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Youth Activism, Art and Transitional Justice: Emerging Spaces of Memory after the Jasmine Revolution

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Chapter 3

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Revolution

By Arnaud Kurze

On 14 January 2015, four years after the youth-propelled ouster of President Zine El Abdine Ben

Ali, the festivities to celebrate the anniversary of a new era in Tunisian society remained limited.

While conducting fieldwork on Bourguiba Avenue in the city center that day, the author felt that

public spaces were much less crowded than compared to the time of the uprising when the

protesters flooded the streets of Tunis. Moreover, newly elected president, Beji Caïd Essebsi, set

a controversial tone during his commemorative speech at the presidential palace in Carthage.

Rather than referring to all victims of the revolution, he only honored high-profile martyrs,

fueling protests by victims' families.[1] Tunisia's transition process, and in particular the efforts of

dealing with the past, is in turmoil. While youth should feature in the center of all this, they have

been sidelined and are marginalized from the political participation process. This chapter

critically examines youth efforts to shape alternative transitional justice practices under the post-

authoritarian regime.

The median age of Tunisia's population is 31 years.[2] While the statistical data indicates

that society is composed of a vast young generation of citizens, the country is led by old elites,

often passed their eighties. This in turn, creates a generational disconnect. The chapter draws on

a concept of youth that goes beyond the legal notion of adulthood that defines youth as minors

below a certain age.[3] Instead, the study embraces a more cultural-inspired model that describes

youth as an experience that shapes the individual's level of dependency. As a result, the level of

dependency is often contingent on economic factors and emotional ties to the youth's family.[4]

Focusing on a wide-range of youth actors in their twenties and thirties, the chapter analyzes the

emergence of transitional justice practices that occur in parallel to the official steps put in place.

In particular, it discusses the role of art and the impact of social movements to address human

rights abuses. Several chapters in this book (see in particular Part II) focus on bottom up

approaches in transitional justice processes. Reminiscent of Philipp Schulz and Caterina

Bonora's work, the author of this chapter zooms in on actors and issues that have found less

scholarly attention. Based on different categories of art, it scrutinizes the work of youth activists

and artists to deal with the past and fuel change in contemporary Tunisian society.

This study centers around two essential questions in Tunisia's transition process. On the

one hand, it seeks to answer why political actors failed to integrate the harbingers of the

revolution into a more holistic post-authoritarian accountability and memory process? On the

other hand, its seeks to shed light on why the strong voice of protesters several years after the

revolution went silent, leaving behind a heterogeneous landscape of activists and projects? This

research maps different types of activities to illustrate how during this process, art served as a

medium to create innovative spaces of deliberation. It draws on Foucault's concept of

heterotopia – spaces of otherness that are simultaneously physical and mental – to present new

findings on the difficulties connected to generating spaces of memory and accountability. It

relies on over two-dozen in-depth narrative interviews with local actors and content analysis of

art campaigns and collective action. The author argues that the creation of this new fragile

spatiality is challenged by a number of factors, including narratives and memories of Tunisia's

secularist and Islamist traditions. To elaborate on this argument, the chapter first explains the

relationship between spaces, heterotopia and transitional justice. It is followed by a description

of the research methodology. Then, it retraces the politicized transitional justice process that led to elite-driven results. Third, the study maps the role of youth activism and the use of art in order to illustrate that in spite of the creation of alternative spaces of memory challenges persist. It concludes by pointing to future avenues of research.

Emerging Spaces, Heterotopia and Transitional Justice

The notion of space in relation with power structures in society has found extensive academic attention notably in sociology as well as post-structuralist and post-modern literature.[5] While the concept of space in transitional justice is essential, it has been understudied in the field compared to other disciplines[6] As pointed out by the editors in the introduction of this volume, space can be defined in more than one way, including a physical, virtual and conceptual dimension, which are key to understanding the emergence of new rules and norms put forward by different social actors in post-conflict and post-authoritarian contexts. As a case in point, the control of an interim government over the implementation of local transitional justice practices in a post-war society, leads to an increase in state power over local population. Drawing on the case of post-genocide Rwanda, Anuradha Chakravarty demonstrates "how the higher authorities ceded space and acquired control at the grassroots" and how the "gacaca courts provide insight into a repressive system that relied heavily on forms of social complicity and the self-interested support of its citizens."[7] By putting in place regulations and practices at the local level, authorities were able to define the post-conflict justice space particularly in geographically remote areas and consolidate state power during the transition process. Juxtaposing geography, knowledge and power is therefore particularly compelling when examining post-revolutionary Tunisia or other

contexts in which alternative spaces and actors emerge during transitional justice processes, such as Philipp Schulz's contribution on dealing with male sexual violence in post-conflict Uganda in this volume.[8] The key hereto lies in exploring the power struggle between different stakeholders by analyzing the relationship between place and being. Focusing on a physical location, allows to assess broader sociopolitical and philosophical impacts on society.[9] In transitional justice studies, various authors have also employed the concept to address a number of questions in different settings associated with the difficulties of dealing with the past. For instance, the notions of public space and victims' voices are frequent reoccurring tropes in the literature. Based on a gender perspective, some authors describe the relentless efforts of civil society to create a public space for victims groups "to tell their truths and be heard by their fellow citizens and the state and to lay the groundwork for a paradigmatic case of sexual violence as a weapon of war to be presented for prosecution in the Guatemalan courts."[10] Their case exemplifies the empowerment of a voiceless group not only by creating a platform within society to enhance their visibility, but also by connecting it to a ulterior goal of paving the road to demand accountability by means of judicial trials. Similar mobilizations are also noticeable in post-Ben-Ali Tunisia, where families of the victims and martyrs of the revolution advocate justice. The gender initiative by the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) is an excellent example that underlines the efforts of creating a voice for marginalized groups within society.[11]

Although this type of protest and political struggle opposes different social actors—such as the ruling elites and those who suffered injustice—it also questions the institutions in place that deal with accountability matters, particularly their functioning, their objectives and their overall impact. As Tazreena Sajjad has demonstrated, major pitfalls include weak governance, deprioritization of the rule law, burdensome multidimensional coordination and the issue of

institutional trust and popularity with the local population.[12] She argues that these obstacles fuel critical debates around these contentious spaces that are continuously renegotiated by those involved. "Rather than disengaging from the question of accountability, the focus should be on how to enhance the capacity and the resources of such institutions so that they can negotiate these narrow spaces even more effectively."[13]

