

**UNIVERSITY SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY AND
ACADEMIC SOCIAL CAPITAL
IN TUNISIA**

By

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To my beloved grandfather Ofelio Pinzin, for the memory of every words,
smiles, tender sights and warming hugs will always rejoice in my heart.

ABSTRACT

Revolutionary movements emerged from the “Arab spring” have determined undergoing socio-political changes in the region with significant implications and impacts on democratic transition and future sustainability. In this framework, the study explores Tunisian public universities’ social dimension and democratic implications of institutional partnerships in cooperation with local communities. In particular, it examines institutional, academic and students’ social responsibility as central elements of universities’ missions and students’ education. Existing complex dynamics linking social responsibility, social capital and democracy are considered within university contexts, taking also into consideration the role of Islam and Islamic values. In fact, university and students’ social responsibility have the potential to contribute to the redefinition of a post-revolution public sphere inspired by democratic participation and society-wide shared norms. Change in government policies affecting freedom of expression, restricted associational rights and political participation might result in institutional autonomy, allowing universities to fulfil their role in society while responding to economic and socio-cultural challenges.

The study involved a sample of academic professors and students from Humanities and Engineering faculties from one public university. Research fieldwork was conducted combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. Questionnaires were employed to gather information from undergraduate students to explore university social responsibility, social capital creation, students’ identity formation, Islam and democracy. Interviews were used both to obtain insights from students and professors to consider their perceptions and self-awareness of social responsibility, while

deepening contextual knowledge. Furthermore, official government documents and government policies in relation to higher education reforms were also consulted.

In particular, the research points out the development of a structured under-utilisation of social capital for social responsibility. Government political control and socio-cultural censorship, as well as HE policies and legal frameworks have limited universities' autonomy and their social dimension, restricting opportunities for students' political and civic engagement in society. These aspects have also affected the provision of education for democracy and civic engagement courses; extra-curricular volunteering programs; as well as, support for community partnerships. Furthermore, Islamic associations' social, political and cultural role has been under governmental control resulting in fragmented, marginal and often antagonist contributions to democracy and social responsibility. As such, in Tunisia, since the independence, the regime have hindered the development of a shared culture based on civically and politically active citizenship for the stabilisation and reproduction of democratic attitudes, behaviours and habits.

Research findings present reflections and implications in relation to universities' third mission in Tunisia to advance institutional and students' autonomy to fulfil their wider civic role in society. Furthermore, suggestions for future research in the field have been made as a way to advance knowledge and provide information to support future policies and reforms.

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PREFACE

The research project was developed during the period 2007-2008, while I was working in Tunisia on Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation projects. In 2009, I travelled back to Italy, where the reading of Giovanni Sartori's book "Democrazia: cos'è" (Democracy: what is it) and Hannah Arendt "Vita Activa: on Human Condition", further influenced my intellectual curiosity in understanding existing connections between contexts and human agency. At this early stage, the research project was initially planned to investigate the relationship between democracy and civil society organisations (CSOs) in Tunisia. However, in 2010 after exchanging views and engaging in discussion with Italian professors, the topic developed towards the social dimension of public universities and their contribution to democracy. In particular, the study considered how existing interactions between political, social, economic, religious and cultural contexts impact democracy and social participation. In this new framework, universities and students are identified as key actors to foster civic skills, democratic attitudes and civic engagement to support democracy sustainability in the Arab region.

In this sense, the research has been initially developed with reference to the period prior to the "Jasmine Revolution" or "Dignity Revolution", which took place in Tunisia in December 2010. The ousting of long-time President Ben Ali in January 2011, ushered in complex and new socio-political scenarios leading to Arab countries' radical reconfigurations, implying both research conceptual and analytical framework's redefinition. In particular, the outcome of the uprisings urged an overall reconsideration of existing relationships between public institutions, Islamic political

parties and revitalised civil society organisations. In this framework, the research, undertaken between the end of 2011 and October 2015, has been re-structured, reflecting a specific political and historical transitional period towards democratic stabilisation in Tunisia, characterised by an initial phase of public demonstrations and social unrests; a second phase where, for the first time, a freely elected provisional government led to the drafting a new constitutional law; and, a present phase, where a newly elected government and president in late 2014 were confronted with undergoing major reforms to consolidate democracy despite growing security challenges.

Such changing circumstances are central to critically understand the unique opportunity of developing a similar study in this specific time and space in relation to research fieldwork, data analysis and research project's significance. In particular, data collection was conducted in April-May 2013, during an ongoing period of both social and political unsettled conditions and occasional disorders affecting public security and political stability in the country. In Tunisia, revolutionary aspirations and demands were gradually substituted by new economic challenges, within growing political, social and religious tensions. Hopes and aspirations advocating for a new social and political environment, were shortly replaced by widespread disenchantment and dissatisfaction. On the other hand, the rise of extremist Islamic movements in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya and Yemen and the call for renewed jihadi movements replaced media attention, overshadowing the "Arab spring" unfulfilled democratic expectations. As such, field access, data collection and related data analysis during this period clearly reflect the research context in this specific space, time and environment. In fact, they contain distinctive if not unique information if compared to the pre-revolution period or if, the same research had been conducted a few years later. In this

sense, the same research might not have been possible to be conducted during Ben Ali regime or, at present, where recent terrorist attacks have reinstated basic freedoms.

In the present-day, the research relevance in understanding both democracy building and its future sustainability in Tunisia and, to a certain extent in North Africa, is a priority. In particular, the research attempts to understand the present and future role of universities and students alike as agents of cultural, social and political change in Tunisia. Their role in developing and supporting programs and projects for social responsibility and civic engagements certainly lies at the centre of a wider societal commitment to human rights defence, tolerance, social justice, citizens' basic freedoms and individual/collective duties. In Tunisia, universities can be central actors in the redefinition of public spaces, allowing for the integration, mutual understanding and co-existence of marginalised, oppositional and conflicting social forces which define the very nature and dynamics of democratic, social and political systems.

ABBREVIATIONS

CGTT	Confédération Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CUE	Community-University-Engagement
EU	European Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIs	Islamic Social Institutions
LMD	Licence, Master, Doctorat (Bachelor/Master/Doctorate)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OIT	Organisation Internationale du Travail
RCD	Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique
SSR	Student Social Responsibility
UGET	Union Générale des Étudiants de Tunisie
UGTT	Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USR	University Social Responsibility
WB	World Bank

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CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

In the last decades, higher education institutions have been exposed to rapidly changing global economic, social and cultural dynamics with consequences on national systems' reconfigurations. Universities committed to varying degrees in wider reforms of privatisation, have been increasingly involved in multiple and diverse roles in society, primarily to support the development of knowledge economy and national policies for technological innovations and economic growth. The Tunisian higher education system has been expanding to meet national priorities in line with growing social and economic demands. Increasing social pressure led to the establishment of private and international universities alongside thirteen public universities to diversify educational offers and provision, decentralising to interior and Southern regions. For this, universities have acquired a central position in creating jobs, training a qualified workforce, advancing innovation and supporting regional economies. Notwithstanding, their role in promoting social innovation, civic engagement, democracy building and social responsibility as part of an inclusive role in advancing public services with an impact on local communities, has been rather under-developed and under-achieved.

In international contexts, higher education institutions have been re-adapting to different extents their primary missions - teaching and research - while re-establishing their commitment to society and service to the community. To the same extent, this implied *institutionalising* a new managerial approach to knowledge production, shaping cultural environments and the relationships amongst administrative staff, professors and students with local associations and private businesses. The fulfilment of these aims has *de facto* determined the nature, objectives,

structure and implementation of national economic and political strategies. However, the lack of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and available human and economic resources, have limited the actual capacity and infrastructure, undermining missions' fulfilment. In particular, there are different elements that might function as enablers or vectors of change, as well as, barriers to it. The protection of basic rights, foremost freedoms of thoughts, expression, association and socio-political participation are fundamental to guarantee personal emancipation within environments, limiting personal threat or influence that might jeopardise these achievements. These aspects are main determinants as they establish the legal and social framework to develop individual social entrepreneurship and community partnerships, supporting university social responsibility and students' participation.

In the research context, notions of democracy, social responsibility and Islam are considered through individual perceptions, awareness and commitment. In this sense, it is important to understand to what extent Islamic values represented by Islamic political parties and associations shape identities and influence the realisation of social responsibility in Tunisia. The relationships between individual social and political behaviours, moral consciousness and interactions with socio-political national settings and main narratives, are important conditions for the formation of individual or collective identities. Prevailing geographic, historical, socio-cultural, religious and political constraints over individual adaptability and compatibility to context, often determines socio-political cleavages. In fact, existing mediating social institutions such as families, educational institutions and civil and religious associations dictate the development of *integrative* or *non-integrative* frameworks defining norms, attitudes, habits and perceptions that are foundational to individual/collective actions. To the same extent, universities' third mission development are explored in relation to

social networks and academic social capital creation; democracy building in the Arab region; students' civic engagement and the relationship between Islam, politics, students' identity and its ethical and cultural role in society.

University social responsibility has been so far only partially taken into consideration. To the same extent, international studies (UNESCO, 2009; GUNI, 2014; Watson et al, 2011) have acknowledged universities' social dimension in partnership with external stakeholders, namely private business and local communities. In Tunisia, however, both 1989 and 2008 higher education reforms have failed to directly address universities' social responsibility and students' social and democratic role hampering active, creative and innovative contributions to the development of a shared public sphere. In particular, structural and institutional limitations have hindered the development of an institutional ethos and integrative approach. As a result, the defence and strengthening of basic academic freedoms are often misconstrued or accommodated to conform to governmental policies, cultural, religious or social habits, as well as predetermined educational objectives and missions. As a result, public universities did not commit to provide wider opportunities for students' volunteering and civic engagement, undermining also the establishment of democratic habits. In this sense, research gaps have identified a lack of scientific research on Tunisian public universities' social mission and implications for students' social responsibility framed by the political system and Islam.

In particular, the centrality of shared values, common objectives, social interactions, trust and reciprocity is supportive of academic social capital which is potentially also functional to civic engagement and volunteering. Academic social capital is an important concept in understanding social relations and human networks in the pursuit of civic engagement and social responsibility within university contexts.

In this sense, social responsibility can be better defined as a multi-dimensional value-led concept based on co-constructed human interrelationships. As previous studies explored (E3M project, 2012; OEU, 2006; Akhtarkhavari & Tavanti, 2011; GUNI, 2014), existing or latent on-campus interactions between administrative staff, professors and students are key in advancing university-community cooperative programs and projects. Universities and students' social responsibility implies a voluntary commitment to public goods in the wider framework of social justice, human rights, democracy, community well-being and socio-economic sustainability. In Tunisia, social and civic relationships have been long organised by the government centralised party system and police control, including inside university campuses. Freedom of expression, participation and association were all constrained and supervised by a well-structured system based on censorship which often promoted passive attitudes of adaptation to the *status quo* or subversive anti-regime activities. Universities were rather operating in seclusion to local surroundings under-evaluating their role in society, constraining students' learning experience and under-estimating undergoing socio-political impacts in the region. In this sense, addressing university social responsibility in relation to academic social capital formation, students' civic engagement and Islam, defines central issues in post-revolution Tunisia.

To the same extent, social capital creation in Tunisian public university contexts is an under-researched field of study, including particularly socio-cultural impacts of Islamic values and changing role of Islamic associations and political parties. In this sense, structural and infrastructural factors are interlinked to individual or collective elements of identity building and awareness raising. Most often, social capital is associated to community volunteering and social networking; company related professional networks; economic private business networks; social status,

social networks and economic benefits (Coleman, 1998); or, in education, the impact on students' success rates (Budgen et al, 2014). Alternatively, it has been used to understand the relationship between volunteering and democracy (Putnam et al., 1993; Portes, 1998; Fukuyama, 1999; Van Deth & Zmerli, 2010) and promotion and access to information (Lindon et al, 2002). However, considerations of how institutional settings foster cultural environments conducive to higher levels of social capital and knowledge-led socialisation and civic engagement, imply an understanding of interrelated structural, cognitive and relational dimensions (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). In post-revolution Tunisia, the interest in further exploring emergent dynamics fostering universities' social responsibility and social capital (Ferman, 2006; Carpenter et al, 2010), also relates to shifting shared norms and values framing cultural, political and civic engagement.

In particular, the democratic deficit in Arab countries (Diamond, 2010; Tawli et al, 2010; Volpi, 2004) and the historical and cultural legacy of Islam are taken into consideration as central elements specific to the region. In Tunisia contemporary history, the transition from Beylical regency to French protectorate and ensuing national independence, have reinforced rather than eradicated the encroachment of a semi-democratic system (Jamal, 2007; Sadiki, 2002). In particular, the endurance of non-democratic political governance has engendered citizens' basic political and civil rights infringements; lack of free and fair democratic elections; citizens' deficient parliamentary representation and inadequate participation in decision-making processes. These aspects have generated a democratic deficit characterised by public democratic institutions' underdevelopment and lack of legitimacy which are also linked to transparency and accountability. To the same extent, Tunisian public universities, founded within a national political project, have not been considered to

date as institutions promoting democratic values and civic projects, if considered antagonistic and conflicting with the dictatorial regime. In this sense, the relationship between social capital, civic engagement, democracy building and Islam might have been negatively correlated rather than self-reinforcing.

In fact, the under-development of Islamic-related social capital and the limited contribution of Islamic political parties to democracy can also be associated to the impoverishment of socio-cultural participatory habits. This is considered significant in relation to the role of Islam and Islamic values in identity building, social participation and conflicting dynamics within a secular national project. For instance, Islamic values also form individual and collective moral consciousness influenced by and related to political and social conditions of modern society (Riaz, 2002). In particular, Islam and Islamic principles are key determinants for social engagement, charity donations and volunteering that are central to community well-being and social justice (Farooqi, 2006; Maluana, 2011; Fukuyama, 2001). However, in Arab countries, the nationalisation project based on social modernisation and gradual secularisation, established conflicting and *non-accommodating* policies, opposing a secular ruling elite within a mostly religious society. In this framework, Tunisian social and political tensions have exacerbated post-revolution political dialogue, social coexistence and democratic consolidation due to a process of “twin tolerations” and open confrontations between religious citizens and the State (Stepan, 2000), impacting on a democratic transition and the creation of a new public sphere. Understanding the relationships, limitations and barriers connecting democracy to civic participation and Islamic values opens up new windows exploring the foundations to context-based democracy sustainability, including the pacification and normalisation of moderate and fundamentalist Islamic parties.

In particular, the development of complex dynamics defining social capital and democracy building rooted in different contexts, frames also the presence of a fragmented and non-integrated institutional framework. Limited opportunities for political and civic engagement have further engendered the under-utilisation of social capital for social responsibility. Furthermore, students have often not been accounted as central agents, vital to universities' third missions, bridging academic social capital within local communities. In this sense, this study focuses on social, political and ethical multi-factor elements existing between institutional social responsibilities, academic social capital, the democratic context and Islam in developing students' SR in Tunisian public universities. The research findings consider constraints and opportunities for successfully implementing social responsibility in Tunisian public universities. To the same extent, in post-revolution changing political participation and social settings, Islamic political parties and associations are considered central to undergoing transitory period of democracy building and consolidation.

Research Problem and Context.

Since the end of WWII, schools and universities have played a crucial role in reducing alphabetic rates, endorsing cultural, civic and human values while gradually opening access to information and knowledge to the masses in the attempt to democratise education and foster civil, political and social rights. In this sense, upholding and promoting human values became a cornerstone mission to education. In particular, education to democracy fostering civic values and social responsibility address central issues defining present societies and their future development. The

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), in art. 26 championed the development of a new humanistic approach:

“education shall be free (at least elementary) and directed to the full development of the human personality, addressing the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups for the maintenance of peace”.

As such, universities’ social dimension is an approach theoretically pertaining to teaching, research and institutional commitment to society to advance public goods for communities’ well-being, so called universities’ third missions. Furthermore, it considers administration-professors-students relationships, interconnecting class contents, on-campus shared environments and off-campus engagement as central elements to create pro-active embedded cultural norms and principles.

At present, however, the prevailing entrepreneurial university model has been supporting the shift from a humanistic to a more scientific and research-intensive knowledge production with increasing pressures on economic efficiency, institutional accountability and business-like profitability logics. Internationally, university social dimension is broadly speaking a rather neglected mission, institutionally and politically. Comparative studies - in most advanced economies and stable democracies often associated with Western countries - have shown how implementation of a democratic and social agenda is complex, often fragmented and discontinued due also to available funding. On the other hand, in less developed countries with unequal economic development and semi-democratic regimes, political structural limitations and socio-cultural barriers often render its implementation subaltern or restrained. In Tunisia, tensions between central government national policies, citizens’ political and socio-cultural aspirations and religious ethical entitlements, have so far prevented the

establishment of a freer and more democratic society, engendering a conflictual paradigm to the detriment of social cohesion.

In particular, public universities' autonomy and academic freedom are both key to foster university and students' social responsibility, although still under-achieved in Tunisia. In particular, the 2011 revolutionary movements have exposed how social fragmentation and the lack of political consensus are rather challenging in order to achieve sustainable democracies in the Arab region. Notwithstanding, Tunisia has since then stood out from other regional realities managing to commit to and support the recognition of basic freedoms and citizens' rights while resisting the pressure from emergent radical forces or the restoration of the pre-revolution regime. As such, the Tunisian paradigm can be, if successful, an example for other countries in the region struggling to support the coexistence of politically and socially conflicting forces, including the revival of religious extremism and new Jihadi movements in Syria and Iraq. For these reasons, there is a growing need to understand how these complex dynamics will affect the establishment of context-based democratic or *vice versa* anti-democratic processes, implying social agency reconfigurations.

In fact, the study, conducted between 2011 and 2015, sought to explore impacts and limitations of university social responsibility, during post-Ben Ali regime, in relation to the transitory period of unsettled democratisation process amidst socio-political tensions and economic constraints. A preliminary hypothesis focused on how theoretical assumptions that restricted socio-political and religious environments might also affect identity building, civic engagement and social capital formation supportive of a more democratic society. To the same extent, structural and subjective factors are explored to underline faculty embedded culture and reproduced patterns of students' social responsibility. As such, the present study has a key objective to

understand how universities can be part of the development and implementation of a renewed democratic society in Tunisia, inclusive of Islamic political parties and associations. In particular, the adoption of an integrative framework including civil society and community leaders in knowledge production and transfer in cooperation with universities, public institutions and the private sectors represents a sustainable paradigm for fostering a more inclusive and cohesive society where shared norms of community engagement are also functional to developing more democratic attitudes, ownership and active citizenry.

Research Methodology

As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3, the study focused on participants who are actively involved in higher education, namely undergraduate students and professors. Data were collected through a survey questionnaire divided up in four main parts: an initial section relating to open-ended questions on democracy, social responsibility and the role of students in Tunisia; a second, exploring students' social capital formation, students' identity building and Islamic social values; a third one investigating universities and students' social responsibility and academic social capital; a final one in relation to participants' socio-demographic information. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with volunteering participants in order to further explore perceptions, insights, views and experiences of the purposive sample. The sample was selected amongst undergraduate students from two faculties (Humanities and Engineering) from one public university in Tunisia; students and also members of one association founded after the revolution. Finally, professors were also

selected from the same two faculties¹. The motivation was to consider if faculty contexts, family socio-economic background, social networks, individual identity, values and habits, would differ within the two faculties and also determine distinct attitudes and type of engagement to social responsibility.

Content of Thesis

The research comprises an abstract, a preface and eight chapters. Chapter one consists of a brief introduction to the study, exploring the research context, research problems and methodology. Chapter two presents research context background in four subsections in relation to modern history and politics in Tunisia; the role of Islam and the national education system with reference to the higher education system. Chapter three presents the literature review, addressing previous studies and academic contributions on university missions and social dimensions; social capital and its contextualisation in university environments; democracy and Islam in the Arab region. Chapter four explains research methodology; population and sampling; research methods; data collection and analysis. Chapter five provides data analysis on the relationship between democracy and Islam with reference to students' identity, value-system and implications for social capital creation in universities and the wider impact on democracy building in post-revolution Tunisia. Chapter six presents findings on university social responsibilities and social capital in order to highlight present dynamics of political and social participation within university contexts. In particular, it examines how pre-revolution barriers and limitations to university and students'

¹ For a comprehensive and detailed account of study methodology see Chapter 3.

social responsibility have shifted campus social relations and related civic networks for social participation. Chapter seven expands upon the previous two chapters' data analysis and further aims to contextualise research findings in relation to previous studies explored in the literature review, highlighting relevant debates and newly emerged arguments as contributions to knowledge in the area of higher education.

Finally, chapter eight presents the conclusion exploring research contribution to knowledge and sets to the fore policy implications and further research into the fields. The appendices include questionnaire, supervisors' letter and other relevant materials including tables and graphs not included in the main body of the research but relevant to its comprehension.

Summary

This introductory section aimed at providing a general understanding of the research with reference to research context, problems, aims, methodology overview, study limitations and contribution to knowledge. In the post-revolution period, the relationship amongst university social responsibility, students' civic engagement, Islam and democracy has been an emerging area of study in connection with recent events in the Arab region. Furthermore, the necessity of re-considering the contribution of public institutions as social agents able to support a public sphere based on dialogue and tolerance, is fundamental to sustain a democratic project in the area. In this sense, the research offers an important contribution as it examines present factors and tensions in factual settings in Tunisia after the revolution. Furthermore, it advances relevant recommendations related to higher education reforms in line with

international trends of a more structured model of *engaged university* for social, economic and democratic cooperation within local communities.

CHAPTER 2: The Tunisian Context

Introduction

The chapter presents background information in reference to the research context of contemporary Tunisia. It considers country geographic, historical, political, economic and Islamic determinants that characterise modern Tunisia. It aims to explore and discuss most relevant historical and political events, by exploring country facts and figures, in order to understand underlying factors in the light of country's recent developments. To the same extent, it also explores recent developments in the Tunisian education system. It focuses on national reforms from an historical perspective with reference to higher education institutions and the way in which country socio-cultural, political and economic environments have contributed to its definition and development.

Tunisia: Geography, Population and the Economy

Tunisia is the northernmost and smallest country of the Western part of the Mediterranean Sea, often referred to as the Maghreb region (denoting Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria but often also extended to include Libya and Mauritania)². Tunisia shares territorial borders with Algeria and Libya, at West and East, with a total area of almost 163,000 square kilometres (64,000 sq. miles), with 1,300 kilometres (810 miles) of coastline. Geographically, it is delimited to the North by the Eastern

² <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/maghreb/>. [Accessed 02/02/2015]

end of the Atlas Mountains and to the South by the Northern reaches of the Sahara desert. Tunisia has formed, since the earliest times, the natural conjunction between the Western and Eastern parts of the Mediterranean basin. It lies at close distance by sea from the island of Malta and around 45 miles away from the Italian island of Pantelleria and less than 100 miles from Italy's biggest island, Sicily. As such, due to its vicinity to Southern Europe, it has historically covered a strategic position bridging two continents culturally, economically and socially.

Figure 1. Geographical Map of Tunisia³



³ http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/tunisia_pol_1990.jpg. [Accessed 25/05/2015]

Most of the country's land, especially in the North and North-East, is fertile soil. The climate is moderate with hot and dry summers and mild winters with frequent rains. These characteristics also denote country reliance on agricultural production which is an important contributor to national economy and international exports.

As of 2012, its population is estimated around 10.875 million, with an average population growth rate in 2010-2015 of 1.1% relatively lower than other Arab countries (Morocco, Algeria and Egypt) and closer to other European and Mediterranean countries like Italy, Spain or Greece. In 2011⁴, the majority of the population lived in urban areas (equal to 66.7%); the population aged 0-14 years was 23.2%, lower if compared to other Arab countries; whereas male labour force participation was of 70,6% and female of 25,1%, with an unemployment rate of 17,2%. Internet usage is relatively high, especially in the capital Tunis and major coastal towns, around 42%, lower than Morocco and Egypt (55% and 44%) but higher than Algeria and Libya (15% and 14% respectively). However, between 2011 and 2014, levels of unemployment rose sharply due both to the joint effect of post-revolution economic recession and political instability in the region. In particular, these events have profoundly impacted the Tunisia-EU trade and specifically tourism. In fact, growing urbanisation and modernisation projects have led to coastal development plans and economic growth, attracting large investments, in spite of interior regions (a common pattern also in other neighbouring nations). Especially in Tunisia, these dynamics are key to understanding how governmental policies have gradually reinforced a parallel socio-cultural, political and economic cleavage.

⁴ <https://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=TUNISIA#Social>. [Accessed 10/06/2015]

Tunisia has historically been, due to its geographical position, a country projected economically towards the Mediterranean and European nations rather than their neighbouring countries or towards the inland. Tunisia, in fact, was the first Maghreb country to sign an Association Agreement with the EU, in July 1995 and the first to sign in 2008, a Free Trade Area agreement to progressively remove trade barriers and harmonise common standards. In 2012, the EU was Tunisia's first trading partner with a total trade accounting for 62.9%, dominated by machinery and transport equipment, textiles and clothing, fuels, mining and chemicals. On the other hand, EU trade still represents over 60% of total share in trade (France, Italy and Germany representing over 60% of exports and over 40% of imports); whereas other regional Arab partners⁵ combined, represent only around five per cent⁶. Trade exchanges patterns with European partners confirm how Tunisia's economy has acquired a distinct European dimension with trends of growing dependency. As such, these considerations suggest how Tunisia's integration into both South-South regional markets and global trading networks are rather limited with an impact on political, cultural and social developments in the region.

In this sense, Tunisia's geographical position at the centre of the Mediterranean Sea is a key element, defining it as a central hub in between Africa and Europe. Moreover, political, economic, cultural and linguistic connections with European countries have shaped society past and modern history, while still maintaining its long-lasting Arab and Islamic traditions firmly rooted in society.

⁵ Despite the Agadir Agreement was signed in 2004 and put into force since 2007 establishing a Free Trade Area between Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt.

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/tunisia/>. [Accessed 14/06/2015].

Tunisian Modern History

The history of North Africa has been widely influenced by the Mediterranean multi-cultural and historical richness, characterised by social complex realities, political conflicts, economic and cultural exchanges. At the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, Tunisia has been historically key for thriving civilisations, trade and culture amalgamating European civilisations from the North, Berber from South and Asian influences from West. In the Mediterranean, from the Phoenicians (first to settle colonies all along the Mediterranean coasts), to the flourishing of Greek colonies and, afterwards, to the Roman Empire - great civilisations contributed to the cultural enrichment and economic expansion of Cartage (modern Tunis) which played a major role as a naval super-power and economic hub, exporting olive oil, wine and fine art crafts in connection with Berber inland traders and Mediterranean merchants.

Over the centuries, the relative socio-political stability, cultural development and economic thrust in the region created an extensive cultural heritage built upon the assimilation and integration of successive dominant ruling elites, re-moulding while respecting local customs and traditions. The coexistence of different official languages such as Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Berber, Aramaic, Syriac, etc. testified the complexity of coexisting social realities. In fact, North Africa played a vital role in shaping the development also of Western Civilisation thanks to the infusion and diffusion of transcultural, social, religious and linguistic influences imprinted and intertwined over the centuries (Naylor, 2009: 15). However, political and social fragmentation represented a constant pattern of critical instability. In the transition from the Vandal domination to the Byzantines, between the IV-XV centuries, North Africa was characterised by a period of turmoil and instability. In this period, growing Christianity

disputes and divisions further fractured social and cultural cohesion (see Ibn Khaldun *Assabyia* in chapter 3) that had previously bonded the pagan past (Naylor, 2009: 56).

The later Arabic conquest of North Africa⁷ was based on renewed but often conflicting alliances, political subordination and religious conversion of autochthone Berber tribes by the newly established Arab-Islamic domination, reinforcing pre-existing lines of divisions. On the other hand, between the VIII and XV centuries, despite internal rivalry and power-struggle relations amongst succeeding Berber dynasties (Fatimidis, Almoravids, Almohas, Marinids, Hafsids, Zayyanids), a relatively long and stable period of coexistence (*Convivencia* during Spanish Moorish kingdoms⁸), guaranteed social integration between Jews, Christians and Muslims. This period, known as the “Golden Age” of cultural emancipation, was established around (Falagas et al, 2006: 1581-1582):

- The pursuit of religious precepts of the Quran, such as “the scholar’s ink is more sacred than the blood of martyrs” and Prophet preaching “For every disease, Allah has given a cure”.
- The ease of communication across the Muslim Empire uniting an extensive geographic area as ever before, while Arabic language became common usage.
- The use of Chinese paper production’s techniques, as books became more available in modern libraries (Cairo, Aleppo, Baghdad, Iran, central Asia and Spain), including the foundation of the *House of Wisdom* in Baghdad in 1004.

⁷ The Arab conquest of the Maghreb in the VII century was initiated not by a plan coming from the Arab caliphate but by Egyptian military chiefs’ personal intention to spread Islam, gain military prestige and economic drives (Abun-Nasr, 1987: 28, 33).

⁸Fernández-Morera (2006:23) in the article "The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise", rather confirms that “cultural achievements of Islamic Spain cannot obscure the fact that it was never an example of peaceful *convivencia*”.

Translations of classics from Greek, Latin and Chinese into Arabic removed language barriers and defined a vital cultural awakening and key contribution to the European Renaissance (see chapter 3).

In the XV century, the collapse of the Eastern Roman Empire with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 by the Turks and the completion of Spanish *Reconquista* in 1492, established new social and political reconfigurations in the region. Between the XVI and XVIII, the fast expansion of the Ottoman Empire from the Anatolian region to the Balkan and the reunification of North Africa, implied the incorporation of new political alliances and the imposition of new habits and cultural traditions. The three regencies of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli received administrative recognition by Constantinople with various degrees of local autonomy under the sultan's authority (Naylor, 2009: 119). The outcome of the 1683 battle of Vienna⁹, opposing Muslims and Christians' powers, inverted the course of long-lasting conflicting equilibrium with the gradual Ottoman Empire's dissolution. In the XIX and XX centuries, in the Mediterranean, European colonialist supremacy eventually redefined modernisation processes as Spain, France, England and Italy increased political and economic pressures, establishing protectorates and expanding their spheres of influence.

In particular, in 1830, thirty years after Napoleon's military expedition in Egypt, France embarked upon its first campaign in Algeria, establishing first a colony annexed later as French territories which lasted until 1962. Seemingly, Morocco became a Franco-Hispano protectorate between 1912-1956; while Tunisia fell under French control between 1881 and 1956. European colonisation considerably interfered with the Arab-Islamic socio-cultural consolidation process, as foreign rule imposed a

⁹ The battle represented the apex but also a turning point in the Ottoman Empire's gradual decline with significant implications in the modern Euro-Mediterranean history.

conflicting and often incompatible cultural, economic and political system upon ruling elites and local population. As a matter of fact, European domination imposed a subaltern modernisation, favouring global North-South inequalities and internal stratification of social and cultural cleavages at the expense of a process of gradual reforms. In Tunisia, since the beginning of 1800, the Beylical power gradually came under growing pressures due to the rejection of recognising Ottoman sovereignty, despite the enforcement of 1839 Ottoman reforms (*tanzimat*) and French consul coercive measures to direct the reforms, limiting Bey's independence and powers to rule (Abun-Nasr, 1989: 273, 278). Furthermore, the polarisation between *traditional-religious* and *modernist-secularist* values and social structures, accentuated the uncomfortable adaptation to new national political projects while challenging patterns of historical development in the region.

In particular, the demise of the Ottoman Empire meant also the end of Islamic Caliphate twelve centuries rule with Ataturk in 1923, a symbol of Muslim unity between religion and politics. National borders were redesigned as a result of international peace Treaties based on Western powers' arbitrary redefinition of North African modern-nation states. However, the political development left unresolved socio-cultural, ethnic and religious issues. During the inter-world wars' period, an even more aggressive and assertive colonial policy in the region mirrored intensive economic exploitation and political repression. In Tunisia, foreign-rule acted as a catalyst to national identity, sense of belonging and nationhood. The Islamic revival supported grass-root movements to end the colonial rule constructed upon the *coloniser vs colonised* system, where the colonised was the symbol of "backwardness, unprivileged political status and economically disposed" (Abun-Nasr, 1989: 324). As a result, the Second World War was welcomed as an opportunity to push for national

independence from foreign occupancy. Tunisian political elites in an attempt to mobilise economic support from the bourgeoisie and to gain support from the masses, organised a national-wide network of local councils. The objective to obtain independence amidst international support while accommodating French colonial power to avoid repressions, eventually led to the proclamation of national independence¹⁰.

In this framework, social, religious and political consolidation in Tunisia has been long rooted in historical legacies, suggesting a need for further reevaluating different contributions of co-existing cultures to the establishment of modern Tunisia. In this framework, Maghreb historical, linguistic, cultural, political plurality or hybridity, constructed around post-colonial binary subjectivities, locates Tunisia as the link between the “West” or European cultural and the Arab-Berber dimensions, offering “the possibility for intra-civilizational commutative communication and comprehension” (Naylor, 2009: 249). Furthermore, in present days, the relevance of defining a public sphere respecting and tolerating diversities and minorities is an unaccomplished cultural, social, religious and political project which lies at the centre of the complex process of democratic change in the area.

Modern Politics in Tunisia

Political alliances historically dominated modern Maghreb history. Nevertheless, the role of political leading figures, such as the Roman proconsul, Berber leaders, Ottoman governors, Beylical rulers or the French resident-General, always

¹⁰ The independence was proclaimed in Libya in 1951, Egypt in 1953, Tunisia and Morocco 1956, Algeria in 1962.

represented a key reference intended to promote stability and unity, despite conflicting interests, religious diversity or social fragmentation. National movements, supporting Tunisian independence and the safeguard of national interests against French occupancy, were gradually and prominently directed by a young lawyer Habib Bourguiba¹¹. His nationalist commitment increasingly dominated the public scene in 1934 when in conflict with the old guard of the Destour Party, he founded the Neo-Destour party, a prominent political force active in the systematic anti-French struggle in cooperation with the national union UGTT (Abun-Nasr, 1989: 360-367). In particular, after the declaration of independence in 1956, Habib Bourghiba emerged as the resilient national leader, considered as the founder of modern Tunisia.

The French Protectorate, designed to rule via the Beylical symbolic presence, was soon replaced by the newly adopted parliamentary system, inspired by the French model. Arabic was established as the official language and Islam as the national religion according to the 1959 Constitutional law¹². Modern Tunisia was initially inspired by democratic ideals and principles based on a constitutional republic model where the President is appointed head of state and the Prime Minister head of government upon a bicameral legislature. However, no effective alternation of ruling power was ever established due to *de facto* single party state rule supporting a semi-dictatorial regime (see chapter 3).

In this sense, modern Tunisia was allegedly founded around a centralised democratic project strongly based on a well-structured administrative system. In this perspective, however, the State was defined as a main agent of development, guarantor

¹¹Born in Monastir 3rd August 1903 – Monastir, 6 April 2000, political leader of Berber origin, educated in France in Law where he was deeply inspired in his political and cultural ideals.

¹² The nationalisation process considered French as a privileged language in public life including the education system (although Berber Amazigh has never been officially recognised).

of a progressive socio-cultural modernisation and planned economic liberalisation to the detriment of political and civil liberties and rights. As a consequence, the role of Islam in society also was constrained and reframed under governmental legislation. To a certain extent, this process of national integration, modernisation and homogenisation did not lead to the integration and recognition of Tunisian cultural, social and religious richness. In fact, it rather incorporated an elitist, exclusive and often undemocratic system. To the same extent, religious-inspired political parties as well as any party supporting a regionalist agenda were outlawed and controlled with repressive measures in order to preserve national unity.

The overarching secular and Western oriented political, cultural and socio-economic project shaped the evolution of the country. This secularist frame came as a counter-alternative to and rejection of the long-lasting significance of Islam and Islamic laws in the regulation of private and public affairs. Bourguiba often blamed traditional institutions for the backwardness of the country, as he aimed to reform three major areas: social and legal by promulgating the Personal status code; cultural by pursuing the expansion of education to achieve social change; and economic by redistributing arable lands (Abun-Nasr, 1989: 420-421). For instance, amongst them, the most significant reform was the promulgation in 1956 of the “*Code du Statut personnel*”, regulating positive rights as opposed to Islamic tradition. In particular, it reconsidered legal marriage (i.e. polygamy forbidden); men and women’s equal right to divorce in civil tribunals; child protection; abortion and family inheritance, representing the first positive law in the Arab world promoting equality between men and women. However, the discrepancy between central government policies pursuing a developed, modern and secular Tunisia contrasted with a more traditional, religious, conservative and economically backward interior, developing a binary system.

On the other hand, the Neo-Destour party was key to foster regime consensus, mass mobilisation and social control, replacing the traditional *Ulema* authority while civil tribunals gradually replaced Islamic *Qadi* system and Quranic Law. Public nationalist celebrations were used as propaganda to commemorate the independence, relegating Islamic values and social traditional habits to a more private sphere. This paradigm, from one side, deprived the population of the tools to politically and socially engage; from the other, disrupted traditional Islamic form of identity building and community networking, channelling growing discontent. In the early 1980s, political and social confrontation along the *secular vs. religious* dividing lines reached its peak¹³. The unrelenting repression against violent social unrest confirmed the unsuitability of a thirty-year long uncompromising governing system. The peaceful *coup d'état* orchestrated by General Ben Ali in 1987¹⁴, was then welcomed with much hope and uncertainty.

Ben Ali, despite his initial commitment to democracy, religious tolerance and socio-economic improvement, pursued thereafter an agenda considered more a continuity rather than avant-gardist to Bourguiba. In particular, the replacement of the Neo-Destour party with the newly founded RCD¹⁵, re-confirmed a conservative stance towards political opposition parties and the adoption of one party rule¹⁶. The development of a new National Pact implied some concessions to the more conservative sectors of society, above all the *Ulemas* by acknowledging the centrality of the Arab and Islamic identity; granting public visibility to Islam, including call for

¹³ MTI Islamist members were jailed as their leaders Ghannouchi and Morou jailed in 1981 (Perkins, 2004: 171).

