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Modernisation theory meets Tunisia's youth during and since the revolution of 2011

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Abstract

This paper presents evidence from interviews in 2015-16 with a nationally representative sample of Tunisia's 15-29 year olds. We use modernisation theory as a prism to examine the sample's political participation and orientations during the 'revolution' of 2011 and subsequently. We find that just 6.6 percent of those aged 15-24 at the time played any direct part in the 'events of 2011'. Political engagement then and subsequently is shown to have been influenced most strongly by a university education and growing-up in a politically engaged family. In 2015-16 the young people were overwhelmingly pro-democracy, supported equal opportunities and status for the sexes, and endorsed self-expression values, but attached equal importance to economic security and betterment, felt that their country's traditions should be maintained and respected, and were personally religious though three-quarters wanted religion to be kept out of politics and government. We explain why Tunisia was the sole Arab Spring country to emerge with a still functioning (in 2016) multi-party democracy. This is despite the main parties having narrow and shallow support among the country's youth, most of whom do not trust their elected politicians. Our survey findings suggest explanations for the paradox between young Tunisians' overwhelming support for democracy alongside intense disappointment with the outcomes. These explanations include young Tunisians seeking a type of modernisation that does not map neatly onto Western versions of modernity, and which at present may not be realisable.

Keywords: Arab Spring, modernisation theory, politics, Tunisia, youth.

INTRODUCTION

Why revisit the Arab Spring? First, because many questions about these 'events of 2011' remain unanswered, and the passage of time and additional evidence now available enable these questions to be addressed. Second, because the answers have relevance beyond idle curiosity about what happened in 2011. We shall show that modernisation theory enables us to reframe hitherto unanswered questions and offer answers which have much wider relevance. The new evidence is from a survey conducted during late-2015 and early-2016 among a nationally representative sample of 2000 15-29 year olds in Tunisia, the country where the wave of uprisings in 2011 began.

The main objectives of this paper are to find out who were the most politically active in 2011 and remain so at present, to outline the values that underpin youth political activism and on this basis, to provide explanations for the paradox between young Tunisians' overwhelming support for democracy alongside intense disappointment with the outcomes.

We justify our selection of modernisation theory as an appropriate framework for setting North Africa's and the Middle-East's events of 2011 in global and historical contexts. The following passages proceed by identifying knowledge gaps that remain after all the research and commentary since 2011. We give details of the investigation with which we try to fill some of the remaining knowledge gaps, then present our evidence on exactly how many and which of Tunisia's young people played direct roles in bringing about their country's 2011 revolution, together with the similarities and differences between these activists and the rest of their age group. We conclude with evidence that Tunisia's fledgling democracy is still fragile but is likely to prove resilient, and the implications for modernisation theory of the character of this new democracy and the views of its young adult supporters**.**

Theoretical framework: modernisation theory

Sociology's original 19th century theories of what was then called 'evolution' claimed that all societies were following the same historical trajectory with European countries at the head. Since then, this 'all on the same track' theory has suffered successive apparently fatal challenges, which have all been followed by revivals, the latest in response to the 'events of 1989-91' when communist regimes fell in Eastern Europe, and all the new independent states that were formed following the break-up of the Soviet Union abandoned communism. Democracy and the capitalist market economy seemed destined to triumph all over the

world, which would mean, as the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama (1992) declared provocatively but sceptically, that we have reached 'the end of history'.

However, the strongest support for modernisation theory, the preferred current name for the now well-worn 'all on the same track' thesis, is from the World Values Surveys which have noted the same two value shifts over time in all countries where the research has been conducted. The first of these value shifts is from traditional to rational values. The second is from survival or security to self-expression values. The evidence from these surveys shows that history always leaves an imprint, thus accounting for persistent differences between modern societies. Notwithstanding these differences, there are said to be important worldwide similarities in the outcomes of modernisation. Shifts towards rational and self-expression values are said to exercise reciprocal influence leading to the 'liberation' of market economies and demands for democracy, both of which confer greater scope for individual choices and undermine traditional authorities whether monarchies or religions. The evidence from the World Values Surveys indicates that these value shifts always begin among young adults, specifically the better-educated who live in major cities, then spread outwards and upwards throughout all age groups through cohort replacement (Dalton and Welzel, 2014; Inglehart, 1977, 1997; Welzel, 2013; Welzel et al, 2003).

However, Fukuyama's (sceptical) proclamation of the end of history was followed quickly by another American political scientist, Samuel Huntington (1996), counter-predicting a renewed clash of older, pre-communist civilisations, mainly between Islam and the Christian West. This view gained enormous credibility following 9/11 in 2001. However, far less provocatively it has been argued that Asian countries have been pioneering their own versions of market economies and democracy, and also, in any case, that there are significant differences between the American and European versions (Martinelli, 2007). If so, we must recognise the possibility of the emergence of further Middle-East and North African versions. 'Multiple modernities' is the rival to the 'all on the same track' modernisation theory (Eisenstadt, 2000).

