

**POLITICIZATION, RADICALIZATION AND MODERATION: THE
CONSTRUCTION OF REPERTOIRES OF ACTION IN TURKISH
AND TUNISIAN ISLAMIST YOUTH**

by
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ABSTRACT

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This thesis demonstrates the patterns of interaction between social movements and explains politicization, radicalization, and moderation as possible results. By focusing on the early trajectories of Tunisian Islamist youth between 1970-1987 and Turkish Islamist youth between 1965-1979, this comparative historical analysis underlines the impact of confrontation and competition with rival ideological currents on the repertoire of action of these movements. Politicization refers to a multi-faceted collective learning process that a social group experiences while becoming a movement (Curnow, Davis, and Asher 2018). Radicalization and moderation mostly refer to the acceptance and rejection of violence as a method for political action (Karakaya and Yıldırım 2013; Snow and Cross 2012). Both movements experience politicization through competition and confrontation with their ideological counterparts, the leftist youth in particular. The analysis of the Tunisian Islamist youth movement concludes that state repression leads to radicalization through harming the organizational structure of the Tunisian Islamist movement, which increases the use of violence by Islamist students on campuses. The analysis of Turkish Islamist youth concludes that a violent environment can catalyze radicalization for some elements of social movements without significant state repression, as in the case of Akıncılar, while moderation is a likely outcome of institutional limitations, as in the case of MTTB.

ÖZET

SIYASALLAŞMA, RADİKALLEŞME VE İLİMLİLİK: TÜRK VE TUNUS İSLAMCI GENÇLİĞİNDE EYLEM REPERTUARLARININ İNŞASI

TUĞCE KIRMACI

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Toplumsal hareketler, Siyasal İslam, Eylem Repertuarları,
Tunus, Türkiye

Bu tez, toplumsal hareketler arasındaki etkileşim kalıplarını incelemekte ve bu kalıpların olası sonuçları olarak siyasallaşma, radikalleşme ve ılımlılık süreçlerini açıklamaktadır. Bu karşılaştırmalı tarihsel analiz, 1970-1987 yılları arasındaki Tunus İslamcı gençliğinin ve 1965-1979 yılları arasındaki Türk İslamcı gençliğinin erken dönem yörüngelerine odaklanarak, rakip ideolojik akımlarla yüzleşmenin ve rekabetin söz konusu hareketlerin repertuarındaki etkisini inceliyor. Politizasyon, bir sosyal grubun toplumsal hareket haline gelirken deneyimlediği çok yönlü bir kolektif öğrenme sürecini ifade eder (Curnow, Davis, and Asher 2018); radikalleşme ve ılımlılık ise çoğunlukla şiddetin bir siyasi eylem yöntemi olarak kabulünü ve reddini ifade eder (Karakaya and Yıldırım 2013; Snow and Cross 2012). Çalışmanın her iki örneği de ideolojik muadilleriyle, özellikle de solcu gençlikle, rekabet ve çatışma yoluyla siyasallaşmayı deneyimliyor. Tunus İslamcı gençlik hareketinin analizi, devlet baskısının Tunus İslamcı hareketinin örgütsel yapısına zarar vererek hareketin alt kadrolarını oluşturan İslamcı üniversiteliler tarafından şiddet kullanımının önünü açtığı sonucuna varıyor. Türk İslamcı gençliğinin analizi, siyasal şiddette artışın, Akıncılar örneğinde olduğu gibi, ciddi bir devlet baskısı olmaksızın toplumsal hareketlerin bazı unsurları için radikalleşmeyi hızlandırabileceği sonucuna varıyor; ılımlılık ise MTTB örneğinde olduğu gibi kurumsal sınırlamaların muhtemel bir sonucudur.

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*To my mother,
who taught me how to be good person*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MTTB: National Turkish Student Union	1
IG: Islamic Group	1
MTI: Movement of Islamic Tendency	12
JP: Justice Party	15
RVNP: Republican Villagers Nation Party	15
NSP: National Salvation Party	15
TLP: Turkish Labor Party	17
TMTF: Turkish National Federation of Students	18
UGTT: Tunisian General Workers' Union	35
UGET: General Union of Tunisian Students	40
WATAD: Movement of Democratic Patriots	44
UGTE: General Tunisian Union of Students	45

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth movements of the 1960s both follow modes of mobilization of their precedents and represent moments of radical innovations. These movements introduced a new political and cultural identity of the youth, a new category associated with contentious politics; and managed to name a generation after itself. Today, the youth as a category carries significance for social movements from which these movements recruit the most. Since these movements provide their members with a space for political expression, political training, and construction of political identity, they may represent a turning point in the lives of their members. In return, the sustenance of a social movement is tied to its capacity to attract new recruits and consider the demands of its members. To do so, social movements are likely to change their initial ideological stance and their preferred methods of action in time.

This study tracks such changes by analyzing the early trajectories of Turkish Islamist youth and Tunisian Islamist youth. Both cases represent examples of social groups that initially lacked a political identity but later developed one through socialization with their rival ideological currents. Indeed, confrontation and competition with rival ideological currents were essential for the construction of the political identity of the Islamist youth in both cases. After this politicization process, some movements chose not to use violence while others did.

This study provides a detailed account of the repertoires of action, together with references to the changing ideological frames of these two movements in their early days. The Turkish Islamist youth, having had the chance of being organized under the roof of the National Turkish Student Union (MTTB)¹ is analyzed between the years of 1965-1970 and 1970-1980. The Tunisian Islamist youth, coming to the university with established connections with the Islamic Group² and with one another, is analyzed in two phases, between 1970-1978 and 1978-1987.

¹*Milli Türk Talebe Birliđi.*

²*al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya.* Translated as the Islamic Group.

For both countries, youth movements have been influential in the trajectory of politics. For the case of Turkey, leftist youth movements were studied rather frequently, both during the protest cycle of the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s.³ The symbolic power of these mobilizations for the tradition of the Turkish left, their impact over other social movements as teaching examples, and their significance for their members in their quest for constructing a political identity were acknowledged.⁴ On the other hand, counter-mobilizations, namely the ultra-nationalist and Islamist student mobilizations, are understudied; which is intriguing given that the discourse and mobilization “rituals” these movements created are still being referenced to this day. For the case of Tunisia, a similar trend is observable. Leftist student movements and their clashes with the state apparatus are studied much in detail, especially the success of these movements in creating “protest traditions” that can be traced in protest songs, poems, works of literature, and popular protest chants.⁵ The Islamist youth movement in its early days was not much studied; this is partly due to the only recent attention of English-speaking academia to Tunisian politics after the pioneering role the country played in the Arab Spring. Additionally, En-Nahda as a social movement is studied mostly through the eyes of their prominent leaders or as an exemplary case of moderation. The Tunisian Islamist youth of the 1970s and the 1980s were thus understudied despite their significance for the trajectory of En-Nahda and its overall ideological stance.

The novelty of this thesis comes from its relational understanding of politicization, not as a given component of the claims these movements make. The comparison between these two cases will underline the commonalities between the politicization of Islam as relational phenomena within two countries, and reasons for continuing radicalization or moderation in framing and preferred methods of action. The thesis tracks further processes of moderation and radicalization by analyzing the repertoire of action and the framing tactics these groups have utilized.

The thesis is composed of four chapters. In the first chapter, a literature review on the construction of repertoires of action, the conceptual framework of the study, the research design, the process of data collection, and the limitations of the study are

³See Nermin Abadan-Unat, 1963, *The politics of students and young workers in Turkey*. Emin Alper, 2010, *Reconsidering Social Movements in Turkey: The Case of the 1968-1971 Protest Cycle*. Joseph S Szlyiowicz, 1972, *A political analysis of student activism: the Turkish case*.

⁴For more information and anecdotes from activists, see Gün Zileli, 2016, *Yarılma*, İletişim Yayınları. Nadire Mater, 2009, *Sokak Güzeldir: 68'de ne oldu?*, Metis Yayınları. Harun Karadeniz, 1975, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, İstanbul: May Yayınları.

⁵See Alessia Carnevale, 2021, "The palm tree and the fist. The use of popular imagery in the Tunisian protest songs of the 1970s-1980s." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, pp: 1-23. Burleigh Hendrickson, 2012, "March 1968: Practicing Transnational Activism from Tunis to Paris" *International Journal of Middle East* 44(4), 755-774. Mohamed-Salah Omri. 2012. "The Movement Perspectives: Legacies and Representations" *EuroOrient*, Vol.38: 149-164.

presented. In the second chapter, the trajectory of the Turkish Islamist youth is presented in two parts, between 1965-1970 and 1970-1980. The first part analyzes the construction of a distinctly Islamist identity that is separated from the rightist youth, which stayed intact as the anti-communist block until the 1970s. The second part analyzes the after-effects of the 1968 protests and increasing political violence over the ideological framing and preferences of engaging in political action for the MTTB and *Akıncılar* (the Raiders). The third chapter gives a detailed account of the Tunisian Islamist youth in two parts, between 1970-1978 and 1978-1987. The first part analyses how the Tunisian Islamist youth got separated from the Islamic Group of the 1970s, as a result of politicization they experienced in the Tunisian campus. The part ends with 1978 Black Thursday as a signifier of the separation of the Islamic Group and the Islamist youth. The second part deals with the delicate peace between the youth and the Islamic Group. Further radicalization of the movement is indicated with changes in their political discourse and preferences of actions that incorporated violence. The final chapter includes a comparison and discussion of both cases. Further implications, suggestions for more comprehensive research, and the limitations of this research are also included in this chapter.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Construction of Repertoires of Action in Social Movements

Studies on the repertoire of action of social movements and organizations are either focused on comparisons of the outcomes of collective action as a result of variance on used tactics (Giugni 1998), or conditions that lead social movements to prefer some tactics over others. In line with the scope and the main argument of this thesis, I chose to focus on studies that aim to identify conditions explaining the variance in tactical preferences of social movements. Studies on the construction of repertoires of action stand in an advantaged position in social movements literature since they encompass actions of both the leadership and the activists. Framing practices and the construction of repertoires of action are tied to one another: “Framing” refers to the meaning work which encompasses the struggle over the production, circulation, and legitimation of mobilizing and counter mobilizing ideas and meanings (Benford and Snow 2000, 613-614). Hence, movements have agency in this process of production and maintenance of meanings for their constituents, adversaries, and bystanders (Benford and Snow 2000, 613-614; Snow and Benford 1988). On the other hand, repertoires of action represent a set of routines that are “learned,

shared and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice” (Tilly 1993, 264). In a sense, the meaning work and the construction of a repertoire of action are tied to one another: The former refers to the process by which the movement constructs its language and identity and the latter identifies alternative ways of using this language.

Repertoires of action are shaped under the influence of many factors: History, the level of experience of the social movement with contention, the usefulness and familiarity of a tactic, the contested entity, and the political system are among these (Tilly 1978). Some forms of action-taking simply disappear, since the society that made it into being disappeared in history. Others were proven to be inefficient in reaching the goal of the action, hence abandoned (Tilly 1978).

Contemporary variance in repertoires of action across geographies is explained mostly through the inclusiveness of the political system, the organizational capability of the movement, the accumulated experience of a particular social movement with its target, and the daily routines of the population targeted for recruitment. The impact of shifts and breaks of workers’ schedules and their places of work also had a profound influence over the repertoire of action of labor unions (Tilly 1978, 156-158). Religious routines of the population and their places of worship similarly mattered. Religious obligations of visiting the mosque five times a day and the Friday prayers served many local and national religious activists since it decreased the transaction costs of message delivery (Wiktorowicz 2001, 52). Additionally, physical interference to these places with brute force was frowned upon by the public, and such interference resulted in increased sympathy with the activists and provided legitimacy to their cause. The role played by the Black Church in the US during the civil rights movement, and by local religious authorities and mosques across the Middle East during the Islamic revival provide examples for such situations (Calhoun-Brown 2000; Wiktorowicz 2001).

Political systems are effective in defining the limits of methods for political activism as well. Recognition, protection, and support for the use of political rights such as the right to assemble and protest are likely to result in the proliferation of social movements and organizations. Such constitutional recognition has a moderating effect on their preferences (Dalton, Sickle, and Weldon 2010; Tarrow 1998). Overall, there is an acceptance of protests as a part of regular politics in Western democracies (Meyer and Tarrow 1998). Protest is to some extent institutionalized, as demonstrated by the consistency and overuse (Caren, Ghoshal, and Ribas 2011, 127-129; Rucht 1998, 29-57), its easy diffusion across movements (Caren, Ghoshal, and Ribas 2011, 127-129; Soule and Earl 2005), and its moderated nature indicated

by increased use of less disruptive tactics such as petitioning and boycotting (Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Everett 1992). These developments increase the predictability of tactics used by the social movements and decrease the likelihood of tactical innovation. On the other hand, the absence of such political opportunities may lead any tactical innovation to go to waste, since in such a case the insurgency is either repressed or simply ignored (McAdam 1983). Elapsed time is the most important component explaining the use of a particular tactic and it may decrease chances of change evermore. Consistent preference for some tactics may decrease the possibility of engaging in innovation in time due to the advantage of familiarity and experience (Tilly 1978, 143-148; 156-158). Still, tactical innovations are not unlikely, especially during protest cycles, and can be quite disruptive due to their originality (della Porta 2008, 230). Similarities between the escalation and timing of disruptive actions within the Italian and German left-libertarian movements throughout the late 1960s underline the rate of success and the pace of diffusion of these newly invented tactics (della Porta 2008). Even though such disruption did not translate to outright violence for whole groups, armed conflicts between the police and the activists arose at the margins of these social movements (della Porta and Tarrow 1986; Tarrow 1989).

Still, some scholars argued for a moderating impact of these engagements on the social movement field later on: Violent confrontations of the 1970s represent a process of learning on the side of the activists and the police; which resulted in avoidance of escalation of violence in the 1980s (Rochon 1988, 186-187; della Porta 2008, 223). The creation of violence-free zones, the regulation of marches into blocks, and the deployment of “protest marshals” responsible for recording the protest incidents to prevent provocation or any use of violence on both sides reflect this tendency to avoid violence (della Porta 2008). Hence, past experiences with state authorities and the data on how the state behaves in the face of political protest are effective for the construction of repertoire of action (Tilly 1978, 156-158). The one-on-one interaction between the police and the activists sets a precedent for future protests while selective patterns of repression may also mark the limits of protest action (della Porta 2013; Tilly 1978, 156-158).