¹⁴ Born in Hammam-Sousse, 3rd September 1936, Ben Ali has been Tunisian second President until 2011 after 23 years of rule, ousted and obliged to the exile after the 2011 Jasmine revolution.

¹⁵ From the Arabic name *التجمع الدستوري الديمقراطي*, mostly known in its French translation *Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique* (Democratic Constitutional Assembly).

¹⁶ Presidential elections were held periodically (1989, 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009) but all largely re-confirmed Ben Ali ruling party in power. In 2002, the constitution was changed to lift term limits to approve his re-election.

prayers via TV and radio channels; as well as the release of political prisoners including Ghannouchi, legalising MTI student unions and offering MTI leaders to participate in the government (Perkins, 2004: 185-188). However, over time, government's system of police capillary controls restrained political participation and silenced dissidents that could threaten the regime *status-quo*. On the other hand, the regime maintained high public expenditure for social policies around 19% during the period 1987-2005, including social welfare, education and health while reductions in social spending on food subsidies were compensated by increases in the minimum wage (Ben Romdhane, 2007 in Paciello, 2011:4). These policies aimed at increasing middle-class support and decreasing poverty amongst the poorest sections of society while being a powerful tool for social control and passive consensus.

In general, in spite of remarkable economic success and political stability, the unresolved cleavages *coastal vs. rural* and *secular vs religious* deepened dissatisfaction amongst the population. Moreover, lack of democratic freedoms, increasing political and judicial corruption, socio-cultural marginalisation and growing unemployment, especially amongst the youth, channelled growing dissidents exacerbated by economic stagnation. In particular, Tunisians¹⁷ experienced a drop in satisfaction regarding the availability of affordable housing (only 41% in 2010 from 74% in 2009); public transportation systems with a decline from 2009 (74%) to 2010 (55%); roads and highways' quality from (59%) in 2009 to (50%) in 2010; also in relation to local schools and educational institutions (67%) in 2010 when compared with 2009 (73%); and healthcare about half (51%) in 2010 with a drop from previous year (71%), highlighting government's failure to cope with growing socio-economic

¹⁷Gallup 2010 survey: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/157049/tunisia-analyzing-dawn-arab-spring.aspx>, [last access on 17/07/2015].

demands. In fact, the 2011 revolution ushered then a period of agitated socio-cultural readjustment, political instability, social and civil confrontations, radicalisation of religious extremism and further economic recession (see chapter 3). In this framework, the implementation of a democratic multi-party political system, inclusive of religious parties and the commemorative establishment of a national celebration on Tuesday the 14th of January as day of the Revolution and the Youth, have marked two key events symbolising a new phase for political, social and civic participation.

The post-colonial and post-independence reconfiguration of North Africa brought to the fore unresolved issues of sectarianism, religious extremism, ideological and political vacuum, cultural fragmentation and economic destabilisation; while the emergence of a self-proclaimed Caliphate in Syria and Iraq have hijacked the so-called Arab spring democratic movements. Western interference in the region has recently further fragmented and destabilised the social, cultural, religious and political organisation. The presence of *new but old* secularists and moderate Islamists' political parties has both marked a crucial moment in MENA countries, often destabilised by the rise of more Islamic extremists. At present, however, the recognition of minorities' rights, the inclusion of marginalised inland areas and the re-evaluation of Islam in society, might appear rather uncertain but realistically the only real solution to promote social cohesion and democracy. In particular, a new political agenda would need to reconsider *unity within diversity* as a viable solution.

The Islamic Context

In the framework of the research context, Islamic principles are analysed in reference to democracy, social responsibility, social justice and education. In particular, as Islam is the State religion and the majority of Tunisians are Moslems, Islamic values, traditions and principles have played and still play an important role in society. Islam's influence was considered central to understanding the extent to which Islamic principles and ethics are considered and reproduced in modern Tunisia.

The role of Islam in society

Islam is one of the three monotheistic religions along with Judaism and Christianity and is the world's second largest religion, with an estimated 1.6 billion followers, constituting about 23% of the world population¹⁸. Historically, Islam gave rise to some of the greatest world civilisations and the Islamic world constitutes nowadays a significant part of humanity suggesting the importance of understanding its religious, social and political trends (Riaz, 2002: 1). Islam is a word derived from the Arabic words *silm* and *salamah*, meaning surrendering, guiding to peace and contentment, establishing security and accord (Krause, 2011: 171); and in religious terms, resignation to the divine will of God (Hughes, 1995:220), as the observance of the divine law of the Holy book, the *Qu'ran*. The submission to God's will is considered mandatory and it revolves around the *so-called five Pillars of Islam* (arkān al-Islām

¹⁸ <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>. [Accessed 18/08/2015].

أركان الإسلام; also arkān al-dīn أركان الدين), considered the foundation of Muslim believers' faith and life conducts¹⁹:

1. *Shahadah*: declaring there is no god except God, and Muhammad is God's Messenger;
2. *Salat*: ritual prayer five times a day;
3. *Sawm*: fasting and self-control during the month of Ramadan;
4. *Zakat*: giving 2.5% of one's savings to the poor and needy;
5. *Hajj*: pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime (if able to do so).

Islam, however, not only contains spiritual rules for worship but also provides an ethical, socio-cultural, political and economic model for regulating individual and community life. It provides a value-system centred on how to improve oneself and live in honesty and respectfully in society, being compliant with all tenets of Islam. In this sense, mosques comprehensively embodied the place where the community gathers, the centre of social leadership and command regulating moral, social and political order. In particular, it is the uniqueness of the divinity of God and the acceptance of the *tawhid* (*La Illaha Illa Allah* – there is no god but God and Muhammed is his messenger), the founding principle expressing the unity and exceptionality of God and divine Law (Ahmad, 1992: 4). The occurrence of apostasy, renouncing to one's own religion in a society entirely dominated by one religion, shaped both the political and legal system as giving up one's religion, also meant being disloyal to the state and society (Peters & De Vries, 1976 :24)²⁰.

¹⁹ In particular, these values and principles are central elements further explored in the study (see chapter 3).

²⁰ These considerations have impacted on subjective identity-building, socialisation processes, political loyalty to the ruler or the State and the co-relationship with other religions.

In particular, *Qur'an* is the Holy book, source of both Islamic canon law (*Shari'ah*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*), complemented by the hadith (*speech*) or traditions traced back through the companions of the Prophet forming the *Sunnah* - practices or deeds of the Prophet (Ahmad, 1992: 7-8)²¹. Islamic *fiqh*, in particular, are distinguished between the facts of the *tashri'* (interpreting the divine law) and *taujih* (guidance) both forms relating to the ascertainment of what is *halal* (permitted) and what is *haram* (forbidden) in making provisions in the *Shari'ah*, concerning human lawful or unlawful deeds (Tibi, 2001:157). In terms of social responsibility and civic engagement, this has been a central point as the definition of good and bad refers to individual conducts of morality and social behaviour. It also referred to guidance for the early community of believers (*Ummah*), discerning common interests and social norms.

The concept of *Ummah*, in fact, appears sixty-four times in the Qur'an, with reference to “the followers of a prophet; divine plan of salvation; religious group; a small group within a larger community of believers; misguided people; an order of being” (Riaz, 2002: 85-86). In the aftermath of the Caliphate's expansion and the unification of different populations, it turned to be synonym and symbol of the Islamic community, universally applied beyond geographical, linguistic or ethnic differences shifting its original religious reference to a wider socio-political usage. In this sense, the *Ummah* soon became a framework for the unification of diverse tribal identities under Islam as a new overarching identity supported by “*jiwar* (temporary protection of a neighbour), *hilf* (a full mutual alliance), *wala* (loyalty) and later *mu'akhah* (brotherhood), to confer tribes fictive kinship status on outsiders” (Riaz, 2002: 87-88).

²¹ Additional sources of law have also been the informed consensus of the community (*ijma*) and analogy of the law or interpretation (*qiyas*) and *ijtihad* (schools formulation of the law) (Ahmad, 1992).

Furthermore, in Islam, values such as mutual respect, communitarian solidarity and interconnected social bonds are paramount and all foundational to a society where social responsibility and community cohesion are core elements. To the same extent, *Qur'an* confirms the relevance of judging and entrusting the affairs of State to people responsible according to justice: “Surely Allah commands you to make over trusts to those worthy of them, and that when you judge between people, you judge with justice. Surely Allah admonishes you with what is excellent. Surely Allah is ever Hearing, Seeing” (Maulana, 2011: 379). Islam also provided a reference to the form of government, taxation and administration, social relations, relations with foreign states, setting the basis for a self-regulating and self-sufficient system (Esposito & Voll, 1996). The supremacy of Islam and the supreme loyalty to God introduced a new socio-legal-theological frame of reference whose norms and values entrusted by believers aimed at overcoming risks of tribal fragmentation.

In particular, after the death of Muhammed in 632 A.D., the succession was established according to two institutions to guarantee unity and continuity of power: the *shura*, based on Q42:38, refers to Muslims ‘who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation’ and *bai'at* - oath of allegiance – from the community or selected few (Bennet, 1998: 46-47). The use of consultation and dialogue are thus clearly reflecting an early socio-political system for democratic consensus and decision-making within the community. These aspects reveal how the unity amongst religion, government or local councils and economic and social life has been the most significant characteristic for the expansion and organic development of a non-homogeneous Islamic *Ummah* under elected or nominated *Khalifas*²². In particular, the protection and well-being of the community also granted freedom to criticise or monitor government’s activity or

²² Until the abolition by Ataturk at the beginning of the 20th century.

even refuse to obey if the rulers/government ruled against the law or the people. This is an important aspect linked to individual participation and responsibility towards the common good of the community.

In the same framework, respect for human freedom for religious belief is also present in the Islamic society as the *Qur'an* refers to: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256) and “the Truth is from your Lord; so let him who please believe and let him who please disbelieve” (18:29), (Maulana, 2011: 67). These verses are often contentious in relation to religious tolerance based on individual right rather than obligation, to choose freely a religion accordingly. However, they highlight how historically respect for religious minorities was acknowledged. In post-revolution Tunisia, the present ideological struggle between different Islamic moderate parties and ultra-conservative currents seem to deviate from classical principles, as confrontational narratives on establishing the “true” Islam implies the redefinition of human rights and civil liberties²³.

Furthermore, Islamic values related to social responsibility and social capital seem to reinforce connections with democratic principles and social justice (see also chapter 4). In particular, the *Qur'an* refers to “*Zakat* obligatory charity for the poor and the needy and those employed to administer it; those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth) and (to free) the captives; and those in debt or in the way of Allah and for the wayfarer — an ordinance from Allah; as “Allah is Knowing, Wise” (Maulana, 2011: 580). *Zakat* reveals a strong and direct ordinance from Allah, applying to all believers. To the same extent, *Sadaqa* also referred to *sadaqa tatawwu`iyya* (voluntary charity), in relation to responsibility to people with no sufficient means for living, has

²³ The ideology pursued by the self-proclaimed Caliphate in Syria and Iraq is based on punishing often also by death minority groups or non-believers (Yazid, Christians, Assyrians, Shia and Shia minority sects, etc.).

been a social practice of donations and public fundraising. These two complementary and normative social conducts reflect the centrality of community well-being, community solidarity, often also referred to *Maslaha* or public good/interest in Islamic jurisprudence, embedded in Islamic values for the Muslim *Ummah*. In this sense, it is possible to find reference to *maslaha* also as Quranic preaching “Indeed, God command justice, doing good and generosity towards relatives and He forbids what is shameful, blameworthy and oppressive. He teaches you, so that you may take heed”, which includes a double reference to doing good as a manifestation of God’s grace and mercy, as well as social welfare and community well-being (Bin Sattam, 2015: 10,11).

To the same extent, it is important to highlight and understand how Islamic values and principles as endorsement of individual faith have for centuries shaped everyday habits in society. As an example, volunteering (*Tatawa*), considered as Islamic values in relation to God’s will, is also an important principle purposeful to social action and participation in the community. *Tatawa* is found in the Qur’an: “[...] whoever among you is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man. So whoever does good spontaneously, it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know”, where fasting is here called *tatawwu’* or the *spontaneous doing of good*, but it also means the doing of an act, a social act with effort (Maulana, 2011: 229)²⁴. There is a reference to individual autonomy and freedom to engage with God and with people in society in order to apply social justice and good actions as God’s will. In fact, despite a reductionist ontological and epistemological framework, Islam consistently influences believers’ social life. Volunteering in Arab tradition is not linked much to the Latin root *voluntas* (personal will or being compassionate) but

²⁴ The same reference of spontaneous acts is also linked to spontaneous prayers as beneficial actions.

from the root *ta'* (to obey) or “being rendered obedient as a relationship of obedience toward God (Mittermaier, 2014: 520).

On the other hand, in relation to education, in the *Qur'an* learning and the pursuit of education are espoused, becoming central elements to all believers. From the first revelation, the application of knowledge had a clear importance as God ordered “*read and write*” (96:1–5); while the Prophet refers to the acquisition of knowledge as being as great a need of humanity as the acquisition of wealth: “There shall be no envy but in two: the person whom Allah has given wealth and the power to spend it in the service of truth and the person whom Allah has granted knowledge and he judges by it and teaches it” (B. 3:75); and also “who has a slave-girl and he trains her in the best manner and he gives her the best education, then he sets her free and marries her” (B. 3:31), (Maulana, 2011: 359). These three references seem to confirm how education and the pursuit of knowledge are obligations as well as a basic right for Moslems. There is an emphasis on learning, teaching and receiving education as key elements to pursue truth and knowledge while achieving personal emancipation and freedom.

Islamic principles directly refer to the right to education, social equality and responsibility to the community, democratic participation and civic engagement as much as to freedom of expression in relation to the study’s conceptual framework, findings and data analysis. The thesis aims at understanding and conceptualising university and student social responsibility in the context of public universities with reference to Islamic principles shaping identity, social values and cultural habits. Tunisian public universities and political institutions have not integrated Islamic norms, values and principles in national laws and regulations following a centralised secular project, rejecting any major role of Islamic institutions in the administration of

State affairs, social or political life. However, the study presents Islamic principles not being forcibly in contradiction with social responsibility, democracy, civic engagement and academic or individual freedom to participate in society. On the contrary, the marginalisation of Islam and Islamic values in the political project might have hindered the adoption or positive integration of principles like justice, equality and respect for human freedoms highly valued in Islam and, if re-considered in relation to universities' social role in local communities, could be also positively supportive to current democratic development.

The Education System in Tunisia

This section explores public education and the higher education system in Tunisia. It firstly considers pre-independence historical contexts. Secondly, it exposes the impact of national reforms in the development of higher education's aims, principles, structures and characteristics. It explores how post-independence policies and regulations have developed a common institutional framework and how public schooling and higher education have been shaped to adjust political settings, social demands and economic conditions.

Tunisian Education System: an historical overview

In Tunisia, prior to the French protectorate in 1881, an education system established by the State already existed, based upon a diversification of institutions offering both traditional and modern educational curriculum. In particular, the

establishment of *kuttab* (Koranic school) and the Zaytuna²⁵ (Islamic theology and jurisprudence), co-existed with a more modern and European-inspired model of education – the Bardo Polytechnic founded in 1840 and the Sadiki College in 1875 (including mathematics, physics, literature and history) (Sraieb, 1993: 239)²⁶. Existing economic, political and cultural exchanges interconnecting Tunisia with European partners, influenced local elites, embracing a different approach and attitudes towards educational models and values alike. In particular, a trend of *continuity within diversification* in the education system confirms how gradual modernisation policies implied the introduction of a modern and secular curricula specifically to form the new elites, the military apparatus and state administration officers. The creation of parallel and often not reciprocal nor convergent education systems reproduced lines of cleavages between the majority of the population with access to a more traditional-Islamic schooling system and ruling elites with access to a secular and modern one.

In fact, the French protectorate, established in 1881 with the Bardo Treaty and 1883 La Marsa convention, exposed Tunisia to new logics of colonial dependency. These events impacted profoundly educational reforms due to the subaltern replacement of the European-imported cultural development model. In fact, the new education system in Tunisia was soon built upon the creation of Franco-Arab schools based on the ideas supported by the French Minister of Education, Jules Ferry (Sraieb, 1993: 241), aiming at:

- 1- Respecting the pre-French occupation system and *status quo* of Muslim population's religious identity, as well as the numerous Italian community.

²⁵Mosque and University in Tunis.

²⁶ Schools for Jew and Christian children were already established and recognised (Sraieb, 1993: 240).

- 2- Imposing gradually French as the teaching language for Tunisians but also for other Europeans living in Tunisia.
- 3- Developing professional training to provide skilled labour both for private and public institutions.

The key objective pursued by colonial rule was to impose a bilingual system where French would eventually become the predominant language in the education system; but also incorporating within the same sphere public administration, trade and the everyday lives of local communities. In this way, the Protectorate would be also seen as the newly established political authority, redefining social habits and cultural spaces. To the same extent, the implementation of teaching Islamic theology and Arabic in schools was culturally hybridised by the introduction of French, history, geography and arithmetic in order to open local communities to a more European-like way of life and values. In this perspective, the traditional Tunisian identity was to be redefined and reshaped by the *francisation of society*.

On the other hand, between 1881 and WWII, a degree of resistance from the local population and refusal from local authorities including *Ulemas* and *kuttab* directors to adopt a hybrid system, marked a growing division between the capital Tunis and coastal cities such as Monastir where contacts with Europeans were regular, in contrast with inland rural regions and southern cities, retrenched within an even more conservative closure. In particular, the project of gradual assimilation proved to be unsuccessful. In fact, in 1949 the level of public schooling and educational success rate of students aged between five and fourteen, enrolled in public school with a hybrid system of education, reflected an underlying marginalisation and non-integration of

the local Tunisian population, if compared to French and other Europeans. In fact, during the French protectorate, the formation received in schools with a modern curriculum taught in French guaranteed better chances for socio-economic achievements, differently to students educated in schools with a traditional curriculum taught in Arabic. Furthermore, Tunisian students, representing over 70% of the total student population, despite having access to these privileged channels, only 12% of eligible students achieved success in public schools.

Table 1 – Level of Public Schooling in Tunisia (Sraieb, 1992: 249).

	Students aged (5-14 years old)	Educated students	Percentage
French	27500	26000	94%
European	45500	35000	77%
Tunisian	775000	95000	12%

These cultural and social cleavage became overtime motivation for growing resentment amongst the local population. In fact, the struggle for improving public education for Tunisians against the colonial administration, initially brought up by the movements of *Jeunes-Tunisiens* (Young Tunisians), evolved into a general movement for national independence further organised around political parties (Destour in 1920 and Neo-Destour in 1934) and national unions, such as CGTT in 1924 and UGTT in 1946 (Sraieb, 1994: 51). As such, cultural, linguistic, religious, political but also socio-economic grievances consolidated local movements of resistance characterised by embedded a binary and subaltern system of the *coloniser vs colonised, tradition vs*

modernity, religion vs secular, French vs Arabic, urban vs rural. On the other hand, these rich narratives, framing tensions in the definition of the new national Tunisian identity, seem to be still relevant in present-day Tunisia.

The Birth of National Public Education System in Tunisia

After the 1956 independence, the foundational elements of Tunisian national identity were founded with reference to post-colonial socio-cultural, as well as economic and political configurations. The preamble to the 1959 Tunisian first constitution enshrines key values and principles upon which modern Tunisia was established. In fact, it is stated²⁷:

“In the name of God, the Merciful, We, the representatives of the Tunisian people, meeting in the National Constituent Assembly, proclaim the will of the people, who is free from foreign domination thanks to its powerful cohesion and the fight it has delivered to tyranny, exploitation and regression:

to consolidate national unity and remain faithful to the human values of [...] dignity of man, justice and freedom [...] peace, progress and free cooperation among nations;

to remain faithful to the teachings of Islam, unity of the Greater Maghreb, to its connection to the Arab family, cooperation with the peoples who fight for justice and freedom;

for a democracy based on the sovereignty of the people and characterised by a stable political system based on the separation of powers.

We proclaim that the republic constitutes:
the best guarantee for the respect of human rights, equality of citizens in rights and duties, to achieve prosperity, economic development and exploitation of national wealth the benefit of the people;
[...] to protect the family and the right of citizens to work, health and education”.

²⁷ Researcher own-translation from French (previously translated original text from Arabic to French).

In this framework, the end of foreign domination (associated with tyranny, exploitation and regression brought by French occupancy) and the emergence of the State as guarantor of national unity, political stability and democracy are framed within the respect of human values and citizens' will and rights. In particular, it defines the State as an engine of economic development and protector of the family, providing work, health services and, also, education for all citizens. To the same extent, the constitution reconfirms the significance of historical connections with Islam, the Arabic identity and political unity to the Greater Maghreb. These elements of change, however, despite continuity of post-colonial economic and political ties, structured concurrent and often contentious dynamics imposed by centralised government policies, supporting an incomplete project of subaltern modernisation.

In particular, the national education reform was one of the most important transformations enacted by Bourguiba who perceived education to be the main factor of socio-cultural and economic development. The promulgation of national law n° 58-118 4th of November 1958, established, under the competence of the State Secretary for National Education, Youth and Sports, a free and compulsory education system from the age of six and for at least 6 years with no distinction on the basis of sex, racial, religious or social status, contributing to national development, national cultural emancipation while preparing children for their role as citizens (Art 1, 2 and 3). It also considered the distinction of two levels of education: a first 6 years primary education based on general learning including language and arithmetic; and a second 6 years secondary education divided in general, economic/commercial and technical/industrial, including specialisation in Arabic and foreign language and

literature; science, mathematics and technical subjects (Art. 7-19)²⁸. It also defines the establishment of higher education institutions, providing scientific, technical, humanistic and artistic higher level of education in the pursuit of scientific development of research (Art. 25).

The founding principles of the national education system supported social modernisation and political “nationalisation” project, reflecting a European-centred model. The implementation of Tunisia’s top-down reforms was financially supported by a dedicated budget rising from 18% in 1959 to a peak of 34.5% in 1971, expressed in the 1959 manifesto “*Nouvelle conception de l’enseignement en Tunisie*, based on the elite’s confidence that the school, properly funded and correctly guided, could produce the good society as a:

“...modern state, Tunisia must impose upon itself, among the first tasks of the liberation [...] that of creating a system of teaching and education, conforming at once to its genius, to its cultural tradition and to the ideals of the present times” (Webb, 2013: 24).

The new education system, built upon pre-existing pre-colonial and colonial infrastructures, aimed at educating the previously excluded masses in order to reduce illiteracy. In fact, in 1984 nearly 50% of the population aged 10 was deemed to be literate, against only 15% in 1956 (despite high levels of school drop-outs, higher divergences in rural areas and women representation), whereas only 8% of students aged 18-24 had access to higher education (De Bouttemont, 2002: 130).

However, implications of economic downturns in the 1970s and consequent rising unemployment rates, especially in the young population, affected the expected

²⁸ In Art 40-56, private education institutions are also regulated and allowed prior to State approval and inspection respecting national law and the interest of good morals, hygiene and public order.

impacts of educational change at a national scale and accentuated shortcomings of a rather visionary project of modernising society through education. To the same extent, the main objective of establishing a modern Tunisian identity around notions of national progress and patriotism, inspired by the European Enlightenment movements, implied that Islam had a role as a source of identity and values subordinated to the State (Webb, 2013: 19). In fact, if Islamic references were used to justify a secular form of government, education gradually turned to become more “Islamised” and linked to the Islamic heritage, as the state sought an alliance with Islamists to counter its leftist opponents (Cesari, 2014: 91). In particular, the *secular vs. religious* cleavage long dominated both education reforms and social change alike in a political environment of growing social control and political repression.

In fact, political events occurred in 1987, with the coup d'état orchestrated by the General Ben Ali to the detriment of Bourguiba's long-lasting rule, took place in a crucial moment of economic crisis and political tensions. The opportunity given by a renewed National Pact implied a broader cooperation framework with all social and political forces, fostering economic reforms under IMF programmes. At the same time, it also led to the promulgation of the first out of three reforms, framed by the orientation Law in 1989 and established by decree n° 91-65 of 29th July 1991, representing the first structural reform to meet the challenges of “massification”. In particular, the reform reconfirmed the objective of developing a national and modern Tunisian identity in line with the Maghreb, Arab and Islamic sense of belonging for the integral development of learning and the realisation of responsible citizens (Art 1). Compulsory school increased from 6 to 9 schooling years (Art. 7) and reconsidered Arabic as the basic language for teaching humanities, scientific and technical subjects

(Art. 9). The introduction of a fine equal to 200 dinars was put into place as a deterrent in order to increase enrolments and meet national targets of literacy (Art. 32).

In this sense, the reform managed to provide students with a longer period of education and training in order to improve long-term students' skills and formation. At the same time, it focused on reforming national curricula, attributing to professional training and technical skills a central role, while reconsidering teaching quality with new training, didactic, teaching methods with the establishment in 1995 of a National Council dedicated to quality evaluation. In this perspective, the reform's objectives were set to improve the quality of teaching with the development of a new training school, inspired by the French system linking training with employment in order to (De Bouttement, 2002: 130):

- tackle unemployment rates;
- open the school to society and the modern world;
- establish French as learning language from the third grade, essential to increase job opportunities.

In particular, despite the formal rehabilitation of Islamic values and Arabic language in education, the mainstream strategy remained to pursue a secularisation project initiated by Bourguiba. In fact, the role of French in the education system and the introduction of English as a second language followed increasing openness to modern curricula imposed by socio-economic reforms. This became clear as the intention to eradicate the roots of cultural Islamism was pursued by strengthened bilingualism (Vermeren, 2009: 59).

On the other hand, in spite of significant investments up to 7% of the budget resulting in important achievements as 99% of eligible children were attending compulsory schooling with a sharp reduction on illiteracy rates (Country Report 2000, Education for all); socio-economic adjustments targeted social and welfare provision, widened wealth unequal distribution and increased job insecurity (Murphy, 1997: 117), increasing urban-rural economic and cultural divide. In this framework, with the promulgation of the Orientation Law n° 2002-80 of July 23rd 2002, the government reinforced the idea of free education being a primary national priority (Art. 1), where students lie at the centre of education (Art. 2), aiming at developing a sense of loyalty, love for the nation and sense of belonging to the national, Maghreb, Arab, Islamic, African and Mediterranean identity upon the respect of knowledge, labour, solidarity, tolerance, moderation and modernity comprising principles of liberty, democracy, social justice and human rights (Art. 3). Furthermore, there is a reference to developing a sense of citizenship, civic responsibility and the development of a moral, affective, mental and physical individual personality (Art. 8). To the same extent, it stressed the importance of allowing students to learn how to use their knowledge and skills to real-life problems in order to adapt to changes, learn how to be innovative, how to work in a team and how to develop competencies for long-life learning (Art 10).

At the beginning of the new century, the government embraced a structural reform more flexible to adapt to the fast-changing global economy and the integration of Tunisia in the Euro-Mediterranean market. In fact, the reference to the Mediterranean identity, the link to civic responsibility and democracy, as well as, the connection to long-life learning are three key elements confirming the on-going process of economic, cultural proximity and political engagement within the Euro-Mediterranean partners, rather than with the Arabic and Muslim neighbours. On the

other hand, educational unresolved and critical issues linking technical and professional trainings to employment are represented highlighting existing structural and economic problems to students' employability.

In this framework, primary education became almost universal for both sexes reaching 93.4%²⁹; whereas level of repeating years and schooling drop-out both decreased sharply (OIT, 2013: 19-20, 27). The 2002 orientation law marked an important step in the development and consolidation of the national education system, further integrating and standardising it in cooperation with European neighbouring countries. On the other hand, issues of participation, democracy, citizenships or social justice increasingly occupied a central role in the development of higher education institutions, as constitutional principles upon which national education reforms were founded, remained unaccomplished with broader consequences in the development of students' identity formation, socialisation and predisposition to social responsibility and civic engagement (Hamami, 2012).

The Higher Education System: from its foundation to the 2008 National Reform

Higher education in Tunisia is relatively “young”, since modern national universities were founded only during the 60-70s. At the dawn of Tunisian independence, there were only two HE institutions founded to respond to colonial needs: the “Institut Agronomique de Tunis” (1876) and the “Institut Pasteur de Tunis” (1902), (Rezig, 2004: 2). In fact, if the University of Tunis was founded in 1960, from

²⁹ Access to basic and secondary education mainly benefited girls who have become, since 2005, the majority of total enrolled students.

the Institute of Higher Studies established in 1945; only, in the early 1970s, academic institutions were also founded in the coastal cities of Sfax, Monastir and Sousse in line with government's decentralisation policies (Dhafer, 2009: 90). As table 2 shows, public higher education was initially considered an elitist and centralised project with the establishment of HEIs in the capital Tunis where few members of society were trained to become part of the political and economic ruling class. However, women's access to university was gradually increased as the nation opened up to substantial legal, economic and socio-cultural reforms.

Table 2 – Evolution of students' enrolment 1961 to 2008 in public universities³⁰.

Year	Number of Students	% Women
1961/62	2,310	5
1965/66	5,456	18,6
1971/72	11,069	22,9
1975/76	17,235	25,8
1981/82	28,449	33
1985/86	41,590	36,1
1991/92	76,097	40,5
1995/96	112,634	43,7
1999/00	180,044	50,4
2002/03	262,502	55,1
2007/08	350,828	59,1

Source: Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche scientifique et de la Technologie 2008.

Overtime, the expansion of a compulsory national schooling system further provided more students with a national diploma to grant access to universities, expanding enrolment rates. In this sense, socio-economic and demographic pressures

³⁰ However, if undergraduates' success rates constantly improved to reach 62% in 1994/1995 and 71.3 per cent in 2007/2008, years' repetition and drops-out were still higher than expected (Dhafer, 2009: 91).

increased government investments allowing for the reorganisation and regionalisation of HEIs to coastal cities and Southern regions of the country to reduce economic and cultural fragmentation. As a result, in 2010 Tunisia had 22,000 teaching staff and 370,000 students³¹ (over 38% of 19-24 population age, with an annual intake of 75.000 new students) distributed in 13 public universities encompassing 194 HEIs of which 34 private institutions (attracting about 13.000 students with a total of 65.657 graduates in June 2009, representing a national success rate of 73.4% (Tempus, 2010: 3). In this sense, the public higher education system expanded in terms of infrastructures, diversification of the offer, and adaption to internationalisation trends, increasing teaching personnel, enrolments and success rate.

This rapid expansion, particularly in the last 20 years, has been welcomed as one of the most important accomplishments of modern Tunisia and as an example for neighbouring countries in the region to meet ongoing globalisation challenges and reconfigurations. However, as noted by World Bank reports (Abdelssalem, 2011), in the MENA region efforts to expand access to education and accumulate human capital, have not been able to meet “new economic, demographic and financial challenges” or to take advantage of “globalisation and the increasing emphasis on knowledge in the development process, the region’s enormous youth bulge and the additional financial resources required to expand higher levels of instruction”. In particular, the national HE system was exposed to:

- increasing economic budget expenditures’ due to lower returns on investments (i.e. low enrolments’ rate in private universities);

³¹ In public universities, more than 102.000 students receive government grants, while over 55 000 benefit from university accommodation at reduced rates (Ibid).

- social challenges due to low access to jobs, exposing graduates to semi-employment or unemployment;
- lack of human and structural resources to provide quality education and to attract international students.

In this framework, the public higher education system has been developed around four major reforms. As previously noticed, the 1958 foundational law established the national education system and framed universities' role, programs and exams for each faculty in the pursuit of scientific progress, research for national development and graduates' technical and non-technical training (Art. 25). In fact, this early reform mirrored two post-independence national priorities, functional to nation-building context:

- 1- forming new teachers to expand national compulsory education;
- 2- providing skilled workers for State bureaucracy and technical/non-technical workers for the private sector.

However, only with national law 89-70, 28th July 1989³², promulgated by the new President Ben Ali, universities were reconfigured to foster scientific and technological progress, national development but also contribution to develop cultural, social and political environments, including the consolidation of Arab and Muslim culture (Art 1). In fact, the changing nature of Tunisian society urged also universities to pursue new missions linked to national economic growth and socio-cultural needs to favour cultural, sport and social activities (not intended as outreach engagement); while developing Maghreb and worldwide cooperation programs (Art. 2). On the other hand,

³² This national law integrated three previous reforms – law 69-3 24th January 1969; law 76-65 12th July 1976; law 86-80 9th August 1986 – ratified under President Bourguiba.

the formation of scientific councils (with a consultative character), formed by the deans of faculty, departments' directors, teaching staff, students' representatives, economic and socio-cultural representatives, created new organisational structures (Art. 16). Faculty deans, elected only by presidential decree, became primarily responsible for budget expenditures, internal scientific, pedagogic and research organisation, assuming control over campus order and discipline in coordination with the university Rector and the local public force (Art. 15). In particular, these two elements have long impacted upon institutional autonomy and academic freedom as universities became directly dependent to the political power via appointed deans; whereas university social responsibility and campus life was constrained and controlled by a university police (see chapters 3 and 5).

On the other hand, national strategies to develop university-government-industry partnerships were a result of national openness to neo-capital global logics and dynamics of international scientific cooperation. In this sense, President Ben Ali's newly approved national privatisation policies were encouraged by increasing investments in higher education by the World Bank. In fact, from December 1991 to June 2014, the WB in coordination with other private donors financed three projects for a total investment of \$328 million dollars. In particular, the 1991 restructuring project aimed at "making the higher education system more cost effective and responsive to the needs of the country"; diversifying the higher education system and improving output of trained technical and managerial labour force; revising curricula to enhance teaching and learning quality and strengthening planning and managerial capacities³³. The 1998 project promoted access to higher education; improving internal

³³ <http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P005726/higher-education-restructuring-project?lang=en&tab=overview>. [Last accessed 04/11/2015].

and external efficiency while enhancing financial sustainability of public HEIs³⁴. Finally, the 2006 Second HE reform Support Project aimed at expanding access to public higher education; modernising the HE system by strengthening quality assurance mechanisms, institutional and financial autonomy as well as academic quality and institutional performance³⁵. These policies, supporting the development of an *Entrepreneurial university model* in Tunisia based on a human capital logic, restrained the scope for a wider civic and democratic reforms defining university-community programs. Notwithstanding, the entrepreneurial model could not meet targets of economic efficiency, governance autonomy and profitability, to the detriment of teaching quality assurance³⁶.

In parallel, the progressive integration in the Euro-Mediterranean socio-cultural, political and economic area favoured the implementation of convergence policies for degree standardisation (EU Bologna process in 1999). In fact, the LMD³⁷ reform ratified by national law 25th February 2008 is the latest reform still regulating the HE system in Tunisia (up-to-date and after the 2011 revolution). The reform aimed at implementing university governance, degree flexibility and adaptability to changing global environments, students' mobility and the establishment of a system of quality assurance (Art. 3). In particular, in line with European logic of long-life learning, it established the award of a three year Bachelor's degree of 180 credits (Art. 5) and the division of subjects into compulsory (up to 75% of total subjects) and optional (up to

³⁴ <http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P005741/higher-education-reform-support?lang=en&tab=overview>. [Last accessed 04/11/2015].

³⁵ <http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P075809/higher-education-reform-support-ii?lang=en&tab=overview>. [Last accessed 04/11/2015].

³⁶ National law 2000-73 25th July 2000 was ratified to normalise the foundation of private universities, opening to trends of HE globalisation. On the other hand, the Tenth Economic and Social Development Plan expectations of 30.000 students enrolled in private universities in 2006, failed to be achieved as only 3500 students registered (Mazzella, 2006:237) and by 2010 they were about 13.000 (Tempus, 2010).

³⁷ In reference to the establishment of the three cycle-degree system *LMD*: *Licence* or Bachelor degree (*al-Ijaza*), the *Master* degree (*al-Magistir*) and the *Doctorate* (*al-Dukturah*) (Tempus, 2010: 4).

25%), allowing for degree flexibility (Art. 25); giving access to a professional Master's degree (Art. 6) and the introduction of professional internships of 30 credits (Art. 8), enhancing employability (Art. 25). On the other hand, the Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology remains the sole responsible for policy implementation (Art. 45) and, as a result, universities' autonomy and decentralisation remained limited and unaccomplished. For this, despite enacted curricula reforms, progressive internationalisation, degrees' readability and standardisation of education quality, the LMD reform has unsuccessfully created the basis for a constructive and suitable adaptability the Tunisian context characterised by different socio-cultural, economic and political settings to the European ones.

In fact, it is possible to further consider strategic aspects that have determined subaltern patterns of higher education system's modernisation in Tunisia (Benabdallah, 2010: 120-122):

- **Formation:** the lack of infrastructure, human and logistical resources as access to facilities in often overcrowded faculties are affecting achievement of continuous assessment, based on teacher-to-student supervision.
- **Competitiveness:** scientific productivity, innovation and good governance have been under-achieved due to lack of commitment and concerted political-unions-civil society decisions (often dominated by corporate interests).
- **Sustainability:** the "massification" challenge coupled with constraints on public funding and the poorly developed private sector has urged for

alternatives (i.e. increase students fee), in order to tackle students' employability (i.e. growing gap of Science vs. Humanity degrees).

- **Quality assurance:** the implementation of national quality evaluation can favour universities' international rankings and students' inter-university exchanges but its failure might also compromise developing partnerships with European most advanced universities.

In Tunisia, the lack of HEIs' structural reforms to support university autonomy, governance and management; limited public funding and the difficulty of implementing economic reforms failed to translate *educational mobility into social mobility*. Real opportunities to implement a wider development strategy for graduates to access the job market in synergy with other relevant stakeholders have further contributed to a slow implosion of the HE systems calling for new strategies and different considerations on universities' missions in society³⁸.