It might initially appear that the legacies of the Arab Spring constitute a set-back for modernisation theory. All the countries which experienced the 'events of 2011' were already market economies, at least in respect of consumer markets, and throughout the previous decade they had been adopting neo-liberal macro-economic policies, thereby earning the

praise of international financial institutions (see Shenker, 2016). None except Lebanon, which experienced only a tepid Arab Spring, could be described as democracies in 2010, and only one of the others (Tunisia) has subsequently created a still surviving (in 2016) multi-party democracy. However, we will show that addressing previously unanswered questions about the Arab Spring leads to a more nuanced appraisal of modernisation theory. Asselburg and Wimmer (2016) argue, and we agree, that the 'events of 2011' are best conceived as contested and open-ended attempts at transformation. Democracy has not swept across the entire region, yet there has been change everywhere. There are more active political parties and movements. All the regimes must now contend with pluralism (Cavatorta, 2015). There may be no entirely new regimes containing no old faces, but there has been change everywhere (Rivetti, 2015). Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds (2015) have observed that although all the attempted revolutions in Europe in 1848 failed to establish democracies at that time, they added impetus to pressure for change that eventually led to the spread of democracy throughout the continent. Tunisia may be leading its region along a modernising path but, if so, could this be towards a distinctly Arabic/Islamic modernity?

Some knowns

Some questions about 'the events of 2011' have already been answered either by recent history or research evidence gathered at the time or during the intervening years. In 2011 it was plausible to anticipate a North Africa and Middle-East repeat of 'the events of 1989' and what followed, though this was always unlikely because the 2011 protests were in countries with no histories of communism from which to depart and were already consumer market economies. None were Western-type democracies. In 2011 this was a plausible outcome, but as noted above and discussed further below, during and since 2011 only Tunisia has taken significant and (so far) lasting steps in this direction.

We now know that 'the events of 2011' did not signal the birth and mobilisation of a new political generation in North Africa and the Middle-East. We now know that the prominence of young people in the protests owed more to the demography of the countries than the over-representation of the young, and that all age groups were present and all their voices could be heard amid the protests in Tunis and Cairo (Brym et al, 2014; Steavenson, 2015). Surveys have not produced evidence of change over time or differences by age in political orientations that a new political generation would create (Hoffman and Jamal, 2012; Rizzo

et al, 2014). It appears that the most recent new political generations in North Africa were formed in the 1970s and continue to recruit new cohorts of young people. In the 1970s these new cohorts became the countries' post-independence generation. The liberators of the countries were in power and new incoming youth and adult cohorts were dissatisfied with the outcomes (Tessler, 1976, 2015; Tessler and Miller-Gonzales, 2015). Arguably, this dissatisfaction can only have intensified over time, and by 2011 a greatly enlarged new political generation could have swept incumbent political elites aside for ever, but unlike in Eastern Europe in 1989, this has not happened during or since 2011, even in Tunisia.

We already know about the 'condition of young people' throughout the Arab Mediterranean region in 2011. We know about the demographic surge, the high levels of unemployment and even more widespread informal employment. We know about the pressure on housing (Desrues, 2012; Hammouda, 2010; Murphy, 2012; Population Council, 2011; Roudi, 2011). These conditions have awaited increasingly urbanised and well-educated young people. In some countries by 2011 the university educated were the young adults who were at greatest risk of unemployment (Bogaert and Emperador, 2011; Dhillon and Yousef, 2009). Our new evidence confirms these features of youth's condition. There have been no changes since 2011, except further deterioration in young people's job prospects in some countries, especially those in which tourism had become a significant business sector (see Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2015). However, we also know that 'conditions' or 'structure' can never be a sufficient explanation of outcomes. Actors' motivations, informed by their own definitions of their situations, always need to be part of an explanation. In the case of 'the events of 2011', our best evidence is from research that was conducted close to the events. Most of this evidence is from Tunisia and Egypt and more specifically from Tunis and Cairo, the places where protestors succeeded in toppling incumbent rulers.

We know that the protestors were angry, outraged by the repression that they were experiencing and the manner in which all dissent was being brutally suppressed. They were outraged by the widening inequalities in countries where the regimes' neo-liberal policies had made them darlings of international financial institutions, enriching the rulers and their crony capitalist cadres while impoverishing swaths of their populations, degrading public services, and stripping the people of dignity (Boudarbat and Ajbilou, 2009; Boughzala, 2013; Chomiak, 2011; Fahmy, 2012; Honwana, 2013; Kandil, 2012; Shahine, 2011; Sika,

2012; Singerman, 2013). We know all this, yet important questions remain unanswered. Hence the seemingly never ending attempts (of which this paper is one) to 'frame the debate' about the true significance of the events of 2011 (see AlMaghlouth et al, 2015).

Knowledge gaps

Our fresh evidence can address some previously unanswered questions, namely:

- The socio-demographic profile of the young people who were involved in the protests, and whether they can be treated as a cross-section of their age group.

- Whether they had similar or different political orientations from peers who did not join the protests. Were they speaking and acting for their age group?

- Was there a disconnect between participating in protests in 2011 on the one hand, and voting in subsequent elections and involvement in conventional politics on the other?

- How many protestors in 2011 sustained their political activity over the next five years, up to the time of our survey in 2015/16?

We can set answers to these questions in the context of the overall socio-political orientations of Tunisia's youth, including their trust in politicians and political institutions, their religiosity, their evaluations of multi-party democracy vis-à-vis alternative political systems, and whether they have been abandoning traditional and security values in favour of rational and self-expression values.

There are other questions that we could discuss, but will refrain from discussing because our new evidence cannot tell us anything new. So we will not try to explain:

- Why the Arab Spring erupted in 2011. Why not in 2010, 2009 or earlier?

- Protests had been recurrent throughout the previous decade in some countries. How can we explain the protests gaining sufficient momentum and intensity to topple rulers in two countries (Tunisia and Egypt) in 2011?

