EXPLORING YOUTH APPROACHES TO COLLABORATION ACROSS SOCIAL
DIFFERENCES IN TUNISIA'S CIVIC COMMUNITIES

by

Sarah Kincaid
A Thesis
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DEDICATION

Michelle Tooley, my dear friend and mentor

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Thank you for sacrificing so much to enable me to accomplish this huge goal. Thank you for giving me study time and for being the type of partner who didn't just support me doing this but also took interest in the topic and listened while I verbally processed new ideas.

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When I didn't feel like I had it in me to do this project, you reminded me how important my topic was. Thanks for believing in me and sharing a passion for positive change in the MENA region. This wouldn't have been possible without you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Civically Engaged .... CE
Democratic Constitutional Rally .... RCD
General Union of Tunisian Workers .... UGTT
Middle East and North Africa .... MENA
National Constituent Assembly .... NCA
National Democratic Institute .... NDI
Non Civically Engaged .... NCE
Not in Education, Employment or Training .... NEET
International Monetary Fund .... IMF
Islamic Tendency Movement .... MTI
World Bank Group .... WBG

ABSTRACT

EXPLORING YOUTH APPROACHES TO COLLABORATION ACROSS SOCIAL DIFFERENCES IN TUNISIA'S CIVIC COMMUNITIES

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George Mason University, 2015

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This thesis explores youth approaches to collaboration across social differences in

Tunisia's civic communities. After Tunisia's 2011 revolution, social, political, and

religious differences came to the fore of the new civic sphere. At the same time, the civic

sphere was given new legal freedoms, creating an explosion of civic associations, formal

and informal. This study explores if and how youth are collaborating across new

publically expressed social differences. This qualitative research project drew on

interviews conducted with youth, under the age of 35, during summer of 2015.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 2010, protests led by youth began in Tunisia, starting in the rural and interior

areas, quickly rippling across the country and eventually throughout the African and

Middle Eastern region. The phenomenon was called the Arab Spring or the Arab

Uprisings. It was a movement that cut across class and religion, calling for the end of

authoritarianism and poverty. Something new was finally happening in a part of the

world where rulers seemed impervious. Images of young men and women staring down

tanks and calling for freedom, bread, and dignity graced the front page of newspapers all

around world. In Egypt, Muslims and Christians joined hands. In Tunisia, youth from the

south and the north found their common cause. While the revolution in Egypt, Syria, and

Libya eventually fell apart, Tunisia made headway towards a peaceful transition. This

research seeks to better understand Tunisia's transition as it rests in a liminal space

between revolution, post-authoritarianism, and the imagined future, now disputed by the

protesters.

Problem Statement and Research Question

While Tunisia's burgeoning and delicate democracy is still nascent, it stands on a

new, progressive constitution and fair presidential and parliamentary elections that were

internationally observed. Yet when analyzing Tunisia's progress since 2011, scholars

should be careful to evaluate progress not just in terms of Tunisia's constitution and new

political system. Scholars should be paying more attention to the emancipation of Tunisia's civic sphere and public spaces. The Ben Ali regime controlled both the political and social system, constricting civil society. Analysts and researchers have asked: what steps has Tunisia taken to restore the economy, rule of law and political plurality? But fewer researchers have asked: what steps has Tunisia taken to reconstruct civil society? Focusing only on elections and political parties provides a narrow perspective on Tunisia's transition. Tunisia's legacy of violence was not just of violence against the body or political parties, but systematic violence against public participation in society and critical thought. Under former presidents Ben Ali and Bourguiba, all civil society organizations had to gain approval from the ministry of the interior. The regime's tentacles of power infiltrated civic, social, and religious spaces. No coffee shop or concert was without surveillance.

As we explore the promise of Tunisia's transition, we would be amiss to not evaluate how the civic sphere has been and is, or isn't, being transformed. Historically, civic organizations have not enjoyed high levels of trust or participation. Today, are these norms changing? How is the revolutionary process continuing, or not, through changes in civic communities? Have new freedoms in civil society empowered Tunisians? Or, as political parties often stir ideological divides, are civic groups contributing to societal divisions?

But just as scholars have heavily focused on political shifts instead of civic changes, scholars have also heavily focused on the role of Tunisian adults, leaving Tunisia's youth majority out of the picture. The voices of the youth who led the first

protests, have also been lost due to the dominance of new leadership emerging from the older generation. Youth, comprising 51% of the population, have proven to be a powerful source of social change. Due to low levels of political participation among youth since 2011, scholars and reporters have wrongly depicted youth as apathetic and inactive. Their role in post-authoritarian Tunisia must be better understood as they are a demographic majority, though their perspectives are often marginalized.

In Tunisia's new public sphere, social, political, and religious differences are protected. Tunisians, for the most part, have the freedom to be who they are. And at the same time, major policy shifts have dissolved the legal bars that once constrained associational life. Citizens can easily create and join organizations. The emergence of these freedoms—freedom of the individual and freedom to create groups—has created an explosion of change in public life.

And yet the increase of freedoms has also brought a sense of loss—the loss of a national identity that was enforced by the Ben Ali regime. And even the loss of the sense of unity and pride felt throughout the Tunisian revolution. While young, old, rich, and poor alike protested together, five years after the revolution, there are fewer things that all Tunisians agree on. Those who were once political prisoners now form political parties. Those who previously led secret discussion groups now create associations. The revolution brought an exhilarating rush of unity. And the post-revolution transition has brought an overwhelming rush of differences to the fore, unparalleled in Tunisia's history.

This raises the question—what are youth doing with these new freedoms? How are social differences that are being publically expressed for the first time shaping social and civic norms? Theorist and practitioners on peacebuilding and democracy have argued that civic participation and networks that cut across and transcends social differences create the most sustainable changes in society. To better understand the promise of peace in Tunisia's transition, this research will explore youth-led approaches to collaboration across social differences in civil society. Studies on democracy have shown that civic groups can often turn to competing against each other and can even contribute to creating societal rifts based on ideological differences. That is, it is important to not only evaluate what freedoms exist, but also how freedoms are being used. In order to better understand Tunisia's post-authoritarian transition, this research project will explore collaborative approaches led by youth within civil society.

Research Question

This research project seeks to answer the following: *how are youth approaching collaborating across social differences in their civic communities?* This research project will seek to explore and understand social differences among youth; if and how they are active in civic spaces; and if civic activity is cutting across social differences. The following sub-questions will help guide the exploration:

Firstly, what social differences exist among Tunisian youth? While Tunisia is quite homogenous ethnically and religiously, what other significant differences exist among youth?

Secondly, are Tunisian youth active in their civic communities? If so, how are they civically engaged? Also, how are Tunisian youth socially active?

Thirdly, how do social differences among Tunisian youth blend in civic and social spaces? If so, how? In what social or civic contexts do Tunisian youth note differences or divides? When are differences most salient in civil society and when are they, perhaps, irrelevant? What are examples of Tunisian youth engaging across differences in either socially or issue-oriented activities?

Significance of Research

This research acknowledges the role youth can play not just in starting a revolution but in creating long-term, societal change. Since the revolution, youth have consistently expressed disillusionment with politics. Therefore, their voices cannot be adequately understood by researching youth participation in politics alone, as very few youth vote or work with political parties. Rather, the role of youth in Tunisia's transition can also be understood by exploring youth leadership in civil society. It is critical that peacebuilders, conflict resolution practitioners, and scholars on Tunisia gain a better grasp on youth approaches to civic participation, as too often scholars deem lack of political participation as inactivity or as a lack of investment in Tunisia's future. Youth led the Tunisian revolution, died by police bullets, and yet, today, their voices seem to have been lost.

This research will also provide valuable insight on the difficulties of creating collaborative initiatives in a post-revolution, post-authoritarian context. Many Tunisians are reminiscent of both the safety felt under Ben Ali and the unity felt during the protests.

Increased instability and lack of economic progress since the fall of Ben Ali has caused many Tunisians to doubt the revolution. For many the hope of the revolution has reversed into an even deeper cynicism. This is demonstrated by the low numbers of youth involved in either politics or civil society. Youth not involved in civic work or in politics also need to be better understood, as they represent the majority of Tunisian youth. While this study focuses on civically engaged youth, it does give some limited voice to youth who are neither active in politics or civic work. In summary, this research will contribute to building a greater understanding of the challenges that young civic leaders face in maintaining both momentum and inclusivity within civil society in Tunisia's post-authoritarian context.

Summary of Chapters

In chapter two, I will provide a more in-depth background on Tunisia's history of authoritarianism and civic engagement. This chapter will focus on civic engagement throughout Tunisia's history and how civic groups were coopted by former presidents Ben Ali and Bourguiba. This chapter will focus heavily on how the police state robbed Tunisia of public or people-controlled spaces. Understanding cooptation of public spaces and suppression of ideological and social diversity under the regimes provides critical context to this discussion of approaches to collaboration.

In chapter three, I will review the theoretical framework for this study by providing an analysis of the existing literature that this research project builds upon. Firstly, I will explore understandings of youth in social change and development processes. Secondly, I will discuss theories and practical frameworks that address

approaches to collaboration. Following that, I will explore social networks and social capital as it relates to building peace and strengthening democracies. Finally, I will contextualize this study by discussing existing studies on Tunisian youth, offering insights and gaps in the existing research on Tunisian youth.

In chapter four I will give an explanation of the methodology used in this qualitative study based on open-ended interviews and participant observation, conducted in the summer of 2015. This will include an overview of the overall research approach, methods for data collection and analysis and a consideration of their strengths, weaknesses, and limitations.

In chapters five through eight, I will discuss the findings of this study. Chapter five focuses on social characteristics of Tunisian youth. In chapters six and seven, I discuss approaches to collaboration amongst civically and non-civically engaged youth and across religious differences, respectively. Finally, in chapter eight I discuss collaborative activities, leadership styles, and organizational structures.

In chapter nine I will discuss the conclusions of this study. I will explore how the findings can inform conflict resolution practice; how this discussion on approaches to collaboration is important in understanding Tunisia's transition; and areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: TUNISIA'S LEGACY OF AUTHORITARIANISM

Tunisia, a small, Francophone country in North Africa, launched the 2011 movement known as the Arab Spring or Arab Uprisings. Protests swept from Tunisia across North Africa and the Middle East. Protesters, who were mostly under the age of 35, demanded jobs and an end to authoritarianism (Beissinger et al. 6). Tunisia's revolution was one of the least violent of the Arab Uprisings and, to this day, the most successful. Since the revolution, Tunisia has written a new constitution through an inclusive process and has had internationally observed elections that were free and fair.

In this chapter I will explore Tunisia's history as it relates to youth approaches to collaboration across social differences by exploring three major themes. First I will explore how Tunisia's authoritarian rulers created a culture of suspicion, punishment, and intolerance by controlling both public and private life. Through Bourguiba's and Ben Ali's authoritarian rule, civic life was usurped as a tool to reinforce their power. Understanding Tunisia's legacy of control will be critical to understanding the current norms of exclusion experienced by youth, which is discussed throughout the findings in chapters six and seven. I explore the culture of suspicion and punishment by discussing the leadership of Tunisia's first president Habib Bourguiba, followed by exploring the police state established by Ben Ali, Bourguiba's successor.

Secondly, I will explore Tunisia's history of civic engagement and activism under Ben Ali to show how Tunisians improvised to create independent thought and action, even while under severe oppression. Moreover, I will also look at examples of collaborative engagement across differences throughout Tunisia's history of authoritarianism. Then, I will look at how pockets of resistance joined together under the 2011 Tunisian revolution which, today, is the most significant reference point for collaboration across differences for Tunisian youth. These examples of civic engagement, both pre and post revolution, demonstrate continuity of civic activism and critical thought.

Finally, I will explore the substantial political, legal, and cultural changes since 2011 that have supported freedom in civil society, as well as the challenges of those new freedoms—such as the quick dissolution of the sense of unity enjoyed during the revolution. In this section, I will also focus on youth perspectives of these shifts and how their revolutionary demands have still not been met. This section provides critical context as to why collaboration across social differences is significant and the challenges of civic life in a forming and delicate democracy.

Tunisia's Legacy of Authoritarianism

Former president Habib Bourguiba is considered to be the father of Tunisia for organizing a vibrant nationalist movement that led to the liberation of Tunisia from the French occupation. His political party, Neo Destour, advocated for independence and stirred enthusiasm for national Tunisian identity. A recognized threat, Bourguiba was arrested and exiled numerous times by French colonizers for his involvement in the

nationalist movement. Eva Bellin, author of "Civil Society in Formation: Tunisia"

explains how Tunisians joined together through "a network of party cells" that

"crisscrossed the country, mobilizing Tunisian resources and organizing the

demonstrations, strikes, and guerilla warfare" (126). A hike in violence, including attacks

targeted at Europeans caused France to begin to seriously reevaluate its presence in

Tunisia (Naylor 181). Eventually, Bourguiba brokered the agreement with France that led

to its independence (Naylor 181). But Tunisia's subordination to France would soon be

replaced with a new master.

After the French occupation ended, Bourguiba utilized the nationalist networks he

created "to reinforce" his political party, Neo Destour (Bellin 126). Under occupation his

slogan was independence. As president, his slogan was unity. He called Tunisians to

stand together to strengthen their new nation, which he saw as threatened by their recent

colonial past. But there was more to this rhetoric than preservation of the independent,

sovereign state. He also discouraged "political competition" for the sake of preserving his

power (Bellin 127). Bourguiba welcomed civic participation, as long as it was in support

of his policies. While the civic sphere in Tunisia was bustling, it was bustling with

organizations and slogans controlled by what quickly became known as the regime.

Bourguiba's enthusiasm for political and civic engagement became synonymous with

enthusiasm for his party. The units of Tunisia's civic life were not independent, but

rather, Bellin states that civic groups became "monolithic, monopolistic, state-controlled

organizations, geared to rally citizens in support of the president's programs as well as

provide the means for social control" (Bellin 128). Citizens were free to participate in civil society only as a prisoner is free to either sit or stand within a cell.

Bourguiba's Contribution to Education and Women's Rights

While Bourguiba intentionally limited political competition and ideological diversity, he did, however, emphasize women's rights and education. In 1956 he passed an extremely progressive law called the Personal Status Code that "granted Tunisian women progressive rights concerning marriage, divorce, and education" ("Reflecting on Bourguiba, 13 Years After His Death"). This code allowed women to divorce their husbands, established "a legal minimum age for marriage," "banned polygamy" and essentially "gave women legal equality with men" (Murphy). Passing the Personal Status Code was a very liberal decision at the time and even today Tunisia continues to be a leader of gender equality in Africa, the Middle East and among Muslim-majority countries. These policy decisions supported the development of a more progressive culture in Tunisia, which is considered the most liberal country in the Maghreb. It's common in Tunisia for women to not wear a hijab and families often strongly encourage women to earn high degrees. Bourguiba's emphasis on equality and education, undoubtedly, shaped the cultural notions on gender that are held even today.

But there is still a disparity between the ideal embodied in the Personal Status Code and the realities women in Tunisia face. Tunisian women still suffer unequal pay, domestic violence, and face unequal pressure to care for children. Yet, today, Tunisia has more women in parliament than any Western country in the world. Bourguiba's support of women's rights, yet suppression of political plurality demonstrates how Bourguiba

played a double-role in both pushing Tunisia forward and holding Tunisia back. While his legacy of control continues through divisive political narratives, his pro-woman legacy also lives on in the high number of woman voters, politicians and civic activists.

Bourguiba also strongly emphasized education by prohibiting child labor and requiring education up to the age of 16. In fact, "The largest component of the state budget was dedicated to education and youth development" ("Reflecting on Bourguiba, 13 Years After His Death"). Today, Tunisia continues to benefit from these significant contributions and the remarkable forward-thinking of Bourguiba. Filipe Campante and Davin Chor, authors of "Why was the Arab World Poised for Revolution? Schooling, Economic Opportunities, and the Arab Spring" point to how president Habib Bourguiba's commitment to education created an educated class that had expectations that the government could not meet. Campante and Chor state that educated people "exhibit a greater propensity to participate in the full spectrum of political activities" whether it's voting, talking about social issues or mobilizing (168). Bourguiba's contribution to education has helped support today's youth presence in civil society. However, Bourguiba's progressive, western style was not celebrated by all Tunisians and was also not without serious contradictions.

Bourguiba's Suppression of Political Islam

Bourguiba's staunchly secular position led to the creation of a strong Islamic opposition. In the 1970s a group called the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) formed to combat Bourguiba's anti-Islamic policies and revive commitment to Islamic culture, thought, and practices. Activists joined and created "Islamic study circles" that gained

momentum during the peak of the Iranian revolution (Bellin 130). These study circles

were organized across the country creating a "rigorous network" of citizens that

countered Bourguiba and shared an enthusiasm for Islamization (130). Bourguiba

countered this movement by shutting down magazines that published photos of

Khomeini, Iran's Ayatollah and by arresting Islamic activists (Bellin 131). One of the

leaders of MTI that was arrested was Rached Ghannouchi, who is today's president of

Tunisia's Islamic party Ennahda.

Bourguiba became increasingly authoritarian in his final years in power,

eventually leading to his demise. Several extreme decisions caused his heavy-handedness

to become clearer to both the Tunisian people and his colleagues in Carthage. Firstly, in

1975 Bourguiba changed the constitution "declaring himself 'president of the republic for

life'" (Kallander 25). He also became increasingly aggressive against political Islam. His

choices to counter MTI, in the end, undermined his power. Eva Bellin, author of "Civil

Society in Formation: Tunisia" called the "Islamic threat" an "obsession" for Bourguiba

(133). When the courts gave a group of Islamists a sentence that Bourguiba found to be

"lenient" he called for the Islamists to be executed (Bellin 133). Ben Ali, Bourguiba's

prime minister and former minister of the interior quickly calculated this moment of

tension as a political opportunity. He took advantage of this vulnerable moment to cast

Bourguiba in a bad light, while positioning himself as the good, savior of Tunisia. At the

time, Bourguiba was age 84 and had held the office of the president for thirty years. Ben

Ali was able to have Bourguiba officially deemed mentally unfit for the presidency

causing a bloodless coup d'etat (Marzouki 18). Yet, it appeared that it wasn't a coup but a rescue mission that many saw as a positive change for Tunisia.

The Development of the Police State Under President Ben Ali

On November 7, 1987 Ben Ali became Tunisia's second president. He launched his presidency with a strong emphasis on new freedom in Tunisia. He made generous promises, positing that he would "enhance public liberties and political participation" (Khashan 921). The Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD) had a convincing democratic rhetoric, but none of the policies. Fearful of a coup against himself, Ben Ali built up Tunisia's security sector. He created an extremely comprehensive surveillance system that employed 10% of the population (Kallander 30). Through the large police force, Ben Ali provided jobs creating a sense of economic hope and at the same time he enjoyed the ability to monitor activities from the north to the south. Kallander explains that under Ben Ali, the police force increased to "three times the size of the police under Bourguiba" and is "comparable to the ranks of police in France with its sixty million inhabitants" (30). Building up a fierce security apparatus was an effective means of marshaling the Tunisian population into one of two positions—persecuted or persecutors.

Similarly, Ben Ali held a tight grip on all of public life by tapping phone calls and instilling a deep sense of suspicion in society. Tunisians lived in constant fear of the secret police. It was rare to ever find people publically discussing anything related to politics or the economy. The Ben Ali regime controlled the people through fear and coercion. And this fear and suspicion is still present in today's culture. Beatrice Hibou's book *The Force of Obedience* gives one of the most comprehensive and detailed accounts

of the methods of coercion Ben Ali used. Hibou explains that police raided and searched houses "at any time of the day or night," whether or not they had a warrant and even confiscated legal documents, such as birth certificates or identification, from homes (6). Hibou argues that Tunisian people were robbed of both social and "private life" by the ubiquitousness of the regime (6). The omnipresence of the police occupied the Tunisian subconsciousness like a flickering worry that was always there. And this fear was used to stifle movement and thought.

Ben Ali spoke of hope, change, and progress, but underneath this dazzling narrative were traps. This explains why today many Tunisians are suspicious of these terms. Ben Ali even encouraged civic participation through associations, but did not create legal freedoms for civic organizations. Instead, he coopted them as units of control and influence (97). Hibou recounts that some 5,000 NGOs were "linked to the Ministry of the Interior," Ben Ali's party, or strictly confined to holding cultural activities (96). Ben Ali created commissions that were assigned to monitoring civic activities such as "the Commission for Activities of Associations" (97). Beyond these formal monitoring institutions, Ben Ali also kept all associations under constant watch (97). All civil society organizations were required to register with the government and often organizations would be refused without explanation (Hibou 99). A Human Rights Watch report explains that membership of an illegal organization was punishable by "one to five years in prison and a fine of 100,000 dinars" (Whitson). There was no place for civil society to occupy where it could be inclusive, public, or independent.

The Internet was no exception to Ben Ali's oppressive tactics. According to

Amnesty International, all sites that published information that was "critical of the

government" were blocked and nationals who attempted to publish articles without

government approval were "liable to prosecution and imprisonment" (5). Similarly, the

government also controlled radio and television programming, limiting Tunisians to only

pro-government sources (5). Control over the flow of information significantly restricted

the civic and political sphere. Public spaces were essentially eliminated. Private spaces,

such as the home, were invaded and the minds of Tunisians were disturbed. I recall, in

my first visit to Tunisia in 2010, being told in the car from the airport to my hotel not to

ask or comment about politics and to please enjoy the fine hospitality of Tunisia. That

this conversation took place in a moving, noisy car and not in a public place or even in a

home did not escape me. There were not safe ways to even warn others of the dangers of

dissidence. The public sphere was eerily silent while photos of Ben Ali cloaked buildings

and busy squares.

Political Repression

As part of Ben Ali's progressive and democratic rhetoric he heavily suppressed

Islamist groups. Like Bourguiba, he earned a very pro-western image due to his

crackdown on terrorists. While there were violent groups, Ben Ali lumped anyone who

wanted to blend Islam and politics under the label "terrorists." He usurped control over

the meaning of what it meant to be a conservative Muslim and taught Tunisians to behave

accordingly through beatings and imprisonments. Hibou states that prisoners were

malnourished, raped, left in solitary confinement, and prohibited from praying (4). In

"Tool of Rule: The Tunisian Police under Ben Ali," Derek Lutterbeck explains that torture was commonly practiced at the Ministry of the Interior as well as within neighborhood police stations (817). Amnesty International report "Tunisia: Human Rights Abuses in the Run up to the WSIS" states that Tunisian authorities often would not allow prisoners to have any outside communication or legal counsel, leading to frequent hunger strikes (3).

But abuse of political dissidents went far beyond police property. Family members of prisoners were frequently harassed and sometimes raped. Even after being released from prison, Islamists and communists were put under heavy surveillance and required to check in at police stations "once, twice, four times a day, or even every two hours, just to show his presence" (Hibou 4). Both Islamic and communist political prisoners were severely mistreated. If political prisoners were later freed Hibou explains that many of them were subjected to "internal exile" (6). Police harassed business owners who dared to hire ex-prisoners. And former prisoners who sought self-employment faced red-tape and harassment to no end (Hibou 6). This sent the message that once you were considered a political opponent of Ben Ali you could never escape that label. The regime invaded their place of work, worship, and family to reinforce power through bribes and intimidation. When observing today's political and religious freedom in Tunisia, it's important to understand how drastically different it is compared to the experience under Ben Ali.

Contrived Legitimacy

Like Bourguiba, Ben Ali maintained a single party system even though he did occasionally allow other parties to operate within very limited constraints. But even if Tunisians joined these faux-oppositional parties, the most efficacious means of gaining social and financial power in Tunisia was to join Ben Ali's party the RCD. These so-called opposing parties were part of Ben Ali's mirage of democracy. In 1989 and 1994 Ben Ali was the only presidential candidate receiving "over 99 percent of the vote" (Kallander 25). Again in 1999, Ben Ali had 99% of the vote "despite having permitted two minor politicians to run against him in a sop to his mild foreign critics" (Kallander 25). And, like, Bourguiba, Ben Ali toyed with the constitution to his benefit. After serving the maximum allotted three terms as president, he amended the constitution so that there was no longer a maximum number of terms. Instead, the office of the president was limited by age, with the maximum age being seventy-five (Kallander 25). At the time Ben Ali was 66. This dramatic change in the constitution demonstrates how weak the parliament was and how few Tunisians were willing to publically contest these decisions.

In this section we have explored how coercion, control, and suspicion permeated the political, religious, and private spheres of life in Tunisia. Ben Ali rewarded specific Islamic and political identities through rigorous methods of punishments and rewards. Today, we see this legacy continued through hostile debates, intolerance, and exclusion experienced by youth. Understanding this authoritarian legacy is critical to understanding the context in which young Tunisians are creating civil society organizations and attempting to create coalitions across social differences. To understand the challenges of

collaboration and exclusive norms in today's civil society, we must understand them within the context of Tunisia's authoritarian history.

Tunisia's History of Civic Engagement

In the following section I will explore continuity of civic engagement from the Ben Ali period, to the revolution, and finally to today's post-authoritarian context. This section will give a brief picture of Tunisia's history of civic engagement and resistance, demonstrating that the revolution did not represent a rupture from a disengaged, passive citizenry to active revolutionaries. Rather, the 2011 revolution represented a shift from disconnected pockets of resistance to connected, cohesive networks with shared vision. In this section I will show how Tunisians used creativity to circumvent government control and advocate for change. I will then demonstrate how Tunisians and, specifically, youth acted as agents of change throughout the revolution.

Protest and Civil Society Under Ben Ali

Tunisians worked around the constraints of the regime to create micro civic groups that promoted advocacy, community problem-solving, and community. In "The Making of North Africa's Intifada," Laryssa Chomiak and John P. Entelis explain that civil society was active in Tunisia despite the regime making it impossible for "opposition movements to work within the system . . . legally" (45). But civic leaders improvised. The authors illustrate, "Tunisia's disenfranchised masses developed mechanisms for dodging the tentacles of the authoritarian state, include tax avoidance, illegal tapping of municipal water and electricity supplies, and illicit construction of houses" (45). Chomiak and Entelis highlight critical activity that contextualizes the 2011

revolution as a boiling point, not a sudden shift to protest and advocacy. Pockets of resistance were disconnected but present.

While civic participation was extremely limited under Ben Ali, at times Tunisians did try to interlink these pockets of resistance into larger movements. Alfred Stepan and Juan Linz, in "Democratization Theory and the 'Arab Spring'," note that while Ben Ali and Habib Bourguiba both tried to instill fear of an Islamist take over, "leading secular liberals began to ask whether they might have more in common with at least some Islamists than with Ben Ali" (23). Stepan and Linz explain that liberals and Islamists met "regularly eight years before Ben Ali's fall to see whether they could reduce mutual fears and agree upon rules for democratic governance" (23). Tunisians understood divide and conquer tactics and tried to overcome them by creating coalitions across differences. While there is very little public information on the coalitions among secularists and Islamists prior to 2011, these collaborative efforts foreshadowed the unity across differences that made the Tunisian Revolution so powerful.

While Islamist-Secularist coalitions were fewer and more secretive, there were larger, public protests regarding economic issues that flared up from time to time. Mark Lynch in *The Arab Uprisings* explains that in the 80s IMF reforms caused a dramatic cut in "food subsidies" (45). These changes were widely felt and many Tunisians suffered, causing wide-spread protests. Lynch writes that "Furious Tunisians rampaged through the streets, overwhelming local police . . . Protesters tore down statues of former president and revolutionary hero Habib Bourghiba [sic]—the ultimate rejection of not only the government but the regime" (45). These protests foreshadowed the coming uprising in

2011 that was not just against poverty, but also against the actors that were creating and perpetuating unjust economic systems.[1]

There were also significant protests in 2008 led by the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT). Chomiak and Entelis explain that the UGTT organized protests against corrupt hiring practices and poor working conditions at a "state-run phosphate company" (46). These protests were unofficially linked to Tunisia's illegal community party, demonstrating how secret political groups attempted to work within the existing limitations (47). These protests succeeded to gain momentum. Chomiak and Entelis explain, "within days, local schoolteachers, women, wives of miners, marginalized youth, and even local union branches joined in" (47). These protests reflected the wide-spread discontentment with the regime. Peter J. Schraeder explains in his article "Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution, International Intervention, and Popular Sovereignty" that there was a dramatic change of quality of life in Tunisia in 2008,

> As of 2008, the average Tunisian spent nearly 36% of household spending on basic foodstuff consumed at home. To put this in comparative context, the average American in 2008 spent just under 7 percent of household spending on the same foodstuffs (75).

Schraeder explains that while 24% of Tunisians were considered to be "thriving" in 2008, that number dropped to 14% in two years "meaning that at least 1 million citizens had witnessed a reversal in their economic fortunes" (75). These drastic economic changes created a common source of discontentment for Tunisians. The major limitation to

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[1] For more information on the motivation of protesters, see "Explaining Divergent Revolutionary Coalitions" by Mark K. Beissinger et al.

resistance groups under Ben Ali was a lack of networks that could unify these different pockets of resistance. However, new information technologies, wide-spread financial hardship, and rumors of Ben Ali's son succeeding him created a source of shared grievance that would prove to be extremely effective in mobilizing large numbers of people in a national movement.

