environment has also helped for example the Mali rebellion of 2010 to happen, yearly estimates of arm trade both within and out of the country revolves around 60 million USD yearly. Another around 300 million USD worth trade is believed to be in the trafficking business: Libya is a European gateway for cocaine from Colombia or Moroccan cannabis. Yet, currently the Nr. 1 revenue stream for armed groups seems to be the migrant smuggling. (The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime 2015) Also officially, a significant interconnection between Libyan and other Maghreb economies exists on both national and regional levels. (Nouira 2014)

According to the most recent UN reports, Libya is becoming a haven for Islamic State (ISIS) combat groups at a significant speed. As already forecasted in the previous years by locally operating British investigators (Sherlock & Freeman 2015), their major points of interest are two: first, these are the oil fields, which may fuel the ISIS economy in order for the organization to set wider and more stable base in the area. Secondly, Libya might serve as a highly strategic location for ISIS's attempts to smuggle increasing numbers of its fighters into continental Europe. (United Nations a 2016, Associated Press 2016)

Tunisia – Between Global East and West

(Pre-)Colonialism

Figure 4 Physical map of Tunisia (Mappi 2011)

Quite like the neighbors, also Tunisian relief and natural environment divided the country (economically, not geographically) into a central region at the northern coast and the periphery. The *hinterlands* stretch from southern deserted plains over the mountains in the northwest, compiling over two-thirds of the country's area. Counter to the two different trade roots, which were crossing Libyan territory, trade through Tunisia was for long too complicated and too risky. The peripheral area historically also included the island of Djerba. Consequentially, the structure of population was corresponding to the opportunities the soil has given it: Speaking for example of the 1860s, while in the urban areas around 500 thousand city dwellers profited mostly from

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trade, more than half of the inhabitants consisted of nomadic tribes. Only limited amount of hinterlands people were peasants or local farmers. Mostly situated along the coast, they were cultivating the land to supply the center. The setting was supported by the fact that Northern Africa did not use the concept of privately owned land until the European protectorate times. (Anderson 1986)

To reach resources from the hinterlands for use by the central governing body, the center included rural representatives in the government. Original, historical ties and self-governance structures based on kinship embarked on a journey towards their erosion. (Anderson 1986) At the same time, this period marked the origins of the discrepancies between the central ruling elites and the elites of the hinterlands. As we will observe later, the country never recovered from this dichotomy that affects the settlements dynamics until today. The urban, central elites' interests were aiming to capture a chunk of the newly formed pie for themselves; it was the farmers of the hinterlands whose soil was being cut. For these reasons, the elite was forming in a contradictory situation when it needed to collaborate with the French, yet aiming to grab part of the "wins".

The unbearable international debt served as a reason to make the country a protectorate of France in 1881. The treaty of Bardo and the following colonization further deeply dismantled the traditional societal ties. Initially, the so-called "private colonization" phase, aimed to use the colony first as a source of economical benefits. Purchases of land and resources by continental speculators and investment funds brought a new dimension into ownership ties – no such things as land registry was known in the area before the entry of foreign investors. Later on, the sales of public land during the following "official colonization" further impacted power and wealth distribution amongst the local society. (Anderson 1986) Even today, we can observe the direct and indirect impacts of the land's redistribution from those days. Amongst other effects, quite lethal was the inability of small and medium-size farmers to recover from the loss of available soil leading to a consequential status of wageworkers. Moreover, affected was also the structure of the crops: While Sahel changed the least, the Tell area transformed into a cereal-farming district with the goal to feed the newly settled French

inhabitants. As the formerly agricultural land was far from sufficient for the newly needed volumes, the attempts to cultivate former pastures disabled locals to eventually grow own livestock. In this sense, the elites of the centrum were further depriving their counterparts of the regions to participate in both the economy and, consequentially, the polity.

These wide and far-reaching changes then, not so surprisingly, were at the very ignite point of both Tunisian nation-formation and anti-French resentment. As Anderson stresses, the opposition had formed in several waves, or stages: young and French-educated elites started coming home after their studies abroad, these mostly provincial representatives formed what was later called the "Jeunes Tunisiens". Their concern about the future of periphery in the protectorate did put the hinterlands on a political map. They were the sons of the deprived local elites from the regions, having the ties and means to join the political game. Second, the Destour (movement, later a political party), consisting of mobilized urban bourgeoisie came from the other side of the societal spectrum. They were deeply dissatisfied with the working possibilities and conditions for Tunisians in the cities. While the presence of local university as well as the foreign-educated people meant sufficient supply of qualified prospective leaders, the French system was severely limiting them from participation. The French were often using the protectorate to accommodate needs of certain segments of their overgrown bureaucracy. Additionally, to prevent Tunisian inhabitants to gain too much of insight and control over the state through appointed positions, available posts were often reserved for continental French citizens. The evolution of the grouping into the Neo-Destour party and the political comeback of the hinterlands meant that politics was finally a matter of the whole protectorate. (Anderson 1986: 158) The first challenger coalitions in the colonial political settlement of French Tunisia therefore emerged as both an antidote to some of the colonial politics as well as from the center-periphery divide. The Neo-Destour party leaders were the newly emerged elites from the periphery, who made it to the highest politics – the later first president of Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba and his great rival Salah Ben Youssef. Their belonging to the rural areas was absolutely crucial to gather support during their fight for independence.

In the meanwhile, also numerous associations and chambers saw the light of the day: the Tunisian labor union Confédération Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens (Omri 2014), Tunisian chamber of commerce, etc. Their position within the settlement evolved throughout the time. In the beginning we can clearly talk about organizations connected with the challenger coalitions, engaging in "Tunisian" matters. However, as the French grew aware of the necessity to accommodate some of the Tunisian demands, these became positioned rather at the further border of the settlements' outer circle. They became a tool in the effort to coopt the competing group.

Caught between the heritages

A further split of the political formation marked the appearance of a new and independent state in the 1956. The clash between Ben Youssef's supporters, traditional merchants and imams, with the progressive followers of Bourguiba was only stopped by a French intervention. (Barakat 1985) The result thus meant a victory of the western-style constituency which then formed the upcoming half-a-century. Prior to the independence, Bourguiba have agreed with the Bey of Tunis[2] on a specific voting system, which later on clearly benefited the Neo Destour. If we say that Tunisia was since its independence tacking between single-party and dominant one-party system, the origins are likely dating back to this agreement. It skewed the settlements legal institution towards producing specific electoral results. Throughout approximately 20 years of rule, Bourguiba was able to establish himself as a nearly absolute leader in what some call a "presidential monarchy". (Perkins 2004: 131)

Bourguiba's strategy to deal with Islamic tendencies was not to suppress it, but rather to reinterpret it in order for it to fit the system. He was gaining an international recognition as he skillfully navigated throughout the field with harsh methods far from democratic, yet with widespread public support. The level of legitimacy and support that Bourguiba had in the 60s has never been exceeded. His slow decline started in the 70s when austerity measures connected to the IMF loan hit the country's poorest. In 1975, the

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[2] Since the Ottoman Empire times, the Bey of Tunis was a monarch heading (in times officially, in others formally) the Tunisian land. The office ceased to exist with the independence in 1956. (Perkins 2004)

National Assembly voted him a "president for lifetime". In fact, Bourguiba's presidency ended far ahead before his death. According to some, a matter of international politics, to others national politics, to some a matter of health issues. In any case, the first president was declared medically incapable of carrying off his duties in 1987 and immediately replaced by Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. (Perkins 2004) Nevertheless, the struggle over the character of the newly independent state revolved mostly around the core vision of Tunisian identity. The supporters of Ben Youssef inclined towards rather religious, Islamic and conservative polity. The more successful Bourguibians then, being western-educated, progressive and quite liberal, shifted the discourse elsewhere, leaving the traditionalist tendencies out of the inner circle of the settlement.

The 60s were marked by a failed attempt to create a socialist state. Neo-Destour, by then renamed to Parti Socialiste Destourien (PSD), started a 10-year-long economic plan. The whole experiment was abolished 3 years before its due and a three sectors economy was introduced. We can also date the upscaling of Tunisian tourism industry back to these times. Last but not least, an Italian company discovered oil in Tunisia in the early 60s. Roughly ten years later, a joint venture between the Italians and Tunisian government was a source of the single most valuable export. Similarly as tourism, also the oil industry fails in being stable. The "golden age" of Tunisian production was ended by the Arab-Israeli war and connected market changes. Apart for blooming tourism, the unemployment was growing. As previously mentioned, agriculture was being automatized and farmers exploited for the lowest paid work. Tunisia witnessed creation of thousands of jobs as it underwent major industrialization in the early 70s. Rather unfortunately though were these jobs mostly for low-skilled labor and gave no perspective for growth. So as the former agriculturalists were moving to urban areas and as the post-independence population years were aging, the situation was not any better off. (Lesch & Haas 2013) These latter reforms of this era enabled former landowners to purchase some newly established private enterprises. Throughout this process an emergence of new commercial elite was possible.