- Was it just coincidence, or was there some connection between the events of 2011 in North Africa and the Middle-East and the intensification of anti-austerity protests in Greece during the same year, the demonstrations of Spain's indignados (see Castells, 2012) and the Occupy movement that began in the USA then spread to several other countries? During 2011 there were also riots that spread throughout London then into other UK cities (The Guardian, London School of Economics, 2012). We know that

new media played a part in the diffusion of protests in 2011 (see Brym et al, 2014; Cardoso and Jacobetty, 2012; Skali, 2013), but the availability of these means of communication cannot have been a sufficient cause of the spread of protests, and we must bear in mind that 1989 happened prior to the advent of any of the new media.

However, our evidence enables us to engage in debates about why the protests in Tunisia were able to lead to regime change unlike the weaker or shorter protests in neighbouring Morocco and Algeria, and we will also discuss why the legacies of 2011 have differed from country to country, and more specifically, why only Tunisia has emerged as a still functioning democracy, and why its young people are disappointed with how democracy (which has their overwhelming support) is actually working in their country.

Methods

Our evidence is from an interview survey during the winter of 2015-16 with a nationally representative sample of Tunisia's 15-29 year olds using a fully structured questionnaire which was available in Arabic, French and English. A representative sample of households was approached, and all resident 15-29 year olds became the sample. All interviews were conducted by a same-sex interviewer. Respondents were divided into those living in rural and urban settlements. Age, sex and marital status were recorded together with information on the housing that respondents' occupied, and their mothers' and fathers' education and occupations. The respondents' own educational attainments and positions in the labour market were recorded. We then addressed a series of questions about each respondent's political actions (if any) during and since 2010-11, together with their socio-political orientations. Details of these questions will be given as the findings are presented. For some purposes, namely all analysis that involves political actions in 2010-11, we use results only from respondents aged 20-29 at the time of the survey, thus excluding those who were not yet age 15 in 2010-11. We commence below with exactly who took part in the actions that led to the revolution that involved the flight of Tunisia's President Ben Ali on January 14 2011.

YOUTH AND THE EVENTS OF 2011 IN TUNISIA

The protestors

Who were the young Tunisian activists who set their president fleeing, and forced the incumbent regime to concede contested elections to an assembly that created a new democratic constitution? Not only this, they set in motion the wave of protests that spread across North Africa and into the Middle-East. We asked whether respondents had taken part in each of a series of 'actions' in the period leading to and surrounding the flight of President Ben Ali. These actions were:

- Participating in party political meetings and other activities.
- Making a donation to a party or association.
- Collecting signatures or signing a petition.
- Participating in night watches to protect a neighbourhood.
- Participating, attending or helping in a demonstration.
- Joining a strike.
- Using forms of violent action for social or political ends.
- Participating in election campaigns.
- Political participation via the internet.

Respondents answered on a six-point scale with a range from every day to never. As explained above, we restrict our analysis here to members of our sample who were age 20-29 in 2015-2016, that is, those aged 15-24 in 2010-2011. We reasoned that the youngest respondents were less likely to have been politically aware and active in 2010-2011. Out of the 1367 20-29 year olds in the sample, just 90 had taken part in any of the above actions in 2010-2011, just 6.6 percent. Only 1.5 percent had been cyberactivists and 2.4 percent had taken part in a demonstration. The action that had involved most respondents had been night watches (4.4 percent). It seems that it was the actions of a rather small proportion of the age group, and probably an even smaller proportion of the entire Tunisia population, that won relatively free elections, sparked the protests that became known as the Arab Spring across the region, and created North Africa's as yet sole democracy.

We also asked whether respondents had taken part in the same list of actions during the last year, 2015-2016, five years on from the revolution. Slightly more (6.7 percent) had been involved in at least one of these activities. So what was different about 2010-2011? Our hypotheses are as follows. First, in 2010-2011 most acted at the same time and in the same

place, during December 2010 to January 2011 and mainly in Tunis. Second, in 2011 the protestors persisted and refused to disperse in the face of police charges, brutal assaults, arrests, gunfire and fatalities. Third and crucially, by mid-January Ben Ali's security forces and colleagues in the regime had decided that the president was expendable and advised him to flee, temporarily and able to return, though this was never to be. If autocrats retain the support of colleagues and their security forces they can hold on until protestors disperse, or fight if a protest movement acquires arms (as in Syria post-2011).

The events of December 2010-January 2011 in Tunis show that it is possible for a small proportion of a population who assemble together to feel, and to appear to others, that they are 'the people'. We will see below that the motivations and orientations of the protestors did indeed represent the aspirations of many more inactive peers, the overwhelming majority of their age group. Some who did not join the crowds contributed to the revolution with sounds, images and lyrics which conveyed the revolution's mood (Gana, 2013; Skalli, 2012). The activists would have been aware of and sustained by the moral, social and material support that was given at the time. Those who died, including the street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi who self-immolated on December 17 2010, have become revered figures in Tunisia's history.

More males than females had been involved in 'the events of 2010-2011' (10.1 percent and 3.3 percent). There was little difference in participation rates between those living in urban and rural areas (6.9 percent and 6.0 percent), or between those from middle class families, measured by mothers' and fathers' education and occupations, and the rest (6.5 percent and 6.6 percent). However, those involved in the events of 2010-2011 were the more likely to have become university graduates by 2016 (8.2 percent versus 5.7 percent), and in 2016 a higher proportion of those in permanent, full-time official jobs had been activists five years previously (10.8 percent) than those in 2016 who were in informal employment (5.3 percent) or unemployed (6.2 percent). The protestors in 2010-2011 were then, and in 2016 were still, on relatively advantaged, not disadvantaged, life course trajectories.