Revolution Rising

The beginning of the Tunisian revolution is often told through the story of two young men who stirred unrest in late 2010. Young Rapper El General articulated both the economic and political frustrations shared by Tunisians. In November 2010 he released a song entitled "Head of State" on YouTube that directly addressed the president regarding issues of hunger, dignity and unemployment. One of the verses reads as follows,

> Mr. President your people is dead
> many people eat from garbage
> and you see what is happening in the country
> misery everywhere and people who have no found a place to sleep
> I am speaking in the name of the people who are suffering
> and were put under the feet
> ("The Rap That Sparked a Revolution: El General (Tunisia)").

In December, El General was taken into government custody where he was questioned and insulted by security officials (Walt). His song inspired Tunisian youth to speak out against corruption and injustice. Later, protesters sang his song during demonstrations and eventually Egyptian protesters even created their own version of "Head of State" which they instead title "President of the Republic" (Walt).

Just a month after the release of "Head of State" another critical event happened.

Mohammed Bouazizi, a 26 year-old produce vendor in the rural town of Sidi Bouzid located in the interior of the country, was confronted by a police officer for not having a permit to sell. The interaction quickly escalated. NPR reports in "The Arab Spring: A Year of Revolution" that the police officer "allegedly slapped him" though this has never been verified. Rania Abouzeid in the article "Bouazizi: The Man Who Set Himself and Tunisia on Fire" reported that Bouazizi was frequently threatened by a corrupt police force, who forced him to pay bribes that sometimes equaled his meager daily earnings. After the altercation with the police officer, Bouazizi went to the mayor's office to complain but they refused to see him. Bouazizi then attempted suicide by drenching himself in gasoline and lighting himself on fire in front of the mayor's office. While this story is popularly used as an explanation of the revolution it's important to note, though, that the revolution was not about Bouazizi or El General themselves. Rather, their stories facilitated momentum around frustrations that were *already* shared among Tunisians.

Protest

Bouazizi was hospitalized for his severe burns. Meanwhile, protests in Sidi Bouzid erupted. The government attempted to prevent people from spreading information about protests by blocking off the city, but protesters improvised and instead shared information on Facebook (Lynch 75). Al Jazeera played a key role in raising the profile of protests by using "amateur videos, photos, and interviews sent in by Tunisian protesters themselves" (Marzouki, 20). Soon massive protests, led by youth, were popping up across the country and especially in the capitol, Tunis. In "Explaining Divergent Revolutionary Coalitions" Beissinger et al. found that 60.4% of the protesters

were under the age of 34 (6). And this youth movement was powerfully transcending social differences. In *Youth and Revolution in Tunisia,* Alcinda Honwana explains that youth created a movement that turned into "a national coalition of forces from all sectors of Tunisian society, spanning age, gender and ethnicity, and socioeconomic, political and religious ideologies" (4).

On January 4th, Mohamed Bouazizi died in the hospital of his burns, inciting more protests. While most of the protests were peaceful, many escalated into violent conflicts among the police, the National Guard, and the protestors. In "Security Sector Reform in Tunisia" Querine Hanlon explains the final days of the revolution, "Police opened fire on crowds and arrested protestors, journalists and opposition party members, lawyers, and rights advocates" (2). As tension built Ben Ali publically announced that he would step down at the end of his term in 2014 and open up elections. But with this provision he banned public gatherings and commanded the military to regulate the crowds with "the use of force against any individual who ignored the ban" (Hanlon 2). Incredibly, the Army's chief of the staff refused Ben Ali's orders and the president was helpless. With no other option, Ben Ali and his family went in exile to Saudi Arabia (Hanlon 2).

Tunisian citizens remained ardently engaged by putting pressure on the government to facilitate true transformation instead of merely reshuffling elites from Ben Ali's party. After Ben Ali left, Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi assumed power. However, protesters had a poor opinion of Mohammed Ghannouchi because he worked under Ben Ali. Protests continued calling for the RCD party and all of its members, not just Ben Ali, to be barred from politics. Tunisians organized under *Le Conseil National*

Pour la Protection de la Revolution which included "left-wing parties," Tunisian labor

union, and "the bar association" (Honwana 100). They called for "the full dismantling of

the old regime's repressive security apparatus" and elections for a constituent assembly

(Honwana 100). On February 27th, 2011, the interim government finally dissolved and

Beji Caid-Essebsi, foreign minister under Habib Bourguiba, became the new prime

minister. In March, elections for the National Constituent Assembly were announced. In

the weeks just after Ben Ali left, engaged Tunisians continued to put pressure on

government leaders, advocating for radical and complete transformation of Tunisia's

political system.

As the Arab Uprisings were unfolding, Western media largely captured these

protests as equally about economic and political issues. However, Beissinger et al. found

that, among Tunisian protesters, economic concern was listed by 77% of participants as

the "most important" or "second most important" motivation for participating in the

Tunisian revolution (4). This runs counter to the common narrative found in the media

that the Tunisian Revolution was equally motivated by political and economic

grievances. Beissinger et al. draw on data from the Arab Barometer survey in which

1,196 people were interviewed in a "nationally representative survey" (3). Still, the

survey found that 50% of those who participated in the revolution listed "demands for

civil and political freedom" as either the "most important" or "second most important

reason" (4).

While the media wrongly depicted these concerns as equal, 50% is still a

significant portion of the population. This data does not necessarily support the argument

that the Tunisia's uprising was less political in nature. After all, this dichotomy of economic concern vs. political concern hides the political economy of Ben Ali's authoritarian tactics. Economic incentives were a major tool of the Ben Ali regime. Government funds were used to explicitly support pro-RDC groups. In this regard, the wide-spread corruption in Tunisia, undoubtedly, had an impact on day-to-day hardships due to economic constraints. This point is not emphasized by the fact that 60% of Tunisians listed "combatting corruption" as either the "most important" or "second most important reason" they participated in the 2011 revolution (4). All in all, what's important to understand is that while many advocated for increased political freedoms, there was high expectation for the political transition to meet economic needs.

The Post-Authoritarian Transition

In this section, I will explore the political, legal and cultural changes that most impacted the dynamics of civil society throughout Tunisia's continued post-authoritarian transition, namely from 2011-2015. Specifically, I will look at changes that supported freedom of expression, an increase of political accountability, and the increase of legal rights for associations. I will also look at the new challenges of freedom—particularly the explosion of political parties and political identities that quickly became divisive. In this section I will also explore youth perspectives on the continued transitional process.

The New Public Sphere

In the months after Ben Ali's exile, the public sphere in Tunisia visibly changed. Photos of Ben Ali disappeared and art filled public spaces. People spoke freely and openly about politics and human rights abuses. The number of both international and

national organizations active in Tunisia increased and ideas that were barred under Ben Ali began to become part of everyday conversation. Shelley Deane in "Transforming Tunisia: The Role of Civil Society in Tunisia's Transition" explains that Tunisians were given "the right of association and assembly" and that the registration process was revised to be more transparent and accessible (5). According to Freedom House, approximately "7,000 – 10,000 new associations, unions, and professional organizations were registered in just the first 10 months following the revolution" ("Tunisia"). Public spaces were being restored from their authoritarian occupation, burgeoning a new era in Tunisia.

In this new era of burgeoning democracy and civic life, National Democratic Institute conducted focus group research with young Tunisians to explore their attitudes on the revolution, political participation, and democracy (Collins 3). Collins found, "Tunisian youth are eager to participate in their country's democratic transition, but skeptical about available channels." Almost all participants were especially committed to voting in the NCA elections (5). While almost no youth voted under Ben Ali, this segment of the population became increasingly interested in political participation. At the same time, due to "long-standing exclusion of youth," many participants feared that both civic and political groups would attempt "to profit from the revolution for personal gains" (5). Youth were cautious but wanted an opportunity to participate beyond just protest and were hopeful to find new, pragmatic political parties and civil society organizations.

National Constituent Assembly Elections

With the creation of Islamic parties and associations, Tunisians, especially the older generation, began to debate Tunisia's religious identity. Under Ben Ali, Tunisia was a Muslim country with staunchly secular policies. With elections to determine Tunisia's future, this clear stance on the role of religion in politics was no longer guaranteed. But when the NCA campaigns took on these "questions of cultural identity" youth became less interested in politics (Honwana 132). Honwana explains, "the debate between the values of religion and secularism overrode all the important and thorny issues regarding the economy, unemployment, justice and political reconciliation" (132). Many youth began to feel that the country was losing sight of the original aims of the revolution.[2]

In October 2011, symbolizing a radical turn from the past, Ennahda, a progressive Islamic party, won the majority of seats in the National Constituent Assembly (NCA). 48.9 per cent of the population turned out for the elections (Honwana 137). While there is no official data, Honwana asserts, "youth constituted a small proportion of the voting population as many young people abstained from voting" (137). Tunisians experimented for the first time with an Islamic political party. Ennahda had a progressive image, including women leaders at the forefront of their campaigns. Ennahda endorsed presidential candidate Moncef Marzouki, a human rights activist and the parliament elected him as president. With a new president and free and fair elections behind them, the NCA began the gnarly task of drafting a new constitution.

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[2] Drawn from interviews with Tunisian youth.

The Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy organized debates on the constitution to bring together stakeholders from a range of political parties and civil society organizations (CSOs). During these workshops, participants "were invited to discuss, debate, negotiate, and arrive at mutually agreeable solutions" on key issues in the constitution ("National Debates on the Constitution"). Tunisians openly took opposing positions but respected the rules of the debates and worked to come to consensus. At the close of these debates, CSID submitted a report to the NCA with recommended revisions that were developed by the debate participants. The varied backgrounds of the debate participants and high levels of participation demonstrated a new era in both political decision-making and civic freedoms (Masmoudi).

Enduring Challenges

The new freedoms in Tunisia's post-revolution context came with new challenges and many shortcomings. A World Bank report titled "Youth Participation, Voice, and Active Citizenship," based on a study done in 2013, found that youth "lack the institutional channels necessary to effectively participate in postrevolutionary Tunisia" and that confidence in political and public institutions is low among youth (Drissi 10). The report found that "only a small fraction of young Tunisians are active in CSOs" (Drissi 14). Moreover, the majority of youth volunteers are from coastal regions and in rural areas "as little as three percent of rural youth participate in CSOs" (Drissi 14-15). Though up to 60% of youth participated in the 2011 revolution (Beissinger et al. 6), these high levels of protest did not translate into high levels of sustained civic engagement.

At the same time, Salafi extremists stirred throughout the country and secular activists began to feel increasingly threatened by them. In 2013, two leading secular activists were assassinated, causing the public to widely distrust Ennahda. Many were suspicious that it was the government who carried out the assassination. Others blamed radical Salafis but were angry with the government for not doing more to restrain and punish extremists. Summer of 2013, protests erupted and activist called for the NCA, which was led by Ennahda, and the president to step down. In December of 2013, the NCA agreed on a plan to dissolve, as per the protesters' demands. Parliament passed the new constitution in January 2014 and preparation quickly began for new parliamentary and presidential elections under a new temporary, transitional government. Meanwhile, the economy remained stagnant. High youth unemployment rates continued while tourism dropped from increased instability.

2014 Elections

As Tunisia prepared for the 2014 parliamentary and presidential elections, secular party Nida Tounes gained popularity. Their presidential candidate Beji Caid Essebsi, was minister of foreign affairs in 1981 and prime minister from February – December 2011. While there were over 20 candidates, Essebsi and Marzouki took the lead. Marzouki, criticized for failing to address economic issues since the revolution, widely lost popularity. On the other hand, many were concerned that Essebsi, who was 88 years old, was too old to fulfill his duties as president. Tunisia has a history of elites staying in power despite their age, as their first president, Habib Bourguiba, was removed from power at age 84 because he was deemed mentally unable to fulfill his duties.

Additionally, Essebsi's experience working for both former presidents raised concern that he represented the old regime.

In the parliamentary elections, Nida Tounes, Essebsi's party, won the majority of seats. According to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems Election Guide webpage "Country Profile: Tunisia" Ennahda was the second majority in Parliament with 69 seats, compared to Nida Tounes, who won 86 seats. An additional 43 seats is shared among smaller political parties. Few youth participated in both the parliamentary and presidential election, representing an increasing chasm between youth and political life. Global Network for Rights and Development and International Institute for Peace, Justice and Human Rights' Report "Joint Observation Mission to Tunisian Parliamentary Elections 2014" found that "over 80% of Tunisian youth boycotted the parliamentary elections" (32). Alcinda Honwana points out in *Youth and Revolution in Tunisia* that similarly, in 2013, "the vast majority of the young people who decided not to vote . . . did so deliberately, as an expression of their disapproval of the political system as a whole" (137). Many youth, instead, turn to civic engagement as an alternative means of advocating for change and strengthening their communities.

Questioning Progress

In the last four years Tunisia has faced incredible difficulty and also made remarkable progress in its transition from authoritarianism. Tunisians are very proud to have held fair elections and rewritten their constitution. But terrorist attacks in March and June of 2015 have cast a grave shadow on this enthusiasm. March of 2015, Islamists stormed Tunisia's famous Bardo Museum, killing 21 tourists and one policeman. In June

another terrorist attack happened on a beach resort in the city of Sousse. 38 foreign tourists were shot dead while sunbathing on the beach by a 28 year old Tunisian man, with the Islamic State claiming responsibility. The paradox of set backs and accomplishments are not easily reconciled in the minds of Tunisians. Many feel that they were safer under Ben Ali. Freedom of expression and the rise of civil society are two of the most concrete wins of the revolution. But to most Tunisians this is not enough. Youth still long for jobs and suffer from the same unemployment rates of 2010 and 2011, weakening their confidence in Tunisia's developing democracy and new political game.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have sifted through pieces of Tunisia's history that best contextualize the role of youth in today's civil society. By exploring the history of authoritarianism, we've seen how intolerance and control were taught to Tunisians through decades under a system of extreme repression. However, we have also explored how Tunisians found creative ways to work around the police state through small-scale networks of resistance. As seen, these networks joined together into a large social movement to create the 2011 Tunisian Revolution. This social movement had broad enough goals that both the underemployed Ph.D. student and former political prisoners from the Islamic Tendency Movement could come together. While the post-Ben Ali transition has opened up many freedoms for civic life, it has also led to an explosion of social and ideological differences that have, in turn, caused a division between the older and younger generations. And this division has reinforced many of the norms of marginalized that youth already experienced under Ben Ali.

Today, many youth feel that they have lost the revolution. Their economic demands have not been met and politicians often belittle their voices. Though only a few participate in civil society, civic action has become one of the few spaces where youth feel they have a voice and opportunity to work for real change. Other Tunisian youth, however, have abandoned hope for social change altogether, despite having protested in 2011. There is a heavy sense of disappointment shared among Tunisian youth that shapes attitudes on civic participation. While some are motivated by their disappointments, others are not. This research seeks to better understand how youth are approaching collaboration in their civic communities, despite these setbacks. In the following chapter we will explore the key theoretical concepts of civil society, peacebuilding networks, and social capital to better understand the practices of collaboration and the role of civil society in social change.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I will offer a summary and analysis of the literature most relevant to youth approaches to collaboration across social differences. To begin, I will offer a brief analysis of the included literature, presenting the theoretical stance this research project takes on key terms. Then, I will offer an in-depth discussion of the key terms, starting with understandings of youth. I will discuss the various ways youth have been defined by scholars of international development and peacebuilding. Moreover, I will discuss how youthfulness is best understood as a rite of passage that can be slowed down or prevented by socioeconomic and political constraints.

Secondly, I will discuss theories on collaborative processes and of social capital, demonstrating how collaboration and bridging social capital play a key role in creating peaceful, resilient communities and support emerging democracies. Thirdly, I will explore understandings of the role of networks and peacebuilding, to demonstrate the role of both informal and formal ties across differences in supporting peace. Finally, I will discuss recent studies on Tunisian youth and how this research project responds to the need to better understand how youth are active in civil society.

This literature review explores the aforementioned key terms by exploring various theoretical perspectives, as they relate to the study of youth approaches to collaboration across social differences. This literature review illuminates the need for youth to be seen

not as passive participants in peacebuilding, but as contributors that can offer valuable insights on approaches to building relationships across differences and creating inclusive processes. While the role of youth in building peace should not be exaggerated, it *should* be emphasized as their contribution to building peace has been overlooked, especially in Tunisia. Not all youth see themselves as peacebuilders, and researchers should be sensitive to embrace the terms that youth use to describe themselves. However this research also advocates that the work of peacebuilding happens not just in negotiation rooms but also in cafes, schools and in clubs. That is, perhaps, if peacebuilding was more widely understood as a process that takes places in these valuable, informal social settings, more youth might see themselves as peacebuilders and also as contributors to the transformation of conflict—not just as liabilities to stability.

By exploring theories on the role of both collaborative processes and informal ties in supporting strong communities, this research emphasizes the importance of nongovernment actors working at the community level. There is a vast amount of literature on nongovernment actors working at the community level that can be broadly sliced into two groups. Scholars on democracy argue that in order for democracies to flourish there must be an engaged and educated civil society that reads the newspaper, votes in elections, and lobbies government officials, among other activities (Linz and Stepan 18; Putnam, *Bowling Alone* 23; Tocqueville 123). These scholars emphasize the importance of inclusivity in civil society to ensure that there are high levels of participation and that people are represented not just by government, but also by their

civic communities. A flourishing civic sphere leads to a stable and sustainable democracy.

On the other hand, scholars from peacebuilding and conflict studies argue that in order for conflict to be truly transformed, it is necessary to include actors at the grassroots and middle levels of society as they comprise the majority of the population and hold high levels of influence by setting cultural norms in families, schools and communities (Lederach, *The Moral Imagination* 76). Researchers from the fields of conflict resolution and peace studies often evaluate the culture and norms among grassroots actors to evaluate the promise of sustainable peace, widely defined by the transformation of relationships (Schirch, *The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding* 26). This literature review focuses on the role of civic actors, affirming the powerful role of nongovernment actors in building both peace and democracy. It does not, however, attempt to capture all literature on the role of civil society in democratic transitions. Instead, this literature review focuses on scholars who discuss the role of inclusion and collaboration across social differences among nongovernment actors—whether they argue for inclusivity from the perspective of it promoting democracy or from the perspective of it leading to conflict transformation.

Understandings of Youth

Youth is often described as a demographic shaped by age range. However, the assumption of this understanding is that the experience of youth is controlled by age alone. Youth refers to a between-stage, after childhood and before adulthood. And the transition from youth to adult is unique for each culture. That being

said, defining youth in terms of age is problematic as in very few societies, if any, does the simple acting of earning a certain age give you specific adult privileges or status. For example, in the U.S. at age 21 you can legally drink. But you are not guaranteed the economic means to afford alcohol. While this is a trivial example, in developing countries the challenges to becoming an adult are far more comprehensive. In order to understand Tunisian youth, it is critical to understand the various rites of passage required to becoming adult and the obstacles to those passages. In this section we will discuss various perspectives on youth and how they illuminate the unique characteristics and challenges of Tunisian youth.

In *Stuck: Rwandan Youth and the Struggle for Adulthood*, Marc Sommers defines youth as a "liminal stage" or a "stage of becoming" (3). In Sommers' book he explores the economic challenges of becoming an adult in Rwanda where adulthood is largely based on owning a house and getting married. Sommers explains that many youth are "stuck" in adolescence due to the expectation of having an expensive wedding, yet the lack of adequately paying jobs to pay for a house, support a family, and pay for a large marriage celebration.

Becoming an adult, according to Sommers' is about experiencing "social and cultural fulfillment" that is not accessible by youth or children (3). The privileges of adulthood are numerous. In some cases adulthood may mean greater autonomy to make decisions, the ability to vote, or the ability to drive. In Muslim countries, there are also sexual restraints of being a youth. In Muslim cultures, the man must provide a house and be ready to support a family before he is eligible for marriage and sexual relationships

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outside of marriage are also forbidden. Men and women, forbidden from sexual intimacy, can continue to be treated and constrained to child-like roles far into their twenties and even thirties. In Sommers' words youthness "is not, fundamentally, about a person's age at all" (3). That is, becoming an adult is a rite of passage that can be slowed-down and even prevented by economic or political structures. Likewise, In "Problematizing Arab Youth" Emma C. Murphy argues that the Arab youth experience is not reflective of age, but rather, "reflective of the political, economic and social failures of authoritarian regimes" (7).

Summer's understanding of youth rightly challenges us to think of it as a liminal space not controlled merely by passing time (aging), but also as controlled by access to jobs and family pressures. In Tunisia, youth are pent-up in a liminal space by both sparse economic opportunity and lack of political power. In Tunisia, for example, youth suffer high unemployment rates. Yet, political parties do not adequately represent youth, giving 51% of Tunisia's population limited options to contest the economic barriers to reaching social and economic adulthood ("Tunisia | Factsheets"). In "Tunisian Youth: Between Political Exclusion and Civic Engagement" Emily Parker reports that most of the members in the National Constituent Assembly "are in the 50s or 60s, and the oldest member of the NCA is 74." "Enhancing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle: A Good Practice Guide" reports that parties were required to list one candidate under the age of 30 (23). However this requirement is hardly progressive when "28 per cent of the population is between the ages of 15-29, and 51 per cent of the population is under 30" ("Tunisia | Factsheets").

For this study, it is critical to have a comprehensive understanding of youth, which encompasses age, economic opportunity, and both political and social power. By looking at the youth experience comprehensively, we see that youthness can continue up to age 30 and sometimes older in Tunisia. Indeed, if we only defined youth by age, how would we be able to describe the unique experience of thousands of Tunisians not represented by political parties? The common experience of youth in Tunisia goes beyond turning a specific age. And that is perhaps why youth are so troubled with the political transition since the 2011 revolution. For some, their status as youth seems unending.

The unique needs of youth populations has been a rising topic of research in recent years as many developing countries have been experiencing what is called a youth bulge. The term youth bulge is largely charged with a negative connotation, which has impacted how youth are conceptualized and understood in the field of international development. Youth bulge, explained by Justin Yifu Lin in "Youth Bulge: A Demographic Dividend or a Demographic Bomb in Developing Countries?" refers to a phenomenon when a developing country "achieves success in reducing infant morality but mothers still have a high fertility rate." This results in a population largely made up of children and youth. Lin explains that a youth bulge is a threat to the economy and stability because "the ratio of non-working age population to the working age population" will likely be unbalanced. In order for a youth bulge to not be a threat to the economy, youth must be "fully employed in productive activities" in order for the "income per

capita" to increase. Unemployed youth, however can become "a demographic bomb" likely to cause "social and political instability."

Henrik Urdal's study "A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence" on youth bulges showed that countries with a large population of youth "are associated with significantly increased risk of domestic armed conflict, terrorism and riots/violent demonstrations" (623). Urdal showed that this held true even in countries whose youth population had high levels of educational attainment. In fact, this can cause increased destabilization because educated youth tend to look for more sophisticated work, not just grocery clerk positions. Urdal goes so far as to call highly educated youth "one of the most destabilizing and potentially violent sociopolitical phenomena" (612). Urdal conceptualizes youth as potential agitators, perpetrators of violence, or protesters and therefore as a risk for society. However, youth could equally be seen as mirrors that reflect back systemic weaknesses and, sometimes, even failures. In other words, Urdal calls youth—not the economic or political systems that fail to support adulthood—dangerous. This conceptualization fails to capture the role youth can play in humanizing systemic failures and serving as a force for *positive* social change.

The literature on youth bulge rightly emphasizes the unique needs of youth populations, but fails to conceptualize a youth bulge as an opportunity. For example, it fails to recognize the role youth can play in nonviolent movements that lead to sustained change. And moreover, how nonviolent, youth movements have been usurped by the older generation to perpetuate systems of inequality. The Tunisian Revolution brought a significant shift in the country, yielding unprecedented political freedoms in Tunisia's

history. However it was and is still today, largely, the older generation of political dissidents that have benefited from these freedoms. Former members of the underground, illegal Islamic Tendency Movement and Communist parties have enjoyed the ability to create official parties, run for office, and even win seats in the parliament. But this was not the only agenda item of the revolution. Youth chants for dignity and jobs continue to echo in 2015 with no reply. Yet it was largely youth who labored in the streets for the new political freedoms, now enjoyed by Tunisia's adults.

Sioblan McEvoy-Levy in "Youth as Social and Political Agents: Issues in Post-Settlement Peace Building" presents that "youth are the primary actors in grassroots community development/relations work; they are at the frontlines of peace building" (25). Instead of conceptualizing youth as societal risks, McEvoy-Levy argues that they play a vital role in transforming conflicts. Helen Berents and Siobhan McEvoy-Levy, in "Theorising Youth and everyday peace(building)," argue that even referring to youth as "actors" or "agents" can be patronizing. Rather, the authors assert that youth should be seen and conceptualized as leaders with "new knowledges about peace" (121).

Berents and McEvoy-Levy argue that the field of peacebuilding has implicitly acted as if "youth will inevitably need the benefit from training in peace" (119). Moreover, through training youth are taught that conflict is both their fault and their responsibility to fix (119 – 120). Instead of seeing youth as juveniles that need to be trained and contained, Berents and McEvoy emphasize how youth are leaders with their own theories of social change. And moreover, youth already occupy public spaces ripe for stirring social change such as "schools, community groups, and youth centres" (122).

The problem is that adults still control these spaces. The authors illustrate that it's the "consultants and professionals" who decide what time the doors open" (122). All in all, Berents and McEvoy argue that there is a gap between youth and adults in the peacebuilding agenda that is pushing youth knowledge and leadership to "parks, street corners," their homes, or, worst of all "to the imagination" (122). And if peace is left to the imagination of 51% of the population in Tunisia, what substance of peace can there really be? Berents and McEvoy argue for greater inclusion of youth in peacebuilding, beginning with changing how adult peacebuilders conceptualize young people.

That youth have their own agenda for social change is critical to this study. This research attempts to operationalize itself within the paradigm that youth are not merely invited by peacebuilders to join in building peace—but rather that youth *are* peacebuilders, at work. Of course, not all youth view themselves in these terms—however that does not change the fact that they act as influencers in a wide variety of social spaces that shape cultural norms and attitudes. In fact, it could be argued that youth do not see themselves this way because they are systematically taught that they are not contributors. This is the underlying argument of Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The pedagogies of education taught in schools reinforce structural violence by abnegating students from any opportunity to critically analyze or contribute. Freire states, "Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat" (72). It should be emphasized that youth are socialized into submissive roles through education and that it takes intentionality to transform these norms. And that can begin with how we describe youth.

Likewise, Berents and McEvoy make the point that the *way* stakeholders are described impacts *how* they are invited to participate in peacebuilding initiatives. This study takes the position that youth are leaders and experts on social change and, therefore, their role in civil society should be explored and valued. That's not to say that this research will exaggerate that role—but rather that this research attempts to help provide a more even perspective on the role of youth within civil society because it has not been adequately researched. In recognition of the role youth can play in creating positive social change, this research seeks to explore youth approaches to collaboration. Of course, not all youth hope for democracy or collaboration and this demographic should be acknowledged. However, this research seeks to also give voice to that demographic—instead of describing it. So-called passive youth and troublemakers are too often described and not frequently enough given the microphone themselves. Therefore, this research seeks to understand youth approaches to collaboration from the understanding that their role has been de-emphasized in Tunisian's transition. And, moreover, this research also seeks to understand youth who are inactive in civil society or promote exclusions within their own narratives and their own meanings of exclusion or resistance to civic engagement.

Lack of adequate inclusion of youth in peacebuilding continues to reinforce the structural marginalization that is also experienced by youth economically and politically. In "Urbanization, War, and Africa's Youth at Risk: Towards Understanding and Addressing Future Challenges" by Marc Sommers, he explores youth exclusion in urban Rwanda, particularly in civil society. Sommers explains that though youth "are a

demographic majority" they see themselves "as an outcast minority" (1). Sommers, like

McEvoy argues that we need to move beyond disciplining and controlling youth as

"defiant outcasts" and instead treat them as an "accepted contributor to Africa's urban

economies, cultures, and civil societies" (15). Sommers outlines several possibilities for

increased youth inclusion in civil society. He argues that civic organizations should

"target the marginalized youth majority" by tailoring programs "to the needs and

concerns of male and female youth" (12). Sommers argues that peacebuilding programs

should not just include "ex-combatants" who are traditionally targeted in peacebuilding

but also "youth who have resisted joining a gang," for example (12).

However, Sommers does not provide detail in how programs could be built to be

inclusive or what processes could be used to make programs tailored to youth needs. And

this ambiguity is dangerous, as too often youth are asked to be representatives on behalf

of their cohort; or the mere presence of youth in a program can easily be mistaken as a

successful youth program. As Berents and McEvoy point out, "If . . . young people's

tactics, knowledge and practices of building peace are institutionally ignored, or

misunderstood, a pattern of exclusion and colonial interventions for youth continues"

(124). This research seeks to unearth youth approaches to collaboration, from the stance

that their approaches are critical to the success of Tunisia's transition from

authoritarianism to freedom and positive peace. In the following section we will explore

theoretical understandings of collaboration; how to set up a collaborative process; and

what factors have been shown to support successful collaboration.

Collaboration

In this section, I will explore theoretical understandings of collaboration. David Chrislip looks at collaboration in terms of issue-specific, formalized processes. On the other hand, Susan Allen Nan and Andrea Strimling look at collaboration as an overarching approach to sharing work. Moreover, Sandy Schuman looks at collaboration not as an action but as a culture in his edited volume *Creating a Culture of Collaboration*. I will begin the discussion by looking at definitions of collaboration and comparing it to communication, cooperation, and coordination by drawing on the work of David Chrislip, Susan Allen Nan and Andrea Strimling. Next, I will look at how collaborative processes are created and practiced. I will also explore how collaboration has been shown to make democracies, and especially societies in transition, more stable by exploring Robert Putnam's work on bridging social capital. Finally, I will explore Schuman's contribution on how collaboration is created through cultural norms.