Summary

The chapter has presented background research context information on Tunisia's historical, political, economic, geographical, Islamic and national education system development. In particular, it explored existing connections between the political

³⁸ To the same extent, in the twelfth and last Tunisian national development plan 2010-2014 under Ben Ali presidency, despite one reference to anchoring "volunteering culture, initiative and voluntary work in all stages of education", reforms in higher education are rather centered around the conceptualisations of "human capital investment", "knowledge economy" and "university-industry partnerships", by "strengthening both overall productivity, the development of quality standards and the adoption of international standards; the pursuit of improving the business environment and promotion of promising sectors like offshoring, health services and improving logistics services and infrastructure, while promoting the culture of productivity, human capital and intensification of the use of ICT" (République Tunisienne, 2010: 17, 24, 25).

system, economic development, geographical proximity and cultural influences into contingent implications to the education system. In this sense, there are several key elements that emerged as central to the study:

- Political authoritarianism is a constant trend in the historical evolution of Tunisian societies characterised by power centralisation and limited political, social and civil freedoms limiting democracy and social responsibility.
- The *urban vs. rural* socio-cultural, economic and religious cleavage has consistently favoured a two-speed modernisation process in Tunisia with impacts on social cohesion, cultural fragmentation and economic development.
- The political and cultural struggles between *secularists* and *Islamists* have favoured the development of a binary system for identity-building and socialisation dynamics within non-integrative frames for democracy building.

In this perspective, university and students' social responsibility has been defined by society-wide embedded tensions restricting its definition, implementation and development in line with social demands and challenges. The establishment of a new framework incorporating all actors of society, engaging within society and embracing the democratic ethos of the revolution, inclusive of Islamic based associational and political agents, seems to be a sustainable approach, often refuted, to overcome historical cleavages and fragmentation across socio-economic, religious and cultural lines.

CHAPTER 3 – Literature Review

The chapter presents the main theories, concepts, implications and limitations of academic debates on universities' social dimension in the Tunisian context. In particular, three interrelated key aspects have been identified: social responsibility, social capital formation and democracy building. In particular, the chapter is structured in three main sections and it aims at exploring the following themes:

- 1- **Democracy and religion:** exploring the secular-religious interplay between Islam and the State and its impact on universities' campus life and students' identity as well as the role of Islam in the development of democracy, social capital and civic engagement.

- 2- **University social responsibility:** investigating the role of universities as *social agents* in partnership with external stakeholders and specifically the local community, promoting inclusive institutional socio-cultural, political and civic engagement.

- 3- **Social capital and civic engagement:** presenting an analysis of main social capital theories and debates; universities' role in contributing to academic and students' socio-cultural, civic and political participation.

In the conclusion, the main research questions are presented and gaps in the literature review highlighted. To the same extent, research relevance and implications are discussed in the light of key issues emerged from the literature review.

Democracy, Civic Engagement and Islam

Democracy: Concepts and Historical Developments

The notion of democracy conveys political ideals, socio-cultural principles and values that are central to modern societies. Nowadays, representative democracy can be defined as “a political system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through elected representatives [...] which offers a variety of competitive processes and channels for the expression of interests and values - associational as well as partisan, functional as well as territorial, collective as well as individual” (Schmitter & Karl, 1991: 76-78). In Muslim tradition too, the term *jumhuriyat*, first used in Turkish in the eighteenth century, derived from the Arabic *jamhur*, meaning people or assembly of people; and in Islamic faith, culture and history, the political order aimed at twin goals of *adl* (justice) and *shura* (consultation) (Ahmad, 2000: 2), sharing a similar decision-making model compatible with modern democratic institutions.

In fact, democratic systems are commonly characterised by majority elected governments; a pluralistic political party system; competitive, free and fair elections; a legal system for the defence of civic and political rights and the protection of minorities. Social cohesion is often achieved through public-private procedures of cooperation, dialogue and consensus to address conflicting interests. Modern democracies worldwide, however, while sharing common organisational, institutional and embedded principles, vary in terms of implementation, structures and historical development, reflecting different socio-political systems. As a consequence, democracy is neither a fixed category nor an *end-product* but the result of a complex

socio-cultural, economic, political and historical process of constant re-adaptations, shaping governing institutions, patterns for political participation and the notion of citizenship itself.

In the Arab world, in particular, enduring authoritarian 'pseudo-democracies', (as a distinct analytical category and political phenomenon), are reinforced by “structural opposition between liberalism, republicanism and Islamism [...] where non-liberal associative models become more effective than 'laissez-faire' models of liberal mobilisation in competitive political settings” (Volpi, 2004: 1061, 1075). In fact, the evolution of grassroots democratic movements have created a hybrid system characterised by the juxtaposition of colonial and neo-colonial imported Western value-system and institutions against endogenous historical, political, cultural and religious traditions. In this sense, both Arab nationalism and Islamism³⁹ have been two of the most potent and persuasive, although often conflicting, ideological and political forces (Browsers, 2009: 1,2), where post-independence failures to implement modernisation, secularisation and nationalisation policies have gradually led to the resurgence of political Islam. For instance, in the aftermath of WWII, while nationalist movements ended Western colonisation, newly empowered national states were soon challenged by economic fragility, administrative inefficiency and political, linguistic, ethnic or social fragmentation, as a result of colonial legacy.

In the 1950s and 60s, Arab nationalist and socialist ideologies dominated internal politics and inspired national reforms. This political agenda of national unity was framed by a ‘tendency to secularism’ and the notion of a common language, the unified borders within a single nation-state, in opposition to a borderless Islamic

³⁹ Islam provided a framework for social relations, form of government, taxation and administration; as well as, relations with foreign states, setting the basis for a self-regulating, self-sufficient system (Esposito & Voll, 1996).

Ummah, re-shaping traditional identities into the new national consciousness (Browsers, 2009: 20). The classic idea of the unity of state and religion (*din wa dawla Islamiyya*)⁴⁰ was thus replaced by a national project of economic and social modernisation. In this sense, the dawn of the Islamic caliphate, or “a civil state whose reference is Islamic’, applying the rules of *Shari’a* (classical forms of the Caliphate or Sultanate), crystallised in a “political utopia” or “impossible nostalgia”, separated from history and reality, appealing to the emotions of believers for a political project of religious symbolism” (Belkeziz, 2014: 26, 27)⁴¹. However, authoritarian regimes not only imposed a system for a “restricted democracy” of one-party rule; but also prevented the development of an independent, critical and participatory civil society⁴². Oppositional forces (liberal-democratic, Islamist or leftist) have been systematically confronted with the coercive, economic, political and bureaucratic might of militaries or similar regime, leaving a wide range of mediating structures and formal organisations suffocated (Singerman, 2004:148).

In this sense, during the so-called democratisation’s “third wave” in the early 70s, the number of ‘democracies’ sharply increased around the world, with a single exception represented by the Arab region⁴³. In this sense, some scholars have long supported the hypothesis that Islam and democracy were reciprocally exclusive (Beinin & Stork, 1997; Eickelman & Piscatori, 1996; Entelis, 1997; Esposito & Voll, 1996; Kramer, 1993; Salame, 1994; Gellner, 1996); while others argued that Islamic

⁴⁰ Furthermore, after Prophet Muhammed’s death in 632 A.D., the succession was established according to two institutions: the *shura* based on “Q42:38 which refers to Muslims as those ‘who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation’; and *bai’at* - oath of allegiance – amongst the community or selected few (Bennet, 2005: 46, 47).

⁴¹ In particular, the Caliphate or the unity between Islam and politics regulating the Islamic *Ummah*, was firstly weakened during the colonisation phase and finally abolished by Turkish General Ataturk at the beginning of the 20th century.

⁴² In Tunisia, constitutional ban imposed on religious inspired political party from politics, fostered from the 1970s, the resurgence of Islamic movements with wide-ranging social, political and moral programs.

⁴³ In particular, it refers to Arab and Muslim countries but not to other Muslim countries like Indonesia, Malaysia or Bangladesh.

values and norms would rather hamper democratic government (Fukuyama, 1992; Huntington, 1991; Lipset, 1994). However, this *democratic gap*, according to Diamond (2010) is not due to national economic development - as modernisation theory assumed (Lipset, 1969; Rostow, 1971) – nor to Islamic or traditional culture but to political and geo-political reasons (Diamond, 2010). As a matter of fact, in current globalisation trends, Arab countries experienced a stable economic growth - especially oil-rich states - but passive habits towards social and political participation, largely supportive of an authoritarian political *status-quo*.

Tessler (2010: 251)⁴⁴ further suggests that although the promotion of a ‘democratic, civic, and participatory political culture’ may be needed to promote democracy, Islam is not an obstacle to democracy as the division exists between ‘those who favour a secular democracy and those who believe in a political system both democratic and Islamic’. In fact, Islam, intended as a set of religious, ethical, social and moral norms - different from the use of political Islam in the public sphere – might also be consistent with, rather than in contradiction to modern Western democracies set of values. According to Ciftci (2010: 1460), high levels of individual support for democracy in Muslim countries, despite the presence of authoritarian regimes, confirm that “if a transition to democracy would take place, regardless of their Islamic values, the public would mostly be ready for it”. Furthermore, Nasr (2005: 13-19), in “The rise of ‘Muslim democracy’”, also argued that since the early 1990s, the Islamic-oriented (but non-Islamist) parties, outside the Arab world, successfully won political elections due to key factors such as:

- the military forces’ formal withdrawal from politics;

⁴⁴ Data drawn from the Arab barometer survey in seven countries: Jordan, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco, Kuwait, Lebanon and Yemen.

- private sector's independency and integration in world markets;
- the development of a multi-party voting system.

These considerations seem to have a strong correlation in explaining the 'Arab exceptionalism' since the majority of Arab countries are still dominated by a military or police protected political system; governments' control over the national economy and the endurance of one-party political system.

In this sense, the Arab democratisation process shows a disjunction between the "political top-down reform that allows people to express their choices via free and fair elections and the protracted bottom-up process of civic education that gives them the opportunity to acquire liberal democratic skills and habits" (Volpi, 2004: 1073). Furthermore, the division between moderate Islamic parties - embracing democratic and pluralistic values - and radical Islamists, concerned by the application of Shari'a law within an Islamic theocracy, contributed to political divisions and social fragmentation. According to Bayat (2007:5-10), the 'over-religiosity', such as fundamentalism, revivalism, conservatism, fanaticism or extremism which intensified Western anxieties, was determined by:

- the continued foreign intervention in the region (particularly US);
- the presence of oppressive authoritarian regimes, supported by many Western countries;
- the emergence and expansion of Islamist movements due to lack of social mobility, economic development, social marginalisation and inequalities.

In this context, the authoritarian rule of Western-backed regimes, fostered grassroots social and political re-legitimisation of Islamic oppositional movements as the only

available alternative. However, On the other hand, the emergence of radical Islamists implied the rise of wider support for a traditional worldview characterised by (Hassan, 2002: 13):

- an unchanging static view of the world based on the absence of the idea of development;
- the finality and self-sufficiency of Islam;
- the idealisation of early Islam and of Prophet Muhammad.

In fact, the support for a radical Islamist value-system model is often understood as anti-democratic, anti-capitalist and anti-Western as it promotes an anti-hegemonic and anti-historic vision of modernity. By the middle of the twentieth century, with the occurring shortcomings of Islamic modernist movements, in several Middle Eastern countries, Muslim brotherhoods continued to call for the establishment of an Islamic state, confirming a growing social polarisation and fragmentation based on the Islamic 's religious authority (Hefner, 2001: 494- 495)⁴⁵. In this sense, the association of Islam with violence and terrorism amplified since September 11th 2001 suicide attacks, has given prominence to extremist groups (often linked to Al-Qaeda). In particular, despite the early contributions of scholars (Omar, 2003; Lawrence, 1998) who attempted a positive reformulation of the unconstructive *Islam-violence* model; the presence of a radicalised minority still dominates the media and overshadows the reality of Muslim societies and the key role Islam plays in society. In fact, rather than

⁴⁵ This has been further radicalised with the self-proclaimed emergence of *Daesh* or commonly referred to as ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and Levant) caliphate in the latest development of the Syrian civil war in early 2011 as a result of Arab spring spill-over impacts in the region.

framing the issue around ‘Is Islam compatible with democracy?’, the focus should be on how Muslims as social agents are able to develop and support socio-cultural and political conditions to allow more democratic habits and shared values to flourish. The dichotomous sense of loyalty both to modern nation-states and traditional religious beliefs, has triggered a conflicting if not incompatible double identity in the Arab world which could eventually be integrated around a new ethos of community participation in the pursuit of the common good of society and civic equality by strengthening the inclusiveness of opposite cultures (Sachedina, 2006: 22), as the case of post-revolution Tunisia might potentially suggest.

Religion, Politics and the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia

In Tunisia, since 1956 national independence, state hegemony embodied by *l'Etat-patron* (State as tutelary) and *l'Etat-parti* (State as party), controlled and censored democratic participation, associational life, the press and organised opposition, promoting an ethos of *singularity vs. pluralism, loyalty vs. autonomy*, co-optation but not contestation (Sadiki, 2002 58, 63), fuelling embedded clientelism, corruption and nepotism. The modernisation project was a gradual top-down process where civic freedoms were largely restricted. The social and political role of Islam, perceived as a threat to state legitimacy, was also weakened in the nationalisation process. The first elected president Habib Bourguiba initiated a complete dismantlement of Islamic institutions, bringing national religious life under the control of the state, politically neutralising the *Ulema* - Tunisia's religious leaders - integrating the Zaytouna mosque into the new *Université de Tunis* with a western-styled

curriculum⁴⁶; annexing lands, once used to finance mosques and other religious organisations while pursuing cultural de-legitimisation of Islam by deliberately attacking the wearing of Hijab and customs linked to holy month of Ramadan (Boulby, 1988: 591, 592). The modernist elite embraced the fervent process of political and social *laicisation*, inspired by the French legacy, which also implied the separation between citizenship rights and religion, the latter being relegated to the private sphere. Furthermore, the divergence between Arabic, language of identity, and French, language of modernity (Lamchichi, 2000: 37) exposed considerable contradictions between the language of the “colonisers and oppressors but also the language of freedom and emancipation” (Wolton, 2008:60).

However, in opposition to post-independence governmental policies, political Islam emerged in Tunisia in the late 1970s with the foundation of the MTI (Islamic Tendency Movement)⁴⁷ to bring Islamic and Arabic revival through mosque activities, informal and clandestine activities and the election of independent candidates to respond to authoritarian rules. This revival fomented rising tensions and clashes between militants and police, including the imprisonment and sentencing of activists, reaching its peak in the riots of 1984. From 1987, with the ‘bloodless’ presidential *coup d’état* of General Ben Ali, notwithstanding the proclaimed determination towards democratisation, inclusion and normalisation, the regime continued to administer and control religion. In fact, policies aimed at rehabilitating the Islamic-Arabic identity and the political amnesty agreed upon 600 MTI activists including Ghannouchi in 1987-1988 (Frégosi & Zeghali, 2005: 26), can be considered as pre-empting strategies to

⁴⁶ Only in 1989 the Zaytouna Mosque, under Ben Ali, was allowed to grant traditional degree.

⁴⁷ This was the founding movement which in 1989 changed its name in present-day Ennahdha political party (legalised the 1st of March 2011) which won the majority of seats at the Constituent election in 2011 and became the main opposition party in the newly elected parliament in 2014.

reduce socio-political tensions, regime confrontations or destabilisation and social polarisation within a wider framework of government's repressive social pacification.

The long-standing tensions between Islam, society and state politics characterised civil society organisations, political participation and democratic contribution to social change. The Tunisian socio-political system was favoured by (Ayeb, 2011: 469):

- a real organised economic mafia built around the president family; a very effective modern police system;
- a clientelistic policy with a particular preference for the middle social class⁴⁸; and
- the marginalisation of the Southern, central and Western regions.

As a consequence, the events that followed December the 17th 2010, when a 26-year-old Tunisian fruit and vegetable vendor set himself on fire, marked the democratic political waves of contestations across the region. Protests and revolts sparked from Tunisia, affecting all Arab countries from Morocco to Syria, including Bahrein and Yemen. In Tunisia, civil society was swiftly organised via internet- related local, national and international virtual networks - including "Islamists of various stripes, left-wing trade unionists, economic and social liberals, and French-style secularists"- acting in solidarity against the regime (Deane, 2013: 14). The revolution, in fact, witnessed the transversal participation of youths, professionals, intellectuals and students. Popular discontent towards economic neo-liberal policies unable to respond

⁴⁸ In particular, the economic reform of the mid 70s have facilitated the flourishing of the middle class, often well-educated, mainly Westernised especially in urban settings, which constitutes almost half the population in Tunisia.

to rising unemployment, economic stagnation, political oppression, public institutions' corruption and government unwillingness to meet unattended social needs and social justice demands, fuelled unprecedented changes on virtually all Arab countries.

In this new framework, the Arab middle-class, regime's main beneficiaries of economic and social policies in exchange of legitimacy, historically remained uninterested in political reforms and participative democracy; however, economic hardships, increasing repression and lack of political space, gradually endangered the implicit social contract, leading to political uprisings (Prasad, 2014: iii). As a consequence, as Boose argued (2012: 310):

“[...] the Arab world is charting a revolutionary path through an era of unfamiliar democratisation where there is no way to predict the outcome until it is over”.

In particular, notwithstanding waves of anti-authoritarian revolts were launched by demonstrators “calling for dignity, elections, democracy, good governance and human rights - what one might reasonably call a secular, liberal, democratic agenda - protesters were not primary beneficiaries of elections that ensued⁴⁹” (Fradkin, 2013: 5). For this, in Arab countries, transition to democracy might have not yet translated in civil and political rights' recognition, religious tolerance or the protection and inclusion of socially marginalised and most vulnerable citizens. According to Stepan (2012: 89, 90), Tunisia is struggling to achieve democratic consolidation through a process of “twin tolerations” to bring closer divergent political standpoints, confronting:

⁴⁹ In Tunisia, despite youth participation to mass street manifestation, only 17% of Tunisians aged 18-35 registered to vote in the national elections (McCurdy, 2011), showing an alarming trends of high abstention rate, political disenchantment and refusal to perform citizens' rights in the first multi-party system political election.

- **Religious citizens toward the state:** based on freedom of democratically elected officials to legislate and govern not under religious supremacy claims.
- **State towards religious citizens:** based on religious citizens to freely express their views and values within civil society and politics under constitutional law.

In the aftermath of the “Jasmine revolution” in Tunisia, the previously banned⁵⁰ moderate Islamist party Ennahda⁵¹ won 89 seats or 37 percent of the popular vote to form a transitory coalition government with the secular party led by Marzouki’s Congress for the Republic (CPR) with 29 seats and Ettakatol with 20 seats. This political compromise represented the only viable solution to implement a pacification process to guarantee new democratic governance and stability in Tunisia, avoiding the risk of dialogue breakdown along the *religious vs. secular* divide. On the other hand, the 2014 parliamentary and presidential election won by the secular party Nidaa Tounes, confirmed the necessity of a continuous dialogue with the moderate Islamic opposition to support democratic institutions. In this sense, the endorsement of a moderate version of political Islam in a democratic multi-party system could integrate a generation of young unemployed population with only “theoretical exposure to freedom of belief, expression, and assembly into a system that fosters open political debate and contestation” (Anderson, 2011: 4).

On the other hand, however, violent Islamist unrests, street manifestations and recent terrorist attacks have also dominated the scene in Tunisia, leading to growing social tensions and public security concerns. The present conflicting dynamics are

⁵⁰ Art 8 of the Tunisian Constitution (Law n° 59-57 1st June 1959) declared that “any political party cannot be inspired in its principles, objectives, activities or program on one religion, language, race, sex or region”.

⁵¹ Under the leadership of Mohammed Ghannouchi, returned in Tunisia after being exiled in the UK.

shaping future democratic trajectories exposed to the challenge of radical Islamists. In this sense, according to Charfi, Islamism is a liberticidal, anti-democratic, anti-feminist and anti-progress movement, both in its moderate or more radical Salafist⁵² version, due to their indiscriminate use of physical violence and proselytism aiming at “Islamising” society (Charfi, 2012: 329). Tunisia, a predominantly Muslim country of Maliki tradition, never had a strong jihadist opposition, adopting a more moderate and modernist political Islam. However, Bourguiba’s anti-Islam legacy, reconfigured by Ben Ali’s authoritative policies, created a far most radical climate for “global jihad by foreclosing all opportunities for moderate political Islamists to engage in politics” (Henry 2007: 95). The authoritarian regime endangered human and political rights, social justice and religious tolerance, driving extremists to wage a violent opposition⁵³.

In this sense, the present democratic transition has opened up new opportunities for moderate Islamists to play a growing public role in society, despite growing concerns arising from most extremist groups advocating the integration of marginalised individuals within the “jihadist temptation”. In fact, Islamists and secularists, despite ideological divergences, both advocate for the rule of law, less corruption, freedom, generosity and dignity showing common grounds and congruence between Western aspirations and those espoused by Islam (Chamlou, 2014: 12)⁵⁴. The legalisation in 2012 of the political party *Jabhat al-Islah* (Front of Reform) confirmed Ennahda party’s commitment to include Salafists groups embracing the rules of democratic governance. However, violent activities (*hisba*) of

⁵² The Salafi movement has its origin from the word *salafiya* referring to the Prophet, the first community of believers and the four successors (*Khulafa al-Rachidun*), predicating the rigorous application of *Quran* and the *Sunnah* but also re-vindicating violent principles inspired by early Islam’s rapid expansion.

⁵³ Fierce confrontations between national police and Tunisian army and Salafi local groups took place already in 2007 in the suburban area of Soliman-Hammam Lif, South of Tunis.

⁵⁴ The lack of a governing religious institution in Islamic tradition, similar to the Church or the Vatican State in Rome, might be one barrier in granting pacification, dialogue, wider consensus and convergence within Islam.

most organised extremist group - like *Ansar al-Sharia*⁵⁵ - mirror a more complex dynamic, posing a considerable threat to the democratic transition in Tunisia (Torelli et al, 2012: 142, 144).

In fact, Salafists pursue an active public role through proselytism and predication (*da' wa*) and a social role in assisting the marginalised, often an effective and consistent counter-government political and alternative social strategy⁵⁶. However, several contentious events have marked post-revolution Tunisia⁵⁷. In April 2013, a group of Salafists broke into a secondary school in Menzel Bouzelfa, physically and verbally assaulting the principal who had denied entry to a female student wearing *niqab*. Seemingly, the events at Manouba University in Tunis have been the most controversial with the provocative hailing of the Salafi flag and protests of two students banned to wear the *niqab* during exams⁵⁸, showing how Salafi sit-ins have aroused controversies on freedom of religious expression in public spaces (Gartenstein-Ross, 2013: 15).

The Ennahdha party, between 2011 and 2014, adopted an ambiguous policy⁵⁹ between “laissez-faire and open disapproval, without any timely intervention” to tackle extremist activities impacting on social security (Lusardi, 2012: 105-106). This down-playing and low-profile approach, however, did not turn out to be a successful strategy. The escalation of violence reached its peak following the assassination of two

⁵⁵ Active since April 2011 under the leadership of Abu Ayyad al-Tunisi, also founder of a Tunisian jihadi group in Afghanistan in 2000.

⁵⁶ Presumably, out of 5,000 mosque, around 1,000 fell under Salafi Sheykh (preacher).

⁵⁷ Including the attack to the American embassy on September 2012; the attack to Sidi Bouzid's Hotel Horchani bar, where they smashed alcohol bottles; the attacks on a synagogue in southern city of Gabes; as well as, the attack against anti-Islamist film director Nouri Bouzid, stabbed by a Salafi; or the attack on art-house cinema in Tunis prevented to show a movie about secularism; mob attack against the TV station Nessma; targeting Islamic practices regarded as deviant, like *Sufi* shrines or occupying a Christian Basilica in El Kef (Gartenstein-Ross, 2013: 14).

⁵⁸ Protests were supported by a group of 56 Salafi young men who occupied the university from 28 November 2011 until 24 January 2012.

⁵⁹ As an example, in February 2012, Ennahdha representatives proposed introducing *Sharia'a* law as the source of Tunisian law, contrary to the separation of religion and state espoused by the party in the pre-election campaign.

opposition political leaders Chokri Belaid in February 2013 and Mohamed Brahmi in July 2013, provoking a national political crisis witnessed by Ennahda prime minister's resignation, brokered by the national worker union (UGTT). These events brought to an end the political stalemate, culminating in the ratification of Tunisia new Constitutional law in January 2014. In Tunisia, Salafi intentions of imposing *Sharia'a* law by violently eradicating impious behaviours and establishing their own version of Islam based on religious, social and economic overlapping agendas of radical activism, communal bonding and popular aspirations for jobs and social justice (Boukhars, 2014: 13), were consistently marginalised in the post-revolution political project, despite posing threats to political stability, social cohesion and democracy⁶⁰.

In this perspective, the role of Islam in Arab society is sensitive and crucial for it shapes social awareness; it builds political democratic attitudes and it can support social cohesion. Religious values often play an important role in identity formation, personal behaviour and might also influence individual political views, social and political participation. Putnam (1993, 2000), Bourdieu (1990) and Fukuyama (2001), confirmed the importance of religion in creating values, norms, trust and beliefs all of which are central to social capital formation and civic engagement. Nonetheless, traditions, contexts and history shape society to a very large extent. In fact, Putnam (1993:107) singled out how the Catholic Church in Italy has traditionally *discouraged civic and for a rather long period political participation* as it was itself “an alternative to the civic community”, although still promoting social engagement and religious ethos. Furthermore, in Western literature on civic engagement and religion, several studies confirmed the positive relationship between religious traditions and Church

⁶⁰ As the two terroristic attacks at Bardo Musuem on 18th March and at the Hotel Imperial Marhaba in Port El Kantaoui in Sousse on 26th June 2015, have recently confirmed.

attendance in fostering civic engagement (Smidt, 1999); the positive association between religious self-understanding, meaning and pro-social personality (Furrow et al, 2004). To the same extent, some other studies focused on the formation of adolescent identity towards social good, given that religious institutions provide ideological, social and spiritual settings (King, 2003); the role of religious organisations in offering a platform to volunteering (Marta, Rossi, & Boccacin, 1999); and the direct relation in male rather than female undergraduates between volunteering experiences, religious beliefs and relationship to God (Ozorak, 2003).

In Arab countries, Ibrahim and Hunt-Hendrix (2011:16), also highlight how, amongst volunteers, the religious discourse explains motivations to volunteer and reflections of a generation that has ‘lost faith’ with secular development or state-led solutions to social problems. In this sense, Islam occupies a prominent position and religious education can play a significant role in promoting students’ citizenship since “Islamic education in Tunisian public schools aims to nurture religious tolerance, to promote the acceptance of Western democratic values as universal values and to develop students’ interest in analytical thinking on the meaning of religion” (Faour, 2010: 17). In fact, the promotion of citizenship and democratic participation needs also to be supported by public institutions, promoting cohesive cultural environments. However, according to Sarkissian (2012:609, 611), using data from the World Values Surveys (WVS), active participation in Muslim organisations is associated with ‘greater civic engagement, while religious service attendance is not [...] as religion may not be the key to understanding why Muslims do or do not participate in civic and political life’. In particular, this can confirm a lack of interconnection between Islamic values, civic engagement, social trust and tolerance in societies characterised by weak democratic settings and low associational activities.

For this, contrary to Western literature, political participation and social responsibility need to be reconsidered in the light of the long-standing conflicting relationship between *Islam vs. State*; the lack of democratic participation in an authoritarian setting; the emergence of extremist and violent religious groups and the inconsistency between traditional religious values, radical Islam, civic values and democratic attitudes or practices. As a consequence, social trust, civic engagement and democratic attitudes might also be restrained. Furthermore, if education for democratic citizenship in the Arab world has to be supportive of a truly democratic transition, it needs to be “framed along a pluralist imaginary of citizenship and be considered beyond gender-based discrimination and beyond the religious-tribal patriarchal perspective” (Waghid & Davids, 2013: 343). On the other hand, the centrality of education in fostering a culture of civic and political participation is an important indicator also in Arab countries, showing how education, religion and political participation are inter-related aspects foundational to individual identity. In fact, the expansion of schooling in the Arab world, in a context of weak economic conditions and low opportunity for political participation, has led more-educated individuals towards political participation. Social skills and human capital acquired through education are important assets in economic production but also in political activities (Campante & Chor, 2012: 175).

In Tunisia, in particular, as Islamic socio-political participation was forbidden prior to 2011, there is no available research or data on the relationships between education, civic engagement and democracy on the basis of religiously-motivated social solidarity, volunteerism and public engagement in university contexts. This lack of comparative data and research highlights a gap in knowledge. At present, in particular, the tripartite conflicting division amongst secularists, moderate Islamists

and a minority of Islamist fundamentalists conveys central issues and implications in the development of a national higher education system. Universities are often socially and politically co-constructed, limiting the possibility to engaging students in local communities, reducing social inequalities and wider participation while promoting employability competences and skills. Their role in granting religious tolerance, dialogue, respect of rights as well as promoting civic engagement and democratic values, however, is an important area of study in post-revolution Tunisia, as emergent democracy in transition.

The next section explores university third missions and social responsibility comparing international trends with present configurations in the Tunisian context.

University Social Responsibility

Universities and Globalisation

Higher education worldwide has been characterised by common trends, global in nature but locally-adapted, influencing national policies and strategies. This may also be seen historically. For instance, a contribution to the foundation of early European higher education institutions⁶¹ came from Arabic *medrassas* (Islamic seminaries⁶²). Catholic students enrolled in *medrassas*, influenced European

⁶¹ Al-Qarawiyyin University in Fez, Morocco, was founded in 859; whereas Cairo Al-Azhar University in 934.

⁶² After the closure of the Academy of Athens in 529, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the rival College of Cordoba, Toledo and Granada were the first institutions of higher learning. The European capture of Toledo in 1085 opened their knowledge to hundreds of books, treatises of which they had neither knowledge nor understanding (O'Brien, 2011: 21).

universities' curricula, practices of holding a "chair", being a "fellow" or wearing robes (O' Brien, 2011: 19-22); as well as, incorporating two Islamic concepts of *Awqaf* (endowments or institutions) and *Ijazah li al-tadris*, licence to teach (equal to European universities *licentia docendi*) (Koshul, 1995: 40-41). In particular, *Awqaf*, operating within the framework of Islamic principles, provided a wide range of social services to the community, as well, private business's development. Islamic based higher education institutions have adapted throughout key transition periods: from empire-state to European occupancy and from modern nation-states to global reconfigurations. The Islamic educational model has been characterised by three distinct phases (Reetz, 2010:110):

- 1- The organisation, reproduction and knowledge transfer during dynastic Muslim empires (the Safawids; the Moghuls and the Turkish Ottomans).
- 2- The multiplication of Islamic schools in response to the penetration of Western education and colonial rule replacing Muslim governance;
- 3- The implementation of global Islamic revival politics, during the 1970s, when Muslim scholars, politicians and militants started pursuing a different agenda.

In Europe, instead, universities grew out as a 'necessity of time' during the late medieval *European awakening* and classical revival, organised in the so-called *guilds* (communities of learners). The flourishing of locally-based "learning institutions" represented a model, modern universities have derived their essence from. In fact, they established the very name of 'university', the notion of curriculum, three degrees of education (bachelor, master, doctor); as well as, faculties with their deans, chancellors and rectors (Haskins, 1957:24). Their central role as sites of knowledge *production-*

reproduction evolved around the notion of service “such as teaching, research, and other academic services to the church, governments, individuals and the public” (Scott, 2006: 3). In Europe, higher education institutions have followed historical patterns of alternative political and social developments, if compared to Islamic *medrassas*:

- **Pre-nation-State:** teaching (from medieval universities) and research (in 19th century Humboldt pre-unification Germany), emerged as core services.
- **Nation-State:** three distinctive missions emerged: nationalisation, democratisation and public service to meet social and political requirements.
- **Globalisation:** universities tend to internationalise⁶³ their missions of teaching, research and public service in the global “information age” (Scott, 2006: 5-6).

In this latest stage, internationalisation strategies brought into discussion nationalisation, democratisation and public service missions as universities have adapted to the redefinition of national, cultural and economic boundaries. Globalisation, in real terms, has nowadays become a hegemonic discourse. In fact, despite quasi-egalitarian national reforms from élite to mass higher education, global dynamics intensified human, natural and structural inequalities. In higher education, Western universities became intellectual “*centres*” providing direction, models and leading research; while “*peripheral*” universities tend to import best practices with low contribution to knowledge/research (Altbach, 1998: 20)⁶⁴. In this sense, a growing

⁶³ Globalisation is then understood as condensed economic integration in a global marketplace while internationalism refers to the promotion of global peace and well-being (Jones, 1998:143).

⁶⁴ In this sense, *center-universities* have developed stronger academic and institutional structures in terms of funds, governance, ICT, academic-research excellence, library resources, laboratories, etc.

North-South divide intensified as result of post-Cold War world order, culminating in the (Currie & Newson, 1998: 22):

- Aspiration of virtually all society towards Western materialist/consumer based lifestyles and the penetration or near hegemony of Western popular culture.
- Growing dominance of standardised models of production-consumption.
- Increasing integration into a single global/international market, free trade and new labour division.

In this sense, transnational technology, information and economic exchanges have increased the complexity of knowledge production and innovation trends within interconnected global networks. The knowledge economy model based on neoliberal economic policies of privatisation and state “downsizing” has assumed a prominent paradigm based on “the *un-reflexive*⁶⁵ celebration of contemporary capitalism” (Kenway et al, 2006: 4-5). However, as globalisation unequally affects poorly interconnected economies⁶⁶, in the Arab world, a context-based reflexivity on the idea of globalisation⁶⁷, (*al-‘awlama*, in Arab political discourses), presents a different connotation expressed by the notion of *taba’iyya* (dependence/subordination) and related implications on *huwiyya* (identity) shaped by colonial rule (Fuentes, 2009: 201-203). In this sense, in Arab countries, present neo-colonial and Post-Cold war order, has led to counter-hegemonic discourses, predominantly anti-Western and, often more explicitly, anti-American. Western colonial occupancy and post-colonial economic

⁶⁵ Emphasis mine.

⁶⁶ See also Joseph Stiglitz in “Globalism's Discontents. American Prospect, January 14, 2002

⁶⁷ The first Arab term to define globalization was *al-kawkab*, closer to the French word *mondialisation* - linked to the idea of 19th century national colonialist economic expansion (Fuentes, 2009: 202).

and often cultural subordination, have hindered modernisation processes in the Arab region. These dynamics have also favoured the adoption of a binary education system, impairing the process of Arab universities to acquire an independent and integrated global “positionality”.

In particular, Western liberal educational philosophy based on independence of thought, personal autonomy and individual experience clashed with Islamic education⁶⁸ “based upon religion’s revelation, aimed at producing a community of Muslims following Islamic rules of behaviour and a strong knowledge of and commitment to faith” (Halstead 2004: 519). Post-independence Arab universities, then, have been compressed in a subaltern paradigm limiting the construction of alternative paths to modernity. The ruling class who benefited from Western development and modernisation, adopted a hybridised set of values while the rest of society, in favour of the egalitarian Muslim community model (*Ummah*), affirmed a defensive/offensive retrenchment of religious integrity and authenticity for identity construction (Camilleri, 1984). The rising tensions between the *global* and the *particular*, the *objective* and *subjective* have had an impact on individual agency. The often conflictual adaptation between modernity and Islamic traditions limited local communities’ means of expression, identity building and actions, often trapped in between *socio-cultural dynamism* and *cross-generational alienation*.

In this sense, global dynamics have raised questions of *individual-society* relationships with reference to democracy for the realisation of humanity (Morin, 1999: 65). To the same extent, human and environmental challenges are also

⁶⁸ Three Arabic terms define education: *Tarbiya*, from the root *raba* (to grow, increase) refers to individual development; *Ta’dib*, from the root *adaba* (to be refined, disciplined, cultured) refers to understanding society, social and moral rules and social behaviour within the community and society at large; and *ta’lim*, from the root *’alima* (to know, be informed, perceive, discern), refers to transmitting and receiving knowledge (Halstead 2004: 522).

determining new directions towards a “sustainable⁶⁹ economic growth, human development and ecological concerns” (Martens & Raza, 2010), urging for a new social contract anchored in wider public social responsibility. Universities, while conforming to strategic demands of knowledge privatisation and higher education marketisation/commodification, need to readdress their public role to confront and respond to socially relevant challenges. Social dynamics calling for social justice and civic engagements also reflect existing contradictions between: “professional closure vs. civic engagement; training for jobs vs. education for citizenship; knowledge for all vs. the “best” possible knowledge” (Calhoun, 2006:12). The identification and restructuring of universities’ social dimension for democratic citizenship and civic engagement is therefore becoming central in an ever more globalised world, as the case of Tunisia seems to suggest, opening new windows for understanding future developments of modern societies.

University and Society: exploring University Third Mission

Universities historically established their organisation, purpose and roles in society around founding ideals, values, norms and embedded ethos. Henry Newman envisaged a university as “a place for the communication and circulation of thoughts where inquiry is pushed forward [...] by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge”; whereas for Humboldt, universities bore “unity of research and teaching, freedom of teaching and academic self-governance” (Boulton

⁶⁹ In 2001 the first World Social Forum took place where social movements networks, NGOs and other civil society organizations opposed the vision of a neo-liberal world, dominated by capital or any form of imperialism (<http://www.forumsocialmundial.org>) [Accessed 18 June 2014].

& Lucas, 2011: 2506). For Ortega-Gasset, universities had a broader public and active social role of general culture transmission (intended for all citizens) and specialised scientific research (intended for the few) (Savignano, 1991). However, in more recent times, universities seem to prioritise economic profitability logics, based on expected returns on private investment. According to Theodore Schultz, in fact, education is:

[...] a form of human capital, human because it becomes a part of man and capital because it is a source of future satisfactions, future earnings [...] higher education is engaged in three major types of *production activities*⁷⁰: discovering talent, instruction and research... (Schultz, 1968: 329).

For this, in recent decades, universities have integrated a new '*institutional consciousness*' through wide-ranging managerial and economic transformations. Governments consider universities to be a vital source of innovation, knowledge production, providers of skilled personnel; attractors of international talents; promoters of labour mobility and regional investment but also as agents of social justice and socio-cultural vitality (Boulton & Lucas, 2011: 2508). Universities develop integrated '*knowledge environments*', providing internal and external services in order to respond to 21st century societies' complex and multi-functional requirements. As a consequence, this distinctive market-oriented and business-led character has increasingly redefined education more as a private rather than a public good.