Some responses towards acts of disobedience are extreme. To eliminate the success of tactical innovations for the activists, some governments engaged in the act of creating different sources of violence (della Porta 2008). In the cases of Northern Ireland and Basque countries, social movements were faced with death squads created by the state, a tactic also observed in Latin American democracies (Waldman 1993 cited in della Porta 2008, 222; White 1993; Wieviorka 1988 cited in della Porta, 222; della Porta 2008). Such actions only fueled radicalization on the side of the protestors.

The creation of well-organized small groups that can inflict violence against the police is an example of such radicalization, and it was a shock to the police that was only capable of dealing with loose “communist-led riots” (Reiter 1998; della Porta 2008).

One-on-one confrontation with the state and its newly created resources of violence also affected how rival ideological currents view such social movements. The conditions favored the rise of radical counter-movements that were tacitly supported by some governments. In Italy, violent confrontations between leftist and neo-fascist university students during the 1960s took place (della Porta 2008). This conflict escalated throughout the 1970s: During the decade, left-wing and right-wing groups engaged in armed conflicts even in front of high schools (della Porta 1995, 2008). The rise of racist groups across the US as a response to the civil rights movement and the Unionists in Northern Ireland against the Nationalists resembles this development (della Porta 2008).

Hence, interactions between the social movement and the counter-movement determine spaces of conflict, tactical preferences, and the articulation of demands made by the movement itself (Meyer and Staggenborg 2008). They are also effective in determining the extent of the repertoire of action and preferences among these repertoires. This particular confrontation has a significant impact on the initial frames of both sides, the methods of contention the movement prefers, and even its overall agenda (Fetner 2008). This interaction is essentially an “iterative and discursive process” and can be a catalyst for evolution for both sides (Esacove 2004, 70) by forcing them to come up with tactical innovations frequently (McAdam 1983, 736). However, this may result in the lack of institutionalized action-taking in return (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996).

The image social movements aim to demonstrate to the public is also an area of contestation. Political elites frame such movements and their activists as “dangerous”, “radical”, or the “remnants of the past.” During the 1960s protests, the German elites resembled the student protests to the uprisings preceding the Nazi Regime (della Porta 2008). Similarly, Italian political elites appealed to the “anti-fascist” sentiments of the public to delegitimize student uprisings (della Porta 2008). The past was also invoked by the activists themselves, to legitimate both their causes and preferred methods of action. Inclusion of the use of collective violence in the repertoire of action was justified through references to armed insurrections of the past (della Porta 2008). Finally, counter-movements utilized rival narratives that are approved by powerful actors as well (Demetriou 2007). In some cases, violent counter-movements recruit individuals by providing them with a political discourse

justifying mobilization against what they define as threats, which may include social movements or categories of religion, race, ethnicity, or ethnicity (Bjørge 2004; O’Boyle 2002, 28; Juergensmeyer 2000).

The tradition of the movement itself also becomes a factor in determining the action (Tilly 1978, 156-158). Commemorating the ‘martyrs’ of the movement, creating esprit de corps, and making traditions out of influential moments in the history of the movement are included in the repertoire of action for these movements (Blumer 1995). Such actions are sometimes taken as indicators of the level of institutionalization the movement experienced throughout time, given that these activities are likely to invoke emotional reaction and facilitate mobilization when initiated (Blumer 1995; Fine 1995).

The organizational structure of the movement is effective in determining tactical preferences in various ways. Formal hierarchical organizations tend not to use disruptive tactics because personal interests and the security of the leaders’ positions weigh more in decision making, compared to the aims and interests of the organization as a whole and its members (Piven and Cloward 1979). “Movement professionals” formalize the organization of the movement which facilitates institutionalization of the tactics the movement uses (Staggenborg 1988). Such hierarchical structures and steps towards formalization also limit the diversity of the repertoire of action of the given organization and limit the component of novelty (Koopmans 1993).

The same argument holds for the level of centralization of the movement’s organizational structure. The repertoire of contention of a decentralized and non-hierarchical movement is likely to be broader compared to a centralized and hierarchical one (Staggenborg 1989), and the likelihood of experiencing tactical changes in a short period is higher for former cases (McCammon 2003). Organizationally diverse social movements may become productive hubs in which consequential discussions arise over the appropriate method of engaging in collective action (Ganz 2000). Sometimes, these discussions may end up in splits and formations of new groups (McCammon 2003; Taylor 1979). This argument includes the movements that had experienced internal conflict, competition, and hostility among members and competition (Kriesberg 1998 cited in McCammon 2003, 797). Yet, due to the pressing need for organizational maintenance suffering from a lack of concrete structure, such movements may disregard the importance of innovation in their set of tactics (Freeman 1983 cited in McCammon 2003, 797).

On the other hand, some scholars underlined that the lack of resources such as a mass-based organization may force activists to come up with innovative tactics. Yaghi’s study (2018) on the mobilization patterns during the Jasmine revolution in

Tunisia reveals that frame resonance and innovation were crucial in the sustenance of mobilization. Through locating protests within poor neighborhoods in coastal regions, intensifying protests through individual initiatives, and the gradual exhaustion of the policies with disruptive actions and spontaneous riots, the protestors were able to keep the momentum of the movement alive. The structural power of participants (Gamson 1989; Taylor and van Dyke 2004; Tilly 1978) may influence preferences on the methods of collective action as well. Lower socioeconomic status may motivate individuals to use disruptive modes of action-taking given the lack of platforms where these people can voice their grievances and be heard and the less-costly nature of such actions for those who already have too little (Piven and Cloward 1979; Scott 1985; ?). On the other hand, cultural resources of the protestors may also influence the preferences of repertoire: The “professional protestors” (Van Dyke 1998) and those who are experienced with different modes of communication and representation within the movement can diversify the repertoire of contention (Crossley 2002).

Targeted institutions of a movement can also shape the character and range of tactics the movement employs (Manheim N.d.; Smith 2001; Wood 2004). Social theorists have focused on the state as the main target of social movements (van Dyke, Soule, and Taylor 2004). The modern state came to be known as a major component in determining patterns of repertoires of contention through making some tactics thinkable (Berger and Luckmann 1966) and shaping sets of contentious action-taking available to all challenging groups (Swidler 1986; Tarrow 1998). For example, toleration of some forms of action-taking and the punishment of the others by the state may also be effective in preferring one tactic over the other and the regulation of a single event such as demonstrations (McCarthy and McPhail 1998). The state can also play a role as the third party in routinization of the repertoires of action between a given institution and the contesting organization: Membership templates that were used by corporations to resist unionization were created with the intervention of the state (Martin 2004; Walker, Martin, and McCarthy 2008). The repertoires of action of the contestant and the contested can be shaped without such an intervention as well: Free speech areas and demonstration zones were created by universities as a response to increasing student activism across university campuses (Davis 2004).

For some cases, the inclusion of a new method of collective action may simply indicate that the movement now has the capacity to carry out that particular tactic (McAdam 1983; Morris 1981; Tilly 1978). A parade can be an example of that in this case since it requires high levels of coordination, communication, and mobilizational abilities (McCammon 2003). Some movement leaders, who acquire a large network

of acquaintances, may help to increase the number of participants to show greater capabilities of the movement (Morris 1981, 749).

Physical space and infrastructure may also be among the determinants of tactical preferences. Some studies underline the qualities space acquires as determinants of the tactics used by protestors, including the material properties and their symbolic meanings (Boutros 2017). The former may shape the movement of the protestors and the patterns of communication they try to establish with their target population and the general public; while the latter affects the impact of the actions the group takes, and the level of resistance activists may encounter (Boutros 2017). Similarly, physical infrastructure is effective over tactical choices and mobilization patterns. The preference of activists for mass transit shutdowns compared to traditional street protests in Colombia is explained by the implementation of a bus-based mass transit system throughout Bogota (Leal 2020). Overall, the rise of this novel tactic is explained through references to experience with road blockades as a part of protest culture across Colombia, weakened political institutions of the country, and the rising tide of collective contention under Uribe (Leal 2020).

Technological developments and the new media had a significant impact on the extent and pace of tactical innovations. Tüfekçi (2013) underlines that competition over media users' attention increases tactical innovations. She investigates the impact of the coexistence of old and institutionalized media in which dissemination of information is one-sided and the social media which combines the consumer and creator of the content and information and explores a new tactical innovation termed "Microcelebrity Networked Activism" (Tüfekçi 2013). This tactic includes politically motivated and noninstitutionalized social media personalities who use their established presence to get public support for their cause through testimonies, advocacies, and citizen journalism (Tüfekçi 2013). Digital culture also facilitates new methods of protest characterized by the combination of memetic information, humor trends of the social media, depictions of real-world activism, and regular social movement activism; such activism is argued to be promising as a method of resistance due to its anonymity, its ease in dissemination, and its prior successes in challenging political institutions such as in the case of Iranian protests, the Arab Spring, and Wikileaks (Comunello and Anzera 2012; Underwood and Welser 2011).

1.1.2 Political Socialization, Contention, and Youth Movements

Youth movements are affected by external and internal constraints in a similar way to other social movements; yet they carry distinctive advantages for sustenance and

recruitment. Given that education revolves around confined spaces and is structured around schedules, students have the opportunity to organize and discuss political issues (Enriquez 2014; Van Dyke 1998; Zhao 1998). Such a structure also eases coalitional work between different groups on campus (Enriquez 2014; Van Dyke 1998) and increases the possibility for students to become more committed to activism (Meyer and Whittier 1994).

Existing subcultures of activism (Van Dyke 1998) and a history of the university associated with political activism have an impact on the sustenance of activism, creation of new activist groups, and dominant tactics of these groups in action (Binder and Wood 2013 cited in Earl, Maher, and Elliott 2017, 2). This sustenance, and the knowledge that student mobilization did win concessions in the past through demonstrations and rallies (Arthur 2016; Rojas 2007) in return further endorses the image of campus, a possible sympathetic target for protest (Walker, Martin, and McCarthy 2008).

Some argued that the pervasiveness of youth movements may also be related to the opportunities of that phase of life characterized by limited obligations and having more free time, referred to as “biographical availability” (Earl, Maher, and Elliott 2017). As McAdam (1988) states, “the young, unemployed, unmarried and childless” are more likely to participate in activism, potentially to more risky forms of it. This quality of “being young” is also attached to the potential of innovation. Some have argued that being experienced in activism or by age may result in preferring what is familiar to them; while young and inexperienced people are more likely to invent or embrace novel tactics online (Sukarieh and Tannock 2015).

Being young is also related to the initial desire to become a part of social movement in political socialization literature. The university youth is also inclined to be a part of social movements, due to the weight of an unknown and scary adult life: They are more likely to experience change in their political views in this period of their lives (Fillieule 2013, 1-3).

Overall, the sustenance of a youth movement, and social movements in general, is connected to its intellectual capacity for the articulation of grievances to appeal to this demography, but also its capacity for creating a sense of self that would secure the attachment of the members to the body of the movement (Blumer 1995; Choudry 2015). The latter is necessarily an emotive process. There is a strong emotive component in the formation and sustenance of a social movement, which becomes visible in the confrontations with other actors, i.e., the state apparatus or counter-movements (Jasper 1998).

While giving its participants a sense of self-actualization through enabling them to express themselves politically, social movements also actively curb the ‘overboard’ political desires of their members through imposing moral codes of action, setting limits to the legitimate political discourse of the group, and appeasing certain participants with titles and responsibilities. Hence, the emotional bonding of the participants, the simultaneous liberation and restricting of the members within, and interactions with rival ideological currents construct a big part of the repertoire of action of a given social movement (Tilly 1978, 2006). Constraints external to the social movement itself are also highly effective: The level of inclusion within the polity, the level of constitutional protection over the civil and political rights of individuals and civil society organizations, the influence of political parties and the members of the political elite are among these constraints, marking the boundaries for social groups (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996).

1.2 Methodology

This section outlines the methodology and the data collection procedure for the thesis and is composed of descriptions of the research question, research design, data collection procedure, and limitations of the study.

1.2.1 Research Question

This thesis aims to demonstrate the patterns of politicization, radicalization, and moderation in youth movements by tracing down the construction of a repertoire of action. Politicization refers to the collective learning process that a social group experiences while becoming a movement, which incorporates “conceptual, practical, epistemological and identity development” (Curnow, Davis, and Asher 2018). Radicalization is understood as the targeting of the totality of the political system with its signifiers and increased proclivity to use political violence; hence it brings the terms’ connotations of being about “the roots and foundations” (McLaughlin 2012, 21) and an association with risk-taking behavior and use of violence (Cross 2013; Snow and Cross 2012). Moderation is understood as tactical moderation as in party moderation literature⁶: Such change takes place in the repertoire of action

⁶Karakaya and Yildirim (2013) identify two types of political party moderation: Ideological moderation and tactical moderation. The former refers to a broad change in the party’s political ideology, while the latter refers to the obedience to the laws and regulations of democracy and yet little to no change in initial ideological goals.

of the social movement or organization, not necessarily in the ideology it promotes. Hence, for the scope of this thesis, moderation is the increased avoidance of political violence and a slight moderation of the 'tone' of the political discourse the given movement utilizes.

I argue that confrontation and competition among rival ideological currents triggers politicization and radicalization given social movement, hence effective over the construction of repertoire of action of the early Islamists within the campus. Repressive measures taken by the state towards the given social movement may be more effective over further radicalization than such confrontations. Still, an overall increase in the use of violence by rival ideological currents may facilitate further radicalization of a given social movement, without needing such repression. Under the lack of state repression, moderation of a social group or movement is likely to come with institutional constraints, such as having a more or less centralized structure or being dependent on a limited audience.