To begin our discussion, I will explore Chrislip's definitions of collaboration, offered in the book *Collaborative Leadership* by Carl Larson and David Chrislip. They define collaboration as, "a mutually beneficial relationship between two or more parties to achieve common goals by sharing responsibility, authority and accountability for achieving results" (5). In other words, participants in a collaborative process are partners with the goal of bettering each other through a process of shared efforts and oversight. Moreover, Chrislip and Larson argue that collaboration goes beyond "sharing knowledge and information (communication)" and it's "more than a relationship that helps each

party achieve its own goals (cooperation and coordination)." Collaboration is not just an action, collaboration is also about attitudes and approaches to shared work.

In this definition, Chrislip and Larson place communication and cooperation on a spectrum that spans from activities that require little interaction, to collaboration, which requires high levels of trust and integration among parties. Perhaps one of the most unique components of Chrislip and Larson's definition of collaboration lies in their emphasis on "sharing responsibility" (2). While many civic organizations often invite members to participate in programs, fewer actually make a point to include outsiders in the actual work of planning and leading programs. Many organizations seek to be inclusive by inviting the community. But a collaborative process goes beyond this by asking what barriers might prevent people from participating and seeking to remove those barriers. And not just in the sense of how to get people in the room—but how to get people's hearts in the process. Moreover, Chrislip and Larson explain that, "The purpose of collaboration is to create a shared vision and joint strategy to address concerns that go beyond the purview of any particular party" (5). By sharing work, participants in collaborative processes build a shared vision based on consensus to guide their efforts.

John Paul Lederach argues that true conflict transformation happens not just when meetings are shared, but when the meaning of transformation is shared. In *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* he argues that "participants and their knowledge" must be seen as "the primary resource for the training" (56). Instead of inviting participants to learn about peace and conflict, Lederach argues that true peacebuilding is about facilitating "discovery and creation" though a

"process that is highly participatory in nature" (56). One facilitator can't achieve transformation. In other words, there is a special potential for transformation within groups that cannot be achieved by one charismatic leader.

Likewise, in *The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook* David Chrislip explains that collaborative processes begin at the moment that ideas are conceptualized. From start to finish "people who reflect the broader community" must be involved (44). The community, then, must develop shared vision, requiring people to sift through various positions and values to find common goals. This shared vision is like the northern star that the collaborative process follows—without it energy will be divided into different directions and ultimately, lost.

Chrislip and Larson's framework for collaborative processes outlines a comprehensive approach to including stakeholders in an issue-specific process where people from different backgrounds can meet on a equal playing field to work together towards common goals. This framework, while comprehensive, might also be criticized as overly ambitious. Sharing equal responsibility with other participants may prove to be challenging when there is a history of violence or marginalization. Marginalized groups may find that sharing responsibility with privileged groups put them at risk of being coerced.

Chrislip outlines several steps on how to ensure that participants have the opportunity to authentically contribute. The first step is to ensure that everyone who should be included in the process has been invited. David Chrislip, in *The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook,* argues that collaboration should include "those traditionally

engaged and those who have been excluded or otherwise disengaged" (50). He argues

that anyone related to the given issue should be included,

> Those responsible for problems or issues, those affected by them, those
> with perspectives or knowledge needed to develop good solutions or
> strategies, those with power and resources to block or implement solutions
> and strategies, and anyone else who wants to be engaged (74).

But in order to do this, it's critical that the conveners have clout among both the

"traditionally engaged" and "disengaged." Chrislip calls this "the credibility to convene"

and argues that conveners should recruit with the goal of "enhancing" the "credibility" of

the process. That is, if someone has a reputation of being biased, it may taint people's

perception of the process. Collaborative processes need leaders who are respected by a

wide number of people and who can create enthusiasm for participation.

Finally, Chrislip argues that collaboration is also about how people

communicate—not just who you invite to the meeting. The following table, printed

originally by Mark Gerzon and adapted in Chrislip's book points out that collaboration is

based on dialogue, not debate, outlined in the table below (qtd in Chrislip).

Table 1 Dialogue vs. Debate

Debate	Dialogue
Assuming that there is a right answer and that you have it	Assuming many people have part of the answer
Combative: participants attempt to prove the other side is wrong	Collaborative: participants work together toward common understanding

About winning	About exploring common ground
Listening to find flaws and make counterarguments	Listening to understand, create shared meaning, and find agreements
Seeing two sides of an issue	Seeing all sides of an issue

Source: Chrislip, David D. *The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook: A Guide for*

Citizens and Civic Leaders. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002. Print. Pg. 97.

Figure 8.2[3]

As seen, bringing people together with differences does not necessarily mean they are

collaborating. Maintaining a dialogue-based culture throughout the process is critical to

creating an authentic vision and culture of openness.

Collaborative processes are built on inclusion, starting from the beginning of the

process and carried out through dialogue and shared responsibility. Collaboration goes

beyond filling quotas or merely conducting a survey to include minority voices.

Collaboration weaves together perspectives to create paths for transformation that could

not be achieved otherwise. That is, by inviting stakeholders to share responsibility, the

process is strengthened by solutions and resources that could not be mined from simple

surveys that, instead, only foster communication.

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[3] Adapted from Chrislip's figure 8.2. Chrislip gives the source as "Created by Mark Gerzon for the Bipartisan Congressional Retreat. Adapted from the work by the Public Conversations Project, National Study Circles Resources, Educators for Social Responsibility."

While Chrislip rightly offers apt warnings against cooperation and coordination, he fails to acknowledge that when stakeholders have very low levels of trust with one another, a collaborative process may simply be too radical. In other words, in contexts where there are low levels of trust, communication and coordination may play an important role building that trust deficit and increasing the level of integration amongst stakeholders. While Chrislip maintains that this can be addressed by basing collaborative processes on consensus and dialogue, in some contexts that still may not be enough to bring stakeholders to the table. Chrislip criticizes efforts that are based on communication or coordination because it does not give stakeholders adequate opportunity to contribute to decisions. However, communication and coordination may still play an important role in building trust. Chrislip's framework doesn't answer the question, how do people collaborate if they refuse to speak with one another? The answer may simply be that it's not possible. But, in such a case, perhaps working towards communication or cooperation could be a helpful next step.

Susan Allen Nan and Andrea Strimling discuss the unique characteristics of collaboration in comparison to communication, coordination, and cooperation, or, as they call it, the "four 'Cs'," in the article "Track I and Track II Cooperation." They define communication as "sharing information" or "analysis." Coordination is described as "planning together" or "synchronizing." Cooperation includes "resource sharing, maximizing the impact of separated initiatives" and collaboration means to share work and "maximize the impact of joint initiatives." Like Chrislip and Larson, to collaborate, the process must be truly shared through joint responsibility and shared vision.

Allen Nan and Strimling also warn against cooptation, which they call the "fifth 'C'." Cooptation occurs when the convened parties are not able to develop an authentically shared vision and, instead, parties are manipulated into supporting positions. Allen Nan and Strimling warn that this often comes to play when NGOs carry generous government funding to support specific "government driven agendas" which may limit the development of a truly shared vision or even be antithetical to the vision that would otherwise be achieved among collaborating parties. But cooptation could occur for many reasons—not just due to government funding. When there are inequalities among stakeholders, cooptation of the marginalized group is always a risk.

In *Ritual and Symbol of Peacebuilding*, Lisa Schirch emphasizes that trust-building rituals have historically made negotiations more successful. She says, "A handshake, sitting down for a meal together, or sharing a cigarette outside the formal negotiating room might physically symbolize a transformation of a conflict that may not be able to occur on a purely intellectual level" (86). It could also be said that having positive interaction on a social level, builds anticipation for positive interaction on community issues. While coordination and communication are not sufficient means of effectively addressing community conflicts—perhaps collaboration is not actually possible without these components. In summary, the role of cooperation and communication must be recognized for their capacity to build momentum towards collaborative processes.

Chrislip argues that collaboration can create effective solutions for communities, thus strengthening civil society, and thereby the nation state. Chrislip argues that an

effective civil society is one that is inherently inclusive and collaborative. Moreover, collaboration can "mitigate conflicts between competing interests, engage citizens deeply in addressing the problems that concern them, and build the capacity to negotiate future conflicts in ways that better reflect the common good" (28). Chrislip argues that collaboration is integral to the continued "evolution of the United States as a democratic society" (28). But he argues that collaboration is even more critical in new democracies. Chrislip explains that in Slovakia the transition from communism to democracy was rot with "'politics of interests or advocacy'" which created many ideological divides making it easier for Vladimir Meciar to "consolidate political power" by playing on "Slovak nationalism and ethnic prejudices" (27). However, Chrislip points out, "influential NGOs coalesced to help defeat Meciar in the 1998 elections" (27). In other words, civic organizations were able to show collaborative leadership, turning a crisis into an opportunity to build "a more deeply democratic state" (27). While this research does not seek to grade Tunisia's transition to democracy, it recognizes the value of collaborative processes in creating stronger communities and more effective governments. This point must be acknowledge to point out, simply, that the significance of collaboration goes beyond the purview of one community and can, in turn, play a part in shaping politics.

Robert D. Putnam has done extensive research on how social connectedness improves both institutions and communities. Putnam, in his seminal book *Bowling Alone*, explains that social capital "refers to connections among individuals" and social capital theory investigates the value of "social networks" on society (19). Putnam argues that communities with high levels of social capital are healthier, wealthier, and wiser (287).

And in *Bowling Alone*, Putnam explains the impact of civic collaboration on institutional effectiveness. Putnam found that when researching the effectiveness of regional government in Italy, those situated in areas that had "strong traditions of civic engagement" had the most effective government systems, even though on paper each government had the same structure (344). In other words, civic activity can help strengthen communities as much as they can also help make government systems more effective. This underscores the significance of an engaged civic sphere. But Chrislip and Putnam argue that the *quality* of engagement is also important. Collaborative or bridging engagement can be especially effective in transforming relationships, creating stronger communities, as well as strengthening new and developing democracies.

In *Community Organizing: Building Social Capital as a Development Strategy*, Rose Gittel and Avis Vidall introduced this idea through the terms bridging and bonding social capital. Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone*, building on this idea, explains that bonding happens within groups and reinforces "exclusive identities and homogenous groups" (22). Bridging capital happens across groups and helps connect people "to external assets" and supports the spread of information (22). Putnam explains, "Bonding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40" (23). In other words, bonding creates cohesion within groups and bridging eases collaboration across groups.

Chrislip argues that many civic associations have failed to see their role in contributing to societal divisions by only cultivating bonding social capital, which can actually undermine democracy (24). On the other hand, organizations that use bonding

social capital to create bridging social capital "fashion a more equitable and democratic society" (24). Finally, Chrislip argues that more research needs to be done to explore how civic organizations have successfully fostered both bridging and bonding social capital (25). This research responds to that need by exploring how young civic leaders are approaching collaboration across social differences in their clubs and organizations.

While formal processes of collaboration are important SandySchuman, Research Associate Emeritus of the Center for Policy Research at University of Albany and editor of the International Association of Facilitator's Handbook, explains that an important piece of collaboration has been lost since practitioners have become more and more professionalized in collaboration. Collaboration has become constrained to "a single meeting or project" instead of being conceptualized as a "culture" (xxvi). While Chrislip emphasizes the importance of collaborative processes, Schuman argues that collaboration goes beyond access to information or being invited to a meeting. Collaboration is "inextricably and dynamically" interlinked to "meaning, choices, and relationships" (xxviii). While collaboration is about people having the opportunity to contribute to decisions and have say over the choices that affect them, it's also about relationships. Schuman explains, "relationships provide the social context in which we exchange information and make choices" (xxviii). In this regard, collaboration is also about how community members perceive one another and interact. Schuman advocates that the quality of collaborative processes is about the quality of relationships.

This relationship-centric focus is critical to the shaping of this project, as it seeks to understand collaboration holistically by better understanding how young Tunisians

interact in both social and civic settings. Collaboration can be cultivated in many ways.

This project seeks to build on the aforementioned scholars and practitioners to gain a

holistic and even flexible understanding of how youth are approaching collaboration. As

argued by Chrislip, collaborative processes must be carefully designed so that the

appropriate stakeholders are included, meetings are conducted based on dialogue, and

participants are given equal responsibility for decisions and responsibility. Collaboration,

however, can also be supported by communication and coordination as it increases trust

and can help strengthen relationships, which are critical to how individuals make

meaning of their choices. In this section, I have explored how inclusivity across

differences supports collaborative processes and culture. In the following section, I will

explore inclusivity and social differences through theories on social networks and

peacebuilding.

Networks and Relationships

Susan Allen Nan in "Conflict Resolution in a Network Society" defines networks

as "social structures that connect people to each other" (113). Nan explains that

"networks allow activities that no individual person or organization could accomplish

single-handedly" (113). Networks are powerful because of the people who comprise them

and their potential for cumulative impact. Networks are similar to collaborative

processes, in that who is involved is critical to understanding the role and potential of the

network. However, networks exist without formal, collaborative processes. For example,

whether or not I am looking for jobs, I am part of a network of other students at Mason

searching for jobs in a specific field. My friends, former supervisors, and professors are

not part of any specified collaborative process, but if I began to ask around about jobs, my network would be responsive by sharing information with me on available jobs. That is, networks operate and sometimes even act collaboratively, without it being a formalized process, as often described in Chrislip's framework for community collaboration.

Collaborative processes, however, do exist within networks and they also have the capacity to build networks. That is, civic leaders recruit and look for participants through their networks, which will likely include people with whom they have both weak and strong ties. But then, once people agree to participate in a collaborative process, it's possible that their network will expand as they meet new people. And perhaps, participation in collaborative processes have the ability to transform ties. For example, two people may be neighbors but not friends. After participation in a neighborhood committee on how to appropriate municipal funds, they may connect based on this new activity and common interest they share. Imagine that two neighbors both advocate to improve educational resources for children with disabilities because they both have children with autism. After participating in the community meeting, they both develop ties to each other as mothers but also as community members. They develop connections for both personal interests and for their greater commitment to improving their communities. But now imagine, that these mothers are from two different political parties. There were able to bond as mothers, thereby also simultaneously bridging across political divides. The fact that bridging and bonding can happen simultaneously is well

captured by network theory, which emphasizes the variety of ways individuals are connected to each other.

These types of mixed personal and community ties are critical to peacebuilding, according to Lederach. In *The Moral Imagination* John Paul Lederach argues that "the center of building sustainable justice and peace is the quality and nature of people's relationships" (76). He explains this through his model of what he calls "the web approach" which could similarly be called the network approach. For effective peacebuilding Lederach presents a peacebuilding pyramid in which he argues that in conflict settings there are the elites, middle-tier citizens, and the grassroots actors. Effective peacebuilding not only requires action at all three levels but action that links between the tiers. Lederach calls this vertical and horizontal capacity (79). Further more, it's important for stakeholders on each level to both "link with people up and down in the society" and also to maintain "relationships among . . . groups that cut across the identity divisions" horizontally (79). Lederach argues that effective peacebuilding needs to be embedded in a network that somehow connects, for example, government officials (the elite) with civil society leaders (middle tier leaders) and mothers (grassroots), for example.

But peacebuilding processes must also create networks across divided elites, civic leaders from opposing civic groups, and mothers who gossip about one another. Lederach calls this the "web approach" which is based on "explicit strategic networking, one that creates a web of relationships and activities that cover the setting" of conflict (80). Lederach argues that the venues for the web approach are "social spaces where people

cross in natural ways, in necessary and often unnoticed ways" (86). It could be in "markets, hospitals, schools, street corners, cattle dips, transportation service centers, youth soccer clubs" (86). Collaborative processes and inclusive networks are the currency of linking both horizontally and vertically. This research explores links across social differences, some of which include divisions based on civic elitism. Participation in civil society has created, to some degree, an elitist culture as civic leaders tend to be highly educated and have the financial freedom to volunteer their time either in addition, or instead of, working. Therefore this research acknowledges the importance of linkages and webbing from the middle tier and the grassroots level.

In *To Make the Earth Whole* Marc Gopin similarly argues for a relationship-focus in peacebuilding through networks, however he emphasizes the role of the individual actor in creating networks of peace that cross enemy lines. Gopin asserts that religious peacemakers "are continually creating connections between enemies who might never meet" (81). Gopin calls them "the Rosetta stone of peacebuilding" (83). Gopin argues that to think in terms of transformation, conflict resolution scholars and practitioners must begin to think in terms of increments through changed relationships. He advocates for measuring change through transformed relationships that move from "hostility to tolerance to friendship and even to love" (67). Gopin suggests that collaboration even within small groups can be powerful, over time, in effecting wide-spread change. While Chrislip focuses on pulling communities together for focused processes, Lederach and Gopin focus, instead, on the development of relationships, sustained over time, across social differences.

Through this discussion we have explored several perspectives on collaboration. Issue-specific collaborative processes can powerfully give stakeholders greater opportunities to contribute and shape decisions that effect them directly. But other forms of interaction can also play an important role in building trust and integration. In contexts where there has been a history of violence or animosity, communication or coordination among parties may be a more viable next step. Schirch suggests that even social experiences like sharing a meal may help build a sense of community and trust in tense scenarios. Gopin and Lederach's emphasis on transformed relationships raise an important problem with issue-specific processes. Dialogue and shared vision can be achieved in a community meeting, but stakeholders could still remain alienated from each other outside of issue-specific processes. Gopin and Lederach assert that transformation doesn't end in problem-solving workshops or community meetings. Collaboration must also extend into the marketplace, religious institutions, schools, and social settings.

This study takes a holistic view of collaboration, seeking to understand the variety of ways youth may be approaching collaboration—whether it be through dialogue, integrative social rituals, or intentionally seeking diverse stakeholders to spearhead a process. This exploratory study is also designed to be flexible and responsive to unique approaches to collaboration that may contrast from the frameworks offered by the aforementioned scholars.

Existing Studies on Tunisian Youth

In this section, I will discuss recent studies on Tunisian youth and how this research project responds to the need to better understand how youth are active in civil

society. The studies in this section were selected because they explore a variety of issues relating to youth in Tunisia's post-2011 transition, including attitudes on voting and participation in civil society. While I have referenced most of these studies already in chapter two, in this section I will provide more detail on them and directly address how this research differs from them.

I will begin this discussion by exploring three studies conducted between 2011-2012. Firstly, I will analyze NDI's report "Voices of a Revolution: Conversations with Tunisia's Youth" conducted just after the 2011 revolution. Following that, I will discuss Alcinda Honwana's book *Youth and Revolution in Tunisia,* which focuses heavily on youth perspectives on social and political events in 2011 and 2012. Contrasting with Honwana's study, which focuses on youth participation in politics, I will explore how youth, even prior to 2011, have used informal channels such as a rap to advocate for themselves by introducing Ilyana Ovshieva's article "Stomping for Tunisia."

Following these articles, I will analyze Sarah Dickson's study "To Vote or Not to Vote" which questions how youth's perspective on voting shifted after 2011 and 2012. Dickson highlights various narratives of youth who have chosen intentionally not to vote. Building on this, I will then explore "Breaking the Barriers to Youth Inclusion" by Malika Drissi, of the World Bank Group, which explores important questions around low levels of civic engagement among youth. Contrasting with Drissi's study, I will explore "The Revolutionary Promise: Youth Perceptions in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia," created by British Council et al, which focuses on youth who are active in either politics or civic work. The studies conducted by Drissi and British Council et al. explore important shifts

in the youth experience in Tunisia, focusing on political, social, and civic dynamics in 2013. Finally, I will explain how these studies contextualize this exploratory research project, especially noting how this project's approach, scope, and purpose is unique to prior studies.

NDI's report "Voices of a Revolution: Conversations with Tunisia's Youth" provides important data on youth attitudes on participation in civic and political life. This study was done in March 2011, just months after Ben Ali's ousting, through focus groups in cities in both interior and coastal areas with youth ages 25-35. This research found that youth are eager to participate in the transition and enthusiastic about democracy. It also found that youth were concerned about economic and security issues; ongoing regional differences; political elitism; and on-going exclusion of youth. This data also showed how youth hoped to contribute to the country's transition, especially by voting in the constituency elections. This report gave a regionally representative sampling and a rich snapshot of attitudes in March of 2011. At this time, youth were very enthusiastic about the transition and eager to participate in elections that were seen as a pivotal moment in Tunisia's history. NDI's study documents an important moment for Tunisian youth. 2011 was filled with hope, uncertainty, and eagerness to try new things. This study showed that youth maintained a strong commitment to the transition, well after protests had fizzled out.

But today, five years after the revolution, this study is quite outdated. Since the revolution, Tunisian has had two presidential elections, passed a new constitution, suffered several terrorist attacks, and, in the meantime, unemployment rates are still low.

The youth of 2015 are not the same as the youth in 2011. And at the same time, the experience of the revolution is still a salient memory in the minds of many young people. NDI's study shines a light on the opinions and perceptions held at that time, which, today, still serve as a reference point in the minds of those interviewed for this study.[4]

Alcinda Honwana's book *Youth and Revolution in Tunisia* explores youth retrospection on 2010 and 2011. Honwana found that for many youth their high hopes in 2011 turned to disappointments. Her research gives voice to Tunisian youth who became disenchanted with the transition. She captures how quickly youth began to feel excluded from the transitional process, despite their leadership role in protests. Honwana points out that some youth began to turn to civic activity instead of the political activity. Honwana questions whether participation in civic life is enough to truly incorporate youth perspectives into the "new political culture" (121). Furthermore, Honwana asserts that if advocacy in the civic sphere remains disjointed from political processes, civic action may be ineffective.

What is not explored in Honwana's study is the quality of action within civil society. While she discusses several youth civic groups, she does not explore their effectiveness or collaborative quality in depth. Honwana does, however, acknowledge that aversion to politics was not a result of apathy but instead as a deliberate choice to show "their disapproval of the political system as a whole" (137). This research takes the position that there could be a wide variety of ways for Tunisian youth to contribute to the transition, beyond political participation. While this study does not explore "new forms of

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[4] Based on interviews with participants. This theme will be further explored in the findings chapters.

effective political engagement" it does seek to better understand the quality of civic activity, specifically in regards to norms of collaboration and inclusion (121). This study focuses on civic activity not only because few youth are involved in politics, but also because this study seeks to emphasize the importance of collaborative civic processes in creating not just democratic societies, but peaceful societies. That is, much of the literature on Tunisia has focused narrowly on supporting political parties and getting youth to vote. While these may be valid goals, it also reflects an underlying assumption that, perhaps, voting is the most important form of participation. This assumption excludes the role that culture, arts, families, schools, and civic groups can play in shaping norms and addressing social and economic issues.

In "Stomping for Tunisia: Liberation, Identity and Dignity in Tunisian Rap Music" Ilyana Ovshieva explains that while youth may not be flocking the polls, they are expressing their views in other ways. Ovshieva explains how rap music is a "space" for "re-negotiating and deconstructing Tunisian identity" (38). In other words, political spaces are not the only spaces that need to be recovered in Tunisia's post-revolution context. The worlds of art and media were squashed under the Ben Ali regime. To think of the transition, only in terms of polity, is to overlook how comprehensive Ben Ali's power was. Ovshieva explains that rappers not only played a role in exposing "the grim reality of Ben Ali's Tunisia" but through rap, artists "delved into the weighty matters of Tunisia's place in the world, neocolonialism and their national self" (51). Ovshieva's analysis of Tunisian rap discourse gives a glimpse of the wide variety of tools that can be used to amplify the voice of Tunisian youth. In a time where voting is less and less

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vogue, creative projects might become a more important part of youth expression. While

this study does not specifically explore the role of art and social change, it does include

creative tools as *possible* mechanisms for fostering collaboration in civic life. And,

moreover, the arts, and specifically rap, with its non-elitist, rugged modality, is highly

attractive to young people (50). Likewise, this study seeks to include creative avenues

youth are using to create collaborative civic groups which counter elitist political groups.

Spring of 2013, Sarah Dickson, student of the School of International Training,

conducted a study on youth attitudes on voting, culminating in her article "To Vote or

Not to Vote: Youth Political Agency in Post-Revolutionary Tunisia." She gathered data

from twenty online surveys, seven individual interviews, and one group interview

(Dickson 11). Her study addresses youth attitudes on voting, including exploration of

why youth are or are not committed to voting (12). Dickson found that youth choose not

to vote because they didn't find it to be an efficacious method of creating change. But

lack of voting, she notes, didn't indicate lack of interest in politics. As Dickson writes,

"among Tunisian youth, political involvement and activism is not synonymous with

excitement to vote" (22). This point is critical as, too often, adults and politicians have

interpreted low youth voter turn out as an indication of apathy on public issues. Or worse,

not voting has been interpreted as total inactivity.

As Dickson writes, those who weren't planning to vote were "just as politically

engaged as those who were excited about voting" (22). Here, Dickson makes an

important differentiation between political engagement and political participation. Many

youth may be engaged in politics by reading or watching the news on the T.V. or Internet

and by participating in debates. Yet, they may choose not to participate in politics by voting or joining political parties. "Post-Revolutionary Effects", a limited study conducted by Erica Zarlenga in 2011, showed that Tunisian youth in the capital spend up to one hour a day researching political issues by watching "television programs," researching via "the internet" and participating in "discussions with family, friends, and colleagues" (Zarlenga 12). Zarlenga describes the increase of political engagement as a form of "self-education" that will "push the nation in the right direction" (22).

It's critical to ask, in Tunisia's transition, how are youth participating? And limiting participation to voting in post-revolution Tunisia would exclude a wide variety of ways social change can be created. As this study will explore collaboration in civil society, it seeks to expand the idea of what it means to participate or contribute to society as citizens. Dickson's study is important because it gives voice to youth who are aware of political issues but are intentionally choosing to abstain from political participation. This research project builds on Dickson's study by taking a snapshot of how youth are shaping alternative approaches social change through civic engagement.

Malika Drissi of the World Bank Group (WBG) did a study titled "Breaking the Barriers to Youth Inclusion." This study, released in October of 2014, draws on surveys, interviews, and "direct consultations" with youth, "service providers and policymakers." One of the most significant findings of this report is that there are very low numbers of youth involved in civic groups. Drissi found that "only a small fraction of young Tunisians are active in CSOs" (14). Moreover, the majority of youth volunteers are from coastal regions (15). In rural areas the National Youth Observatory in Tunisia found that

"as little as three percent of rural youth participate in CSOs" (qtd. in Drissi14). This study also explores how many Tunisian youth are "not in education, employment or training" or "NEET" (24). In industrial areas, one in five men and one in three women are considered NEET. This causes a loss of "skills, creativity and potential" among Tunisian youth (24). This research shows how the seemingly high levels of civic activity and enthusiasm for participation in 2011 have petered out into a very small group of civically engaged youth. It's critical to ground the findings of this study in its greater context in which most youth are not volunteering, protesting, or voting. This study focuses on youth anomalies, the few who have stayed engaged.

While the WBG's study emphasizes the low number of youth who are active in civil society, British Council et al. released a study titled "The Revolutionary Promise: Youth Perceptions in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia" that focuses on youth who "engaged directly or indirectly in political and/or civic activism" (3). This report focuses on unmet promises to support youth and how "development activities" can best "meet the needs of young people" (3). British Council et al. interviewed about 100 youth, ages 18 – 35, in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia through focus groups and semi-structured individual interviews (3).

British Council et al. found that since the revolution there is an increase of civic groups as well as informal initiatives (46-47). Moreover, there are also an increasing number of youth-led and youth-focused organizations (46). Youth consider this change "one of the key achievements of the revolution" (46). British Council et al. states that "frustrated youth" have turned to civic action as the "ultimate" alternative to political

routes that they view as "restrictively elite." However, this assertion fails to take into consideration how few of youth are active in civil society. For many young Tunisians, civic groups are not the "ultimate" alternative, reflected in the low numbers of youth who volunteer or work in civil society (Drissi14). This research shows that while youth participation has increased since 2011, there are still very low levels of youth active in civil society.

Within Tunisia's emerging civic sphere one common issue is overlap between groups. Often several groups work on the same or similar issues without collaborating with one another. Lack of shared information and unsustainable programming are two prominent issues (48). Also, lack of funding stunts growth and sustainability (48). This finding underscores the importance of exploring youth collaboration in Tunisia.

Drawing on insights from Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, British Council et al. makes several key recommendations to policymakers and international organizations on how to better support young civic leaders in the Arab world. Firstly, youth need "support that is tailored to their specific talents," suggesting that development work and government assistance is tailored to adult groups (25). Since youth civic engagement often begins in student unions, British Council et al. recommends initiatives that would bring student unions together in national and regional summits. More than that, student unions should be sought out by "policy actors" and be "integrated within the public discourse" (25). British Council et al. also recommends that donors make grant writing and reporting requirements easier so that youth organizations are encouraged to apply for funding, especially so that "initiatives" can be built up into "institutions and organisations" (25).

And, finally, youth need "protected spaces" to "test out creative ideas" (25). Finally, the British Council recommends creating hubs where young people interested in either entrepreneurship or social change can find community and support.