In particular, the conceptualisation of the *Seminal Service University*, *Enterprise University*, *Corporate University* or *Entrepreneurial University* (Bridges, 2007: 204–209) confirms how universities moved from local/national *public service* to private *economic utility*. In this sense, in the 90s, the Triple Helix model (university–

⁷⁰ Emphasis mine.

industry–government)⁷¹ offered a framework to designate new institutional, normative and organisational development paradigms for innovation and competitiveness in emergent global markets. Public higher education has gradually but significantly become ‘*enterprised*’ and hybridised, as values of competition, contracting and income generation are set over and against values of academic freedom and scholarship (Ball, 2009: 135); while logics of privatisation and commodification have reversed universities’ public and social role. To the same extent, as highlighted by Clark (2004: 357), a core element to create an Entrepreneurial university is to diversify funding:

(a) *other government sources* (other than the core-support department);

(b) *private organized sources*, particularly business firms, philanthropic foundations, and professional associations; and

(c) *university-generated income*, for example, alumni fund-raising, garnered research contracts, profits from patents.

However, as commercial culture increasingly replaces public culture and the language of the market substitutes the one of democracy; consumer rights prevail over socio-democratic citizenship rights, limiting shared vocabulary and imagery available for defining, defending and reforming the state, civil society and public culture as centres for critical learning and citizenship (Giroux, 1999:12, 24).

⁷¹ See Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz “Universities and the Global Economy: A Triple Helix of University-Industry-Government Relations”.

In this sense, the capitalisation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)⁷² in higher education mirrors the *quasi-business* nature of universities. CSR, in fact, refers to the voluntary commitment⁷³ by companies to pursue economic activities ethically, supporting wider public goods and addressing social and environmental issues. CSR, while preserving market-oriented values and managerial competencies, reconsiders businesses' social agency and responsibility based on moral and ethical grounds. In fact, the term "responsibility" derives from the Latin word *respondere*: to respond to. Responsible entrepreneurship, then, refers to both "economic success and positive contribution of a business by the inclusion of social and environmental considerations [...] satisfying customers' demands, whilst managing employees, suppliers and community expectations" (Pavlíková & Wacey, 2013: 269)⁷⁴. In particular, organisations like universities also have a direct impact on communities both local and global. Topal (2009: 14), precisely points out that:

"[...] the entire philosophy driving CSR initiatives is the power of grassroots, community-based collaborations working together to assess community needs and address university's community issues, enhance resources and support a better quality of life for community residents".

Universities can offer opportunities to build partnerships with public, private and voluntary organisations, fostering academic, economic, cultural and social capital. However, the challenge lies not only in CSR definition, stakeholders' awareness and

⁷² Islamic CSR, however, requires "*a taqwa*-based (God consciousness) paradigm, where corporations are not only driven by profit-maximization but also driven by Islam's directions to pursue ultimate felicity in life and Hereafter (*Al-falah*)" (Darrag & E-Bassiouny, 2013: 368), defining an Islamic-based moral and ethical framework.

⁷³ International Standard ISO 26000 on Social Responsibility contains *voluntary guidance* but not requirements for a certification, assisting business to implement effective actions beyond profitability in the following areas: environment; human right; labour practices; organization governance; fair operation practices; consumer issues; and contribution to the community and society.

⁷⁴ However, the adoption of CSR and ISO 26000 show that companies still value it mainly for the effects on company's reputation and customers' loyalty (Park & Kim, 2011: 321).

engagement; but also in the importance to recognise how “CSR is socially constructed in a specific context and how to take this into account when business strategies are developed” (Dahlsrud, 2006: 6). For instance, in higher education, the re-adaptation and implications of the notion of students as customers represents a major issue. If a business “can legitimately talk about “customers”, when students are turned into customers, it can destroy the core understanding of education or student-academic relations” (Dahan & Senol, 2012: 98). In particular, the implementation of social responsibility strategies is critically connected to the very fact that universities have not yet endorsed a mandate to address and fulfil their role in (Brennan, 2008: 387):

- 1- constructing the ‘knowledge society’;
- 2- supporting a ‘just and stable’ society; and
- 3- educating for a ‘critical society’.

In fact, the implementation of integrative strategies for a CSR model has shown failures to integrate socio-democratic values while empowering other parts of the economy (public sector, social economy, cultural sector), and community life (social governance of non-economic sections of society) (Arnkil et al, 2010: 11); undermining the development of a fourth-Helix model - including universities, civil society with industry and government (Cooper, 2011: 354-355). To the same extent, a small-case study conducted in the UK shows that “students, staff or leaders talked very rarely and only superficially about issues of responsibility being included in the curriculum [...] showing an absence of making connections between the practice of responsibility for students in their learning experience at University and the practice of responsibility in the University as corporate entity” (Kaul & Smith, 2012: 148).

In this perspective, the emergent trend of universities' "Third Mission", "Third Leg" or "Third stream" (as referred to in different academic traditions), can be defined as the:

“[...] generation, use, application and exploitation of knowledge and other university capabilities outside academic environments, implying all interactions between universities and the rest of society⁷⁵” (Mollas-Gallart 2002: iii).

The diversification of universities' missions in relation to knowledge transfers has then implied the inclusion of local communities as important actors. In particular, universities' social dimension also refers to (E3M Green Paper, 2012: 3; OEU, 2006: 157-161):

“[...] social engagement activities such as educational outreach activity, services, events and facilities open to community; research with direct impact on the community; voluntary work; community grants; participation in policy-making/public debate; involvement in socio-cultural or sport life, public understanding of science, etc..”.

In fact, University Social Responsibility (USR) shares several elements with the notion of CSR as public, private or corporate institutions tend to adopt a business-like managerial model while implementing a strategy for social responsibility and civic engagement in terms of:

“volunteering as an ethical approach⁷⁶, developing a sense of civil citizenship by encouraging students, the academic staff to provide social services to their local community or to promote ecological, environmental commitment for local and global sustainable development” (Vasilescu, 2010: 4178).

⁷⁵ Third mission activities can be broadly categorised under three main areas: Technology Transfer & Innovation (TTI), Continuing Education (CE) for life-long-learning programs; Social Engagement (SE) (E3M European project).

⁷⁶ The Settlement Movement was born as a counter-reaction to social problems induced by 19th century urbanisation and industrialisation in England. University students and graduates worked to address cultural, pedagogical and social needs of poor population at the Toynbee Hall in London by developing *personal connections* with the community (Roivainen, 2002: 217).

In the last two decades, emerging regional and global networks⁷⁷ of “*engaged universities*” indicated that most universities place more consideration on extension, outreach and civic engagement (Watson et al, 2011). USR, however, being an emergent and underdeveloped action-framework, has not yet reached a common definition. In particular, USR can either refer to **university as an institution** (i.e. as micro-level outreach activities of community civic engagement); or to **higher education as a system** (i.e. as macro-level key player in the public space with an ethical dimension) (Bahri, 2012: 11). The provision of public services, however, often tends to be confused with “internal service” (faculty counselling, student clubs, university committees, etc.) or “professional services” (professional meetings, publishing in journals, attending conferences, etc.); failing to embrace universities’ cultural, organisational and managerial changes, including: teaching/learning activities, scientific research and knowledge production⁷⁸ (See Castañeda et al, 2007; Domingues Pachón, 2009; Watson et al, 2011; Scott 2006).

In particular, integrated social commitment beyond the *academic excellence paradigm* of the “high culture’ liberal elite and ‘knowledge transfer’ market-driven business model”, is still an exemption as universities are more focused on generating more training and profits than critical thinking and social responsible education (Akhtarkhavari & Tavanti, 2011: 16). However, in order to capitalise human, infrastructural and networking resources, universities need yet to implement policies

⁷⁷ As the Talloires networks (strengthening the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education); Ma’an Arab University Alliance for Civic Engagement; Latin American Center for Service-Learning, Community-University network in Russia; Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance; Campus Engage in Ireland; Tufts University and Innovations for Civic Participation, etc.

⁷⁸ Some scholars have argued that higher education survival will much depend on connections to local communities (Overton & Burkhardt, 1999: 227) and relate academic research and teaching more closely to real-world issues (Ostrander 2004). Further studies also highlight the importance of engaged scholarship to problems exposed by the community as relevant academic responsibility (Kellogg Commission, 1999; Boyer, 1996; Cooper, 2011).

reframing institutional relationships with society. In fact, social engagement activities - service learning, action research and community-based partnerships - could be easily left on the margin of institutional commitment (Ibid, 2011: 18-19); if administrative staff and students are not included to play an active and more relevant role (Zlotkoswki & Williams, 2003; E3M, Draft Green Paper).

On the other hand, most advanced national economies predominantly in Western countries, have become leaders in adopting an institutional framework for social responsibility. Western-based literature on university students' civic engagement and social responsibility have extensively focused on: the relations between civic activities and civic contexts (Zaff et al, 2008); the role of building a civic identity in students (Younnis et al, 1997); the centrality of civic skills and building competencies (Kirlin, 2002); the positive relationship between social participation, sense of community and social well-being (Cicognani et al, 2008); the relevance of community partnerships (Bringle et al, 2009); students' commitment and perspectives on teaching contents and internship (Fall, 2006); campus organisation in creating engaged citizens (Raill et al, 2006); the relationship between race, ethnicity, citizenship and socio-economic status as determinants of civic engagement (Foster-Bey, 2008); the role of critical pedagogical strategies for engaging students (Ten Dam & Volman, 2004); the importance of students' involvement, ownership and degree of voice to increase self-awareness and political engagement (Morgan & Streb, 2001); as well as social capital promotion to improve engagement and retention in first year students (Budgen, 2014).

However, the literature on university social responsibility and community engagement is predominantly based in favour of North American and European, mainly Anglo-Saxon, scholars (GUNI, 2014: xxxv) and research conducted that is

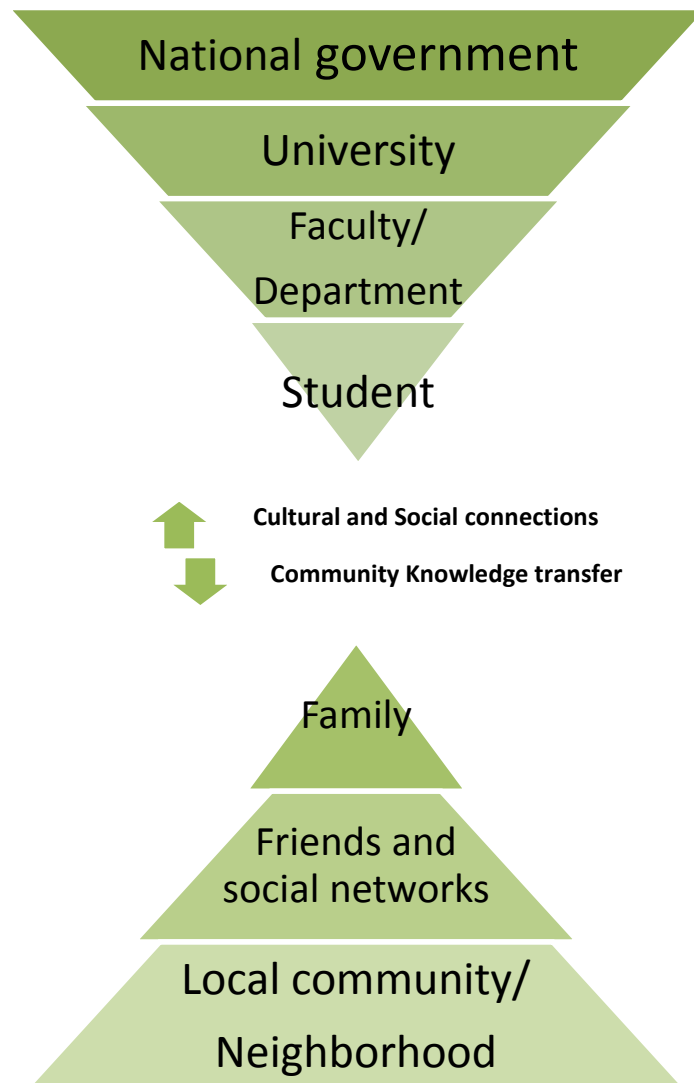
related to those specific contexts, showing a gap and need for further study in other regions. Furthermore, the literature is drawn nearly exclusively from the perspective of HEIs and its commitment and implemented policies. In particular, concepts such as USR or Academic Social Responsibility (ASR) place the accent on institutions' commitment (*high level*) and academics' participation (*meso level*), restricting their understanding, implementation and participation to the process of other stakeholders, including students (*low level*), showing a considerable gap in acknowledging students' role and perspectives. In this sense, it is key to research and understand how social responsibility is framed and debated in Arab countries and which initiatives have been developed within universities, as well as, what social role students have.

In fact, despite the importance to ensure that the students are major partners and their voice heard at all stages of the learning process (UNESCO, 1998), students have not been placed at the centre of university missions, learning processes and institutional wider social and democratic strategies. Furthermore, student Social Responsibility (SSR) focuses on individual responsibility of each student 'as a personal commitment towards the other and the environment to offer a service to society in the pursuit of the common good', while USR refers to the university as an entity, an institution or a business (Maldonado de la Calle & Armentia, 2011: 238, 245), key to guaranteeing a sustainable process. However, students still occupy a subaltern position, despite being able to develop socially engaged networks with a variety of different actors.

In fact, notwithstanding the close relation between university and student social responsibility, universities have the duty to educate students to be socially responsible, to enact programs/courses and to support students' cultural identity, social awareness and democratic engagement. In particular, as figure 2 shows, students are also inter-

generational filters, interlinking universities with society in the development of civic engagement programmes.

Figure 2: The societal multiplier impact of Students Social Responsibility (Temporin, 2014: 93).



Most often university commitment, campus culture, individual identity and personal resources shape social interactions. According to Kirilin (2002: 572), education can foster critical experiences in:

- civic participation (*motivation*);

- providing money or time to contribute to civic endeavours (*capacity*);
- introducing one to others concerned with civic life (*networks*).

In particular, interactions amongst these three factors are often complex and can become either enablers or potential barriers to social capital for social responsibility.

In this framework, universities, in order to meet global and national socio-economic and democratic challenges might need to reconsider students' transformational and critical role in relation to knowledge, the self and the world (Barnett, 1997). The emergent space acquired by civil society and citizens during the Arab Spring revolutionary movements, seems to suggest the possibility of a more inclusive *citizen-centre* and *citizen-driven* social dynamics, shifting the predominant economic-driven model in favour of a renewed public sphere and a shared common good. In higher education, the question of opening a space for discussion to further develop a *university student-focused model* based on the notion of students as co-producers (Neary, 2012; Carey, 2013), holds the opportunity to develop students' *social responsibility* and *social awareness*.

University social responsibility in the Arab region: the case of Tunisia

Globalisation in the Arab region has raised majors concern also for higher education institutions. Whether perceived as an opportunity or a challenge, it is raising questions on the very definition of education, culture and the development of a knowledge society (UNESCO, 2007: 10), urging universities in Arab countries to

assess their missions and role in society. Economic global trends and national policies have a direct effect on graduates' employability, ensuing under-utilisation of human capital (Ben Halima et al, 2010), as well as brain-drain dynamics, social capital impoverishment and lack of public funding for research. In Arab states, pressures to liberalise their economies, supported by World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), have favoured state companies' privatisation while public expenditures were re-routed to primary and secondary schooling to the detriment of higher education (Guazzone and Pioppi 2009 in Buckner, 2011: 22). Furthermore, adaptation to economic reforms of privatisation and limitations imposed by the central government on universities' autonomy and management, have further worsened resources' availability to adapt to and confront global socio-economic challenges.

In the last decades, in fact, Arab countries enhanced educational opportunities and showed a progress in the establishment of ICT systems; increasing admission equality and equity (i.e. increase in female students); diversification of higher education institutions (public, private, virtual) and its regionalisation; as well as, the establishment of quality assurance and control councils (UNESCO, 2009). However, no tangible achievements were registered regarding: improving quality of research; teaching and curricula reforms; administration and management decentralisation; Arab-to-Arab higher education cooperation or universities' social responsibility. In particular, the higher education sector in Arab societies presents, amongst others, three areas of major constraints and emergent challenges (UNESCO, 2009: 62):

- **Serving society:** they have fallen short in interacting with local communities.
- **Curriculum reform:** they have failed to enact policies to include citizenship, human rights, religious tolerance and ethics for social cohesion.

- **Degree devaluation:** existing admissions systems have devalued social and human science specialisations, pushing students with lower marks into humanities;

In this sense, policy makers have missed the opportunity to reform the education system pedagogically, favouring a student-centred and competency-based learning; structurally in a lifelong learning perspective; financially (diversification of funding) and managerially (decentralisation and coordination) (World Bank, 2008: 297-298).

Arab universities, in fact, seem still to operate mainly in isolation from their local surroundings, unable to reduce the gap between local traditions, culture diversity and economic global trends, marginalising local population's needs and aspirations. In Tunisia, in a context of turbulent democratisation process, universities have the opportunity to reflect upon their role in supporting a transition towards two main changes, as aspiring to turn into *centres of excellence* might not be appropriate nor realistic (Michavila et al, 2010:13):

- one related to their new social role, redefining their relationships with local communities; and
- the second, concerning knowledge creation and knowledge transfer.

Different authors have analysed current problems of higher education in Arab countries, focusing on private and public education dynamics (Akkari, 2004); the impact of technology transfer and R&D gap (Weiss, 2004; Bardak, 2007); the impacts of quality education (Heyneman, 1997) or the challenges of the labour market (Issa &

Siddiek, 2012), often failing to interlink economic, knowledge creation and innovation with cultural, political and social factors. For this, it seems that nor lack of economic resources nor low levels of human capital, but rather universities' role as a source of change in the respective socio-cultural environments, has emerged as a central issue (Ridha, 2013).

In particular, the Arab Human development report (UNDP, 2011:7), confirmed that "Arab knowledge today in terms of demand, production and dissemination are ineffectual notwithstanding the abundance of Arab human capital", highlighting concerns over universities' social commitment, community integration and their strategies in knowledge generation and transfer". In this sense, higher education in Arab countries (Al-Rashdan, 2009: 80-84), has shown the:

- lack of a social and educational philosophy for a clear institutional strategy;
- lack of academic freedom due to government control in appointing university managers;
- low-impact on their surroundings due to universities' nature but also to the surrounding environment itself ("Tower on Sand");
- weak relations between different universities within a single country and near-total lack of cooperation between universities in different Arab countries;
- absence of a pedagogy based on critical, analytical approaches to problems in society, causing student submissiveness and fear to voice their opinions.

To the same extent, Kazem (1992: 117) defines the modern educational system in the Arab region as "largely static, traditional and mainly Western, advocating for 'a major

role of Arab universities in helping the community to define concepts of development and to speed up modernisation”, contributing academically to:

- propose a concept of development interacting with the popular base;
- activate, stimulate and guide societal interactions for a more open yet stable community,
- stimulate societal movements to narrow the *educated vs. masses* gap;
- prepare specialists with a strong sense of social responsibility.

In this sense, university social responsibility for civic engagement and social participation seems to be one of the major *caveats* in the Arab region, presenting an interest in research aimed at understating dynamics, implications and impacts upon their socio-political systems. In fact, the development of university-community partnerships might also act as a catalyst, reducing economic, educational and socio-cultural cleavages.

In Tunisia, since the 1956 independence, the government administrated the expansion of the education system “driven by rapid youth population’s growth; the need to build a shared feeling of nationhood; a priority to establish political legitimacy and popular support, making education a fundamental right of citizenship” (World Bank, 1999: 7). In fact, universities gradually became the economic, political and cultural executive arm, supporting government national development plan under the control of the Destourien socialist political party and later under Ben Ali’s Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD). However, the imposition of a top-down

political administration affected universities' autonomy and academic freedom while inevitably intensifying campus confrontations (Ben Kahla, 2004: 162):

- 1- In 1971, the General Tunisian Student Union (UGET) congress marked universities' independence from the political power with the rise of left-wing political representatives.
- 2- In the early 80s, the emergence of an Islamic leadership, replacing left-wing units, presented a new configuration of contestations.
- 3- In the 90s, Ben Ali's political party (RCD), regained control of the university and enacted a process of de-politicisation and pacification.

In the last two decades, contrary to international trends and despite geographical and cultural proximity to Europe, Tunisian universities' social dimension was consistently curtailed affecting students' civic engagement, while leaving an institutional void in the process of democracy building. In fact, the government mainly prioritised policies supporting graduates' employability and human capital formation as 'universities are placed at the centre of economic development in partnership with the industry, leading to students' higher employability rate⁷⁹', reflecting a triple-Helix developmental model. Notwithstanding enacted policies, economic structural deficiencies and uneven national development resulted in a high level of unemployment, highlighting the inadequacy of an education system failing to address

⁷⁹ Tunisian "Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology: 2010 strategy.

students' employability skills and societal commitment. In 2008, the higher education reform stated that, amongst HE missions⁸⁰:

“[...] it lies strengthening graduates employability in the framework of partnership with the economic, cultural and social environment contributing to the diffusion of values such as citizenship, modernity, national identity and the interaction and acknowledgment of other cultures”.

The inspirational principles for a new educational model to adapt universities to growing needs of a global job market while acknowledging the importance of democracy and the role of society, did not promote an effective reform. In fact, compelling issues such as social mobility, laboratory equipment, quality and knowledge access and production (Charlier & Croché, 2010), deepened the radicalisation of economic and cultural “*subaltern mondialisation*” (Bensaâd, 2011).

A study conducted in Sfax University confirmed how in Tunisia “policy and culture have shifted to become more favourable toward university entrepreneurship [...] where government policy favours knowledge capitalisation and triple-helix development model to promote employability rather than a socially and civically engaged university model” (Bouhamed et al, 2010: 9-10). Seemingly, Jendouba university, since its foundation, has had an impact on the economic structure of the region becoming an engine of economic growth; however, low-level of students' engagement in the community has hindered the development of political, cultural and social activities (i.e. cultural events, creation of public parks, cultural associations, political activities) (Najem, 2012: 77). In this sense, according to Dhaher (2009: 98, 103), despite the fact that Tunisian universities need to play a strategic socio-cultural role to address the challenges of democratisation, knowledge society and the market

⁸⁰ Art 2 Law n° 2008-19, 25 February 2008 reforming Higher Education.

economy, the unilateral character of state decision on regional development, undermines local actors' responsibility and participation to context-relevant decision-making processes.

These considerations, then, highlight how social cohesion and civic participation are still dominated by an “unaccomplished modernity” within a democracy under construction (Tawil et al, 2010: 274-279) with severe deficits of social promotion affecting also the role of higher education institutions (Baduel, 2007:10). In Tunisia, the transition to a more socially engaged university model seemed yet far from been embraced and implemented. The unachieved development of an education system, based primarily on the privileged relationship with the industry while disregarding other social actors, has undermined the idea of educated students “who will have to think and build society” (Ben Kahla, 2000: 173). In the present process of post-revolution national reforms and democratic transition, both *entrepreneurial skills* and a *sense of social responsibility* should become “major concerns of higher education in order to facilitate employability of graduates while educating them to become full participants in democratic society and promoters of changes that will foster equity and justice” (UNESCO, 1998:29).

In this perspective, the 2009 UNESCO regional conference confirmed an increase in universities' partnerships with local communities in the Arab region. Specifically, while the conference raised the issues of “disparity between culture acquired in the university and traditional social values and the weakness of participation in forming civic and political orientations among university students” (UNESCO, 2009:52), a trend in universities' social responsibility is gaining higher

relevance, highlighting an interest for investigation. Projects and programs identified⁸¹ in the Arab region included, amongst others: Student engagement with Communities for solidarity and citizenship and Outreach and Civic Engagement Unit at Lebanese American University (Lebanon); Community services at American University in Cairo (Egypt); Women for social responsibility and civic engagements (Sudan) (UNESCO 2009); Community Action Centre in Al-Quds University (Palestine); Centres for community Service and Continuing Education in Kuwait University (Kuwait); Undergraduate Community Involvement Program in Akhawayn University and the Centre for Civic Education (Morocco); Centre of Volunteerism and Civic Responsibility at Qatar University (Qatar); Centre for Environmental Studies and Community Service in Taiz University (Yemen) and the Community Service and the Sharajah Social Empowerment Foundation at American University of Sharjah (EAU) (GUNI 2014).

In Tunisia⁸² in 2002, the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education in cooperation with the universities of Sousse, Sfax, Jendouba and the Virtual University of Tunis signed an educational partnership with the American University of Georgia (University of Georgia-Tunisia Partnership⁸³), aiming at strengthening universities societal role in local communities. In particular the project included civic engagement for university and community development with the creation of a forum for Tunisian

⁸¹ It is important to highlight that the majority of civic engagement programs in Arab Universities are often developed by American Universities established most often during the colonisation period or as part of international cooperation programs.

⁸² Only in 2013 after the Arab spring, the United Nations Development program (UNPD) has launched a program for civic education in Tunisia titled "Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE)" to offer short courses in civics to 10,000 university students (GUNI, 2014: 173).

⁸³ However, in the aftermath of the Arab revolution the partnership instead of being reinvigorated given the potential of the democratic transition process, it was halted (last activity reported was in 2008 and 2010 before the revolution).

students to discuss community issues and to work with their peers at university, secondary and elementary school level, with the following project's outcomes⁸⁴:

- 2 Workshops;
- 8 Tunisian faculty members trained;
- 5 Tunisian graduate students trained;
- 5 UGA Faculty facilitated Study Abroad Service-Learning Course;
- 8 UGA students participated in Study Abroad Service-Learning Course;
- 13 Tunisian secondary students participated in civic engagement pilot project.

The partnership aimed at readdressing the role of education at different levels, including: capacity building workshops; faculty and staff exchanges; a health programme, environmental science, entrepreneurial promotion and tourism projects; community service and primary school awareness raising to support outreach programs and students' engagement. In a long term perspective, this partnership, being the first and only nation-wide supported initiative, was a milestone in the Tunisian context creating an opportunity to establish a framework to support and develop student outreach activities⁸⁵.

In this framework, due to the late emergence of social responsibility and civic engagement programs in the Arab region, there is a considerable research deficit on universities' civic roles and social responsibility as there are very few scholars or faculty members for whom this is a primary field for investigation; in fact, there are no faculty chairs dedicated to civic participation as a field of study or degrees in civic

⁸⁴ <http://www.tunisia.uga.edu/about.php?p=22>

⁸⁵ <http://universitieswithoutborders.org/index.php/history>

participation or engaged citizenship has been founded yet (GUNI, 2014: 166, 177). For this, Arab universities have not yet developed a national network to advance a constructive debate via good practices' exchanges, institutional leadership and community integrated programs, incorporating social responsibility and civic engagement in mainstream faculty courses and outreach activities. In particular, the analysis of over 2,000 worldwide community-university engagement (CUE) initiatives showed that the majority originated from Europe (30,7%), the USA/Canada (23,8%) and the least represented region was the Arab States with only 3,8% (only 1 in Tunisia) (GUNI, 2014: 113-115), showing a gap in research to address and analyse determinants, present challenges and future implications.

Arab higher education institutions have so far struggled to contextualise their role for social responsibility as an autochthon and context-based response to social, political and cultural challenges. Furthermore, Tunisia, in particular, is a country whose national universities have not adhered yet to any international networks for democracy and civic engagement. In fact, there are no Tunisian universities or higher education institutions as members of the *Arab Ma'an University Alliance for Civic Engagement* at the American University in Cairo⁸⁶, showing a counter-current political and cultural trend towards civic engagement policies, knowledge and best practices exchange. The low commitment of public institutions and Tunisian universities to social inclusion, social capital creation, social responsibility and democracy building is a central aspect worthy of further research in the field of higher education comparative study. In this sense, how Tunisian universities will incorporate their social

⁸⁶ First Arab-wide centre for Civic Engagement founded in 2008 in collaboration with the global Talloires Network. At present, some universities of the following countries are members or partners of the network: Egypt, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Palestine, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Morocco (<http://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/maan/Pages/MemberUniversities.aspx>, accessed on 20/09/2015 at 16:18).

role in support of democracy is an important but under-researched area of enquiry in present Arab post-revolution political and social re-configurations.

The next section explores the relationship between social responsibility and social capital, identifying main theories and implications. It explains how social networks can be functional to foster civic engagement and explores the relationship between higher education, academic social capital, civic engagement and Islam.

Social Capital and Civic Engagement

Social capital theories

In the social sciences, the emergence of social capital theories have been proving successful for it re-evaluated the role of civil society, re-explored individuals' social dimension and widened the spectrum for understanding complex socio-economic, cultural and human relations'. In this sense, the association of the two terms *capital* and *social* has opened new windows for prospective theoretical frameworks bridging economic rationality and context-based human and social relations. In Adam Smith's *The Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, capital⁸⁷ also defines education in terms of productivity, investment and profit. For Smith (1976: 281-282):

[...] the acquisition of such talents and the maintenance during his education, study or apprenticeship, always costs a real expense, a capital fixed [...] though it repays that expense with a profit.

⁸⁷ The term capital appeared in 13th century Italy as a sum of money or value exchange to invest or trade.

For Karl Marx, capital personified social class struggle and power relations. Material means of production owned by the bourgeois class generated surplus-value and economic profit as result of *alienated working class* exploitation. However, a first understanding of capital beyond the economic-materialistic and power struggle ideological tradition, referred not to capital as:

“[...] real estate, personal property or cold cash [...] but ‘social capital’ as ‘good will, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse among individuals and families [...] whereas its accumulation may immediately satisfy his social needs and may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community” (Hanifan, 1916: 130).

Social capital is here defined as a community-wide embedded resource originating from cooperation amongst *fellow citizens*. The multi-dimensional quality of social capital, characterised by individual investment in shared social exchanges, then embraces also other forms of capitals such as human, economic, cultural, etc. In particular, community cooperation, based on tolerance, trust, shared norms and reciprocity facilitates the pursuit of wider individual and collective benefits.

Coleman (1998:98-100) defines social capital as a productive, individual rather than collective resource: “available to an actor [...] in the structure of relations between actors and amongst actors [...] to pursue both economic and non-economic interests [...] making possible the achievements of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible”. The creation of social capital is reflected as the *missing link* to investigate relations amongst people in social networks where daily interchanges take place. Social capital is then rational and functional to an individual or groups as it holds the potential of better achieving economic or non-economic benefits. In fact, closed groups facilitate internal group connections and cohesion via norms of trust and

cooperation whereas the lack of social capital might limit social interactions, turning communities economically or socially dysfunctional. Bourdieu (1980:2), drawing from the Marxist materialistic tradition, defined social capital as the “sum of present or potential resources linked to a sustainable network of relations [...] based on material and symbolic exchanges [...] where the volume depends on the extension of connections and on the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) owned by everyone who is linked to”. Social relations are based on individual use of economic, cultural and symbolic assets interlinked and exchanged, defining a person wealth, power relations and status in society. Members of social networks tend to share common interests and benefits; although resources and networks’ access are based on power struggles, reinforcing social inequalities. In particular, for Bourdieu, in a field such as education, if there is not a dominant and legitimated paradigm of cultural capital⁸⁸, then “the concept of social capital is also intended to act as a moderating concept on an overly deterministic model of cultural hegemony and social dominance” (Grenfell, 2009: 24), considered counter-hegemonic and critical to social change.

On the other hand, Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti (1993: 167), argue that social capital ‘[...] refers to features of social organisation such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions [...] based on social networks associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness’ (Putnam, 2000: 137). Values such as trust, trustworthiness, shared norms and obligations are central elements within communities and driving vectors for information’s reliability, honesty and reciprocity, functional to social and civic participation. Putnam thus marks a difference in defining social capital based on dynamics of collective values and

⁸⁸ Bourdieu (1979) distinguishes three forms of cultural capital: ‘incorporated’ as set of permanent and lasting attitudes and social assets of each individual; ‘objectified’ in the form of material goods such as books, paintings, machines, etc.; and ‘institutionalised’ in the form of academic qualifications within different educational systems.

societal integration whereas Bourdieu focuses on implications of social struggle as individuals pursue own interests (Siisiäinen, 2000: 10). Investment in social capital is linked to higher levels of associational life and community civic engagement. In this sense, social networks could positively impact upon “members not directly involved within a community while benefiting the interest of the person who invested into it” (Putnam, 2000: 20), potentially supporting higher returns of “*private good*” and “*public good*”.

Putnam, in fact, equated social capital to healthy democracy, highlighting the connection between individual or group social engagement to participatory citizenship. He measured the level of associational involvement and participatory behaviour in a community, consisting in the level of “*civicness*” in communities, by such indicators as newspaper reading, membership in voluntary associations, and expressions of trust in political authorities (Portes, 1998: 18). Civic participation and civic virtues are associated with better democratic institutions, a higher level of political participation, healthier neighbourhoods as communities pursue common interests and have mutual expectations. In Putnam’s work “Making Democracy Work” (1993), public administration reforms were successfully implemented in Northern Italy but failed in Southern Italy, mainly due to levels of social capital primarily in terms of voluntary associational life (Putnam 1993: 176). Citizens’ interactions thus are intended to increase trust, cooperation, access and share of information fostering social ties for more democratic and accountable governments within a vibrant civil society⁸⁹.

⁸⁹ However, in Grenfell (2009: 28), “the concept of ‘social capital’, as defined by such writers as Putnam and Coleman offers a ‘relatively weak’ theoretical foundation [...] as the functional view of social capital to imply a non-competitive, non-conflictual view of communities, which is not the case in many European situations”. This also applies in societies with local environments where actors are divided up by cultural, religious or political views as in the case of Tunisia.

In this sense, social networks in a community can be characterised by strong, weak or absent ties⁹⁰ (Granovetter, 1973), as well as, latent (Haythornthwaite, 2002) or virtual ties (Blanchard & Horan, 1998)⁹¹. Putnam also differentiates between inclusive or “bridging” and exclusive or “bonding” ties: “the former is better for linkage to external assets and information diffusion; while, the latter enhances undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity” (Putnam, 2000: 22). Interconnected communities might generate inclusive social networks as well as cross-groups’ social ties to different degrees, depending on types of university-business-community relationships.

In the case of absent or latent ties, however, it might not generate social or economic benefits at all, associated to negative social-capital. Controversially, in the absence or presence of low level of social capital, people might act on a rational, self-interested calculation of short-term subjective choices as consumers and producers against a ‘thicker’ conception of common good⁹² (Meadowcroft, & Pennington, 2008: 122). For this, reciprocity between social capital and democracy can actually vary. Van Deth and Zmerli (2010) have argued democracy can be negatively affected by what they call the “dark side” of social capital depending on members’ homogeneity, associations’ non-democratic goals or the possibility that civic participation can actually turn people off from politics (Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005: 228). Furthermore, participation intensity (active vs. passive participation), scope (many vs. few affiliations) and type (non-political vs. political purpose) (Wollebaek & Selle,

⁹⁰ Groups’ ties or connectivity is defined as the “combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy and the reciprocal services” (Granovetter, 1973:1361).

⁹¹ According to Blanchard & Horan (1998: 296, 305) ‘dispersed virtual communities may have the potential to increase social capital [...] but physically based communities might be more likely to increase civic engagement [...] linking virtual to physical communities creates new public spaces and increases opportunities for interaction’.

⁹² In this sense, Putnam’s “Bowling Alone” metaphor highlights the extent to which associational life can be affected by an attitude based on individualist one-off and closed groups’ social participation.

2002: 32), can also affect social capital generation, individual identity and predisposition to democratic participation. In particular, the relationship between individual social trust (*bottom-up process*) and political trust is crucially mediated by the effectiveness of social and political institutions (*top-down process*) (Newton, 2001: 211). Political participation and civic engagement are then by-products of the socio-political context. In fact, social capital can help to create democracy in a non-democratic country, reducing state oppression and providing a space for opposition, promoting tolerance, compromise, participation and debates (Paxton, 2002: 257).

In modern complex societies, in fact, social capital can foster economic advantages, social fulfilment, personal validation or access to information (Lindon et al, 2002:17); while higher levels of social status (level of education and wealth) are more likely to influence government decisions and collective actions (Larsen et al, 2004:64). These assumptions, however, support the equation that poorer neighbourhood or less connected individuals might lack both the skills and organisational capacity to advocate for their interests. Different types and levels of social capital then affect trust, participation and civic engagement. In fact, well-connected individuals in a poorly connected society are not as productive as well-connected individuals in a well-connected society (Putnam, 2000: 20). At the same time, individual, institutional and structural social capital need to be interrelated to facilitate trust and cooperation amongst citizens for social cohesion. For this, the amount of social capital “in a [democratic] society [...] is directly related to the extent of internal inequity [...] the greater the inequity, the lower the social capital” (Carmon, 1997 in Larsen et al, 2004: 75).

In a university context, socio-economic, cultural and political configurations determine types of institutional governance, social networks and degrees of university-

students-community relationships. Social relations can, then, either foster democracy and civic participation or in the case of latent or absent ties it can hinder opportunities for social trust, cooperation and civic participation. Furthermore, as societies move to more intensive technologically-led interactions, internet access can contribute to the development of new kinds of bridging and bonding⁹³ ties, wider access to information, enhancing contacts beyond territorial boundaries in the light of emergent *virtual to non-virtual* social engagement patterns⁹⁴. In this sense, social capital offers a consistent and valuable theoretical and conceptual tool⁹⁵ to investigate the relationships between social responsibility, democracy and civic engagement. However, it also presents some theoretical limitations and empirical challenges. In particular, the literature on social capital is grounded mainly on European academic scholarship and does not refer to non-western societies characterised by a semi-democratic system, a different value-system and subaltern modernity.

For the purpose of this research, the next section explores social capital in the Arab region with reference to the specific cultural, religious and socio-economic context. The role of social capital for social responsibility in universities is also considered in relation to students' civic engagement.

⁹³ The use of Facebook, amongst undergraduates showed "positive formation of bridging and maintained social capital (to a less extent bonding), as on-line to off-line relationships supports the "poor get richer" hypothesis, lowers barriers to participation and provides greater benefits for users experiencing low self-esteem and low life satisfaction" (Ellison et al , 2007:1162- 1163).