Roughly a half of our respondents who had taken part in the actions in 2010-2011 had not been involved in similar actions in 2015-2016, while 3.5 percent had acted in 2015-2016 but not in 2010-2011. Just 3.1 percent had been activists in both years. They will probably have joined Tunisia's long-term grassroots political activists. Elected representatives in Western-

type democracies are normally drawn from similar small pools of long-term activists. Other citizens are not required to participate except in occasional elections.

Table I. Political participation, 20-29 year olds in 2015-2016

	Participated in the 'events of 2011' %	Did not participate %
Belong to a political party as sympathiser, participant, donor or volunteer	22	4
Using or have used activists political blogs or websites	28	13
Political party to which feel close	29	14
Always or often vote when elections called	37	26
Voted in last election	53	29
Follow political news every day or often	53	36

Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017)

We asked all 20-29-year-old respondents whether they took part in the set of more normal, non-revolutionary political activities listed in Table I where we divide the sample into the 90 who were personally and directly involved in the 'events of 2011' and the rest. The 2011 activists proved more likely than their peers to have taken part subsequently in all the 'normal' political actions. Twenty-two percent compared with just four percent of the non-activists in 2011 belonged to a political party in 2016; 28 percent and 13 percent were using or had used political blogs or visited political websites; 29 percent and 14 percent had a specific political party to which they 'felt close'; 37 percent and 26 percent said that they voted regularly; 53 percent and 29 percent had voted in the last election; and 53 percent and 36 percent reported that they followed political news every day or often. These findings

refute previous suggestions (for example by Honwana, 2013) that the activists in 2011 were rejecting normal politics in favour of alternative ways of doing democracy.

Respondents who expressed some degree of support for any political party were most likely to name either Nidaa Tounes (43.1 percent) or Ennahdha (27.8 percent) the current and former post-2011 government-forming parties. The support of the remaining 29 percent was scattered between a large number of much smaller parties. However, only just over 14 percent of the total sample named any favoured party. This is one indication of the fragility of democracy in present-day Tunisia. In combination, supporters of the country's two main parties accounted for only around 10 percent of our 20-29 year olds.

YOUNG TUNISIANS' POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND ORIENTATIONS
Who are Tunisia's young political activists?

Since being an activist in 2011 predicted all forms of subsequent, normal political activity, it will be no surprise that similar socio-demographic variables predicted political activity in both 2011 and subsequently. The answers as regards subsequent political activity are the same irrespective of the measure of political engagement – voting in elections, feeling close to a particular political party, following political news and all the other indicators in Table I. The predictors are all familiar in political sociology. Those who were politically engaged in 2015-16 tended to be male, living in urban rather than rural areas, older rather than younger with a pronounced leap in activity between late-teens and early-20s, married rather than single, and living independently rather than with their parents. However, there are two eye-catching predictors. The first is various indicators of social class: the classes of families of origin measured by mothers' and fathers' occupations and education (which did not predict involvement in the events of 2011), and especially whether respondents had progressed through university. For example, 64 percent of university graduates compared with 23 percent from the remainder of 25-29-year-old respondents had voted in the last election. Compared with participants in the events of 2010-11 (where our numbers are much smaller), in subsequent political activity gender differences are narrower, while differences on all indicators of social class are much wider.

The other eye-catching predictor of all forms of political engagement was whether respondents had been brought-up in politically engaged families. This was measured with a question about whether respondents spoke with their mothers and fathers about national

political affairs regularly, often, sometimes or never. On our measure, speaking with either the mother or father or both about politics often or regularly, 929 (67 percent of the 20-29 year olds) were from politically engaged families. This was related to respondents having been activists in 2011 (7.6 percent compared with 4.3 percent from politically non-engaged families). Both a politically engaged family background and participation in the 2010-11 events were independently related to our various measures of post-2011 political activity including voting regularly in elections and belonging to a political party (see Table II). The latter was most common (53 percent) among the activists of 2010-11 who were not from politically engaged families. However, there were only 19 such activists in our sample of whom 10 had become political party members. This was also more common among those from politically engaged families who had been activists in 2011 (15 percent) than among the other groups in Table II (three and four percent). Politically engaged families (according to our measurement) accounted for 68 percent of the sample of young people, but produced 79 percent of youth activists in 'the events of 2010-2011', 75 percent of regular voters and 80 percent of current political party members. Young people who participated in the events of 2011 were far fewer in number, and although more likely than non-activists in 2011 to become regular voters and party members, they comprised only eight percent of regular voters and 30 percent of party members. Most of Tunisia's young adults who were members of a political party in 2015-16, by far an absolute majority, were from politically engaged families, on advantaged life trajectories, and had *not* been involved in the events of 2011.

We allowed respondents to describe themselves as 'members' of a political party by being sympathisers, participating in party-organised events, donating or volunteering. Membership of a political party does not have the same meaning across North Africa as in the relatively mature democracies of Western Europe and North America. In North Africa, as in the new democracies of East-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, most political parties are top>down creations. They have been formed by caucuses of politicians who then mobilise support rather than built upwards. Members of the public can 'join' by doing something in addition to voting for the party like donating, volunteering to undertaking some activity, or even just attending meetings. They may thereby become part of one of the pools from which it is possible to be recruited into a 'political class' from which candidates are selected for placement on party election lists, or appointed to jobs on the recommendation on a member, and thereby co-opted into the political class.

Table II. Predictors of voting and party membership in 2015-16

	Percentages voting regularly	Member of a political party
Politically engaged family Participated in 2011	53%	15%
Politically engaged family Did not participate in 2011	45%	4%
Non-politically engaged family Participated in 2011	37%	53%
Non-politically engaged family Did not participate in 2011	31%	3%

Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017)

We should note in reading the above table that voting in elections and joining a political party are different kinds of political engagement which open different possibilities. 'Following' politics in the media and discussing politics with family members, friends, people at work, in streets and bazaars, can help to form public opinion which can make itself felt in elections and place politicians under additional kinds of pressure. Joining a political party is not just another form of political engagement. As explained above, it can be an early step in a political career.