While researchers have explored why youth are not motivated to vote, low levels of youth civic engagement is less understood. British Council et al. focuses more on the perspective of those that are engaged in civil society. But, to have a truly effective civic sphere, inclusion across a wide spectrum of differences is critical. This study seeks to explore the collaborative nature of youth approaches to civic work as a way of understanding the possibilities for broad-based inclusion in Tunisia' emerging public sphere. As seen, though there are low levels of youth civic engagement, youth seem to be more apt towards the civic than the political sphere. To continue to explore the promise of Tunisia's transition and greater recognition of the role youth can play therein, this research seeks to understand approaches to collaboration among the few youth who are engaged. Additionally, this research provides limited insights on why some youth have chosen not to participate in civic work. In the following chapter, I will provide a fuller explanation of the scope of this research project by describing the methodological approach used for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will explore the methods used for this research, including the overall approach as well as methods for the data collection and analysis. To begin, I will share how I refined my research question and methodology through preliminary research. Then, I will share my research approach, which drew on interviews with Tunisian youth and personal observation of civic and social meetings. Finally, I will discuss the strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of this study, as well as areas for future research.

Background on Research Question

When I began to formulate this study, my original research question was "how are Tunisian youth approaching collaboration across *religious differences* in their civic communities?" As I conducted preliminary background research to further explore this conundrum, I decided to shift the focus of my research due to the insignificance of religious differences among youth, which I will further explain below. While there is diversity in religious thought and practice among Tunisian youth, I found in my preliminary research that most youth do not perceive these differences to be significant. Because of this, I shifted my research question as follows, "how are Tunisian youth approaching collaboration across *social differences* in their civic communities?" This allowed me to explore a wider-range of social differences, not limited to religious differences.

My original interest in religious differences emerged as I studied how Ben Ali rejected and marginalized conservative expressions of Islam. Ben Ali enforced a strictly secular state, pushing Islam into private life. After the 2011 revolution, it became legally possible for Islamists to create associations and political parties. Women who wear *hijab* can now work and participate in politics. With a variety of expressions of Islam showing up in public life, I was curious if civil society organizations and communities were beginning to form groups based along these lines of religious differences. In other words, were these new expressions of religious differences catalyzing an exclusive grouping effect?

Moreover, throughout the 2014 presidential and parliamentary elections, Western media honed in on the religious tensions between secular party Nidaa Tounes and Islamist party Ennahda. The presidential and parliamentary elections stirred up Ben Ali's authoritarian legacy, as politicians from the left and the right promoted a divisive discourse on religious lines. While it was clear that religious differences were coming to the fore among the older generation of political elites, I wondered if and how similar religious tensions were being experienced by youth. I also wondered if civic groups were manipulating religious differences to create interest groups in the same way that religious differences were being used by political parties to build support. In other words, were religious differences being used to sway community members, gain support, and even dictate the positions and visions of civic organizations?

To explore the relevance of this topic, I read several public Tunisian blogs in French and English to get a sense of what young Tunisians were writing about. While I

did not have access to age of the authors for the blog posts that I read, 73.5% of bloggers are under the age of 35, based on an international study that analyzed "more than 100 million blog posts" ("Blogger Demographics by Gender, Age, Geography"). Through my reading, I noticed that most blogs that dealt with issues over secularism and Islamism were dated back to 2011 ("Laïcité Je T'envoie Valser"; "Musulman Laique, est-ce possible?"; "Tunisie: Debat sur la Laicite. Relevons le Niveau du Debat"). From 2014 on, I found less entries dealing with religious differences. Instead, youth were writing about the need to address terrorism and the lack of jobs. This was an indicator to me that perhaps my original research question was less relevant than I realized. It seemed more and more evident that religious differences were more significant to the older generation than among youth.

I further tested these observations through informal, open-ended interviews with experts on Tunisia in the Washington, D.C. area. Many thanks is owed to the Middle East and North Africa team at the National Democratic Institute; Bill Lawrence, nonresident fellow at the Project on Middle East Democracy and former North Africa Project director for International Crisis Group; and Dr. Mohammed Cherakoui, adjunct professor for the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. These scholars helped me to identify that the secular/Islamist divide is a more prominent debate among political elites, than among Tunisian youth.

Based on this finding, I shifted my research question from focusing on "religious differences" to focusing on social differences to encompass a wider variety of social characteristics. My research question now is: "How are Tunisian youth approaching

collaboration across social differences in their civic communities?" Within social

characteristics, I explored religious differences but I also included differences due to

region, class, or other characteristics. I left interview questions intentionally open and

broad to elicit broad strokes that could help me gain a picture of Tunisian youth that went

beyond politicized religiosity.

Research Approach

Given that there have been limited studies[5] on youth approaches to collaboration

in civil society in Tunisia, I created an explorative, qualitative design for this research

project. This design was created to better understand the attitudes, activities, and roles in

youth civic culture. The explorative nature of this project allowed me to paint silhouettes

that explain, in broad strokes, if and how youth are approaching collaboration. This

explorative design maps out some of the norms and dynamics often experience by civic

youth leaders. This qualitative study sought to "to find out what is happening; to seek

new insights; to ask questions;" (Robson 42). I designed my interviews to be responsive

to various social differences and types of civic activity, while still grounding the data in

the core exploration of approaches to collaboration.

The exploratory design and small sample size gives limited insights on how youth

are approaching collaboration and points to important areas for further research.

However, this research also plays an important role in scoping out the role of youth in

Tunisia's transition by specifically looking at collaborative norms created by Tunisian

youth. This research seeks to understand youth approaches, recognizing the need to

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[5] Please see chapter three for more an analysis of existing studies on Tunisian youth.

empower youth in youth spaces, not adult spaces. For this reason, interviews took place in informal settings and my sample focused on smaller youth organizations, burgeoning initiatives, and individual leaders. There are a handful of youth organizations in Tunisia that have becoming increasingly professionalized and that have garnered international attention, such as Sawty, IWatch, and Al Bawsala. Sawty, for example, is a youth-led organization, founded in 2011, that focuses on promoting youth civic engagement and serving as a platform where youth and civic and political actors can meet ("Sawty Tunisie").

While I did interview a few youth at larger and well-established organizations, I focused more on youth in emerging, informal groups. I chose this approach intentionally so as to foster greater understanding of the expertise and promise of young civic leaders that are often treated as "an outcast minority" despite representing 51% of Tunisia's population (Sommers, "Urbanization, War and Africa's Youth at Risk" 1). Since the 2011 upsurge of civic organizations, there has also been an increasing sense that civil society is becoming dominated by adult groups.[6] Therefore, this research approach was designed to include the voices of youth leaders who are part of what I will loosely define as non-elite civic groups.

Data Collection for Interviews:

In this section I will discuss the data collection methodology used for interviews with Tunisian youth.

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[6] Based on anonymous interview on July 28, 2015 with a member of IWatch

Sample Size and Demographics

I conducted twelve semi-structured interviews in English and French with Tunisians from ages 19 – 35, with each interview lasting from 30 – 90 minutes. I also conducted two additional group interviews. There were sixteen participants total in the study, including eight men and eight women. This research took place from July 21 – August 4th. Prior to each interview I asked participants their age, educational background, employment status, and political parties they associated with (if any).

Of the participants, the average age was 25.6. No participant claimed to associate with a political party. Seven participants had a master's degree, eight had or were earning their bachelor's degree and one was pursuing a Ph.D. All participants were residents in Tunis, except for one participant who resided in Sousse.[7] However, many participants shared that they were not originally from Tunis, though they had been in the capital for at least six months. Other cities of origin represented in this research included Sousse, El Kef, Bizerte, and Nabeul.[8]

Having interned twice in Tunisia, I took a snowball sampling from my networks but refrained from interviewing close contacts. I also asked for my contacts through the Sixth Tunis Exchange and through fellow students at George Mason University. Additionally, I used a semi-purposive sampling by asking for participants that were a variety of ages, genders and that were conservative or liberal, in order to get a balanced set of perspectives. Interviews were held in public cafes, hotel restaurants, or in the offices of civil society organizations.

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[7] This interview took place via Skype.
[8] See Appendix B for a map of Tunisia.

Interview Phases

Each interview had three parts. Please see Appendix A for a full list of interview questions. To understand how youth were approaching collaboration across social differences in their civic communities I needed to know the social characteristics of Tunisian youth; how Tunisian youth are active in their civic communities; and what collaborative approaches youth practice. Because this research acknowledges the role that social interaction can play in enhancing civic life and collaboration, I also wanted to know how youth are socially active. I organized my interview questions according to these components of my research question.

In the first phase of the interview, I focused on understanding social characteristics of youth. I asked participants to describe their peers; the common values shared by youth; and differences among youth. The purpose of this phase was to identify the diverse social characteristics of Tunisian youth, including regional, political or religious differences. In order to explore collaboration, I needed to know which of these social differences were significant among Tunisian youth.

In the second phase, I explored how the participants were active in their communities. I explored the types of organizations participants volunteered with and what types of people participated with these organizations by following the characteristics described in the first phase. For example, if a participant described youth by saying some are religious and some are unreligious, then, in the second phase, I would ask if both religious and unreligious youth were involved and welcomed in the organization. I also asked participants to describe activities or events they participated in.

Asking participants to describe activities elicited stories that included "place, time, characters and events" and enabled me to explore "issues of complexity" through their narratives (Webster and Mertova 71).

In the third phase, I explored participants' social activity. I asked where and how they socialized and whom they socialized with. Similar to the second phase, I explored specific social characteristics to find out if social differences impacted social life. Given that interviews were semi-structured, at times I chose to move between the phases and return to prior phases. For example, if a participant seemed uncomfortable with describing social differences among youth, I would ask them about their social life instead and then return to social differences later in the interview. While I made these decisions on an ad hoc basis, by keeping the list of interview questions in front of me, I was able to ensure that each participant was given equal opportunity to address the questions in each phase.

Data Analysis for Interviews:

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Then I synthesized the data by looking for common themes and establishing correlating codes. Codes were created by paying special attention to "the characteristics of language; the discovery of regularities; the comprehension of the meaning of text or action; and reflection" (Robson 372). I coded the data according to the following five umbrella themes that emerged:

- Social characteristics

- Social activities

- Civic activities

- Methods of exclusion and sources of social divides

- Methods of collaboration and sources of social cohesion

I used these five main umbrella themes to organize subthemes.

Social Characteristics

I coded social characteristics by organizing responses to questions in phase one of the interview, which explored differences among youth. It's important to point out that I explicitly asked participants to describe differences, not divides. In other words, I attempted to invite participants to conceptualize differences as neither negative, nor positive. However, participants often reacted to the question by convincing me that differences were not necessarily divisions or conflictual. For example, when I asked participants to describe religious differences among youth, participants would often respond by saying that there are no conflicts due to religion but that there are many different expressions of Islam in Tunisia in addition to other religions. Furthermore, they would explain that despite Tunisia's religious diversity, there were not significant divisions along these lines. Participants attempted to guide my understanding of social differences and at times seemed to downplay varied social characteristics in an attempt to differentiate Tunisia from other Arab states. Participants often stressed to me that Tunisia's social dynamics were nothing like the highly sectarian and violent divides seen in Libya, Egypt, and Syria. The social characteristics identified in this research, therefore, are not necessarily sources of conflict but rather are the sources of Tunisia's cultural color and complexity. This will be further explored in chapter five, which discusses social characteristics of Tunisian youth.

Identifying Social and Civic Activities

Social activities were identified as activities that were for leisure, not led by a civic organization, and conducted for the sole purpose of enjoyment. Civic activities were identified as led by a civic organization or an activity held with the purpose of promoting an idea or an organization's cause. In this case, some civic activities had significant social components to them. For example, some participants mentioned that civic organizations often throw parties to try to attract more members. Since the purpose is to recruit members, for the purposes of this research, parties can be considered a civic activity.

Identifying Approaches to Collaboration

To understand and code approaches to collaboration, I drew on several theoretical frameworks on collaboration. Chrislip and Larson define collaboration as a process by which "responsibility, authority and accountability" is shared among multiple parties with the goal of creating "shared vision" that addresses community concerns (5). I noted norms of collaboration such as emphasizing shared vision, intentional choices to promote inclusivity and activities that required participants to share work. However, I also looked for approaches to communication and coordination, following Susan Allen Nan and Andrea Strimling's framework in "Track I – Track II Cooperation." I noted civic activities in which youth shared information, which would be considered communicating or "synchronized" efforts, which would be considered coordinating.

Identifying Approaches and Norms of Exclusion

To understand how exclusion based on social differences is occurring among Tunisian youth, I identified instances of labeling, organizational exclusion, practices of

intimidation and, in some cases, stories of lost relationships. Additionally, I explored

social differences that created barriers to shared vision within civic organizations as well

as social norms that discouraged interaction across specific social differences.

Data Collection and Analysis from Personal Observations:

During my trip I used personal observation to understand dynamics among youth

in civic and social contexts. Originally, I hoped to attend CSO meetings through contacts

made from my participation in the Sixth Tunis Exchange, an annual exchange program

that connects students all over the world with Tunisia. Through the exchange, I met with

organizations such as the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women; I-Watch, a youth-

led transparency organization; and Nawaat, a leading blog for activists. This experience

gave me background on various activities and values within Tunisia's civil society; but

each of these meetings were off the record.

Unfortunately, because the time of my fieldwork fell just at the end of Ramadan,

which is the traditional time for families to go on vacation, most CSOs were not holding

official meetings or activities that I could observe. These observations of meetings would

have been crucial to exploring the quality of interaction across social differences. Still,

while there I was able to attend one press conference of a new youth organization.

Observations were recorded through handwritten notes and collected handouts. I was

permitted to record during the meeting, which enabled me to take pictures to document

the setting, participants and rituals. I paid special attention to "space, actors, activities,

objects, acts, events, time, goals and feelings" (Robson 200). I made completed notes

promptly after the meeting to avoid "selective memory" that blends events with "pre-

existing schemas and expectations" (Robson 204). I also visited cafes, shopping malls, restaurants, bars, and concerts to observe youth in social contexts.

Ethical Considerations:

In order to protect the identities of participants, I used pseudonyms in my findings chapters and avoided collecting information that could put participants at risk. Stories from various participants were pieced together to create "composite" pictures and protect identities (Creswell 99). Also, in order to honor the participation and time of interviewees, I sent a copy of the final report to all participants to honor their stories and avoid "exploitation of participants" (Creswell 98). Findings were shared with the hope that this set of stories will inspire reflection and to continue an ongoing conversation between the researcher and the participants. Many civically engaged participants expressed gratitude that research was being done in this area and expressed eagerness to better understand how to create a collaborative culture in their civic group. This project seeks to honor that desire by sharing the findings transparently.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Limitations

In this section I will discuss the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of this research. These parameters should be acknowledged to contextualize the findings discussed and to also point to areas for future research.

Weakness and Limitations

This research project provides a snapshot of collaborative approaches to social differences, but does not provide a comprehensive history of how approaches to differences have developed since the 2011 revolution. The findings are grounded in the

period of data collection, July 21 – August 3. Due to the brevity of this trip, the observations of civil society meetings were limited, which did not allow me to see patterns over time.

This research project was also regionally limited. Due to the limited financial scope of this project and the terrorist attacks just a month prior to my field research, I was not able to visit the southern or interior parts of the country. Because this research focuses on English-speaking youth in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, which is known for higher levels of employment than the interior cities, the sampling will represent the opinions and experiences of highly educated and privileged Tunisian youth. While it is unfortunate that I was not able to get a more diverse sampling, this sample will instead likely represent the ideas of Tunisia's future leaders, as many of the current political and civic leaders studied in Europe or the United States. These opinions are likely to differ from Tunisians from rural areas. However these interviews will pave the way for future research that provides a more robust sampling of Tunisian youth.

This research is not representative of Tunisia's religious minorities. The U.S. Department of State's "International Religious Freedom Report for 2014" states that Tunisia is 99% Sunni Muslim and the remaining 1% is comprised of "Christians, Jews, Shia Muslims, and Bahais" (1). There is little research on this 1% and almost no reliable information on Tunisians who are atheists or agnostic. Atheists and other religious minorities at times have faced persecution from the state, such as being jailed for criticizing or denouncing Islam (5). This research did not exclude Tunisians who are religious minorities but it is possible that participants identified as Muslim, even if that

was not their genuine persuasion. Due to these security constraints this project does not capture approaches to collaboration among these religious minorities.

This small sampling gives a snapshot of current attitudes but will not provide a comprehensive analysis of approaches to social differences among Tunisian youth. Likewise, these findings will be specific to Tunisia's socio-historical context and cannot necessarily speak to the norms of bridging social capital across social differences in the Maghreb or other Muslim countries.

Strengths

While this trip was regionally limited, I was able to draw on insights and observations from prior trips. I visited Tunisia in both the summer of 2010 and 2011, for two-four weeks each time. In 2010 and 2011, I visited cities on the coast, interior areas, as well as southern towns. Though my travel in 2015 was limited to Tunis, my experience in Tunisia's rural areas help me to better understand the regional differences and developmental challenges that participants described.

The sample of participants captured diverse Islamic perspectives; gender differences; and crossed levels of societal classes. Of the participants, there was a strong mix of participants who identified as a conservative or liberal Muslim, as well as equal representation between men and women. Also, I interviewed civic leaders in small, university-based clubs as well as national organizations that had well-established youth wings. Thus, the voices of participants in this research capture the attitudes and approaches of young people in both elite organizations and groups that are just beginning to form.

While many studies have described youth who do not vote or protest through statistics, this research, instead, gives them direct voice. While I interviewed only three people who described themselves as not engaged in civil society, this research engages them directly. This research acknowledges the importance of their stories and their unique explanation for why they are not engaged in civil society. This study also provides a unique snapshot of how youth perceive one another. Many studies have focused on adult-youth relationships, but fewer have explored peer-to-peer dynamics in Tunisia. These findings are important for understanding the common values within this demographic, as well as the lines of division.

Finally, this research provides a robust picture of the many different kinds of activities happening within Tunisia's civic communities. Participants described their experiences and approaches to collaboration as it related to a wide variety of civic activities. Participants drew on reflections from participating in theater activism, hosting debates, leading trainings, launching awareness campaigns, holding social justice oriented concerts, and facilitating dialogues.

CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TUNISIAN YOUTH

In this chapter I will explore the various social characteristics youth used to describe themselves and their peers. The emergence of social differences in public spaces is a mark of post-authoritarian Tunisia. Under Ben Ali, there were tight constraints on public expression. At the same time, the Ben Ali regime systematically rewarded and promoted a rigid definition of what it meant to be a good Tunisian. Good Tunisians, according to Ben Ali, were devout Muslims that were dedicated to the future of Tunisia through the continuation of the RCD party. Good Tunisians paid their taxes, reported political dissidence and had a photo of Ben Ali in their homes. After Ben Ali's exile, this definition of what it meant to be a "good Tunisian" crumbled. Now, Mohammed Bouazizi, the first martyr of the revolution, was good. Now the military, refusing to gun down protesters, was good. And now, the protesters, who came from all regions and classes, were good. Obedience, now, was not the essence of what it meant to be a good Tunisian (Hibou 205).

In this chapter I will explore how the rapid increase of publically expressed social differences changed the dynamics within civic life, sometimes leading to polarization, divisions, and confusion over what it means to be Tunisian. Then, I will explore the kinds of social differences that the participants most frequently named when asked to describe

Tunisian youth. I will describe the prominent social differences, as describe by the participants in this study, to provide a snapshot of youth characteristics.

It should be emphasized that this discussion is limited to the perspectives of those interviewed and is not nationally representative. This chapter does not adequately give voice to youth from the southern and interior regions, as my sampling was limited to English and French speaking youth who lived in the capital. Also, this research focuses heavily on the perspective of civically engaged youth who comprise a small percentage of the national population. Further research is needed to gain a nationally representative sampling that gives a more robust picture of social characteristics among Tunisian youth.

This chapter will give a background on how the increase of publically expressed social differences has created new challenges for collaboration in Tunisia. It is important to understand social characteristics in order to understand the context in which young civic leaders are attempting to create collaborative environments through shared vision. Approaches to collaborative leadership will be further explored in chapters 6 - 8.

The Significance of Public Social Differences

Before exploring the various social characteristics that Tunisian youth shared in interviews, I will first discuss how Tunisian youth understood the significance of social characteristics and its impact on Tunisian society. Throughout interviews, participants noted that after the revolution there was an explosion of publically expressed differences that challenged their own notions of what it meant to be Tunisian and sometimes caused new divisive narratives over the meaning of various social differences. Participants noted that in post-revolution Tunisia they were faced with ideas they had never considered.

Mariem, a 28-year-old female from Tunis shared, "Before the revolution . . . we thought . . . that all Tunisians have the same beliefs, but after the revolution I understood that this was not real." The police state under Ben Ali, not only kept people from expressing differences, but it sheltered Tunisians from learning how diverse their neighbors and friends were. The mirage of unity and the homogenous Tunisian identity began to crumble, opening up new questions and public debate.

In the months just after the revolution Tunisians began to more publically explore new identities. This exploratory process sometimes led to divisive labeling. Mohammed, a 19-year-old from Bizerte shared, "Tunisians, after the election, were asking a lot of questions about the revolution, work, identity, etc. Are we Arabs? Are we Berbers? It was a problem of identity." Likewise, Aziza, a 24-year-old from Tunis, shared, "We spent a lot of time judging and this made a bad impact on the Tunisian population. You feel that you are different." During this time Aziza shared that people labeled each other frequently, using terms like "Islamist," "communist" and "terrorists" causing an intense time of social tension. Throwing these terms around before 2011 would have been dangerous as communists and Islamists were severely persecuted by Ben Ali's regime. Suddenly, after the revolution, these terms became a regular part of public conversations.

Participants also noted that it often felt like people were using freedom to divide Tunisians along the lines of new social differences, instead of using freedom to solve problems collaboratively. Bochra, a 26-year-old from Nabeul, shared that some of her friends suddenly became closed minded, "[Everyone] was so enthusiastic about their own ideas—[saying] like 'I'm not going to talk to this one.'" Bochra shared that after the

revolution she even lost some friends due to ideological differences, even though before

2011 they never discussed these types of issues. Amine, a 30-year-old from Tunis,

shared, "There are people who exploit the climate of freedom to disseminate extreme

ideas." Youth identified post-revolution Tunisia as a tumultuous time when social

differences became a new part of public life. These social differences stirred up divisions

and exclusivist narratives. Rowsell and Ben Yahia of the National Democratic Institute

found similar themes in their study conducted in 2013.[9] While they found that

participants "consistently" celebrated freedom of speech as a major win of the revolution,

participants also "voiced anxiety over the constant exchange of political views" (6).

Norms of exclusions and divisiveness will be further explored in chapters 6 and 7.

However, since 2011, participants stressed that these divisive narratives have

steadily decreased. Since then, public debates and social differences are becoming a new

norm. After the 2011 elections, in which the Islamic party won, controversies around

social differences became contained within the National Constituent Assembly term

limits. Similarly, the public discourse adapted to better accommodate social differences

as norms of tolerance and acceptance began to emerge. Bochra, a 26 year old from

Nabeul, shared that in 2011 the term "unbeliever" was often used to insult Tunisian

liberals. As a Muslim majority country, this term is a very strong insult that is used to

undercut someone's morality based on their opinion on a social issue. But Bochra

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[9] This study, titled "Prioritizing Patriotism: Tunisian Citizens Express their Views" was conducted in April of 2013 through focus group discussions in Tunis, Nabeul, Sfax and Gafsa. This study included 117 participants. For more information please see: https://www.ndi.org/files/Tunisia-priortizing-patriotism-focus-groups-june-2013.pdf

explains, "We're moving . . . past the nonbeliever, believer, Ennahdowi[10], religious story

. . . but it used to be an issue." Youth shared that while there is still a long way to go

towards tolerance, Tunisian society has changed since 2011. Amine, a 30-year-old from

Tunis, shared "Just after the revolution the climate was much more hot." Now, Amine

feels that Tunisians "share the value of coexistence and unity. We've adapted . . . to

democracy, citizenship, free elections, liberty, little by little . . . there are cases of hate but

mostly things are going well."

Many youth feel that with time Tunisia is becoming a more tolerant and accepting

society. However, divisive narratives and negative interactions do still persist. Examples

of exclusion and negative interactions due to social differences will be further explored in

chapter 6 and 7. This chapter will outline social characteristics of Tunisian youth and the

social differences that exist among them, according to the 16 participants interviewed in

this study. This chapter will build a foundation for future chapters, which will explore

how youth and civic organizations are both bridging and bonding along and across these

lines of social differences.

Social Characteristics of Tunisian Youth

Exploring Narratives on Regional Differences

When asked to describe Tunisian youth, participants frequently described what

they considered to be a typical northern youth versus a typical southern youth. These

themes were consistent across all interviews and participants assigned very specific

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[10] Ennahdowi is a term to refer to someone who is part of the Ennahda political party.
Ennahda is an Islamic, conservative party.

characteristics based on regional differences. I will illustrate these profiles in the following fictional character sketches that draw on interviews and personal observations.

Saffa grew up in Gabes, a small town in the south of Tunisia. She grew up in a conservative, Muslim family that taught her to fervently pray, fast, and give to the poor. Every year, during Ramadan, Saffa volunteers at a food drive to collect donations for families in need. After finishing high school, Saffa became engaged to Ahmed, a friend from school. Four years later, after finishing at university, Saffa and Ahmed got married. Ahmed, a teacher at a school two hours away, stays with a cousin during the workweek and comes home to be with Saffa on the weekends. They are expecting their first child and hoping that Ahmed can find work in Gabes soon. In the meantime, Saffa helps take care of her mother who is aging and takes freelance translation jobs when she can.

Sarah grew up in a Tunis suburb, located in the North of Tunisia, in a middle class family. An avid writer, Sarah decided to start a student newspaper at her high school. After three years of negotiating with the principle and gaining support among students, they published their first issue her senior year. For college she got a scholarship from the U.S. State Department to study journalism in the U.S. After finishing her degree, she returned to Tunisia, founding a local CSO that teaches English and journalism for free in rural areas. Sarah met her boyfriend through her CSO. They like to go out to nightclubs in La Marsa, just outside of Tunis and plan to get married after they've settled into their careers.

Saffa and Sarah are the same age but they live very different lifestyles. They might meet each other at a wedding of a common friend or cousin. Since they are both

English speakers, they might meet through a translation job, or an English film screening. Saffa's story is the typical story of a woman growing up in the interior region of the country. Participants in this research often described youth living in the south or interior of the country as more socially and religiously conservative. They also described them as less engaged in civil society due to the prominence of traditional family values and lack of social and civic spaces.

Sarah's story illustrates a typical woman growing up in the Tunis suburbs or coastal cities such as Sousse or Sfax. Youth in the North and coastal areas of the country tend to be more engaged in civil society, have more socially liberal values and practice Islam less rigidly. For example, it's not uncommon to see a girl wearing a short skirt and smoking or drinking in Tunis—however that is extremely rare in southern, interior areas. See table 1 for the prominent social characteristics that were described based on region.

Table 2 Social Characteristics by Region

Youth from the Coast/North	Youth from the Interior/South
Socially liberal	Socially conservative
Practice Islam casually[11]	Practice Islam rigidly
Upper class	Lower class
Civically and politically engaged	Focused on family and education

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[11] Practicing Islam casually does not necessarily denote less devotion to Islam. Levels of religiosity in the capital vary greatly. While some more liberal Tunisians do not practice Islam strictly, others may have a more fluid interpretation of Islamic practices but still consider themselves very devout.

While these distinct profiles emerged consistently from interviews, participants also challenged these profiles as stereotypes by telling stories about either themselves or friends that didn't fit this frame. The following fictional profiles illustrate how the above social characteristics can be found in all regions of Tunisia and how many Tunisian youth do not fit these stereotypes.

Hyatt grew up in Bizerte, a city north of Tunis. Her parents were involved in the Islamic Tendency Movement in the 80s. Before the revolution she could not participate in civic organizations or politics because of her parent's background and because she wore *hijab*. When the revolution began, she immediately went to Tunis to protest, hoping for greater religious freedom. After the revolution, she was so inspired by the potential democratic transition that she decided to study Political Science. She volunteered to become an election monitor and started to frequently attend meetings on transparency and electoral fraud. Through her involvement there, she became friends with all kinds of people. She doesn't tell her parents, but sometimes she goes to cafes or bars with her friends who drink. Even though she believes drinking is against Islam, she also believes the work they do together is more important than their differences. Hyatt holds strongly to her personal values while still appreciating her friends who are different than her.

Zied grew up in Gafsa, in the south of Tunisia, in a conservative Muslim family. His father taught him to be a leader and encouraged him to set an example for his peers by growing a beard and wearing the traditional *jebba* at University. On campus, Zied is often surrounded by other students. He excels in his classes and recently decided to join a student organization to help build up his resume. The president of the organization,

Miriam, smokes but always has the best ideas on how to create community on campus and has great connections with potential employers for students. Zied and Miriam, despite their differences, become very good friends as they work together to help students network to find jobs and learn how to improve their study skills.