Defining the role and character of a space that is negotiated by key players who participate in these processes is a common phenomenon in times of transition. German efforts to cope with atrocities committed under the Nazi regime are a case in point of a long and contentious process. The Holocaust discussion was revived in recent years with a debate on how much space—physically and ideologically—society should accord to other Nazi victims, such as those persecuted due to their sexual orientation.[14] The act of commemorating and erecting memorials then becomes a matter of narrating a particular part of history, and promoting a specific victim identity. As Christiane Wilke's demonstrates in her study, these compartmentalized collective memory efforts fail to capture the inherent moral complexity. The intricacies of overlapping identities, such as lesbian Jews who fell victim to their Nazi perpetrators, are ignored.[15] The politicization of these different identities is poised to affect the perception of the imaginary and the physical space. Whereas the debate in Germany's capital Berlin opposed the Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual community and representatives of the Jewish community – particularly Holocaust survivors—it wasn't fueled by political elites. In Morocco, in contrast, the current ruler, King Mohamed VI, used his influence to create a space that allows for dealing with the past. Yet, this process was carefully orchestrated to maintain his reign and power.[16] Rather than constituting an opportunity to address past wrongdoings, the creation of an Equity and Reconciliation Commission served the sole purpose to point fingers at

the abuses committed under his father's regime, King Hassan II, while at the same time putting

his current style of governance in a better light. The continuing immunity and the lack of

accountability of former perpetrators further underline the politically motivated creation of a

"safe space." The King therefore seemed "to intend this space for stable change guided by one

side only (the monarchy) rather than for constructive dialogue."[17]

The current mandate of the Tunisian Truth and Dignity Commission (TDC) based on a

transitional justice law passed in December 2013, during Ennahda's final rule, cast similar

doubts on its effectiveness and one might question to which extent the politicized process might

backfire, hampering Tunisia's young and fragile democratic transition. In addition, as will be

discussed later, youth, the catalysts of Ben Ali's fall, have little political voice in the current

transition process, raising the question of their role, and the development of formal and informal

settings that would allow for an inclusive participation of these actors. In order to explore the

creation of alternative spaces in the post-Ben-Ali era, this chapter draws on Foucault's notion of

heterotopia, spaces of otherness. Foucault juxtaposes them to utopias, which are imaginary and

do not exist as a real place. In contrast to utopias, so Foucault,

> There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do
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> exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like
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> counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real
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> sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and
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> inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to
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> indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the

sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias,

heterotopias. [18]

Foucault's unfinished work on heterotopias provides an excellent starting point to examine the

creation and appropriation of post-revolutionary space by Tunisian youth.[19]

The seizure of the political vacuum by established political elites, who quickly took over

power after the fall of President Ben Ali to end turmoil and assure a peaceful transition deprived

young protesters from any meaningful participatory space. Contentious politics that had led to

political gains achieved through mass mobilization vanished in front of the eyes of activists and

advocacy groups. The spaces that were left for many of them to voice their ideas, hopes and

frustrations was limited to a virtual world, a utopia of sort, "sites with no real place."[20] Ironically,

this space was created by Ben Ali's regime embracing "education and the adoption of new

technologies" to develop "an educated workforce that would attract further investment."[21] While

this goal was achieved, "it also had as a consequence the creation of many technologically savvy

youth who would go on to use social media as a tool of political dissent and finally of political

mobilization."[22] Post-revolution attempts by institutions, such as the Temimi Foundation, to

engage stakeholders, including politicians, economists, religious figures, scholars, lawyers,

judges and activists, in an open dialogue failed to include youth in a sustainable, comprehensive

transition process, in spite of the "civilized, responsible interaction, based on respect of divergent

dissenting opinions."[23] Hence, the appropriation of alternative spaces became key in the battle to

maintain a nascent political voice that emerged with the ouster of Ben Ali. It gave birth to the

creation of post-revolution heterotopias, spaces of illusion that are neither here nor there, but that

expose real spaces, while at the same time compensating for the lack of real space by creating

spaces that are other. The lack of autonomy, in this case particularly political participation, also referred to as heteronomy in Kantian terms, raises questions with regards to sociopolitical transformations in society. According to Cornelius Castoriadis, social change involves radical discontinuities fueled by the social imaginary. The social imaginary, is based on a collective memory of each historical time period, capturing the social, cultural and political zeitgeist of the era.[24] In the context of political exclusion in post-revolution Tunisia, these social actors have thus occupied imaginary spaces and conveyed meaning to these spaces of otherness, or in Castoriadis words, have initiated a process of "social imaginary signification."[25]

This trend raises a number of questions: Is it merely a mirror of current sociopolitical conditions, a "counter-site" as defined by Foucault, with the aim of resisting current the political struggle?[26] Or do these efforts constitute more than just a form of resistance, creating an alternative space for a particular social group in Tunisian society, as posited by some scholars who further interpreted Foucault's work, drawing on different cases studies.[27] To answer these questions, it is important to deconstruct the notion of youth during and after Tunisia's revolution that ousted President Ben Ali. A closer analysis of this transition period will help distinguish several categories of youth actors, illustrating the struggle to claim and appropriate these spaces.[28] In addition, it reveals different forms of contestation that question the legitimacy of this newly created alternative spaces.