Following these trends, Islamism appeared as a rising platform for change. With the Association pour la Sauvegarde du Coran it also gained a sizeable (yet not official)

representation. Facing the growing dissatisfaction, the government started off with opposition accommodation programs. With the aim to achieve reconciliation of the polity, the Prime Minister Mzali filled bureaucratic positions with non-party figures, invited the dissent to form an opposition party and prepared a reform of electoral participation. In the pursuit of political pluralism, non-governmental organizations were invited to present their candidate lists for the elections of 1981. The plan was to accommodate all who pass the 5% threshold. Yet, for the harshness of the electoral system, coming from the realms of the 50s, no opposing powers passed the limit and the PSD remained ruling alone. In a situation of still-troubled economy, this was yet another water to the Islamists' mill. Only after Ben Ali took over the presidential post and was granted the power to do so, he managed to accommodate the Islamist tendencies and regain trust. His luck was that the opposition's rhetoric religious aggressiveness did not resonate with the non-Arab Tunisian population. (Perkins 2004, Barakat 1985) For the second time, an Islamic challenger coalition has emerged in the settlement of Tunisia at the end of the 70s. The very closed and exclusive elites of the inner circle then decided to launch again the strategy of cooptation in order to regain stability of the settlement. However troubling the step was, the challengers after all managed to rather discredit themselves. For long, the field seemed to be all-quiet, until the re-emergence of Islamic tendencies after the Jasmine Revolution.

Unemployment and economic situation themselves were not the only political troubles the government had to face. A great divide also opened between families with foreign currency from abroad-working family members and the rest. Nearly one-fourth of Gross Domestic Product consisted of such incomes in the late 80s. So while this system was bringing the much-needed foreign currency on one hand, it was deepening the socio-economic and religious divide. (Lesch & Haas 2013) From the other side, the 70s enabled the wealthy, including Ben Ali's family, to privatize strategic national businesses in agriculture, banking and construction. Reportedly, the economy was suffering some one-billion USD worth of corruption costs every year. Also the military was driven by nepotism and corruption, often in reality underfinanced. Last but not least, it was focusing on silencing opposition rather than modernizing towards the current regional, transnational and global challenges, which were about to pop up.

The Middle Eastern Spring

In the broader milieu of post-Washington consensus results, in which the Third World countries were neither able to regulate their markets against global products, nor to keep up with them, this had further devastating effects. For years, the country was considered a paragon of successful post-colonial transition. By 2010 the annual growth rate revolved around 4%, it was scoring well on the Human Development Index and also the IMF was rather delighted by financial performance. These, however, soon proved to be only a façade. (Salamey 2015)

After the self-immolation of a young man, whose cart-store and only source of income was unlawfully confiscated, protests started in numerous locations. In December 2010 people filled the streets to express their dissatisfaction with the president. The regime was walking on the edge for long and in the 2011 it finally lost its balance. In January 2011, the crowd ousted president Ben Ali in a peaceful and fast process. The country went from the overthrow directly to elections and formation of government. Unlike in the neighboring countries, the process was enabled by the civil society, which was weak, but existing. Unlike elsewhere, Tunisia possessed political parties, labor unions, non-governmental organizations, etc. (Salamey 2015, Lesch & Haas 2013) With the words of Parks and Cole, what happened in Tunisia at the end of 2010 and beginning of 2011 was a clear mixture of forces of change: on the one hand, the legitimacy of the former settlement sunk rapidly. Due to dissatisfaction with both prospects for dignifying work and with informal network of Ben Ali's comrades running the country, things started moving. On the other hand, what started with the outcasts from the hinterland gained momentum by attracting wide support of non-elites actors and was finalized by open support by the single biggest organization in the country, the UGTT.

The upcoming elections were of historical importance mainly for two reasons: a) they gave the country political plurality, never witnessed before, while b) it enabled political representation of the Islamist tendencies. After long years, when the Ministry of Interior always ran elections and when opposition was restricted by arbitrary legal rules, a special committee was formed in 2011. Despite the fact that the *Instance Superieure Indépendante pour les Élections* (ISIE) had only limited time and resources for

organization, it managed to redraft the electoral law into one more favorable to pluralism and inclusiveness. Still, since the beginning, they faced voters' mistrust: Both regarding the ability to organize elections and the distrust in politicians' capacity to be the agents of change. (The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 2011) Although the organizational side of elections ended up mostly positively, such feelings transformed in relatively low voter turnout. In total the turnout counted for 52% of eligible voters (86% of previously registered, 16% of unregistered). (Carter Center 2011) Such low election turnout was signalizing, in the first place, the far detachment of population from the elites – a factor that affected the settlement in the upcoming years.

The Islamist Ennahda Movement won with striking 37% of votes, more than three times as much as the first runner-up Congress for the Republic. The predictions from pre-election times that Ennahda would receive an absolute majority of seats did not happen. Still, the TOP 5 counted for more than 80% of National Assembly seats. (The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 2011) Provided all that, over one million of casted ballots did not receive representation, making the institutional legitimacy of the whole establishment questionable. The Ennahda movement was the first of the official Islamist-conservative parties to win elections in the post-Arab Spring settings. Consequentially, the Constitutional Assembly elected Moncef Marzouki, lawyer and a human rights activist, as the president. His striking victory, in which he received 155 out of 200 votes, was yet another proof that Tunisians want to restart politics from the routes. (M'hirsi, Z 2011) The story of Ennahda gaining power after the revolution is one in which an excluded elite (often either in dissent or abroad in exile) opted in into the changing system.

Although Ennahda's electoral victory was indisputable, many, including domestic secular circles as well as Western community, were concerned with yet another Islamic party in charge of a MENA country. It emerged in the 70s/80s as another branch of internationally active Muslim Brotherhood school, known for rather conservative Islam direction. (Feuer 2016) After operating illegally until the 2011 elections, the party stood up mainly for return of religion into the public life. Although in the beginning their views

stood on the conservative side of the spectrum as well, in the course of years, Ennahda cruised over to today's Muslim democracy discourse. (Marks 2015)

Elections 2011 – Constitutional Assembly			
Party / List	Percentage of Vote	Number of Seats	Percentage of Seats
Ennahda	37.04%	89	41.01%
Congress for the Republic (CPR)	8.71%	29	13.36%
Popular Petition (Aridha Chaabia)	6.74%	26	11.98%
Ettakatol (FDTL)	7.03%	20	9.22%
Democratic Progressive Party (PDP)	3.94%	16	7.37%
The Initiative (Al-Moubadara)	3.19%	5	2.31%
Democratic Modernist Pole (PDM/Al-Qutb)	2.79%	5	2.31%
Afek Tounes	1.89%	4	1.84%
Tunisian Workers' Communist Party (Al-Badil al-Hawri)	1.57%	3	1.38%
Other	27.10%	20	9.22%
Total	**100%**	**217**	**100%**

The Fall of Jasmine Petals?

After winning the elections, Ennahda sought partners to both create an absolute majority in the Assembly and to establish legitimacy amongst the secular voters. The broad coalition of Ennahda, CPR and Ettakatol did not remain for the whole period. Tunisia witnessed a fall of a government and an interim technocratic government, both of which, as it seems until now, were a positive litmus test of the democratic transition. Nevertheless, the country made it through to the new set of elections in late 2014. Throughout the three years, the security situation within the country deteriorated, several places witnessed an outbreak of terrorist attacks against both political as well as civilian targets. (Marks 2015) With that and in the environment of growing strength of ISIS and fall of Muhammad Mursi[3], Ennahda lost a significant chunk of support. Still, the first electoral term was about reconciliation of the settlement, strengthening the institutions (law, trust in electoral process, efforts to de-personalize politics, etc.) and creating more open, inclusive environment.

Elections 2014 – National Assembly			
Party / List	**Percentage of Vote**	**Number of Seats**	**Percentage of Seats**
Nidaa Tounes	37,56%	86	39%
Ennahda	27,79%	69	31%
Free Patriotic Union (UPL)	4,02%	16	7%
Jabha Chaabia (Popular Front)	3,66%	15	6%

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[3] M. Mursi was elected in the first free election in Egypt after the outbreak of the revolution. Coup against him was, therefore, perceived as a step backwards against the ideas of the revolution and possible backlash to chaos.

Afek Tounes (Tunisia`s Horizons)	3,02%	8	3%
Congress of the Republic	2,14%	4	1%
Democratic Current	1,93%	3	1%

Nidaa Tounes, which managed to override the former governing party, built precisely on such issues. Beji Caid Essebsi found the Nidaa Tounes so as to regain political representation for secular currents with heritage dating back to the times of Bourguiba and the Neo-Destour. And it worked. Ennahda lost some 20 seats in the Assembly compared to the previous term. Yet, the scope, preparation and execution of elections signalized that democratic transition in the country is still underway. (The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 2015)

Last but not least of the recent institutional changes in Tunisia were the first free, direct presidential elections. Amongst others, the two strongest candidates, who made it to the second round were the acting president Moncef Marzouki and Beji Caid Essebsi, the Prime Minister and leader of Nidaa Tounes. In November 2014, Essebsi was elected president. (Carter Center 2014) Only a month later, he appointed his Prime Minister, Habib Essid, as the first Prime Minister under a new constitution. (Al Jazeera 2014) Unlike the other countries of the post-Arab spring settings, all these processes happened without violence. The protests of 2013, which has led to the abdication of Jebali and his government proceeded peacefully. Very clearly, looking into the previous chapter, the Tunisian settlement has a history of both cooptation and suppression of challenging forces. Still, often rather the inclusive tradition seems to be predominant.