As seen, not all Tunisian youth fit the typical stereotype of a erner or Southerner. Amjad, a 27-year-old from Tunis, noted, "Some people are liberal and very pratiquant and some are less. It's not a box." In other words, social characteristics are not actually controlled by region, though they are sometimes perceived to be. For that reason, I will more thoroughly examine the following characteristics, section by section

- Civically engaged versus civically disengaged youth
- Conservative versus liberal Muslims
- Regional differences among youth
- Political differences among youth

To explore which of these social characteristics was most prominent, I counted how many participants mentioned each one. Of the differences that youth described, the most frequently mentioned difference was that of *civically engaged versus non-civically engaged youth.* The second most frequently mentioned characteristic was *religious differences*, the third most mentioned was *regional differences* and the final was *political differences*. These percentages are illustrated in table 3 titled "Prominent Social Characteristics." It should be stressed, however, that the majority of the participants in this study identified as civically engaged youth. The views expressed, then, represent the greatest perceived social differences to civically engaged youth interviewed in this study. This table is not representative of the views of all Tunisian youth.

Table 3 Prominent Social Characteristics

Characteristic of Tunisian youth	Percentage of participants that mentioned characteristic
Civically Engaged and Disengaged Youth	87.5%
Religious Differences	81.2%
Regional Differences	50%
Political Differences	43.7%

Civically Engaged and Disengaged youth

Engaged versus disengaged youth was the most frequently mentioned social differences by participants. Of the 14 participants interviewed only three identified as not engaged in civil society; therefore, the findings shared here do not adequately represent disengaged narratives. Engaged youth were described as highly educated and dedicated to improving Tunisia. Disengaged youth were described as focused on starting a family, developing their careers, and sometimes even described as lazy. Imed, 21-year-old from Tunis, shared, "after the revolution, there is engaged youth in civil society but they are the minority. The large part of youth is away from political life, even in voting. They do not watch T.V., they just use Facebook."

Similarly, Adamos, a 28-year-old from Tunis, shared,

I think there are like two categories . . . The youth that are just trying to live their life. After education they think only about employment. After employment they think only about getting married, having a family. The other kind of people is

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people who think about these things, but they also think about doing something to the community. They don't just think about their personal interested but they think about giving back to the community and leaving an impact.

Adamos' comment captures that success, for many youth, is having a job and being able to have and care for a family. Adamos notes that civically-engaged youth are not an exception to this. They also want comfortable jobs and to be able to have a family. And moreover, Tunisia's low employment rates make this goal challenging, and in many cases, unattainable for young Tunisians. Landing a job that provides enough money to support a family, is no small feat in a country where the employment rate for youth is at 40 percent (British Council et al. 35). But Adamos asserts that civically engaged youth also want more than this. There is a new desire, after the revolution, to support this important moment in Tunisia's history. Adamos' comment suggests that just as starting a family is considered part of success, being active in your community is also becoming increasingly internalized as a personal goal that gives meaning and creates a sense of accomplishment among civically engaged youth.

Engaged youth explained their perception of why disengaged youth do not participate in politics or civil society. In their view, many youth are hesitant to participate in civil society because CSOs were so heavily coopted and manipulated by Ben Ali, prior to the revolution. Many are suspicious that CSOs are some how secretly tied to political parties or misusing financial resources. Some interview participants who identified as disengaged expressed this concern directly. At a public discussion on volunteerism held at the American Corner, an English language learning center in Tunis, one participant

shared, "When I was jobless someone offered me a job at a feminist association. But I didn't join because I am apolitical and it smelled of politics."

Participants also noted that there is a lack of enthusiasm to work towards change, in general, due to enduring challenges in Tunisia's post-authoritarian context. Persisting challenges include low employment rates, an increase of terrorism, low capacity among civic organizations, and an elitist political sphere that deters youth participation. Mohammed, a 19-year-old from Bizerte, shares that there is a heavy sense of hopelessness among youth, "People are demoralized. That's why some people leave for Europe, or they leave for violence and terrorism." Mohammed described a sort of post-revolutionary backlash. The new political scene is not new enough for youth, as many of them find themselves complaining about the same issues they experienced under Ben Ali. Mohammed explains, "Political leader today talk about how they're going to integrate young people . . . they're going to find work for young people. But they are just lies. Since 2011, since 2014, they are just lies."

At times engaged youth expressed frustration with disengaged youth for not being more involved in civil society or politics. Mohammed, a 19-year-old from Bizerte, shared, "It's not good to just stay inactive with crossed arms, going to get coffee and just talking about sports and football and whatever. Young people can do more." Civically engaged youth interviewed in this study consistently shared that they feel many young people are not living up to their potential. Mouna, a 25-year-old from El Kef, shared, speaking of non-civically engaged youth, "They think that money can buy everything.

And this is the thing that is happening in Tunisia. Every child now wants to be a football player or wants to go Italy."

Some participants expressed empathy and understanding for youth who do not participate in civil society. Specifically, they explained that many youth do not volunteer in civil society due to financial constraints or because they do not know what opportunities exist. Walid, a 23-year-old from Tunis, shared, "To be fair to the people who don't give back—some of them don't find opportunities. I used to have like no idea that there were civic engagement and associations." This underscores that civic engagement is still a developing norm in Tunisia. Hyatt, a 27-year-old from Tunis, shared, "There are people who want to give but they don't have a way to and [if they could] they would give even more than those who are able to give." Here she argues that lack of participation does not denote ambivalence or lack of talent.

One of the underlying themes of these comments is that youth are being underutilized. This is a wide-spread feeling, that goes beyond just low levels of youth leadership in the civic sphere. In "Tunisian Youth: Between Political Exclusion and Civic Engagement" Emily Parker shares that the youth-led revolution "produced an assembly with very old people." At the same time, one in five men and one in three women are considered not active "in education, employment or training" (Drissi 24). The longing civically engaged youth express for greater youth involvement could be understood more broadly as the longing for youth efficacy. Exclusionary norms experienced throughout politics and economic constraints, somehow, can be challenged through civic action. In other words, civic spaces and civic activism symbolizes a place of youth empowerment,

not experienced in the home (due to dependence on parents) or at the ballot box.

Moreover, differing perspectives on the role of civic engagement, perhaps reflects that

civically engaged and non-civically engaged youth conceptualize empowerment and

efficacy in contrasting ways.

Of the participants I interviewed, only three identified as not engaged in civil

society and each of them had paying jobs. Civically disengaged youth shared that instead

of volunteering they focus on their jobs. Ali, a 28-year-old from Tunis, shared that "I am

a kind of youth who works very hard and there is no time to rest and it's not good."

Dynamics, differences, and approaches to collaboration among those who are civically

engaged and those who are not civically engaged will be further explored in Chapter 6.

Moreover, I will unpack the terms "engaged" and "active;" further explore reasons for

non-engagement in civil society; and discuss how civically engaged youth are attempting

to encourage participation.

Religious Differences

Participants conceptualized religious differences in various ways. Firstly, most

participants acknowledged that within Tunisia there are religious minorities such as

Christians, Jews, Atheists, Agnostics, and Catholics. Participants also conceptualized

Islamic extremism as a religious minority. The most prevalent religious difference that

participants noted was between the *pratiquant* and less *pratiquant* Muslims. *Pratiquant,*

which literally means practicing, is a French word used to describe someone who is

religious.[12] In other words, while participants acknowledged that there were religious minorities, participants focused on discussing religious differences within the Sunni Muslim majority.

While most Tunisians consider themselves Muslims, Tunisians, as in any culture, vary in the methods of practicing Islam and in the level of their devotion to Islam. Participants often described friends as either *pratiquant* and less *pratiquant* friends. Participants also used the term conservative and liberal Muslims synonymously with *pratiquant* and non or less *pratiquant*. It's important to understand that conservative Muslim is not the same as extremist, Salafis or jihadi Islamists. Muslims who believe in violence were called extremists by participants and described as a religious minority.

Participants noted that even among conservative and liberal Muslims, there were a variety of social practices within these general groups. Young Muslims differ greatly on issues such as drinking, intimate relationships, and dress. Some explained these differences in terms of the choice to live either a European lifestyle or a traditional Tunisian lifestyle. Participants shared that a traditional Tunisian Muslim would not drink, dress modestly, and not have a relationship without parental involvement. Some participants shared at times they experienced social tension over how to dress. Hyatt, a 27-year-old from Tunis, shared that when she briefly worked with Ennahda in 2011 some men wouldn't talk or sit next to her because she wore jeans and *hijab* together, instead of wearing a dress. As shown, religious tensions are not only experienced between

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[12] In English, "practicing" is often used to explain someone's religious orientation as either practicing or not. In French, this term can be used to express a spectrum of religiosity. In other words, someone can be a little bit *pratiquant*, very *pratiquant* or not *pratiquant*.

conservatives and liberals alone. There are infinite ways of practicing Islam and varying levels of religiosity. As above, two conservative women may even differ on the issue of modesty.

Participants shared that many Tunisian Muslims who adopt a so-called European lifestyle consider themselves as equally devout. Socially liberal Muslims shared that they believe they have liberality to practice Islam and still make private choices regarding drinking, dress, and relationships. Mouna, a 25-year-old from Tunis, shared that most Muslims "just want to have fun, to drink a beer, . . . to not hurt anybody." Bacem, a 35-year-old from Bizerte, who identifies as a devout Muslim, criticized rigid interpretations of Islam saying, "We're not going to hell because we play some guitar." These varying practices of Islam can be viewed as either positively or negatively. In the post "Secular Muslim, is it possible?" from the blog *Cahiers de la Liberte,* Selim shares that the day after the revolution, some lined up to buy Tunisian beer and others woke up relieved to finally be able to grow out their beard. As in this example, and also as mentioned by the participants in this study, there is increased freedom to express religious differences after the revolution. While some Tunisians are comfortable with these varying practices, some still insist on absolute right and wrong practices.

Since the revolution, some participants noted that there is a small number of Tunisians who have openly renounced Islam. Mouna, a 25-year-old from Tunis, shared, "There are those . . . who decided they are sick of violence and the whole system [of religion] and they decided that they aren't Muslims anymore and they say it out loud and everywhere." Participants noted that this is happening more since the revolution. All in

all, since the revolution, religious differences seem to have become more salient and present in the public sphere. This points to an area for future research. How many Tunisians may be renouncing Islam? And how does this shape the dynamics within civic and social life? These questions are not the focus of this project but further exploration [in Chapter 7] can contribute to our understanding on the role of religion in youth civic spaces.

While participants mentioned various religious practices and religious minorities, they emphasized that social ties generally flow freely across these differences. Bochra, a 26-year-old from Nabeul, shared "I have friends who are even more religious than I am. For example who would not wear jeans, only the *abaya*,[13] and I also have friends who don't do their prayers." As stated, these findings are not representative of religious minorities as none of the participants identified as a subscribing to a religion besides Islam. Religious differences and their impact on approaches to collaboration will be further explored in chapter 7.

Regional Differences

Participants frequently mentioned regional differences, specifically noting that there were disparities of economic, social, and civic opportunity. Southern and interior regions were also associated as areas where terrorist recruitment happens. Youth often mentioned that rural areas are underserved by government services and are disproportionately underdevelopment in comparison with the rest of the country. Youth emphasized that lack of social spaces in rural areas limits social and civic activity.

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[13] *Abaya* is a black, loose, long-sleeved dress that conservative women wear.

Bochra, a 26-year-old from Nabeul, shared, "If you go to certain areas here in Tunis you will find restaurants, youth clubs, all sorts of spaces available to youth. Whereas if you go to certain regions in the south it's really bad, I mean, they have nothing." Youth suggested that lack of social and civic spaces in addition to low employment levels made their rural peers more susceptible to radicalization. Imed, 21-year-old from Tunis, shared that youth in rural areas are often the ones on "death boats" that attempt to cross the Mediterranean and arrive in Italy or France. While participants shared that regional differences are significant, regional collaboration is not adequately explored in this study due to travel limitations. I will address regional differences briefly in chapter seven by discussing how regional and religious differences often correlate with one another, creating greater social friction, especially in the university setting.

Political Differences

After regional differences, political differences were the most frequently mentioned characteristic. Of the participants I interviewed, no one supported a political party. Participants shared that there are very few numbers of young Tunisians that are engaged in politics. Several participants shared that they find their peers working in political parties to be dogmatic and intolerant. Mouna, a 25-year-old from El Kef, shared "Every time I talk to them I feel like they don't like criticism and I feel like they are the ones who [think] 'they are wrong and we are right and that is it'." While many participants mentioned having friends with different religious backgrounds, fewer of the participants talked about having friends who work in political parties. Collaboration between civic activist and political activist could be an important area for future research.

In a context where youth feel so marginalized by political parties, what role could young politicians and political activist play in building trust and integration amongst youth who are active in the civic sphere? This question, while extremely relevant to youth, goes beyond the scope of this research as it focuses on civic, not political, collaboration.

Other Differences

While the aforementioned differences were the most prominently discussed among Tunisian youth, some other less frequent, but consistent themes emerged. Some participants described youth as either tolerant or intolerant. Participants described intolerance as a cultural issue that went beyond politics and religion. Participants argued that intolerant attitudes were pervasive in sports and modeled in both the classroom and in the home. Adamos, a 28-year-old from Tunis shared, "Even when I see people with religious differences it's not actually about religion when I analyze their point of view— it's about a way of thinking." In this comment, Adamos points out that one of the major social characteristics that define youth is not politics or religion, but a way of thinking. As he says, youth differ on their perspective of "how to deal with people who have different points of view."

Similarly, some participants noted that one of the major differences among Tunisian youth is those who think critically and those who are consumers of information. Bacem, a 35 year old from Bizerte, shared "Educated youth know the real meaning of democracy. They know that we don't live in a democratic country." Mouna, a 25-year-old from El Kef, shared, "[There are] people who are confused, they don't know who to follow." In several interviews, participants shared that too often youth rely on Facebook

for information and are not critically analyzing information. Mouna shared that she feels many youth vote based on what they hear "on the media or on Facebook" or just because "their parents told them to."

Conclusions

Participants shared that following the 2011 revolution, young Tunisians have a greater awareness of the variety of practices of Islam within their communities. Moreover, participants in this study shared that many young Tunisians have grown to appreciate these differences instead of fearing them, though they do still at times cause social tension. This exploratory research does not provide a comprehensive analysis of attitudes on religious differences in post-revolution Tunisia. But it does, however, point to the need to better understand how new publically expressed religious differences are shaping social and civic dynamics. In chapter seven, I will discuss religious differences as they relate to collaboration in social and associational life in greater detail.

Regional differences were frequently mentioned by participants but could not be easily explored through this project due to travel limitations. Finally, participants did not find that political differences played a significant role in shaping social groups. Participants felt that political differences caused great social friction, though this didn't occur frequently. Participants described youth who are active in politics as distant, difficult to talk to, and detached from their lives. This stands out as, even though civic engagement was the most mentioned difference, participants shared that there was still strong social cohesion between these groups. This shows that while varying levels of commitment to civic engagement was the most frequently mentioned difference, that

doesn't mean that it was the most divisive issue to the participants in this study. Instead, it may suggest that civically engaged youth were most concerned about bridging with their peers who do not volunteer. Throughout chapters six through eight, I will discuss how Tunisian youth are attempting to create cohesion and shared vision across these varied social characteristics. I will also explore differences that have been insurmountable and what approaches to collaboration have failed.

Now that Tunisians enjoy freedom of expression, young people are filling social and civic spaces with their diverse perspectives. It's important to understand these differences as an inclusive public sphere is a critical component to flourishing democracies. In Craig Calhoun's book *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Calhoun emphasizes that the public sphere is powerful when it is based on common goals that override "social differences" (13). Moreover, civic and public spaces should play a role in reconciling differences, not exacerbating them (19). If there is increased and continued friction between differing social groups, the civic sphere in Tunisia will lose its capacity to represent common interests. Moreover, the civic sphere, instead of being inclusive and effective, could become elitist and exclusionary. In the following chapter, I will address concerns over exclusive civic networks by discussing how civically engaged youth approach collaborating with non-civically engaged youth and how these groups interact socially. Furthermore, I will discuss the importance of collaboration and interaction across this difference, especially as it pertains to building an inclusive civil society.

CHAPTER SIX: CIVICALLY ENGAGED AND NON-CIVICALLY ENGAGED YOUTH

In this chapter I will discuss how civically engaged youth approach collaborating with non-civically engaged youth. Participants in this study most frequently described Tunisian youth as either civically engaged or not. In this chapter I will justify the use of the terms civically engaged and non-civically engaged youth. Secondly, I will discuss how these differences become evident through divides in civic communities such as a sense of suspicion between the groups, differing perspectives on Tunisia's transition, and negative interactions. Thirdly, I will discuss how civically engaged youth are approaching collaboration with non-civically engaged youth by encouraging civic engagement in public spaces, sharing information on Facebook, and by promoting a narrative of civic coolness.

To begin our discussion, it's critical to understand how civic engagement was defined by Tunisian youth. Participants described a commitment to civic engagement as a commitment to improving Tunisian communities and the country's progress towards democracy. For civically engaged youth, that meant more than simply getting a job and starting a family. Many of the civically engaged youth I interviewed volunteered in several organizations in addition to work and school commitments. For them, this commitment to civic engagement represents continuation of the revolutionary process,

started in 2011 through nonviolent protest. Many of the interview participants protested in 2011 and saw their continued engagement in civil society as integral to creating lasting change in Tunisia. Moreover, participants often framed not continuing to engage in civil society as squandering the revolution and giving up on hope.

Non-Civically Engaged, versus Inactive Youth

Within the sample of young Tunisians interviewed, thirteen participants identified as civically engaged and only three identified as not civically engaged. Given that, non-civically engaged youth were not equally represented. For the purposes of this discussion, civically engaged youth will be abbreviated by the acronym CE youth and non-civically engaged youth will be abbreviated by the acronym NCE youth.

Many CE youth described NCE youth negatively, using pejorative terms like lazy, ignorant, and apathetic. CE youth explained that NCE youth were only interested in benefitting themselves and not in giving back to the community, deeming them selfish. Many youth also used the term "active" and "inactive" to describe these differences. In this research, I have refrained from using these terms since it implies that NCE youth do not contribute *at all* to society and are not socially active. Observation of a public discussion on volunteerism in Tunisia helped me understand the important difference between the terms inactive and non-civically engaged. While most of the youth in the discussion I observed identified as civically active, three youth shared that they were not active. Their various reasons for not participating revealed much more than a non-commitment to improving their lives or communities. In this section I will discuss the reasons NCE youth gave for not participating in civic activities.

1. "My dream is to be rich"-Amol, Male, Age 20

The facilitator asked Amol why he didn't volunteer and he responded, "My dream is to be rich." The other discussion participants immediately began to laugh at Amol. He looked down hesitantly, chuckling along with everyone else—but his face was visibly red. The facilitator then followed up by asking him if he was succeeding. He gave no answer to the facilitator's question and the conversation moved on without any comment on the difficulty of finding work. The ambiguity of the interaction stuck out to me.

In prior interviews I noted that many participants described youth who "just want to be rich" negatively. Here, I finally had an opportunity to speak with one of "them" myself. But his voice seemed to be pushed out of the conversation. This stuck with me. What caused this conversation to move on without exploring the difficulty of getting rich in Tunisia? Given that youth suffer from high unemployment rates, I expected there to be more discussion on this point. Beissinger et al. explains in "Explaining Divergent Revolutionary Coalitions" that economic concern was listed by 77% of protesters as the "most important" or "second most important" motivation for participating in the Tunisian revolution (4). If economic concern was a primary demand of the revolution, why didn't these young people discuss Amol's dream?

This raised several issues that are unresolved. Was Amol just being facetious? Have CE youth determined, within their value system, that financial security is less important than civil liberties? Or, rather, have CE youth given up hoping for financial security due to its unattainability? This impasse in the conversation was alarming because, either way, it showed that it's possible that NCE youth who desire to be

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financially secure are labeled as lazy and selfish by CE youth and that perhaps their desire for economic power is not taken seriously, even by their own peers.

2. "I'm shy." –Female, Age 30

This participant shared that she doesn't like to hang out in large groups or speak in public. She felt that most civic organizations usually encourage participants to help out with events, recruitment, and take on leadership roles. The roles she saw other youth take through civic engagement didn't match her own personality, so civic engagement just didn't seem to fit her.

3. "Giving back to society is bigger than just being part of a group." –Female, Age 27[14]

This participant felt that there is often a lot pressure to join groups that feel like cliques. Moreover, she felt that it wasn't necessary to join a civic group in order to "give back" to others.

4. "There is no time to rest" –Ali, Male, Age 28

I met this participant in the evening after work and he was visibly exhausted. He shared that he didn't participate in civic organizations because he wasn't interested and he didn't have time. While Ali was well aware of the political and civic challenges his country was facing, he was disenchanted with trying to make a change. He explained, "I am a kind of youth who works very hard and there is no time to rest and it's not good." This interviewed made me question whether economic pressure played a role shaping who becomes involved in civil society. Ali stressed that he didn't make enough money

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[14] Names are not given for these quotes because these are quotes pulled from a public conversation on volunteerism in Tunisia, not an individual interviews

for as hard as he works. The time and economic pressures on him, seemed to be heavy and be an obvious explanation of why volunteer civic work was not attractive to him.

As seen, there are a wide variety of reasons that Tunisian youth have chosen not to participate in civil society. Though many CE youth conceptualized NCE youth as lazy, this generalization is not fair. Further research is needed to better understand why so many young Tunisians have chosen not to engage in civic work. For the purposes of this research, I advocate for understanding this social difference as some who are committed to civic engagement and others who are not. Lack of commitment to civic engagement does not necessarily denote lack of activity or work. NCE youth contribute in other ways, including by exceling in their studies, taking care of family members, and working. In this section I have discussed the reasons NCE youth gave for not participating in civil society; however, these findings are limited to a very small sample size that was regionally restricted to the capital. Reasons for low civic engagement may vary from region to region. In the following section I will explore how CE youth described the differences between them and examples of divisions and negative interactions between these two groups.

Examples of Divisions

In the following section, I will describe themes that paint a picture of how CE and NCE youth are divided, from the perspective on CE youth. Above, I discussed reasons that NCE youth gave for not volunteering. In this section, I will discuss how CE youth described the differences between CE and NCE youth.

The difference between CE and NCE youth can be distinguished by the commitment, or not, to civic engagement. Participants' explanation of this difference widely fell into two categories. While these categories certainly cannot be generalized, they provide some initial insights on how CE youth perceive NCE youth and point to areas where future research could be done. First, participants asserted that NCE youth are not civically engaged because they don't know about opportunities for civic activity. Or, secondly, NCE youth do not share a commitment to working for societal change due to a pessimistic mentality. These differences became points of division through interactions where NCE youth mocked CE youth. Another component of this divide that was commonly mentioned is that NCE youth do not trust CE youth and are suspicious of their motives.

While CE youth often complained that most youth are apathetic about the problems in their communities, CE youth also shared that many NCE youth simply don't know about the opportunities there are to engage their communities. Adamos, a 28 year old male from Tunis shared, "They have the will . . . but they lack the vision." As seen, at times participants did not describe NCE youth negatively. Instead, they showed that there was simply a lack of communication regarding the opportunities that exist. CE youth saw themselves as leaders with the opportunity to help spread that information and give other youth "vision" on how to become engaged in civil society.

There could be many reasons why some youth are aware of opportunities while other youth are not. This research did not investigate this question directly but can offer some possible insights. Class could be a possible explanation for this disparity (See table

4). While I did not ask participants about their income or their parents income, I did ask participants if they were working or in school. Of those involved in civil society, 31.25% were in school but not working. Families that are well off financially may be better suited to support youth while they are in school so that they don't have to work while they are students, thus freeing up additional time for volunteer activities.

Of the participants, 18.75% were extremely engaged, reporting that they were working, in school, and volunteering with a civic group at the same time. This shows that while class may be a contributing factor, some participants found a way to volunteer despite other significant time commitments. This weakens the argument that NCE youth are not engaged due to financial pressures. At the same time, 12.5% of participants were involved in civil society through professional, paid positions. This represents a highly elite group that is able to make a meaningful contribution to civil society, while also getting compensated. All in all, the data does not point to a clear explanation as to why some youth are not aware of opportunities for civic engagement. It's also a possibility that some families, abused under Ben Ali, still discourage discussion of politics or social change for fear of being put under close surveillance again. Though we cannot know the reasons for this disparity, CE youth interviewed in this study tended hold the perception that NCE are not engaged due to a lack of awareness.

Table 4 Summary of Youth Activities and Engagement

Activity	Percentage of Participants
Studying and Volunteering in Civil Society	31.25%

Working	18.75%
Working as Civic Engagement	12.5%
Working and Volunteering in Civil Society	18.75%
Studying, Working, and Volunteering in Civil Society	18.75%

CE youth mentioned that while some NCE youth simply don't know about civic activities, others blatantly opposed participating in civil society. CE youth shared examples of being mocked and ridiculed by NCE youth. Walid, a 23-year-old male from Tunis, shared a story about being mocked while helping lead a trash pick up project at the National Zoo for Earth Day. A peer approached him and dropped a trash on the ground in front of him saying, "Clean this." Similarly, Mohammed, a 19-year-old from Bizerte, explained that when volunteering for a youth vote campaign other youth mocked him for supporting the elections. "They make fun of you," he shared. Mohammed emphasized that his friends argued that because the economy didn't improve after the previous election, there was no point voting in the next election. Hope of CE youth and cynicism of NCE youth clash against each other through insults and mocking. These negative interactions create animosity between CE and NCE youth. Tossing a paper on the ground in front of someone picking up trash, communicates a sense of meaninglessness. It symbolizes the feeling that even if some progress is made, it will never be enough. With every piece of trash picked up, another is tossed. With every election that passes, another year goes by without employment rates improving.

The above incidents seem to demonstrate that CE and NCE youth have differing perspectives on Tunisia's process of social change. While CE youth remain committed to slow change accruing over time, NCE youth question whether the revolution has even brought small wins. Similarly Rowsell and Ben Yahia found that "regardless of age, gender, residence, or economic status" most participants in their 2013 study "believe the country is going in the wrong direction." According to Rowsell and Ben Yahia, it's not just youth who have begun to question the promise of Tunisia's transition, but the population at large. This research suggests that lack of confidence in the political process and enduring economic challenges may be contributing to a sense of hopelessness that has undercut the surge of civic activism seen in 2011.

Youth also shared examples of suspicion, noting that NCE youth often didn't trust CE youth. Youth who are involved in civil society are often asked if someone is paying them to advocate for certain issues. Some even accuse youth advocates as being influenced by foreign governments. Walid, a 23-year old male from Tunis shared, "People . . . accuse us of being like CIA agents or something." This demonstrates the living legacy of Ben Ali's regime which heavily policed and coopted civic organizations. Under the Ben Ali regime, Leila Ben Ali created propaganda organizations masked as charities such as "Association for the Promotion of Employment of the Disabled" (British Council et al., 44). The organization promoted government initiatives to support people with disabilities while covering up "violations" of the Ben Ali regime (44). The culture of suspicion and policing, instilled by Ben Ali's policies, continues to shape perceptions of civic engagement. CE youth struggle to gain trust and spread enthusiasm for civic action.

Walid shared "They don't like have the mentality that we are doing it for Tunisia." CE

youth see the post-revolution context as an opportunity to make change in a way that is

transparent and nonpartisan. However, NCE youth still see the civic sphere as tainted, as

it was under Ben Ali. These different orientations on the meaning of post-revolution civil

society cause a sense of distrust in each other.

Aside from a sense of suspicion and lack of awareness of opportunities, CE youth

shared that often NCE youth also lack confidence in the capacity of civic group. CE

youth interviewed in this study shared that civic organizations often face significant

resource challenges, which limit their capacity to mobilize. Due to this, many youth hold

the perception that civic organizations lack the capacity to actually effect change. This

creates a widely shared sense of pessimism and defeatism among NCE youth. Walid, a

23-year-old male from Tunis, shared that minimal government support makes youth

question "'Why would I give back to my country when they won't even help me?'" Even

when planning events or service projects in popular areas such as on Habib Bourguiba

Avenue or the National Zoo, Walid found that he ran into a lot of bureaucracy and little

assistance.

Bacem, 35-year-old male from Bizerte who puts on theater shows on social

justice issues around the country, shared similar frustrations. Bacem shared that there are

few resources to support the arts, "I've never found any support from the government."

Many youth who are civically active stressed that they wanted greater support from the

government and more financial resources. Civic groups often have big ideas, but small

budgets and come up against complicated processes for requesting assistance. CE youth

shared that NCE youth are often deeply skeptical of civic work. At the same time, CE youth struggle to make their own organizations effective with few resources. The World Bank Report titled "Breaking the Barriers to Youth Inclusion" by Drissi explains that the more young people trust institutions, the more likely they are to engage them actively (11). It's possible that civic groups that demonstrate the ability to effectively advocate for youth issues may enjoy greater levels of trust and, therefore, engagement.

Examples of Collaboration

Despite differing perspectives and negative interactions, CE youth described various ways they try to encourage NCE youth to participate in civil society. CE youth shared several examples of attempting to bridge across their different perspectives on post-revolution Tunisia and the role of civil society in social change. Even though CE youth, at time, described NCE youth negatively, they also demonstrated a commitment to building stronger relationships with them and encouraging them to participate.

Firstly, CE youth approach collaboration by taking initiative to encourage NCE youth. CE youth shared that they often found the NCE youth were interested in joining new civic groups but often just didn't know where to start. Moreover, for this reason CE youth saw themselves as messengers and leaders to NCE youth, with the responsibility to help connect NCE youth with organizations. Adamos, a 28-year-old male from Tunis, shared "There are people who are not active at all but they will tell you 'I want to do things but I don't know where to start'." Admos shared that it was his "duty" to take initiative towards NCE youth. While CE youth sometimes used condescending language to describe NCE youth, this participant expressed a desire to invest in his peers. Adamos

points out that when given the right information and opportunities, NCE youth can surpass the people who encouraged them to get involved originally. Participants shared that non-engagement seems to come from a sense that youth are second-tier citizens. Here, Imed, 21-year-old from Tunis, shared that he tries to counter this idea, explaining youth need to know, "Tunisia . . . is for us. It's for your sons in the future. It's for you to live, for your children and your grandchildren."