Universities represent a space of contestation for rival student groups and a training ground for future activists and politicians. Given that they are placed at the periphery of the political arena; universities provide students with the opportunity to get experienced with political confrontation that ranges from mixed discussion circles to violent brawls, often without subjecting them to the punishment mechanisms utilized against civil society organizations or labor unions. Focusing on the university helps to control the changing nature of the public sphere across political systems since a level of tolerance towards political activities within the campus is granted to students across political systems, at least compared to responses towards any such activity in other public spaces (Lipset 1968).

1.2.2 Research Design

I designed a comparative historical analysis that includes cross-case and within-case variation to demonstrate the trajectory of moderation of youth movements. I selected the cases of Turkish political Islam between 1965-1980 and Tunisian Political Islam between 1970-1987 to track the patterns of politicization, radicalization, and moderation in youth movements. In the Turkish case, the period between 1965-1970 represents the early agenda formation for Turkish Islamists. The political legitimacy of anti-communism and the incorporation of certain cultural symbols into the discourse of the rightist youth represented by the MTTB preceded many of the talking points of the Islamists of the 1970s and facilitated the ideational differentiation between the Islamist youth and the ultra-nationalist youth. The protest cycle of 1968

increased contact between leftist students and the MTTB students, which changed the modes of engaging in protest behavior and increased physical violence. The period of 1970-1980 reflects the construction of the distinctly Islamist youth. The initial distancing from increasing political violence inflicted by the radical leftist youth and ultra-nationalist rightist youth, and the acceptance of passive modes of engaging in protest action affected the construction of the moderate image of the Turkish Islamist youth. This image later blurred with the rise of *Akıncılar* (the Raiders) between 1976-1979, which followed similar methods of engaging in political action with the radical left.

In the case of Tunisia, the period between 1970-1978 illustrates fragmentation for the Islamists: The Islamist youth (the MTI) detached from the Islamic Group (IG) due to increasing politicization and blamed the IG for being devoid of a political agenda. The period of 1978-1987 illustrates the peace between the Islamic Group and the MTI with the absolute ideological victory of the latter, and the increased tendency of engaging in violent political action similar to the leftist students. This thesis discusses moderation and radicalization with reference to preferred modes of political action and the construction of the political repertoire of action in both traditions of political Islam.

While analyzing changes in the repertoire of action of both of these cases, I will also make references to the political opportunities these movements acquired from time to time, their mobilizing structures, and framing processes (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, 1-20). Political opportunities include the connections between the institutionalized politics and the movement and emphasizes the characteristics of the political system, while the mobilizing structures refer to the formal and informal connections through which people choose to engage in collective action, referring to both 'professionalized' social movements (SMOs), and grassroots settings, including the neighborhood, the work, and for this study as well, the university (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, 1-20). On the other hand, framing processes are more focused on the creation of shared meanings, definitions, ideas, and sentiments that would both legitimate and motivate collective action (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, 1-20). While focusing much more on changes within the framing process and the construction of a repertoire of action, this study also underlines the relationship between youth movements and political systems. Indeed, the process of identity construction and the repertoire of action of the Turkish Islamist youth and the Tunisian Islamist youth is shaped by all these factors.

I have picked these cases by relying on the positive-negative boundary of causal mechanism to avoid selection bias (Mahoney and Goertz 2004): Turkish Islamist

youth represents both cases of moderation and radicalization which is facilitated by fragmentation, while Tunisian Islamist youth illustrates radicalization without fragmentation. What makes the difference in the outcome is that the former did not experience state repression while the latter did. The research design also allows to control several factors: Turkey and Tunisia both have predominantly Muslim populations, they both experienced state-led secularization and economic development and had strong leftist currents outside of the university during the early development of political Islam, all of which were considered influential in the development of Islamism in both countries.

1.2.3 Data Collection

I made use of both primary and secondary resources, including online newspaper archives, personal accounts of student activists, websites, and interviews. Given that it was easier to reach out to public information on Turkey about the matter, resources are much more diverse. It includes primary empirical data gathered from open access newspaper archives and personal accounts of leftist and rightist students participating in the protests. For Tunisia however, given the lack of focus on the region before the Arab Spring by the English-speaking academia, I mostly made use of secondary empirical data which combines public and personal interviews conducted and translated by various scholars, and articles written by former members of the Ennahda. Due to the language barrier, I couldn't make use of the newspaper archives of Tunisia, therefore the study relies on the information other academics managed to gather and translate.

1.2.4 Limitations of the Study

Other than the problems related to the reliability of the data, the limitations of this study mostly stem from the research design itself. The study has limited external validity and small degrees of freedom due to its small N; yet, it allows for an increased degree of detail about the cases themselves and background knowledge about the countries (Tarrow 2010). Given that the early periods of Islamism within campuses in both countries are understudied, the study has the purpose of discovery rather than confirmation (Thomas 2005). In this sense, the study is conducted to demonstrate causal mechanisms rather than inferences since they present in-depth analyses of the cases in focus (Gerring 2004). Since the study seeks to illustrate processes of change and progression; the method and preference for conducting a

small-N study match with the aims and the questions of this research.

Given the narrow literature on the early days of Ennahda, the fact that the movement is mostly studied as a mere extension of its leaders, and the disinterest of the English-speaking academia in pre-Revolution Tunisia; the secondary data gathered on this country is limited by problems related to accessibility, language barriers, and the self-inflicted biases of the writers of the personal accounts. During the research I came across some conflicting statements given by the early leaders of the movement of Ennahda about the roots of the movement in retrospect. I was able to detect them by cross-checking the information with the statements provided by activists who were the first-hand witnesses of the events I have discussed. Given the nature of information sharing and withholding under authoritarian regimes, it should be kept in mind that some information about the modes of activism of early Islamists of Tunisia might be kept secret. The same applies to personal accounts of Turkish activists: Some events might be kept secret so as not to hurt the image of the movement or organization in question.

2. CASE STUDY: TURKEY

This chapter analyses changes the MTTB had experienced between 1965-1970 and 1970-1980. The union had good relations with center-right and far-right parties, namely Justice Party (JP) and the Republican Villagers Nation Party (RVNP)¹ between 1965-1970. After the entrance of Islamist parties into the parliament in 1970s, the union became close with the National Salvation Party (NSP). Most members of the union were also a part of the youth association of the NSP and benefited from the party's central role in the parliament to a great extent ². Hence, throughout these periods, close relations with the parliament were maintained. The mobilization structure of the union did not alter much as well, with the exception of increasing networking activities across Anatolia through the formation of alternative social science institutes and organizing inside *imamhatips* ³ (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007). In this sense, the MTTB's abandonment of violence as a mobilization strategy between 1970-1980, a period that witnessed gradually increasing levels of political violence, might be explained with sustenance of political opportunities and the mobilization structure, together with the lack of an incarceration experience. Yet, it also comes across as a strategy that resulted in the fragmentation of the Islamist youth with the rise of the Raiders. I aim to demonstrate this moderation process through tracking changes in the repertoire of action of this union, with references to the way they perceive rival ideological currents.

In the years between 1965-1970, the anti-communist Turkish rightist youth countered the repertoire of action of the leftist students by responses in the form of counter-rallies and protests for the purpose of attracting recruiters and getting the upper hand against the rising popularity of the left on the eyes of the Turkish youth.

¹The party took the name of Nationalist Action Party in 1969, under the leadership of Alparslan Türkeş.

²The NSP was a partner in the coalition governments of 1974, 1975-1977, and 1977-1978. The last two are the governments of the nationalist front, representing the center-right Justice Party (JP), far-right Nationalist Action Party (NAP), and the religious right National Salvation Party (NSP).

³The imamhatips are the secondary education institutions established for the training of religious personnel (imams) to be employed by the state.

The university campus, the dormitories, and the increasing number of Anatolian students in need of material and emotional support provided both the rightist and leftist students with a fertile ground for recruitment. During the 1970s, on the other hand, Islamist students differentiated themselves from the ultra-nationalist and leftist students through their emphasis on non-violent methods of engaging in political action and protection of students from political violence with the important exception of the Raiders.

2.1 Understanding Student Activism in Turkey

In his study on the patterns of student activism in Turkey, Szyliowicz (Szyliowicz 1972, 13) explains why student activism emerges in the first place and how factors internal and external to the university, such as to the political elite (Weinberg and Walker 1969, 80) and the level of inclusiveness of the political system (Lipset 1970, 80) can facilitate or reshape student activism. Individual incentives add on these structural explanations, too. Relative deprivation explains the rising number of protests organized by student organizations (Szyliowicz 1972, 13-14). Worsening economic conditions, loss of social status and prestige for several groups within the society, and loss of a career opportunity in politics due to the highly unstable structure of Turkish politics are among the factors facilitating feelings of relative deprivation (Szyliowicz 1972). Student organizations, the core constituents of student activism, are instrumental in articulating these grievances: In a sense, they function as a hub for collective meaning-making and identity construction and make up a flexible language for the members of its body influenced by rival student organizations, the contemporary political scenery and rhetoric, prominent intellectuals of the time, and the collective values pervasive in the society.

Student organizations of the late 1960s are a peripheral community of knowledge and practice within the Turkish political arena (Lave and Wenger 1991, 27-42). Learning how to communicate a message that would resonate with the members in one's community, with the members of rival communities, and the members of the political elite is crucial for the further sustenance of the given community. Furthermore, for members aiming for a future in politics, a student organization provides a safe environment for practice compared to punitive electoral politics, given that the overall political system is accommodating to such civil organizations.

Every single collective act initiated by these organizations may be read as a reflection of an end to the negotiation of meaning between the members of the given

organization, a definitive stance against their rivals within the student body, and a form of signaling to the political elite. All three ways of interaction—among the members of the same community, with rival groups and the political elite—affect the construction of the institutional identity of a student organization, its distinct claims for legitimacy, and the ways it chooses to deliver its message. For the organizations of the Islamist youth, the same applies: Starting as a small entity within the Turkish right dominated by the nationalists and the anti-communist discourse in the 1960s, the Islamist youth developed a distinct identity and became an alternative to the revolutionary left and the nationalist right in the 1970s (Akkaya 2010). The MTTB is a central organization in which we can track these interactions. The development of the language and the symbols of the Islamist youth as a result of these interactions precedes the distinctly Islamist identity and the Islamist actors themselves.

2.2 After the Revolution: The MTTB of 1960-1965

The 1961 constitution enabled Turkey to transform into a pluralist democracy with an open and inclusionary political space and an emphasis on the protection of civil rights and freedoms (Gençkaya and Özbudun 2009; Özbudun 2011). With a new electoral law emphasizing pluralist representation over majoritarian rule, a diverse landscape of political parties was formed. In this period, the ideological spectrum of political parties included leftist and rightist parties alongside the center parties, the former represented by the Turkish Labor Party (TLP) and the latter by the Republican Villagers Nation Party (RVNP). It is important not to underestimate the idealistic connections between center parties and their peripheries, and the level of support these parties provided one another (Bora 2014). The style of political campaigning and the political discourse utilized by the center-right was very much reflective of the level of harmony or a “closeness of hearts” between the center right and the far right (Bora 2014, 9-29), especially when it came to anti-communism. Both the JP and the RVNP were known for their direct support for the Fight Against Communism Associations across the country (Meşe 2018, 64). The RVNP was also known for its armed militants trained to fight against the leftists (Bora 2020, 137-151; Özkarabekir 2018). We observe the ideological flourishing of the left in this period, and yet the capacity for political mobilization for the right was as high as the left. The toleration of and the support for the right in the parliament was also greater.

With the constitutional protection over civil rights and liberties, a pluralist political landscape, and the increasing autonomy of universities in this period ⁴, student organizations became endowed with a new kind of power similar to their contemporaries in the world (Lipset 1970; Szyliowicz 1972, 8): Influence within the polity as an independent power. Directly engaging in issues ranging from the dire economic conditions of university students to the potential dangers of the rise of the Turkish left, the MTTB gained much experience in campus politics, renewed its identity, and strengthened its ties with the political elite.

Between 1960-1965, the union rebranded itself as a voice of the revolutionary youth. In this period, members of student organizations perceived themselves both as the initiators and the guardians of the 1960 revolution (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 84-86). This common mindset facilitated both a reconciliation between different student organizations, such as the MTTB and the Turkish National Federation of Students (TMTF)⁵, and a sense of independence from other components of the Turkish political system, especially from the members of political parties (Szyliowicz 1972, 51-55).

The rupture of this reconciliation between student organizations (Szyliowicz 1972, 51-55) and the end of self-proclaimed guardianship of the 1960 revolution came with the election of Rasim Cinisli (Okutan 2004, 137) as the president of the union. As the MTTB body was split over the renting of a hall of the union for a TLP conference, elections were held for the presidency of the MTTB (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 100). Gathering the support of the students offended by both the MTTB's support for the 1960 revolution and this TLP incident in particular, Rasim Cinisli got elected for the presidency of the organization (Okutan 2004, 137). After this election, the MTTB transformed into a reactionary nationalist force blended with religious sensitivity and an emphasis on the Ottoman Past. It is argued that this election was the result of the JP exerting influence over the organization to counterbalance the appeal of the TLP over students (Szyliowicz 1972, 54; Genç 1971, 27). Financial support for the rightist voices and promises of a career within the JP ranks were also a part of the agenda of JP in intermingling with the MTTB's affairs (Genç 1971, 27).

The election of Rasim Cinisli, who also entered the parliament as a JP deputy later, signifies the moment of the break with the support for Republican ideals in the

⁴The law no.115 of the 1961 constitution revoked the ministerial authority that inspects universities in the name of the government, which restored institutional and scholarly autonomy of universities (Fındıklı 2020).

⁵ *Türkiye Milli Talebe Federasyonu*.

MTTB tradition⁶ and with other student organizations such as TMTF. Changes in political discourse, alliances, the ways of engaging in political protest, and the formation of an identity through reaction were observed within this period of 1965-1969.