Both the settings and history are crucial in order to understand the current political settlement and dynamics. Looking at the history from a bit far aside, the character of Tunisian polity was always in the modern history driven by the discussion over identity and cultural belonging of Tunisians. Like the other states of Maghreb, also Tunisia was bouncing between its Arab-Islamic heritage and the Western direction. While the former was viewed as something national and traditional, however old-school, the later refers

to progress and alien culture. As the statehood was formed in opposition to colonial rule, this dichotomy stood at the very inception of independence. The consequential changes, coming in sinusoidal periods with different amplitudes, characterize political life in the country. To make it even more complex, unlike Algeria and Libya, Tunisia developed its own ethos, in which the above stated tendencies are accompanied by a believe that there is something specifically Tunisian. Something that is far-reaching and makes the country and its people predestined to be the bridge between MENA countries and the West. Barakat adds to that: "This Tunisian personality […] is so ancient that it would be most incorrect to claim that the history of present Tunisia began with the Islamic invasion." (Barakat 1985: 55)

4. Analysis

As becomes rather obvious from the previous pages, the political milieu of Tunisia developed in a specific context, where a free political competition has never been the thing. Throughout past sixty years, fully exclusive and one-party predominant systems covered the gap after the paternalistic politics of the former center. The country's system reached a point, where political parties are a major, although not the only, carrier of political will and process. The inner circle of influence developed hand in hand both formal and informal elites – although the events of 2011 stirred up the game, it would be silly to think the current central elites did not befriend or replace extensive networks of informal ties. (Haouas & Heshmati 2015)

The "Crime Scene"

Mapping, as suggested by Parks and Cole, helps us to understand the distribution of both power and interests. The central coalition in the inner circle is surrounded by outer and challenged by the external forces. In case of Tunisia's current settlement, this means:

- Inner circle – The national government and opposition, UGTT, Judiciary, particular business interests.
- Outer circle – The president, other elected and appointed state branches, business associations, the French community, the army and other security forces. As will be later argued, also regions are considered part of the outer circle.
- Challenger coalitions – Religious organizations, Salafi organizations in particular.

The populations of Tunisia consist of, but are not limited to ethnics, youth, women, immigrants, peripheries, religious minorities, etc.
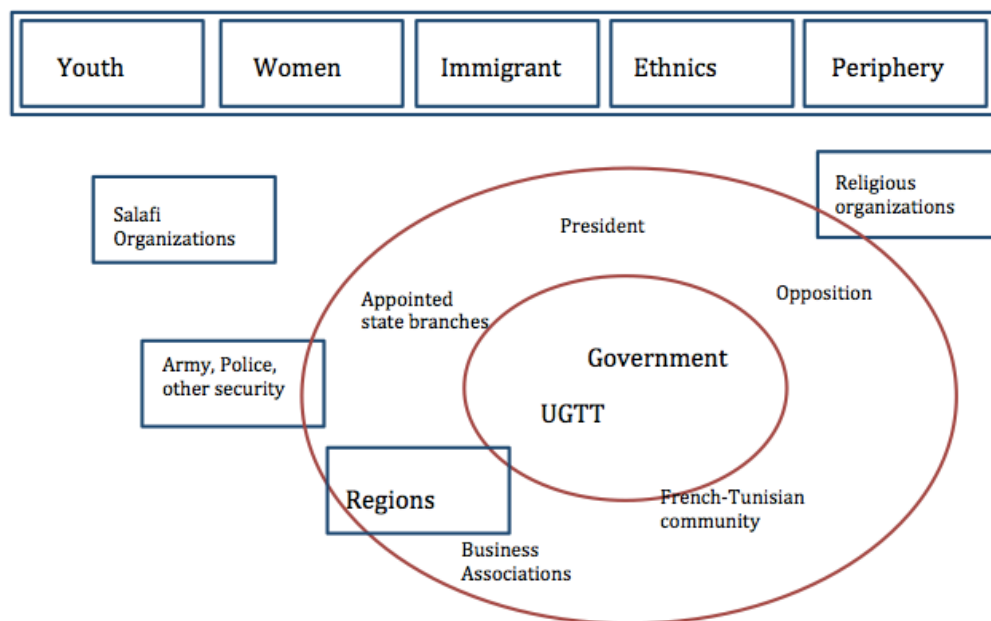
Figure 5 Political Setting of Tunisia – Visualizing the actors (Author)

Government and the opposition

From a purely institutional perspective, Tunisia is a representative, semi-presidential republic, and hopefully a democracy in transition. This young political settlement has undergone series of major changes since the outbreak of the Jasmine revolution in early 2011 and has been full of ups and downs on its track to stability. To fully understand where does the current setting come from, one needs to remind themselves that the scope of events was an extremely fast forward process in which there was barely time to catch some fresh breath. The first election was held fairly 7 months after the governmental overthrow, leading to a) an unelected body being responsible to arrange for the elections, b) parties to have limited timeline to prepare for both the electoral circus and eventual post-election negotiations. The government barely had a mandate and definitely low level of political legitimacy, yet was responsible for creation of a new settlement. (Lang 2014)

The election of 2011 then ended up with severe triumph of the Islamic party Ennahda. Without much delay, however, it formed a coalition – the so-called Troika – together with the first runner-up Congress for the Republic, and the fourth scoring Ettakatol. For the first time in history of Arab politics, such a broad coalition was established. This situation, in which not only a single party is in charge for the political outputs, remains,

for many, the cornerstone of the later successes. (Ali 2015) Yet, foolish would be to state that the bloc was a harmonious body. Quite the opposite, Ennahda itself entered the political field with little unity as well as clarity of what and how to pursue further.

The party entered the political battlefield after decades of formal non-existence. It reunited shortly before the election after the long period of operating in dissent and exile. Emerging dichotomy between the two distinct groups was obvious by the first sight: the "western" returnees often incline to moderate Islamic view of the state. On the other hand, the for long repressed dissent members required principles of sharia to be implemented into the legal system. (Arieff, & Humud 2014) Ennahda had little to none time to debate about and unite around such key questions and had to focus on the technical ones. Only later, the great divide changed from small discrepancies to forming a deep divide amongst the Ennahda membership, providing solid ground for the nation wide political stalemate. (Lang 2015) What followed was the moment of governmental step-down, marked by the next election and negotiation over the creation of political roadmap. Those moments, crowned with the Nobel peace prize awarded to the country, carry until today the meaning of a political change as a feasible or even positive element of a functioning settlement.

Apart from the coalition-opposition change within the government, the year 2014 was marked by the passage of the constitutional bill. The two yearlong struggles between sometimes-adjacent understandings of state brought again the resentments over the nature of Tunisia back in the game. By default then, while international community, as well as westwards looking Tunisians were predominantly applauding, indispensable part of Tunisian political milieu felt betrayed. Their vision of Tunisia, as an Islamic country, vanished, the promises of Ennahda from 2011 were broken. The following bitterness built a notable level of distrust towards the settlement. (Bozonnet 2014) To put it to our framework, the whole process built a consensus amongst the political players; created an environment, where opposition lives without fear of physical or political death. (Muasher et al. 2016) On the other hand, it created a great divide between the politicians and the general public. Even further, the constellation that

stands in the center of the settlement is by far distant from the "business-as-usual" politics.

Nidaa Tounes, the winner of the elections of 2014 then nearly immediately continued with the "tradition" of Tunisian omni-coalitions, when it finally formed one including Ennahda. To their predecessor alike, Nidaa Tounes faced internal discursive and personal crises. In 2012, the party emerged as a secular contra-balance to the Islamist Ennahda. (Arieff 2011) A mixture of political and business interests, social activists and former regimes' functionaries had otherwise only a little in common. Rather than mobilizing for a cause, the party won building on Ennahda's undelivered promises and mobilizing against the vision of a religious polity.

Such conceptual struggle on both sides of the spectrum brought about a vacuum resulting in unclear political identity of the whole settlement. No one was asking the questions like: What politics is and what it should be in the first place. Or where do they see their polity heading in the long run. Lack of common understanding of major concepts then expresses in political excesses in which politicians execute (or misuse, depending on who is the narrator) their power based on personal interpretation, rather than their real competences. As an example may serve a case, in which the Ministry of Justice dismissed 82 judges from their office for drinking alcohol in public places. (International Commission of Jurists 2014) The problem has however more structural consequences when it comes to "doing politics". Overall, the understanding of use and misuse of certain political tools enforces and reinforces mistrust within the political setting. Again, an example for them all: use of the state of emergency. In the Ben Ali's era, state of emergency was used in order for the regime to be able to cope with dissent and potential forming opposition. It allows the establishment to apply measures it would not be able to legally deploy otherwise. The events of 2011 changed the public perception of it as a state that is imposed only and only if the security is genuinely threatened in order to a) avoid losses and b) solve the threat effectively. It is thus not surprising that the establishment had to deal with such rage when they used the state of emergency (declared after the terrorist attacks of 26th July 2015) as an excuse to dissolve protests in the city of Gafsa. (Steinich 2015)

According to recent public opinion polls, the mistrust in political parties, as well as the whole establishment is growing. When asking about the degree to which parties do act in favor of common people, most of the respondents (79 percent) answered that they do nothing or only little. (International Republican Institute 2014) Such alarming situation should be necessarily addressed on the national level; still, there is another specific of Tunisian society stemming from the history. It is the absence of a bottom-up culture in addressing specific issues and coming up with solutions. Behavior that was being suppressed throughout decades is now drastically missing especially to address local issues and divides between regions. (Lang 2014) As will be discussed later, this is one of the causes of pertaining hindering tendencies of the Tunisian outback.