Secondly, CE youth shared that organizations often try to recruit new members through awareness campaigns, which combine communicating through official organizational Facebook accounts and also by handing out flyers on the street or in the mall. Handing out flyers and creating Facebook posts are an important way of distributing information. But, recruitment in such formalized settings does not address the issue of suspicion or hopelessness. CE youth interviewed for this research shared that messages sent from official Facebook accounts are less personal and street campaigns often trigger feelings of suspicion for NCE youth.

Thirdly, to create a more personal connection, CE youth also shared that they try to encourage NCE to participate by posting inspiring content on Facebook through their personal accounts. Through personal Facebook posts they attempt to increase awareness of opportunities for civic engagement and also show the person behind organization. Mouna, a 25-year-old from El Kef, shared, "On facebook . . . my thing is just to inspire people. What I say is just 'I did it. You can do it too . . .'" Mouna shared that she knows communicating isn't enough, but that through Facebook she is at least making NCE

youth aware of what CE youth are doing. "We try with what we are doing to give [inspiration] to someone else, to other places and regions."

Likewise, Imed, 21-year-old male from Tunis, shared that he uses Facebook posts to encourage civic participation. Imed, 21-year-old from Tunis, shared,

> My friends . . . see on Facebook that I am sharing these things and many of them are contacting me and they were never active [before] . . . But they say . . . "Can I join?" and I tell them "Yes! You can join!" And we need them to join. I told them, "You have to come! You have to be with me!"

By sharing information on Facebook, CE youth are creating more personal stories on the importance of civic engagement. These personal messages are much more likely to be perceived as authentic, than if these messages were only sent through organizational accounts. While these messages are still limited, CE youth see Facebook communication as an important way of creating momentum and enthusiasm. The Internet has become an important tool for the mobilization of young Tunisians. Drissi argues that the Internet is an independent space that has supported the "emergence" of an authentic "'youth culture'" (13). Participants noted that personal connections are important to establishing trust and credibility. That is, they emphasized that it's important to go beyond handing out flyers to strangers on the street and to instead focus on mobilizing through friendships via social media sites.

Likewise, Bacem, 25-year-old male from Bizerte, shared that he wasn't involved in civic organizations until a friend invited him to a meeting. Now, Bacem is very active in several civic groups. Bacem shares, "So what I discovered is that we need to give information to people, but the problem is that they didn't trust the person they didn't

know." Beyond inviting friends to meetings, CE youth also use social settings to talk about civic work. Whether it's over coffee or while playing cards, CE youth frequently mentioned that they take these opportunities to informally encourage new people to join their groups. CE youth see their network as a strategic opportunity to reach out to others. They seek to capitalize on their reputation and social ties to get more people involved.

Throughout interviews, several CE youth described civic work as cool. I found that the CE youth interviewed for this project created a narrative around civic engagement that is designed to create a sense of belonging, purpose, and novelty. This narrative has two purposes. On one hand, it captures their enthusiasm for civic work. Mouna, a 25-year-old from Tunis, shared "Working with civil society is really cool." Bochra, 26-year-old from Nabeul, who was part of the Tunisian Youth Parliament shared, "We ended up doing our own parliamentary session, which was really cool." On the other hand, the civic coolness narrative is also meant to attract NCE youth to civic activities. Bacem, 35-year-old from Bizerte, shared "We have a respectable number of people who think we are cool, so [we] just give them information." Bacem shared that he draws on his own social capital to influence others. Walid, 23-year-old from Tunis, similarly shared that he tries to share his enthusiasm for civic work with others,

> Walid: I do think it (civic engagement) is fun, it's very much fun and it's necessary to give back to your community.
> Interviewer: Do you try to tell them it's fun?
> Walid: Yes. I try to tell my cousins, in my family. I am like the only one engaged. I don't have this family of engaged people. I try to tell them that it's fun.

This coolness narrative shows that CE youth are enthusiastic and proud of their work.

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Surprisingly, NCE interviewed in this study also shared the perspective that civic work is cool. While observing a public discussion on volunteerism in Tunisia, I noted that many young Tunisians who did not identify as civically engaged still agreed that volunteering has become "very important" and "very cool." Another person commented in the discussion that her university had a fair with different associations to promote their organizations. She reflected, "They were cool. I admire them. But we were very busy and that was the main reason we didn't join." Similarly, in "Youth Participation, Voice, and Active Citizenship" Drissi found that "9 out of 10 young Tunisians consider volunteering in CSOs to be important for their communities" (14).

CE youth interviewed in this study conceptualized and promoted civic activity through a cool narrative that attempts to attract youth. CE youth attempt to engage NCE youth and incentivize civic work by offering them not just an activity but an identity, earned through civic engagement. CE youth are attempting to address various barriers to civic engagement by cultivating a narrative that balances the need to prove that they are both professional and effective yet also personable and fun. At times they use formalized, impersonal communication strategies, such as handing out flyers and creating websites to demonstrate their professionalism. At the same time, they also used informal communication channels such as personal Facebook pages or social settings such as local cafes to create fun, personal connections. Figure 1 demonstrates how youth use both professionalism and personal connections, along with narratives around both fun and effectiveness to promote civic engagement. This approach demonstrates a dynamic approach to collaboration that incorporates both formal and informal mechanisms.

CE youth perceived their social activities as opportunities to promote civic engagement. Schirch argues that rituals can play an important role in transforming relationships and conflict dynamics. Schirch argues that ritual is a way "to address conflict in ways that are less confrontational, frightening, and threatening" (83). By maintaining personal relationships with NCE youth, CE youth can "dance around" the social divide, creating spaces for community (83). And, according to CE youth, it is often through these spaces that invitations to participate in civic life are best received.
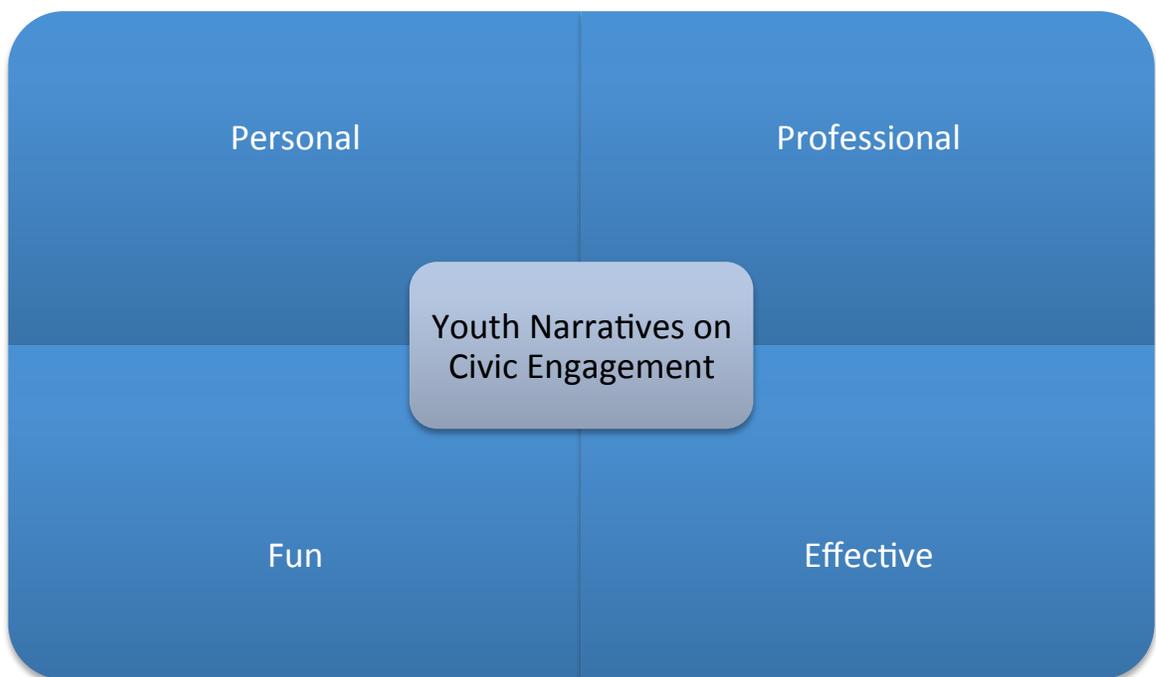

Figure 1 Youth Narratives on Civic Engagement

Conclusions

In post-revolution Tunisia, commitment to civic activism rapidly became a value of high importance to a very small percentage of civically engaged youth. At the same time, many youth who participated in the 2011 revolution chose not to join civic groups. The reason for this has not been adequately understood though lack of trust in civic groups; time and financial pressures; and lack of awareness of opportunities are three likely reasons. CE youth sometimes perceive NCE youth as apathetic about social issues. The limited findings of this research suggest that their choice to not engage in civic action has been misunderstood by CE youth as a lack of effort. Importantly, CE youth acknowledge that lack of engagement sometimes stems from lack of awareness. Furthermore, this research suggests that sometimes NCE youth are choosing non-engagement thoughtfully and intentionally. Just as citizens opt to boycott elections, many youth seem to be opting to boycott civic activity. This preliminary finding merits further research, as intentional non-engagement, versus apathy of youth, represent quite different challenges for the continued reconstruction of Tunisia's civic communities.

The low level of engagement within civil society is an issue of concern for Tunisia's future. In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam argues that the civic sphere helps bolster the voices of ordinary people who might otherwise be overlooked (338). According to Putnam, civil society gives citizens an opportunity to "express interests and demands" (338). With low-levels of youth engagement in both civil society and in politics, the question must be asked, where are youth expressing their demands? Are they? And what

can be said of Tunisia's future if a whopping 51% of the population is largely disengaged from both civic and political spaces?

Putnam argues that while formal initiatives and civic groups play an important role in bolstering the voices of the people, "citizen connectedness," or high levels of social capital, can also powerfully create change and serve as efficacious channels for solving social issues. Putnam explains that "friendship networks" were in fact "more important" than "formal organizing efforts" prior to the fall of the Berlin wall in East Germany. This suggest that perhaps CE youth's highly socially oriented approach to cultivating relationships and encouraging activism with NCE youth could be a powerful means of strengthening the voice of youth in the public sphere.

For those who are paid to work in civil society, they must work to prevent the perception that civic groups are just another elite, professionalized clique. On the other hand, for those working in unpaid positions in informal groups, they must prove that their work is efficacious while still being careful to not over-promise. Tunisian youth will be turned off to grandeur promises of change that could easily be perceived as a manipulation tactic. Political figures have often tried to win over youth through comprehensive plans for economic reform that have petered out. Even Ben Ali, just two years prior to the revolution, stated in his 2009 Presidential Campaign that "Youth are the key to success and the guarantor for achieving our people's aspirations for further prosperity and progress" (qtd in Murphy 5). Tunisian youth have heard politicians acknowledge to importance of youth issues in public speeches long enough. Participants frequently stressed that they have been lied to and ignored by politicians. Civic groups

should be careful to not remind NCE youth of this history by over-promising or by marginalizing youth who are not engaged or familiar with civic work.

Based on the interviews in this research, it seems that the choice to not engage does not stem from apathy, but a deeply entrenched cynicism from repeated disappointments. Given that, one of the most powerful things youth associations can do is demonstrate their effectiveness in solving community issues. Even small successes, such as providing job training or networking opportunities could be powerful in demonstrating the benefits of civic engagement. It's possible that civic groups that are well established and making the lives of Tunisians better will be the mostly likely groups to win the trust of NCE youth. This requires, however, that civic groups can not only successfully solve community issues, but also convince youth of that. For example, in my research, I found an informal youth-led club whose mission is to bring youth together across differences. But many NCE youth might ask, how does that improve our lives when we can't find jobs?

But there are other challenges to civic engagement too. Ben Ali's legacy of control lives on in NCE youth's suspicious of coercion through civic organizations. By creating personal connections, CE youth are attempting to repair this deficit of trust, which is foundational to a powerful civil society. Indeed, Tunisia's deficit of trust in civic and political life is what makes the fashion in which young Tunisians are approaching collaboration so significant. Recognizing deep levels of cynicism, CE youth seek opportunities to talk about their work over coffee, instead of only in formal meetings,

with the goal of stirring a sense of hope that was so foundational to the revolution and can continue to serve as a guiding vision for Tunisia's continued transition.

These findings point to several areas for future research. I did not expect participation levels in civic engagement to be such a consistent theme in my interviews. This research project was not originally designed to explore collaboration among civically and non-civically engaged youth. Most of the interview questions regarding collaboration asked questions that referred to organizational structures, decision-making methods, and organization activities. However, the semi-structured, exploratory approach allowed me to explore how CE youth view the civic sphere, especially their concern that youth are not adequately engaged in civic organizations. The fact that so many youth emphasized wanting more youth to get involved, may signify CE youth's genuine desire to create inclusive organizations. Chrislip argues that collaborative processes are important because too often "public hearings and town meetings" are dominated by whoever ends up having time to show up at (78). Moreover, he stresses that collaborative processes "cannot work without a credible stakeholder group" (78). CE youth's concerns around participation demonstrate their awareness that inclusivity is key to effectiveness. This research points to the need to explore more stories of how youth became engaged in civil society to explores any themes or patterns that could be replicated through recruitment strategies or programming.

But this research also points to the need to expand the idea of civic engagement. In a country with such a high percentage of youth, naturally, the concepts of collaboration and civic participation should be shaped and integrated as norms in a youth-centric way.

To explore collaboration among youth in further depth, special attention should be paid to social media sites, the role of social ties, and informal initiatives.

Drissi found that of the institutions that young people trust, universities received one of the highest ratings. Further exploration is needed to understand the promise of informal spaces in bolstering youth voices and youth concerns. Instead of seeking to empower and support the spirit of civic engagement in adult spaces, both international and local actors should seek to empower youth in youth spaces. In "Problematizing Arab Youth" Emma C. Murphy calls social networking sites the "new interface of state-society confrontation" (12). Murphy seeks to expand how youth activism is understood, underscoring the role of informal spaces. However, I argue that, for Tunisia's young leaders, informal and formal civic spaces are not just platforms for state confrontation.

Informal spaces and civic groups are the platform for the development of in independent community of youth activists. Youth are using a wide variety of civic spaces to build strategic relationships across social differences; encourage a sense of self-efficacy and community ownership; and to empower one another. In other words, these limited findings suggest that much of youth work is parallel to, not intersecting with, political affairs. Though the numbers of civically engaged youth are low, they want little or nothing to do with the political realm. Still, civic collaboration and "friendship networks" according to Putnam can strengthen Tunisia's post-authoritarian transition and "help people translate aspirations into realities" (288). As youth frequently echoed in interviews, young people are choosing to address youth issues, via their own approaches and platforms because it's the only authentic space they have. While in this chapter I

have focused on informal mechanisms of collaboration, in the following chapter I will

explore collaboration and exclusion due to religious differences among civically active

youth.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RELIGIOUS COLLABORATION AND EXCLUSION

In this chapter, I will discuss examples of social and civic divisions due to religious differences. I will also discuss how young Tunisians collaborate across religious differences. To begin, I will briefly explain the religious differences that young Tunisians described and how other social characteristics, at times, compounded divisions. Then, I will illustrate these division by sharing a story of how religious differences impacted a school club. Next, I will discuss examples of organizations that exclude based on religious differences. Lastly, I will discuss examples of collaboration such as intentional recruitment of people with different religious backgrounds and robust social networks across religious differences.

Religious differences were the second most frequently mentioned social characteristic of Tunisian youth. Participants defined religious differences as various levels of commitment to Islam, as well as different methods of practicing Islam. Tunisia is 99% Sunni Muslim with very small numbers of Christians, Catholics, Jews, Agnostics, Atheists and other religious minorities (U.S. Department of State 1). Throughout the interviews, participants mentioned religious minorities but did not discuss these groups in depth. Participants instead focused on discussing the differences between conservative and liberal Muslims.

Moreover, these religious differences sometimes became more salient when compounded with other social differences, such as varied regional or political backgrounds. For example, at times, conservative Muslims who previously were politically affiliated with Ennahda experienced greater social friction than Muslims who simply practice Islam conservatively without engaging in politics. Regional differences paired with religious differences created a greater perceived social divide among youth. While civic and social activity is very common in the north, there are generally less social spaces for youth in the south. Interview participants expressed that conservative religious practices and low levels of civic engagement in the south, combined together, correlated with stronger divisions within civil society. In other words, participants found that conservative and liberal youth, if they were from the some region, experienced less social tension than that of liberal youth from urban areas with conservative youth from rural areas. Participants did not frequently mention political differences as a prominent social characteristic. Given that the focus of this research is on collaboration in civic communities, not political collaboration, I will discuss political differences as it related to politically active youth joining civic organizations. I was not able to sufficiently explore regional differences due to travel limitations. However, participants often mentioned regional and religious differences together. While these findings are not representative of approaches to collaboration across regional differences, I was able to glean a few insights from participants who attended universities with students from both the north and the south.

Leading Students through Religious Differences

Young Tunisians from different religious backgrounds are highly integrated through Tunisia's public education system. Regardless of religious practice, young Tunisians intersect with one another in the halls of their universities. Throughout interviews, participants frequently mentioned encountering difficulty in their student clubs due to religions differences. The following story, shared by Mouna, a 25-year-old from El Kef, illustrates the types of difficulties students encounter due to various practices of Islam. Mouna's story offers a compelling narrative of how collaborative leadership can be utilized to effectively strengthen student organizations, create bridging social capital, and common vision that unifies students across religious differences. I will share Mouna's story while combining insights from Putnam and Chrislip to highlight the collaborative quality of her leadership.

In Gafsa, a small town in the south of Tunisia, Mouna was the president of a club for chemical engineering students and her friend Karym was the vice president. Mouna shared that she enjoys smoking and drinking. In our interview, she came across as eccentric, out-going, and a natural leader. Karym, however, comes from a conservative family that adheres to strict Islamic practices such as abstaining from alcohol and faithfully praying five times a day. Mouna shared that despite these differences, her and Karym both shared a strong drive to excel as students. Still, at times, Mouna and Karym encountered significant challenges to working together. When they first started working together, Karym felt that doing activities with boys and girls mixed together was not right

and violated Islamic practices. Several other participants in this study also mentioned encountering the same challenges in their student or youth organizations.

Mouna shared that one day Karym's friends, Ahmed, confronted Mouna, saying that if the activities weren't separated by gender then Karym was going to leave the club. In response, Mouna argued back that the club is not for only men or only women, it's for all students. Mouna asserted, "We are chemical engineering students, so you have to behave so." Mouna put forth a common vision, arguing for a sense of unity around their shared status as students, as more important than their gender differences. Moreover, she argued that as students they are obligated to help and support one-another and that separating activities by gender would violate this norm of collaboration and inclusion.

To strengthen her argument, Mouna underscored ways that she had supported Karym's religious practices in the past.

> I told him, 'the day that you wanted to have a nice and a clean place to do your prayers in the school I was the first person to tell the director of the school to do so. Not because I was afraid of you but because I believe you are free to do these kinds of things. And so what—if I have a place for my club then you can have yours to do prayers . . . And so now it's your turn to help me, buddy! I won't do [activities] just for men or for women. I will do it for everybody.

Mouna appealed to Karym by emphasizing that their relationship was based on mutuality and shared vision. Putnam argues in *Bowling Alone* that inclusive networks are about "mutual obligations" and creating a sense of "reciprocity" in which people feel compelled to make choices that are for the better of the group, not just for themselves or a selected group of individuals (20). Mouna asks Karym for help—emphasizing that the success of the club is dependent on the group. And, finally, she stressed that the club is not about

religion, it's about creating community among all students. Putnam argues that bridging social capital, which supports reciprocity across social differences, can help combat exclusive norms that can easily turn into sectarianism (22). Mouna's appeal to Karym is not just specific to the issue of gender, it relates to the issue of mutuality. Mouna reflected on this incident, "Sometimes you get in this kind of situation, but even in this situation, if you talk to people, you can get a win-win thing." Karym compromised and decided to continue to participate in activities. At the same time, Mouna continued to be open to Karym's suggestions, especially when he voiced that he felt uncomfortable with something due to his religious practice.

Later that year, the student club decided to hold an art fair and dance. However, several conservative students, including Karym didn't agree with holding a dance. Together, Mouna and Karym compromised by deciding that Karym would only be responsible for organizing the art fair. Mouna agreed to organize the D.J. and dance so that he didn't feel uncomfortable. Reflecting on the event, Mouna shared, "For me his presence is very important." She shared that his involvement helped make other conservative students feel more welcomed, "Because when he was present . . . then everybody saw clearly that we were doing this for the good of everybody . . . the Ennahdowi,[15] the Salafis, everybody!" Here Mouna points out that it was important not just that conservative students were invited to the party, but that they were part of the planning process. This reflects a collaborative leadership approach.

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[15] Ennahdowi means someone who is part of the Ennahda political party. Ennahda is a conservative, Islamic party that is the second most-popular party in Tunisia.

Chrislip argues that in a collaborative process it's critical to include anyone who "controls power and resources" (78). Mouna recognized that if Karym wasn't involved that other conservative students might stop participating in the club and also not attend the event. That is, Karym had unique power to influence other students. Her collaborative vision compelled her to negotiate the responsibilities so that conservative students were included in the celebration. Chrislip argues, to create an inclusive and collaborative environment, then "the convening group must have the collective credibility" to "attract" people from different backgrounds (76). Mouna recognized Karym as a key leader who would increase the credibility of her organization. Chrislip asserts that collaborative leaders must ask who are the essential people to make an effort "truly collaborative" and what can be done to "engage" those individuals (76)? Mouna demonstrated highly collaborative leadership qualities by working hard to keep Karym engaged. This examples demonstrates how even social events, when planned collaboratively, can play an important role in building bridging social capital.

Mouna shared that the next time there was tension due to religious differences the club was able to handle it. Mouna explained that the club had planned to hold an event that explored depression among women in the south of Tunisia. To advertise the event, the club hung up posters on campus that pictured a woman without her head covered. A conservative student, took offense at the photo and attempted to take the poster down. Mouna explains that this time Karym intervened and approached the student, "Karym saw him and took his hand and started talking to him. He didn't tell me what he said, but after about 1-2 minutes of chatting they left the poster." Later that week, Mouna saw that

same student who tried to sabotage the event, not only attending the event but also assisted the lecturer.

Mouna explains that Karym played an important role in attracting and integrating conservative students into the club. In this example, by having diverse leadership within the club they were able to attract members that otherwise would not have felt welcomed in the club. This story powerfully illustrates how allies are important. Karym played a vital role in incorporating conservative students into the club. At the same time this would not have been possible had Mouna not been willing to work with some of Karym's limitations due to his religious beliefs. By creating a collaborative leadership team, it increased the credibility of the club causing more people to be interested in joining and creating a space for students to come together, regardless of how they practiced Islam. In this example we see several collaborative practices taking place. Students negotiated with one another, valued each other's contribution to the club, and resolved issues through open dialogue. This demonstrates how Tunisian youth are using collaborative techniques to foster inclusivity in their civic communities. In the following section, we will explore cases where religious differences cause divisions that were insurmountable.

Exclusive Religious Norms

Participants shared various examples of exclusive religious norms. The most extreme cases include total social isolation and preventing people from joining civic groups because they wore *hijab*. However, participants more commonly shared that at times religious differences caused tension over what types of activities to hold, especially regarding activities that integrated men and women. Mariem, a 28-year-old from Tunis,

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explained that Tunisians Salafis live completely cut off from other Tunisians. In other words, there is almost no social or civic integration between conservative and liberal Muslims with the Salafis community. Mariem shared, "We have Salafis . . . They try to work only with each other, marry only each other, they live very closed off. When you try even to have a dialogue or to interact with them, they don't cooperate." This was the most extreme example of exclusive religious norms.

Mariem, shared that, just after the revolution, she started a student association at her university attended by students from both rural and coastal areas. Mariem found that at times the differing backgrounds among students caused tension, especially between conservative and liberal Muslims. Mariem explained, " . . . people from villages don't want to interact with other students. They think of people from cities as just people who go out, drink, and smoke. They didn't want to interact positively." Divergent social practices, such as activities that include both men and women socializing together, are perceived as a barrier to participation. "They think we shouldn't be mixed," she shared. Cultural and religious differences interweaved together caused a split on her campus.

Mariem shared that she intentionally tried to communicate that all students were welcomed in her club but this message did not have the impact she hoped for. Mariem did not share details of other approaches to including conservative students besides communicating with them. While communication can play a role in building trust towards collaboration, this example may be a reflection of how communication has a limited ability to foster trust. This issue could be further explored by interviewing conservative students on Mariem's campus to explore why they are not engaged and also

by observing the campus personally to see if students are integrated on the social level (in the hallways, classroom, etc.). If students are, for example, quite disintegrated during social times in between classes that may help explain why civic integration was harder to achieve.

While political divisions were not a prominent theme in interviews, some participants shared how religious differences became a politicized issue that also affected civic activity. Aziza, 24-year-old from Tunis, explained that some civic groups will blatantly deny membership to young women who wear hijab, "We see this, now, in many civil society organizations—they don't allow you to be part of their community and they try to marginalize you." Aziza shared that intolerant mindsets create these divisions, "There are Tunisians here that don't believe in the right to exist for people who are different than them."

Two participants noted that because they had previously participated in Ennahda they were not welcomed to participate in civic organizations. Bochra, 26-year-old from Nabeul shared, "Once you're a Ennahdowi you're always a Ennahdowi. Even though I left completely, I have no idea what's going on with Ennahda now. But you're always going to have that following you." Here we see that politically active, conservative Tunisians seem to face different challenges to participating in civic life than those who are simply religiously conservative. This division stems from the legacy of anti-Islamism, instilled through years of torture and political persecution. Tunisians were systematically taught to fear an Islamist take over. Today, this fear is still evident within civic norms as well.

As seen, gaps between conservative and liberal Muslims are minimal, but become wider when compounded with regional or political differences. There is a small number of Salafis in Tunisia who live cut off from other Tunisians. Still, participants noted that examples of religious exclusion are limited and rare. Most participants believed that, in general, all Tunisians accept one another. In the following section, I will explore norms of inclusion and collaboration in both civic and social life.

Collaborative Processes, Organizational Structures, and Inclusive Social Networks

Just as participants gave examples of exclusion based on religion, participants also discussed a sense of pride that Tunisians are unified despite various religious practices. Participants shared examples of collaborative norms in social settings, collaborative issue-specific processes, as well as short-term exercises and simulations that promote dialogue.

While difficulties due to religious differences sometimes came up, most Tunisians shared that socially, there are not divisions among youth. Participants expressed pride in their sense of unity and enthusiasm for their friendships that cut across different religious backgrounds. Fatima, 19-year-old from Sousse, shared "I grew up in a family where, as long as you don't hurt me, I don't care about what you think and what your beliefs are. We can be friends, it doesn't matter our differences." Mariem, a 28-year-old from Tunis, similarly shared that both conservative and liberal Muslims interact with one another, "[T]hey don't have a problem . . . Yes they can get angry about certain ideas, but they exchange and they interact." Bochra, 26-year-old from Nabeul, explained, "I don't really

think that people will choose their friends based on whether they wear *jebba*[16] or not, or go to Friday prayer or not." Participants acknowledged religious diversity but emphasized that it didn't impact who they chose as friends. This shows that while differences exist, according to participants, social networks are not inhibited by variations in Islamic practices.

Many Tunisians explained that there is a great sense of unity and respect for religious differences, especially concerning Tunisia's Jewish population. Fatima, 19-year-old from Sousse, shared, "In Djerba you will find a lot of Jewish people . . . [T]hey live together and they are Tunisians, as we are, but they just have a different religion." Shayma, 26-year-old from Tunis, shared, "We have a lot of Jews in Djerba. We live in peace. Personally, I have friends who are Jews." Social ties that run freely through religious differences are critical to civic collaboration as many participants who are civically active noted that they began working with an organization because a friend invited them.

While social integration is an important starting point, true collaboration must go deeper than going to coffee together. Collaboration is not just the presence of diverse participants; it's diverse participants at work. Aziza, 24-year-old from Tunis, who is the president of a youth organization, noted how she intentionally chose diverse leaders for her organization, "It was my dream to have a civil society that was patriotic and that got rid of their old ideological schemas and to find our common ground where we can work together." While conducting field research, I had the opportunity to attend a press

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[16] *Jebba* is a loose dress that conservative men usually wear.

conference for her organization. While there, the diversity of the membership really stuck out. Group members included both men and women from conservative and liberal backgrounds.

I also found an example of an issue-specific collaborative process that quite closely matched Chrislip's framework. Adamos, a 28 year old from Tunis, shared that he helps administrative a participatory budgeting process in four of Tunisia's municipalities. Participatory budgeting is a process that seeks to increase citizen-oversight of municipal funds. Usually, municipalities that do participatory budgeting designate a discretionary portion of the budget to the process. Adamos explained that his organization carefully selected facilitators that came from both different religious and political backgrounds. These facilitators were given the responsibility of helping citizens come to consensus on which projects the municipal budget should fund. Adamos explained that having diverse leadership was critical to ensuring that participants view the process as credible and open and so that there was not suspicion of the process being coopted by a closed group or sabotaged by specific ideologies. Similarly, Chrislip argues that collaborative processes rely on facilitators "with recognized influence in the stakeholder group" (88). Adamos points out that because the facilitators came from diverse backgrounds, the initiative enjoyed high levels of participation.