⁹⁴ This is particularly relevant to the Arab Spring wave of contestations (Angrist, 2013; Saleh, 2012).

⁹⁵ In this sense, despite academic contributions advancing the understanding of social capital theory, its nature and definition, its conceptual coherency and the validity of empirical results (Arrow, 1999; Solow, 1999; Sobel, 2002; Grootaert et al, 2004; Portes, 1998; Durlauf, 2002; Adler & Kwon, 2002; Glaeser, 2001; Bowles and Gintis, 2002), the concept still "remains under-theorized and ... oversimplified unable to grasp a reality of inclusion-exclusion far more complicated and multi-layered" (Leonard, 2004: 942).

Islamic Social Capital between Differences and Continuity

In the Arab region, Ibn Khaldun⁹⁶ developed one of the earliest conceptualisations of social capital. In his most famous work “*Muqaddimah*”, he identifies ‘*asabiyah*’: meaning group feeling, solidarity or group consciousness – as the main factor explaining the origin, development and falls of Arab civilisations. Group feeling represents “the secret divine (factor that) restrains people from splitting up and abandoning each other [...] the source of unity and agreement, and the guarantor of the intentions and laws of Islam” (Ibn Khaldun, 1967: 170). People cooperate in mutual agreement, trust and solidarity to better achieve common benefits, social cohesion, order and the respect of divine laws as such avoiding mistrust, social divisions or internal wars. Group feeling is then meant to be stronger in traditional Bedouin societies as blood ties generate protection, close contact, unity, affection, mutual support and aid (Ibid, 97-99); while in sedentary urban areas ‘group feeling disappears as they mingle with common people losing the original nobility of group feeling (Ibid, 102, 292). The concept of *assabiyah* shares many features with Western social capital’s conceptualisation in terms of social power struggle, bonding and bridging ties, community cohesion, cooperation, reciprocity, loyalty, trust and shared norms for economic and non-economic benefits.

In this sense, Islam also places a strong emphasis on trust and being trustworthy as a moral and ethical duty. In particular, in Arabic, the root of the word ‘belief – *Iman* – is the same of trust – *Amanah* [...] for faithfulness to contracts and promises are mandatory obligations for a believer’ (Mirakhor, 2007:28). Islam also orders to pursue

⁹⁶ Born May 27, 1332, Tunis (Tunisia) - March 17, 1406, Cairo (Egypt), one of the greatest Arab historians and philosopher.

the good and prevent the wrong (*al-amr bi'l ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*) (Chambers & Kymlicka, 2002: 182-183), promoting social ethical values. Furthermore, the notion of *maslaha* (common good, similar to *res publica*), and the term *sadaqa mawqufa* (perpetual charity), are essential constituents of the community of believers, combining public and private concerns (Salvatore, 2007:140-154). For this, in the Arab context, the notion of social capital creation is historically rooted into the Islamic system of beliefs and norms shared and reproduced amongst communities of believers. For this, a modern definition of Islamic social capital is related to:

‘[...] the well-being which is a part of the Islamic social welfare system [...] developing ties, norms and trust based on universal Islamic principles, transferred from conventional social settings to Islamic social settings to influence pattern of social exchange’ (Farooqi, 2006: 115, 117).

In particular, in pre-modern Arab societies, the institution of *zakat*⁹⁷, like Christian “*caritas*”, strengthened vertical social bonds between wealthy patrons and their kin or clients; while *sadaqa*, like “*misericordia*”, corresponding to giving to a community or corporate group (such as a guild, confraternity or town), sustained community-wide horizontal bonds⁹⁸. These two Islamic normative and ethical principles ‘were not just products of civil society and social capital but creators and drivers of it’ (Terpstra, 2011: 186,187, 192). In particular, privately funded religious *waqf*⁹⁹ (charity endowment) delivered services to the community and to the poor through *zakat* and *sadaqa*. In fact, *waqf* combined the features of “philanthropy, social service agency and, indirectly, political voice [...] through informal networks of soup

⁹⁷ *Zakat* forms one of the five pillars of Islam, mandatory to all Muslims, consisting in returning a set percentage 2.5, 5, or 10% in goods or money for religious and social purposes.

⁹⁸ *Zakat* fostered the equitable distribution of wealth for social stability and solidarity while *sadaqa* was performed through voluntary work, in kind contributions, free services or social entrepreneurship and *al qurd al Hassan* (beneficial/benevolent loan, gratuitous loan) aimed at poverty alleviation and project development (Atia, 2012: 1).

⁹⁹ It is possible to distinguish three types: ‘Charitable’, ‘Family’ and ‘Cash’ *waqf* (Kuran, 2001).

kitchens, hospitals, public fountains, education and other equalising benefits [...] including housing, commercial facilities and mosques” (Bremer, 2004: 5,10). As modern societies became more complex, however, the predominant logic of a single donor limited the generation of community-wide social capital and failed to adapt to socio-cultural changes. In particular, they failed to address religious, political and social corruption and accountability; the rigidity of resources and investment and the lack of interconnected *waqf*'s union (see Bremer, 2004; Kuran, 2001; Kuran, 2013).

For this, trust, cooperation and inter-communities' networks resulted impoverished, hindering a more dynamic and inter-independent civil society. Furthermore, from the waning of the Ottoman Empire to nation-states period¹⁰⁰, Islamic charitable institutions were replaced with state-run substitutes or closed down completely, ending independent Islamic charitable institutions' role for social bridging and justice, often alternative voice to the state (Bremer, 2004: 12, 13). In this sense, the development of autonomous Islamic social capital was curtailed and reinvented under governments' direct control to meet national political aims. In the Arab region, it is thus possible to identify two types of social capital: a spirit of economic initiative and highly sustainable levels of social cohesion. However, national state-led policies have crippled that entrepreneurial spirit whereas Washington Consensus policies have undermined social cohesion (UNPD, 2011: 2). The advent of modernity and the impact of Western colonisation have radically undermined Arab societies' development, shaping the socio-economic re-organisation of society.

Central government policies of social control and political repression fostered lack of trust, disincentives to invest and a need for associations to stay close to centres of power to operate freely; while, in parallel, movements based on religious ideology,

¹⁰⁰ Civil society organisations were largely restricted in Egypt and in Ben Ali Tunisia and forbidden in Libya.

such as the Muslim Brotherhood, began to offer their own style of social services and charity, as national public services declined (The American University of Cairo, 2013: 8). These developments turned out to be crucial in shaping modern Arabic civil societies, social capital generation and the resurgence of public and political Islam as the only available alternative to the State. In particular, the establishment of a complex binary system has determined a tendency to social collision and fragmentation shaping the social responsibility and democratic models of participatory citizenship. In particular, Islamic activists or Islamists in the Middle East have *de facto* created “states within states”: ‘from political party activities to banking and commercial enterprises or associational life via private voluntary organizations (PVOs), such as charities, schools, medical clinics, etc. [...] applying Islam to the public sphere and engaging in political protests with the secular ruling state to support the implementation of an Islamic state based on Islamic law (*Shari’a*)’ (Clarck, 2004: 942- 943).

The creation of Islamic private welfare services as alternative to public services, deepened *secular vs. religious* cleavages. These aspects of social capital generation within a framework of conflicting interests between the Islamic tradition and post WWII modern and secular nation-states, seem to be distinctive to modern Arab societies. Social capital formation in Arab countries has also determined university social responsibility based upon an alternative model for democracy building. In the framework, both Islamic and Western social capital theories are considered relevant and significant in assessing specifically how universities have reproduced patterns of students’ socialisation.

Social Capital and Social Responsibility: the case of Tunisia

In the Arab region, the relationships between civil society, social movements and social capital remain largely unexplored. Notions of students' civic engagement, volunteering and civil society are emergent concepts of subaltern social realities. As such, there is a general absence of comparative data about the voluntary sector and the nature, characteristics and socio-economic contributions derived from civic engagement; as well as, about the roles of the state, Islamic mutual assistance and civil society in promoting and establishing civic service programs (Kandil, 2004: 49). Furthermore, according to Li Puma and Koelble (2009: 13):

‘[...] it is impossible to develop an adequate theory and account of social capital in emerging post-colonial democracies grounded in a nation-state production-centred political economy’.

Individual or groups' social agency often clashed with central government policies, often jeopardising social capital development and active political participation. In particular, civil society organisations have tended to act within a *conflicting space* between the government and the private sector in which “civil society shares with government a sense of public sphere and general good but unlike government it makes no claims to exercise a monopoly on legitimate coercion” (Lehning, 1998: 221-223).

The public sphere is often considered a ‘buffer zone’ where political, socio-economic and cultural factors determine the emergence of civil society organisations. Post-independence Arab states, in fact, established strategies of liberalisation-repression - between narrow pluralism and brutal suppression - to control civic activism, resulting in the failure of civil society to remove autocratic regimes (Yom, 2005: 15, 23). Restrictions on political engagement and democratic participation

resulted in a lack of basic freedoms, undermining social and civic actions while favouring movements of clandestine dissidents. Bayat (2002: 3), argues that Middle Eastern societies foster a predominant quiet encroachment strategy:

‘[...] characterized by direct actions of individuals and families to acquire the basic necessities of their lives (land for shelter, urban collective consumption, informal jobs and business opportunities) in a quiet and unassuming, atomised and illegal fashion to achieve social changes.’

As a matter of fact, grassroot social activism in the Arab region has been characterised by complex, diverse, conflicting but dynamic movements.

In Tunisia, the 1959 Constitution guaranteed right of association¹⁰¹ and assembly, although the establishment of associations was left to the discretion of the Ministry of Interior which could arbitrarily reject applications or hold approval, often on the basis of preserving public order. In particular, during Bourguiba, the strict control over civil society was enacted by Law on Association (Law 154 of 1959) which limited the classification of authorised civil society organisations, excluding those pursuing political objectives; whereas, during Ben Ali, tight security control remained and the Law of Associations in 1992 forbade any association of a “general character”, allowing the RCD party loyalists to infiltrate in NGOs (Lawner, 2012: 177-119). The Arab spring, in this sense, had a crucial impact on grassroot associations removing not only the limitations on nature, aims and objectives of associations but also unlocking tight government control over associations’ freedoms, including activists’ persecution. This change has opened up new spaces for wide-ranging associational and political engagement, including Islamic ones. In this sense, CSR trends experienced a shift from

¹⁰¹ Tunisian Organic Law on Associations No. 25/1992 classified associations within: women’s groups; sport groups; scientific groups; cultural and arts groups; charity, emergency and social groups; development groups; amicable groups, public interest groups (American University of Cairo, 2013: 50).

traditional philanthropic activities (based on religious commandment of alms giving as *zakat*), toward a more restructured approach in previously sensitive areas such as democracy, human rights and the labour market (Avina, 2013: 81-82), including:

- the rise of locally-driven CSR (including locally-led employee activism);
- a growing CSR support to societal and democratic transition;
- a renewed support to key national socio-economic challenges (i.e. employment and entrepreneurship).

In Tunisia, prior to the revolution, official data reported that civil society organisations were mainly operating in cultural and artistic spheres (62,81%)¹⁰²; while after the revolution¹⁰³, the sharp increase in the number of associations showed that charitable, aid and community groups have made remarkable progress (18%) and associations which are active in citizenship, social rights, political rights, economic rights and public freedoms or development groups have flourished at the expense of sports groups (American University Cairo, 2013:53-55). On the other hand, traditional forms of social participation such as urban mass protests, trade unionism, community activism, social Islamism, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) tended to pursue fragmented interests to meet socio-economic needs. Quiet encroachment then allowed individuals to improve their quality of life in the absence of state policies with low impact on social capital creation or community well-being. In this sense, the state either both created and supported civil society (i.e. Kuwait, Syria and Tunisia), or controlled it by deciding the content and form of civil society, as in Egypt (Hassan,

¹⁰² To the same extent, young people are disillusioned with autocratic regimes that in many ways limit how they can explore their identity through art, literature and political expression (CAWTAR 2006 in Chamlou 2013).

¹⁰³ In Tunisia, social activism has since then experienced an unprecedented boost fulfilling an important role of wider cooperation with the State in the “High Council for the Realisation of the Goals of the Revolution, Political Reforms and Democratic Transition” (Behr & Siitonen, 2013: 15).

2010: 69), ensuring an “authoritarian resilience” based on an adaptation strategy within a largely state-monopolised civil society (Deane, 2013). In this sense, the *State vs. civil society* paradigm has hampered the creation of social trust, shared norms, trustworthiness in the government or democratic attitudes.

Amaney Jamal’s book “*Barriers to democracy: the other side of social capital in Palestine and the Arab world*”, is the first empirical study investigating social capital in MENA region¹⁰⁴. In contexts characterised either by centralised and clientelistic semi-democratic or authoritarian regime, associational life and social capital formation might not support a democratic process. In fact, non-governmental organisations have been often central to critically oppose authoritarian regimes (Langohr, 2004; Cavatorta, 2006). However, empirical findings in Palestine showed that “the relationship between civic engagement (political knowledge, civic involvement and community engagement), interpersonal trust and support for democratic institutions were not directly related to one another” (Jamal, 2007: 13). These dynamics seem then to be in contrast with mainstream Western social capital theory which rather assume that a vibrant associational life is linked to community social capital’s creation, fostering better democratic systems (i.e. Putnam, 1993, 2000). In fact, positive correlation between trust, democracy support and political confidence seem to be positive in countries with stronger democratic institutions. In non-democratic societies, instead, “higher levels of generalized trust are not linked to more support for democracy” (Jamal & Nooruddin, 2010: 58).

¹⁰⁴ Although, it draws from the experience of Palestine, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan (not Tunisia) and only with reference to the pre-revolution and not to post-revolution socio-political environments.

In particular, associations supporting the regime *status-quo*, seek government funding and protection in clientelistic networks¹⁰⁵ and create stronger interpersonal trust but lower democratic forms, civic engagement or concerns about one's community; while, associations not linked to the regime will conversely show lower levels of interpersonal trust but higher levels of commitment to democracy and civic engagement (Jamal, 2007: 13, 77, 87). In this sense, governments by strategically replacing, supporting and controlling associations, occupied their space in society and reinforced authoritarian rule rather than fostering grassroot social capital, trust, shared norms and values. For this, in anti-democratic and paternalist authoritarian settings, civic activism has a negative effect on democratisation because governments support only pro-regime associations which, in turn, are unwilling to support a democratic change in order to guarantee protection and economic gains. Associations advocating against the regime, instead, are often banned or under censorship, preventing the development of democratic social settings and genuine political participation.

In this sense, in Arab countries, if Western funded international NGOs and state-supported national NGOs have been under government's direct control, the role of Islamic Social Institutions (ISIs) generated a third alternative to social capital generation. In particular, Islamic institutions are grassroot networks of private organisation, often voluntary, providing public and social services while expanding the role of Islam in the public sphere. In general, ISIs, often perceived as a political threat by governments, advocate for an ideological struggle between *public-private* and *secular-religious*, based on an Islamist identity and the creation of alternative

¹⁰⁵ In pre-revolution context, larger corporations developed CSR "often partnered with NGOs under the patronage of or otherwise favoured by the ruling elites". Most companies in Tunisia, (i.e. Tunisiana, the largest telecommunications company; Amen Bank; Groupe des Assurances de Tunisie (GAT insurance company); and the three major Tunisian labour unions), were encouraged to be in the informal or black market: they did not pay taxes as the extended family of the President benefitted from and encouraged the corrupt system (Avina, 2013:81-83).

institutions to challenge state control, repression, co-optation or biased encouragement (Clarck, 2004: 945, 948). Nonetheless, in modern Arab nations, according to Cavatorta (2006:221):

‘[...] the inclusion and dialogue with Islamist groups, the truly popular civil society actors¹⁰⁶, becomes a necessity since political parties are discredited and co-opted by the regime while ‘secular’ civil society is not yet strong and independent’.

In Islamic associations, however, social capital’s generation is often found to be weak since ‘middle-class horizontal ties reinforce vertical patron-client relationships as the educated middle-class receives jobs and services while the poor receive mainly services that do not eliminate the need to seek additional aid and services from elsewhere’ (Ibid, 944, 965). In this sense, these associations might not foster social cohesion or social inclusion due to the prevailing middle-class bonding ties and class-restrained interests, leaving the disenfranchised poor disempowered to social and economic participation. Furthermore, either political affiliation or democratic participation appears not to be central to ISIs’ agenda, disengaging members from civic engagement or political participation, as they rather provide short-term relief. In this sense, the relationships between social capital, democracy and civic engagement in Arab states seems to be weak and the role of both secular and Islamist CSOs might not be functional but rather incompatible with democratic values, social cohesion, social trust and political participation. In this sense, in the university context, it is relevant to explore if values and norms such as trust, reciprocity and trustworthiness facilitate or hinder democratic and civic participation.

¹⁰⁶ This aspect relates more openly to countries like Morocco or Egypt while does not apply to Tunisia where Islamist social activities were strictly controlled by the State and obliged to go underground.

In this framework, governments, since ‘people cannot associate, volunteer, vote or take care of one another without a stable and safe environment¹⁰⁷’, support the reproduction of social capital via (Fukuyama, 1999: 13-14):

- **Education**¹⁰⁸: transmitting human and social capital as social rules and norms.
- **Religion**: as religiously inspired cultural change is a live option in the Islamic world (although sectarianism can breed intolerance, hatred and violence)¹⁰⁹.
- **Globalisation**: conveying transformational ideas and changes.

In particular, education is central to government policies to most effectively pursue community development¹¹⁰. Education can be crucial to meet local and global challenges; to foster inter-religious tolerance and dialogue (inside and outside universities); to form present and future leaders; to address effectively CSR and USR concerns as well as to guarantee public services’ provision for government’s accountability. In this sense, universities are institutional settings where the organisational advantage can be conducive to higher levels of social and intellectual capital if its **structural dimension** (network ties, network configuration, appropriable organisation), **cognitive dimension** (shared codes and languages, shared narratives) and **relational dimension** (trust, norms, obligations and identification) (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998: 251), are mutually fostered by networks of knowledge-led socialisation.

¹⁰⁷ These aspects are key elements in developing social capital. However, this might not be the case in politically, culturally, linguistically or religiously fragmented societies. Nonetheless, social capital is also created in these specific contexts calling for the development of an alternative framework of analysis, incorporating different criteria and lenses able to understand enablers and barriers to context-based social capital development.

¹⁰⁸ Education, in fact, is one of the most important predictors —usually the most important predictor - of engagement as rising general levels of education are likely to be accompanied by higher general levels of political, social engagement (Helliwell & Putnam, 2007:1,14; La Due Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998).

¹⁰⁹ The role of Islam towards democracy will be dealt with in the next section.

¹¹⁰ In Tunisia, political Islam has been often censored and globalisation impacts are still subaltern.

Intra-faculty bonding and extra-university bridging ties can form academically related social capital, reinforcing a set of shared norms and values via cultural, political or volunteering activities. However, despite emergent considerations on how universities' social responsibility and social capital influence society (Ferman, 2006; Carpenter et al, 2010), there is a gap in the literature. In particular, the knowledge gap relates to the nature and development of social capital and social ties in Tunisian public universities in relation to social networks developed amongst professors, administration and students within the local community.

In this sense, despite the fact that education has the potential to support social responsibility and the creation of social capital, opportunities for youth civic engagement remain largely limited in the Arab region. A survey conducted in Morocco in 2000 showed that, on average, only 15 percent of youth participated in associational activities; in Tunisia, only 3.7 percent of young people surveyed in 2000 reported they were members of civil society organisations and only 8.6 percent felt they had a social role to fill; whereas, a 2009 Population Council survey in Egypt showed that only 3.3 percent of young males and 1 percent of young females took part in voluntary activities (Marseille Conference, 2010: 32-33). Furthermore, in Tunisia, Hamami (2012) argues that despite existing civic engagement programs and national regulations¹¹¹ in primary and secondary schools, students' sense of citizenship and civic responsibility in the pursuit of social cohesion is characterised by a gap between theory and practice. Civic programmes remain detached from everyday life with limited experience of participatory activities and social engagement. In Tunisian public schools, as in higher education, participation has long been limited to mainly cultural associations and

¹¹¹ Law 2002-80, 23 July 2002 on Education and Teaching system (Loi n° 2002-80 du 23 juillet 2002, loi d'orientation de l'éducation et de l'enseignement scolaire) and Law 2010-26, 21 May 2010 on Volunteering (Loi n° 2010-26 du 21 mai 2010, relative aux activités de volontariat).

sports clubs since students ‘were not allowed to engage in debates and the curriculum focused on obedience to the state creating submissive students’ (Duncan, 2012: 23).

On the other hand, according to World Giving Index 2014 (CAF, 2014), Tunisia was ranked 120 out of 135 countries in relation to people’s predisposition to charity on the following elements: helping other, charitable donation and volunteering. In addition to this, Youth Arab report concluded that amongst the main obstacles to participation was overall control and authority. In particular, it is stated that ‘authority is not confined to government authority but also includes the family, school principal, college professor, the boss at work [...] as youth rarely confront these figures of dominance, hence their unwillingness to participate increases’ (League of Arab States, 2007: 3). In this sense, Hussainy (2012) also points out how in Jordanian universities, security’s intervention in students’ affairs; student clubs’ weakness; limited freedom of expression; political partisan actions and violence, are amongst the main reasons hindering students’ social role, political awareness and participation. Furthermore, Mitchell (2010), exploring¹¹² Syrian students’ engagement, found out that students tend to have low-levels of social trust and low-levels of participation in extra-curricular activities combined with dissatisfaction expressed towards faculty and administration, highlighting existing barriers in terms of opportunities for engagement. To the same extent, in Egypt, students are often prevented from engaging in political activities outside the classroom as members of clubs as they must get university approval to join one (Holmes, 2008: 179).

In this sense, youth civic engagement in MENA countries¹¹³, while lacking comparative data on life skills, mobilisation skills and social networks, does not seem

¹¹² Based on a sample of 1050 Syrian University youth.

¹¹³ Data from Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Kuwait, Algeria, Yemen, Palestine.

to contribute positively to greater social capital, political trust, tolerance, respect for pluralism and diversity or a sense of shared identity (Mercy Corps, 2012: 4-8). In this perspective, a 2008 report on student engagement highlighted how undergraduate students lack awareness about civic engagement, confirming a gap between the faculty and local community and suggesting the necessity of creating new discourses, culture and renewed tradition of service within communities (American University in Cairo, 2008). In Tunisia, an additional gap in the literature has been identified in relation to students' civic participation, students' identity, social capital formation and students' social agency in a university context.

Post-revolution emergent grassroots students' movements acquired a central focus in Arab states in relation to political participation and civic engagement. In a wider perspective, exploring how "students experience and find their place in the social world determines their self-concept, and this self-concept is intricately linked to how they know and engage the world as focusing on identity issues could provide richer, more contextual interpretations of how students know and learn or engage" (Zaytoun, 2005: 9). In this sense, a deeper understanding and reflection on how students perceive and conceptualise their social agency, can highlight barriers and enablers for civic engagement in post-revolution Tunisia. In particular, the role of Islam and Islamic associations in students' social capital formation, social responsibility and political participation is an important aspect shaping a democracy and a contested public sphere.

Summary

The main purpose of the present chapter has been to present the literature in relation to the following identified themes: democracy building and Islam; university and students social responsibility and social capital formation in the context of Tunisian public universities. The review of the academic literature has shown that university social responsibility is an important emergent issue in higher education at an international level. In particular, in the context of post-revolution Tunisia characterised by the demise of Ben Ali authoritarian regime and present complex democratic transition, the following literature gaps emerged:

- 1- **Democracy and Islam:** in the context of the Arab spring, both moderate and extremist Islamic parties, as well as civil society organisations have played an unprecedented role in the democratic transition in Tunisia. The centrality of Islam, then, plays a crucial role in the correlation between social responsibility, social capital formation and democratic participation. In this perspective, the literature has shown a gap in research on the relationship between Islam, civic engagement and democratic values in the university context. In particular, the influence of both Islamic values and Islamic associations in undergraduate students shaping political and civic participation, is an area in need of further investigation.
- 2- **University social responsibility:** despite global emergent trends of university-community partnerships, fostering social responsibility for civic engagement, university social responsibility (USR) is to-date under-developed in Arab countries and, to a great extent in Tunisia. In addition to

it, the related conceptualisation of student social responsibility (SSR) also, both in Western and Arab literature, seem to be an under-researched field of investigation. In this sense, both USR and SSR in the Tunisian context will be investigated to fill the present gap in literature.

- 3- **Social capital:** the contextual development of social networks, often associated with norms of trust, reciprocity and trustworthiness, is an under-researched area of investigation in the Arab countries and in Tunisia alike, as the related concepts of civil society, civic engagement and volunteering are. Furthermore, there is a gap in understanding the relationship between social capital and university social responsibility exploring the connections between the nature and types of social networks in terms of structural, cognitive and relational dimensions. Furthermore, there is a need to study academic social capital in universities and its impact on students' identity and existing relationships with surrounding communities.

Starting from the above-mentioned research gaps, the present study aims at addressing the following research questions:

- What is the role of Islam in relation to students' identity, social capital, civic participation and democracy in Tunisian public universities?
- What are the relationships between universities and student social responsibility for civic engagement in university contexts?

- What is the relationship between social responsibility and social capital in Tunisian universities?

The study has the objective of making a contribution to knowledge by exploring the relationship between university social responsibility, social capital, Islam and democracy in post-revolution Tunisia. The understanding of the nature, characteristics, implications and barriers to university social responsibility and students' engagement within an Islamic context will shed a light on the influence exerted by political and socio-cultural agents within specific local and national contexts.

The next chapter presents the methodology used with reference to the study population, sampling, research approach, ethical considerations, data collection and data analysis methods.

CHAPTER 4 – Methodology and Methods

The study aimed at exploring university social responsibility, academic social capital and students' civic engagement in Tunisian public universities in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution. The chapter provides information on research problems and questions in relation to study design, methodology and the methods used to conduct fieldwork's data collection. In particular, it considers the setting of the study, the research design, study participants, the sample, instruments used and data analysis's methods. It also presents methodological implications, ethical issues and limitations on research's methods.

Research problems and research questions

In Tunisia, as in other Arab countries, the 2011 social uprisings established new forms of social participation and political consensus. Tensions existing between political and social aspirations to establish a more democratic society have engendered re-emergent conflicts between secular and Islamic values and social norms. Tunisia has since then stood out from other regional realities, managing to pass reforms to grant wider basic freedoms and civil rights in a framework of inclusive political coexistence despite oppositional political and social forces. This process of pacification has allowed resisting pressures from more extremist Islamic social forces, the risk of a civil war or the restoration of the pre-revolution dictatorial regime. In this sense, education for democracy, civic values and social responsibility are central issues defining the future democratic development in Tunisia. University autonomy and

academic freedom, however, still remain under-achieved, hindering the realisation of university and students' social responsibility. For these reasons, there is a growing need to understand how universities can play an active role in the region amidst complex socio-political dynamics.

The research aimed at exploring the nature of universities and students' social responsibility in terms of academic social capital, civic engagement and democracy. In this sense, the study explored connections related to the following research questions:

- What is the role of Islam in relation to students' identity, social capital, civic participation and democracy in Tunisian public universities?
- What are the relationships between universities and student social responsibility for civic engagement in university contexts?

What is the relationship between social responsibility and social capital in Tunisian universities?

The existing relationships and connections define the realisation of social responsibility in public universities in the post-revolution Tunisian context. In fact, it is important to consider how external factors such as governmental policies, socio-political and Islamic structures; as well as, individual identity, family and local community environments, have been shaping its definition, implementation and development.

Research Methodology

In the modern research tradition of social sciences' theories and philosophies, it is possible to differentiate ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches which reflect specific historical, political and cultural contexts as integral elements influencing what knowledge is and how social realities can be investigated. In particular, the *modernisation* of the social sciences mirrored uneven patterns based on the diversification and specialisation of intellectual traditions. Existing differences between European and US traditions, but also within European nation-states themselves, identified cultural adaptations to different contexts characterising 'the state, civil society, national policies and institutional configurations to meet problems of industrialising mass societies' (Outhwaite & Turner, 2007:7). The evolution of theoretical models have been often framed by a dominant positivist approach to social science and often developed conflicting cultural traditions in tensions with society secular or religious embedded values. The evolution from an empirical quantitative scientific model based on the objectification of realities towards a more subjective and qualitative context-based model, gradually determined the adoption of different methodological tools to explore and analyse society. This shift has determined not only the definition, generation and understanding of knowledge but it has also enhanced the capacity to make use of complementary frames to define the complexity and richness of social realities by interconnecting variables beyond a deterministic approach.

In particular, as shown in table 3, it is possible to articulate a distinction amongst three different major paradigms of empirical sociological approaches. In fact, social sciences methodologies have evolved in reference to political and mainstream cultural context-based systems defining how social theories offered a justification or

alternative paradigm to social problems. In this framework, it is possible to consider theories in an historical perspective where contributions of individual researchers within different schools of thoughts, elucidate how conceptual and methodological relativity reflects specific definitions of knowledge and the understanding of reality.

Table 3 - The three practical philosophies of social science, (Mjøset, 2009: 41)

<p>The philosophy of natural sciences: twentieth-century traditions emerging from logical positivism, Popper’s critical rationalism, Lakatos’ research programmes, Kuhn/Popper debate, analytical philosophy</p>	<p>The philosophy of the social sciences: US pragmatism, European critical theory, standpoints epistemologies</p>	<p>The philosophy of the humanities, phenomenology, hermeneutics, structuralism, post-structuralism</p>
<p><i>The standard attitude</i></p>	<p><i>The contextualist attitude</i></p>	<p><i>The social-philosophical attitude</i></p>
<p>Mathematical modelling. Thought experiments/simulation. Statistical analysis of large data-sets. These methods indicate a methods community with the natural sciences</p>	<p>Qualitative methods implying direct or indirect involvement with the cases studied; ranging from long-term participant observation, more or less structured interviewing and comparative work on distinct case-histories. These are methods that are distinct to the social sciences</p>	<p>Interpretative analysis of texts: formal linguistic and narrative analysis, discourse analysis, history of concepts, content analysis, less formal methods of textual exegesis, use of classical texts in social theory to build broad “philosophy of history” – like interpretation of the present. These methods indicate a methods community with the humanities</p>

In particular, the *contextualist approach* considers specific contexts or case studies to generate ‘general knowledge in denser and broader typologies, concepts and models

of social interaction patterns’, using qualitative and quantitative triangulation methods (including non-probabilistic quantitative approaches), ‘designed to increase sensitivity to cases while considering substantive generalisation and comparative specification’ (Mjøset, 2009: 52-53). Contextualisation is then central to exploring *local research frontiers* and providing new and also cumulative knowledge from empirical studies which are often problem-oriented, opening new windows for comparative and multi-disciplinary studies.

In particular, during the first phase of research development, considerations on the type and nature of the study, the research context and the generation of new knowledge have been of primary concern as they are considered to be closely interconnected with the research methodology underpinning methods used for data collection. In fact, the objective to explore the contribution of universities to social responsibility, civic engagement and democracy in Tunisia have been considered to be:

- 1- objectively framed by complex structures and dynamics of social processes beyond individual reach; but
- 2- also simultaneously and subjectively co-produced by individuals.

In fact, educational researchers engage with the relationship between structure and agency embedded in social life as part of participants’ beliefs, intentions and emotions (Scott, 2007: 9). In social settings, like universities, with multi-layered power-relations, diverse socio-cultural determinants and socio-political structures, it is central to investigate context-based meanings and existent relationships to estimate social dynamics. In this sense, as expressed by Scott (2005: 640):

“Social structures pre-exist agential operations and, in turn, human beings reflexively monitor the social world, either individually or collectively, exerting an influence or changing relatively enduring but emergent structures”.

In this sense, the revolutionary movements in Tunisia might help to reshape the definition of both university and students’ social responsibility, reflecting current social dynamics. In a reflexive and relational setting, social life is thus defined by interactions with ‘context, interpersonal relations, emergent social structures and the stratified constitution of the self’ (Nash, 2005: 187). As such, existing tensions between the objective and the subjective reveal how social forces can be functional to change social structures by adopting new ideas, aims and policies. These available or latent social resources are context-dependent as they develop within historical-bound socio-cultural and economic factors of change.

Social capital theory has been considered to explore these issues as it focuses on how interactions among people within a community can foster a higher level of individual, community and institutional trust and shared norms and values central to build citizenship, sense of belonging and civic participation. In particular, it is relevant to highlight how ‘initial works of Bourdieu (1985) and Coleman (1990) conceptualised social capital as an attribute of individuals or small groups; whereas, later focused to the level of communities, regions or nation states (Evans, 1996 or Putnam 1993, 2000), with implications for development theory and practice (Schafft & Brown, 2003: 329). As table 4 shows, these two methodological approaches have considered how social capital can be relevant to understand contexts as a result of

individuals' social or economic interactions based on a constructionist and interpretative approach; or based on a objectivist and positivist approach measured from an individual level aggregated to the community.

Table 4 – Alternative approaches to social capital research (Grix, 2010: 74)

Approach	Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology	Methods	Sources
'Putnam School'	Foundation alist	Positivist	Choice of quantitative strategy, using multiple cases and surveys	Questionnaire via wide-scale survey	Answers to questions in questionnaire
Alternative approach	Anti-foundation alist	Interpretivist	Choice of both quantitative and qualitative strategy, usually small number of in depth-cases	In-depth interviews, documentary analysis	Interview transcripts and background statistical data

As such, the study focuses on understanding complex realities on how agencies and structures are key elements for co-constructing universities and students' social responsibility embedded in specific socio-political environments; cultural settings impacting on individual identities; social relations and institutional culture for policy implementation. In particular, social agency is considered functional of either re-adjusting and changing overtime in relation to existing structures; or, adversely, reinforcing and crystallising social networks and embedded norms and cultural habits both in the short or long-term, hindering or delaying social changes. The interpretivist and co-constructivist *alternative approach* is considered significant to the study as it allows for a deeper understanding of existing tensions arising between

different levels: the individual, the collective and the external contexts. It focuses on how micro-dynamics interact within macro-contexts. In this sense, the valorisation of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were considered central in the research, as explored in the next section.

Research Methods

The research methods used to collect fieldwork data reflected the research methodology and objectives. The development of a multi-dimensional analysis of social responsibility and social capital included the exploration of students' identity, values, motivations and expectations. The research was conducted via triangulated data collection methods and data sources in order to integrate and interconnect finding during data analysis. The purpose was to “offset the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of the other” (Creswell, 2003: 217), as qualitative approaches can compensate for deficiencies of quantitative ones, and vice versa, in describing reality (Scott, 2007: 4). In fact, in addition to quantitative methods (surveys, multiple variants), qualitative methods included analysis of semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions included in the survey. In this sense, methods used are relevant to the research aims as they allowed to consider structural trends in the development of social responsibility and social capital in public university settings; while considering participants' subjective accounts, reflecting deeper meanings and influences brought in by context and cultural or religious values. These methods are, in fact, typically used within social capital theory to explore objective and inter-subjective structures, dynamics, meanings and values.

The present research, in coordination and agreement with my supervisors, was conducted using four main instruments to collect data during fieldwork:

- 1- **Questionnaire:** composed of both open and close-ended questions, questionnaires were used to gain students' perceptions and attitudes towards university and students' social responsibility in terms of civic engagement and social capital formation.
- 2- **Semi-structured interviews:** used to generate qualitative data both from students and academics regarding the role of universities and students in society in relation to post-revolution democracy building.
- 3- **Documentary search:** analysed to address research themes from an institutional and national policy point of view with reference to higher education reforms.
- 4- **Diary notes:** collected during fieldwork campus observations with relevant information regarding students' habits, campus environments and local surroundings to contextualise students' agency.

Research Questionnaire

Questionnaires are common tools in social science as they allow for large sample data collection, implying the understanding of nature and type of social networks, the reproduction of social norms and shared values within a community. Self-completion questionnaires are considered valuable for: the lower-cost; quicker tools to distribute

and administer; for the convenience to fill questionnaires in at participants' chosen time and pace; as well as, in the presence of the researcher (Bryman, 2004: 133). During fieldwork, in particular, the following aspects were observed:

- It was important to specify that questionnaires had to be filled in from the front page and not from the last (since in Arab countries both reading and writing goes from right-to-left, exactly the opposite way round to Western tradition),
- Although participants were asked to tick only the box corresponding to their choice, due to a common misinterpretation about how to fill in questionnaires (despite given explanations), some of them, instead, ticked all questions and left blank the box they had chosen as the correct one (it was possible to clarify this method by comparing questionnaires).

On the other hand, questionnaires might also risk to have lower response rate; greater risk of missing data; limitations of collecting no more data than survey's actual questions; difficulty to clearly understand the questions; and, in case of researcher's absence, no possibility for participants to ask clarifications (Bryman, 2004: 135). In particular, in different sessions, some students asked detailed information and clarifications in order to understand how to fill in the questionnaire (i.e. how to interpret questions' scales). Furthermore, in relation to lower response rate, participants returned questionnaires at the end of each session, resulting less dispersive for participants and more efficient to collect questionnaires in person. In terms of limited or restrained data available from questionnaires, the presence of open-ended questions and the introduction of an "Other" category in most sections of the survey, helped obtaining greater sources of information while allowing students to explore in

more detail individual opinions. In addition to it, students' willingness to take part to post-survey interviews also proved successful as both participants and researcher could further discuss key issues emerged from the questionnaires.

As a matter of fact, questionnaires were designed to obtain relevant information on university and students' social responsibility linked to social capital creation in Tunisian public universities, which implied the necessity to design a rather long and detailed set of questions to cover interconnected topics. However, the experience has suggested that the complexity of questions and length of the questionnaire are important aspects to consider in order to make readability easier and participants' concentration higher. On the other hand, undergraduate students in Tunisia might not be too accustomed to take part in surveys (i.e. there is not a NSSE equivalent or student union/university satisfaction survey-led initiatives as in other European countries); perhaps, participants' interests in the survey, might have impacted on the accuracy of answers given, limiting the possibility to compare some dataset across the study sample (i.e. questionnaire PART C, question number 12). As such, the experience has suggested that designing questionnaires is a rather complex but crucial task to reflect upon in relation to the specific study context. This can be related to designing simple questions; considering survey's length and time needed for completion; levels of participants' attention; as well as, choice of rating scales used to reduce complexity (i.e. avoiding different scales).