2.3 After the Take-Over of Cinisli: The MTTB of 1965-1970

These five years of the MTTB under the leaderships of Rasim Cinisli and İsmail Kahraman respectively were the formative years of the contemporary identity of the union. Celebrations and demonstrations loaded with emotive historical moments from which the Turkish right derives its arguments became a running theme for the organization during this period. Commemoration of Çanakkale martyrs, rallies of Fetih⁷ and Cyprus⁸, and the night of commemorating Akif⁹ were among these actions heavy with symbolism (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 108-110). The frequent emphasis of Kahraman on how the MTTB has inherited the spirit of Çanakkale (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 108-110), and that this spirit was much more powerful than the immediate threat of “a bunch of anarchists” is an example of how the leftist youth was positioned by the rightist youth: A maleficent group of looters with its roots outside of this country, threatening what is held sacred by the members of the nation. While these rallies, demonstrations, and commemorations aimed to strengthen the moral code of the Turkish youth that was under the threat of moral corruption by communism; counter-protests, such as the Uproar Rallies and the 6th Fleet counter-rallies, were organized by the MTTB. Before going into these protests, analyzing how communism, the communists, and finally the Kemalist modernization were viewed by the Turkish right and the rightist students would be beneficial.

⁶The MTTB was known for its rich history that dates back to the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. A defender of the ideals of the Kemalist revolution, the union was recognized for its press and its pan-Turkist political discourse. Shut down after an unauthorized demonstration for the annexation of Hatay to the Turkish soil; the union reopened in 1946. The members of the union had taken official responsibility for the raid of Tan Gazette in 1945 and supported anti-communist policies of the Democrat Party, while also criticizing its brand of laicite and the rapprochement of Adnan Menderes with the Nurus (Tunaya 1962).

⁷Fetih (conquest) rallies were organized to commemorate the conquest of Istanbul by Ottoman forces under the command of Mehmed II, 29th May 1453.

⁸Cyprus rallies were the response of the Turkish rightist youth to the increasing political tension between Turkey and Greece, and between Greek and Turkish inhabitants of the island, demonstrating solidarity with the Turkish inhabitants while advocating for the take-over of the island by Turkish forces.

⁹Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Turkish poet. Known as a literary and political figure from the tradition of modern Turkish Islamism, Ersoy’s poems brought themes of family, faith and the homeland as the utmost sacred values of the Turkish nation. While acknowledging the Western modernity for its benefits; he defended the coexistence of the universal Western modernity and the authentic Turkish culture intertwined with the religion of Islam and did not endorse the laicite of Kemalist revolution (Aydm 2006; Kara 1997).

Identifying the roots of the Turkish Right is rather difficult since the Turkish right itself does not identify itself as the Right (Bora 2014, 9-29). This is not unique, given that the Kemalists also abstained from being to the left or the right up until the 1960s. This stems from the conviction of being above the right and the left: The right was those who are appropriating the ancient regime's components, and the left was simply something external to the Turkish Republic, a harmonious union in which class-based demands are at the best "absurd" (Bora 2014, 9-29). Critiques towards the leftists were essentialist and underlined what the 'leftist' lacks in his or her core as a member of this society (Bora 2014, 9-29). The conceptualization of this implication is the notion of "national consciousness", which is defined as the embodiment of the common values of the nation, constructed throughout history by the members of the nation and stood the test of time (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 105; Güngör 1964, 33). A predefined moral set of standards needs to be embodied, or at least respected and followed, given that the individual is a part of the body of the Turkish Republic. Hence, the leftist university student chooses to be a leftist, since he or she lacks the Turkish moral code that emphasizes devotion to faith, family, and the nation (Bora 2014, 2020). The argument also covers the national education curricula of the republic, which is criticized for being anything but national, underlining the west-oriented content of it (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 105-108; Güngör 1964, 33-37). Hence, Kemalist modernization and the appeal of communism to the youth were connected as follows: the Turkish youth lacks something and turns to communism as an alternative moral code that would help them resolve their personal crisis, which is the outcome of the Westernized curricula of education embraced by the Kemalist state. In this sense, the right wanted to turn back to what is authentic to the nation and emphasized the importance of devotion to the cultural codes of Anatolia and an idealized Ottoman past.

This desire to turn to the authentic normal is quite common and based on students' daily experience with urban life during their university education. Abadan-Unat (1963) identifies a culture shock for the university students who came to cities from the rural parts of Anatolia and a struggle in adjusting to the standards of the gender-mixed cosmopolitan lifestyle within cities. Hence, creating a familiar environment for these university students while also helping them materially, is a responsibility that is carried by university organizations as well. The MTTB gave university students this opportunity of both material comfort and a sense of familiarity, a cultural comfort: This function of the organization enabled the members coming from various localities to share their understandings and experiences with local Islam (Akkaya 2010; Coşkun 1999). Therefore, the MTTB also functioned as a hub by bringing together members of different local religious sects and communities and

establishing an urban language of Islamic faith (Akkaya 2010, 62-63; Coşkun 1999). In the following part, these notions of authentic normality, critiques of the Kemalist project, and the perception of the leftists will be dealt with the most resounding protests of this period: The Ayasofya Prayer, The Uproar Rallies, and the 6th Fleet counter-protests.

2.3.1 The Hagia Sophia Prayer of 1967, The Uproar Rallies and the 6th Fleet Counter-Protests

The Turkish Right chooses to derive its arguments from the cultural codes and sensitivities of the Turkish public, rather than referring to a definitive doctrine that is more common for the leftists and the Kemalists, representatives of political intellectualism in Turkey (Taşkın 2014). A political discourse blended with arguments for the authenticity, locality, and therefore the realness of Turkish culture, which also functions as a form of education on what is normal for the given population or not, is often complemented with references to the past, especially to historical moments with a high emotive impact. References to Çanakkale War and the way the Turkish rightist youth embodies its spirit exemplify this: The retellings of the legends of War and the positioning of Turkey and the West as David and Goliath underlined that the same enemies were now exerting influence through Western modernism and the communist agenda. To fight these, the rightist youth should embody the spirit of Çanakkale (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 109).

Hagia Sophia is one of the spaces of contention for the Turkish right in this sense. Once sacred and now profane, the Hagia Sophia museum, presented as a cultural site with archeological value and a symbol of reconciliation between Greece and Turkey by the Turkish authorities, was understood both as an insult to the nation and its history (Özemekçi 2014). The Hagia Sophia is considered also a “museum” of the meanings, life routines, practices of Islamic faith, and cultural codes of the Ottoman civilization (?). In a sense, the decision to make Hagia Sophia a museum corresponded to the aggressive act of encapsulating the culture of the past by the Kemalist revolution and its Western collaborators; hence, only waiting to be liberated by the true sons of this nation. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek,¹⁰ a prominent figure for the MTTB youth since the second half of the 1960s and throughout the

¹⁰The author is known for its influence over the Islamic thought in Turkey. Kısakürek framed the East and the West as oppositional civilizations and placed Turkey as a part of the former and as a central power. He is known for its sufi-centered understanding of sharia, as against the materialist secular law of the West. He is known for his project of “Büyük Doğu”, a comprehensive ideological worldview that aims for restoring what was harmed during modernization, which he explains as a mimicry of the Western way of living and organizing the society (Dalacoura 2019; Kısakürek 1968). He advocated for an Islamic revolution which would facilitate a top-down transition of the society (Duran 2001, 243-256; Dalacoura 2019).

1970s, described the desacralization of Hagia Sophia as a crime against the Turkish public in a speech he delivered during a Hagia Sophia conference of the MTTB in 1965 (Kısakürek 1997). Marking how the visitors in Hagia Sophia did not follow the Islamic dress code, he argued that this desacralization is an insult to the devoted Muslims of the Turkish nation and the memory of the Islamic conquest of the Byzantine Empire, and illustrates the extent of Western domination over the country (Kısakürek 1997).

The Hagia Sophia prayer protest organized by the MTTB was a unique way of mobilization in 1960s' Turkey. It incorporated a reclaiming of a formerly sacred space that is loaded with central themes of the Turkish Right with the use of a daily religious practice outside of the Hagia Sophia museum. Therefore, it also made a case for appropriating any public space through a religious ritual regardless of the history or the purpose of any architecture, be it a square, a building, or a mosque. In a sense, it demonstrated an ideational continuity with the incident it protested, the praying of the Pope Paul VI in the Hagia Sophia. The protest prayer challenged the desacralized legal status of Hagia Sophia as a museum and was simultaneously legitimized as the defiance of the religious claim the Pope made—which supported accusations directed towards the Kemalist cadres as the instruments of the Christian West, a historical enemy to the Turkish nation.

The protest itself was fueled with a strong emotive impact since it was blended with a religious ritual, which lent protection from police violence to the protestors. This form of collective action became a part of the repertoire of action in the next decade because of its mobilizational power, its legitimacy in the public eye, and the untouchability it gave to the protestors. It combines several qualities that reflect the success of the organization in building a common identity and an elementary language, and a solution to breach official constraints over the public sphere put forward and exercised by the state apparatuses. The Hagia Sophia protest prayer carried references to an injustice committed in the early years of the republic and made it visible to the bystander, anticipating that such a protest can communicate this injustice and was in line with the standards of rights and justice prevailing in the society (Tilly 1978, 156).

The Anatolian Uproar Rallies, on the other hand, are considered the response of the right to the Awakening Rallies organized by the TLP, also known as the Eastern Conventions (Oruç 2005, 46). Uproar rallies were cautionary measures towards the rising left, the “last call” to stop spreading communist propaganda: Use of violence was encouraged against individuals participating in future leftist demonstrations (Milliyet 1968). One banner summarized the aim: “Last call to the rampant leftists:

We will either silence you or make you vomit blood” (Milliyet 1968). The protests also included insults to Nazım Hikmet¹¹ and threats to TLP representatives in the parliament, especially to Behice Boran and Mehmet Ali Aybar¹². In the speech he delivered during the demonstration, the president of the MTTB İsmail Kahraman referred to the leftist organizations, intellectuals, and parliamentarians as alien entities undercover that have their roots outside of the country, and stated that they should meet their end (Milliyet 1968). In a speech he delivered in one of these rallies, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek blamed Kemalist modernization for the rising appeal of Communism and underlined that the communist plans to take over the nation failed solely due to the prominence of the culture of Islam in Turkey (Milliyet 1968).

Finally, known as Bloody Sunday and one of defining moments leading to the Turkish military memorandum of 1971, the US 6th Fleet protests of 1969 mark a turning point for both the leftist and the rightist youth, for being the first large-scale violent confrontation between the representatives of these two groups. Up until this confrontation, leftist and rightist organizations both refrained from collective violence; aggression was shown through verbal attacks and threats of violence only (Özkarabekir 2018). This is also a point of transition for the leftist and the rightist students in terms of the methods of engaging in protest behavior. For the rightist students, the repertoire of action consisted of a mixture of frequent publications, seminars in which the intellectuals of the Right were the guest speakers, commemorations of Çanakkale Wars and the conquest of Istanbul, and frequent rallies up until the incidents of 1969 protests.

Knowing that on the 16th of February 1969, the US 6th fleet protest march¹³ will take place, the MTTB organized the Respect for the Flag Rally two days before the march. A Turkish flag was hung on the door of the Istanbul University as a response to the red flag on the Beyazıt Tower within Istanbul University, hung to commemorate the death of Vedat Demircioğlu¹⁴ due to police violence during

¹¹Nazım Hikmet is an internationally acclaimed poet known for its leftist political activism. His imprisonment throughout the 1940s, his flight to Moscow and his deprivation from Turkish citizenship became the most defining acts of the anti-communist agenda of the single party governments of 1940s and DP governments of the 1950s.

¹²The Rallies were organized a month after the lynching of TLP representatives in the parliament in February 1968, following Çetin Altan’s statements against calling Nazım Hikmet a traitor.

¹³The US 6th Fleet Protests of 1969 started ten days prior to the arrival of the fleet, in order to inform the public opinion: Small-scale rallies, the burning of American Flags and the commemoration of Vedat Demircioğlu killed in 1968 took place. The final event was the protest march from Dolmabahçe to Taksim (Karadeniz 1975, 166-196).

¹⁴The police killed Vedat Demircioğlu during a raid of student dormitories during 1968 US 6th Fleet protests and demonstrations. His body was not given to his friends for his funeral; therefore, a symbolic coffin filled with stones was carried on shoulders (Dündar 2016, 133). Vedat Demircioğlu became “the first revolutionary martyr of the Turkish left”, and his funeral set a precedent for the future martyrs (Yenen 2019).

1968 US 6th fleet protests (Karadeniz 1975, 188-189). Slogans such as “Down with Communists” and “Police could not enter, so we did” were shouted during the march from the university to the Beyazıt courthouse and accompanied by the Mehter troop, the reminiscent of the historical Ottoman military band mehteran (Karadeniz 1975, 188-189). Similar to the loot of Tan Gazette, the Öncü Bookstore, known for publishing books on socialist literature was looted and several books from the bookstore were burned. The rally ended with Kahraman’s call for jihad against communism and for gathering to engage in a counter-protest towards the leftist students (Karadeniz 1975, 188).

These calls were intensified by the rightist newspapers: Headlines included “Time to strangle the Reds” and “Either complete silencing or making them vomit blood” (Karadeniz 1975, 188-189). Şevket Eygi (1969), a rightist writer on Birgün Gazette, called the citizens to get ready for jihad and gather in the Bayezid Mosque to engage in action. On the day of the US 6th Fleet Protest March, small Turkish Flag pictures were used by MTTB members and others joining the counter-protest for identification purposes (Birand 2019). Choosing to use the Turkish flag for identification was very telling: There was a crack between the body of the nation represented by these rightist students and the leftist others, those who do not acquire the national consciousness and Turkish moral code, and who are instrumentalized by the enemies of the nation for the greater purpose of asserting Soviet imperialism.

Before reaching the Taksim square, violence between the rightist groups and the leftist groups breaks out. Bomb explosions and heavy beatings of several leftist protestors with sticks and iron bars accompanied by chants “Hit them in the name of God!” took place during the brawl (Birand 2019; Karadeniz 1975, 196-199). A definitive turn to incorporate violence into the repertoire of action was taken: The bombings of university faculties and dorms, street barricading, and taking up arms were to be integrated into the practice in the 1970s.