Methodology

This qualitative mixed methods study is based on field research conducted in Tunisia during summer 2014 and winter 2015. It draws on over two dozen of narrative interviews with youth actors, including activists, artists, and students. While most of the interviews were held in the

capital Tunis, the subjects were from across the country, providing for a mix between urban and rural participants. Additional key stakeholders involved in the transition process have also been interviewed when deemed appropriate, including policy-makers, government experts, and practitioners. To select the research subjects, snowball sampling has been employed as a technique to reach out and tap into the network of different social groups that are hard to penetrated from outside. Oftentimes members of these groups form a closed-circle making it difficult for outsiders to gain access to the group and to obtain information.[29] Snowball sampling therefore offers way of collecting data by which the researcher uses the first point of contact of the social group under scrutiny, in order to get introduced to additional members within the network for further interviews and in-person meetings that serve to gather complementary data. As a result, with each additional member, the circle expands, allowing for a wide-cast net of participants who lie within the research study parameters. The objective of these interviews is to collect information about the varied involvements and trajectories of youth actors at the time of the revolution and its aftermath, to capture different perceptions during the transition, and to compare a variety of views about conditions on the ground. Moreover, this work uses content analysis to complement the data collected through research interviews. Documents include news articles retrieved from the written press and from online sources, reports and official documents released by government institutions and nongovernmental organizations, as well as information gathered from online blogs and social media such as Twitter and Facebook. These diverse sources were in particular analyzed against the backdrop of discursive patterns indicating for instance counter-cultures or trends in public debates within Tunisian society and sub-cultures within the different youth categories.

Tunisian Politics of Transition: Transitional Justice à la Carte

To understand the role of youth in Tunisia's post-Ben-Ali era, it is necessary to highlight the evolution of the public debate of transitional justice in the aftermath of the revolution. The implementation of accountability measures during the post-regime period was the product of a politicized process that led to elite-driven technocratic bargaining at the expense of youth involvement. As Aymen Briki, a researcher in political science and law at the University of Sousse, points out

> In spite of the large number of youth and students in the streets during the fall of President Ben Ali, political elites implementing policy strategies during the post-revolutionary transition period did not actively include the ideas and suggestions of youth in the democratization process.[30]

This obstacle-filled process illustrates the political struggle associated with addressing grave human rights abuses, political repression and other forms of wrongdoings. Transition periods after a conflict or the collapse of an authoritarian regime raise a number of questions about dealing with the past, including discussions on purging, trials or reconciliation. Additionally, society is confronted with the problem of how to set the historical record straight. However, shedding light on these dark chapters of history is a process that is a biased process and a fact-oriented analysis of past abuses can often turn into contested politics of justice.[31]

Tunisia's post-authoritarian transitional justice record fits this pattern. The post-Ben-Ali caretaker governments that succeeded the president's ouster implemented piecemeal transitional justice measures, focusing mostly on addressing harms suffered by protesters during the weeks

of the revolution. This à la carte choice of dealing with the past underlines the need for security

and stability after the regime collapse pursued by the interim political establishment. Continuity

rather than tabula rasa was at order. When the Islamist troika government – headed by Ennahda

and joined by Ettakatol and Congress of the Republic – formed a government after the fall 2011

elections, a broader vision emerged, leading to the creation of a Ministry of Human Rights and

Transitional Justice, headed by Ennahda's Samir Dilou. Yet, as Anne Wolf points out, this also

posed problems:

many opposition parties and international organizations criticized the tying of transitional

justice to the executive rather than an independent body, arguing that this could easily politicize

the process – especially because Ennahda had suffered more than any other movement under Ben

Ali.[32]

After several crises in 2013, including the assassination of two politicians in the opposition[33], the

troika decided to hand over power to a technocratic caretaker government led by an independent,

Mehdi Jooma. Before the power shift, however, the parliament passed a comprehensive, the so-

called transitional justice law, with the objective to deal with regime abuses of the past starting

from 1 July 1955 until the issuance of this law on 24 December 2013. [34] Spanning over six

decades of abuses, it systematically covers a myriad of measures, including accountability,

reparations and reconciliation.[35] In order to do so, the law included the creation of a Truth and

Dignity Commission with the goal of investigating human rights violations during this period.[36]

While this legislative achievement could open the doors for a holistic transitional justice

approach in Tunisia in the near future, it nonetheless accentuates the clash between secularists

and Islamists that is at the very core of this process. From a restorative justice perspective the law has great potential to address injustice from the past. This includes notably the early years of nation-state building, when Habib Bourguiba[37], in an effort to consolidate his power, asked the French colonial military for help to quash the Yusufists, the Islamist opposition, leaving hundreds of their supporters dead.[38] Although this reckoning with the past represents an opportunity to account for systematic repression of the Islamist opposition over several decades, it also poses a risk as politicization of the transitional justice process and the rising polarization of Tunisian politics loom large.[39]

Moreover, this process led to a technocratic government approach of dealing with transitional justice matters that resulted in an exclusive, elite-driven process with insiders opposing outsiders. Already in spring 2012 the Ministry for Human Rights and Transitional Justice launched a national dialogue on transitional justice in coordination with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). Although the aim was to bring together key stakeholders in the process—Tunisian and international NGOs, international organizations and domestic and international policymakers—these meetings only included political elites, leaving grassroots organizations and youth excluded from the negotiations. Christopher Lamont and Hé La Boujneh describe the nature of the high politics as followed:

> Illustrative of the extent to which Tunisia's transitional elites sought to promote
> transitional justice was the fact that Tunisia's three presidencies, as the President of the
> Republic Moncef Marzouki, the President of the National Constituent Assembly Mostafa

Ban Jafaar and the Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali are known domestically, attended the event along with other governmental ministers.[40]

Although grassroots efforts were not entirely ignored, the prevailing efforts are only limited in scope. In 2012, for instance, the ICTJ launched an initiative with the aim of empowering women in the transitional justice process, providing training to NGOs that work on women's rights.[41] According to ICTJ staff working on these issues, however, efforts are slow and it is too early to gauge the impact at the moment.[42] These initiatives are nonetheless an exception rather than the rule. Instead, the overall process continues to be technical and elusive. An invitation-only workshop held by Human Rights Watch (HRW), UNDP and the ICTJ on 12 January 2015 at the occasion of the launch of a HRW report on the Tunisia's trials on the killings during the uprisings further illustrates this problem.[43]