UGTT as a political actor

The Tunisian General Labor Union or UGTT (Abbreviation of the French *Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail*) are by far not anything new for the country. Emerging previously from the French labor union in Tunisia, the organization succeeded in the first half of the 20th century to represent interests of local workers amidst the colonial rule. Both colonial and postcolonial regimes decimated the conditions for common people, especially from the regions. (King 2009) First, the colonialists took lands from the local communities. Then, after independence, instead of restoring the historical system, the peasants were further driven to abolish their societal and economical role and join the workforce for agricultural production and manufacturing. UGTT then started serving as a contra-weight, making it inherently a political actor.

By now for decades, they have been on and off opposing the central government in different situations: in 1976 during the Bread strike, UGTT was one of the main mobilizing forces as well as the one able to negotiate and press for a change. In the 2008, when strikes broke out amongst the miners in the central town of Gafsa, organizers of these enjoyed strong leverage by dissenting UGTT faction. However, the really central role of the organization as we see it today, emerged in the 2011 Jasmine revolution. (Lynch 2014; Omri 2014)

Sources differ here, as of what was the general stance of UGTT towards the starting revolution in the 2010, however, it is more than apparent that the organization as a whole joined the protests in January 2011. As a self-proclaimed backbone of the event, they maintained two crucial roles, which defined the outcomes. First, it massively helped the protests to spread across the whole country as else they would have remained nothing but yet another local strike. (Lynch 2014) UGTT with their offices in about 150 different locations and a base of around 700 000 members had both the resources and network to administer it. (Jamaoui 2015) Second, equally important, they played a crucial role in translating the self-immolation of a single individual into a comprehensive packet of struggle amongst the nation. (Lynch 2014) They pictured the societal issue and drew a discourse, which helped to articulate the demands of the mass.

Furthermore, UGTT engaged and played a crucial role in the political settlement of the later transitional period. To many, including the Nobel Price committee, (Borger & Chrisafis 2015) the organization's facilitation and moderation is what differentiates Tunisian story from those of Egypt and Syria. In the course of 2013, the political situation reached a stalemate. Although enjoying full electoral legitimacy, the governing Troika (coalition of Ennahda, The Congress for the Republic and Democratic Forum for Labor and Liberties/Ettakatol) fell short in managing public in the outset of creation of a reformed state. The settlement fell into a state where political violence turned from verbal to physical and Ennahda was (for many of the opposition) to be blamed. (Jamaoui 2015) This split meant creation of deep mistrust and an incremental division over both procedural and substantial matters of policy- and polity-making. All that in a situation of fragile post-revolutionary settlement, where public was eagerly awaiting effective actions. It was then the so called Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, consisting of UGTT, Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicraft, Order of Lawyers and the Human Rights League, who managed to bring these quarreled players together. (Omri 2014)

From the very initial moments of the process, UGTT was enjoying high level of public support, consensual legitimacy and therefore strong mandate to act: "Yet, one local trade union may save the day. If it did, it would not be doing so for the first time. For this is no ordinary union." (Omri 2014) The quartet used their strong public mandate to bring

together 21 different sides in order to create a nation-wide dialogue on the further steps of transition. As an output, a Road Map, which outlined the next necessary steps, (including, but not limited to Ennahda stepping down from the governing position) was signed at the end of 2013. (Dreisbach 2013) This far-from-an-easy step fundamentally changed the rhetoric of the settlements legitimacy by creating a "[…] shift from the logic of electoral legitimacy to that of extensive national consent." (Jamoui 2015) And although Ennahda politically backed the process, it would have been impossible without the active role of UGTT and its counterparts.

Talking in terms of political settlements, indeed this success was possible because of a political process that enabled such an actor (the Quartet) to step in. Aside from that though, the talents, will and networks enabled the UGTT and their counterparts to reach the final destination. Else, a process or an institution would not have been enough to make so many involved sides satisfied. Also, as Chayes points out, small-scale civic NGOs would, on the other hand, not have had enough capacity, skill and experience to steer such massive negotiations. (Chayes 2014)

Until today, the overall situation in the settlement has changed. Although quite a bit from the post-Road Map agenda remains to be done, UGTT is far from the strong-voiced player it once has been. The Nobel price has given the organization even stronger mandate to act upon the wellbeing of Tunisia, which resulted in a push for strong state-driven employment activities. An increase of about 200 thousand jobs, which were created in the public administration within just one year, had hideous consequences on performance (and output legitimacy) of the state-run services. Hand in hand, also UGTT is not viewed as a paragon of success. (Benoit-Lavelle 2016)

Judiciary

Although political settlements are not about state agencies *per se*, the judiciary branch plays a crucial role in any kind of society in maintaining balance between the formal state and the ongoing processes under the surface (or within). With failing to ensure independence of judiciary, the former regime concentrated power around the executive. After 2011, the judiciary system underwent major changes both on the institutional and

personal sides. The outcomes of changes (of which some are yet to come) are questionable.

To understand what a difference the current system stands for, it is necessary to mention how courts used to function previously. The existence of a constitutional council had a mere instrumental function and served as an extended hand of the executive. Not only was the president formally the only entity to be able to address the council, but he was as well the one to appoint most (if not all in a given time) of its judges. As in that, the constitutional council was yet another office of the executive with barely an advisory function. At the same time, the local civil courts, although often carrying their responsibilities towards civil law and the public, suffered under severe understaffing while being crippled by corruption. Additionally, the off-coast courts served previously as a deployment destination for judiciaries who opposed the regime or in any other way became undesirable nearby to the center. Such action by the center has lead to in fact absolute crash of the system in some of the regions.

Many consider the model, as anchored in the Tunisian post-2014 constitution, one of the most sophisticated and well thought amongst countries in transition. (Choudhry 2014) Next to the establishment of a full-fledged constitutional court, newly created Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) is about to co-guarantee the independence and well-being of the branch.

This managerial body, administering a proper functioning of civil courts has been filled in October 2016 after nearly two years of clashes between numerous groups with different understandings of how this should be implemented. In the end, 33 out of its 45 members were elected directly by judges themselves, lawyers, notaries, etc. As of now, the relative consensual procedure prevented the divides amongst the professionals from deepening. (Guettari 2016) The SJC guarantees judges the right to appeal managerial decisions – promotions, suspensions, deployments. (International Commission of Jurists 2014)

The SJC was the first of the two bodies to be re-established, followed by the Constitutional Court (CC). The constitution of 2014 offers a highly sophisticated

approach to building a constitutional court with numerous checks to prevent the misuse of the body. Such a progressive process of its filling of the twelve positions is marked by two-step procedure. In the first phase, each of the three branches nominates their candidates. Later on, the representatives are picked from amongst these nominated candidates proportionately. (Choudhry 2014) Naturally, such a procedure might be long and exhaustive, as the parties of the chamber will need to cooperate, negotiate and compromise. And as we see all around, prolonged negotiations and political stalemate are of the least desirable situations the young settlement wants to get into. Numerous cases that make it to the CC are of highly political nature (election results, constitutionality of law, etc.), Still, the CC will need to preserve its independence, widen its responsibilities, ensure its apolitical character, ensure transparency and all that, while all the actors involved will grant individuals the ability to access the court. (ICJ 2015) In parallel, dealing with its unwanted heritage will have to be on the agenda too: the one in the minds of judges, politicians and the public. There is a long way to the change of mindset, which will enable functioning of the CC how it is supposed to.

Taking the note of politicization tendencies, currently we are witnessing numerous attempts for law extension or/and suspension in the name of battling terrorism. (Mersch 2015) As contemporary and burning the topic might be, it is also putting additional pressure on the constitutionality of its country. Sooner or later the question how will the young, just-getting-born court, deal with issues at the edge of the democratic establishment itself will emerge. Some even mention that implementing the CC is on a troublesome path since the law adoption in November 2015. (Mekki 2016) Maybe it is also time to re-think what are the general expectations of the court-creation and of the settlement itself. Are we not expecting too much too fast?

Formally, the constitution and civil code grants the judiciary independence, so needed to restrain from political decisions. As mentioned, Tunisian system is often perceived as one of the better designs out there. These two examples show that the real situation is far from perfect. A controversy, which is surrounding military tribunals and their alleged misuse after the revolution, has for long been suppressed. In the months following the upheaval, military tribunals had been used to deal with cases transferred

from the civil courts. Such an action makes them highly political, as they might be creating precedence for the civil courts for years to come, but without a legal mandate to do so. Even more questionable is how these decisions and precedence emerged in a situation with no checks imposed on the military tribunals. Looking at 2015, such a situation popped out when a Tunisian national was arrested upon arrival from France. Without trial, he was put to jail for "defaming the army" by posting critical blogs on his personal website. (Human Rights Watch 2015)

Similarly, a case from a civil court re-opened the question whether the Tunisian system endures facing informal bending of procedures. In the past, Ben Ali's regime severely abused the institution of state of emergency and the new political representation claimed rigorously that such situation would not repeat. Last year then, six young men were sentenced for sodomy after their dorm was raided during a state of emergency following the terrorist attacks in November. Moreover, they were sued and imprisoned based on evidence obtained by internationally banned methods. On the top, they were banned from their township, by the decision of the court – a procedure that is unprecedented and illegal in Tunisia. (Samti 2015)

By 2016, numerous judges from the Ben Ali regime remain in functions; moreover, some of them took over higher official functions and scraped of the legitimacy of judiciary as an absolutely rebuilt entity. (Guettari 2016) As a result, clearly, the founders of the new settlement were (and are) aiming for development of standardized, transparent procedures. Yet, the informal practices are getting into the play: stemming from the old habits, misperceptions of institutions based on previous experience, projections of individual understandings of the new settlement and its core values. Steps aside, however, might pose a threat to the restoration of trust in the rule of law in the country.