The period between 1965-1969 was transitional for the organization and its ideology. Carrying the decades-long anti-communist and nationalist legacy of the organization, the MTTB incorporated Kemalist modernization to its language that was endowed with symbols and references associated with Turkish political Islam. The Turkish left was framed as the other side of the dichotomy anti-communist youth utilizes most frequently: Criticisms towards the leftist students in particular underlined a theme of foreignness against authenticity. In the 1970s, the same dichotomy was used with an increased emphasis on the impact of Kemalist modernization over the ultra-nationalist students and the leftist students.

2.4 1970- 1980: Radicalization & Moderation

This decade represents a historical moment for the development of Turkish political Islam in general, given that the first Islamist parties entered the Turkish Parliament, which ultimately affected the level of confidence and the methods of action of the Islamist youth. During the decade, the Islamist youth separated from the ultra-nationalist student groups and experienced fragmentation within as well. The increasing political violence after the amnesty of 1974 overflowed from within the campus to the streets. Armed conflicts between ultra-nationalists and the radical left, and within the radical left, quickly became a reality of daily life. Within this context, the Islamist youth tried to manage two aims: Establishing a distinct identity of its own and trying to stay secure and intact throughout the political turmoil.

The establishment of a distinct Islamist identity separated from the Turkish conservatism nebula came with an ever-increasing prominence of Islamism in the circles of the MTTB. In fact, after 1965, even though the union still included clicks of ultra-nationalist students, the election of Rasim Cinisli reinforced the image of the institution as an Islamist one. The ever-increasing appeal of the MTTB to Islamist students resulted in tension between the ultra-nationalist cliques and the Islamist students within the union, which continued throughout the 1970s.

This fragmentation of the anti-communist front benefited the Islamists in enlarging their repertoire of action and diversified their sources of inspiration. A critique of imperialism was incorporated into their anti-Western discourse. The Turkish intelligentsia was now held accountable for the crimes of introducing capitalism and Western imperialism to Turkey, the exploitation of the resources of the country, and the cultural and mental enslavement of its people to the West (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 147-148; Göle 1998). Additionally, the movement also embraced the economic outlook of the National Salvation Party (NSP) which prioritized the development of heavy industry, manufacturing machinery, and an interest-free economy—which in turn enabled them to respond to the criticisms of the leftist students on their lack of an “economic prescription to economic problems” (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 161). Additionally, most people who had been actively involved with the MTTB were also a part of the youth branch of the party¹⁵: They organized meetings of the NSP, put up banners of the party, and write slogans on behalf of the party (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 161).

The emphasis on Islam was visible in most actions taken by the organization. The

¹⁵This is based on an interview Duman and Yorgancılar (2007) made with Ahmet Poçanoğlu in 2005.

criticisms towards the Turkish secular intelligentsia, the Kemalist modernization project of the 1920s and 1930s, and of the national curricula increased in volume, with the addition of appraisal of the Ottoman past and Abdulhamid II in particular. Struggles of political Islamists across the globe were quite influential on the Islamists of the MTTB as well: Articles on The Islamist Movement of Philippines, the case of Asian Islamist Youth, and the Egyptian-Libyan War were published in the *Milli Gençlik* and *Çatı* (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 182).

The Islamist tone of the MTTB was also quite prominent in their traditional conquest rallies, during which the slogans of “The Conquest is Close,” “Muslim Turkey,” “The only pioneer is the Prophet,” “The infidels are a single nation,” and “No Revolution, Yes Resurrection” were read on banners (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 185)¹⁶. Some influential protests of the late 1960s such as the Istanbul conquest celebrations of May and the Hagia Sophia prayer (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 171-172) were repeated. Even though competition between the ultra-nationalist students and the Islamists continued for the first half of the 1970s, the change of the emblem of the organization from a Grey Wolf howling to Qur’an in 1975 is taken as the final declaration of the absolute takeover of the institution by the Islamists (Okutan 2004, 194).

In addition to the incorporation of these elements within the discourse of the movement, there is an underlying discontent with the violent confrontations between rival student groups, which resulted in discontinuities in academic education and put the academic cadres, students, and their families under stress (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 147-148). Throughout the decade, the institution strived for two goals: Sheltering the Islamist students from political violence and increasing their outreach inside and outside of the campus, especially high schools. As stated in multiple activity reports of the union, the institution aimed to reach the disorganized Islamist students inside the campus through organizing seminars on problems the devout Muslim encountered in everyday life, and diversifying their press (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 165, 177).

Such goals were also reflective of the political environment the Turkish military memorandum of 1971 created, after which student unions and other organizations from the leftist and rightist youth¹⁷ were shut down for their involvement in politics (Zengin 2021, 114). Therefore, the union followed outreach strategies that would

¹⁶Still, it is important to note that these large rallies and demonstrations of the union came back only after the "Warning to the Greek" rally of April 1974, similar to the Cyprus rallies of Cinisli period (Zengin 2021, 118)

¹⁷TMTF, Dev-Genç, and Ülkü Ocakları. The first two were known as the organizations of the leftist youth. The last is recognized as the home of ultra-nationalist students associated with the Nationalist Action Party.

be for "educational purposes only"; such as providing high school students with university preparation courses and opening clubs and alternative institutes of social sciences at the university level (Zengin 2021, 116-117). The university preparation courses aimed to reach high school students in remote provinces with lower socioeconomic backgrounds and increase their university chances. At the same time, the union built social sciences institute to increase the cultural capital of students on Turkish nationalism and conservatism (Zengin 2021, 116-117).

Overall, the union strived to create an intellectually stimulating and gun-free environment inside the campus by informing students on disruptive agent provocateurs and calling students to the values of Islam that would heal the wounds of the materialism of secular ideologies (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 165). The fact that Islamist students of the MTTB were able to lump the ultra-nationalist and radical leftist students together as the sickly children of the Kemalist modernization project and its materialist education system, enabled them to present themselves as a moderate and non-violent alternative.

Even though this passivism of the MTTB was impactful in terms of gaining legitimacy in the public eye and attracting supporters from the disorganized Islamists within the campus, it also attracted criticism from a segment of its supporters. The 'Raiders' criticized the MTTB for its invisibility and ineffectiveness in competition with the leftist and the ultra-nationalist students. At the time, it was argued that not just the Raiders themselves, but also the ultra-nationalist students were aiming to radicalize the MTTB supporters and drag them into violent confrontations. The buildings of the MTTB were set on fire and bombed, and some Islamist students were beaten by ultra-nationalist and leftist students (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 208). The killings of student affiliates of the Raiders, Metin Yüksel, Erdoğan Tuna, and Mustafa Bilgi by the ultra-nationalists, were quite provocative moves as a writer of *Milli Gençlik* states: "Look how they force us to use the methods and the weapons of this age" (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 188-189). Yet, despite these provocations, the Islamists of the MTTB still stayed relatively peaceful, aimed for de-escalation, and took pride in keeping its supporters away from escalating political violence (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 196).

2.5 1976- 1979: The Rise of the Raiders

The Raiders (*Akıncılar*) was essentially an umbrella term that coincided with the Islamist youth in the early 1970s, including members of the NSP youth organiza-

tions, the Islamist members of the MTTB, and the non-organized supporters of the NSP (Zengin 2021, 131-136). The formation of the Raiders organization, on the other hand, reflects the nature of the relationship between these four groups of actors. Zengin (2021) argues that the preference of the NSP to have a youth force that would be both autonomous from the party structure and devoted to the agenda of the party was the main determinant in the party's connection to both the Raiders organization and the MTTB. The interest of the NSP in the MTTB stemmed from the union's organizational capacity; yet, the preference of the union to keep its distance from party politics¹⁸ lead the party to search for alternatives (Zengin 2021, 131-136). An alternative came forward with the formation of the first Raiders organization by Islamist students in 1975, who rejected the MTTB's passive stance and did not want to be restrained by the party hierarchy of the NSP at the same time (Zengin 2021, 131-136). The Raiders kept their relations with the NSP close: Metiner underlines that Necmettin Erbakan was recognized as the leader of the Raiders, and the connections with the NSP allowed them to function relatively safe from interventions of the police, especially throughout the Nationalist Front governments of NSP, center-right JP and far-right Nationalist Action Party (NAP) of 1975-1977 and 1977-1978 (Metiner 2004, 30-36; Zengin 2021).

Metiner (2004) argues that the Raider's modus operandi carried a strong resemblance to the Leninist concept of "vanguard party" (Akkaya 2010, 66). Their infiltration in high schools and labor unions followed a similar pattern to the radical left. Indeed, the hierarchical structure of the organizations of the Raiders were essentially replicas of its leftist counterparts, such as the Dev-Genç and the Ak-Genç (Akkaya 2010, 66). They also organized summer camps similar to their rivals, providing training to the participants on religion, politics, and martial arts (Akkaya 2010, 69)¹⁹. Additionally, the Raiders also organized large demonstrations and rallies to demonstrate the presence of an Islamist youth, next to socialist and ultra-nationalist alternatives: This was essential, since the MTTB mostly confined itself to primarily educational activities and the limited audience that comes with it. The first "Muslims are brothers" rally of March 1977 was organized by the Raiders and the MTTB, to honor the birthday of Prophet Mohammad and celebrate the Muslim solidarity week, followed by the "Call for unity" rally in April which the Raiders had

¹⁸This became evident with the majority support for the candidates of MTTB presidency Rüştü Ecevit in 1975 and Cemalettin Tayla in 1976, who advocated for the MTTB's separation from the daily Turkish politics (Zengin 2021, 135).

¹⁹This information is based on the news on Cumhuriyet, 29th July 1978; denied by some members of the Raiders Akkaya had interviewed. These members underlined an avoidance from violence on the side of the Raiders, which is in contradiction with Halis Özdemir's account (2007) on continuous demands of the Raiders to get education from the Palestinian Salvation Army to get back at the militant leftists and ultra-nationalists. For further information, see Halis Özdemir, 2007, *Mamak Zindanlarında Bir Akıncı: Tarihe Notlar*, İstanbul: Milsan.

organized by themselves. They also attended to the conquest rallies of may 1977 and the "Glorious conquest and we shall open Hagia Sophia" rally of NSP (Zengin 2021, 144-145).

The radicalism of the Raiders can be traced both in their demands for the take-over of the Kemalist state and the establishment of the rule of sharia and the use of violence against rival ideological currents. Their demands for sharia were voiced in both private settings such as group meetings or coffee-shop gatherings, but also big public meetings with the potential of making a spectacle. A public meeting held in Konya named "Saving Jerusalem" was one such instance (Akkaya 2010, 66). A group affiliated with the Raiders sat down during the Turkish national anthem and exclaimed "We do not want to listen to the march, but the voice of ezan!". The slogan "We demand sharia!" was also shouted throughout the meeting (Akkaya 2010, 66; Birand 1984, 260). To spread the cause, the Raiders took the responsibility to re-educate people, organize seminars and visits to tradesmen and craftsmen, trips to rural areas, and held meetings in the village centers and coffee houses; while also engaging in violent confrontations with radical leftist and ultra-nationalist youth organizations in the streets (Akkaya 2010, 67-68). Due to the radical revolutionary content of the magazines they sold in front of mosques, they got into trouble with the police officers time to time (Akkaya 2010, 67-68).

The Raiders also claimed their own "rescued areas", in a similar fashion to the radical leftists; especially in the cities of Istanbul, Konya, and Sakarya (Akkaya 2010, 74; Duman 1999, 256). To strengthen their influence, they established personal contacts within the neighborhoods and organized panels, rallies, and disseminated pamphlets (Akkaya 2010, 68). Within the neighborhoods they managed to dominate, "religious gendarmes" demanded shops to be closed during Ramadan, and attacked drunks, drug dealers, and cinema owners (Akkaya 2010, 68). Political graffiti became an area of competition and a symbol of domination during this decade (Akkaya 2010, 68). Public spaces, especially mosques and neighborhoods for the Raiders, were areas of contestation. The content of the graffiti complemented their stance: The walls of the Fatih Mosque were covered with slogans such as "Sovereignty belongs to God" and "The Raiders are coming, the Islamic state will be established by all means" (Akkaya 2010, 71-72).

Overall, this demand for the establishment of a new order and the incorporation of leftist revolutionary concepts reframed under Islamism underlined a break-up, both from the Islamists of the MTTB and the ultra-nationalists at the same time. Yüksel underlined that the Raiders did not have much of a problem with the demands of the radical left and were keen on most of the slogans the radical left used, such as

“down with fascism”, “down with oligarchy”, “employment, bread, and freedom”, and “down with America,” except for “Marx, Engels, Lenin”²⁰ (Akkaya 2010). The Raiders’ motivation in their struggle was clearly to seize the state apparatus, “establish an Islamist regime similar to that of Iran, only in modern clothes.”, and liberate the people of Turkey from the enforced regime of secularism (Akkaya 2010, 74-75; Metiner 2004, 84).

The Raiders can be considered the precedent of the Turkish Radical Political Islam, aiming for the establishment of a new Islamic state. The influences of the radical left were visible in the Raiders’ emphasis on economic and political freedom as willed by the Muslim people, justice and peace (Akkaya 2010, 75) which resulted in increased hostility between the group and the ultra-nationalists. It also should be noted that the killings of the Raiders Erdoğan Tuna in 23 December 1977 and Metin Yüksel in 23 February 1979 by the ultra-nationalists resulted in an irreversible separation and hostility between these two groups (Zengin 2021, 159-160; Duman and Yorgancılar 2007, 188-189). In fact, the Raiders adapted the term “fascist” that the leftist youth used frequently to address the ultra-nationalists after the killing of Erdoğan Tuna in 1977 (Zengin 2021, 159). After the killing of Metin Yüksel, on the other hand, the Raiders referred the ultra-nationalists as factious racists (*ırkçı münafıklar*) as used in an opinion piece in *Milli Gazete*²¹ Zengin argues that this peculiar use of the term *münafıklar* against ultra-nationalists is a sign of radicalization since it identifies faith directly with the ‘correct’ political discourse and action (Zengin 2021, 191). Hence, the overall transformation of the Raiders can be summarized as a process of convergence with the leftists and divergence from the ultra-nationalists. While they shared a similar political stance with the MTTB, the Raiders differentiated themselves through their repertoire of action and mobilizational capacity.