It was on a sunny Monday morning that a number of experts and Tunisian elites gathered at the Africa Hotel on Bourguiba Ave in the capital for an entire day to discuss the record of transitional justice in the country with a particular on the military trials between 2010 and 2011 as well as the special chambers to account for past abuses as stipulated in the transitional justice law. While the moderator of the wrap-up session, Filippo di Carpegna, a Judicial Technical Advisor at UNDP, stressed the importance of including recommendations for future legislative propositions, it became evident from the start of the last session that the organizers were less interested in getting additional input from participants, but instead merely presented their own views to a select circle of Tunisian elite audience. Earlier that day, however, during a roundtable discussion on comparative case studies and lessons learned for the Truth and Dignity

Commission, Mezri Haddad, a renowned Jewish-Tunisian intellectual, criticized this expert-driven process:

> You were so kind as to provide us with your expert views. … Yet, the principal problem that remains is that despite an existing transitional justice process and a transitional justice law, there is a lack of political will. In fact, relevant stakeholders unwilling to apply these rules but instead are trying to sabotage or dissolve the commission.[44]

Corinna Mullin and Ian Patel, who followed this process closely, refer to it as "hegemonic justice."[45] While this expert-centered approach discloses the different power structures within society with international actors actively shaping the outcome[46], youth activists, many of who carried the brunt of the revolution, feel left out and have launched their own transitional agenda. Hé La Boujneh, for instance, an activist, emphasized her grassroots efforts to empower the young generation, "we have to build our own transitional justice movement, *le Front pour la Justice Transitionelle*, in order to render this process more inclusive."[47] Reactions like hers to the current situation stress the challenging conditions, in which youth grapple to define their role in the search for accountability in the post-Ben-Ali era.

Mapping the Role of Youth Activism and the Use of Art

In the following, the chapter maps out a variety of youth responses to the present conditions on the ground and explains to what extent these different groups were able to create an alternative space that allows them to confront past abuses in spite of the exclusive, official government-led transitional justice process. It draws from a selection of categorized examples that are analyzed

against the backdrop of various art forms. Furthermore, it underlines the specific characteristics of each medium the different social groups are relying on. First, the chapter discusses the place of cyber activism during the transition period. Related to this, it examines several types of local street art and contrasts it to internationally sponsored projects. Attention is paid also to traditional art forms, such as visual arts and performing arts. In this context, the chapter also scrutinizes performance activism, which uses elements of the performing arts as a form of protest. Finally, the chapter completes this map by discussing recent developments of youth engagement in civil society organizations. The objective is not to provide a holistic picture of each space[48]; yet, to provide an initial topography of the different youth categories as well as the use of their available space for deliberative purposes.

Cyber Activism and the Development of a "Leitkultur"[49]

The use and particularly the potential of the Internet during the Tunisian uprisings after 17 December 2010 and in the post-Ben-Ali period has been described as an "effective tool for supporting the capabilities of the democratic activists by allowing forums for free speech and political networking opportunities; providing a virtual space for assembly."[50] Social media, and in particular Facebook, was perceived as a crucial factor that sparked the Tunisian revolution.[51] In an interview, social media scholar and activist Kerim Bouzouita, underlined that while twitter served as an opinion shaper by a limited amount of users, over two million Tunisians[52] have Facebook accounts and the exchange of information during the weeks of the uprisings on the site equaled that of over 150 million North American users during that period.[53] But what exactly constitutes cyber activism and what role did the Internet and especially social media play during

the political transition in Tunisia? Philip Howard put forward a frequently used definition, describing it as,

> the act of using the Internet to advance a political cause that is difficult to advance offline … the goal of such activism is often to create intellectually and emotionally compelling digital artifacts that tell stories of injustice, interpret history, and advocate for particular political outcomes.[54]

An excellent example to illustrate this description is Sami Ben Gharbia and his colleagues. Gharbi is a Tunisian blogger, human rights activist and founder of Nawaat and was exiled in the Netherlands from 1998 until 2011. He created the organization with the goal of generating an online discussion platform for activists and dissidents in and from Tunisia. In a nutshell, the site aggregates articles and other online media for further dissemination across the web. During the upheavals in early 2011, Gharbia's team posted videos originating on Facebook to Nawaat's blog, from which other activists would then repost it on their pages and spread them through various online platforms. Other, more individualized expressions of dissidence include for instance changing profile pictures of individual headshots to representations of Tunisia, such as the national flag. But in order to underline the rupture with the old regime and demonstrate the belonging to a new, "imagined community"[55] online, the flag had been tinkered with and the red background was painted black.[56] Other examples of the flag included personifications with tears running from the white circle in the center of the banner and were part of forging an alternative citizenship and form of belonging, a so-called "Alter-Tunisianship" (in French "Alter-Tunisienneté)."[57]

There is a close link between ideas that spread in the virtual world and putting into practice different forms of protest or advocacy work, which will be developed further below. For now, however, the above examples illustrate that "activists have not only integrated the Internet into their repertoire but also … what counts as activism, what counts as community, collective identity, democratic space and political strategy."[58] In this context, Kerim Bouzouita described the online work of bloggers and activists as an effort to establish a "Kultur," referencing the German term as a notion that refers to a process and its result, similar to agriculture as the art of sowing and cultivating plants. For him, the importance is to establish a culture promotes core values of modernity including democracy, secularism, human rights and civil society. This idea of a Leitkultur[59], first mentioned by Tibi, Bassam, a Syrian-born German political scientist, is already visible through efforts that have spilled over from the net, such as the initiative OpenGovTN[60] that aims at introducing new forms of democratic participation and citizenship into Tunisian society in order to move beyond the system of electoralism.

This Leitkultur, however, remains contested in society from two specific fronts. On the one hand, the Tunisian state continues to fight against individual cases of activism, putting several cyber activists in prison during the transition period. More recently, authorities arrested a blogger, Yassine Ayari, and put him on a military trial for "defaming the army." [61] While the virtual space has been successfully claimed by youth since the revolution and freedom of expression expanded exponentially compared to the Ben Ali years, a political power struggle remains visible with the territorial boundaries drawn in favor of a political elite used to a deep state watching over society. On the other hand, the marginalization of political Islam in Tunisia since the revolution particularly in the media has incited increasing dissident Islamist and Salafist voices online. While secularists are still given statewide access to media platforms, the

latter have been excluded, which has fueled the use of the Internet as a counter-space to propagate their ideas and discourse.[62] In parallel with their online contestation, Salafists also expanded their activism on the ground. Before discussing this issue in relation with performance activism; however, the author focuses on street art, a relatively recent form of cultural expression in Tunisia.