Regions

As mentioned above, the events of the Arab Spring started out in the Sidi Bouzid town. This capital of the Sidi Bouzid governorate became over the next few months the paragon of a mycelia spot to the Tunisian revolution: a town of a little importance to the national economy and political life, in the geographical center of the country, which

generated wave of unrests. Yet, the revolts and anti-systemic feelings are far from new in the off-coast parts of the country. Quite the opposite: such setting applies back to the colonialist times. As Boukhars stresses, these regions have a history of severe mismanagement of resources resulting into mistrust to the on-coast center. (Boukhars 2016)

Such areas as Sidi Bouzid were historically hit by the collectivization of agriculture in the 60s and 70s. An economical model of that period enabled local exports to pay for only fifty percent of the food imports - desperately needed in such dry regions. Additionally, the water scarcity was getting worse over the decades, leaving the farmers with always-shrinking harvests. With all that, they could barely compete on rich markets with big agribusinesses blooming in northern parts of the country. The distribution of capacities then played a crucial role in growing divide between the coastalized cities in the north and the agricultural, desperate, uneducated and drained south. (Lesch & Haas 2013)

As of today, the disparities have not improved much. The 2014 constitution aimed for empowerment of rural areas, higher degree of autonomy and general decentralization, yet the application is falling short of those goals. Several laws were under development to provide infrastructure to the change, however very little was so far formally executed. The disparities are, according to many, deeply rooted and embedded in the economical model of the country and without substantial reform, they will move only slowly. Since the end of 2015 UGTT, together with other human rights organizations, demands that government again revises its stance towards economical development of central and southern regions. Nowadays still, 70% of country's poor live outside the main agglomeration. (El Fassi & Medinilla 2016) And similarly to the settings of 2010 – it is not only question of economy anymore, but rather of national security and political stability.

Voices of desperate outback were to be heard yet once again in the 2015 when protests in the Gafsa district were dissolved. On the onset of 20th century, the place had been the source of main income of the national industry. Today, Gafsa is another abandoned place, which exports all of its resources to the center without getting anything in return. (Steinich 2015)

Events following the passage of 2014 constitution, however, indicate that drops of change may arrive to the regions. A World Bank program which unlocked some 350 million USD, combined with another 500 million USD loan by the International Monetary Fund, aiming to target Tunisian outback, sounds like a promising tool to drive a change. (Al Arabiya 2014) Nevertheless, it might be again the informal divide between the center and the peripheral regions, which may hinder the extraction and distribution of promised international aid.

Economic forces

If there were but one thing that most of the both international and domestic observers commonly stress about Tunisian economy, it would be its focus on low-productivity industries and the consequential struggles to fulfill the social function. (Lang 2014, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department 2014, Carnegie Europe 2016) As an underlying cause of the Jasmine Revolution, the lack of economical means and dignifying employment opportunities led to an overthrow of the previous regime. The question still remains on the table ever since is whether and how to make sure the situation is not going to repeat. Currently, the economy is facing numerous challenges related to both the formal and informal settings.

The 70's and 80's gave way to the current dual economical setting of off-shore and on-shore businesses. This means that companies would be separated based on their focus either on local markets or on export and in that way it was also dealt with them. While at that point such an arrangement provided decent tools to foster foreign incomes and pushed certain degree of industrial progress for local firms, it became a hurdle for further development of the national economy only couple of years later. This dichotomy is per se an institutional arrangement anchored in the Investment Incentive Code, yet it has ties and implications to the informal settings. The code formalizes differences between companies who specialize on export (keeping maximum 30 percent of their production for local sales) and those who intend their production solely for local purposes. While the former do enjoy benefits in form of lowered income and profit tax or duty-free access to materials and production inputs, the later are taxed under

standard regime. This arrangement creates situations in which firms are a) treated differently by officials and business partners. [4] b) often forced to officially split into two separate administrative units in order to be able to exist in this framework. In similar manner again, further costs as of HR, administrative and indirect costs are involved, crippling the whole economy. Over all the difficulties, it might seem that such provisions do at least bring the so needed foreign currency into the local market: in fact, although only 23% of exporters are in foreign hands, they account for up to 45% of the total exporting turnover.

Further structural gaps are then amongst the symptoms of a relatively non-transparent and unstable environment. The approximate cost of corruption and informal procedures in public/private ties are estimated to make up around 2 percent of Tunisian GDP or around 1.2 billion USD. According to the World Bank report, it "[…] hinders job creation and investment and contributes to social exclusion." (Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department 2014: 121) As the economy consistently fails to provide for more complex, higher value-added jobs, the state administration swelled significantly, making the bureaucracy machine protract certain processes for even longer. In such an environment, some companies claim the conditions to start or maintain a business are growingly worsening. (AFDB 2014) The World Bank stresses that it led to a situation, where "[…] firms developed a set of techniques of avoidance ranging from remaining below the radar or working exclusively with foreign partners and consenting to pay taxes in the form of grants and sponsorships to some social activities of the cronies." (Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department 2014: 111)

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the Tunisian job market fails to accommodate growing portion of job-seekers, especially from younger cohorts of the population. As the current research shows, age is indeed a negative factor in hiring process in Tunisian companies. While (especially) the youngsters would enjoy higher hiring probability in SMEs, these account only for a small proportion of job-providers in

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[4] In an environment of pervasive cronyism and patronage (as discussed later in this chapter), this means imposing different costs on doing the business as well as different access to opportunities.

Tunisia. (Haouas & Heshmati 2015) One of the specifics of Tunisian environment, compared to other similar countries[5] is the discrepancy between the amount of small companies and their share amongst job-creation. More than 85 percent of local firms are one/two-person companies creating around 29 percent of jobs. Even weaker is the central segment of SMEs, accounting 14,5 percent of all firms in the country, yet providing approximately 25 percent of positions. Quite on the other hand, the final 0,5 percent of companies, who employ more than 100 people, make up for the rest, which constitutes more than third of all the available jobs in the country. Amongst other factors (as discussed below) stands out the strong (self-)regulation in form of associations in many branches that limits not only new jobs creation, but also competition and innovation.

It seems that the Holy Grail for the Tunisian settlement, when it comes to its economical dimension, will be a possible shift towards production with higher complexity to accommodate the social and economical demands. (Carnegie Europe 2016) In the current situation, 75 percent of jobs available are in the low productivity sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing or the public sector (24 percent). On the other hand, banking, telco, transportation and other high productivity sectors generate only about 8 percent of positions. Productivity of an economy sums up the total productivity of its parts (all three public sectors plus the private one) and indicate the ability of a given settlement to mobilize available resources into creation of products (tangible or services) and their effective sales. In places where we perceive gaps of productivity, an expected mismanagement or allocation of resources exists. (OECD 2001) In case of Tunisia, manufacturing has comparatively low productivity, being the same – in case of textile industry even lower – as agriculture (typically low-productivity sector), ranking Tunisia as the 110th country in innovation and sophistication degree of economy. (World Economic Forum 2016) Not only does the low-productivity economy imply availability of low-skilled jobs, which do not suffice the relatively skilled labor, but it also does not

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[5] In numerous researches and reports until 2014, Tunisia is benchmarked with other MENA countries, as well as with the Upper Middle Income Countries (based on World Bank classification). In fact, ranking of Tunisia has lowered in 2015/16 to the Lower Middle Income group.

allow selling high-margin products, creating thus a vicious circle. The World Bank Report mentions a specific illustration of the olive oil manufacturing industry. The example shows how insufficient standards on harvesting, producing, storing and transportation allow Tunisia to only produce low-end virgin olive oil. Globally, virgin olive oil is both the one with the highest margin on sales as well as the highest proportion of consumption. But margins solely depend on its quality and adequate branding. Current estimates claim that only by mechanization, Tunisian oil manufacturers could increase their yearly returns by 20 percent. (Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department 2014)

To overcome this central issue, the market will need a good mixture of both local and foreign capital as well as of know-how. So far the limitation to foreign involvement is often the unclarity of legal framework or political instability, combined in later years with security concerns. (Angel-Urdinola et al. 2015, Waissbein et al. 2014)

Last but not least, the economical dimension of the Tunisian settlement is characterized by existence of extensive informal economy. The black market functions in both importing and exporting directions. In many cases, it serves to get around inflation or food and oil prices, but as well to obtain illegal goods. (Lang 2014) According to Kartas, the cross-border tribal cartels, who serve as a backbone to goods trafficking do exists on the border between Tunisia and Libya since around the 1980s. Their activities intensify whenever the situation on either side gets tougher. The 2011 U.N. embargo on Libya was no exception. The trafficking inevitably became massive, reportedly around 1 million Tunisians benefited from the trade or related activities and the yearly turnover ramped over 1 billion USD annually. (Kartas 2013) These established clans do enjoy close connections with local authorities and therefore they are able to operate on quite extensive field. With the recent decline in security, these areas became increasingly important channel for arms trafficking. (Marzouk 2016)

The French community

The French living in Tunisia may be classified in both terms as a faction of the society, as well as an actor of the outer circle of leading elites. For both views there is a reason: the

French diaspora, just as any other diaspora, is part of the society it lives in, identifies itself with different political players, is an object of the legal system, interacts with local institutions, etc. However, specifically the French community is a group of a specific significance in the Tunisian political settlement.