Adamos shared, "In the public meetings there were a lot of point of views, different religious views, different political views but they still gathered together." Adamos shared that participants shared a common interest in bettering their region, so much so, that despite religious differences, participants worked together. Adamos

explained, "We have pictures of groups of people working together on projects with Salafis men working with women who wear a mini-dress and wearing makeup." Adamos described a deeply collaborative process. Not only did the organization carefully choose facilitators that would have credibility among both conservative and liberal Tunisians, but they also emphasized the shared vision of improving their city and gave participants an opportunity to work with their neighbors.

I also found that some organizations focused on holding dialogues, roundtables, and collaborative simulations where citizens could practice working with people from different religious backgrounds. Amine, a 30-year-old from Tunis and president of the youth wing of a civic group, explained how he uses simulations to teach the value of collaboration. Amine shared that his organization invites conservative and liberal Muslims to participate in an exercise where they are required to advocate for the opposite point of view. Amine explained, "So we say to the secularists [participants] you are now part of an Islamist party, like Ennahda . . ." Amine gives them simulated collaborative exercises, such as deciding how to create a program on a million dollar budget. Amine shared, "We mix up the participants so that they have to adapt . . . they have to work together." This exercise gave participants the opportunity to try out a collaborative process. Participants were given a shared goal and required to work together. At the same time, the simulation required participants to practice empathy by requiring them to switch roles and learn to think with a different mentality.

Conclusions

Tunisian youth interviewed in this research shared a strong sense of unity that transcended religious differences. In social life, Tunisian youth tend to pride themselves in being open and accepting. Moreover, youth also frequently emphasized that Tunisia is a very united country, compared to other Muslim countries that have conflicts between Sunnis and Shiites or between Jews and Muslims. Tunisian youth interviewed in this research did not describe themselves as fundamentally divided along the lines of conservative and liberal practices. Alcinda Honwana similarly found in her study that religious issues, even in 2011, were not part of the "youth-led revolution," stating that, "the movement did not treat religion as an issue" (125).

Among the participants in this research, youth described themselves as largely unified due to their common experience of "unemployment, political disempowerment and restricted futures" (Honwana 9). Participants in this study described how social networks flow through religious differences without major obstacles. These social networks seem to be nurtured, largely, through the educational settings where youth are highly integrated. And frequent interaction among differing social groups is important because it tends to produce norms of "generalized reciprocity" (Putnam 21). These norms of "generalized reciprocity" are integral to the creation of networks of trust that enjoy high levels of interconnection and social capital.

This research suggests that perhaps youth approaches to collaboration can be more deeply understood by looking at social inclusion, instead of just formalized issue-specific processes. As seen in both chapter six and chapter seven, participants

emphasized that they were friends with liberals and conservatives and youth who are and aren't civically engaged. That is, participants emphasized the diversity of their friendships, reflecting that the participants conceptualized collaboration as a highly social and informal concept.

However, Ben Ali's legacy of divide and rule tactics still comes to life through Islamophobic organizational practices. In "The Revolutionary Promise" British Council et al. found that universities in Tunisia tend to "mirror" the ideological divides within politics (32). One participants in the British Council et al. study shared that "'Universities have become a battle scene between leftists and Islamists'" (32). Some CE youth from this research sample were successful in managing these differences by emphasizing shared vision. Young civic leaders shared stories of finding common vision through common goals such as combatting terrorism or helping create community in their schools. Religious differences, when compounded with other social differences such as political or regional differences, correlated with greater perceived social tension. This suggests that greater collaboration is needed across regional and political lines.

CHAPTER EIGHT: COLLABORATIVE CIVIC LEADERSHIP, ACTIVITIES, AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

While in chapter six and seven I explored approaches to collaboration across specific social differences, in this chapter I will explore collaborative practices in broader strokes. In this chapter I organized approaches to civic collaboration into three main categories: leadership styles, organizational structures, and activities. These examples provide a rich snapshot of youth approaches to civic and social collaboration. Firstly, I will explore approaches to collaborative civic leadership. Here, I will discuss common characteristics of collaborative civic leaders such as taking initiative; a commitment to building trust with youth; emphasizing shared vision; and emphasizing the process of collaboration. Secondly, I will discuss collaborative organizational structures such as inclusive organizational missions; intentional recruitment of people with different backgrounds; and the use of structured collaborative processes. Thirdly, I will explore collaborative activities and their defining characteristics. I will compare collaborative activities to activities that promote communication and coordination. From my findings, I will identify an additional type of collaborative activity, which I call collaborative meaning-making through communal experience. I will discuss how these types of activities reflect various approaches to building bridging social capital among Tunisian youth.

Leadership

Throughout interviews, participants shared that they valued including people from different backgrounds, emphasizing that they actively work to build diverse groups. Furthermore, participants emphasized that diverse perspectives help strengthen their organization. Imed, a 21-year-old from Tunis, shared, "Everyone can help answer this question of how to fight terrorism—not just law students or medical students or sharia students." Valuing the contribution each person can make is part of creating a culture of collaboration. Chrislip argues that collaborative processes are about creating a group that can reflect the diversity of community (52). Instead of differences being hidden or ignored, participants in this research stressed that the differences among their peers should be welcomed. Moreover, Imed stressed that differences are not just for decorating his organization. Instead, differences are actually sources of enrichment for the organization's overall strategy. Similarly, Aziza, 24-year-old from Tunis, shared, "In the last two years I was really dreaming to have this team with many backgrounds of people working together." CE youth stressed that having a diverse group was something they strive and hope for.

Valuing diversity drove participants to work hard to gain trust of youth not typically engaged in civic associations. In other words, their priority was not just to accomplish a goal or make a decision. Instead, their goal was to build relationships. Adamos, 28 year old from Tunis, shared, "Often people are deceptive and so people are suspicious. So you have to show them that you have no personal interest but just that you want to make something for their benefit, then they will tend to work with you on it."

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Participants demonstrated empathy for young Tunisians who are cynical or suspicious of civic engagement. CE youth acknowledged that the civic sphere is still being redeemed from years of coercion under Ben Ali. Not only were they aware of this dynamic, but they demonstrated a commitment to removing this barrier by building relationships with NCE youth. Mohammed, 19-year-old from Bizerte, explained, "[T]here is no real leader in society to tell . . . the youth, that we need them. That's why we're counting on ourselves." This quote demonstrates Mohammed's passion for building a more inclusive, active civic sphere in Tunisia. Likewise, many other participants stressed that it was critical that more youth get involved in civic work, emphasizing that Tunisia's future depends on youth.

In times of tension, participants shared that they emphasized common vision to keep the group unified. Aziza, 24-year-old from Tunis, emphasized that her group's vision is to bring together young people who are committed to working for Tunisians of "all backgrounds" and who "defend the right of every person." Furthermore, she asserts, "The compass of civil society should be the commitment to common interest to people, not just you." Adamos, a 28-year-old from Tunis who helped administrate a participatory budgeting program which brought together citizens of different ages, political parties and classes, shared a similar commitment. Adamos shared that when issues arose among the participants he encouraged participants to remember the original goal, "We always remind them that participatory budgeting should be successful in your town because it's for your citizens and it's not for us." When social differences emerged as points of tension, CE youth help the group refocus by emphasizing the greater goal that they were

working towards. Chrislip explains that shared vision represents the "desirable future" that participants are working towards and helps equilibrate groups during points of tension. Moreover, Chrislip emphasizes that collaborative civic leaders play an important role in rallying participants around shared vision in moments of crisis (49).

Collaborative civic leaders also encouraged participants to focus on the process of collaboration, even if at times it was frustrating or time consuming. Adamos, 28-year-old from Tunis, shared that he emphasizes to participants that collaboration takes time to learn how to do, especially if participants have never been required to make decision based on consensus and dialogue, instead of voting and debate. Adamos shared, "For many, it's their first time working in the group. We encourage them to be patient and flexible and to embrace the learning process." Youth emphasized the process and shared vision by helping participants redirect frustration with the process towards a common goal. This commitment demonstrated that youth were not naive about the challenges of collaboration. CE youth interviewed for this research showed that they not only valued collaboration but understood that it took facilitative skills and patience to actualize the vision of shared work. Participants also shared that their commitment to collaboration informed the very structure and mission of their organizational. In the following section I will explore how youth organizations institutionalized collaboration into their structures, demonstrating their deep commitment to shared responsibility and inclusivity.

Organizational Structure

Participants reflected on the way they set up their organization such as their mission, norms, and recruitment strategies. Often participants reflected on their choices

and compare them with exclusive norms they observed among other civic groups, so as to emphasize the intentionality of their choices. Participants noted various ways their organizational structure intentionally promotes collaboration.

Firstly, participants often shared that it was their organization's mission is to be open to everyone. Participants stressed that regardless of religious or political background, everyone was welcomed to their organization. Fatima, 19-year-old from Sousse, shared, "We don't bring religion to the table we are just like working on the community, like I said before, cleaning beaches." Regardless of background, participants stressed that they just wanted people who were committed to the group's vision. Shayma, 26-year-old from Tunis shared, "We just welcome student who are enthusiastic to learn about peace. We accept everyone, all the students."

Almost all CE youth who led an organization stressed inclusivity, reflecting a strong desire to make people feel welcomed. These statements came across as intentional and thoughtful as participants often juxtaposed these mission statements with a general culture of intolerance in Tunisia. By sharing this juxtaposition, participants emphasized that inclusivity was an explicit choice, noting norms of intolerance in the culture. Amjad, 27-year-old from Tunis, shared, "We were living under dictatorship for 50 years or even more. In our education, we don't accept others." Likewise, Adamost, 28-year-old from Tunis, explained,

> You can find even people who are progressive, modern, and they don't know how to debate or make points with people who are different than them. So to me, this is not about religion only . . . it's about a generation that didn't learn how to deal with differences from other people.

Here, CE youth emphasize that by creating new norms through their civic groups, they

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working to try to replace the norms of exclusion and close-mindedness cultivated under Bourguiba and Ben Ali. That is, promoting collaborative practices is actually seen as part of the process of transformation in Tunisia's post-authoritarian context.

Participants noted that, still today, some organizations are created for the purpose of tacitly promoting certain political parties causing partisanship. Amajad, 27-year-old from Tunis, shared that that political parties have limits on how much money they can spend. To evade these constraints, Amjad shared, political parties will create non-government associations that secretly support political parties. Aziza, 24-year-old from Tunis, shared, "Here in Tunisia we have a lot of civil society organizations that are working like political parties." Other participants noted that if a liberal starts an organization then most of the members will likely also be liberals. CE youth shared that they were concerned about these divisive norms in civil society. They carried stories of exclusion in their minds as a reference point. In interviews, participants used these stories as reference points to differentiate themselves from other groups. Similarly, British Council et al. found that today there is still a strong "culture of politicising the work of civil society" (44).

As mentioned above, participants stressed that they valued creating diverse groups and reaching out to youth who are not involved in civil society. Participants shared how this value shaped their organization's recruitment strategy. Imed, 21-year-old from Tunis, shared how having diverse members was critical to the mission of his organization, "We will need conservative youth to work in this initiative. Conservative youth talk better than me to these people to explain that you can have Islamic life and

pray without killing the ones that don't do that." Participants identified themselves as unique to other civic organizations and had awareness that they were making intentional choices to support the quality of collaboration in their group. CE youth promote and cultivate a collaborative culture within their organization by both the way they talk about the mission of their organization as well as who they recruit to join. In the following section, I will explore how their collaborative organizational values and leadership shaped the types of activities that they organized.

Activities

Throughout interviews, I asked participants to describe the types of activities that their civic group offers. Participants discussed various civic activities that encouraged participants to communicate, coordinate, or collaborate. To review, the below table outlines a descriptions of each type of effort,

Table 5 Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration[17]

Communication	"Sharing information"
Coordination	"Synchronizing efforts"[18]

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[17] Table 5 is an original table that organizes the ideas of Susan Allen Nan, Andrea Strimling, and David D. Chrislip.

[18] "Sharing information" and "synchronizing efforts" are terms employed by Susan Allen Nan and Andrea Strimling in "Track I - Track II Cooperation | Beyond Intractability." *Beyond Intractability*. N.p., Jan. 2004. Web. 24 Sept. 2015.

Collaboration	"Sharing responsibility"[19]

Both Allen Nan and Chrislip refer to this spectrum as a way of capturing activities that require different levels of integration and trust. The idea behind this spectrum is that with higher levels of integration and trust, more desirable outcomes will be achieved. Also processes that require greater levels of integration and trust will, in turn, strengthen communities. In this section, I have organized the activities that participants described by the above characteristics.

Activities that Promote Coordination and Communication

One youth organization led a soccer tournament for youth who are members of political parties. Youth were mixed up, so that each team had players from different political parties. This activity encouraged participants to coordinate with one another by following the rules and working together to win the game. Shayma, a 26-year-old from Tunis, organized the event and shared that it was a "symbolic" way of teaching youth to "accept ideological differences." Soccer is a major part of Tunisian youth culture. This organization creatively used a ritual that everyone was familiar with to weave in a deeper meaning. By agreeing to work with their team members and follow the rules, players practiced coordinating efforts towards a common goal. In *Ritual and Symbol in*

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[19] Chrislip, David D. *The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook: A Guide for Citizens and Civic Leaders*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002. Print.

Peacebuilding Schirch explains that "improvised rituals" can powerfully "weave familiar or traditional symbols with new symbols that represent new, changed contexts" (22). This activity creatively embodied the value of collaboration across differences.

Another activity that promotes communication and coordination is debate teams. I found several youth organizations that focus on organizing debates. Amjad, who is a debate coach, shared that they emphasize group work so that participants learn how to effectively communicate and listen. Amjad leads trainings on debate where he focuses on instilling the values of respect and teaches youth to construct powerful arguments, instead of simply attacking people. During one workshop his organization brought together young people who were part of differing political parties. In the first session he observed that most participants started out by blaming one another. Amjad shared, "The workshop leader explained this is not really a fight, this is a real debate. You have to make a concrete argument." Amjad shared that participants learned to "discuss together" and "find a common solution."

Amine, a 30-year-old from Tunis, similarly shared how his organization focused on developing positive communication in diverse groups. Amine helped organize round table discussions with "activists," "politicians," and "youth" where participants focus on a topic and share their ideas with one another. Amine shared that they especially focus on bringing people from different political parties together to challenge them "sit at the same table and talk." While, Amine is not teaching participants how to share responsibility, he is encouraging participants to focus on constructive communication, an important component of collaboration. Both Amine and Amjad especially emphasized sitting "at the

same table" and "sitting together" so as to emphasize the importance of coexistence in the presence of different opinions. These activities can play an important role in creating a basic level of communication and integration among parties.

Activities that Promote Collaboration

In chapters six and seven I discussed various examples of collaborative processes. The unifying themes of these examples were civic activities that included diverse participants who shared equal responsibility in achieving a goal through a shared vision. Some collaborative processes were created to address issues through civic action such as creating a participatory budgeting process. Some collaborative processes were created to support social life, such as planning a school dance. These processes were built on intentional inclusivity, shared responsibility, and shared vision. From my research findings, however, I found another kind of collaborative practice that did not neatly fit into Chrislip or Allen Nan's model. I will explore communal experience as a type of collaborative practice, explaining its unique characteristics and potential in cultivating inclusive networks that cut across social differences.

Communal Experience

While many youth are invested in improving their communities, many are not motivated to join civic processes. At the same time, while Tunisian youth are generally highly socially integrated, their levels of shared trust tend to decrease when dealing with civic, political, or community issues. Figure 1 situates collaboration, communication, and coordination on axes of trust and integration in a graph. This graph also includes a third type of activity, which I call communal experience.

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Communal experience is achieved when participants share an experience that is designed for high levels of integration without requiring high levels of trust. Going to a movie, concert, or even to a class could be defined as a communal experience. It is through communal experience that people can participate in collaborative meaning making. For example, friends go to a movie together and play off each other's ideas to decide how they liked it. Students often turn to their peers after class to ask, "what did you make of that lecture?" Shared meaning making of communal events is a foundational way that we shape opinions, values, and relationships. Shared experiences can be as mundane as shopping at the same store or as extraordinary as participating in a revolution.
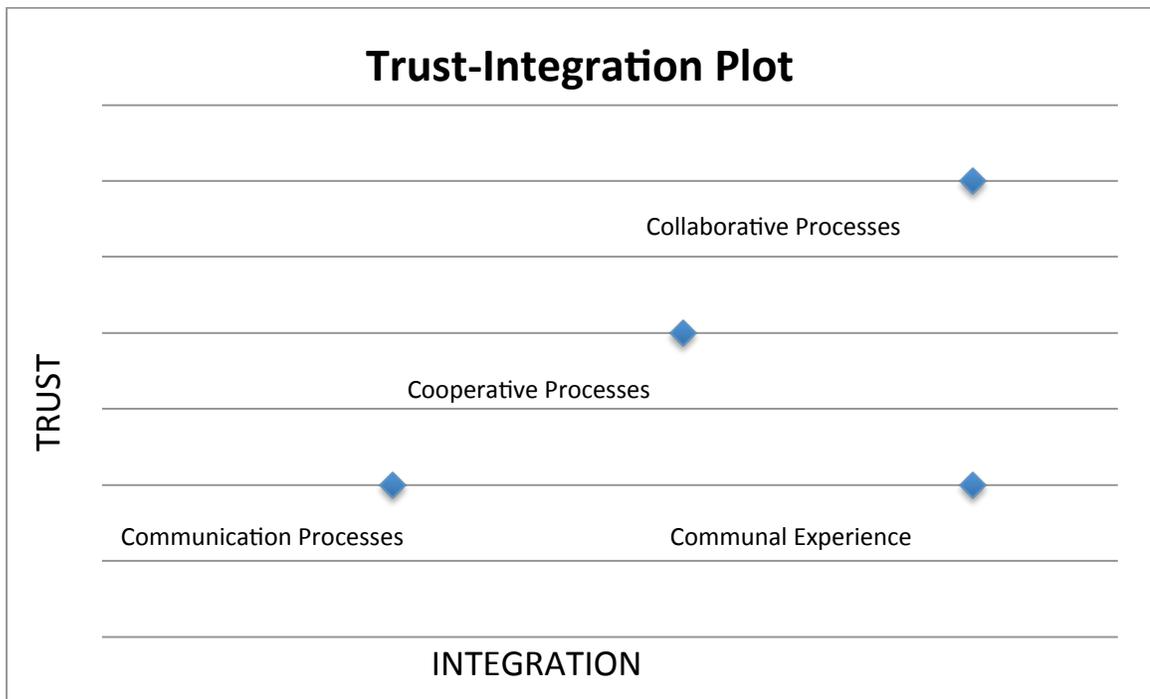
Trust-Integration Plot

Collaborative Processes

Cooperative Processes

Communication Processes   Communal Experience

TRUST

INTEGRATION

Figure 2 Trust-Integration Plot

Through communal experience, participants witness images and sounds. Their testimony of the experience may be varied but by sharing testimony they also recreate experience. That is, shared experience often leads to the ritual of telling the story of the experience. As participants tell stories of their shared experience they participate in collaborative meaning making. Individuals or small groups make meaning that, in turn, influences the environment in which the experience is shared. In interviews, I found several examples of communal experiences that were highly social but still did not require high levels of trust.

Bacem, a 35-year-old from Bizerte, shared that he participated in the Indian festival of *Holi*, which is the festival of color. He described how the organizers created a fun, interactive space for youth to come together and how they leveraged this space to create an opportunity for collaborative meaning-making. Bacem reflected, "At the end of the party everyone has different colors on just one body." Bacem described the festival as a metaphor for unity in diversity. Though everyone had different colors, they all shared the same experience of "fun" and "dance." At the end of the event, the conveners asked youth to consider what their part is in creating unity in Tunisia. In this example, the organizers created an interactive space where participants could collaboratively create fun and make meaning of fun, creating a sense of community. Then the conveners built on this base of community to ask participants to consider other ways they could work together as a community, namely how could youth contribute to building greater unity.

Shayma, a 26-year-old from Tunis, shared that her university club hosted a photo booth during the first week of school to give students an easy environment to meet new

people. Students were invited to come take photos or "selfies" in the booth and then the club later posted them on Facebook for students to share.

Mouna, 25 year old from El Kef, explains that she threw a big school party that brought young people from different backgrounds together to share a highly integrated, interactive experience. Mouna described looking out on the dance floor and seeing both boys with beards and girls with scarves all dancing together, "I was looking at them and everybody was dancing like yeah, yeah yeah!" To see her peers better, she asked the D.J. to turn on the light. She reflected, "You can see boys and girls mingling, but when they saw the faces of each other they were like ashamed. Everybody turned around and went to his friend." The music and lights brought young people together across their different backgrounds. And moreover, this unique youth-centric space gave birth to it's own norms of integration in which young men and women danced together, unhindered by familial pressures or rules.

In Mouna's story, the light, dance floor, and music all played a key role in creating this moment of social collaboration. Firstly, the event itself would not have been possible without a place to congregate. Access to space provided an opportunity for young people to come together. But music gave everyone a reason to dance. Music is like the shared vision that guides a collaborative process. Without music, there is no dance. And finally, light is needed so that participants can see each other. They needed light to not step on each other toes. And yet, the light should be adjusted so that social differences aren't blinding. In the same way, collaborative processes should not attempt to keep differences in the dark. They should be exposed, but just enough for the process to be

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authentic. The point of inclusion is not to emphasize differences; it's to create a space where diverse perspectives enrich common energy to be put to work towards a common goal.

Lastly, the party wouldn't have happened unless someone would have planned it. Which raises the question, how did Mouna have the ability to convene such a diverse group of people? Gopin, in *To Make the Earth Whole*, emphasizes that some of the most powerful peacemakers are those that have the most amount of loose ties (78).[20] People with loose ties could also be considered the best individuals to throw a party. Their connections through a variety of groups give them great power for robust social convening. These informal, shared experiences and high levels of social integration are the processes whereby young Tunisians experience high levels of integration. And moreover, these informal experiences can create camaraderie across religious, political, and other social differences, paving the way for greater levels of integration and trust that are needed for issue-specific collaborative processes. These are just a few examples of how youth organizations used interactive activities to build trust. Participants noted that they often used communal experiences such as concerts or flash mobs[21] to attract new members. While their goal was often to raise awareness of their organization, these interactive, communal experiences also gave participants an opportunity to both make new friends and collaboratively craft meaning around their experiences.

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[20] The concept of loose or "weak ties" versus "strong ties" was originally coined by Marc Granovetter in the article "The Strength of Weak Ties"

[21] A flash mob is when a group of people suddenly and spontaneously start performing a synchronized dance, play, or any type of performance art in a public space. Flash mobs are often used to capture the attention of large groups for the purpose of fun or in order to disseminate a message.

Conclusions

Tunisia's young civic leaders have developed a wide-variety of approaches to collaboration. For many civically engaged youth, collaboration begins with a personal conviction that diverse perspectives will strengthen their organization and community. This commitment to including different voices motivates them to increase the accessibility and attractiveness of civic engagement. To counter the legacy of coercion and manipulation, civically engaged youth focus on using social capital to encourage civic participation. And youth do not limit themselves to formal civic processes. Youth utilize experiential and communal activities to foster collaborative social spaces that create opportunities for shared experiences. Civically engaged youth approach collaboration in a relation-centric fashion by focusing on trust and expanding social experiences into socially-conscious conversations.

In post-authoritarian contexts, rebuilding social life may be a critical component of birthing a vibrant civil society. Putnam, in *Bowling Alone*, found that Americans that are active in social settings are more likely to volunteer (121). He commonly found that volunteers got involved simply because someone asked them to. This underscores the power of social connections in building a more engaged civic sphere. Putnam asserts "the more involved" individuals are in "social and community networks, both formal and informal" the more likely individuals are to be asked to volunteer (121).

I was struck, during research, that two civically engaged youth emphasized the importance of youth debates. Chrislip emphasizes that collaborative processes are built on dialogue, not debate. However, perhaps Chrislip's emphasis on dialogue is built on the

assumption that debates are already occurring. Chrislip seems to argue that debates are passé and that to truly solve community issues, there must be a greater focus on dialogue (97). Debate is passé while dialogue, from Chrislip's perspective, is promising. But what about in contexts where debates actually aren't common? In Tunisia, where public expression has been restricted and often punished for decades, the concept of debate is still quite novel. Participants noted that it was important to bring people together to sit with one another and to focus on making arguments, not attacking people. I assert that emphasis on the importance of debate was not an anti-collaborative attitude, but rather reflected how young civic leaders are still developing mechanisms and norms to cradle social differences so that they do not tear their communities apart. In a context where ideological diversity has been violently punished, emphasis on substantial debates and communication is a step towards collaboration. After all, in youth debates, the loser doesn't go to jail. Instead, the loser works to become a more effective speaker.

One weakness of this study is that I was not able to observe rituals or activities to see first-hand how collaborative and inclusive they were. Interviewing activity participants would have also strengthened the findings of this study. Most of my interviews were with people who were leading activities, who are more likely to describe their activities as successful. In future research, the findings of this study could be explored by observing civic groups over a period of time. Also, further research should also be conducted to more precisely investigate if communal experiences that are more socially oriented do, in fact, translate to higher levels of civic participation among Tunisian youth.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I will summarize the findings of this research and discuss the importance of them for the trajectory of Tunisia's future. The discussion of these findings will begin with a brief summary of the major findings. Then, I will expound on each finding in further detail by discussing other studies that inform the findings of this study, areas for future research, and implications for conflict resolution practice. I will begin by discussing collaboration between civically and non-civically engaged youth, followed by discussing collaboration across religious differences and, finally, I will discuss collaborative approaches to leadership, activities, and organizational structure. Following that, I will address how youth acknowledged the importance of their efforts, yet contextualized their civic work in a greater transition, which I call the second revolution, that needs time to develop. In closing, I will discuss a few additional areas for future research and provide closing comments on how this research reflects both the challenges and opportunities in Tunisia continued transition.

Summary of Findings

The civically engaged youth interviewed in this research perceive a commitment to civic engagement to be an important social difference among youth in post-authoritarian Tunisia. Among my participants, the most salient social difference among youth was between those that are civically engaged and those who are not civically

engaged. Since thirteen of sixteen participants identified as civically engaged, this does not adequately reflect and is not representative of those who are not civically engaged. However, this does show that for those interviewed that are civically engaged, their commitment to civic work is very important to them and this commitment is foundational to how they perceive themselves and their peers. Civically engaged youth interviewed in this sample sometimes perceived non-civically engaged youth as non-contributors who are apathetic. This narrative silences the story of NCE youth who have intentionally chosen not to engage in civic work or who do not have the financial means to volunteer in addition to their school, work, and/or family responsibilities. At the same time, CE youth recognized that sometimes NCE youth are not involved simply because they aren't aware of opportunities. CE youth interviewed in this research believed that it was their job to make NCE youth more aware of opportunities and to encourage them to give back to Tunisia.

Religious differences were the second most frequently mentioned social difference, among youth interview in this research project. While incidents of exclusion were limited, young Tunisians found that there is still animosity between secular Tunisians and those who practice Islam more conservatively. This animosity took shape, in rare cases, as lost friendship, explicit exclusion, and, more commonly, difficulty finding common vision in student or civic groups. Still, young Tunisians interviewed in this research also emphasized the importance of intentionally sharing responsibility and work with youth from different religious backgrounds. Youth also emphasized to me that they were friends with anyone, regardless of their religious belief.

Civically engaged youth shared stories of collaborative approaches to leadership, organizational structures, as well as activities. Tunisian youth approach collaboration through a wide variety of practices that include formalized, issue-specific processes that are time constrained, as well as on-going efforts to create inclusive social networks that cut across social differences. The civically engaged youth represented in this small sample promote collaboration by building relationships and social networks across social differences. They utilize social spaces to promote enthusiasm for civic engagement and build social capital with people who have different backgrounds. These social spaces focus on communal experience, which serves to bring young people together without requiring high level of commitment or trust. Youth interviewed in this research also shared that they use activities that focus on communication and coordination, such as community debates or soccer games, to foster a sense of unity across social differences. Civically engaged youth also promote collaboration by creating organizations with the explicit goal of inclusion and by seeking diverse membership.

Discussion on Civically Engaged and Non Civically Engaged Youth

In *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam draws on research on Italian "regional governments" to illustrate the impact of vibrant civil societies on "institutional effectiveness" (344). In his research he studied regional governments that on paper were "identical" yet in practice some turned out to be extremely effective while others were "dismal failures" (345). Putnam found that where government was most effective, civic groups were most active. Regions that were successful had "strong traditions of civic

engagement" that included activities like "soccer clubs," high levels of voting, or "membership in choral societies" (345).

While I do not claim to be able to measure Tunisia's effectiveness as an emerging, delicate democracy, I do assert that, given that youth have been greatly marginalized by political actors, civic action is an important avenue for youth advocacy. In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam argues that civic groups play a special role in strengthening "quiet voices" and supporting minority or marginalized groups. Tunisia suffers from an overwhelming trust deficit that has largely stolen the energy of the revolution and undercut enthusiasm in civic participation. The overwhelming sense that civic action is pointless has powerfully impacted many Tunisians, demonstrated by the low levels of civic participation found in Drissi's study and the views of those interviewed in this research.