We could very likely strengthen the link between a politically engaged home background and grown-up children's political participation by tightening our criteria for classifying families as politically engaged. We could require respondents to have spoken about politics 'regularly' with both their mothers and fathers. We did not ask whether the respondents' parents were political party members or held political jobs. Had we done so, links with their children's political activism and non-activism might well have emerged as even stronger. However, this would have required a much larger sample to yield adequate numbers of activists from politically engaged families in 2011. Using our generous criteria for classifying families as politically engaged, there were just 38 respondents from this group

who had been part of the events of 2011 and who were voting regularly at the time of our interviews and just 11 who had become political party members.

In any changing society, there will be socio-demographic compositional changes from one family generation to the next. For example, far more of our respondents than their parents had progressed through university. There are also likely to be changes in the ideas that politicians develop into policies with which to seek electoral support, and in the main political parties that seek this support. Between their parents and our respondents coming of age, there had been a revolution in Tunisia's political system – from autocracy to democracy. Despite this immense change, there was still a powerful tendency for political engagement to be inherited, transmitted inter-generationally through families.

Social and political orientations: activists and non-activists in 2011

We now ask whether the 15-24 year olds of 2011 who played direct parts in that January's momentous events were representative of their age group not in socio-demographic terms but in terms of their political orientations and ambitions. We shall see that generally this was the case. However, where there are differences these are not in the direction that one would expect to distinguish a group of young Western modernisers. The young Tunisian activists tended to be more conservative (using a Western frame of reference) than the non-activists. This also applied to those from politically engaged as opposed to non-engaged families. According to our evidence, young Tunisians want change. They want to modernise Tunisia, but in a way that does not map neatly onto Western-formulated versions of modernisation. Respondents in our survey were asked to rate three political systems: autocracy (a system led by a strong group that depends neither on parliament nor elections); technocracy (where experts and not a government decide on what is best for the country); and democracy (a regime in which representatives depend on and are accountable to the citizens). Democracy was by far the most popular choice among both activists and non-activists in 2010-2011, though majorities of both also rated technocracy as very good or acceptable (see Table III). We shall see below that the young Tunisians had little trust in the representatives that they elected. Yet in principle, and on the whole, democracy was clearly their preferred political system. On this, protestors in 2010-2011 spoke for their age group. The main difference

between activists and non-activists in 2010-1011 was that the former were less likely to regard 'technocracy' as a very good or acceptable alternative to democracy.

Table III. Views on different political systems, 20-29 year olds

	Participated in 2011	**Non-participant in 2011**
Autocracy	%	%
Very good	10	6
Acceptable	6	4
Bad	21	16
Very bad	63	74
Technocracy		
Very good	30	42
Acceptable	24	32
Bad	24	13
Very bad	21	13
Democracy		
Very good	72	79
Acceptable	16	16
Bad	9	4
Very bad	3	2

Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017)

Respondents were asked a series of questions measuring their attitudes towards sex equality, government measures to promote sex equality, their religiosity, their support for traditional and security values, self-expression values, and about their levels of trust in 23 groups and institutions. The mean scores on these scales are given in Table IV. Here the sample is again divided between 2011 activists and non-activists, and also according to whether or not they were from politically engaged families. There were only 19 respondents from non-engaged families who had been activists in 2011, so findings from this group are best disregarded. Comparisons between those from politically engaged and other families should be confined

to the young people who were not activists in 2011. Comparisons between the activists and others should be confined to those from politically engaged families.

Table IV. Socio-political orientations: mean scores, 20-29 year olds

	Political family Participated in 2011	Political family Did not participate in 2011	Non-political family Participated in 2011	Non-political family Did not participate in 2011
Sex equality	2.48	2.27	2.33	2.21
Government promoting sex equality	1.66	1.65	1.66	1.55
Religiosity	2.00	2.11	2.50	2.19
Traditional and security values	2.09	2.28	2.48	2.41
Self-expression values	2.43	2.50	2.76	2.61
Trust	3.56	3.33	4.09	3.87
N =	71	858	19	419

Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017)

There were 13 statements on sex equality. Examples are: 'The same upbringing should be given to boys and girls', and 'Men and women should have the same job opportunities and receive the same salaries'. Respondents answered by totally agreeing, agreeing, disagreeing or totally disagreeing. The mean scores in Table IV are calculated from these answers. The mid-point in the scale is 2.5. Lower scores indicate support for sex equality. The results show slightly more support than opposition to sex equality in all the groups in Table IV. All the means are beneath the mid-point on the scale. Seventy-four percent of the sample scored between 2 and 3, while 24 percent had scores of less than 2 (strongly in favour of sex equality) whereas only 2 percent had scores above 3 (strongly against). Unsurprisingly, females tended to be stronger supporters of sex equality than males. The young activists of

2011 and those from politically engaged families proved somewhat *less* enthusiastic about sex equality than others in their age group.

The sample was also generally in favour of government promotion of sex equality. They were asked to agree absolutely, to some extent or not at all with government efforts in the labour market, education, political participation and family matters. Low scores in Table IV indicate support for government efforts. All the groups had means of 1.66 or 1.65 (less than the mid-point of 2) except those from politically non-engaged families who were not activists in 2011 who had a mean of 1.55. They were the strongest supporters of government initiatives to promote sex equality.