2.6 Conclusion

Competition and confrontation with the rising left within the campus is the primary component that triggered the politicization of the MTTB. Throughout 1965-1970, the organization developed a repertoire of actions learned from the left, such as disseminating press materials, publishing magazines, and organizing demonstrations and rallies. Still, the early signs of the distinct identity of the political Islamists are

²⁰The works of Ali Shariati and Seyyid Qutb’s “Social Justice in Islam” were also effective in this ideological rapprochement between the radical left and the radical Islamists.

²¹Cited in Zengin 2021: Metin Yolumuza Meşale Olacak, *Milli Gazete*, 14 March 1979.

traced back in their novel forms of protest, which became a part of the repertoire of action of Islamists: The Hagia Sophia prayers, the conquest rallies across Anatolia, and May celebrations of the conquest of Istanbul are among these. The eventual outbreak of violence during the 6th Fleet Protests resulting from the escalation of anti-communist political discourse that calls for violence is the peak point of politicization of this group. Throughout the period, the MTTB maintained its tradition of keeping up good relations with governments. Civil society organizations such as the Fight Against Communism Association supported the union's activities as well.

Between 1970-1980, the union became distinctly Islamist as the candidates of the Islamist students won the consecutive elections after Cinisli (Duman and Yorgancılar 2007; Okutan 2004). The introduction of the Qur'an as the union sign by replacing the howling Gray Wolf signifies the take-over of the Islamists. Throughout the decade, the union kept up educational activities, seminars, and disseminating magazines that include political commentary. Yet, they did not engage in large demonstrations and rallies to counter leftist mobilization, which was a big part of their repertoire during 1965-1970. The union also did not overextend its network.

In the end, confrontation and competition among rival ideological currents provided incentives for further politicization and radicalization of a social movement or organization. The eventual moderation of the MTTB can be explained with the sustenance of its organizational and mobilizational structure as a union. The center-right JP supported the union until the 1970s, and the NSP did the same throughout the 1970s. The state subsidized the MTTB, and its target base had not changed much throughout these decades. The latter is the element explaining moderation: Most of the university youth, the academia, and the families of students were worried about increasing levels of political violence within the campus, and non-violent strategies of recruitment were in line with the concerns of their target base.

The repertoire of action of the Raiders carries similarities with the radical left; demonstrated in their method of infiltration to labor unions and high schools, demands for having a radical party that would carry them to their ideal state and society, and engagement in armed conflict with their rivals from time to time. Learning from the radical left did have an impact on the repertoire of action of these Islamists, which was a factor facilitated the Raiders' departure from the MTTB, together with the incentives the NSP provided to the newly formed Raiders (Akkaya 2010; Metiner 2004; Zengin 2021).

3. CASE STUDY: TUNISIA

As one of the partners in the Tunisian revolution, En-Nahda is perceived to be one of the foundational elements of the young Tunisian democracy. The leader of the party Ghannouchi explains Ennahda as the party of Muslim democrats which combines modernity and Islam, rather than an Islamist Party (Ounissi 2016). However, the party itself did not manage to put forward a consistent outlook and was blamed for having different facets for different audiences, one for the West, one for the TV, and another one for mosques (Hammer 2011). Some argued for a detachment between the leadership of the party and its base, the former characterized as moderate and the latter as fundamentalist (Al-Rashed 2011). While its political rivals blame the party for having multiple facets, the more conservative supporters voice their concerns about Ennahda's compromising stance during the democratic transition period (Luck 2016). Found itself in a very well-known credibility problem associated with the parties representative of political Islam, Ennahda's fragmented facet is neither unique nor new. It reflects a decades-long struggle for visibility, relevancy, and negotiations on how to keep its distinct identity while making the necessary concessions for the enlargement of support and acceptance from both the gatekeepers and the bystanders of Tunisian politics.

Historically, the creations and recreations of the "Nahdawi" identity demonstrate intertwined patterns both known in the political socialization and the contentious politics literatures. In this chapter, I aim to demonstrate the impact of contestation and the competition in the creation of the identity for the given social movement by analyzing their process of construction of the repertoire of action of Islamic Group and the MTI, now known as the predecessors of Ennahda between 1970-1987 within university campuses.

In this chapter, I will provide information on the political context in Tunisia before and during the rise of Tunisian political Islam and the methods of action the early Islamists used. Later on, I will demonstrate the politicization process Tunisian Islamist youth experienced after its competition and confrontation with the Tunisian

leftist students in the 1970s. The repercussions of these experiences are observed in changes within the political discourse and preferred methods of action these students use. Finally, I aim to demonstrate the impact of the political repression of Tunisian Islamists over the repertoire of action Islamist students utilize throughout the 1980s.

3.1 Creation of a Repertoire of Action and Tunisian Islamist Youth

The repertoire of action of a given group is shaped along with many factors, such as the nature of its demands, the ‘space’ in which the action is realized, how ‘appropriate’ and efficient the action can be, and how familiar an action is (Tilly 1978, 143-158; Tilly 2006). In a sense, most forms of action-taking are over-determined. Within the history of activism on Tunisian campuses, the Islamist students’ way of engaging in protest behavior changed across decades, given that the nature of the interaction between the government and political Islam and the power dynamics within the campus had changed. Since the university campus provided a relatively safe playground for engaging in politics, there is a qualitative difference between activism outside of the campus and activism inside. For most of its history, the ongoing intergenerational conflicts within the Ennahda stemmed from the different levels of regime toleration for politics and the resultant different demands for action.

“Space” also has an impact on the nature of the demands made, and on the imitation of certain forms of action-taking in the cases of notable successes. The need for recruiting a bigger portion of the incoming students for both hegemonic and physical domination of the campus is reflected in the nature of the claims made by the student activists; competitive claims are more likely to result in physical confrontations between rival groups (Tilly 1978, 143-148). On the other hand, having the disadvantage of a short history in contentious politics might have pushed the Islamist students to make use of the repertoire of action that had already been developed by their rival groups. Most methods of action-taking of the Islamist students have parallels to that of leftist students, with the exception of use of violence: This was the case for the purpose of claiming their legitimacy within the campus politics and for recruitment purposes. Yet, changing dynamics of state repression over students transformed these more moderate aims and actions of the Islamists.

3.2 Post- Independent Tunisia under Bourguiba: Secularization of the Public Sphere

Compared to other states in the Middle East, Tunisia is recognized for having had a relatively stable and peaceful political arena under the rule of Bourguiba that began in 1957, up until the take-over of Ben Ali in the bloodless coup of 1987. This “peacefulness” is explained by the lack of any credible challenge that could threaten the legitimacy of the rule of the New Constitutional Liberal Party (Neo Destour) under the strong grip of Bourguiba, the initial success of Bourguiba’s economic program of nationalization and westernization of the public institutions, his role in the independence of the regime from French protectorate, and his success in eliminating possible challenges from within through sustaining an elite coalition (Dell’Aguzzo and Sigillò 2017). Bourguiba initiated a series of reformist policies that aimed to construct a modern nation of Tunisianites, sharing a common system of values and an understanding of citizenship (Camau and Geisser 2003). These reformist policies combined with the personal performances of Bourguiba delivered in the form of public speeches are noted as the essential instruments used to establish a cultural hegemony over society (Hibou 2010).

Secularism constituted an important component of these reformist policies. The absorption of the sharia courts into the national judicial system and nationalization of private waqfs and zawiyas resulted in economic losses on the side of Tunisian ulema, effectively reducing their economic resources and making them dependent on the state (Dell’Aguzzo and Sigillò 2017). Additionally, the public habous administration was eliminated and its lands were annexed which were used to secure the financial needs of mosques and religious administration (Boulby 1988). With the introduction of a new family code, polygamy and the ending of marriage through the pronouncement of the husband were banned, and women gained the right to initiate the process of divorce and to have an equal share in the division of goods (Dell’Aguzzo and Sigillò 2017). A department of religious affairs was established for appointing, training, and remunerating imams as government employees, regulating public rituals of religion, and religious education programs (Dell’Aguzzo and Sigillò 2017). Bourguiba’s intent in these reforms was understood as attempts to have control over the circulation and dissemination of religious symbolism throughout the country, rather than the sole de-sacralization of old religious institutions (Durham et al. 2013).

The reform of the Zaytouna Mosque constitutes a model demonstrating this intention. Right after the official declaration of the independence of Tunisia in 1956, the

educational institution of Zaytouna Mosque was legally separated into three components of primary and secondary schools, and a civic public university that would provide education on Islamic law and Arabic language (Brewster 1968). The mosque itself stayed independent from the state (Hajji 2011). The Zaytouna University then became a faculty within the National University of Tunis in 1960, with a mixed curriculum that included modern sciences lectures (Brewster 1968). The additional introduction of scholarship schemes to democratize religious education was a break with the old elitist educational practices of the Zaytouna Mosque (Dell'Aguzzo and Sigillò 2017). The influence the Zaytouna Mosque possesses as a signifier of Arab-Muslim identity was protected, while the old ulema that may pose a threat to the Bourguiba regime was both diversified and constrained under the state. The graduates from Zaytouna were hired by the state as teachers responsible to teach a standardized curriculum designed by the state (Dell'Aguzzo and Sigillò 2017). These policies initiated under the rule of Bourguiba were rather focused on breaking the power of the ulema and controlling the use and dissemination of religious material and symbolism, without losing legitimacy on the ground of religion. Yet, such an explanation was not found quite convincing by the first generation of Tunisian Islamists.

3.3 Islamic revivalism, the Movement of Islamic Tendency, and Bourguiba

The Islamic revival of the 1970s had a visible impact on Tunisian society, as demonstrated by a proliferation of Islamic literature, and an overall increase in the observance of religious obligations of praying, fasting, and following the dress code of Islam (Boulby 1988). It also later transformed into a political language, enabling a new form of dissent towards the regime of Bourguiba. The failure of Tunisian socialist economic programs in the late 1960s, and Bourguiba's insistence on keeping the dead-end economic programs proposed by the Minister for Planning and Finance Ben Salah in effect resulted in widespread dissatisfaction with the regime (Vandewalle 1980). To curb this dissatisfaction, Bourguiba discharged Ben Salah from office and purged the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), the most powerful labor union in the country (Dell'Aguzzo and Sigillò 2017). These actions hurt the ruling coalition of Bourguiba. In the end, a weakened ruling coalition, the ideational impact of Islamic revivalism across the region, and popular discontent with the regime made up a context in which the Islamist movement could claim a legitimate voice.

To repair the damage of the 1960s over the Tunisian economy and to respond to the enthusiasm around Islam, a series of liberalization policies and certain re-adjustment policies regarding the relationship between religion and the state were put into effect. The spaces and schedules of the administrative staff were reorganized following the religious obligations of praying and fasting (Frégosi 2003), and religion was reintroduced to the national curricula as a specific subject separated from civic education (Dell'Aguzzo and Sigillò 2017). This liberalization also provided a civic environment for the nourishment of the Islamic Group (*al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya*).

3.4 The 1970s: The Founders and the First Generation of the Islamic Group

Multiple factors accounted for the rise of the Islamic Group in the 1970s. Economic deterioration resulting from the failure of the Tunisian socialist experiment and the ever-rising unemployment are accounted as factors for both the loss of legitimacy of the far-left and the regime of Bourguiba. Enneifer, in an interview with François Burgat, argued that the radical shift from this series of failed socialist economic policies to liberal restructuring under Hedi Noura resulted in feelings of disillusionment among the youth towards the Bourguiba regime (Hamdi 1996, 21). He also mentions the impacts of the loss of the Six-Days War in 1967, the youth protests of 1968, and the rise of Islamic revivalism across the region as ideational factors for the rising attractiveness of Islamism and the waning influence of Marxism for the Tunisian youth (Hamdi 1996, 21-24). The Tunisian academic Dr. Abd al-Majid al-Sharfi argues that the support base of the Islamic Group during the 1970s and the 1980s was constituted by the university youth coming from poor rural parts of the country, which suffered from the dimming job prospects in urban Tunisia (Hamdi 1996, 24). Still, the founders of the group underline that their intent of coming together under the roof of the Islamic Group (IG), besides encouraging Tunisians to follow the obligations of Islam, was a religious and cultural reaction to Bourguiba's pro-Western and anti-clerical reforms (Hamdi 1996, 25).

The first connections between the founders of the IG¹ and their followers were established while they were working in the Official Association for the Safeguard of the Holy Qur'an (Hamdi 1996, 35-36; Wolf 2017, 37-38). The association was founded in 1967 and was recognized by the department of religious affairs, thanks to the good relations between the co-opted Islamic ulema and the government. Under

¹Hmida Enneifer, Abdelfattah Mourou, and Rached Ghannoushi.

the protection of the association, the founders of the IG were able to carry out their meetings and deliver the message of Islam, up until their ‘eagerness’ to do so bothered the government (Wolf 2017, 37-38). After being dismissed from the association, mosques became the primary space for their lectures on Islam delivered in small discussion circles of believers named *halaqat* (Cavatorta and Merone 2013).

Between 1970-1973, the founders of the movement were primarily engaged with delivering the message of Islam, hence the act of *tabligh*. Influenced by the Pakistani Jama’at al-Tabligh, the Islamic group also paid visits to several villages across the country, visiting public places such as local cafes and shops, to spread the message of Islam and to remind the obligations of the religion; hence very much engaged in a form of faith-based activism (Hamdi 1996, 36; Magnuson 1991, 170). Some new preachers of the IG, who were trying to attract like-minded young people of their age, developed innovative deliveries of *tabligh*, blended with fun, bonding activities such as engaging in football matches (McCarthy 2018, 23).