Street Art as "Glocal Space"

The contested online space is complemented by a physical space, consisting of streets, walls and buildings. The message is still composed of words and images, but the medium is paint and spray cans. Street art and graffiti developed into one of the major forms of expression during and after the fall of the Ben Ali regime. This section underlines a few examples of this trend in order to explain its role for transitional justice processes and the role of youth in them. By street art, the chapter refers to as "the act of writing upon walls (also known as parietal writing) is an equally ubiquitous and elemental act, one linked to the primal human desire to decorate, adorn, and physically shape the material environment."[63] But in the context of the Tunisian transition, the significance of street art goes further. In fact, graffiti here represents a communication device that serves the purpose of transmitting a message from a collective group to the state.[64] It has become a major weapon in the local and urban territorial disputes confronting the state and youth. When the waves of protest descended over large part of the country and the military and police forces lost control over the crowds, many protestors armed with spray cans and paint started claiming public spaces, marking slogans, symbols and images on walls, buildings and onto the street.[65]

Many slogans that adorned walls and even street signs were painted in two languages: Either in French and Arabic or in English and Arabic. The objective was to highlight the universal character of the publicly expressed messages. This was done against the backdrop of an internationalized transition with corps of journalists invading the country to report on the unfolding of the events. Hence, their work was not only visible to the local eye, but to an international audience as well. A variety of messages were embedded in the art created across these urban spaces, including beautiful, detailed murals as well as crude, hastily sprayed anti-regime slogans on government buildings. The destruction of former regime property, such as one of the Ben Ali beach houses in Hammamet that was vandalized and covered in graffiti, attest of the angry appropriation of a space exclusively reserved to the ruling elites at the time.[66]

Yet, the story of street art does not end here, as it has a more global and internationalized narrative to it as well. During the post-Ben-Ali period, a number of initiatives were developed, including international graffiti artists, who were invited to illustrate their skills in a recently freed society. In Djerba, for instance, the largest North African island off the Tunisian coast and a popular tourist destination, Tunisian-French artists, Mehdi Ben Cheikh, launched a project called "Djerbahood." For this, artists from over two-dozen countries travelled to a little village, Erriadh, on the island between July and August 2014 to create murals and embellish the local landscape with their art.[67]

A much more controversial project was launched in the March 2011, "Inside Out Tunisia" under the guidance of French photographer and artist JR.[68] His work consists of oversized black-and-white photographic images that he posts in public spaces reminiscent of graffiti artist work. For this project, a team of photographers shot six hundred portraits of ordinary Tunisian, which were subsequently exposed in diverse public locations around the

country.[69] While the group of artists embarked on a journey to plaster random buildings and walls in remote regions of the country, the response was not always as welcoming as the artists initially hoped for. Several times, local residents attacked the art installations, ripping the paper off the walls. These walls contained portrait pictures of many average Tunisian citizens who had previously agreed to participate in the project so that photographers could take headshot pictures for the installations.[70] Art—which often times is used as a medium of contestation but served here, in the eyes of the organizers, as a medium to provide a voice and space for communities to share their untold narratives in form of artwork—became a politically contested medium and the appropriation of physical space was rejected by the local population.

Visual Arts, Performing Arts and Performance Activism as Cultural Contestation

In the visual and performing arts in Tunisia, the fall of Ben Ali fueled a spurt of creativity and an increase in artwork, illustrated by the growing number of art galleries in La Marsa, an upscale and tourist-flooded neighborhood in the capital.[71] Unsurprisingly the prospects of commodifying revolutionary art, in particular the idea of copying the tropes of the initial street art, inspired artist to sell their graffiti-inspired work on a globalized market.[72] Yet, such an exposure did not result in art losing its sting, as some have argued elsewhere.[73] Rather, in Tunisia's transitional context, this type of art played a vital role for the progressive and vanguard forces of the country. As Jacqueline Adams concisely put it in her work on women's protest under Pinochet in Chile, the women used it "for framing, to attract resources, to communicate information about themselves, to foster useful emotions, and as a symbol."[74] But in fragmented and fragile societies, these forms of expression and belonging can provoke tensions, as the following example illustrates. The organization of the ninth "Printemps des Art," an annual, internationally renowned art

exhibit in Tunis, turned into a clash of cultures and traditions in 2012, when a group of Salafists

entered the premises and destroyed some of the art installation and threatening several artists,

claiming blasphemous nature of the paintings, thus forcing the exhibit to shut down.[75]

In connection with a growing religious conservatism due to the Ennahda-led government

between 2011-2013, performance activism has also provoked a conservative outcry in Tunisian

society. Amina Sboui, a women's rights activist, for instance, posted a top-less picture of herself

on Facebook in the midst of the March 2013 protests in honor of the assassinated of Chokri

Belaïd, an opposition leader. Her naked body contained the following message: "My body

belongs to me and no one's source of honor."[76] She was part of the feminist group FEMEN, a

Paris-based organization that originated in Ukraine known for its topless protests and

performance activism in public locations.[77] While it wasn't indecent exposure that caused her

trouble with the law, she was eventually arrested later that spring in Kairouan, a conservative

Bastion of the Salafist movement, while she tagged the word "FEMEN" on a wall nearby a

Mosque.[78] The juxtaposition of the virtual and physical space is further accentuated by the so-

called Harlem Shake incident. In spring 2013, Tunisian students posted a comedy sketch with a

song by US DJ Bauuer, causing the video to go viral inspiring memes in schools and universities

around the country.[79] The secular youth's motives behind the dissemination of the message is

summarized by Mohamed-Salah Omri as follows,

> Harlem shakers claim to represent life by setting their dancing and colourful [sic]
>
> costumes against a culture they see as preaching death and darkness – a reference to
>
> black niqabs and gowns worn by followers of Salafism, and their trademark black banner.