The sample was asked how important they regarded religion in 15 life domains including dress, appearance, food, place of work and marriage. Answers were on a five-point scale with a range from 'very important' to 'not important at all'. Low scores in Table IV indicate high levels of religiosity. Generally the young people were highly religious, and the most religious were from politically engaged families, and especially those who were activists in 2011. On all the measurements examined so far, the young political activists and respondents from politically engaged families tended to be more conservative than their peers, but we must stress that this is within a Western frame of reference, and as argued below, our overall findings query the appropriateness of imposing this frame on Tunisia.

If the Tunisian revolution had been instigated by the modernisers encountered elsewhere in the literature, we would expect the young activists and their families to be pro-democracy, moreso than others in their age group, to express stronger support for sex equality, to be less religious, and to be abandoning traditional and security values in favour of rational, secular and self-expression values. None of this applied within our sample. Traditional and security values were measured in our survey with three questions which asked respondents about the extent to which statements resembled themselves on a six-point scale with a range from 'greatly resembles me' to 'does not resemble me'. The traditional and security statements were about wanting to be rich; to live in a safe and secure environment and to feel secure; and being a person to whom tradition is important and who follows rules established by religion and society. A mean score was calculated for each respondent. There were four questions measuring self-expression values: being a person who considers it important to think of new ideas; a person who wants to be creative, to have a good time and enjoy

themselves; a person who wants to have adventures, take risks and lead an exciting life; and being a person who pays attention to the environment and takes care of nature. As with the traditional/security scale, low scores indicate agreement. None of the results, however these are manipulated, fit conventional modernisation theory. Activists in 2010-2011 score relatively high on traditional/security values and also on self-expression values. Those from politically engaged families also score relatively high on traditional/security values and on self-expression values. Among our young Tunisians, support for traditional/security and self-expression values did not rise and fall conversely. Those scoring relatively high on one set of measurements also tended to score relatively high on the other. They wanted self-expression and care of the environment alongside security and respect for traditions. This combination is not inherently incompatible. Politically active young Tunisians and their politically engaged families seek modernisation that may be specifically Tunisian, or it may be more generically Arabic or Islamic.

Respondents were asked about the extent to which they trusted 23 different groups and institutions on a 10-point scale on which the lowest score indicated no trust while the top score indicated absolute trust. Table IV gives the mean trust scores, amalgamating all 23 ratings, for each of the four groups that are distinguished. We can see that participants in the events of 2011 were more trusting than non-participants, and those from politically engaged families were more trusting than others. Clearly, the Tunisian revolution was not instigated by young activists who were especially lacking in trust, though all the groups' mean scores are well beneath the mid-point, and levels of trust might have been different in 2010-11.

Table V[1] gives the percentages of trust ratings of six or more awarded by the entire sample of 15-29 year olds to each of the groups and institutions about which they were questioned. There is only one group – the people in general - with a percentage above the mid-point of five. Ominously for its democracy, the three lowest scores were awarded to politicians, political parties and elected officials. At the time of our survey in 2016, Tunisia was a low-trust society, and its politicians, political parties, and parliament attracted less trust than anyone else except employers. This, along with the narrowness of support for its two main political parties, indicates the fragile state of Tunisia's young democracy in 2016. We have further evidence of this fragility.

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[1] The answers were given on a scale from 1 to 10, where 0 was no trust and 10 – full trust with 5 being the mid-point.

Table V. Trust scores: percentages scoring 6 or more

The people in general	64%
National media	49
European Union	44
Legal system	41
Elections	40
Education system	40
Foreign media	37
United Nations	35
Religious leaders	34
Administration in general	31
USA	29
Trade associations and unions	27
Government	26
Local administration	26
Arab League	25
Arab Maghreb Union	25
Parliament	21
Employers	18
Elected officials	18
Political parties	16
Politicians	16

Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017)

Respondents were asked about their views on Tunisia's government before and since 2011 (see Table VI). Answers were expressed on a five-point scale with a range from 1 - 'very bad' to 5 - 'excellent'. The mid-point on this scale is 3, and mean scores beneath this mid-point mean that more respondents said 'bad' or 'very bad' than 'good' or excellent'. The economy, and the prevention of crime and maintenance of order, were rated as 'less bad' since 2011, but on all the other measurements the situation was rated as worse. The young

people believed that citizens were less able to feel free to say what they thought, that everyone was able to join a political organisation or movement of their choice, that ordinary citizens were able to influence the government, that corruption was under control, and that judges and tribunals were free from government interference. Clearly, despite rating democracy as the best political system, the young Tunisians were not impressed by their own country's post-2011 version.

Table VI. Views on system of government before and after 2011 (mean scores)

	After 2011	Before 2011
Everyone is free to say what they think	1.22	3.58
Everyone can enter/join the political organisation/movement of their choice	1.3	3.66
All ordinary citizens can influence the government	1.17	2.12
Corruption in the political parties and the state is under control.	1.5	1.68
People can live without fear of being illegally arrested	1.54	2.08
The prevention of crime and the maintenance of order are a priority	2.71	1.85
The economy is in good shape and everyone can live decently	2.74	1.44
Judges and tribunals are free from all government interference	1.46	1.86

Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017)

Table VII. Religion and politics (mean scores)

Religion should not influence people's political decisions	1.64
It would be desirable for the country for more people with strong religious beliefs to take on representational posts or political responsibility	3.29
The religious leaders should have influence over the government's decisions	3.28
The practice of religion is a private affair that should be separated from socio-economic life	1.68

Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017)

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree on a five-point scale with four statements about religion and politics (see Table VII). Despite most regarding themselves as religious, and despite our measurements showing that political activists rated themselves as more religious than other young Tunisians, most of our respondents wanted politics and religion kept separate. They did not want religious leaders influencing government decisions, or for people with strong religious beliefs to take-on representative posts. It was also despite the sample being more likely to identify themselves as 'Islamic' than as Arabs or Tunisians or any of the other groups in Table VIII.