After 1973, both due to Ghannoushi’s increasing interest in the Muslim Brotherhood literature and contacts with the Muslim Brotherhood ex-prisoners,² the Group experienced a transformation from a movement of *tabligh* to a movement of *da’wa* (Hamdi 1996, 38). In this line, in the words of Ghannoushi, two main ways of engaging in praxis arise: The first one would be the public face of the group shown in public lectures and publications, and the second one would be its private face shown in small and secret meetings in the members’ houses focused on increasing knowledge of Islam and its teachings (Hamdi 1996, 38). Not much change has occurred within the content of these meetings and lectures throughout the 1970s. Up until the late 1970s, the Group mostly functioned similar to a form of civic organization that provides religious education to the Tunisian youth on varying topics ranging from individual Islamic ethics to the place of Islamic family within the Tunisian society. With this, the organization aimed for a gradual change in the hearts and minds of the Tunisian people that would lead to the formation of both an Islamic society and eventually an Islamic state. In this line, following the gendered dress-code of Islam and Islamic diet and fasting by the moon meant more than obeying religious obligations: The members of the Group were also making a political statement against the regime from their own point of view (Hermassi 1991).

These re-education practices can be read as actions taken to repair the “damage” of Bourgiba’s secularizing policies inflicted both on the individual’s sense of self through creating a chasm between the Islamic tradition of Tunisia and the modern Tunisian and as an act of implicit criticism towards the hold of the state over the

²Egypt’s president Anwar al-Sadat released leaders of Muslim Brotherhood from jail in 1973.

dissemination of religious knowledge.

The early 1970s of the IG was a confusing period in terms of the direction the group tried to choose for itself. A mixed approach was followed by the founders of the group that incorporated political criticisms of Bourguiba's policies with religious education; yet, these rely on the retrospective accounts of the founders themselves. Wolf (2017), on the other hand, argues that criticisms of the Bourguiba era were introduced to the leaders by their young followers who were recruited or merely influenced by the IG in their earlier years of education, but came to criticize the movement's half-hearted criticisms towards the Bourguiba regime. In fact, the politicization of the IG arguably took place with the rise of the Islamist youth that follows it.

The interaction between the first affiliates of the Islamic Group and the youth took place in the lycees (McCarthy 2018, 27-29). Given that the graduates of the Zaytouna were employed as Arabic or religious and civic education teachers in public schools rather than becoming a part of the Tunisian clergy, many Zaytouna graduates with direct connections to the founders of the Islamic Group became teachers in primary and secondary public schools (McCarthy 2018, 27-29). Hence, many students who came into contact and developed a close relationship with these teachers became supporters of the Islamic cause within the campus in the 1970s and the 1980s (McCarthy 2018, 27-29).

Formed their small circles in the lycees, most of these students were already socialized in a proto-version of university groups that they would experience in a couple of years. These small groups of students usually studied the Quran and the *hadith*, and political figures who have articulated the grievances of their people such as Gandhi and Mandela, and their motivational values (McCarthy 2018, 29). They were also engaged with 'fun' activities such as going to swimming and trips together and studying martial arts and poetry. Hence, in addition to studying Islam, they were also actively engaged in emotional labor and creating long-lasting affectionate connections with one another. In order to encourage each other for academic success and religious observance, such as modest clothing in public places, they were awarding one another with small gifts as well (McCarthy 2018, 31).

3.5 Political Islam Inside the Campus

The main support base for the Islamic Group that is formed by these small groups across the country, or the Movement of Islamic Tendency (MTI) as it will be known

in universities in a couple of years, were the young people at the age of university education, coming from secular educational backgrounds. The supporters were predominantly from the rural regions of Tunisia and from families employed in lower-class jobs, mostly laborers (Hermassi 1984, 43-46; Waltz 1986, 655). These students were mostly organized in the Faculty of Science, which was at odds with the common association of science faculties with the status-quo (Waltz 1986, 664). Other than the effect of worsening economic conditions and dimming prospects, influences of coming from a traditionally religious family and being under the influence of IG during their lycee years, support for political Islam among the university students is also explained with the culture shock the students experienced after coming to the big cities of Tunisia to study. Most of them were confronted with social situations that they were not experienced with: Gender-mixed close study groups, religiously insensitive clothing, clubbing, alcohol consumption, and sex were among these (Waltz 1986, 668). Overall, confrontations with alternative lifestyles and ideological currents within the university strengthened the underlying devotion to the cause of the Islamic Group and furthered it with the inclusion of socio-political critique of post-independence Tunisia.

The early days of Islamist activity within the campus were relatively free from state repression. In fact, as stated by Ahmed Mestiri, there was an implicit tolerance towards actions taken by Islamist students and the IG (Wolf 2017, 39). While this tolerance is considered as a sign of an alliance between the regime and the Islamists in the eyes of the Marxists; Ahmet Mestiri claimed that it is rather a tactical choice of Bourguiba, made to counterbalance the influence of the far-left groups in campuses and Tunisian politics (Wolf 2017, 39). Be it a tactical choice or an ideational alliance, this “informal tolerance” (Albrecht and Wegner 2006, 123; Zhang 2020, 124-126) provided the movement with the opportunity to engage with other ideological currents, especially with the leftists; which in turn allowed the Islamists to incorporate new strategies of framing and mobilization (Zhang 2020).

Within the campus, student organizations were divided into three main ideological currents: The Gauchistes (leftists), the Bourguibists, and the Unaffiliated (Entelis 1974, 547-549). There was not much of a presence of Islamist students within the campuses in the early 1970s. Still, after the entrance of the first generation that came under the influence of the IG, the Islamist students established themselves as an ever-growing rival to others throughout the decade. They opened faculty mosques and extended activities of religious teaching through organizing private meetings in the Islamic Group’s fashion (Hamdi 1996, 44; Wolf 2017, 42). They also engaged with other groups, attended discussion circles mostly organized by the leftist students while consistently criticizing the choice of these meetings to be held primarily in

French (Hamdi 1996, 43; Wolf 2017, 42). Reflecting on those days, some members of the MTI claim that their attendance at those discussions revealed their ideological weaknesses compared to their rivals (Wolf 2017, 42-43). Marxists, on the other hand, discarded the discourse of the Islamists as at best irrelevant and essentially the same with the Muslim Brotherhood, and at worst “ideologically obscurantist” (Hamdi 1996, 44). Given that they were unable to counter the arguments posed especially by the leftists, some students even studied Marxist literature (Wolf 2017, 42-43).

The growing population of the Islamist youth within campuses intensified the already existing tensions between the leftists, the Bourguibists, and the Islamists. 1977 elections of the General Union of Tunisian Students (UGET) exposed these tensions in a violent manner (Wolf 2017, 42-43).³ Before the elections, the members of UGET demanded their candidate run unopposed. To condemn this demand, Islamist students organized a rally which resulted in physical confrontations between the Islamists and the leftists: According to an interview of Wolf with a former member, students have fought against one another with stones and knives; while the police stood by (Wolf 2017, 43). To denounce the use of violence during these rallies, Islamist students published an official statement signed by the name “the students of the Islamic Tendency Movement”, the MTI (Wolf 2017, 43-44). The ideological break between the leadership of the Islamic Group and the Islamist students became apparent and physical with this act. An activist who helped to draft the statement articulated that the distance the Islamic Group puts between the realities of Tunisian politics and itself does not reflect the motivations and struggles of Islamist students (Wolf 2017, 43-44). Countering the accounts of the founders of the Islamic Group, most criticisms towards Tunisian secularization and the state control of Islam under Bourguiba were articulated in the campuses by this new group of MTI.

The activists of MTI themselves started to initiate discussion circles within the campus (Wolf 2017, 44). One old member of the MTI argued that the existence of the Islamists within the campus was mostly tangible through these loose discussion circles, around which Islamist students gathered to discuss politics and pray (Zhang 2020, 63). In their secret meetings, priorities and the strategies of the MTI were discussed and decided (Wolf 2017, 44). The movement engaged all these activities autonomously from the IG. They founded groups of religious pioneers, visiting the rural areas across the country (Wolf 2017, 44). The members of the group started to call each other by the names of influential Islamic figures, studied religious texts,

³The Tunisian campuses during the early 1970s witnessed increased clashes between the Bourguiba supporters (the Destourians) and the leftists. The UGET elections in 1971 resulted in far left gaining the majority of seats, a result that was denied by the Destourian students of the union. Wolf (2017, 43) argues that this was the sole indicator of the ruling party’s control over the Union.

and engaged in physical exercises to stay in shape (Wolf 2017, 44). The last preparation is quite telling about the nature of the confrontations taking place between MTI members and rival groups within the university. Much of “know-how” was integrated from the IG, but the main motivation and mode of action were fundamentally different.

Even though confrontations between leftists and the Islamists in campuses harmed the students themselves, they also furthered the politicization of the MTI. This process of confrontation helped the Islamist students to incorporate the know-how of the Islamic Group with both leftist perspectives of dissent they developed towards the regime itself and the methods of action of the leftists such as “arranging political meetings, disseminating mural newspapers and clandestine magazines, and engaging in debates, political analysis, and polemical politics.” (Lamchichi 1989 cited in Hamdi 1996, 45). Ghannoushi himself argues that together with the impact of the Iranian Revolution, these confrontations of the young MTI members with the leftist students resulted in the absorption of both leftist ideals and violent methods of engaging in political struggle, which made Tunisian Islam “politically and socially militant” (Hamdi 1996, 45-46). As Enneifer states, the MTI, the first generation of students that came under the influence of the teachings of the Islamic Group, took the lead in the construction of the Tunisian Political Islam and became the “locomotive of the movement” (Hamdi 1996, 46).

The Black Thursday, the protests of 26 January 1978, is the signifier of both the disrupted ideological connection between the MTI and the Islamic Group in terms of strategies and priorities and the influence of the far-left over the young Islamists. As a result of the economic deterioration the country suffered during its transition from a socialist to a liberal market economy,⁴ The Tunisian General Workers’ Union called a general strike on January 26, 1978 (Perkins 2014, 168). To support the union, student groups from secondary schools and universities, including the Islamist students, participated in the strike (Wolf 2017, 45). The government called the army to intervene and restore order, which resulted in violent repression of the strike (Wolf 2017, 44). Officially, 47 protesters lost their lives, unofficial accounts claiming numbers four times higher (Perkins 2014, 168). Several members of the MTI also joined the strike to show their solidarity with the workers (Wolf 2017, 45). The initial responses to this event further underlined the disconnection between the Islamist university students of the MTI and the founders of the group. After the events took place, the Islamic Group published a piece in the *Al-Maarifa* titled

⁴Acute compromises from the interests of the labor demanded by the government of Hedi Noura resulted in insubordination of the UGTT and increasing number of labor protests throughout 1977 and 1978. The failure of the government in responding to the grievances of labor pushed the leader of UGTT Habib Ashour to resign, and the union to schedule a general strike.

“Before the Iron Curtain Falls,” which recognized the demands of the workers and yet sided with the government and held the protestors accountable for the eruption of violence. Enneifer claimed that the reason for such arguments was the existential threat the increasing prominence of the left posed to the Islamists and Islam itself (Hamdi 1996, 54).

Still, this split did not prevail for too long; the IG learned from the MTI university youth, both on an ideational basis and political action-taking. While the ever-increasing tension between the government and the leftists enabled the informal toleration towards Islamists, they also adapted what they learned from the MTI in their mode of action. Mirroring the MTI’s struggles with the leftists for the domination of the political discourse, members of the IG joined labor unions to compete with the leftists and voice an Islamic alternative to the traditional Tunisian labor politics (Toumi 1989, 116-117; Zhang 2020, 59-61). Contradicting the initial position that was taken towards the left, demonstrated in their initial framing of 1978 Black Thursday and in several statements underlining incompatibility of Marxism and Islamism were softened. While statements criticizing the Marxist concept of class antagonism and its innate hostility towards religion frequently dropped in the early publications of IG (Esposito 1999, 164); after the events of 1978, the leaders of IG started to borrow from Marxist literature to make sense of the economic reality of Tunisia, addressing the cost of living and unemployment and the widening income gap (Zhang 2020, 62). Indeed, as Ghannoushi states, the 1978 revolt increased awareness and attentiveness of the IG towards the issues of the workers (Tamimi 2001, 51; Zhang 2020, 62). In fact, the IG started to celebrate Labor Day in 1980 (Hamdi 1996, 55).

These changes in the discourse of the movement, together with increasing criticisms towards the regime and governmental programs (Dunn 1996, 153); reflected a take-over of the mindset of the MTI within the university and increased the capacity for mobilization in universities in turn. Given that most members of the MTI within the university had reported concerns for their future in this deteriorating economic environment, changing the emphasis of the overall movement helped the Islamist youth to reconnect with the IG.

3.6 The 1980s: Increasing Prominence of the Islamists on Campuses

The new turn the Islamic Group took did gain the enthusiasm of the MTI on the campus. Influenced by the activism of 1978 and the Iranian revolution of 1979, the

Group reformed itself through organizing its first congress in 1981, coming up with a manifesto, and rebranding itself as the MTI (Hamdi 1996, 62-66). An increasing tone of criticism towards the Bourguiba regime became prominent in this period, especially regarding the secularization of the Tunisian public sphere and the consecutive privatization of religion. The efforts put forward by the post-independence political establishment of Tunisia to “catch up with the rest of the world,” considered to be cheap imitations of the Western course of modernization, only resulted in an enlargement of the gap between Tunisia and the developed nations of the world. As a solution, the MTI argued for the renewal of the state and the society under the guidance of once-abandoned “true” Islam (Hermassi 1984).

The MTI criticized aggressive commentary on the social signifiers of the Islamic belief made by Bourguiba, especially with regards to the use of hijab, and regarded every single secularizing policy raging from the introduction of personnel and family code to the reform of the Zeytouna as an attack on Islam in Tunisia. The control of the state over the use and dissemination of religious material was understood as a strategy of initiating anti-religious reforms and regulation by the MTI and as an act that contradicted the secular ideals that the regime tried to attach itself to by the far-left (Hamdi 1996, 28).