Many Salafis, in turn, accuse the youth of being immoral and slavish imitators of "trashy" Western culture. [80]

The Salafists movement's response to this form of public ridicule was prompt, reverting to performances that included a strong political message. In fact, their actions accentuated the instrumentalization of identity and belonging to contest this imaginary space as well as to protect and expand their own space. In addition to reinforcing symbols, such as black banners, niqabs, long shirts and skullcaps – practices that had increased under the troika government – members of the movement staged a couple of highly mediatized events. They stormed two public locations and captured one of the most representative symbols of the Tunisian state: the national flag on top of each of the occupied buildings. They then replaced them with the Salafist black banner on Manouba University campus and the clock tower on Bourguiba Avenue in the capital.[81] The boundaries between the imaginary and the real are thus intrinsically linked and the online space further fuels the contestation of the imagined spaces of each of the involved actors, including the state, secular as well as religious-oriented youth. The existing cleavages within society are therefore a political minefield putting ruling elites in front of a conundrum that requires them to elaborate an inclusive transition strategy to counterbalance increasing tensions.

The Emerging but Fragile Role of Civil Society Organizations

Civil society under Ben Ali's regime had been silenced a few years after he came to power in 1987, consolidating the strong state after an initial reform agenda.[82] While during the past decade civil society started growing again in many Arab states, it was less because of an increase in power, but because of a resilience strategy of authoritarian rulers to remain in power.[83] Several

of the interviewed youth, representing Tunisia's young society, remember the lack of political activism or engagement under Ben Ali's regime, such as Najla Abbes:

> Tunisian youth are focused on their studies, on their careers, life with family and friends and their last concern was politics or even being part of it. ... It's just how we lived [under Ben Ali's regime].[84]

Politics constituted a preexisting, unchangeable space that shouldn't be interfered with, due to the fear of the president's security apparatus. More importantly, however, Ben Ali created a leisure society in which youth gravitated around a coffee shop culture and sports, and thus "numbing their critical reason," as Héla Ammar, a famous artist, activist and scholar pointed out.[85] These conditions led to a "desertification of you youth" in the political space with visibly consequential results of politically disengaged youth in the post-Ben-Ali era. [86]

The fall of Ben Ali, however, has changed the civil society landscape with "activists and projects mushrooming everywhere," underlines Nour Kaabi, a young activist working for the NGO Jamaity, an umbrella organization that coordinates activities with different nonprofits across the country.[87] To the question about concrete outreach and the impact of grassroots work outside the state capital and the urban coastal regions, she responded that the change is only visible slowly, but incrementally.[88] The objective of many of these movements in the aftermath of the revolution is less about institutional change, but reflects a goal pursued by many of the post-industrial movements of the 1980s and 1990s. Instead of advocating for changes in government policies, their activities aimed at shifting societal beliefs and practices among their members and beyond the membership circle. [89] The case of Charfeddine Yacoubin, one of the

founders of the Tunisian Association of Public Comptrollers, epitomizes this trend. Disenchanted by the political imbroglio during Tunisia's transition he decided to create a civil society organization to advocate for institutional change and promote basic democratic values.[90] As a graduate from the Tunis National School of Administration, an institution that grooms Tunisia's technocratic elites, and as a former member of the political party, Progressive Democratic Party, he chose to work in the nongovernmental sector instead of for the state.[91] For several years, he has been spearheading reform efforts with the goal of fighting corruption, establishing more transparency within governmental institutions and of helping boost democratic processes in the country. Yet, Yacoubin remains very skeptical about the impact of civil society: "I am not one hundred percent convinced about the role of civil society because after working for over four years and fighting in the name of our association, there is still no significant reform."[92] He referred to the current endemic situation in Tunisian society as the "democratization of corruption."[93] In other words, even at the smallest scale graft practices are common to either speed up administrative procedures or to make them possible in the first place. Change will only happen incrementally. And this is one of the lessons to take away from Tunisia's process. While these different, overlapping spaces bring together particularly youth from different sociopolitical backgrounds, they remain fragile and contested. As long as the mainstream political process is reluctant to integrate a much larger share of Tunisia's emerging civil society, the transitional justice process will continue to be elitist and the efforts put in place by NGO activists will remain disjointed spaces.

Conclusion

Drawing on the Foucauldian concept of heterotopia, this study analyzed the role of youth activism and the use of art in post-Ben-Ali Tunisia to assess the emergence of alternative memory spaces. It pursued a two-fold goal. First, it retraced the politicized transitional justice process in post-authoritarian Tunisia in order to answer the question of why the political establishment fell short to include youth—the driving force of the revolution—into the public discussion on how to account for regime abuses and how to deal with the past. Second, it mapped different forms of youth activism against the backdrop of art as a medium of deliberation to create an alter-space for transitional justice in Tunisia. Despite the successful emergence of these spaces, this process faces still many challenges, as illustrated by the several case studies in the different categories of activism and art that were discussed in this research. Future longitudinal studies as well as comparative case studies across the North Africa region will serve as valuable gauges to evaluate the long-term outcome and consequences of this phenomenon.

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Notes

[1] "Tunisians Mark Fourth Anniversary of the Revolution," *Al Arabiya News*, January 14, 2015, sec. Africa, http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/africa/2015/01/14/Tunisians-mark-fourth-anniversary-of-the-revolution-.html.

[2] See United Nations world demographic data at https://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=PopDiv&f=variableID%3A41, accessed 10 January 2015.

[3] In many societies around the world this is eighteen.

[4] Andy Furlong, *Youth Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 2–3.

[5] See for instance, Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Tavistock, 1975). Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1990); James Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Neil Brenner, *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2004); Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France 1977–1978* (New York: MacMillan, 2009); and David Walton, and Juan A. Suárez. *Culture, Space, and Power: Blurred Lines* (New York: Lexington Books, 2015).

[6] Catherine Turner, for instance refers to a "theatrical space," when she describes the institutionalization of transitional justice with law and policy studies. See Catherine Turner, *Violence, Law and the Impossibility of Transitional Justice*. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 44. See also Chrisje Brants, Antione Hol, and Dina Siegel. *Transitional Justice: Images and Memories* (New York: Routledge, 2016) for a discussion of memory spaces and public spaces in transitional justice.