Table VIII. Identification with different groups (mean scores: 1=strongly agree, 7=strongly disagree).**'I am….'**

Islamic	1.26
Arab	1.33
Tunisian	1.44
Maghrebi	2.92
Belong to Mediterranean region	3.01
African	3.08
A citizen of the world	3.53
Amazigh	5.82

Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017)

Some of these findings begin to make sense (to an occidental mind) when set in the context of the young Tunisians' economic and labour market situations in 2015-16. Tables IX and X divide males then females into three age groups, then give the percentages who occupied different positions inside and outside the workforce. We can see that the percentages in education declined with age from 64 percent to 5 percent among males, and from 76 percent to 6 percent among females. By age 25-29 the largest group of males (34 percent) were unemployed and another 13 percent described themselves as economically inactive. Just 23 percent were either employers, self-employed or in formal (official with a contract) jobs. Among females were largest group of 25-29 year olds were economically inactive (43 per cent) and another 27 percent described themselves as unemployed. This makes it unsurprising that that when asked to select from a list the most important problem facing Tunisia, the most common choice was 'jobs' which was followed by 'terrorism' (more on this below), then the 'economic situation' and then 'standards of living' (see Table XI).

Table IX. Socio-economic groups by age, males (in percentages)

	15-19 %	20-24 %	25-29 %
Socio-economic groups			
Education	63.7	25.3	4.8
Employer	0.0	1.5	3.0
Self-employed	1.2	4.5	7
Formal job	2.1	4.8	13
Informal job	7.8	15.2	19.4
Apprentice	3.3	3.3	3.6
Family worker	1.2	4.8	2.7
Unemployed	9.6	25	33.6
Inactive	11.1	15.8	12.7

Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017)

Table X. Socio-economic groups by age, females (in percentages)

	15-19 %	20-24 %	25-29 %
Socio-economic groups			
Education	75.7	21.0	6.2
Employer	0.0	0.3	1.1
Self-employed	0.0	0.9	1.1
Formal job	1.0	5.2	7.0
Informal job	2.3	9.1	11.3
Apprentice	0.0	2.7	3.0
Family worker	0.0	2.1	1.1
Unemployed	6.3	23.1	26.6
Inactive	14.7	35.6	42.7

Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017)

Table XI. Percentages saying that the most important problem facing the country was:

Economic situation	15.7
Standard of living	13.2
Democracy/human rights	1.5
Education system	6.7
Health system	1.7
Corruption	0.4
Increasing influence of religion on government	1.7
Morals in society	1.8
Jobs	36.2
Housing	1.0
Criminality and drugs	1.2
Terrorism	17.3

Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017)

TUNISIA'S POST-2011 FRAGILE BUT RESILIENT DEMOCRACY

It has become routine to describe Tunisia's democracy as 'fragile' (see Murphy, 2015), but this fragile democracy looks more-and-more resilient with every passing year, with every election. Fragility is inevitable given that the democracy is still less than a decade old. Tunisia was a one-party state from independence in 1956 until 2011. Since 2011 it has been a functioning multi-party democracy. This is despite presiding over a tiny economy and official labour market relative to the size of the present-day, mainly urban and increasingly highly educated, population.

If we are to understand how the change to a multi-party democratic system has been accomplished in Tunisia but in no other Arab Spring country (which apart from civil wars in Libya and Syria, and the formation of IS, is the major legacy of the events of 2010-11), it is necessary to move from youth into political analysis. The outcomes of the revolutions or uprisings throughout the region have always been via country-specific politics. The youth and other movements that coalesced in 2011 played little part in the events that followed. 'Politically relevant elites' took the lead roles in subsequent regime changes or regimes' survival (Asselburg and Wimmen, 2016; see also Staeheli and Nagel, 2012), So it is to its 'politically relevant elites' rather than its young people that we must look to explain why Tunisia has become the sole Arab Spring country to replace autocracy with democracy.

At least two essential conditions that must be met before a Western-type democracy can function. First, there must be at least two political parties that can command sufficient support to lead a government. These blocs of support are never ready-made by and within civil society: parties need to build support and this is likely to take decades rather than months or even years (Leon et al, 2015). Second, rule by a victorious party must be accepted by its defeated opponents. This should happen if competition for electoral support forces parties that seriously seek power to converge on a middle ground (Lipset, 1960), but this is likely to take decades.

Tunisia emerged following the flight of Ben Ali in 2011 with these conditions already in place. It was the region's lucky country as regards prospects for democratisation. The country already had an Islamic party (Ennahdha) which had been illegal but had existed mostly underground with leaders in exile since the late-1960s, and was able to 'surface' and win elections in 2011. This party had always been (prematurely) post-Islamist in being willing to accept democracy together with freedom of belief and expression within (as yet

undefined) limits. Its main objective has always been to reclaim Tunisia's Arab-Islamic identity (McCarthy, 2015). The party of the deposed president, the Democratic Constitutional Rally, was dissolved in 2011 but its politicians and supporters were able to re-form as Nidaa Tounes and win elections in 2014. Both outcomes have been accepted by the defeated party.