The theories of Diasporas and transnationalism offer a very dissimilar understanding of what exactly these concepts represent or how such groups affect political, economical and social questions in both home and incoming countries. (Al-Ali & Koser 2002) Yet, one thing these have in common: they agree that influential diasporas do affect the hosting country in a way no local faction of society is able to. While authors from the migration studies pot often use the concept, it also has a lot to offer to the political settlement analysis: the actors might have an interest in carrying various patterns across the border. The transnational ties theories go a mile further than the traditional diaspora studies, by explaining how do the flows of influence stream. Kevin Howard offers quite simple, yet relevant model to the double-triangular relation between the host-state (in our case Tunisia), the diaspora (in our case the French), the external homeland (France) and eventually transnational political institutions, which can but do not necessarily need to be involved[6] (Howard 2006). The chart below (Fig. 5) pictures these ties on 2D plane as is often understood and interpreted by many international relations scholars: as a "term to describe the cross-border contact of non-state actors, such as first of all business subjects or non-governmental organizations (NGOs)." (Murad 2012) However, for the purposes of this work, the transnational ties are understood also as three-dimensional relations, disregarding the division between private sector and state institutions (both in formal and informal understanding of them). The diaspora is connected, either directly or indirectly, to the affairs of their external homeland. In that sense, this section is also one of the only two in which a connection with international or foreign players is discussed.

After France and its state institutions left Tunisia in the 1956, the immediate influence that France had in the country naturally declined. However, keeping influence and most

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[6] Ranging from inter-governmental organizations, bilateral state institutions and contracts, etc.

of all business opportunities for French companies has since then been on agenda of governments throughout the past decades. (Al Jazeera 2013) What some call the politics of Francafrique has been until the 1990s not only an extended hand of French foreign economic relations but also a globally strategic politics of containment of communism. After the fall of communism, the French position, which was until then strongly supported by the U.S., remained purely of economical dimension with a strong effect on French domestic polity. Such a situation required rewiring of how the "Francafrique" is being done. (Chafer 2005) At this moment, France wrapped their activities even tighter around their nationals living abroad.

Looking at the French foreign policy towards Africa, Maghreb is one of the core areas of interest for the business circles, while remaining a gateway to Sub-Saharan Africa. These hopes do not remain unanswered by Tunisian elites – we can observe numerous initiatives to attract French attention towards the country (especially as the security concerns are arising). Amongst the latest ones count the Tunisia 2020 or an official appointment of some of the French most influential businessmen with the Tunisian Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Today, a group of merely 30 000 French or dual French-Tunisian citizens live in Tunisia, the majority of which counts into the highest income group quintile. Not only do they count into the economically most active fifth of the society, but also they are often members of local boards and managements of French companies in Tunisia. Such enterprises constitute around one-third of foreign business in the country, making the French community relatively influential, taking into consideration its size. (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development 2016) Additionally, according to many, Tunisia with its youth employment policies focused on self-employment is becoming somewhat of the *Berlin of Africa* when it comes to the start-up scene. (Moreau 2016) With that also the Tunisian-French ties are activating in order to take their part as investors with know-how and available funds. (El-Mourad 2016)
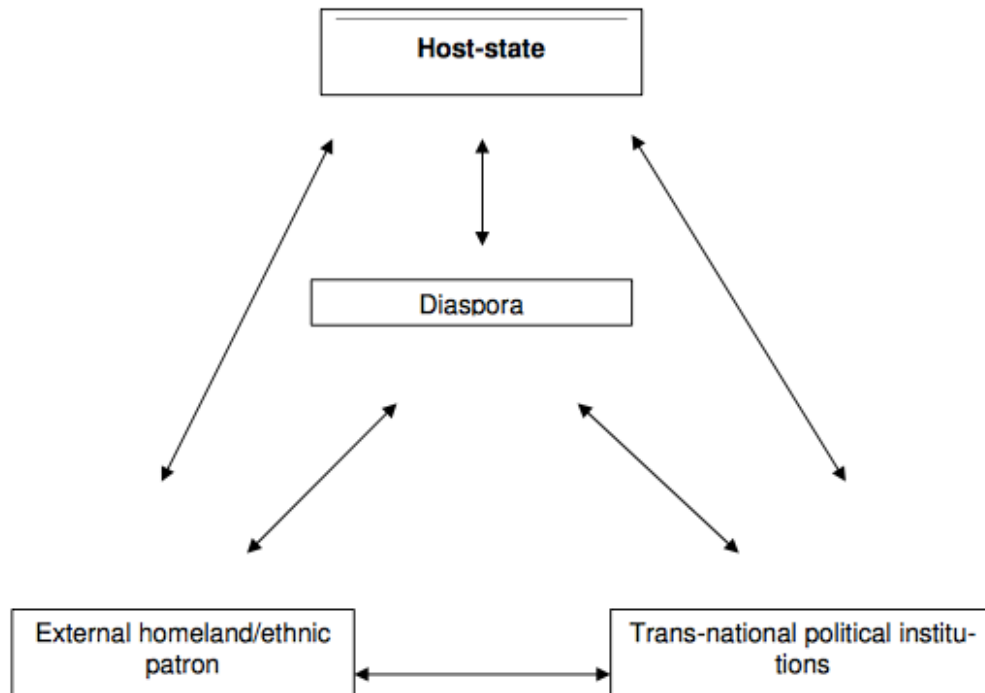
Figure 6 Long-distance nationalism (Howard 2006)

Anti-systemic opposition

For tenths of years, Islamism was portrayed by the two consequential post-colonial regimes as an ideology inherently incompatible with democratic politics. Needless to say that after the revolution of 2011, Islamism is present in Tunisia's political settlement reflecting its presence within the society. Therefore, it goes far beyond being a for- or anti- systemic force per se. It goes far back to the character and direction of the whole society. Yet, it is Islamism on which the current anti-systemic players are currently gaining a momentum.

It is the political difficulties of post-2012 politics that are taking the toll: Many of those who were protesting for their own better tomorrows were those left behind. While politicians focused on the creation of consensual framework that would accommodate the demands of various parties, the day-to-day life of many has everything but improved. Additionally, the abovementioned inherent struggle of religious identity of the Tunisian people, combined with the (for many) failure to incorporate this identity into the project of "new" Tunisia contributed to a creation of a free space available for conservative positions. (Cavatorta 2015) Today, it is the religious (Islamic)

conservatism, stirred up with extreme positions, which drives the current main decomposing powers in Tunisia.

Jihadi Salafism, which appeared in Tunisia after the revolution, is a political branch of conservative Sunni Islam. It aims for a state with law system based on Sharia and calls, in general, for stricter adherence to religious life. (Dreisbach 2013) To some, the blossoming Jihadi Salafism is a result of the failure to incorporate Islam into the settlement. For others, the environment in which politics grew detached from the society enabled despair to spread like measles. To this, for example, Boukhars notes: "[...] psychological phenomenon with its own constructed myths about how alienated Tunisians can conceive of their identities and gain acceptance [...]" (Boukhars 2014: 13) For the latter, it is the frustration rather than religion that actually matters to those who became Salafis. (Muhanna-Matar 2014) Likely then, the radical factions arose from a combination of these conditions and attracted those who were not just willing to wait.

The phenomena first stroke the settlement in 2013, when a wave of assassinations of leftist politicians, harassment of journalists, public figures, religious minorities and women broke out. The major actions were clearly corresponding with important national events and aimed strategically for creation of fear and proliferation of distrust towards the establishment. (Lang 2014) Since then the situation has significantly deteriorated. Previously, the violence attributed to extreme religious groups was connected to AQIM (Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb). The Maghreb branch of Al-Qaeda was mostly using Tunisia as their base for activities in neighboring Algeria or Mali and although operating on Tunisian soil, their interest was rather economical than political. (Stutz 2016) In the past two to three years though, the Islamic State significantly gained ground.

With the vision of Islamism also for Tunisia and immediate actions, ISIS coopted numerous AQIM members and set up cells across the whole country. Recent observations talk about their immediate presence in seventeen out of twenty-four provinces (Stutz 2016) and an immediate threat of establishment of a Tunisian "wilayah" – an IS province. Unlike in the past, nowadays this faction does constitute a

real and immediate threat to the settlement. (Zelin 2015) According to the Global Terrorism Index, Tunisia is one of the few countries where the security situation has worsened compared to 2014. Supported by the evidence of recent attacks in Ben Guerdane, where up to fifty officials and civilians were killed in a raid, Tunisia went far down the tube. (Amara 2016, Marzouk 2016) As the report says, until the end of 2015, the losses are estimated to be of 1.2 billion USD of revenues. Naturally, the most affected industry is tourism – approximately one million tourists less visited the country in 2015. (Institute for Economics and Peace 2016)

The early proto-Salafi organizations (such as Tunisia's Islamic Front) appeared in Tunisia in the late 1980s and were quickly dissolved. By 1990 the founders were either imprisoned or left the country to join forces abroad. Many of those, whom we today call Salafists, were released from prisons or came back to Tunisia after 2011. (Torelli 2012, Noueihed 2012) Immediately they started setting grounds preeminently in the poor neighborhoods, or soon in Libyan refugee camps. In many places they substituted the role of state and provided immediate relief as well as spiritual help. (Fahmi & Meddeb 2015) By creation of long-lasting relationships with conservative refugees, they gave the refugee flows a political dimension as well. (Kartas 2013) Often the Jihadi Salafis are described in literature as a homogenous group, yet, quite the opposite seems to be right. That as well contributes to the hardship the center of the political settlement has while dealing with them. The difficulty of portraying their ties stems from the fact that they commonly operate absolutely out of the formal frameworks (Arieff, & Humud 2014) One of the few institutionalized organizations of the later years, the Ansar-Al Sharia, attempted to implement conservative Islam into the polity until it was officially marked illegal in May 2013. Since then, this direct successor of Muslim Brotherhood on the Tunisian ground is de facto dissolved (Lang 2014, Zelin 2015)

By the end of 2015, 95% of young people lacked the confidence in political parties and their will to put the destiny of the country further, (Muasher et al. 2016) leaving an open space for external actors to satisfy their needs. Although the poorest make up the backbone of Salafi followers, also university grounds lately became a place of political struggle. The most visible example is the Manouba Affair, in which Salafi-provoked

violence outbreaks stroke the Manouba University. Conservative tendencies are to be expected at universities where today Islamists occupy 42% of seats in academic senates of different levels. (Tho Seeth 2016)

Society Factions

The system, which has developed for taxation, military recruitment and state-credit throughout the 20–30 years after the independence, enabled the formation of impersonal ties within the population. These were so crucial in the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011.