The questionnaire was piloted on two different occasions. Firstly, it was piloted in the UK with 20 undergraduate students who volunteered to take part¹¹⁴. The provisional draft was then piloted twice in Tunisia with 10 Tunisian students before

¹¹⁴ In this occasion, questionnaires submitted did not include Part A and B, and also did not include all sections referring to Islamic values and principles.

finalising it¹¹⁵. This was an important procedure to follow as it allowed for further simplification and clarification of questions and answers' options; as well as, internal coherency. Furthermore, the use of French and Arabic was also tested to refine the translation while improving text comprehension and readability. The process of selecting the most appropriate sentences and context-based meanings during the translation process was also key. To the same extent, piloting the questionnaire also helped in improving the layout and definition of tables for uniformity.

In designing the questionnaire, the literature, related to university social responsibility, social capital and students' civic engagement, was explored. This background task helped to identify previous research methodologies and methods, while highlighting key aspects, definitions and design of questions linked to multiple-choice answers. In fact, the comparison with previous studies conducted in similar areas was necessary to identify different models of questionnaires, exploring also commonalities and differences. In particular, the following questionnaires were used for reference to develop the final survey:

- 1- the 2013 NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) US and Canadian version (in French);
- 2- Deep Narayan, Global Social Capital Survey in Uganda (World Bank, 2001);
- 3- Riaz Hassan study on Muslim conceptions of Islam and Society (2002).

As a result, the questionnaire was composed of five main sections¹¹⁶:

¹¹⁵ In this occasion, a full and final version questionnaire was submitted to volunteers (translated in French and already including Arabic words in the section related to Islamic values).

¹¹⁶For further information, see Appendix V on research questionnaire (English translated version).

- **Part A:** structured around three open-ended questions on what democracy means; what is social responsibility and what does it mean and what is the role of students in Tunisia.
- **Part B:** centred on students' social capital in relation to type of organisations/associations; characteristics of members; level of community impact; social perception of generalised trust (using a Likert scale).
- **Part C:** explored students' identity building, self-awareness and the influence of Islamic, social and political values.
- **Part D:** considered the development of social responsibility and social capital in relation to universities, as institutions, and students, as individual agents.
- **Part E:** identified students' personal information (i.e. age; gender; year and field of study; year and place of residence; and parents' information).

On the survey's last page, students were also asked to leave contact details if they wished to take part in the second phase of the study with a face-to-face interview. In particular, once the first phase was completed (questionnaires' distribution and collection¹¹⁷), the researcher contacted participants in order to verify their availability, willingness and interest to conduct interviews.

¹¹⁷ In this first stage, the researcher proceeded to a preliminary control on the validity of questionnaires before contacting participants and inviting them to an interview

Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are flexible tools to explore specific issues presented in the questionnaire, while allowing the emergence of new, interconnected and unexplored lines of investigation. This is particularly important in the case of this present study where social interrelations are explored with reference to identity building as personal attitudes, motivations, habits vary amongst participants. In fact, it is possible to gain “insights into peoples’ opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences” (Denscombe, 2010: 173), to obtain a richer understanding of participant’s personal accounts and also to provide details to enrich understanding of complex dynamics. For the purpose of the research, exploring students’ perceptions and attitudes towards social responsibility and civic engagement, semi-structured interviews were selected to complement and explore themes that emerged from the questionnaires (see methodology section). In this sense, the interviewer guaranteed flexibility to develop relevant ideas and issues uncovered by the interviewee while focusing onto a list of main topics to be discussed ¹¹⁸(Ibid, 175).

Interviews with students were conducted within universities’ premises, inside empty rooms available after classes in order to reduce noise affecting recording quality, distractions and confusion interfering with the interview process; as well as, granting a level of privacy and comfort for participants to express themselves at ease. Interviews with academics were conducted directly in their offices at a suitable time, as arranged by the interviewees. Interviews were confirmed either by phone or by email adapting times and places to participants’ availability and expressed preferences.

¹¹⁸ Three main questions were asked to all participants: What do you think university social responsibility is? Are you actively engaged in any activity within the faculty? Are you member of an association/organisation outside the faculty?

All participants were given the option to conduct the interview with or without a tape-recorder but they all consented to use it during the interview. The length of interviews ranged from fourteen minutes to fifty minutes, depending on different circumstances such as: time availability, depth of participants' answers and personal interest. Interviews were considered a very important instrument to meet research objectives as they contributed to discuss thematic with richer details and exposing a framework for analysis to better understand the extent to which students' social responsibility interfaces with universities' role in society within existing socio-political and cultural environments. Interviewees' personal accounts and direct experiences largely contributed to the researcher's understanding of campus dynamics and understanding of university social responsibility in reference to post-revolution changing contexts.

Interviews were conducted with one participant at a time. On only one occasion, there was a joint interview as one participant requested to be assisted by another colleague, when necessary, in some translation from Arabic to French to better express his opinions. In particular, the interviewer proved to be able to understand and communicate in French throughout the duration, reflecting that this was more a personal worry than a real need. However, appropriate measures were taken to comfort and reassure the interviewee. For this, despite the fact that education in Tunisia is mainly taught in French in schools and universities (being French commonly used in daily life and national media); this single experience has prompted the researcher to underline the importance of taking fully into consideration the extent to which the use of native language can be necessary to express own thoughts, feelings or emotions. In particular, the linguistic support throughout the interview to step in if necessary, proved to be essential as it would have otherwise partially jeopardised the quality of information and limited the participant to express fully notions and ideas. During the

transcription of the dialogues in Arabic between two participants and the translation into English, the support of the Arabic native speaker was required to confirm accuracy. As such, it is considered central in context where the main language is not the one used for questionnaires or interviews to make sure that the chosen language does not become a barrier either for the participants or the researcher to conduct fieldwork.

Documentary search

Official governmental documents and national statistics were used as a secondary source of information, as these are previously collected, presented or analysed. In particular, documents related to higher education national laws, public university regulations and HEI statistics, including institutional official websites, were used to complement relevant information related to universities' missions and students' role. In fact, documents are an "invaluable methodological tool" of qualitative data collection and they can be of various kinds: library-based; computer-based; work-based; policy-focused or historical archival evidences (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2010: 186). National higher education reforms were presented and analysed in chapter 2 and chapter 6 to understand the overall framework within which universities have been framed to derive their missions in society. To the same extent, it also defines how students have been considered and included as key partners in universities.

In order to develop the analysis of institutional and national policy, a thematic framework was structured around two specific research themes: Tunisian public universities' role and its social dimension; students' role in public universities and

their social dimension. In the first stage, after completing questionnaires' analysis with SPSS software and semi-structured interviews with Nvivo software, it was possible to recognise emerging themes or issues in the data set. These emerging themes were mainly related to university social responsibility; social and civic engagement; the role of Islam and Islamic values; the relationships between politics, education and democracy. In this sense, these concepts and themes expressed by the participants, as well as, main themes arisen from the literature review formed the framework used to filter and to analyse official documents. For this, official documents and national policies further addressed insights into existing meaning, relevance and importance of issues, and foremost existing implicit connections between the literature, the data set and the socio-political context within which university and students' social responsibility is framed in Tunisian public higher education.

They have provided significant information in relation to universities' changing role within different national historical contexts, adapting to government's main national discourses and thus considering socio-cultural impacts. National statistics are also presented in the background chapter, while government policies are discussed at the beginning of each data analysis (chapter 5 and 6). Furthermore, comparison between official documents, national statistics and research data collected via questionnaires and interviews have highlighted existing contradictions in relation to universities' role in society, suggesting priorities and divergences for future higher education reforms in Tunisia.

Diary notes

Diary notes were gradually collected during fieldwork to gather useful information derived from the research context. In particular, this might include “personal shorthand, long narratives, short notes, prose, questions, venting or quotes” (Pillow, 2010: 276). The researcher acquired useful notes from campus and students’ observations; discussions with students out of the class in public areas; at the cafe or at the campus canteen over lunch time. In particular, in order to understand how social networks develop within and outside the campus, field observations and shared information with students were also key to the study. Short notes were often taken during the day in the presence of students while longer reflections were carried out at night. In this sense, diary notes helped the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the context: university campus and available facilities; students’ habits; students-professors relationships; student use of spaces (i.e. open squares, classes, library, canteen, study rooms, etc.). It also has, as a result, fostered context-based reflections upon the relationship between theory and data collected. Furthermore, the process of contextualising meanings, habits, symbols, limits and constraints helped to strengthen the researcher’s objectivity and neutrality in reflecting participants’ opinions. In particular, although reflexivity “cannot solve problems of voice, power and representation” (Pillow, 2010: 277), it consistently raised critical questions on the role and perspectives of the researcher in relation to the research and participants in terms of values, principles, expectations and perceptions. Furthermore, observations were significant as the researcher, external to the research context, was able to obtain useful information relative to students’ daily life experiences, become familiar with campus life and better understand existing dynamics.

Setting of Study and Fieldwork Access

As explored in the literature review, Tunisian public universities' role in promoting students' civic engagement and democratic participatory attitudes was reported as being fragmented and underdeveloped, restrained by social habits and controlled by political governing power. Universities' social responsibility in Tunisia has been considered to assess the role of education in relation to present transition to democracy, social cohesion and dialogue promotion. Furthermore, contested power-relations and divergent interests amongst central government, universities and civil society organisations have defined social responsibility's nature, scope and present development. However, despite unpredictable long-term impacts on society, the outcome of the revolution, amidst social tensions and security concerns, seemed to have favoured a climate for building a more open democratic system via free multi-party system elections, gradual press liberalisation subject to freedom of speech, association and manifestation.

In order to conduct fieldwork data collection, the researcher obtained preliminary access to the field and permission to conduct the study by presenting a letter¹¹⁹ to the hosting university international office, from the University of Nottingham first supervisor, Professor Simon McGrath¹²⁰. The rector's secretary organised, upon the researcher's arrival, a first meeting with the Dean¹²¹ of Human Science's faculty in order to introduce and present research aims, objectives and methods' procedures. The Dean, after an initial introduction, asked to read both the introductory letter from the supervisor and discussed it thoroughly once more. He

¹¹⁹ See Appendix I related to research cover letter.

¹²⁰ Accompanied by an information sheet explaining the research project, aims and objectives.

¹²¹ Both deans were asked if they were willing to volunteer for an interview but no interest was manifested.

further asked to read the questionnaire prior to giving permission to distribute the questionnaire and conduct interviews in campus. At the end of the meeting, the Dean called a member of the student union to visit the campus facilities and introduce the researcher to other members of the student union. In this way, the researcher was able to begin data collection.

In this research context, however, fieldwork access was granted via a hierarchical and bureaucratic process, highlighting related issues of freedom in terms of restricted access to participants, resources and information. The selective and top-down approach framed by the faculty administration has potentially biased the researcher's initial ability to meet participants or using available students' database information. As such, the Dean called in only members of the more progressive/leftist student union, excluding the newly founded religious oriented one¹²². This might also identify an underlying sense of mistrust, a low degree of integration and fragmented campus life organisation across members of the two unions. In fact, the researcher's decision to adopt a different strategy granted access to new gatekeepers (i.e. professors and other students) and also opened contacts to members of the religious-oriented students' union. Questions of control, power relations, campus fragmentation and low level of cooperation are all embedded barriers which characterised the research context and implied a necessity to reframe approach to context and knowledge; as well as, the strategy to approach participants and overcome initial access and information restrictions.

In particular, after permission was obtained, it was still not clear where and how to approach students, as no direct access was given to students data from the

¹²² As highlighted, despite initial contacts and access to students, the researcher approached on several occasions, students and members of more conservative and religious linked unions without success to either submit questionnaires or conduct an interview.

administration, nor was it possible to define how to organise questionnaire distribution and further recollection. In fact, at the beginning, the researcher decided to contact students who would gather in common areas (i.e. study rooms, the cafeteria and faculty outdoor squares). However, campus environments were rather dispersive and busy with students attending courses for most of the day, preparing for exams, revising classes in the library and occasionally gathering outside classrooms.

In fact, this initial approach proved to be complicated on different occasions, time-consuming; lacking appropriate access and place for questionnaires submission and recollection. Furthermore, it also resulted in very limited questionnaires return rate. As a consequence, at first instance, there was a need to gain access to students in classrooms as this was not initially an available option. As such, at the second stage, the researcher asked members of the student union to meet directly professors in order to present the study and discuss with them the possibility to meet students at the end of their classes. As a result, some professors agreed and class access was granted with the possibility to:

- interact with a larger number of students at the same time;
- provide more attention in explaining research objectives;
- use an environment more appropriate where to fill in the questionnaire.

On the other hand, it was also possible to provide clarification, as well as collect questionnaires just after completion. This strategy proved to be successful in terms of access and questionnaires' return rate, despite limited sample population mainly due to access, resources and time.

Once questionnaires' collection at Humanities faculty was completed, due to some institutional delays, no initial meeting was still possible at the Engineering faculty. At this stage in order to continue scheduled fieldwork data collection and overcome bureaucratic delays, it was possible to liaise with a professor in the Humanities faculty who could introduce me to a student at the Engineering faculty. As a result, a meeting was then organised directly with faculty secretary. The researcher then presented the supervisor's letter on study aims and objectives. Questionnaire sample was also presented in detail but the Dean did not ask to read it, manifesting a less authoritative approach. Once permission was granted, a similar strategy was adopted in order to submit questionnaires to students at the end of classes as no access to faculty database was available.

Population and Study Sample

The possibility and opportunity to investigate the entire population dataset was limited due mainly to time, resources' constraints; as well as, access to students' information from the administration. To the other extent, the unstable post-revolution socio-political circumstances restrained the opportunity to extend the period for data collection. In particular, the universe of existing units, from which a representative sample can be selected for investigation, corresponds to the research population (Bryman, 2004: 87). The population was selected from one public university, as a case study. The choice was determined due its involvement in the American University of Georgia civic engagement and capacity building's partnership (as explored in chapter 3) and, as such, considered a public institution previously committed to developing a framework for university social responsibility. Secondly, the university is located in a

coastal city in central Tunisia, operating as an important hub connecting Southern and Western internal regions to the capital Tunis, as such selected as being more inclusive and representative of Tunisian students at large. The study sample was then limited to one public university, excluding other private, Islamic or virtual universities. As an explorative study, it does not offer a comparison between different national universities.

The selection of two faculties (Engineering and Humanities) within the same university in agreement with the supervisors, was pre-designed to identify a specific type of participants' profiles (students and professors) from two different fields of study (humanistic and scientific). To the same extent, differences were considered to be related to: campus environments and contexts; families' socio-economic background; types and nature of social relations; degree's different value and related employability opportunities; individual identity, values and habits. In this sense, it was expected that different campus environments, degree disciplines, family background and students' profiles might reveal different attitudes and types of engagement interconnected to social responsibility and civic engagement within each faculty.

On the other hand, the process of sampling aims at identifying and selecting one or more sub-groups, people or social phenomena to be studied, from the larger 'universe' to which they belong and can be either non-representative (based on convenience choice of a particular illustrative case) or representative (based on probability theory more typical of the universe from which they have been selected) (Payne & Payne, 2004: 209)¹²³. In particular, the sample was selected amongst:

1. students at the Engineering and Humanities Faculty (survey and interview);

¹²³ For further specification, see (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2010: 170).

2. students and members of the NGO¹²⁴ (survey and interview);
3. professors at the Engineering and Humanities Faculty (only interview);

In particular, the sample was selected from available students attending classes. The researcher was introduced by the professors at the end of the class, giving time and space for students to submit the questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire, students were also asked if they were willing to take part in the second part of the study, consisting of oral semi-structured interviews to further discuss the main themes presented in the questionnaire. Students were contacted and only ten volunteered to take part to the interviews, composed of: four engineering students, three humanities and three students and members of the NGO.

As Table 5 shows, undergraduate students were selected as they generally represent the majority of HE students' population.

Table 5 – General higher education institutions study population distribution¹²⁵

	Foundational	BA/BSc	Master degree	PhD	Other	Tot
Student Body	37408	231075	46838	19376	4922	339619¹²⁶
	11%	68%	14%	6%	1%	100%
	Professor	Lecturer	Junior Lecturer	Teaching	Other	Tot
Academic Staff	3316	885	6204	8042	3963	22410
	15%	4%	28%	36%	17%	100%

¹²⁴ The NGO was founded by university students only few months after the revolution, in the field of civic engagement, democracy building and participation, recruiting its members only in university contexts.

¹²⁵République Tunisienne - Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique: L'enseignement supérieur en chiffres - Année universitaire 2011/2012. Bureau des Etudes, de la Planification et de la Programmation (www.universites.tn).

¹²⁶ Sixty-one per cent of which are female students.

In fact, as explored in the literature review, university social responsibility is directly linked to students' social responsibility and as such, university third missions are mainly implemented in relation to or in cooperation with students as primary beneficiaries. To the same extent, the second population of students, also members of a student-run NGO founded after the Jasmine revolution, have been specifically selected in order to have a deeper understanding of associational life engaged in relation to post-revolution political and civil rights. This decision reflected the research objective to understand and explore the extent to which the end of the Ben Ali regime impacted upon basic freedoms, allowing students to develop social responsibility, civic engagement and democracy. Finally, the third population of faculty academics was identified since professors also have a significant role in higher education in relation to teaching, researching and supervising students during their degree and, potentially, professional careers. Furthermore, professors hold a key role in developing students' civic skills and supporting academic social capital in connection with the administration, industry, community leaders and policy makers.

On this basis, during fieldwork, the researcher personally distributed 140 questionnaires on-campus, targeting 70 students per each faculty. In relation to humanity faculty, 56 questionnaires were returned but only 29 validated (due to missing data in the questionnaire or because students did not complete the survey correctly). In the engineering faculty, 29 questionnaires were returned and 26 validated. The overall return rate, amongst the two faculties, was 61%, however, the validated rate was equal to 40%. In relation to the second population of students, 12 questionnaires were distributed amongst students (also members of the NGO) but only 5 were returned and all 5 were validated, with an overall rate of 42% questionnaires returned. In this sense, data analysis of sixty questionnaires allowed the development

of an explorative approach, as this research is considered being the first study in the specific context of Tunisia (see chapter 3). In particular, a smaller-scale surveys – usually between 30 and 250 participants – as using non-probability sampling techniques for a representative sample can “produce data that are sufficiently accurate for the purpose of the research” (Denscombe, 2010: 46).

As figures 3 and 4 show, the sample average age was between 22 and 23 years old. The majority of participants (around 60%) were attending their second or third year of university degree¹²⁷.

Figure 3– Sample age composition.

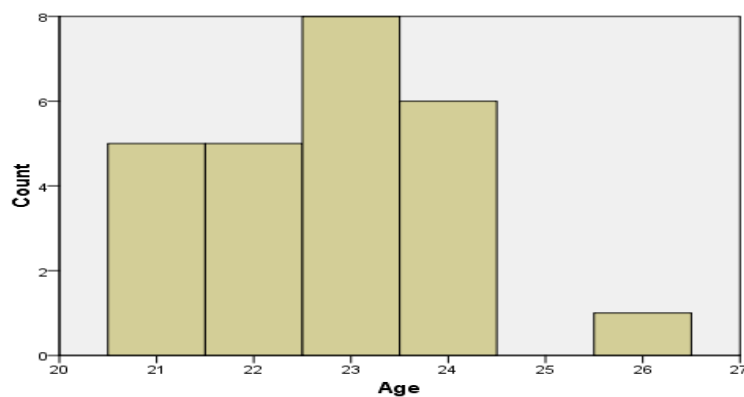
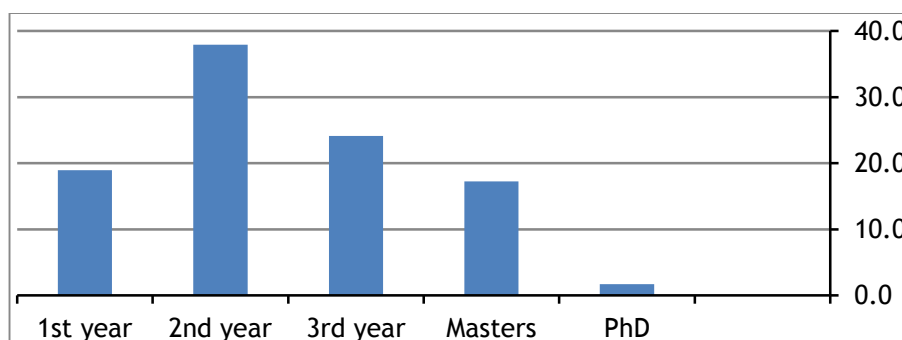


Figure 4– Sample level of study specification: Humanity, Engineering students, including NGO members.

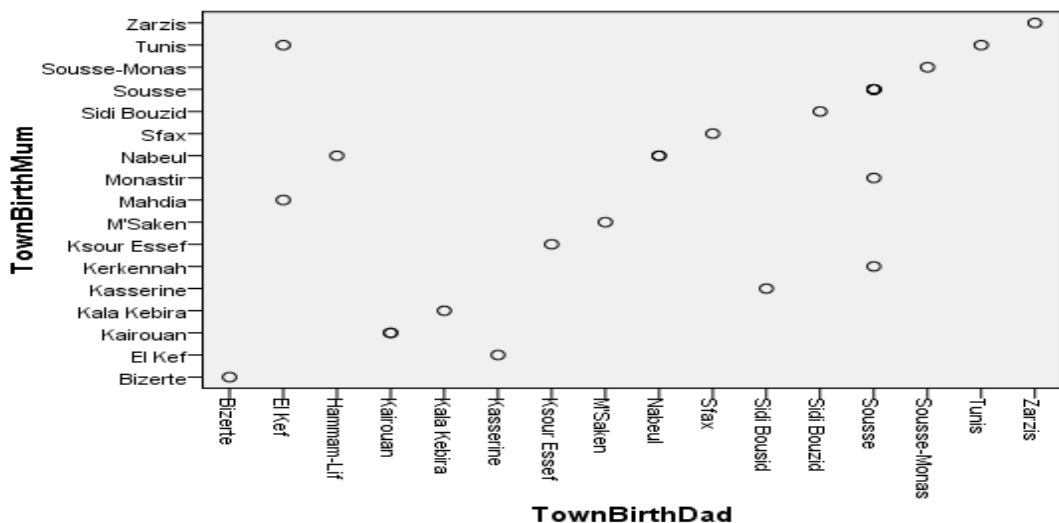


¹²⁷NGO members who volunteered to take part to the study was composed by: 5 Master students, 1 PhD student.

Gender composition of the sample was formed by 22 male (37%) and 38 female students (63%). However, female students represented 75% of total participants in the Humanities faculty. Furthermore, the predominance of female students also reflects general trends in Tunisian public universities in relation to gender ratio (see chapter 2), especially in Humanities degrees. These data reflect research’s aim to survey students still attending university with the intention to explore personal experiences in transition between the pre and post-revolution period. The opportunity to gain insights from students who have been directly witnessing a political change in the post-revolution period helped developing a comparative lens to explore universities’ role in society, social capital and civic engagement. Furthermore, individual identity can also change and readapt to post-revolutionary socio-political and on-campus transformations.

Furthermore, the information gathered from parents’ town of origin helped understanding the level of heterogeneity within the sample.

Figure 5– Parents’ town of origin.



The analysis showed that the sample was mainly representative of the centre-north part of Tunisia as both students or their parents came from 19 different cities, including from inland regions as it is shown in figure 5. For this reason, as suggested earlier, data collected benefited from a considerable richness due to underlying differences in family background, life experiences, social settings and styles of life, considered also more representative of Tunisian population at large.

To the same extent, the population sample showed that the majority of students were both born in and residents in the city where they attend university or living in a nearby town (see chapter 6). Residence can be considered an important factor in students' engagement within the local community due to higher degrees of social integration in the community and higher availability of time (differently from students commuting every day). Furthermore, some participants were born and lived in other cities and decided to move from their family hometown specifically for study reasons, confirming how these factors are also representative of a diversified set of individual circumstances, influencing individual values, motivations and attitudes.

The third population, academic professors were selected to conduct semi-structured interviews with a double objective to:

- 1- understand differences and commonalities between students and academic staff;
- 2- explore the extent to which professors perceive university social responsibility, education to democracy and civic engagement as important aspects in higher education.

The researcher initially considered selecting eight academics, four each per faculty. However, only three agreed to take part in the interviews (two from the Faculty of Engineering and one from Humanities). The final sample was then composed of:

- 29 humanity undergraduate students;
- 26 engineering undergraduate students;
- 5 students also members of an NGO;
- 3 academics from both humanity and engineering faculties.

As previously highlighted, the researcher faced difficulties in obtaining direct access to students' data from the administration referring to the whole population of students from both faculties in order to use a random sampling technique to identify participants. Furthermore, questions of time, economic resources and country socio-political situations, also impacted upon the researcher's decision to implement a convenience technique to select sample population. In particular, although this sampling strategy does not allow for a generalisation of findings due to the sample's size and the fact that it might not be representative of the studied population, it could provide interesting finding for further research or suggesting associations and considerations in relation to existing findings in the area (Bryman, 2004: 100). To the same extent, non-probability sampling reflects the decision to produce an *exploratory sample* which could still retain the aim of generating a representative sample (Denscombe, 2010: 25).

Data Analysis methods

At the end of fieldwork, in consultation with supervisors and consistently with related methodology books, statistical package for social sciences (*SPSS*) was used to conduct quantitative data analysis; while the software *NVIVO* was purposeful to qualitatively categorise and investigate open-ended questions presented in the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. At first, it was necessary to validate questionnaires depending on missing data, errors or non-readability of answers provided. All data from validated questionnaires were inserted and coded in *SPSS* and variables were regrouped into specific categories. During statistical analysis, frequencies, means, mode scores, standard deviation and the T-test technique were used. T-test was used in the analysis to explore existing differences in relation to the two faculties (Engineering and Humanities), reflecting participants' different family background. These were considered important in exploring the extent to which students from two different faculties and family backgrounds, develop identity, attitudes and skills for social responsibility and civic engagement. In fact, three different T-tests were run in relation to participants' answers on three themes: Islamic values, Tunisian universities socio-economic third mission and personal identity (see Appendix VI, tables 20, 21, 22). In particular, simple 'descriptive' statistics can offer straightforward yet rigorous tools to (Denscombe, 2010: 241):

- organise data;
- summarise findings;
- display evidence;
- describe distribution;

- explore data correlation and association.

In relation to type and depth of data analysis, it was considered important for further research to use more advanced SPSS data analysis to include variance, correlation and regression analysis to provide a more comprehensive and more complex explanatory and multi-dimensional factors analysis.

To the same extent, interviews and open-ended questions from questionnaires were transcribed and then translated from French or, in one case some sentences from Arabic to English. One interview was also conducted fully in English, as proposed by the interviewee. Interviews were transcribed and translated from French to English by the researcher with specific attention to students' accounts, focusing on contextual meaning and wording used by students. The analytical use of software NVIVO allowed the researcher to organise data in categories and sub-units, to code data, to classify and interlink contents and construct memos, in order to develop a conceptual framework of analysis. In particular, three main analytic codes were identified relevant to address the research questions: Islam, social responsibility, democracy and students role, extracted from participants' definitions, insights, references and reflexive conclusions (see Appendix VII). Furthermore, the analysis was conducted in order to identify themes, to highlight similarities and connections, as well as, to consider existing relationships. Text search query and word frequency helped defining the analytic framework to identify inductive coding from the data-set. In this sense, codes were used for the interpretation of data-set, allowing connections with SPSS analysis and the themes that emerged from the literature review. In this sense, the analysis of findings in chapters 5 and 6 identified major themes and sub-themes, regrouped and

presented to provide a richer understanding of the research topic. In particular, extracts from transcripts were used in the form of quotes exploring the relationships amongst Islam, social responsibility, democracy and civic engagement.

In this sense, words can be analysed as background assumptions (what they imply or presume) or to underlie social structures or interactions (how they produce or construct things) (Denscombe, 2010: 279). For this, interviews offered a valuable tool to connect quantitative data with more context-based evidences and assumptions constructed by participants from direct experiences to provide a better understanding of individual-subjective elements in relation to structural-objective determinants.

Qualitative and quantitative data were regrouped in common themes according to their cross-relevance where, most often, qualitative analysis and narratives were used to reinforce or enrich findings from quantitative ones. In particular, qualitative data have largely contributed to provide critical information regarding students' identity development; associational life; university third missions and university-community partnerships; as well as, socio-cultural and political contexts. In this sense, both methods are considered complementary in providing relevant information and cross-reference data in order to identify within specific research context, elements acting as enablers or barriers in the development of individual and university social responsibility and existing frames of agency.

Research Ethics

In relation to study design and fieldwork data collection, the following research ethical aspects were taken into consideration. For this, particular attention was devoted

to safeguard both researcher and participants' safety and security both physical and emotional while undertaking the research due to the unstable social and political context of post-revolution Tunisia. In fact, accounts and insights linked to sensitive issues and personal experiences linked to Ben Ali regime and/or post-revolutionary events, could have emerged during fieldwork. As Elliot (2005:134) clarifies, ethical issues depend on the specific settings of conducted research:

“[...] ethical is used to describe those issues that relate to the relationship between the researcher and the research subjects or participants, and the impact the research process on those individuals directly involved in the research, while the term 'political' is used to describe the broader implications of research in terms of the impact it may have on society or on the specific subgroup within society”.

In this sense, the researcher firstly obtained the ethical approval from the University of Nottingham Ethics Committee of the School of Education. The research ethics proposal, consisting of a *Statement of Research Ethics* form with a brief introduction and description about research aims and access to research participants; as well as, the information sheet and consent form for participants, were submitted and approved (see Appendix II - Confirmation and Consent Form).

On the other hand, while submitting questionnaires, the following aspects were taken into consideration and delivered to participants in order to clearly understand the nature, aims, contents and objectives of the study, :

- a brief introduction of the researcher (in Arabic);
- an explanation of the study (in French);
- an explanation of participants' right of refusal to take part and the right to withdraw at any time without any consequence (in French);

- an explanation of the nature of confidentiality and anonymity related to participation (in French);
- a Q&A session to clarify doubts or possible worries manifested by participants;
- the questionnaire submission to participant (in French);
- an informed consent form to be signed and returned (in Arabic);
- the collection of questionnaire on the same day just after completion;
- the arrangement of interviews with students and academic staff thereafter.

These steps were carefully taken in order to guarantee *informed consent* was clearly presented, involving participants' permission, awareness of research purpose and implications of taking part; *confidentiality* issues were also discussed, allowing participants to talk with confidence, including the refusal to publish the material; finally, implications of *anonymity* were also approached, offering participants a degree of privacy or avoiding any harm from disclosing participants' identity (Piper & Simons, 2011: 26). To the same extent, personal viewpoints, cultural and religious values were all treated with additional attention in order to safeguard participants, while caring for participants' thoughts and feelings without interfering.

From the other side, as highlighted in relation to fieldwork access, the presence of a hierarchical, bureaucratic and top-down system to access the fieldwork, also reflected embedded cultural habits based on control, authority and formal procedures to give power to different people/gatekeepers within the same hierarchical structure. In particular, it consisted of several levels of negotiations and renegotiations of access

to participants from Rectorate's secretary, to Dean of Faculty and finally to professors and students, which it has implied the undertaking of complex and delicate tasks in an environment new to the researcher. In particular, access was negotiated within a pre-established framework of power-relations, often exposing the researcher to secure access with political and personal interests involved within the university without jeopardising research integrity. From an ethical point of view, the Dean's approval to conduct the research raised prospective issues of conflict of interests in relation to research objectives. To the same extent, faculty cultural and administrative context could have potentially restricted access or, as highlighted earlier on, initially biased access with an impact on study fieldwork.

Summary

This chapter has presented the methodological approach and methods used in conducting fieldwork data collection in one public university in Tunisia in relation to the three interrelated themes: social responsibility, social capital and democracy. The present research is believed to have offered data collection and analysis from an accurate and significant sample of the population to meet research objectives and findings' investigation to provide an explorative approach to under-researched topics, satisfying study field access, participants' availability and the willingness to participate in the study. Research's population and sample have been also presented identifying study participants in relation to research setting and related implications. Data collection instruments and analysis are also explored in relation to methods' relevance to study aims: semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, diary notes and

documents. In the next chapter, data analysis and findings are discussed to further explore themes emerged from the literature review, highlighting an interconnected theoretical and conceptual framework.

CHAPTER 5 – Islam: Politics and Identity in Public University

Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between Islam, social responsibility, social capital and democracy. Religion conveys values, social habits and a collective sense of belonging through inter-personal relationships, influencing personal motivations, behaviour and attitudes. In post-revolution Tunisia, Islamic-oriented political parties and associations have exerted a prominent public role, including in universities. In the context of public universities, it is relevant to understand existing dynamics and implications on the role of Islamic values and Islamic political parties or associations in relation to social capital and social responsibility in the present democratic transition process. The role of Islam in society, the impact on students' identity and attitudes relevant to social responsibility, civic and political engagement, are further explored. It aims at exploring the extent to which religious and non-religious value-systems are functional to identity building for social responsibility. Furthermore, it investigates Islam's contribution to academic social capital and students' democratic attitudes and civic engagement.

Islam and Democracy in Modern Society

Islam since the 7th century A.D. has been the main driver of moral, social and cultural development rooted in and interconnected to local political contexts. In

Tunisia, however, during the French protectorate and thereafter the 1956 independence, Islam, despite being the state religion under constitutional law, has been increasingly confined to the private sphere. The central government adopted strategies of repression and control over mosque management and public activities. Islam was either perceived as a threat to the *status quo* or by modernists - the secular elite - as a brake to modernity, leading to a contentious cohabitation of a widely religious society within a secular state. The *Jasmine revolution*, in particular, took place despite the Ben Ali regime's long-lasting support from Western powers, well-performing national economy and internal social stability (see chapter 2). The popular out-cry against socio-political authoritarianism and economic inequalities advocated for democracy, freedoms, human dignity and social justice. At first, the revolutionary movements did not see Islamic parties or associations playing any distinctive role. However, Ben Ali's escape led, from one side, to a political *balkanisation process* with the foundation of over one hundred political parties; and, from the other, to the legitimisation of previously outlawed religious-based parties.

In this new scenario, the emergence of Islam as a renewed political narrative has characterised Tunisian post-revolution's political and cultural democratisation process. To further explore it, students then were asked "*what democracy is*"¹²⁸ to understand how revolutionary aspirations for a more democratic and inclusive society in defence of human rights and social justice, have influenced religious tolerance and social cohesion. Participants' answers¹²⁹ mainly showed that democracy was associated with: freedoms, citizens' rights, rule of law, respect, dignity, tolerance or power to people. However, a contextual analysis revealed three distinctive students'

¹²⁸ From questionnaires' open question section, including answers from not validated questionnaires.

¹²⁹ Coded and analysed using Nvivo software.

profiles¹³⁰. The first one was identified as **positivist/idealist**. This group conceived democracy in more theoretical and abstract terms, showing overall trust and adherence to the democratic project and related value-system. The majority¹³¹ of students, in fact, seem to have a clear understanding of modern democratic principles linked to the centrality of human rights, political duties and fundamental freedoms. For instance, one student and member of the NGO, commented:

I do not have an exact definition of democracy but it is the fact of building a nation-state where all citizens can live together, free, in solidarity, mutual respect while respecting the laws organising the state itself. Democracy is to properly acknowledge rights and duties (AS4, from survey Part A).

Democracy is a recurrent concept to some extent embedded in students' identity and consciousness. As such, it represents a model of reference when it comes to political participation, citizenship and national sense of belonging. It also involves a shared culture and collective awareness to build and preserve it. Another student, in fact, expressed:

Democracy means freedom limited by the rule of law and others' rights. Democracy is free thinking without harming others. Democracy is vital rights and it needs to be protected and also properly understood. Democracy needs to be linked to awareness (S7, from survey Part A).

¹³⁰ The three profiles (positivist/idealist; negativist/idealist; realist/pioneering) emerged from the analysis of the questionnaire open-ended questions, Part A (see Chapter 4, p. 132 and Appendix V, p. 366). In particular, they can be considered as 'data-driven' rather than 'theory-driven', as a result of an inductive analysis of codes using Nvivo software, deriving from participants' answers. As such, they reflect the research context in relation to specific historical events and political factors but also participants' economic, cultural and social circumstances.

¹³¹ In regards to eighty seven answers analysed, seventy two per cent (63 answers) have a reference to the modern-Western set of principles.

The second group was identified as **negativist/idealist**¹³². In particular, democracy is considered with scepticism towards political institutions, highlighting a sense of powerlessness, disillusionment and mistrust. Lower trust in government and public institutions in the Arab region is associated with restricted civil and political freedoms in autocratic regime (see chapter 2 and 3). This consciousness seems to endure also during the post-revolution period, as revolution's demands and aspirations remained unfulfilled reflecting youth's low political and civic participation. A student clearly expressed:

[Democracy is] a political system which, theoretically, has to ensure the rights of each citizens, but, actually, it is a system through which the government acts freely without worrying about rights and freedoms of everyone (E 22, from survey Part A).

The contrast between *real vs. theoretical* democracy as a frame of understanding points out a sense of disappointment and opposition towards governmental reforms and policies. Furthermore, opposition to democracy was also associated to post-colonial interference with the development of spontaneous democratic movements in Tunisia. As reported in the extracts below, a sense of frustration emerged:

[Democracy] is violence of great countries like US. It is intolerance, racism hidden behind the word democracy (S20, from survey PART A);

[...] democracy, for me, is the way that developed countries use to manipulate the Arab nations. This term has lost its meaning when those countries use to control the world system (E4, from survey PART A).

¹³² This group was composed of 18 respondents equal to around twenty one per cent of total participants.