There are other features of Tunisia's history which made it better prepared for a transition to democracy in 2011 than any other North African country. Tunisians did not need to fight for their country's independence in 1956. Unlike in neighbouring Algeria, a Tunisian army did not need to fight European colonists for independence and thus feel able to claim a subsequent right to rule. Also, the two conditions identified by Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds (2015) as essential for the long-term survival of North African and Middle-East autocracies were not present in Tunisia in 2011. There was no traditional ruler with traditional legitimacy. Tunisia became independent with no constitutional role for its former monarch (bey) unlike Morocco in 1956 and Egypt in the 1920s, and unlike Libya which was handed by the United Nations to King Idris in 1951. Brownlee et al.'s alternative condition – substantial oil 'rents' – was also unable to prop up a Tunisian autocrat.

However, Tunisia's democracy must be considered fragile, a work in process. Ennahdha and Nidaa Tounes may each be willing to participate in a government led by the other, but together they deny political power to substantial sections of Tunisia's population who were among the protestors in 2011, mainly the working and lower classes, the entire population in the country's south, and radical Islamists (see Antonakis-Nashif, 2016; Berman and Nugent, 2015; Boubekeur, 2016; Merone, 2015; Murphy, 2015). However, these groups' problem is their lack of voter appeal. The Front Populaire Unioniste, a Marxist pan-Arabic party, was the choice of only 8.9 percent of our respondents who 'felt close' to any party, just 1.3 percent of the total sample. Hizb-ut-Tahrir, an international movement that seeks to restore the caliphate, was the choice of just 1.8 percent of respondents who felt close to any party, a mere 0.3 percent of the sample. No-one named Ansar al-Sharia which is listed as a terrorist organisation by the Tunisia government and the United Nations.

Up to 7,000 young Tunisians are estimated to have left to train with IS since 2011, more than from any other country outside Syria and Iraq (Bendermel, 2015). It seems a paradox that the most democratic Arab-Islamic country in North Africa and the Middle East has been a major source of IS recruits. Tunisians train initially in Libya, then may move to Syria or

Iraq, but some return home. In March 2015 an attack in Tunis's Bardo museum left 22 dead. Then in June 2015 there were 38 fatalities during an attack on a beach resort near Sousse. Democracies can cope with terrorism. Tunisia's army is not going to take control of the country. The military has never sought a political role. However, as we have seen, 'terrorism' follows only 'jobs' in young people's judgements of their country's biggest problem.

Even so, Tunisia's major parties need to widen their appeal, their bedrocks of reliable support, or alternatives need to grow. Only 10 percent of our sample 'felt closer' to Ennahdha or Nidaa Tounes than to any other party. The support of these 'major' parties is still narrow and shallow. Moreover, young Tunisians do not trust the politicians who they elect. Activists of 2010-2011 were a minority among the people in their age group who had subsequently become members of political parties. They and other voters may have been aware of the extent of elite reproduction across the generations. Our research testifies to the dominance of those from politically engaged families among young Tunisians who had become party members. There will also be disenchantment over the failure of post-2011 governments to tackle the chronic job deficit. Turnout in elections has been low outside the North-East where Tunis is located, and also among Tunisians everywhere who are not university educated (see Berman and Nugent, 2015). Tunisia's democracy is proving resilient, but modernisation, including democratisation, must be regarded as an ongoing process rather than an accomplishment of 2011. Moreover, the combination of changes sought by most young Tunisians may not be realisable in a 21st century global context.

CONCLUSIONS

Even so, modernisation theory needs to accommodate Tunisia and other North African and Middle-East countries. The 2011 revolution in Tunisia was progressive in intentions and outcomes. It was not stepping back, seeking to recover past glories. Yet the intentions and outcome represent a kind of modernity that the West may not recognise. Apart from filling-in former unknowns about who took part in the actions that led to Tunisia's 2011 revolution, and the ways in which those who took part did and did not represent their entire age group, our evidence adds further weight to the 'multiple modernities' side in the debate about 21st century global trends (see also Goskel, 2016).

Tunisia's young citizens are pro-democracy even if at present they have poor opinions of the politicians who they elect, and many regard rule by experts, technocracy, as an acceptable or even a 'very good' alternative. Many, though not all, will accept equal opportunities for men and women and want their government to act accordingly, but they may still expect the sexes to play different roles in society. Young Tunisians, especially those who want change and who are politically active, are highly religious. They are rejecting previous rulers who have been willing to discard or ignore their country's Islamic history and character. Consumer market research shows that young modern Moslems all over the world treat their faith and modernity as progressing hand-in-hand. They take their religion more seriously than 'traditionalists', and the internet is strengthening their engagement with the ummah (the global Islamic community). They see their religion as a prism through which to embrace modernity, and vice-versa (Janmohamed, 2016). In Tunisia, they want to live in a country whose Islamic and Arabic identities have a high profile. Young people want to express their creativity, including their religious beliefs, and to be free to develop new ideas, but they consider economic security equally important. Governments and maybe democracy in Tunisia are likely to be judged by whether they can deliver these outcomes plus jobs that match the aspirations of educated youth, and lift the population out of poverty. This combination of popular aspirations will be difficult to fulfil whichever politicians are in power.

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Researching
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The SAHWA Project ("Researching Arab Mediterranean Youth: Towards a New Social Contract") is a FP-7 interdisciplinary cooperative research project led by the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) and funded by the European Commission. It brings together fifteen partners from Europe and Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries to research youth prospects and perspectives in a context of multiple social, economic and political transitions in five Arab countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon). The project expands over 2014-2016 and has a total budget of €3.1 million. The thematic axis around which the project will revolve are education, employment and social inclusion, political mobilisation and participation, culture and values, international migration and mobility, gender, comparative experiences in other transition contexts and public policies and international cooperation.