As stressed earlier, the central heritage of Tunisian (pre-)colonial past is the character of both polity and politics with an embedded struggle over the nature of Tunisian identity. Strongly imprinting into the current political settlement, the country is predestined to host both modernists and Arab-Islamists close to the center of the political settlement.

For Parks and Cole, the society factions are directly and indirectly tied to the different parts of the settlement, be it the central coalition, the outer circle or the challenger coalition(s). In this sense, the legitimacy of the whole settlement is closely linked to affiliation of these groups to specific circles of influence. Based on the size and relevance to the Tunisian political settlement, below is a closer look to one of the factions of local society – the youth.

Youth

Many also call the Jasmine Revolution of 2011 a youth revolution – and the reason is more than clear. It was the self-immolation of a recent graduate that ignited the protests; the protests themselves were, by far, mostly conducted by young generations and perhaps, it is the youth whose lives got affected the most after the revolution was over. By many means, simultaneously also the concept of youth in the context of Tunisia was affected. While for decades the category was clearly framed by age and marital status, today it inevitably becomes blurry. Unlike before, when youth was understood of being between 15 and 29, the post-2011 understanding invites also people in their thirties or beyond. (Youth Employment and Migration 2015)

The overall interest of institutional politics in dealing with youth is a highly instrumental matter. At several occasions of Tunisian history, young people played a central role in progressive politics – politics of change. It was the urban, educated youth, being engaged in the times of independence struggle. For being so, this segment was considered engaged and eventually civic and therefore possibly challenging for previous regimes. In that sense, the central elites did engage in matters of employment and satisfaction, or otherwise youth comprised a threat to the establishment. Else, youth was for decades neglected as a political actor. (Paciello et al. 2016) So while the deficiencies were put aside from focus, the problems were growing. In 2015 then, the total unemployment of people aged between 15 and 29 years climbed up to nearly 40% (Angel-Urdinola et al. 2015), leaving loads restless, disappointed and at the edge of existential crisis. According to a recent study, Tunisian young people are the ones out of the region to think of emigration (close to 50%) (Agence Tunis Afrique Presse 2016) Unlike a couple of years ago, when talking about youth problems, we do not only see the underemployed university graduates with low, yet realistic outlook for public office jobs. By now the so-called NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) of various backgrounds are the ones who are the most affected. Like other issues in Tunisia, also the ones connected to youth are additionally tightly related to regional disparities. (Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department 2014)

In the political settlement framework, youth becomes (not surprisingly) both a subject and an object of political process. In the specific settlement of Tunisia, active role revolves around four central points. First, political participation as understood by young Tunisians is often limited to the act of elections and demonstrations. They understand elections as the only means to achieve their political will and interest, which indeed consequentially limits their ability to participate in further forming of policies. (Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department 2014) Furthermore, as Collins found out in his research *Voices of a revolution,* these young voters have only limited, if any, understanding of the electoral process, specifically of how do their votes translate into politics. As an illustration:

"—We didn't choose the political reform commission, the government nominated them."

"—Seeing political parties dispute with one another is not enough. Each party should present itself independently of others."

"—[Constituent assembly members] should adopt clear and distinct programs and listen to people." (Collins 2012:12)

Such low level of awareness of the political process co-creates this feeling of alienation and deepens the divide between the center of the political settlement and this segment of society. (Fahmi & Meddeb 2015) On the other hand, demonstrations represent the only option for corrective action in the eyes of Tunisian youth. (Collins 2012) Same as at the edge of 2010, also today these desperate Tunisians are ready to overcrowd the streets: Some of the latest demonstrations were happening throughout 2016 in Kasserine and seven other poor areas. (Lageman 2016) When saying corrective actions, it is necessary to note that the degree may vary from demand towards change of policies, through the change of the inner circle of political settlement over to the aim to fundamentally change the basis of the settlement.

Only very recently, a limited sector of Tunisian youth started exploring engagement in non-governmental organizations to support political causes. Mostly, these organizations engage in matters of reconstruction of the public space, education for societal participation, environmental causes quite specific for southern disregarded areas, naturally also youth self-employment and informal education. To name just a few: The Youth and Science Association of Tunisia, Beautiful Sfax, Jeunes indépendents démocrats (Young independent democrats), Culture of Entrepreneurship, Tunisian Association for Employment and Investment – most of which are co-funded also from European Union funds. (Churchill 2013)

Last, but not least, around a half of young Tunisians are thinking of migrating to another country – be it a European one or another Arab state. In reality, between fifteen and twenty percent in the end will do so, leaving behind not only their families, but also the whole political settlement. For long the migration of young and educated people was

silently used to help the deteriorating unemployment situation. Currently, it is more than clear that the brain-drain caused to the society will have long-term consequences for both economical and socio-political spheres. (Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department 2014)

On the other hand, looking at vectors in which the youth is involved as an object, the topic gets extremely multi-dimensional. Numerous theories would fit to research both individual and societal vectors of sexuality, self-employment, or perhaps the most visible theme – the increasing focus on youth as prospective for conservative Islam forces. Also, the political settlements framework might do the job in recognizing these phenomena.

Youth in the scope of being an object of Salafi groups to further spread their influence is often perceived as an "entry gate". Unlike in the former years, nowadays it concerns the forgotten youth of the southern regions as well as those of urban poor neighborhoods, and newly also university students. In the first two cases, Salafi groups use the strategy of substituting the role of state with social services and the role of conventional religious units by offering consultations on familial and spiritual matters. Even more alarming is their ability to capture attention of educated university students:

> *"The most difficult thing psychologically was choosing between living my life to the fullest while breaking with the principles and values that are important to me, or living in frustration while respecting them, [...] I was able to consult, without any shame, some of my brothers and sisters here at the university."* (Bensaied 2012)

What a 25-years-old Samia describes as a help of "brothers and sisters", was in fact a (successful) attempt to persuade her towards an illegal act of the so-called Urfi marriage.

Local Salafi groups though are not the only actors, which instrumentalize the young Tunisians as a tool for higher influence of their interests. From both global west and the east, governmental, as well as non-governmental organizations turn their resources

towards this group. Tunisia's ranking Nr. 69 in the world's ladder of access to basic knowledge (Gering 2015) gives these players a significant field to engage in numerous ways. From the Arab neighborhood, it is first and foremost Qatar: In their Qatar National Vision 2030 the country stated that it will promote and support both economic growth and stability in the MENA region. For doing so, so far it deployed not only funds for foreign investment, but also several educational initiatives, including the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE). (The World Folio 2016) The WISE fund is hosting series of events in Tunisia, starting with the Dialogue for Education and Peace in Tunis about to promote social cohesion and change. (Qatar Foundation 2016) Similarly, also the Euro-Atlantic players engage in the country. The UKs Department for International Development engages in Tunisia in order to: "[…] generate inclusive economic growth with opportunities especially for women and youth." (Department for International Development 2015) Present are then also private funds, such as the Open Society Funds. (Open Society Foundation 2016)

All in all, Tunisian youth is as of today a section of society with very unclear role and understanding of itself. The growing dissatisfaction and despair might let it to indulge in contra-settlement yet once again. This is even strengthened by the extent into which the youth is a target of societal restrictions, unwanted rules and destabilizing attempts.

5. Evaluation

As mentioned throughout the work, from the beginning to the end, the current situation of the political settlement of Tunisia mainly stands on the prevalent internal ambiguity of national identity. It is said that Turkey is a ship heading to the East while its crew is running to the West – in case of Tunisia, we might fairly tell that both are running in circles.

Yet, the duality of belonging, in which the mostly western educated "fathers" of the modern country failed to fully reflect their nations' characteristics, is not the sole burden the country is carrying on its back. It is also the distortions in the property and ownership structures the way they were exploited under the previous regimes, which undermined the settlements' cohesion. The very little or absent attention paid to privatization of lands, formerly belonging to communities of both mid and lowlands, predestined the way both business and social cohesion will work in the 21st century. While the traditional distribution of soil and resources meant the availability to anyone belonging to specific communities, privatization has led to formation of three distinguished groups. First, the landless locals who ended up working for the two later groups, unable to claim the soil. Second, foreign (especially French and Italian) businessmen. And third, local landlords whose party acquired some of the areas themselves as well as received monetary compensations from the foreign investors. Additionally, hand in hand with the establishment of a new state, the growing bureaucracy centralized governance and deprived lowland areas from the opportunity to advocate their matters in the capital.