Finally, the third one regroups the **realist/pioneering**. This group¹³³ replaces the sense of detachment from reality of the first group and the disillusionment of the second one, with new concepts of personal awareness and commitment to redefine government-citizens relations. In particular, there is a tendency to re-frame the idea of citizenship, civic participation and political representation. Furthermore, freedom of expression supports higher degree of shared responsibility after the revolution. A student, in fact, commented:

Democracy for us Tunisians is still new generally speaking. I see it means inclusion of people with their point of view in all areas: political, economic and administrative (E14, from survey Part A).

Students seem then to be aware of what democracy entails and existing implications on reforming government-citizens relationships. In this sense, as expressed by another student:

Democracy needs to guarantee human rights, human dignity and social participation (S29, from survey Part A).

The post-revolution scenario, in fact, has favoured wider opportunities for political participation, despite growing constraints to social cohesion and civic engagement. A critical approach and awareness to democracy confirms how acknowledging limits of present democratic processes in Tunisia are crucial to re-evaluate the centrality of social participation. In fact, a student also highlighted:

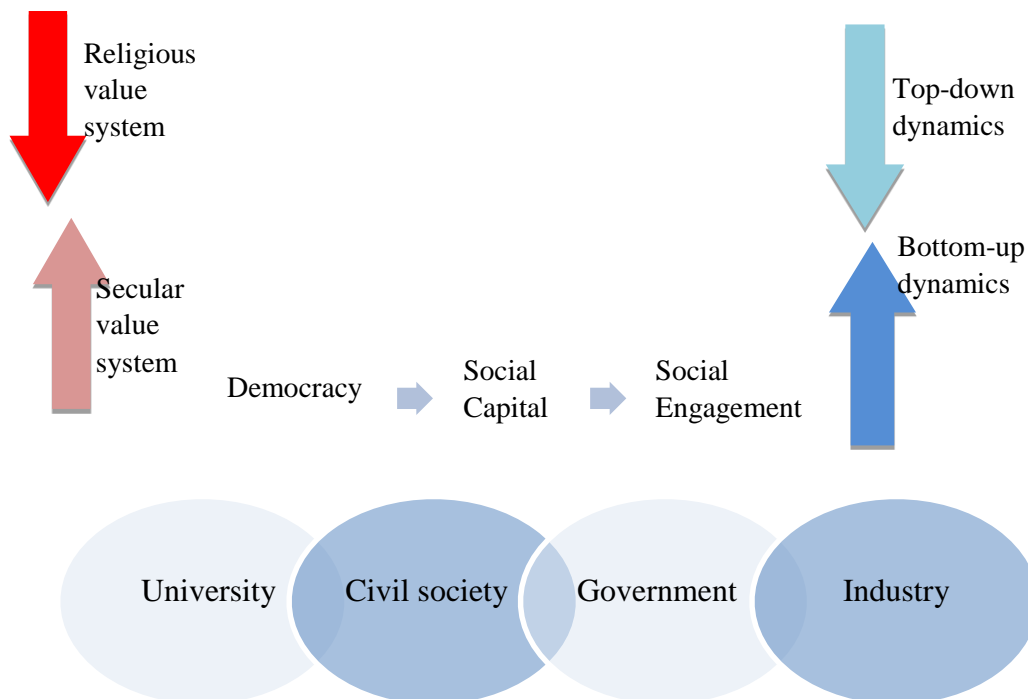
To be democrat is to be open and to position between religion and the state (S56, from survey Part A).

¹³³ This group was composed of 6 respondents equal to around seven per cent of total participants.

Personal and collective participatory experience increased awareness to citizenship and pro-active forms of social actions. On the other hand, students' awareness of deepened political cleavages along secular-religious lines confirms growing concerns for democratic dialogue and social fragmentation.

In these terms, findings seem to confirm how democracy is a contentious key concept, potentially supportive of social capital creation and civic engagement. In Tunisia, a neo-liberal representative political system, as a by-product of modern Western civilisation, was gradually adapted in the national context. In fact, as findings suggest, it implied the interaction with alternative narratives, defining value systems and people's attitudes along the *adherence vs. rejection* democratic continuum¹³⁴.

Figure 6– Western Democracies' Integrative Linear Model.

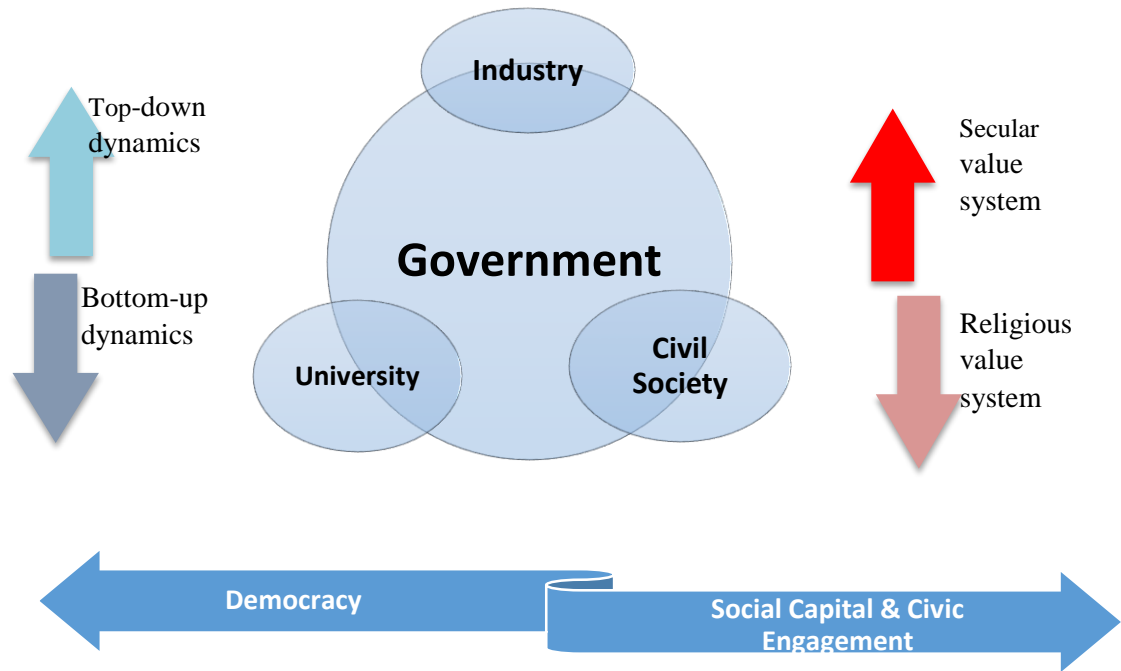


¹³⁴ For example, Socialism, Communism or religious-based theocracy represent alternative and often clashing narratives exploring the cohabitation of ideological power struggles, enriching and challenging democracy, but also essential to the definition and development of modern nation-states.

As the designed figure 6 shows, in *advanced democracies* - often associated with Western countries - political, social and human rights are guaranteed and protected by law. For this reason, democratic systems are more likely to foster political participatory attitudes (i.e. elections, public debates, political membership, etc.) and active civic engagement (i.e. volunteering, associational membership, religious worship, etc.). Consensus is reached via dialogue and compromise amongst a plurality of actors: government, universities, civil society and the industrial sector. Government top-down decision-making is also supportive and integrative of private bottom-up initiatives. Secular vs. religious values systems are not overtly conflicting but rather accommodating, reaching inclusive agreements of mutual consensus, respect and cooperation. In these settings, democratic practices foster open socio-political environments where, more often, social engagement is functional to social capital creation and collective community well-being within a framework of rule of law functional to civic and political freedoms (pp.100-102).

However, in *semi-democratic* political systems, like Tunisia – often non-Western countries associated with dictatorial or semi-dictatorial regimes - political, social and human rights tend to be either restricted or infringed, affecting civil liberties, trust in political and judiciary institutions and democratic practices of citizenship. Democratic participation, social capital for social responsibility and civic engagement are not self-reinforcing and might actually reinforce social inequalities, low political participation, social trust and non-democratic practices such as corruption and clientelism to pursue individual interests. Central governments tend to control national economy, the industrial sector, civil society organisations and public institutions via a coercive system.

Figure 7– Authoritarian Semi-democratic Non- Integrative Model.



As such, the top-down authoritative decision-making is oppositional to bottom-up private initiatives, restricting social and economic activities. Furthermore, socio-political tensions existing between secular and religious value-systems adversely impact democracy, as existing channels of communications often foster environments where social capital or civic engagement is voided or corrupted.

In relation to the research context, the revolutionary movements in Tunisia have initially favoured a democratic change considered relevant for a gradual shift from a pre-revolution non-integrative system to the implementation of a more linear and democratic integrative one. However, this political and social normalisation process is still rather fragile. In fact, the moderate Islamic party Ennahda led the 2011-2014 transitional government political coalition in a context of rising political and public confrontations with radical Islamists, challenging freedom of expression,

political stability and public security (p. 66, 67). In this period, society witnessed an unprecedented flourishing of religious-based activities. Faith-based political parties regained legitimacy, while social, educational and economic activities thrived, including the re-establishment of vibrant mosques' activities; the foundation of Quranic schools; public sit-in and demonstration; new Islamic retail shops; as well as, violent clashes with national police, culminating in the recent terroristic attacks. As a result, new windows for social engagement, public voice and political activism introduced parallel and often conflicting narratives.

In this sense, revolutionary demands for democracy, equality, dignity and employments were reconsidered within a new framework based on discourses of *private vs. public* Islam in a shift from a secular to a more *religious dominated* public sphere. In particular, a student observed:

[...] regarding the religious political party, it is important to understand its roots, since during the Ben Ali (regime), they were really oppressed so it was a kind of revolting against it and feel free to show themselves, like being on TV, etc. I think the main problem happening now, is that people are either for the religious party or completely against it. We are moderate! There are already many clichés on each side, they do not make effort to understand (Interview F1, E).

If the end of religious repression allowed for the reintegration of marginalised groups in society as a result of a democratic process, the anticipation of an “endangered public and political sphere” has fostered a sense of social mistrust or cultural threat (as the new approved 2015 anti-terrorism law might suggest).

The post-revolution political vacuum and cultural shift presented a question related to what extent “good politics” need religion and to what degree Islam needs to play a political role. The awareness of conflicting interests behind the new Islamic

rhetoric also suggests a lack of political transparency and generalised trust. For this, a student and member of the NGO, commented:

[...] religion first of all, is not something new to Tunisian society [...] the problem is the new perspective that is used now. If religion interferes with politics, this is like making a fiasco and making a mess [...] interests are mixed together, people are honestly not trusting anymore politicians who are covering their political interests with religion. Politics is politics and religion is religion because religion, it was not invented by a political party [...] people have to understand it and to make the difference between what is political and what is religious (Interview F1, N).

If Islam holds spiritual, ethical, cultural and social foundations, the participation of Islamic political parties in the transitional government did not translate into political unity or social pacification. On the contrary, their public image turned to discredit its role in society in terms of authority, integrity and trustworthiness. Furthermore, the political conflicts between moderate and radical wings, ranging from religious ultra-conservatives to anarchical leftist, have further hindered political dialogue and social cohesion with a detrimental effect on the democratic transition. In particular, one student expressed a rather radical position with reference to the post-revolution situation by defining democracy as:

[...] the effort to build a nation and kick out all the betrayers as Ennahda now and the religion fascist and work to build a healthy national economy and kick out foreign investments (S35: BC, from survey Part A).

The public and social use of Islam has increased open confrontations, social resentment and disillusionment affecting both the understanding of Islam and its role

in politics¹³⁵. In this sense, the implementation of political reforms for a new social agenda is a central aspect to advance a new political framework, integrating all parts of society beyond present conflicting tensions. In this perspective, religious discourses, as advocated by either moderate or radical Islamic political parties, have been nurturing emergent socio-political and cultural cleavages. In this sense, a student described this substantial change:

[...] conflicts have started since the religious political party in power is trying to create parallel institutions to the existing ones: left and Islamist student union; and also at judiciary level began a conflict. I think this will aim at great disputes and rupture in the following years [...] they created two parallel institutions of representation, really negative to society and social cohesion. It is not leading to dialogue but complexities and disputes (Interview F2, N).

Post-revolution power struggles increased between religious moderate, secular and leftist political parties to form a national coalition government (p. 65, 66, 68), resulting in extremist Salafi groups becoming politically relevant and socially unchallenged, especially amongst the youth. As exposed by a student:

The problem is nor Islam or religion but the radical Islamist who are using religion for other projects and personal needs. This is the problem (Interview F1, H).

In this sense, students seem to acknowledge existing complex relationships between democracy, Islam, society and politics. The democratic project supported by the Islamic moderate political is currently under the threat of radical Islamist minorities, as the *secular vs. religious* divide might also unsettle democratic dialogue.

¹³⁵ This process seems to suggest a different path from post-World War II European experience of Catholic political parties in Italy or Germany, supported by US against the menace of Communist rule during the Cold-War era.

The growing awareness and distress regarding religious influence on national politics is expressed by a sceptical group of students, confirming further disaffection of youths to democracy, calling into question their engagement in the democratic process. The presence of a forward-thinking minority shows, instead, how the revolution has gradually offered new windows for democratic expression and social participation. The combination of both regime authoritative rule and post-revolution political conflicts are key determinants, explaining low trust in political institutions and the under-utilisation of political and civic participation.

In particular, the 2014 national parliamentary and presidential election won by the secular party Nidaa Tounes, highlighted socio-political and economic weaknesses expressed by the moderate Islamist party Ennahda. The unaccomplished democratic agenda might also intensify the alarming global Jihadi movements towards ISIL territories in Syria and Iraq¹³⁶ or national terrorism. In this framework, universities emerge as key actors calling for a more integrative role in developing socio-political dialogue, engaging students via courses and community projects on democracy and civic engagement to address student's role and commitment to democracy. Furthermore, social disengagement and cultural mistrust towards political institutions and Islamist parties also need to be assessed in order to build preconditions to foster academic social capital for social responsibility. In particular, crucial questions, still unresolved, are: what role then should Islam play in Tunisia? What role does Islam play in defining students' identity, social responsibility and civic engagement patterns?

¹³⁶ Tunisia is the country where more Jihadists moved to join the civil war in Syria and Iraq (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-29043331> - 08/11/2014).

Islam and Identity

Religion can often play a significant role in identity formation, individual behaviour and personal socio-cultural and political worldview. Historically, religious beliefs, values and social practices have often fostered a shared sense of belonging, social awareness and commitment to society (p. 68-69). In particular, for research purposes, Islam was analysed in terms of its:

1. impact on students' **personal trust**;
2. influence on students' **decision making**;
3. provision of an ethical and moral **value system**;

In particular, values embedded within family, education or religious institutions form an inclusive and complex system influencing individual identities and life choices. In Tunisia, in particular, Islam frames the development of everyday life occurrences (i.e. daily call to prayer; Fridays' community-wide prayers; Ramadan as fasting month, etc.); it conveys social and cultural symbols (i.e. wearing scarfs; holding a prayer necklace, known as *mesbhe* or wearing typical Arabic tunics); it determines daily and colloquial verbal expression (i.e. *Inshallah*, referring to God's will or God grace) and it also defines social habits and national celebrations (i.e. visiting relatives during Islamic holidays - i.e. *Aid El-Addha*, *Aid El-Fitr*). In modern societies, Islam still plays a central role, identified with family background, personal religiosity and degree of identification.

In particular, interpersonal relationships are also determined by discourses of identity and religion. As such, a student highlighted:

[...] I grew up in a simple family. They pray but they are not wearing the veil. I am praying, I am respecting all pillars of Islam but I am not putting the veil [...] I am feeling free with my religion, seeing it with my own perception [...] and maybe some of these are becoming like habits, something inborn in me that is growing with me. For example, I learned how to be tolerant, how to help others influencing my relationship with others (Interview F1, N).

Islamic culture and Islamic values form the foundational framework shaping personal consciousness and social relationships based on shared common beliefs. Islam can determine structural, relational and cognitive social capital which are central to identity building and social behaviours. In this sense, it can also represent a lens to filter, evaluate and analyse the complexity of reality and our perception of it. In particular, a student considered:

[...] religion I think is universal and gathers all human values. Even in all human right declarations, dignity and freedoms are all in the Qur'an, in our religion but *You* [...] the foreign people, they have a false idea of our religion, about the Muslim with beards [...] they are a minority, they do not express religion because Islam is universal. I think that any constitution has the values of our religion (Interview F2, H).

In this reference, the tripartite identification of *us* (i.e. being a moderate Muslim), with *you* (i.e. the other non-Muslims as foreigners/Westerners), and the *other us* (i.e. religious extremists, identified with beards different from moderate Muslims), designates post-revolution awareness of identity cleavages and religious anxieties.

Post-revolution divisions might evolve around an often conflicting understanding and socio-cultural labelling of Islam from:

1. a personal point of view (individual/subjective Islam);
2. a Western point of view (external/the non-Muslim stands);
3. a radical point of view *vs.* universal Islam (the other Islam, Salafi).

These three different but interrelated sources of interpretation are a thread explaining coexisting narratives related to identity building. The simultaneous co-habitation in the public sphere, is also dictating social engagement and the formation of political discourses in Tunisia. In fact, this complex individual/collective value system within which Islam operates, also implies the presence of a subaltern and alternative Western value-system.

From a subjective point of view, personal life experiences define the level of adherence or rejection to a pre-determined set of values, often linked to trust, sense of belonging and trustworthiness. As shown in table 6, over 90 per cent of respondents confirmed that family represents the most trusted group in society. Families are central to support students' personal decision-making, ethics, education and identity building. Furthermore, families' socio-cultural and economic background can often affect:

- *traditional vs. modern* transitional processes;
- social attitudes and engagement;
- religious beliefs, value systems and practices;
- level of trust in public institutions.

Table 6 - Most trusted group in a situation of difficulty¹³⁷.

		All Sample	N	Engineering	Humanity
Most trusted group	Family	94,4%	51	96,2%	96,4%
	Friends	3,7%	2	3,8%	3,6%
2 nd trusted group	Friends	62,5%	30	73,3%	50%
	Mosque/Religious associations	27,1%	13	26,7%	21,4%
	Government/Associations	4,2%	2	0,00%	7,1%
3 rd trusted group	Associations	46,8%	22	40%	32,1%
	Friends	25,5%	12	20%	25%
	Mosque/Religious associations	17%	8	13,3%	21,4%
	Government	10,6%	5	26,7%	3,6%

Friends, on the other hand, with over 60 per cent of preferences, were identified as the second most important group and as the most important group across the whole dataset. For this, friendship is key to social capital formation, social responsibility and civic engagement. Students experience patterns of socialisation at university, as friends can produce emotional and social bonds developing trust and counter-balancing family influence on identity formation. Friends often become the new reference for personal needs in both academic and private life.

¹³⁷ Five categories: family, friends, associations, government and mosque/religious associations (see Appendix V on research questionnaire (English version). Data values refer to valid percentage only (excluding missing entries).

Furthermore, around half of participants rated associations as the third most important group, suggesting civil associations might play an important role in developing trust, civic engagement and democratic participation in post-revolution Tunisia. On the other hand, religious associations/mosques were rated second as the second most important group with 27% of preferences, confirming a less relevant contribution to social life¹³⁸, providing not only spiritual reference but also collective trustworthiness and social trust¹³⁹. On the other hand, the low level of trust in government institutions, rated also around 27% as third most important group but only by engineering students¹⁴⁰, suggests a significant trend in post-revolution Tunisia, as government institutions face the crucial task to rebuild democracy, citizens' trust and political participation.

Identity formation is also connected to influential factors, shaping individual opinion-making. Findings¹⁴¹, as shown in table 8, confirm how family is once more the most influential actor, followed by the internet and to a lesser extent, friends and religious associations. In Tunisia, this might suggest the development of a family-centred and less individualistic type of society. Students might consider families the most trusted and influential group economically, emotionally and culturally, potentially undermining other forms of socialisation. Social media, as expected, are increasingly the predominant means of engagement for younger generations, influencing students' opinion-making and contributing to *virtual-to-real* social capital generation. The internet, in fact, favours access to a broader, multiple and more

¹³⁸ However, engineering high score of mosque/religious associations trust seem to be contradicting previous findings in which, mainly humanities students rated participation to religious associations relatively high, if compared to engineering, as most important group of belonging (see chapter 6).

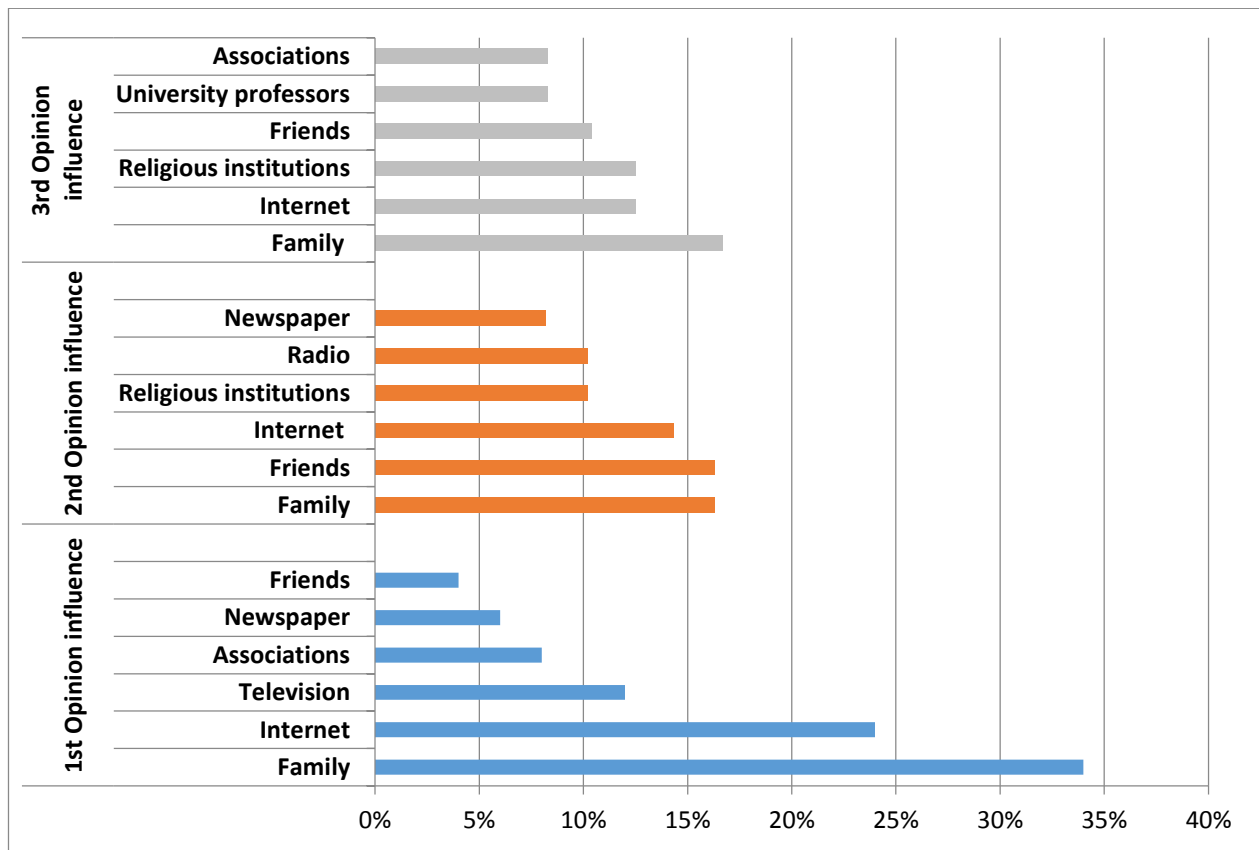
¹³⁹ Often acting as alternative economic relief to families in need, equivalent to historical role of the Church in Western countries.

¹⁴⁰ Nonetheless, engineering students seemed to be less politically engaged (see chapter 6).

¹⁴¹ Most influential factors from a list of 13 items (see Appendix V on research questionnaire - English translated version).

complex source of information. Students might access the internet for personal interest, hobby or curiosity opening new spaces of communication, entertainment and creativity, such as: music, national/international news, history, university materials, religious-related contents and social media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Figure 8– What influence your opinion the most?



On the other hand, newspaper reading, radio and television are rated rather low. In non-democratic settings, often media tend to be censored, biased and controlled by the government, mirroring a lower level of generalised trust and marginal exposure to traditional media. Furthermore, government institutions, once more, are almost absent

across data¹⁴². University professors, despite their significant role in students' formation, have an overall score of only 8 per cent, confirming low density of student-professor's social capital ties and lower trust within a conflicting framework (confirming findings in chapter 6). Finally, both religious institutions, (alternatively 19 in engineering and 14.3 per cent in humanities students), and to less extent associations are rated comparatively low, highlighting how religious values/beliefs and social engagement culture, have a minimal influence on students' opinion-making. In a micro-level context, this can be possibly linked to students' daily life and family culture (p. 85, 105, 116, 168); and, at a macro-structural level, to the marginal role played by associations in Tunisian society, as public life was mainly controlled by the State (pp. 108-111).

To the same extent, students were also asked to rate the extent to which they identify themselves with Islamic values. In fact, despite lower level of trust towards religious institutions and their influence to students' opinion-making, levels of religiosity are considered in relation to religious observance and adherence to Islamic values. As table 7 shows, students generally identify with the Islamic foundational pillars¹⁴³ to a medium-to-high degree with no scores over 80% of compliance to the foundational tenets, despite officially 98% of Tunisian are Muslims. For instance, *Zakat* (compulsory giving) is rated only by half of participants. However, since *Zakat* is also the most significant indicator characterising Islamic social capital, low identification with charity, as individual contribution to community poverty and social

¹⁴²Humanity students scored high in political party and student union engagement - most likely, confirming low level of government trust and transparency – in relation to students' political activism often in opposition to autocratic regime (See chapter 5).

¹⁴³ To the same extent, an overall score of 77,4% identification with *Qur'an* (the Holy book). *Shahada* (Islamic creed vow) scored 79% and *Sauf* (fasting) an overall 70% (humanities students scoring as low as 65%); while *Salat* (prayer, 5 times a day), 68% of preferences. However, *Hajj* (holy pilgrimage to Mecca) was rated as low as around 30%, probably reflecting respondents' age and life plans.

inequalities' alleviation, might indicate a non-linear correlation between social engagement and Islamic values.

Table 7 - Which of the following notions do you identify yourself with¹⁴⁴?

	All Sample		Engineering		Humanity	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Shahada (Islamic creed vow)	79,2%	20,8%	79,2%	20,8%	79,3%	20,7%
Sauf (fasting)	71,7%	28,3%	79,2%	20,8%	65,5%	34,5%
Salat (prayer)	67,9%	32,1%	66,7%	33,3%	69%	31%
Zakat (religious giving)	50,9%	49,1%	50%	50%	51,7%	48,3%
Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca)	30,2%	69,8%	29,2%	70,8%	31%	69%
Adal (justice)	56,6%	43,4%	66,7%	33,3%	48,3%	51,7%
Sadaqa (community social contribution)	56,6%	43,4%	66,7%	70,8%	48,3%	51,7%
Maslah (public good)	49,1%	50,9%	62,5%	37,5%	37,9%	62,1%
Tatawa (volunteering)	35,8%	64,2%	41,7%	58,3%	31%	69%
Romdhan (fasting month)	47,2%	52,8%	66,7%	33,3%	31%	69%
Ummah (Islamic community/brotherhood)	24,5%	75,5%	29,2%	70,8%	20,7%	79,3%
Hijab (women scarf)	22,6%	77,4%	12,5%	87,5%	31%	69%
Quran (Islamic holy book)	77,4%	22,6%	75%	25%	79,3%	20,7%
Sunna (Mohammed PBUH preaching)	41,5%	58,5%	45,8%	54,2%	37,9%	62,1%
Sharia (Islamic law)	20,8%	79,2%	25%	75%	17,2%	82,8%

¹⁴⁴Valid percentage (excluding missing entries). T-test showed no statistical significance difference amongst two populations (see Appendix VI – T-test, Table 20).

In turn, as half of the sample did not consider *Zakat* being a significant element of their identity, this might also reinforce the hypothesis that Islamic values might not be the main ethical reference for Tunisian students, fostering social responsibility and civic engagement.

Furthermore, in relation to what could be defined as “Islamic social and civic values” (social justice, public good, volunteering and community engagement)¹⁴⁵, data show an overall average score of around 50%, except for volunteering (as low as 36%). Findings show how the promotion and reproduction of Islamic values linked to civic engagement and volunteering have not been anchored in society as students do not seem to identify with relevant Islamic principles. In this sense, government control over Islamic associations restricted their social, cultural and civic activities, explaining lower influence of social Islamic values in opposition to secular/modern value-system embedded in post-independence national project. In terms of responses’ variance between the two faculties, engineering students constantly show higher levels of personal awareness and identification to Islamic civic values for civic engagement, than humanities students. This might suggest a potential divergence between religious observances, social consciousness and personal identity, as humanities students confirmed higher level of participation in mosques/religious association but lower adherence or identification to Islamic social values (p. 175).

On the other hand, findings also show low levels of socio-cultural approval of the *Hijab* (the precept of wearing a scarf for women), as only 22% of students considered it important, showing how modernisation/globalisation trends have had important impacts towards a more conservative influence of Islamic institutions.

¹⁴⁵ Closely corresponding to Western conceptualisations.

Furthermore, the majority of students also seem to reject both the archetypical notion of the *Ummah* (Islamic community/brotherhood) with only 24% of preferences; as well as, the application of *Shariaa* law (21%)¹⁴⁶, in opposition to the agenda supported by ultra-conservative groups. In this sense, students tend to adhere to a more moderate rather than radical interpretation of a politicised Islam. Islamic values, in fact, only in some measure occupy a central role in students' identity formation and as such, they cannot be directly regarded neither the sole nor the primary source of influence with significant implications for the development and promotion of civic engagement in the Tunisian context. For this, despite students' medium-to-high level of religious observance, the presence of an alternative value system (i.e. Western/secular) might suggest the development of a hybrid model, supportive of the *tradition-to-modernity* conflictual relationship (pp. 23-26, 42, 107).

In this sense, students were also asked to rate the most important values drawn from a *secular/Western* or liberal-democratic set¹⁴⁷ to further understand what might contribute to their identity formation. As table 8 shows, freedom of expression, tolerance (i.e. religious, gender, ethnic, race, etc.), human dignity and human rights constitute values which students identify the most with. In particular, the identification with freedom of expression can be understood as one of the main achievement of the revolution but also as a reaction against the regime's restrictions. On the other hand, the significance of tolerance confirms the awareness of existing socio-political and religious tensions affecting public safety and social dialogue.

¹⁴⁶ On the other hand, it is important to highlight how these concepts might have different conceptualisations whether if considered more closely related to a private rather than public context.

¹⁴⁷List of 12 items in addition to the *Other* category (see Appendix V on research questionnaire - English translated version).

Table 8 – What are the most important values in your daily life?

		All Sample	Engineering	Humanity
Most Important value	Freedom of Expression	22,6%	20%	25%
	Tolerance	18,9%	20%	17,9%
	Human Rights	17%	16%	17,9%
	Human dignity	13,2%	12%	14,3%
	Nationalism	7,5%	0%	14,3%
Second most important	Human dignity	17%	8%	25%
	Tolerance	17%	20%	14,3%
	Respect	13,2%	20%	7,1%
	Equality	11,3%	8%	14,3%
	Human rights	9,4%	8%	10,7%
	Nationalism	7,5%	12%	3,6%
Third most important	Tolerance	13,5%	12%	14,8%
	Democracy	13,5%	8%	18,5%
	Equality	11,5%	8%	14,8%
	Nationalism	11,5%	4%	18,5%
	Social participation	9,6%	12%	7,4%

Furthermore, the reference to human rights and human dignity suggests how students tend to evaluate modern principles such as the rule of law, civil rights and respect for every citizen. Democracy, however, was only rated as high as 13.5 per cent as third most important value (18.5 per cent in humanities students). In the Tunisian context, this might either confirm students' passive adaptation to the ideals of democracy or *de*

facto expressing frustration and detachment as part of the pre-revolution regime legacy.

Nationalism and political rights do not seem to represent key values, suggesting a direct relationship between low levels of trust in the government and political participation. To the same extent, freedom of association and social participation are not scored high, suggesting once more how civic engagement and social activism are not so prominent to students' identity, reflecting overall low levels of a shared social responsibility culture (see chapter 6). In particular, regime police control over associations has long restricted basic rights including social manifestation (i.e. labour strikes), confirming the presence of disincentives and constrains to social participation, fostering civic engagement under-development.

In this framework, the Western value-system seems to address students' concerns related to individual political, civic and social rights in line with the model of modern citizenship. On the other hand, Islamic values seem instead to foster personal identification with ethical and spiritual aspects. Furthermore, Western values also focus on the individual personal choice to respect rights and duties to the nation in reference to democratic principles. Islamic values, instead, might consider believers' relation to God with a less tangible relevance to social commitment in modern Tunisia. Overall, however, both value-systems are coexistent and potentially complementary in supporting social responsibility, cooperation, trust, tolerance, equality and social justice. As such, the socially and politically constructed and conflicting interplay between Islamic and secular socio-political value-systems might have favoured the under-utilisation of Islamic social capital; as restricted opportunities to civic engagement within a predominantly secular agenda, have also limited Islamic

associations to further contribute to the development of a shared framework for social responsibility.

The next section further explores the role of Islam in the university context in order to explore existing connections with academic social capital and social responsibility development.

Islam in University Context

Universities are, like any other institutions, based on complex decision-making and power struggle dynamics. In Tunisia, politics has long played a crucial role in higher education. From Bourguiba to Ben Ali, universities were founded to be secular institutions, inspired by the French model and framed within the separation between a *private vs. public* role of Islam (pp. 35-40, 58)¹⁴⁸. As such, university campus life, students' welfare and curriculum development were shaped around post-independence modernisation and nationalisation ideals. In particular, the 2008 higher education reform¹⁴⁹ emphasised in Art 2, universities have the mission to:

- foster citizenship and values of modernity; to endorse national identity, its cultural enrichment and its interactions with other cultures;
- contribute to Arabic and Islamic cultural enrichment and its interactions with other cultures;

¹⁴⁸ Government policies allowed systemic use of legal or illegal pre-empting actions against religious activism going from extended exclusion to direct control or repression.

¹⁴⁹ National Law : Loi n° 2008-19 du 25 février 2008, relative à l'enseignement supérieur Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne 4 mars 2008, n° 19, pp. 845-850.

- consolidate the use of the Arabic language and other foreign languages to relate to universal progress and the development of intellectual exchanges.

In this framework, the Arabic and Islamic culture has been arguably placed at the centre of government's educational priorities. However, references to modernity, national identity, citizenship and interaction with other cultures and other languages, confirms an underlying and recurrent accommodating policy between the respect of the Islamic-Arabic tradition and the implementation of a mainstream modern-Western-secular model, structuring a bi-polar and contradictory educational system.

In public universities, Islamic culture and values are not central to contribute to the public mission or institutional ethos. However, Islam still needs to be considered in relation to campus life, students' identity and associational life. In fact, students were asked to express personal perceptions on what role Islam and Islamic culture play or should play in public universities. In this perspective, a student commented:

According to me not at all. Universities remain always scientific and not religious since we have tried to let religion enter universities but it did not work at all. There is confrontation; there is misunderstanding in university, even a war in brackets. I prefer university to be scientific and a place for studying (Interview F3, H).

Universities are here identified as scientific places where religion does not have to play any role at the institutional level. The distinct role between scientific knowledge and religion also highlights a positivistic conception of education, possibly confirming the founding secular ethos embedded in public universities. On another level, post-revolution confrontations between the police and radical Islamist groups in universities

(p. 67) have also raised concerns of co-habitation. In particular, three elements of conflicts have been identified from data analysis:

- personal security and safety;
- curriculum and teaching contents;
- the ethical role.

The anticipation of rising tensions and conflicts are perceived as detrimental to the campus environment, interpersonal trust and dialogue or cooperation amongst students, professors and administrative staff. As a student pointed out:

University, I think, if it takes a neutral stand concerning the question of religion, it can also protect all rights and it can give a level of security as the problem of *niqab*¹⁵⁰[...] I think this would be better not to be involved in religious matters (Interview F2, H).

Universities are often understood to be places of intercultural and inter-faith tolerance and mutual understanding. However, they can become political arena where individual/group's grievances are advocated and violence fuelled, affecting personal safety and campus security. In this sense, a professor, from the humanities faculty, expressed concerns on the role Islam could play in Tunisia, confirming:

No role! No matter which perspective you look at. What are they going to bring...improving education? They are *persona no grata*! Myself, personally, I would defend with my nails a *secular university* [...] No words to say in relation to university reforms, pedagogy, research...what will they do? I am astonished and I am against all scientific and technological universities turning ultra-religious, what does it mean? Why

¹⁵⁰A niqab (Arabic: نِقَاب niqāb, "veil" or "mask", also called a ruband) is a cloth which covers the face as a part of sartorial hijab (Wikipedia, accessed 24/10/2014 at 11:22).

would you like to go backward? Universities are already suffering, religion will pull them downward (Interview F4, H).

From this point of view, the opposition to ultra-conservative religious confirms an existing understanding of Islam as a barrier to education modernisation, in favour of an exclusively *secular* and foremost scientific institution. Furthermore, it calls into discussion how Islam might even affect knowledge generation, potentially compromising research, teaching, and curriculum reforms. Radicalisation of debates upon the future role of universities in Tunisia, however, cannot be restrictive in representing and evaluating society at large. In fact, their public missions and social responsibilities could be compromised in the long-term to the detriment of social dialogue and cohesiveness, limiting the positive relationship between religion, democracy and society.