Inside campuses, Islamist students continued to organize demonstrations and hold public meetings. The hadiths as Islamic graffiti covered the walls of faculties (Boulby 1988, 609). Islamist students campaigned to advance student rights and to designate prayer rooms within the universities. The competition between the left and the Islamist students for the recruitment of incoming students was visible in different manners. Leftist students organized cultural events to gather students, during which they delivered their message and recruited from the gatherers (Carnevale 2021). The Islamists embraced a revolutionary tone that allowed them to recruit more students than before.

The Tunisian Islamists made great use of the discourse of the Iranian revolution, especially the concepts of *Mustakfirin* and *Mustad'afin*⁵; which was added in “the Founding Manifesto of Harakat Al-Ittijah il-Islami” of 1981 (Hamdi 1996, 266). This discourse was further nourished with the continuing influences of the writings of Sayyid Qutb, Hassan al-Banna, and Ali Shariati (McCarthy 2018, 51). Writings of Malek Bennabi on the impact of colonialism over the cultural and moral identity of the colonized and the possibility of an Islamic democracy were highly influential (McCarthy 2018, 51). While dismissed by the leftist students in the campus as either

⁵ *Mustakfirin* can be translated as the oppressor and the arrogant, and *Mustad'afin* as the oppressed, disinherited, and the poor. The relationship between the *Mustakfirin* (the oppressor and the arrogant) and *Mustad'afin* is a reframed version of the Marxist concept of class antagonism.

the “Brotherists,” an accusation indicating inauthenticity of the Islamist students, or as the strike-breakers used by Bourguiba in the 1970s (Ayari 2009); Islamist students posed a serious threat to the hegemony of the left on Tunisian campuses with their increasing number of affiliates and enlarged political vocabulary in the 1980s. Islamists tried to persuade the leftists, especially on the indivisibility of the Arab and the Muslim identities, and convince them on adapting the Muslim identity as the only true perspective from which Tunisian history can be understood; and blamed them for being in contradiction with their acclaimed fight against the imperialists and the Zionists through the denial of this identity (Ayari 2009). Tunisian politics were also discussed around student newspapers hung on walls, such as the Islamist The Political News (*al-Hadath al-Siyasi*) and The Intellectual News (*al-Hadath al-Fikri*), and the leftist The Truth (*al-Haqiqa*) (McCarthy 2018, 51). One activist does mention the competition between leftist and Islamist students over the space on faculty walls used for hanging newspapers and argues that the Islamic praying schedule followed by Islamist students allowed them to take up space before their leftist counterparts (McCarthy 2018, 51).

The Islamists, making use of the language the Iranian revolution brought forward, became considerably radicalized. Students lent support for the 1980 Gafsa attacks even though the leadership of the movement disregarded the incident and officially rejected government accusations about their involvement in the attacks (Wolf 2017, 56; Allani 2009, 261)⁶. As a result the government increased the level of surveillance across the campus, which only aggravated the tensions between the government and the Islamist students. The tensions rise to a whole new level when Islamist students took the dean of the Faculty of Science under hostage at the University of Manouba in February 1981, as a response to the rising presence of security forces around the campus (Wolf 2017, 57; Zelin 2020). Distorted with detailed horrific depictions of the incident in the government-backed Tunisian media, the hostage situation gave a pretext for a tide of arrests and prosecutions of the members of the MTI (Wolf 2017, 57; Wolf 2013, 564).

The competition on campuses occasionally resulted in physical violence between the Islamists and the leftists, especially with the Movement of Democratic Patriots (WATAD) (McCarthy 2018, 49). One particular incident between these two groups took place on 30 March 1982, during which some forty students were wounded. The stories of violence, getting gruesome with each retelling, stuck in the minds of the students (McCarthy 2018, 49). While putting much of the blame on the leftist

⁶Tunisian guerillas supported by the Libyan authorities attacked a police station, the National Army and the National Guard in Gafsa. The guerillas aimed to “liberate of the country from the PSD dictatorship and neo-colonial domination” (Wolf 2017, 56)

students, Islamists accepted that they were engaged in these violent confrontations for self-protection, claiming that the leftist students were threatening them with ‘slithering their throats’(McCarthy 2018, 49). Confrontations between the Islamist students and the Bourgibist students were narrated differently. According to an account quoted in McCarthy (2018, 49), students who were known to be loyal to the regime were occasionally harassed if caught by Islamist students. For public humiliation, the heads of these students would be shaved and marked with an F, which stood for ‘Flic’, meaning cop.

Finally, rather than fighting for a take over of the UGET, the Islamist students established their union, the General Tunisian Union of Students (UGTE) in 1985. The UGTE represented the most revolutionary element within the MTI at the time. In fact, the union objected to the MTI’s decision for legalization after the outing of the organization by the regime forces on the grounds that this decision would enforce the legitimacy of the Bourguiba regime (McCarthy 2018, 48). Nevertheless, the UGTE managed to stay active only for 2 years. In February 1987, the union closed down with a government crackdown on Islamist students, as an extension of deteriorating relations between the MTI and Bourguiba (Wolf 2017, 64) and a response to the strikes Islamist students initiated during the 1986-1987 academic year (Boulby 1988, 611).

3.7 Conclusion

The development of Tunisian political Islam between the 1970s and the 1980s reflects a peculiar pattern for politicization. Starting as a network of middle-aged Zeytounian graduates in the mid-1960s, the Islamic Group had no refined political program and overall avoided any critique towards the Bourguiba regime. Islamist students who get acquainted with the lycee teachers who are members of the IG formed small groups that lasted long after graduation. These groups were the basis for the development of Tunisian Islamist youth within the campus: Their engagement and confrontation with the leftist students within the campus profoundly affected their political outlook and preferences for action-taking. The struggle between the Tunisian left and Bourguiba gave Islamists a political opportunity to develop their network. Ahmet Mestiri underlines that it was indeed a tactical choice of Bourguiba not to interfere with the activities of Islamists and the Islamist youth within campuses, and this was the case for the 1970s (Wolf 2017, 39).

Under such a political climate, the meeting of the leftist youth and the Islamist youth

in the 1970s gave birth to interesting consequences. Without facing repression, as the leftist students did during the decade, the Islamist students became politicized due to the ideological competition they entered with the leftist students. This competition both carried the purpose of redeeming Islamism as a legitimate and equal counterpart to the leftists and the Destourian students; and recruiting more students for their cause. The eagerness of the Islamist students to become convincing political actors within the campus motivated them to counter accusations such as being a tool of the Bourguiba regime or the Tunisian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and simply being irrelevant to the modern times. As a result, Islamist students became familiar with the Marxist literature and their methods of engaging in political action. This, in turn, almost resulted in the break-up between the IG and the Islamist youth; their different approaches to politics became evident in their initial reaction to the 1978 Black Thursday. The repertoire of action of the Tunisian Islamist youth throughout these decades did not include physical confrontations with the Destourian students or leftist students except for the 1977 UGET elections confrontation, after which Islamist students signed a letter condemning the use of violence. The students were trying to increase their community outreach, making claims for public space within the campus, and strengthening their political discourse. They opened faculty mosques, conducted private religious teachings, arranged political meetings, made up religious pioneers for rural visits, disseminated newspapers, and magazines, and engaged in polemical politics through mixed discussion circles with the leftist students. Still, they also get trained in martial arts for 'self-protection' after the incidents of 1977.

The 1978 Black Thursday is a turning point for the organization since it reflected the fragmentation between the generations of Islamists of Tunisia and initiated an ideological reconciliation period between Islamist students and the IG. After the actual extent of the IG was revealed, the relationship between Bourguiba and the Islamists have changed. Promises for an inclusionary political system did not encompass the Islamists; the overall decade became unpredictable for the group. Within the campus, confrontations between leftist students and the Islamists did result in physical violence. Interestingly, the radicalization of Islamist youth increased recruitment within the campus, which might indicate the level of frustration the Bourguiba regime created. Throughout the period, the Islamist youth and the leadership came relatively close with the adaptation of the ideological framework of the Islamist youth; still, the latter kept on engaging in violent actions without the knowledge and the support of the leadership cadres. While most of these actions were responses to the increased oppression of the Islamists, they reinforced the image of Islamists as a dangerous group that can cause harm and disrupt peace.

Hence, the confrontation with the leftists within the university triggered politicization for Islamist students, which eventually affected the organization's leadership. This increased interest in politics and changed methods of action in turn increased recruitment within the campus. State repression caused diversification in engaging in political action by affecting the level of communication within these organizations through selective incarceration of those involved.

4. CONCLUSION

This thesis argues that the process of politicization for a given social organization is essentially tied to the competition and confrontation with rival ideological currents with a comparative historical analysis of Turkish Islamist Youth and Tunisian Islamist youth. The roots of political Islam in Tunisia and Turkey are tied to their Islamist youth, who have built a distinct identity of Islamism under the influence of confrontation and competition between these two countries. In both cases, the politicization process also includes violence eventually. Further radicalization does not require state repression: The Raiders did not experience state repression and incarceration to a large extent. The incorporation of violence to repertoires of action is observed in Tunisia and Turkey, strengthening the argument on the impact of confrontation and competition. Still, violence does not always beget violence. Some groups may moderate due to their concerns about the demands of their audience, as did the MTTB.

For the Tunisian case, the politicization of the Islamic Group is tied to its young followers. After coming into contact with the leftist groups inside the campus, the second generation of the Islamic Group had experienced changes in their ideological stance, which had a significant impact on the trajectory of Tunisian political Islam. While engaging in confrontation and competition over the student body, this second generation had adopted similar tactics to the leftist students. Since Bourguiba tolerated the Islamist activity, the Islamists moved freely compared to the leftist students who were persecuted under repression. With the discovery of the actual extent of Islamist activity, Bourguiba's approach to Islamist activity had changed. Together with the peace between the Islamic Group and the MTI, and the incorporation of MTI's name and political discourse into the organization, the group came under state repression throughout the 1980s, with frequent incarcerations of the group's leadership. Such repression increased preference for violent action-taking, especially inside the campus, even though the leadership did not support that. Violence became a much-preferred part of Islamist students' repertoire between 1978-1987, both

in their struggle against the leftist students and Bourguiba.

For the Turkish case, the distinct image of the Islamist youth movement comes with the separation from the anti-communist block of the Turkish right. Confrontation and competition with the leftist students triggered a transformation process for the MTTB between 1965-1969. In the early 1970s, a similar competition took place with the ultra-nationalist students, which ended with the take-over of the institution by the Islamist youth, which later on branded itself as the “non-violent” alternative to the radical left and the ultra-nationalist right within the campus. Throughout the process, the MTTB had moderated its repertoire of action, excluding one-on-one violent confrontations with rival groups. It also refrained from organizing counter-rallies while keeping others associated with itself as a part; and softened its robust anti-communist political discourse. The union leaders of this decade called for a peaceful educational life and embraced non-violent methods of engagement with one another. The union aimed to recruit more and extended its structure to the imamhatips, yet it did not change its mobilizational structure much. In the end, the MTTB did not experience radicalization, but it did lose a part of its base to the Raiders. The Raiders, in this sense, were much more similar to the radical left in terms of their repertoire of action, demands for political power, political discourse, and mobilizational structure. Hence, the case of Raiders underlines that the component of competition and confrontation might be enough for radicalization just by itself. In this case, state repression may not even be necessary.

This comparison between the Tunisian Islamist Youth and Turkish Islamist Youth reveals politicization, radicalization, and moderation patterns. Competition and confrontation with the left within the campus had facilitated a process of politicization for these groups. Politicization triggered fragmentation for the Tunisian Islamist Youth, which was prevented by accommodating the Islamist youth’s political discourse. Still, the end of state toleration for Islamists’ activities across the country and the incarceration of the MTI leadership had a direct impact on the radicalization of the MTI. A similar impact of incarceration and repression is also visible for the radical left in Turkey: It did trigger a process of fragmentation and increasing use of violence against the ultra-nationalists and the state apparatus. Yet, the case of Raiders may lead us to question whether state repression is necessary for radicalization and pushes for possible impacts of competition and confrontation.

Social movements and organizations are usually taken as entities with an already constructed political outlook, even though the initial motivations of their members in joining the group might be different. Hence, tracing politicization, radicalization, and moderation through analyzing these groups’ repertoires and demonstrat-

ing these processes as results of competition and confrontation with rival ideological currents outside party politics is a novel attempt. Additionally, the roots of political Islam with reference to youth organizations and movements are rarely discussed for the Turkish case; unlike the interest in grass-roots Islamist movements of the 1990s and Islamist parties. The youth mobilization of the late 1960s and the increasing political violence of the 1970s are analyzed with an emphasis over the leftist and the ultra-nationalist youth. The anti-communism of the 1960s and the Islamism of 1970s were rather taken as surface reactions to the left in particular. This thesis argues that Turkish Islamists' political discourse utilized to this day was rooted in the periods discussed. Finally, the roots of political Islam in Tunisia were rarely researched: Most research on political Islam in Tunisia is focused on En-Nahda and its pioneer place in the trajectory of the Arab Spring, the leaders' ideological positioning, and the process of moderation the movement had experienced later on.

The limitations of this thesis mostly come from uncontrolled factors. The thesis does not separate the impact of the Iranian revolution over the radicalization of the Tunisian Islamist youth. On the other hand, even though the Tunisian government did tolerate Islamist activity across the country and inside the campus, such tolerance is not the same as the civil and political rightist Turkish democracy grants to its citizens. Limits of the space for political contestation as defined by democracy and by an autocracy are never the same, ultimately impacting the repertoire of action of the Islamists in the 1970s. Following Tilly (1978; 2006), even the limits of imagination regarding protest behavior are constrained by political systems.

Additionally, the mobilizational structures of these groups are essentially different. For the Turkish case, the union only has ties to officially recognized civil society associations as an independent body. For the Tunisian case, the Islamist youth had connections to the semi-underground organization of the Islamic Group. This difference may impact the repertoire of action, independent from the impact of confrontation and competition between the Islamist group and their leftist counterparts. Finally, ethnicity and religious minorities are left outside of this analysis; their possible impacts over the recruitment process and repertoires of action are not included in this analysis. Fixing these problems and adding more cases would increase both the external and internal validity of these arguments.

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