[7] Anuradha Chakravarty, *Investing in Authoritarian Rule: Punishment and Patronage in Rwanda's Gacaca Courts for Genocide Crimes* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 24.

[8] Jeremy W. Crampton and Stuart Elden, *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2007).

[9] See for instance Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (London: Penguin, 1977).

[10] Alison Crosby and M. Brinton Lykes, "Mayan Women Survivors Speak: The Gendered Relations of Truth Telling in Postwar Guatemala," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 5, no. 3 (November 1, 2011): 457, doi:10.1093/ijtj/ijr017.

[11] Interview with ICTJ staff on 13 January 2015.

[12] Tazreena Sajjad, "These Spaces in Between: The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and Its Role in Transitional Justice," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 3, no. 3 (November 1, 2009): 424–44, doi:10.1093/ijtj/ijp020.

[13] Ibid., 444.

[14] Christiane Wilke, "Remembering Complexity? Memorials for Nazi Victims in Berlin," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 7, no. 1 (2013): 136–56, doi:10.1093/ijtj/ijs035.

[15] Ibid., 154–155.

[16] Luke Wilcox, "Reshaping Civil Society through a Truth Commission: Human Rights in Morocco's Process of Political Reform," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 3, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 49–68, doi:10.1093/ijtj/ijn043.

[17] Ibid., 67.

[18] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 24.

[19] Foucault wrote his piece "Of Other Spaces" in 1967, for a lecture in Tunisia. It was eventually published before his death in the mid-1980s.

[20] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 24.

[21] Francesco Cavatorta and Rikke Hostrup Haugbølle, "The End of Authoritarian Rule and the Mythology of Tunisia under Ben Ali." *Mediterranean Politics* 17, no. 2 (2012):186.

[22] Francesco Cavatorta and Rikke Hostrup Haugbølle, "The End of Authoritarian Rule," 186.

[23] Abdeljelil Temimi, "The Tunisian Revolution Observatory: Considering the Perspectives of the Intellectual and Political Elite," *Boundary 2* 39, no. 1 (2012):88.

[24] Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

[25] Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, p 340-373.

[26] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 22.

[27] Kevin Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering* (Psychology Press, 1997), viii.

[28] A recent study based on Southeast Europe has examined the involvement of youth and performance art in transitional justice context, see for instance Arnaud Kurze, "#WarCrimes #PostConflictJustice #Balkans: Youth, Performance Activism and the Politics of Memory," *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 10, no. 3 (2016): 451–470.

[29] Chaim Noy, "Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 11, no. 4 (2008): 328–329.

[30] Interviewed on 10 November 2016.

[31] For a detailed account on historical transitions and these issues see the excellent work of Jon Elster, *Closing the Books: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[32] Anne Wolf, "Despite Elections, Transitional Justice Still Elusive in Tunisia," *Middle East Institute*, October 24, 2014, http://www.mei.edu/content/article/despite-elections-transitional-justice-still-elusive-tunisia (accessed 10 January 2015).

[33] Chokri Belaid, an opposition leader, was killed on 6 February 2013. A second opposition leader Mohamed Brahmi was killed on 25 July 2013.

[34] *Organic Law on Transitional Justice*, Article 17. A French version of the law, Loi organique n°2013-53 du 24 Décembre 2013 relative à l'attribution et l'organisation de la justice transitionnelle is available at the website of the Presidency of the Government of the Republic of Tunisia at http://www.legislation.tn/en/detailtexte/Loi-num-2013-53-du-24-12-2013-jort-2013-105__2013105000531?shorten=OlUH (accessed January 20, 2015).

[35] Ibid. Title 1.

[36] The commission was launched on 9 June 2014 and complements the existing institutional landscape that includes the Ministry for Human Rights and Transitional Justice created on 12 January 2012 as well as the Bouderbala Commission created on 18 February 2011 to investigate the abuses during the revolutionary period from 17 December 2010 until 23 October 2011, date when the elections for the National Constituent Assembly were held.

[37] He would eventually become Tunisia's first president on 25 July 1957.

[38] Kenneth Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (New York City: Cambridge University Press, 2014), cha 5.

[39] Luca Urech, "Challenging History: The Power of Transitional Justice in Tunisia," *Al Nakhlah*, June 10, 2014, http://alnakhlah.org/2014/06/10/challenging-history-the-power-of-transitional-justice-in-tunisia-by-luca-urech/ (accessed 10 January 2015).

[40] Christopher K. Lamont and Hé La Boujneh, "Transitional Justice in Tunisia: Negotiating Justice during Transition," *Politička Misao*, no. 05 (2012): 43.

[41] See ICTJ website at http://www.ictj.org/news/wake-dictatorship-civil-society-tunisia-prepares-help-women-speak-their-truth, accessed 15 January 2015.

[42] Interview with ICTJ staff on 13 January 2015.

[43] The HRW report *Flawed Accountability* is available at http://www.hrw.org/reports/2015/01/12/flawed-accountability, accessed 12 February 2015.

[44] "La justice transitionnelle à l'épreuve des procès militaires: Bilan et perspectives," Human Rights Watch roundtable discussion, Tunis, 12 January 2015.

[45] Corinna Mullin and Ian Patel, "Resisting Transitional Justice in Revolutionary Tunisia: Hegemonic Justice and Noninstitutionalised Resistance," *Conflict and Society: Advances in Research*, 2015, http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/19376/.

[46] The local Tunis office of the ICTJ has a growing pool of highly motived volunteers from a globalized Tunisian diaspora that know little about transitional justice, but who are eager to acquire their technical knowledge and skills to apply them in the field.

[47] Interview with human rights and youth activist Hé La Boujneh on 12 January 2015. Translated by the author. Emphasis added by the author. See also their advocacy website at http://justicetranstun.wesign.it/fr, accessed 12 January 2015.

[48] Between 2016 and 2018, the author will conduct a multidisciplinary project based on this initial research, including several institutional collaborators across the Maghreb.

[49] The term refers to Tibi, Bassam's work on identity and defines the term as core values of modernity including democracy, secularism, human rights and civil society. See Bassam Tibi, *Europa ohne Identität?* (Berlin: Siedler, 2000).