The state sector became an important player right after the Europeans left and a gap in professional services arose (health care, lawyers, engineers, managers). Policies that emerged in the late 60s after the socialist plan was abandoned created a special spawn, from which Ben Ali's fellows could build their networks.

Underneath, the table summarizes the findings on the four axes as described by Cole and Parks: inclusiveness, stability, elite predation, and conduciveness to development.

Criteria	Indicators	Poor Assessment	Positive Assessment
Inclusiveness	Diversity of elites included in settlement (ethnic, geographic, clan/tribal, political faction)	- The constitution of 2014 perceived as a betrayal to many with the conservative view of state. - Elected and appointed offices (apart from the highest governmental ones) have often very little to say when it comes to business-as-usual politics. - Detachment of politics and society. - Wide disillusionment amongst youth and hinterland regions. - Judiciary traditionally perceived negatively and looked at with mistrust. Numerous judges and judiciary clerks from the Ben Ali era remain in offices even after the fall of the regime. - Subject of the policy of Francafrique – foreign players perceived as more influential tan local ones. - Presence of extensive factions of society coming from the direct neighborhood and absolutely left-behind without any kind of state support.	- Broad coalitions formed in government since the 2011. - Presence of a strong organization representing non-elite society faction – the UGTT. - UGTT to often prefer societal dialogue to top-down political decisions.
Stability	Level of violent contestation of political	- Violence connected to the presence of challenger coalition – attacks at the	-

	power	- museum of Bardo, presidential guard in Tunis, etc. - Presence of extremist, armed group with wide support.	
Elite Predation	Frequency and scale of predatory elite behavior	- For long the long-term vision for the settlement was missing. As a result, predatory tendencies emerged between the Islamic and anti-Islamic understandings of the state. - Two parties with the widest support rather random, heterogeneous groupings than strong goal-oriented players. - Twisting of power and authority around personal/individual perspectives. - Existence of illegitimate military tribunals. - Misuse of the state of emergency and other legal institutions.	- Well-thought constitutionalism.
Conduciveness to Development	Rates of economic growth, income, and investment Institutional capacity and independence	- Missing concept of inclusive economy. - Discrepancies and mistrust between the hinterlands regions and the center, blocking off further economic/investment actions. - Severely unequal economic development. - Duality of economy (off- and onshore)	- Inner circles aiming for further investments from IGOs, foreign businesses and other states.

		creating additional bureaucracy, companies shifting to grey zones and exclusionary economy. - High costs of corruption and lack of transparency of the economy. - Strong self-regulating tendencies of some professions leading to exclusionary segments entrenching the employability. - Severe proliferation of low-productivity industries, while know-how to enhance SMEs is missing. - Extensive informal economy sector hurting both state budget and leaving those involved in precarious jobs and positions.	

As one can see from the above grid, majority of the indicators show severe concerns over the resilience of the settlement. Those that show positive outlooks are rather of the institutional character, which, unfortunately, often remain only in debates or on paper. Due to the proliferating bureaucracy and low level of internal legitimacy, the political settlement of Tunisia is currently failing to accommodate numerous interests. Thanks to that, the challenger coalition, which emerged, might in the upcoming time trigger even further the division between the ruling elites and the non-elite factions of society.

Additionally, as a historical heritage, the settlement and its elements are not used to solving problems on their own – as Lang et al. put it: "[…] It is the absence of bottom-up culture in addressing specific issues and coming up with solutions." (Lang 2014) In that

sense, the widespread understanding is that the state is responsible to deliver measures to make the settlement inclusive, stable, conducive to development and with low level of elite predation. At the same time, traditionally Tunisia has the habit of cooptation of challenging groups, or suppressing with the help of foreign forces, rather than focusing on building and stabilizing legitimate institutions. Rather questionable, as of now, seems to be the presence of Gulf investments and consultants and their aim to participate in the economy.

Last but not least, the central field of Tunisian political settlement has not fully overcome one attribute – the personalization of politics. Leaving aside the personalization as understood by North and collective that implies personal gains from political process, limited access to security etc. (North et al. 2009), let us focus on what personalization means for continuity. Personalism within political bodies, like in business organizations, is a situation where given organization stands on the presence of a single individual or a small group. These carry the responsibility, accountability, investment, etc. It is very often present in systems with low institutionalization. (Choudhry 2014) The consequence of personalism in the center of political settlement is its complete disability or only low level of ability to nurture party growth. Often then this is bringing fatal underrepresentation of certain social segments.

Future outlooks

Although the aim of this work is in no case any kind of recommendation of action steps or policy-making, several points emerged throughout the working time, which would be pity to just throw into a dustbin.

The inability to keep up with socio-economical demands of the population is one of the cornerstones of troubles the country is currently going through. Therefore, in order to stabilize the settlement and rebuild legitimacy and trust in the state, the elites should care to focus on bridging the regional gaps and make sure that an economical success follows the political success of roadmap creation. Such a task is, inevitably, far from an easy one and Tunisia then could keep the pace and work on the implementation of recovery plans together with OECD, the European Union or North African region.

Further, to enable a bigger growth of local SMEs, the state should secure better access to know-how by closer cooperation with foreign institutions, and should rather support the prospective entrepreneurs with programs to enable initial investments, connection and access to global markets, etc. These steps could help preventing the further corrosion of the settlement by taking the wind of the sails of the challenger coalition.

Possibility for further research

Regarding the content-related ways to put this research further, some longer observations might be appropriate: work on this paper has started some twelve months ago, in the beginning of 2016. Although the author aimed to keep pace with the changes that occurred, inevitably not all of them could be, and were, reflected in the research. Notably in the scope of security, economic capacities and performance, the situation has deteriorated. This is where some further research will be possible – as a longitudinal study both reflecting the new status quo and examining the forces, which actually pushed for change.

This work was aiming to outline a general overview of the current situation; however, the issue undoubtedly offers further possibilities to dig deeper into motivations and ties of the actors of Tunisian political settlement. Through a fieldwork in form of direct observations and qualitative interviews, one could definitely understand specific segments of the settlement in a more comprehensive way. At the same time, more attention could be directed towards the external environment into which the Tunisian political settlement is embedded: a research focusing on the wide net of interactions between the domestic members of elite coalitions, challenger coalition, different segments of population and their foreign counterparts might give a hint to better understand how certain political and action narratives are being translated into local politics.

As of going more specific and into details, looking at the particular case of Tunisia, an interesting point might be researching the secondary political settlement. What was just briefly mentioned in the previous pages about local sub-economies and illegal trades is,

for example, severely affecting certain regions when it comes to both security (not necessarily in a negative way), economy and understanding of authorities.

Quite on the other hand, looking at the theoretical framework itself, it would further use some more clarification of method and measurements. It certainly opens the question of quantification opportunities. Alike, to amend the framework as developed by Parks and Cole, measurement of distance between the central coalition circles (both inner and outer) and the society and its factions could be beneficial. In weaker situations, institutions are often either tied closely to informal system or they lack the capacity to assert authority on the elite alliances, which the framework currently does not fully reflect. How they put inclusiveness/exclusiveness axe of analysis into practice is certainly a step in a good direction, but it tells us rather how much is the settlement keen on being inclusive, than how "prone" the society is to inclusion/exclusion. Further specification of the border between the inner and outer circle would be also beneficial, else, of course, there is as well an option to admit that there is none or a highly fluid one. Last but not least, the framework could, as well, go further into how to work with the external environment of a given settlement.

6. Conclusion

The current external and internal situation of Tunisia both seem to be quite troubling. At the same time, the country has been aspiring to be one of the paragons of successful democratic transition and building of a stable partner at the southern coast of the Mediterranean. For being so, Tunisia seems to be a good and viable case to check when talking about legitimacy, stability and resilience. This work looked into the internal resilience of Tunisia through the lenses of political settlement framework. One of the main goals of this work was to describe the actors involved and to attempt to evaluate the current level of resilience of the system as understood by the theory of Parks and Cole.

The political settlement, as understood by the author, is a way of making sense of socio-political settings and dynamics by looking at informal ties, actions beyond institutional norms, and roles played by predominantly non-political actors. Although some argue that the concept is merely another name to what the social sciences understand under the polity-analysis, the framework gives, indisputably, at least options to categorize certain phenomena in new ways. To the perception of the author, it even allows to connect the settlement studies with the open-polity approaches – which are mainly resonating with international political economist, migration studies, security studies researchers and beyond.

In many cases, revolutionary reforms catch their leaders absolutely unprepared for what is going to happen next. From today's perspective, we can tell that the case of Tunisia is uniquely close to the opposite. However, the omnipresent struggle for long-term vision as well as the external environment of rise of conservative Islam's influence affected the newly formed political settlement of Tunisia. Talking also the regional (Maghreb) and sub-national fragmentation (as also discussed above), it all did put hurdles to consolidation of reform outputs. Like the Higgs boson, also a political settlement can be captured either in its movement or as a setting. This study tried to focus on the latter, yet several remarks has been done in order to understand also the dynamics leading to certain situations.

Last but not least, only the time will show whether Tunisia is heading towards more stability or corrosion of this attempt to build a northern African-style democracy. Still, it would be unwise to give up on steering the process from both the central coalitions' side, as well as from the societal side. The author hopes to provide an attempt to give the understanding of the situation slightly different perspective.

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