Increasing civic participation can help bolster the voices of Tunisian youth. And CE youth are working towards this goal by beginning with focusing on networks and social integration. CE youth are strategically utilizing non-threatening, symbolic social spaces to maintain and cultivate inclusive social networks that cross social differences. While Chrislip's model of collaboration includes a highly formalized, participatory process, Lederach, Gopin and Allen Nan emphasize collaboration in terms of inclusive social networks that cut across differences. In *The Moral Imagination*, Lederach emphasizes that peacebuilding is about creating connections that "cut across identity divisions" (79). While NCE youth were, by definition of who they are, not involved in civic groups, they were often friends with people who were highly active in civic groups.

CE and NCE youth were connected fluidly and socialized often. These social ties can play a powerful role in "webbing" youth into networks that are formed at "markets, hospitals, schools, street corners, . . . [and] youth soccer clubs" (86). Lederach argues that if networks of friendship cut across religious, regional, political, and civic differences and also across a wide variety of public and private spaces, that people will be more likely to advocate for one another.

But that also doesn't happen automatically. Increasing collaboration and thereby civic participation means that CE youth and NCE youth must move beyond going out to coffee and start moving towards sharing the work of bettering their communities. Most participants shared that they got involved in civil society, simply, because someone asked them too. At the same time, other participants who were not civically engaged shared the inverse. NCE youth interviewed in this research had all been invited to join an organization but they just didn't have an interest in joining. It's not clear why so many youth are not choosing to engage in civil society but economic pressure may be a factor. Future research is needed to better understand the socioeconomic profile of the few youth who are active in civil society as well as those who are not active.

Participants also often shared that young people are resistant to civic engagement because the civic sphere was so severely coopted under Ben Ali and, still today, some civic groups promote divisive ideas that are so highly politicized that they are perceived as branches of political parties.[22] This marks an important area for future research. What types of activities might encourage civic participation and build trust? And, along those

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[22] Interview with Amjad

lines, how do Tunisian youth understand participation in civil society and contributing to Tunisia's transition? Are there informal ways in which youth see themselves contributing to Tunisia's transition that are not recognized as legitimate due to the increasing professionalization of Tunisia's civic sphere?[23] And if so, how could the concept of participation be broadened to better reflect how the so-called inactive youth are in fact motivated to strengthen their communities?

These areas are important to explore because the civic sphere should be an inclusive, collaborative space. But the civic sphere can hardly be evaluated for its collaborative qualities, when a significant portion of the youth population seems to be avoiding civic groups. As explained in chapter four, I had originally planned to ask the research question, "How are youth collaborating across religious differences in their civic communities?" By opening up my question to explore not just religious but also social differences, it widened the scope of this project. This open, exploratory approach gave participants space to discuss the values and characteristics that were most important and, perhaps, the most obvious to them regarding their peers. I did not expect participants to discuss the value of civic engagement as in-depth or as frequently as they did.

Moreover, these findings posed challenges to my research question. I assumed that important social characteristics among youth were perhaps religious ideas or political positions. Religious and political differences would also be easier to understand when

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[23] Tunisia's increasingly professionalized civic sphere was reported to me by an anonymous employee of IWatch. S/he shared that with the increase of foreign funding, some Tunisian organizations have become increasingly professionalized leading to more and more paid positions in civic association. This has caused concern that the civic sphere is becoming elitist.

exploring collaborative practices because it's easy to ask how many women wearing

hijab attended your meeting or how many young people registered with Nida Tounes are

part of your organization. Moreover, just describing the difference between civically and

non-civically engaged youth was troubling in itself. It's not a social difference that is

easy to name. Youth often used negative terms to describe youth that were not civically

engaged. And, at the same time, the number of non-civically engaged youth that I

interviewed was very low, making it difficult for me to describe this difference in their

own terms, since I had little information on why NCE youth were not engaged. These

issues reflected deep assumptions in my research question. Firstly, to explore

collaboration across social differences is to assume that there are a wide variety of people

civically engaged. Indeed, I did indeed find that there was diversity among those that

identified as civically engaged. Of those who identified as civically engaged, I found

men; women; youth who had experience in politics; youth who had never worked for a

political party; religiously conservative; socially liberal, among other differences.

But, among the young people I interviewed, these various characteristics were not

considered the greatest perceived, or the most divisive, social difference among civically

engaged youth. Instead of class, politics, or religion, a commitment to civic engagement

was considered a value that defined both perception of self and other. Non-engagement in

civic action was described as a problem in Tunisia's society. Youth discussed how lack

of engagement is causing youth issues to go unaddressed. Moreover, they also often

understood youth engagements as part of what it would mean for Tunisia to flourish.

Youth often referred back to the revolution as good moment in Tunisia's history that now

seems unattainable. And by referencing this point in history, young Tunisians emphasized that if more youth were involved in civil society that Tunisia as a country would be better off.

Low levels of civic engagement among Tunisian youth should be alarming to scholars and practitioners. British Council et al. didn't get it quite right when they asserted that civic action is an "uncontested" alternative to politics and even claimed that "civil society in Tunisia is seen to have succeeded where politics have failed" (46). While many youth have enthusiastically embraced civic work, they are a minority within Tunisia's youth population. While there are more youth engaged today than in 2010, there remains a large percentage of the youth population not active in politics or civic work. This points to an underlying issue with the original research question. Even if civically active youth are collaborative within their civic groups, is that still significant if they represent a miniscule percent of the youth population? This pressing question will be further explored in discussion on youth approaches to collaboration.

Discussion on Collaboration across Religious Differences

Collaboration across religious differences is an important issue in Tunisia's post-authoritarian context. Ben Ali used religious differences to strengthen his rule through classic divide and conquer tactics. Moreover, Alfred Stepan and Juan Linz, in "Democratization Theory and the 'Arab Spring'," stress that it was collaboration among Islamists and secularists that helped set the stage for the 2011 revolution (23). Unity between these two groups played a powerful role during the revolution. Likewise, Honwana points out that Tunisians united together for dignity, transcending their

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religious differences (4). But divisions between secularists and Islamists since 2011 have tarnished that memory of unity. The transition has gotten much more complicated as more and more religious differences have come to the fore. The assassination of secular activists and a very vague anti-terrorism law, condemned by Human Rights Watch, have proven to be difficult trials for conservative-liberal relations in Tunisia's political and social sphere ("Tunisia: Counterterror Law Endangers Rights"). Given Tunisia's history of political repression, especially against conservative Muslims and religious minorities, it's not a surprise that religious differences were the second-most frequently mentioned social difference among Tunisian youth.

Participants noted that some civic groups are exclusive based on their religious perspective. Two participants shared that they or someone they knew was told they could not join such civic groups because they wore *hijab*. Participants also noted that the Salafis community seemed to socially isolate itself. However, while youth acknowledged examples of religious divisions, they also often described religious differences neutrally. Participants stressed that they took pride in having friendships with people who practice Islam in different ways and also friends who practice Christianity or Judaism.

Participants in this study frequently mentioned that students from different religious backgrounds interact with one another often in the university setting. Some participants shared that their university enjoyed diverse student clubs, while other participants found that their university clubs were more homogenous. Participants explained that universities often bring together young people from various regions and religious backgrounds. In "The Revolutionary Promise" British Council et al. found that

universities in Tunisia "mirror" the ideological divides within politics (32). Just as

Ennahda and Nida Tounes dispute Tunisia's stance on the role of Islam and politics,

student groups also differ on this issue. British Council et al. shared that Tunisia has two

major student organizations, one which is "left-leaning" and the other has been supported

by Ennahda (32). This suggests that there should be a greater effort to coalesce student

organizations in the university setting, such as targeted dialogues where student

organizations can form coalitions with one another. These programs could help break

down perceived conflicts of interests and build trust. In "The 'Woman Dialogue'

Program" Artur Bala, of Search for Common Ground, explains that they held a similar

program which focused on building dialogue between Tunisia's two women's

associations, which are divided based on leftists versus Islamist values. Bala asserts such

dialogues can play an important role in confronting biases and "pre-conceived ideas" that

may inhibit collaboration (4). The university context could play a unique role in

cultivating a culture of collaboration since Tunisia's universities often bring students

together from a wide variety of backgrounds.[24] Moreover, British Council et al. argues

that, student unions should be sought out by "policy actors" and be "integrated within the

public discourse" since they serve as a popular venue of civic engagement for young

Tunisians (25).

Participants shared several stories that showed that religious differences, when

compounded with political or regional differences, often correlated with a greater

perceived social divide. While this research did not explore cross-regional collaboration,

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[24] Participants stressed in several interviews that students from both coastal and rural areas often attend the same universities.

participants referenced a greater need for it in interviews. Participants frequently mentioned that there are lower levels of civic and social activity in rural areas. Similarly, Drissi found that 72.5 percent of all young volunteers in Tunisia came from coastal areas, 14.2 percent came from the interior and 13.2 percent came from the south. For that reason, civic organizations in Tunisia could benefit from creating an aggressive campaign to establish cross-regional partnerships that focus on the southern and interior regions of the country. Creating greater cohesion across regions and religious differences is important for several reasons. Firstly, the interior and southern regions have often been overlooked by both the government and international organizations. Greater partnerships across regions could help strengthen the advocacy base for underprivileged areas, which suffer from higher rates of poverty and unemployment. And, finally, these areas are also believed to be the most susceptible to radicalization. The Tunisian military has been trying to ward off terrorist groups in Tunisia's western areas, especially in the Chaambi mountains and many young people receive terrorist training in Libya, via covert crossings of Tunisia's eastern border, deep in the south of the country.[25] Youth from industrialized, coastal towns can serve as allies to youth in rural areas by helping advocate for regionally specific issues, such as increasing civic and social spaces for youth. Participants argued that increased civic and social spaces could help provide community and a positive outlet for youth who are vulnerable to radicalization.

Similarly, William Kornhauser in *The Politics of Mass Society* found that those who are most isolated are most likely to be susceptible to extremist ideology (73). Social

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[25] For more on this see The Economist's article "An encroaching tide" and Newsweek's article "Trouble in Tunisia" by Nicholas Noe

connectedness may play an important role in combatting terrorism in Tunisia. Putnam, similarly argues that people active in associations learn how to "run meetings, speak in public" and "debate public issues" (338-339). And moreover, these skills can become internalized as efficacious alternatives to violence while also providing a sense of community and meaning. This research does not at all attempt to offer a comprehensive analysis of radicalization of Tunisia's youth. However, participants did acknowledge this issue and offer that increasing civic and social activity could be an important means of combatting radicalization.

All in all, participants shared that Tunisians, for the most part, are integrated and amicable with one another regardless of religious differences. And, moreover, several participants stressed the importance of having young people from different religious backgrounds in their organizations. Some participants even stressed that they explicitly sought out conservative or liberal students so as to increase the credibility of their organization and to ensure that others, from a similar background, would feel welcomed. Likewise, Chrislip defines collaboration as a process that includes "people who reflect the broader community" (44). Whether it was just planning a school party, or creating a youth initiative to combat terrorism, participants stressed the importance of having a diverse leadership team.

Further research is needed to understand how deeply integrated youth organizations are. Within this study, my findings were limited to how leaders or president's described their members. Interviewing multiple members of civic groups and observing meetings would have strengthened the findings of this research. Chrislip

emphasizes that collaboration is so much more than who is in the room—it's how participants interact and how decisions are made. To truly grasp the nuances of participant interactions and decision making methods, I would need to observe meetings and associational activities, preferably over a more extended period of time.

Discussion on Youth Approaches to Collaboration

Chrislip argues that collaboration can provide a "sense of belonging" as much as it can lead to effective and innovative solutions to community issues. Through a process of collaboration, Chrislip argues that participants gain "a sense of self worth, a sense of control over one's life, and the opportunity for living up to one's aspirations" (2). Through the process of communicating, sharing responsibility and relating to one another "as equals," relationships can be created, strengthened, and restored. Relationship building is at the crux of collaborative processes. And, moreover, civically engaged youth interviewed in this study articulated a very strong commitment to relationship building. This shows that while the practices and approaches to collaboration may vary, the civically engaged youth interviewed in this study recognize the importance of social connectedness or bridging social capital.

The civically engaged youth represented in this small sample utilized social spaces to promote enthusiasm for civic engagement and build social capital with people who have different backgrounds. These social spaces focus on communal experience, which serves to bring young people together without requiring high level of commitment or trust. Informal and interactive spaces play an important role in building trust with youth who have been marginalized by political elites. While Chrislip emphasizes that

collaborative process must include shared responsibility, communal experienced can also play an important role in building integration among youth.

By sharing experiences, youth can experiment with making meaning communally. Shared meaning-making, in many ways, is similar to learning to develop shared vision. When sharing an experience, participants together reflect on how they felt about the experience and listen to the different perspectives of other who shared the same experience. Naturally, this may be easier to do when referring to an experience such as a concert or soccer match rather than discussing an anti-terrorism law or how to improve the economy. However, Lisa Schirch asserts that these informal exchanges can help foreshadow greater unity on more substantial and divisive issues. Schirch shares that humans are always searching for meaning and "ritual" or shared experience is a "tool" which helps us to create those meanings (100). While ritual is often thought of as a rigid tradition, Schirch explains that rituals can also be "improvised" (21). Rituals carry meaning, stories, and beliefs; and through ritual, values can also be transformed (100).

Youth interviewed in this research improvised rituals such as soccer matches that symbolized political reconciliation. The interactive celebration of the festival of *holi* symbolized unity in diversity. These highly social, interactive spaces can provide powerful spaces to build trust among youth. And, moreover, in a context where civic action is often met with suspicion, informal initiatives may be the most strategic anecdote. British Council et al. found that in Tunisia many young people find themselves actually more attracted to "informal initiatives" than formal, professionalized organizations (47).

Youth interviewed in this research also shared that they use activities that focus on communication and coordination, such as community debates, to foster a sense of unity. Youth emphasized the symbolic nature of these exercises, especially emphasizing the importance of bringing people together. However, Chrislip argues that communication and coordination should be stepping stones to collaboration processes. In this study, I found civic groups that seemed to be highly collaborative as well as civic groups that seemed to focus more on trust-building activities. Highly collaborative initiatives included participatory budgeting processes described by Adamos and campus activities, such as the school art fair and dance, described by Mouna. While I found many leaders with collaborative values, my research limitations constricted my ability to thoroughly explore collaborative organization practices.

Civically engaged youth interviewed in this research demonstrated a high level of commitment to supporting Tunisia's transition; however their small numbers bring into question the significance of their efforts. If large numbers of youth continue to boycott civic activity, what implications could that have for Tunisia's future? In *The Moral Imagination,* Lederach offers important insights on the issue of numbers and social change. Social change has often been understood in terms of critical mass, with a focus on the number of people who are considered to be on the "right" side (87). But Lederach argues that focus on numbers can actually distract "from focus on quality" (91). This raises an important issue for this discussion. While there may be few civically engaged youth, Lederach argues that we can better understand them by exploring the quality of their work and relationships. Social change, in other words, is not born of critical mass

but of "critical yeast" (91). Yeast is the critical ingredient to baking bread, even though it is also the smallest ingredient. Similarly, in social change, "a few strategically connected people" are like yeast (Lederach 91). They are able to seep through the mass, powerfully changing the dynamics.

Instead of explaining failed movements by numbers, Lederach argues that we should ask: "what gaps exist in the connections among different sets of people?" (92). This lens can shift the understanding of low numbers of young people involved in civil society. Of those I interviewed, I found both conservative and liberal youth and both men and women. Participants stressed the diversity of perspectives within their friends and families. Civically engaged youth interviewed in this study maintained strategic relationships that cut across religious, political, and civic differences, creating Tunisia's "critical yeast" among youth.

Moreover, Lederach argues that it's "the quality of the platform" where yeast and mass meet that "makes exponential growth strong and possible" (Lederach 93). Similarly, Putnam and Chrislip argue that the quality of interactions within civil society is integral to the health of communities. And that is exactly why the inclusive values of the CE youth interviewed in this research are so significant. While the number of youth engaged may be few, they are like the critical yeast being kneaded into the flour, insofar as they continue to bridge across social differences. And, finally, it must be acknowledged that there are more youth organizations today than there were in 2011 (British Council et al. 46). While the number of civically engaged youth is still low, however few, they still represent a shift in Tunisia's civic sphere.

The Second Revolution

The increase of civic organizations, and especially youth organizations must be emphasized as a significant part of post-authoritarian Tunisia. The growing civic sphere in Tunisia represents a second, slower revolution that is at play. Scholars and reporters have often been troubled with what to call Tunisia. With each election they call Tunisia a democracy and with each terrorist attack they call it fading story of glory or, at worst, a crumbling failure. Indeed, Tunisia remains in a liminal space between post-authoritarianism, revolution, and democratization. While the political leaders and constitution may have changed, the civic sphere is, more ambiguously, shifting and shaping. While Ekkart Zimmerman argues in "On the Outcomes of Revolutions" that a revolution is measured by whether or not there was a change of powers, Jeff Goodwin, in *No Other Way Out*, argues that a true revolution is a change of culture that takes places over decades. While the revolution in the Tunisian political sphere could arguably be considered over, the findings of this research suggest that there is a second revolution still in process, namely the revolution of Tunisia's civic sphere.

Similarly, youth frequently mentioned that the transition to democracy needed time. While Tunisian youth are taking steps towards creating inclusive, collaborative peacebuilding networks through civic engagement, they see the shortcomings. They see youth who, after being invited several times, still refuse to join civic groups. They see youth only looking for jobs, not voting or reading the news, and never able to find work. They see youth wanting to get married, but unable to provide for a family. They see civic organizations, using their license to exclude voices, instead of engaging them. Civically

engaged youth see deeply rooted impediments to a just, peaceful society. Still, they acknowledge the need for time, so as to signal that Tunisia is still in a process of transition. Youth emphasized that Tunisians are inexperienced with ideological diversity and the responsibility of democracy. But with time, they said, they will adapt to these changes. Time, they said, is needed to let new norms and opportunities take root in society.

Young Tunisians perceive themselves in the cusp of time. Between adulthood and childhood themselves, Tunisian youth strongly identify with the transitional period between post-authoritarianism and democracy. On this spectrum of transition lay stains of intolerance and societal divisions. Secularists and Islamists coexist in post-authoritarian Tunisia, but pass between waves of tolerance and assassination attempts, and all the shades of gray in between. Civically engaged and non-civically engaged youth pass each other in the halls of the university and remember protesting shoulder to shoulder in 2011. In a time when such critical changes are in question, is the need for time a simplistic answer to these issues? Or is the need for time, rather, an acknowledgement of the significant shifts at play in Tunisia? Aziza pointed out that Tunisia is not just experiencing a political transition, but a cultural one, "I think with experience and time that youth will start to better understand democratic work. Democracy is not just a slogan. It's a culture." Young Tunisians' approaches to collaboration are part of the transition of Tunisia's public sphere, which is sifting, processing, and birthing new norms to deal with social difference never publically expressed as they are today. In this context,

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perhaps the needs for both time and sustained youth engagement is not a dichotomy but a paradox.

From the sixteen youth interviewed in this research, it seems that civically engaged youth have found a way to both embrace the ambiguity of Tunisia's transition as well as the opportunity to create a new civic culture. Those interviewed in this research project show that for the few who are involved in civil society, they are eagerly seeking to contribute to Tunisia's transition. Civically engaged youth demonstrated creative approaches to cultivating collaboration across social differences to create powerful, inclusive organizations. At the same, they admitted that they had a lot to learn. Tunisia's few young leaders have embraced the ambiguity of Tunisia's transition as an opportunity for them to create new norms. That is, Tunisian youth are using new freedoms in the public sphere to create their own civic culture. And in this liminal space, collaboration and inclusion have emerged as central values. Bochra, 26-year-old from Nabeul, shared, "I think we're doing okay . . . even if we make mistakes—whatever. So what? We will learn. By time we will learn." This comment demonstrates both humility and courage. Young people feel the gravity of the shifting culture and the inertia of the changes in post-authoritarian Tunisia. The process of transition is ambiguous at times. But young Tunisians who chose to be civically engaged are embracing the ambiguity as an opportunity to shape the civic culture that has been born of new freedoms.

Implications for Conflict Resolution Practice

The civically engaged youth interviewed in this project demonstrated deeply-held commitments to social change. Tunisia's political actors must recognize the positive role

these young leaders can play in shaping Tunisia's future. Political actors ought to question the assumption that youth are indifferent to politics and be careful to differentiate abstaining from politics as apathy. British Council et al. points out that Ben Ali socialized youth to teach them that they were "frivolous" and impotent. Instead of engaging youth on policy issues, Ben Ali engaged youth "with football and low-quality music festivals" (73). By engaging Tunisian youth on substantial issues, political actors can gain key insights on how to address youth issues such as unemployment and radicalization. British Council et al. emphasizes that there should be increased youth consultants for government ministries which relate heavily to youth such as the ministry of employment and the ministry of youth (73).

Young leaders often traverse a wide variety of social spaces, giving them a unique perspective of the issues in their communities and among their peers. But often what youth lack are resources to respond to these issues. Political actors can serve as allies to civic leaders by advocating for increasing financial and technical support to civic associations. On the other hand, youth organizations and clubs can also utilize their expertise on youth issues to lobby larger international organizations or government bodies. Youth leaders can prepare presentations based on their experiences with community issues and seek support to implement solutions. Moreover, both international and local organizations could help build the advocacy capacity of local groups by holding trainings on campaign strategies and grant writing and reporting.

One of the major dynamics working against civic participation is an overwhelming sense that change isn't possible. To increase civic participation, this must

be addressed. While young leaders can hold cool meetings and demonstrate inclusivity and sensitivity to religious and gender differences, if civic groups don't have a reputation of getting things done they are not likely to have much credibility. It is for this reason that youth organizations should think strategically about who they can partner with to expand their efforts and maximize their effectiveness. Likewise, British Council et al. recommends that donors make grant writing and reporting requirements easier so that youth organizations are encouraged to apply for funding, strengthening their capacity to effect change (25).

While the legal changes that protect associations are a step in the right direction, more work can be done to decentralize government processes and increase partnerships between civic and political actors. For example, Tunisia's ministry for youth could create a discretionary budget that is set aside for youth associations, dispersed through a collaborative decision making process. This would increase the capacity of youth organizations and strengthen relationships between civic and political actors. In turn, this could help civically and politically inactive youth regain confidence in both the civic and political sphere.

In countries that experience a sudden spike in increased civil liberties, perhaps one of the most important safeguards of freedom is not the ability to say whatever one wants, but instead the freedom to create coalitions. This research makes the case for programs that support collaboration and encourage new democrats to ask the question, "What is freedom for?" Organizations such as National Democratic Institute and Search for Common Ground both developed programs that explicitly sought to bring youth from

different political and religious backgrounds together. Establishing norms of collaboration early on is critical. But early interventions alone are also not enough. Arriving on the scene in Tunisia just after the revolution is a start, but sustained support for collaborative processes is essential in order support the continued revolution of the civic sphere.

Areas for Future Research

Above, I reviewed several areas for future research. Here I will briefly restate those and I will offer a few additional areas that this exploratory research pointed to. Firstly, further research is needed to better understand why there are such low levels of civic engagement among youth and how engagement could be bolstered. This further research should pay special attention to the possibility of economic pressures impacting participation and assumptions of what civic participation is. That is, future research could even explore how youth conceptualize civic participation. This exploration could help advocate for a more youth-centric definition of civic engagement.

Regional differences were frequently mentioned, making cross-regional collaboration a promising area for future research as youth expressed interest and concerns with the difficulty of coalescing youth across regions. Further research is needed to explore if youth are attempting to collaborate across regions. Could cross-regional networks help support the voices of youth in the south who often suffer from higher unemployment rates and more substantial poverty? What impediments are there to cross-regional linkages and how could these be overcome?

Given that the participants in this study spoke poorly of politically engaged youth, what could be done to strengthen communication and interactions between civically active youth and politically active youth? What common ground is there between these groups? Do they desire greater collaboration and, if so, how could they begin? In a context where the majority of youth feel excluded from political parties, how could young political leaders serve as strategic allies to Tunisia's young majority?

Finally, one of the challenges of this research was that while I was able to connect with many young, civic leaders, I relied on their memory and descriptions of their organizations. This raises questions regarding the reliability of their perceptions of activities and their ability to recall events and details. Also, participants may have described their organizations favorably as I often interviewed founders and presidents. In future research, I would like to expand on these findings by interviewing both organizers and participants in organizations so that I could get multiple perspectives on each organization and/or civic activity. Furthermore, in future research I would plan to attend civic meetings over a longer period of time so that I could make personal observations. It would also strengthen future research by employing surveys with closed-ended questions that ask how recruitment is conducted; how decisions are made; how meetings are organized; how leaders are selected, among other questions. By developing a rubric of various approaches to collaboration, I could more concretely measure the collaborative approaches employed by civic groups. Further research should be designed to incorporate both exploratory components (semi-structured, exploratory interviews) and close-ended focused approaches (surveys) in order to both discover youth-centric methods of

collaboration while also making a working rubric of collaborative youth approaches that could be tested with a survey.

Conclusion

One of the goals of this research was to give greater voice to Tunisian youth. With 51% of the population under the age of 30, understanding this demographic is critical to understanding Tunisia's transition. Youth were put in the international lime light during the 2011 revolution and have since then been subjected to flat descriptors such as "potential ISIS fighter," "politically inactive" and "still jobless." This research attempts to give a fuller description of the Tunisian youth experience, as it relates to norms and activities in civic life. Young civic leaders are just as Tunisian as Seifeddine Rezgui, the 23-year-old who murdered 38 people on the Sousse beach resort. Yet few of these civic leaders get even half the amount of attention that Rezgui did. While the Western media has highly emphasized the number of young people joining ISIS, what they haven't acknowledged is the number of young people actively working against this trend.

In the civic sphere, young Tunisians are creating their own organizations that address youth needs and embody youth culture. Tunisia's few civically engaged youth, localized in universities and neighborhoods, are working to facilitate a cultural shift towards collaboration and active citizenship in some of the most critical venues of democracy and peacebuilding. That is, though the number of civically engaged youth may be small, they are occupying social spaces where critical societal norms are created. Civic leaders are creating bridging and bonding capital in coffee shops, streets, universities, parks, beaches, cultural centers, offices, and markets. Though they are few,

they are creating dynamic social networks that traverse social differences and that flow through both social and civic spaces. These relationship-centric approaches are promising for the development of a collaborative, engaged youth culture in Tunisia that has the potential to strengthen communities, bolster the voice of Tunisia's marginalized youth, and encourage greater civic participation.

APPENDIX A

Interview Questions for Tunisian Youth

<u>Biographical Information</u>

Where are you from?
What education do you have?
Are you between ages 18-25 or 26-30 or 31-35?
Do you work? If so, where?
Do you support a political party? Which one?

Understanding Tunisian Youth:
How would you describe Tunisia's youth?
What common values do Tunisian youth share?
     When are you most reminded of these common values?
What differences exist among Tunisian youth?
     When are you most reminded of these differences?
How would you describe Tunisia's religious/political/regional groups? (Will repeat the
questions below for each type of social divide)
     What are the similarities/differences of these groups?
     Which groups do you identify with? Why?
     Do these different groups work together? How?

So among Tunisian youth there are these groups: [insert group described]. Are there any
other groups or social differences you would like to add?

Now I will ask questions about how you are involved in your community.

Civic Engagement:
How are you involved in your community?
     Are you involved in any community organizations? Which one?
What type of people are involved in [*INSERT ACITIVITY*]?
Are there people from all the different groups [mention the specific groups/differences
identified in the first section] you mentioned involved in this activity?
Is this organization open to anyone?
Does this organization promote inclusivity? How?
Does this organization ever work with other organizations?

Who?

If yes, what do they do together?

Social Engagement:

Where do you like to hang out?

Are you part of any groups/clubs/sports teams?

What do you do for fun?

Tell me about your friends . . .

Do your friends have similar political beliefs? Religious beliefs?

Do religious and political differences impact social life?

You are involved in your community by [insert activities] and you usually socialize by [insert activities]. Are there any other activities you would like to add?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me that may help me to understand collaborating with different groups in your community?

APPENDIX B

Figure 3 Map of Tunisia

Source: "Tunisia Country Map" *WorldTravels.com*, n.d, web.

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BIOGRAPHY

Sarah Kincaid, MS graduate from the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, graduated cum laude from Berea College with a B.A. in English and Peace and Social Justice. At Berea College, Kincaid worked as an international student peer-advisor and student writer and editor for the campus alumni magazine and a literary quarterly. In 2011 she studied French in Normandy, France followed by an internship in Tunisia, just six months after the Arab Uprisings. In 2012 she was awarded Berea College's Coretta Scott King award for promoting interracial understanding. As a master's student she has focused on peace education and social movements in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In 2013 – 2015 she worked as the Graduate Admissions and Student Services Associate at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and also as the Homestay Coordinator for the Indonesia Youth Leadership Program, funded through the State Department Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Kincaid has also interned at Freedom House, the National Democratic Institute, and helped coordinate several Mason conferences. Summer 2015, she was named the Honorary Kayla Mueller Fellow by the Chantal Paydar Foundation. Through this fellowship, she participated in the Sixth Tunis Exchange where she met with thirty political, religious, and civic leaders and conducted qualitative field research on youth participation in civil society.