[50] Sahar Khamis and Katherine Vaughn, "Cyberactivism in the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions: Potentials, Limitations, Overlaps and Divergences," *Journal of African Media Studies* 5, no. 1 (March 2013): 69–86, doi:10.1386/jams.5.1.69_1.

[51] Yousri Marzouki et al., "The Contribution of Facebook to the 2011 Tunisian Revolution: A Cyberpsychological Insight," *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 15, no. 5 (May 1, 2012): 237–44, doi:10.1089/cyber.2011.0177; Anita Breuer and Jacob Groshek, "Online Media and Offline Empowerment in Post-Rebellion Tunisia: An Analysis of Internet Use During Democratic Transition," *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 11, no. 1 (2014): 25–44, doi:10.1080/19331681.2013.850464.

[52] Tunisia has a total population of almost 11 million.

[53] Interviewed on 30 July 2014.

[54] Philip N. Howard, *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy Information Technology and Political Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 145.

[55] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 1991).

[56] For a research study on profile pictures and identity formation see Shanyang Zhao, Sherri Grasmuck, and Jason Martin, "Identity Construction on Facebook: Digital Empowerment in Anchored Relationships," *Computers in Human Behavior* 24, no. 5 (September 2008): 1816–36.

[57] Interview with Kerim Bouzouita on 30 July 2014.

[58] Martha McCaughey and Michael D. Ayers, *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2003), 1–2.

[59] Tibi, *Europa ohne Identität?*.

[60] See the initiative's website at www.opengov.tn/, accessed 10 January 2015.

[61] See for instance Human Rights Watch at http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/06/tunisia-blogger-convicted-military-court, accessed on 6 January 2015.

[62] Kayla Branson, "Islamist Cyber-Activism: Contesting the Message, Redefining the Public," *The Journal of North African Studies* 19, no. 5 (October 20, 2014): 713–32, doi:10.1080/13629387.2014.976513.

[63] Rafael Schacter and John Fekner, *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti* (Yale University Press, 2013), 9.

[64] Lyman G. Chaffee, *Political Protest and Street Art: Popular Tools for Democratization in Hispanic Countries* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1993), 4.

[65] For a comparative analysis on the role of graffiti in different countries in the Arab Spring see Charlotte Schriwer, "Graffiti Arts and the Arab Spring," in *Routledge Handbook of the Arab Spring: Rethinking Democratization*, ed. Larbi Sadiki (Routledge, 2014), 376–91.

[66] The author visited the premises during his fieldwork in summer 2014.

[67] Matt Fidler, "Tunisian Street Art - in Pictures," *The Guardian*, sec. Art & Design, accessed February 6, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2014/sep/03/tunisian-street-art-in-pictures.

[68] See artist webpage at http://www.jr-art.net/jr, accessed 7 January 2015.

[69] See project website at http://www.insideoutproject.net/en/group-actions/tunis-tunisia, accessed on 7 January 2015.

[70] Yasmine Ryan, "Art Challenges Tunisian Revolutionaries," *Aljazeera.com*, March 26, 2011, sec. Features, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/03/201132223217876176.html.

[71] Interview with Laetitia Deloustal, art history scholar and researcher, on 17 January 2015.

[72] Howell, "Graffiti Inspires Tunisia Artists," Online, *BBC NEWS Africa* (BBC, February 10, 2013), http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21401434.

[73] Jacqueline Adams, "When Art Loses Its Sting: The Evolution of Protest Art in Authoritarian Contexts," *Sociological Perspectives* 48, no. 4 (2005): 531–58, doi:10.1525/so2005.48.4.531.

[74] Jacqueline Adams, "Art in Social Movements: Shantytown Women's Protest in Pinochet's Chile," *Sociological Forum* 17, no. 1 (2002): 21–56.

[75] Alice Fordham, "L'art face à l'intégrisme," *Courrier International*, June 28, 2012, http://www.courrierinternational.com/article/2012/06/28/l-art-face-a-l-integrisme See also interview with Héla Ammar, artist and scholar, on 14 January 2015.

[76] Yüsra M'Hiri, "Mon corps m'appartient et il n'est l'honneur de personne," *Courrier International*, accessed February 8, 2015, http://www.courrierinternational.com/article/2013/03/20/mon-corps-m-appartient-et-il-n-est-l-honneur-de-personne Text translated by author.

[77] See FEMEN website at http://femen.org/, accessed 2 January 2015.

[78] Tristan Dreisbach, "Femen Activist Amina Arrested Near Historic Mosque in Kairouan," *Tunisialive*, May 21, 2013, http://www.tunisia-live.net/2013/05/20/femen-activist-amina-arrested-during-salafist-protests-in-kairouan/.

[79] "Harlem Shake," originally a 1980s dance, refers to a song of the same name that became popular in 2012.

[80] Mohamed-Salah Omri, "Tunisia Tries to Stop the Harlem Shake," *The Guardian*, March 7, 2013, sec. Guardian Africa Network, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/07/tunisia-harlem-shake.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Christopher Alexander, "Back from the Democratic Brink: Authoritarianism and Civil Society in Tunisia," *Middle East Report*, 1997, 34–38.

[83] Francesco Cavatorta, *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: The Dynamics of Activism* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2010), 25.

[84] Interview with Najla Abbes, Co-founder of the association League of Tunisian Women Voters on 11 January 2015.

[85] Interview on 14 January 2015. Translated by the author.

[86] Najla Abbe's boss referred to this metaphorical expression to illustrate the lack of political engagement and activism in Tunisian society today. See interview with Najla Abbes on 11 January 2015.

[87] Interviewed on 10 January 2015. The association is supported by international development agencies and donors including the United States, the European Union, Japan and the Arab Institute for Human Rights, among others.

[88] Ibid.

[89] James M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, Biography, and Creativity in Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 70.

[90] Interviewed on 9 January 2015.

[91] He was on the electoral list of the PDP in 2011. The PDP is a party with a long history and one of the few parties allowed under Ben Ali's regime. After a year of work for the party, however, Yacoubin was disillusioned by the old hierarchical structures that impeded change.

[92] Interviewed on 9 January 2015.

[93] Ibid.