In particular, after the revolution, a new student union (Ugte), affiliated to the moderate Islamic political party, was legally founded, pursuing a religious socio-political agenda inside universities. In particular, if its democratic legitimisation has been welcome as a contribution to social pacification; however, it has also compromised the cooperation with left-wing student union (Uget). In particular, dialogue, respect and mutual understanding are decisive to foster a healthy campus environment. In fact, a student, from the engineering faculty, commented:

[...] there is a parliament and they are all part of it (Uget, Ugte, all kind of students)... inside the parliament we are all students, we forget everything [...] today there is an event organised for students by the Uget generally of the left wing...but, at the same time, there is the opening of the mosque in our faculty. Do you see what I mean? Here, it is great and if we continue in such a way there will never be violence or other problems. Everyone agrees with it. The political or religious thoughts remain outside university doors. Once we are inside, our aim is to improve the faculty and students' conditions (Interview with M1, E).

Cohabitation is possible if shared objectives to address conflicts are set above differences, as tolerance and respect are set above personal differences. A common platform for communication, as represented by a student union parliament, represents a constructive strategy to foster dialogue, mutual confrontation, reciprocity and social networks amongst students. Meetings to discuss faculty and students' welfare are basic democratic practices; whereas leaving aside personal beliefs or emotional aspects, enhance trust and shared norms for mutual understanding, creating a positive environment for reconciliation.

On the other hand, however, tensions have been experienced in the humanities faculty, suggesting conflicting developments. In fact, a student responded:

I think they have no role especially at University since, for me, they are [religious based] anonymous unions, they arrived just after the revolution and this is it! It is not a question of space or not space, it is a question of working well, of enriching the University and they have clearly no role (Interview F3, H).

To the same extent, during fieldwork, the researcher approached in three different occasions, at both humanities and engineering faculties, five students who could have been identified as representative of a more conservative Islamic background¹⁵¹. On these occasions, a linguistic barrier prevented the possibility of a direct dialogue in French, as it was possible to approach them thanks to an intermediary student, translating my questions from French to Arabic. In general, they did not show interest in the survey, which limited the possibility to gather insights, personal experiences and views either by taking part in interviews or filling in questionnaires. One student¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Wearing traditional cloths and showing the symbolic long beard shape and sandals.

⁴⁸One of the five students approached, was actually wearing jeans and t-shirt, which could have been hypothetically understood as a sign of being less traditionalist.

initially accepted to fill in the questionnaire but, in the following weeks, he did not get in touch in order to return it. The attitudes perceived were different from other students who have previously shown interest in the study and, to some extent, curiosity towards the researcher as an individual. The importance of exchanging ideas, expressing and communicating personal accounts and feelings is a central element to foster dialogue, inclusion, acceptance and recognition in order to avoid the dominance of a non-inclusive and often biased attitude. In general, this specific experience has highlighted the need of understanding, evaluating and welcoming views to improve social dialogue in university contexts to sustain social capital development by removing existing barriers.

Summary

Islamic values and culture undoubtedly have an important role in Tunisia's post-revolution political, social and cultural reconfigurations, being a valuable source of individual and collective identity formation. However, findings highlighted how Islamic values linked to social responsibility and civic engagement do not form a predominant framework structuring students' identity, reflecting the development of a hybrid and conflicting role in universities and society alike. At the same time, campus environments and government policies are key elements that can either foster or hinder cohesion and social capital formation. In fact, growing tensions and safety concerns can also exacerbate secular-religious divides due to lack of trust and shared objectives or values, as well as reciprocal recognition. Students have raised concerns on the role of Islamic-affiliated student unions in the university and impacts of the moderate

religious party to meet students' educational needs, further destabilised by existing challenges from ultra-conservative religious groups.

Post-revolution Islamic influence in the political arena has raised critical concerns of freedom, tolerance and democracy's sustainability. In the university context, in fact, findings suggest how the social and political agenda supported by the Islamic student union can enter in conflict with the more secular union, fuelling a conflicting coexistence potentially deteriorating campus-life. Universities regarded as secular places for scientific knowledge generation, are also called in to acknowledge, integrate and support religious tolerance and dialogue. At present, Islam, as conveyed in political and public domains, brought to the fore transversal confrontational elements. These can potentially limit academic social capital formation and also unsettle the development of an institutional coherent framework for social responsibility and students' democratic participation.

The next chapter presents university third mission and it considers challenges and implications of social capital's formation in Tunisian public universities. Findings contributions are presented in reference to universities and students social responsibility, civic engagement and academic social capital development.

CHAPTER 6 – Universities Social Responsibility and Academic Social Capital.

Introduction

This chapter presents data findings in relation to universities and students' social responsibility. It also explores the relationship between academic social capital and civic engagement. In particular, it aims to explore the relationships between university and student social responsibility, their respective role in society and the type of social capital promoted. In the university's context, faculties develop social networks to connect to local communities, as students engage in society to develop a sense of belonging, social trust and social capital in different contexts. In particular, this chapter explores drivers and barriers in the development of university third missions in relation to:

- public universities' role in Tunisia;
- universities and students' social responsibility;
- academic social capital formation.

Academic social capital is then explored to highlight the extent to which public universities foster social capital for social responsibility. To the same extent, the chapter further considers universities' contributions to education for democratic and civic engagement as part of their third missions.

University Missions and the Social Dimension

The research focused on the relationship between social responsibility and students' civic engagement. Universities are cultural and intellectual “public spaces” open to society, hypothetically providing both professional formation to access the job market and civic engagement programs to enhance students' human and social capital. In fact, worldwide they have been increasingly responsive to society challenges, expanding institutional strategies to achieve wider economic and social impacts, often referred to as university *third mission*. In particular, the role, objectives and missions, universities endorse in society, are often deep-rooted in specific cultural, historical and socio-political contexts¹⁵³. In Tunisia, public universities are regulated by national law and the government have so far retained control over their management and governance, affecting academic freedom and autonomy. The 2008 reform¹⁵⁴ emphasised in Art. 2 and 12 that higher education *is free* and its founding missions are to:

- answer national needs of education, knowledge and skills transfer;
- reinforce graduates' employability in partnership with economic and socio-cultural surroundings;
- create, develop and organise scientific research; improve education quality, contribute to technological innovations and individual/collective creativity;

¹⁵³ Universities are shaped by complex power dynamics. Students, professors, administrative staff, rectors or even the Minister of Higher education, all contribute to define what a university is or should be.

¹⁵⁴ National Law : Loi n° 2008-19 du 25 février 2008, relative à l'enseignement supérieur Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne 4 mars 2008, n° 19, pp. 845-850.

- contribute to national development; educate students for project development and economic entrepreneurship;
- improve the use of new technologies, scientific knowledge and progress;
- offer long-life educational opportunities and encourage cultural, sport and social activities;
- foster citizenship values, the values of modernity, to endorse national identity, cultural enrichment and interactions with other cultures;
- establish international cooperation and partnerships; exchange good practices and expertise according to set priorities.

In particular, a major emphasis is placed on sustaining a technologically-led *knowledge economy*, placing HEIs at the centre of national development and economic growth. Education is intended to advance scientific and technological progress via knowledge creation and transfer, supporting students' employability and entrepreneurial skills. In this sense, Tunisian national policy seems to consider universities within a *triple-helix* model where education is a synonym of human capital, return on investment, employability based on principles of economic development and market-led internationalisation strategies (p. 77, 92). On the other hand, university social responsibility appears not accounted for, reflecting a marginal role in the government agenda. The national law only partially makes reference to: long-life learning (in line with European Bologna process); fostering *citizenship* (that is, citizenship rights but in a *pseudo-democratic* system); *cultural enrichment* (ART. 2) or *cultural, sport and social* activities (ART. 12); whereas, no explicit reference is

made to universities social responsibility in terms of civic and democratic education or the promotion of community engagement projects, suggesting a counter-trend to global developments (p. 95, 96).

In order to explore connections between governmental policies and what role universities play or *ought to play* in society, the survey explored students' opinions in relation to universities' most important missions. As table 9 shows, *free higher education* is rated the most important mission (although not the most important across the data-set)¹⁵⁵.

Table 9 – University's most important missions¹⁵⁶.

	N		Category	Tot N	All Sample	Eng.	Hum
Most important	54	1st	Free Education	22	40.7%	28.0%	51.7%
		2nd	Excellence in Teaching	11	20.4%	16.0%	24.1%
		3rd	Student Employability	4	7.4%	8.0%	6.9%
2nd most important	54	1st	Student Employability	11	20.4%	8.0%	31.8%
		2nd	Professional Internship	7	13.0%	20.0%	6.9%
		3rd	Excellence in Teaching	6	11.1%	12.0%	10.3%
			Civic & Moral Behaviour	6	11.1%	12.0%	10.3%
3rd most important	52	1st	Excellence in Teaching	9	17.3%	17.4%	17.2%
		2nd	Professional Internship	7	13.5%	13.0%	13.8%
		3rd	Civic engagement courses	6	11.5%	17.4%	6.9%
4th most Important	53	1st	Civic engagement courses	8	15.1%	4.2%	24.1%
		2nd	Excellence in Research	7	13.2%	25.0%	3.4%
		3rd	Social Inclusion	5	9.4%	4.2%	13.8%
			Excellence in Teaching	5	9.4%	4.2%	13.8%

¹⁵⁵ In Tunisia, free higher education has been a central tenet and the tacit binding social contract between government and citizens since post-independence nationalisation and modernisation process, grating social mobility in exchange of political support.

¹⁵⁶ Choices were rated from 1 to 4 in order of importance from a list of 16 items (see Appendix V on research questionnaire - English version).

However, around fifty per cent of humanities but only less than a third of engineering students consider free education as a *public good*, to be provided by the government. This difference might reflect a distinction between the two faculties. Engineering faculty considered more as *elite faculty* based on high grade admittance and often mirroring family wealthier economic background; whereas, humanities faculty having a lower status, reflecting lower school grade entry requirement and families with less favourable economic situation or social position.

On the other hand, teaching quality/excellence was rated as the second most important mission and also aggregate most important mission across all preferences. Humanities students, however, scored it higher than engineering, suggesting possibly a higher degree of disappointment or unmet expectations towards teaching quality in their faculty. In fact, teaching can be either related to pedagogies used, course content and delivery, exam assessment methods; but also, in a wider sense, to student-professor relationships; students' learning experience including university facilities (i.e. library, computer and internet rooms); teaching materials; ICT and free Wi-Fi connection (field observations confirmed free Wi-Fi only at engineering faculty). In fact, a student, member of the NGO, commented:

We had a clear problem linked to formation; what we wanted when we were at university it was to have a good education and that's what we did not have. Starting from this main problem, we might have forgotten that there was also another role that we could have inside university and also maybe another role university should play in relation to students and society (Interview M1, N).

Universities primarily provide for students' formation via knowledge transfers as teaching is often regarded a key mission¹⁵⁷. However, poor teaching performance actually undermines education quality, impacting also on students' skills and competences.

Furthermore, as exposed, problems related to teaching quality might hinder students and institutional commitment to other missions, including its social dimension. As another student pointed out:

It is true that we say it is not good that students are passive but what if a student does not find a good education system, nor the hall of residence, nor food at the canteen... (Interview F1, H).

Improving students' learning experience requires specific welfare and educational quality, being both at heart of students' expectations. The lack or low quality of services provided to students can raise barriers to their learning experience as well as raising grievances and distress which is also detrimental to study progress and personal development.

Employability and professional internships were considered third most important missions and the most important across the dataset. Employability skills, in particular, are linked to teaching content and knowledge transfer; while professional internship refers to acquiring specific skills via external public-private partnerships, as university's third mission. In this sense, 20 per cent engineering against only 7 per cent of humanities students consider professional internship important while 32 per cent humanities against 8 per cent of engineering students, prefer students' employability.

¹⁵⁷ Excellence in research, often identified as universities second mission (see chapter 3), is only rated second in the fourth most important mission, most likely due to participants not being involved yet in academic research.

Findings, in fact, highlight an important divergence between humanities and engineering students: the former inclined to consider a face-to-face course-related approach rather than a more market-oriented one, the latter. This dichotomous *passive vs active* or *theoretical vs. practical* attitude probably reflects embedded *scientific vs. humanities* culture linked to type of study and students' objectives. In fact, an engineering professor referred to university mission as being:

[...] mainly to prepare and train students for the job market [...]
I would say this is our primary mission (Interview M2, E).

In Tunisia, however, increasing competition in the job market amid worsening political and economic circumstances have deteriorated graduates' employment opportunities. This aspect clearly reflects both pre and post-revolution economic decline and economic insecurity. To the same extent, two engineering students commented:

At present, university for me is nothing: nor education, political or associational. It hurts! University is to have a degree and nothing more! Each trimester or semester, students work just to pass exams (Interview M4, E); and

[...] we do not really have equipment. We do not have enough to work properly. This is why we concentrate at theoretical level which does not really have a relation with the job since after the degree, we will know only what we learn theoretically (Interview M3, E).

In this sense, job opportunity after graduation can be defined as students' main worry and critical priority, confirming personal expectations of economic returns from investment on education. Nonetheless, the lack of faculty infrastructural support (including laboratories) and integrated external partnerships, might jeopardise

students' personal and professional achievements, as the theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquired at the university do not match the job market. Furthermore, a professor from humanities faculty also underlined:

Can any person study humanity or languages? This also impacts and influences students as they feel themselves demotivated [...] they linger on since they know at the end of it, they will be unemployed. We are an industry for unemployment [...] I meet students again either as cashier in supermarket; fruits seller at the market or waiter [...] they are everywhere apart in a teaching position. Our faculty is a complete loss for the State (Interview F4, H).

In fact, despite government's¹⁵⁸ priority focusing on employability skills and entrepreneurship, the gap between students' competences and job's opportunities still persists. In this sense, curriculum reform and universities' commitment to offer professional internships are key to the creation of new opportunities, especially in under-demanded or over-offered professions.

In this framework, the implementation of university third missions in partnerships with local business and public institutions or civic associations could enhance internships' opportunities in line with market demands. In this sense, according to a student in the humanities faculty:

University never tries to make any connection with the external society, nor helping us. Even in our projects, for students of applied research, they always are in need of internship and have some sort of connection with the external world, for those studying geography or art, university never helps them (Interview F1, H).

¹⁵⁸ Public institutions are gradually losing capacity of being main national job providers, especially of young graduates, partially due to World Bank and IMF privatisation policies (p. 42, 87).

Critically, universities' autonomy, market saturation and limited economic dynamism resulted in an asymmetrical development of a technology-centred triple-helix model favouring the under-achievement of social innovation and entrepreneurship. In fact, the failure of government policies, unable to promote a wider socio-economic agenda in public universities, has gradually impoverished and marginalised available professional resources (i.e. humanities graduates with higher level of unemployment and lower market demands) into under-qualified and often unrelated market sectors.

On the other hand, university social responsibility, addressing social and democratic education via civic engagement courses or volunteering and community-based projects, was rated as the fourth most important mission with nearly half of participants' preferences. In general, students believe universities have to be reflective in relation to society and more active in promoting civic behaviour and civic engagement courses and volunteering. In particular a student, member of NGO, also highlighted how universities should be more effective in developing community projects, as:

Students are members of a society and should be able to take part to a social change and not only economic. Universities need to make a contribution in the formation of an attitude and an understanding/awareness of social problems [...] it is not just finding a job and be excellent in the exercise of a profession but also to integrate a network, being able to share with others (Interview F2, N).

In this sense, government authoritative decision-making system, lack of on-campus student unions' activities and limited university autonomy in defining curricular, extra-curricular courses, might explain the weak institutional social commitment. However,

table 10 (extracted from table 9), reports students' preferences in relation only to university social responsibility.

Table 10 – University most important mission: mapping social responsibility.

	N	Category	All N	All valid %	Eng %	Hum %
Most important		Civic & Moral Behaviour	2	3.7%	8.0%	0%
	54	Social Inclusion	2	3.7%	0%	6.9%
		Fund Ngo cooperation	2	3.7%	8.0%	0%
		Civic engagement courses	2	3.7%	4.0%	3.4%
		Political debates	2	3.7%	4.0%	3.4%
		Improve personal consciousness	1	1.9%	4.0%	3.4%
		Volunteering	1	1.9%	4.0%	0%
		TOT	12	22.3%	32%	17.1%
2nd most important		Civic & Moral Behaviour	6	11.1%	12.0%	10.3%
	54	Volunteering	5	9.3%	12.0%	6.9%
		Defend student rights	5	9.3%	8.0%	10.3%
		Fund Ngo cooperation	2	3.7%	0%	6.9%
		Community project	1	1.9%	4.0%	0%
		Social Inclusion	1	1.9%	4.0%	0%
		TOT	20	37.2%	40%	34.4%
3rd most important		Civic engagement courses	6	11.5%	17.4%	6.9%
	52	Volunteering	5	9.6%	13.0%	6.9%
		Defend student rights	5	9.6%	4.3%	13.8%
		Civic & Moral Behaviour	2	3.8%	0%	6.9%
		Community project	2	3.8%	4.3%	3.4%
		Political debates	2	3.8%	0%	6.9%
		Social Inclusion	2	3.8%	0%	6.9%
		Ecology in campus	1	1.9%	4.3%	0%
		Fund Ngo cooperation	1	1.9%	4.3%	0%
		TOT	26	49.7%	47.6%	51,70%
4th most Important		Civic engagement courses	8	15.1%	4.2%	24.1%
	53	Social Inclusion	5	9.4%	4.2%	13.8%
		Fund Ngo cooperation	3	5.7%	8.3%	3.4%
		Civic & Moral Behaviour	2	3.8%	4.2%	3.4%
		Ecology in campus	2	3.8%	8.3%	0%
		Volunteering	2	3.8%	4.2%	3.4%
		Political debates	2	3.8%	0%	6.9%
		Defend students' rights	2	3.8%	0%	6.9%
		TOT	26	49.2%	33.4%	61.9%

Students confirmed personal interest and commitment towards democracy, social justice and civic engagement as being integral to their academic experience, in line with post-revolution aspirations but, as explored, rather in contrast with national policies. In fact, for instance, university social responsibility increases from 22 to nearly 50 per cent of students' aggregate preferences, as the fourth most important mission. In this sense, university social dimension actually acquires a central relevance as students do value their contribution to society.

Furthermore, as considered in table 11, when comparing students' expectations towards economic and social returns on education, student employability and professional internships are perceived as key university prerogatives.

Table 11- Tunisian Universities Socio-economic Third Mission engagement¹⁵⁹.

	All Sample		Engineering		Humanity	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Student employability	86,85%	13,15%	88%	12%	85,70%	14,30%
Professional internship	85,15%	14,85%	84,60%	15,40%	85,70%	14,30%
Honest, civic and moral behaviour	83,25%	16,75%	80,80%	19,20%	85,70%	14,30%
Courses on social and civic participation	81,30%	18,70%	76,90%	23,10%	85,70%	14,30%
Social inclusion for marginalised students	79,95%	20,05%	88,50%	11,50%	71,40%	28,60%
Volunteering and social engagement	78,20%	21,80%	88,50%	11,50%	67,90%	32,10%
Student socio-political & economic right	69,50%	30,50%	64%	36%	75%	25%
Project for public and community utility	66,25%	33,75%	76,90%	23,10%	55,60%	44,40%
Promote ecology in-campus	67,20%	32,80%	80,80%	19,20%	53,60%	46,40%
Funding civil society organisations	51,90%	48,10%	53,80%	46,20%	50,00%	50,00%
Promote political participation	40,50%	59,50%	34,60%	65,40%	46,40%	53,60%
Engage directly on political debates	29,85%	70,15%	24%	76%	35,70%	64,30%
Promote religious activities	26,90%	73,10%	26,90%	73,10%	26,90%	73,10%

¹⁵⁹ Data includes valid entry only for percentage aggregate (excluding missing entries).

However, over 80 per cent of students believe Tunisian public universities should also promote more civic and moral behaviour, volunteering, social engagement and social inclusion. If humanities students rated higher courses on social and civic engagement, engineering students, instead, considered more important volunteering and civic engagement activities. This variance seems to reconfirm an underlying trend, grounded on the *theoretical vs. practical* divide, characterising humanities vs. engineering students' attitude (see also next section on social capital). In particular, this could be also linked to different aspects as: level of *self-awareness*, *personal commitment* to social engagement and *family background* influence. T-test showed no statistical significance difference between the two populations (see Appendix VI – T-test, Table 21).

In particular, students can experience an active civic culture within their own families and/or close friends. Pre-existing family social networks also support and inspire personal development. In particular, an engineering student confirmed:

Nowadays I am taking part to some activities with the student union. I am participating to a charity organisation [...] actually I have been introduced by my mum to charity activities because she is member since 10 years ago in an association taking care of orphans (we collect dresses, toys and fundraising) (Interview F1, E).

To the same extent, faculty environments and embedded culture also play a crucial role. For instance, 53 per cent humanities against 80 per cent of engineering students thinks that universities should promote ecology on-campus. From diary notes, in fact, only the faculty of engineering had a system of differentiated waste bins around campus, promoting a suitable environment and active education to shape students' experience and awareness.

In line with research findings, political and associational activities are not perceived as central to university-community partnerships. Investment on community projects was rated only by two thirds of students; whereas, around half of participants believe universities should engage and fund civil society organisations. During the Ben Ali regime, associations were controlled or censored, affecting public awareness and limiting their participation in society. These dynamics seem to have also shaped university-community partnership adversely. In fact, despite post-revolution widening associational freedom, associations have not yet developed and established a framework for partnership¹⁶⁰ with universities, opening questions on how current socio-political settings could impact upon campus culture and university social responsibility. Seemingly, students seem to reject the idea of a politicised university in terms of opportunities for political participation or political debates as a form of civic engagement (respectively 40 and 30 per cent). This could confirm generalised disenchantment toward politics linked to corruption and lack of transparency in public institutions but also due to post-revolution political instability and violent confrontations in universities (pp. 63, 64, 67).

Universities' role in promoting religious activities was also largely dismissed with 73 per cent of preferences. Sample bias could entail higher proportion of secular students, however, it could also suggest:

- 1- the acceptance of public universities' secular ethos;
- 2- the rejection of radical Islamists, intended as revolution by-product;
- 3- the presence of a parallel binary value system *secular vs. religious*;

¹⁶⁰ Field observation confirmed the absence of a university civic engagement office in either faculty.

4- the retrenchment of religion into private rather than public domain.

As already explored, if in the engineering faculty, a sense of tolerance, respect and attention to build dialogue was predominant¹⁶¹; from diary notes, humanities students reported lack of communication with the religious-affiliated student union and absence of joint activities on-campus¹⁶². As such, in determined university contexts, civic engagement, political participation and involvement in religious associations might not contribute to democracy, reflecting politically fragmented and culturally diverse social contexts.

Finally, students' socio-political and economic rights' protection was considered important by 70 per cent of respondents. This factor can be related to how, in the past, students' rights have tended to be disregarded or even abused as university police undermined students' social, political and civic engagement, affecting also trust, respect and dialogue in students-administration and students-professors relationships. As a student observed:

It is true there is no more police as a person wearing a uniform but there is still those who control us: where we are going, what we do, what we say and it is the old who continues [...] there is not difference between no manifestation and yes you can manifest but we risk to be beaten up or menaced (Interview F1, H).

The use of university police by the regime was intended to control and censor students' activities. As such, social responsibility and civic engagement cannot flourish if basic

¹⁶¹ From diary notes, in engineering faculty while left-wing student gathered for a political public speech in the main square; a call for prayer reminded students to gather in the prayer room (absent in humanities faculty).

¹⁶² As noted in diary notes, in humanities faculty, communications between left-wing and Islamic union is developed via *intermediary students* with moderate stands, thus able to directly interact with both.

freedoms and generalised trust is absent or fragmented, as often the case in Arab countries. Findings show that in the post-revolution transition period, embedded habits might still endure although under different forms. In fact, a student explained:

At university level, there is always a control but not as before [the revolution]. It is true but there is always [...] some kind of students they express their opinion but they also act with violence [...] security does not exist anymore because before none could say anything but nowadays, everyone can say what they want (Interview M3, E).

Cooperation, trust, dialogue and tolerance are complex socio-cultural determinants that, if missing, can fuel tensions. However, if post-revolution democratic process has initially fostered citizens' freedoms and public institutions' accountability, university-students and university-society relationships have not experienced a structural change in line with the aspirations of the revolution. In fact, students' lack of empowerment, civic associations' marginal role in society, religious conflicts and absence of cooperation with the administration are main factors limiting the implementation of a different social agenda.

To the same extent, 2008 higher education reform was implemented during the pre-revolution in socio-political and economic circumstances openly contested thereafter. In fact, despite post-revolution changes in university governance (for the first time, rectors and deans have been elected and not appointed by the government), no national reform followed to address universities' managerial, structural and organisational framework. A professor, from humanities faculty, also commented:

The role of university has not changed since Ben Ali because no serious reforms have been ever proposed. We are forced to suffer the fall of Ben Ali system in the sense that they have

imposed on us the LMD reform [...] already agreed even before any consultation [...] I think this will depend on the future political scenario (Interview F4, H).

Reforms advocated under the spirit of the revolution seem, have been halted due to the unsettled political situation, as post-revolution democratic expectations still remain overestimated. As a result, the promotion of dialogue and cooperation amongst students, professors and administration staff also seem to be under-achieved. In this sense, a humanities student commented:

[...] for the students and the LMD system that we always are against [...] we try always to change this system, we refuse the LMD but we do not see any change, they are not interested in our problems (Interview F1, H).

Considerations on HE reform imply also the development of an on-campus common platform which is vital to students-to-students and students-to-professors networking, developing academic social capital through channels of communication for information sharing.

In this framework, findings have suggested that university autonomy is a key aspect for higher education institutions to implement locally-driven strategies to address undergraduates' employability, teaching quality and universities' social dimension. Current circumstances hold the potential to impact on how professors and students cooperate on the basis of common grounds and objectives. In fact, an engineering professor underlined:

We want to amend the new LMD system that has been established. The reform did not give more autonomy; we are always under the ministry hold, always a centralised system. I think the common point [between students and academic staff] is the higher education system reform. This is the point

regrouping us. We would like to reform the LMD system as there are impacts both on students and teachers. Reforms could range from working hours, to run more projects, etc. [...] because our objective is that courses are well assimilated [...] transferred to students [...] for this, I think both unions can gather, work together and find solutions, avoiding each one being on his world, as this would not lead to a good reform (Interview F2, E).

In fact, the 2008 LMD reform has left unresolved questions of university decentralisation; *coastal vs. interior's* uneven development; institutional accountability, autonomy and governability; education quality; curriculum reform; structural issues related to students' employability, university social responsibility and education to democracy. In this sense, inter-faculty social capital ties can be considered crucial to empower professors and students whose concerns and voices are often under-estimated within a top-down hierarchical decision-making framework.

In the post-revolution transition context, the idea itself of university can be reconsidered fostering a new social and political consensus, inclusive of bottom-up emancipatory initiatives. If national policies supported an *almost-free* higher education system within a logic of knowledge transfer and students' employability, structural underachievement and socio-economic deficiencies are still present. In fact, findings suggest that Tunisian higher education should be *free*, providing for high standard *quality teaching*, transferring *employability skills* and contributing to a wider array of public-private networking *for professional internship, democratic and civic engagement* education or volunteering programs. At present, however, universities seem not to have incorporated third mission activities for social responsibility and wider cooperation with external stakeholders, despite growing social concerns, democratic deficit and economic backlash. Implications of a HE system reform might entail a renewed national dialogue amongst all stakeholder government-university-

industry-civil society in order to reconsider what role universities ought to play to pursue economic growth, social cohesion and democracy for present and future generations.

The next section further explores university social responsibility in Tunisia, focusing on the main factors influencing present developments and future implications.

University Social Responsibility

In recent decades, universities' have witnessed a gradual revitalisation in organising cultural events (i.e. hosting theatre plays, art exhibitions or concerts); supporting students' curricular and extra-curricular opportunities (i.e. professional internship and/or volunteering programmes); deepening economic and cultural interactions with local communities. Tunisian public universities, however, are currently in turmoil, confronted with complex political, economic and cultural uncertainties. The post-independence nationalist's project favoured governments' control over social, cultural and political activities, fostering habits of public *dis-trust*, *fears* and cultural *dis-engagement*. However, recent revolutionary social movements opened up opportunities for social participation that could potentially lower cultural, social and political barriers. In Tunisia, as the regime restricted political and civic freedoms, a student, member of the Ngo, commented:

First of all, it is the attitude in need to be developed. Before we did not have this idea of volunteering and thanks to networks of associations, I think this attitude has grown. It is evident that associations are changing the face of society through creating new attitudes, responsibilities but at university level I am not really sure if associations have their place because universities remain a bit backward if compared to NGOs (Interview F2, N).

Universities are *de facto* best placed to develop students' academic social capital because they can enable external partnerships. However, they can implement policies that could either promote or hinder civic engagement programs. In fact, students are drivers of change although the lack of institutional commitment to support a thriving social environment inside or outside the campus can limit their actions and available resources. The lack of universities' support and acknowledgment of post-revolution civil society revival, free from regime repressions, might actually disregard students and associations' agency. In this sense, another student, member of the Ngo, highlighted:

Students' mentality is changing [...] they are more opened to civil society, they are active and they are participating. If this is not coming from university itself, it will come from students and they will influence universities to make the change. [...] When the administration cannot fulfil its role, when the government cannot fulfil its role, it is time for civil society to intervene and fill the gap that is left (Interview F1, N).

The revolution has thus facilitated a bottom-up and grassroots social and political awakening to respond to issues unmet by the government. For this, universities need to be intended as central hubs attracting both professional and civic associations to engage in constructive partnerships. Furthermore, a student, member of the Ngo, also commented:

I think [university] should be more open towards civil society by encouraging, for example, extra-curricular activities, by founding more clubs for cultural, associational, charity networks, considering a time each day specifically devoted to these activities. Generally speaking, students say we do not have time in order to be active. For this, it is to universities to

find the right allocation of time to give motivation and to be part of social activities (Interview F2, N).

Students who actually have changed attitudes towards their commitment to society reconsider universities' institutional change central in establishing a civic engagement/external partnership office; focusing on administration training to change cultural habits; promoting on-campus social events; enhancing students' participation; deepening collaboration and joint programs with the community or drafting a university and students social responsibility charter (pp. 80-82).

To the same extent, universities can support and enable students to be active participants in the decision-making process on priorities such as teaching and curriculum; student welfare, services and facilities; finance; students' behaviour and campus safety; contribution to charity and community engagement. In Tunisia at present a different situation still prevails, as a student, member of the Ngo, observed:

Our Ngo when we were launching the recruitment campaign, we found many problems with universities, going into the yard to ask students to join us, it was a problem starting from the administration. They needed many papers to be filled in and they were suspicious, not really trusting what we were doing [...] some universities refused us! The only universities with easy access were the one we studied in or where members of the NGO are still students as they know the administration, they know people there, they trust them otherwise it was very difficult to go into other universities (Interview F1, N).

Findings highlight how lack of trust, cumbersome bureaucratic procedures and the administration's attitude are the main barriers affecting academic social capital formation and social responsibility. In general, universities seem not to be committed in developing cooperation with external partners; nor do they seem equipped, in terms

of autonomy, economic resources or managerial culture to do so. However, the present critical phase of changing socio-cultural and political environments, is already defining the extent to which universities will need to readapt their role in society.

In this sense, students clubs, prior to the revolution, could not develop a wide range of socio-cultural or political activities since university police exerted vigilant control and censorship by accessing list of participants and program events. Campus life was defined by regime's *approved* cultural clubs (i.e. theatre, music, language, etc.) or sport clubs; while prohibiting political activities, considered a threat to the *status quo*¹⁶³. This legacy impacted clubs' role, ethos, autonomy and financing, undermining also students' social capital for social responsibility. A professor from humanities faculty commented:

Once I asked students: are there any clubs? Do you take part in any clubs? The answer: "The desert". They are not connected to politics, rarely some of them are, not connected to cultural activities. The faculty never encourages them. There is a theatre recently founded and sport clubs well developed. Overall, there is a hiatus between education in the faculty and cultural life (Interview F4, H).

Lack of institutional incentives, organisational infrastructure and limited dialogue can further hinder students' participation. Latent or fragmented academic networks between professors, academic staff and students reinforce under-utilisation and under-development of a shared culture for social engagement. In fact, external environments can have a negative impact on individual identity and personal attitudes to civic engagement, limiting the imaginary and the scope for initiatives.

¹⁶³ For example, at Nottingham University over 500 clubs exist to provide students with a platform to express their opinions and their identity via sport, linguistic, social, cultural or political interests.

Contextually, professors are often seen as inspirational or leading personalities, contributing to students' awareness and social commitment. In particular, a humanities student critically articulated:

[...] universities need to play a major role between faculty and society, also at level of cultural clubs to improve level of students' education, to help students being aware of what is happening outside the faculty because if we attend class and we go back home, we travel back and forth only for teaching purposes [...] it will teach us to be passive! Professors need to pass the message, they need to teach students, they are an important part of society who needs to fight and say yes or no; who need to take part to the decision-making process (Interview F1, H).

If education is considered rigorously in terms of human capital and knowledge transfer, students' learning experience remains restrained and limited to it. In Tunisia, HEIs ought to promote a more dynamic educational paradigm connecting course material to students' everyday life, fostering social projects that is foundational to SR and professor-student and student-community academic social capital. At the faculty of engineering, a student also expressed similar expectations:

[Professors] they come, they work, they leave [...] I have to take care about research, give classes, I mark [...] and I do not care about the rest. You have to work it out yourself! Other professors they supervise us, they listen to us and they stay longer after working hours. They give consultations, appointments, counselling. Our department director is the secret of good functioning [...] he is the leader, he works very well [...] he is a source of inspiration (Interview M1, E).

In this perspective, professors-students relations can also define the extent to which students are engaged either with their study or, if motivated and supported, with society. Professor curricular and co-curricular led activities, if embedded in campus culture, hold the potential to enrich students' formation. In fact, social responsibility

is often a combination of driving factors that if missing, can eventually disconnect students. As a humanities student confirmed, *professor-students-society* networks can also favour:

[...] connection between cultural level and teaching because our faculty is trying always to engage us with society. In March we took part to “Jean Giono¹⁶⁴” day at the French cultural Institute, in order to know a different culture and to deepen our knowledge. We also took part in activities with the municipal theatre (Interview F3, H).

In this sense, findings from the humanities faculty revealed a mixed picture with fragmented institutional commitment and lower individual exposure to social responsibility. In the faculty of engineering, instead, students seemed to acknowledge a more proactive institutional framework in promoting opportunities. In particular, from diary notes, students also commented that the newly appointed Rector and administrative staff are positively contributing and supporting activities/projects proposed by students. In particular, during field observation, a student recalled how in conjunction with the International Women day, the Rector allowed students to commemorate the event by painting an external wall with coloured hand-prints. Students not only find support to build their identities but also develop a sense of belonging and embedded culture for next generations. Furthermore, an engineering student also commented:

Last year a professor, who is part of an international network, asked us to film a short-movie to highlight what is the role of an engineer in society [...] the majority of our events are always open, advertisement and launching are done outside the university [...] we also develop social entrepreneurship [...] trying to train students or young people no matters where from,

¹⁶⁴ Twentieth century French novelist.

in order to help them develop and work on their own projects (Interview F1, E).

Professors are important actors in supporting social responsibility by raising students' awareness, organising events involving external stakeholders and the local community.

Engineering students¹⁶⁵ seem also to show a comprehensive sense of personal responsibility, mirroring campus culture. In this sense, another engineering student described his personal experiences:

I am member of the student organisation “Junior Enterprise” and Eureka and I took part to IE3 project [...] I am also part of a music club. I was also parliament commissioner for mechatronic department [...] at the faculty, in fact, there are also 6 associations (Junior Enterprise [scientific and professional training association], Eureka [cultural and artistic association], Oxilion [newly founded scientific association], I3E student branch, the Adeniso (alumni association) as it is always necessary to build a bridge between the faculty and industry and they are helping us a lot. They also offer trainings in order to support students to better understand classes. Then there is mechatronic club, club Tecnocar... (Interview M1, E).

The engineering faculty seems to have an active key role in developing students' networks, clubs' and societies encompassing different aspects of student life from career development, to socio-cultural or political groups (i.e. a student-led parliament, not present in the humanities faculty). As from field observations, during data collection, the engineering faculty organised a three day event with conferences, commercial stands, live concerts, exhibition and live showrooms. University social

¹⁶⁵It is important to highlight that while engineering faculty has around 700 students, humanity faculty counts over 5000 students, allegedly having an impact on projects' development, networking and proximity, as well as, a less cumbersome bureaucratic structure, governance, economic resources to promote external relationships.

responsibility then implies a progressive change in attitudes and habits to support a vibrant educational and social life.

As findings show, students are rather aware of what social responsibility is, their role and how they would like universities to be. However, “old regime habits” have crystallised and endured in the post-revolution political settings, playing a crucial role in university-students dynamics. Universities, in fact, seem still unable to enact any long-term autonomous changes. However, as the engineering faculty showed, faculty environments and embedded shared culture can foster USR. In the humanities faculty, instead, lack of planning, resources, channels of communication and campus life showed cleavages between faculty and students’ priorities. On the other hand, students and civil society organisations can sustain social innovation, being committed to fulfil revolution’s expectations; whereas universities have not yet institutionalised their role to address social problems. In the future, however, events leading to the democratic transition will be crucial to see if these two forces will eventually converge and how universities will engage actively with society.

The next section explores how underdevelopment of university social responsibility has impacted upon students’ identity, limiting their engagement in society.

Student Social Responsibility

Student social responsibility is often directly linked to university SR. At a macro-level, political, academic or social-cultural contexts can intensify the underdevelopment of university-community relationships (see Chapter 3, p. 82). On the other hand, at a micro-level, students’ family backgrounds, personal experiences and

self-awareness contribute to identity building and individual commitment to society (see Chapter 3, pp. 83, 84). In Tunisia, the 2008 HE reform states in Art. 3 that “students are at the centre of the higher education system and they have the right to”:

- acquiring knowledge and attending teaching classes ;
- professors’ supervision;
- participate in courses according to study plan;
- access and information to different curricular specialisation, courses, programs and professional perspectives;
- respect teaching staff, administrative staff, building facilities [...] and higher education institutions according to the present law.

For this, students are framed within a traditional and considerably static definition, centred on university teaching mission, pre-set learning objectives and courses for students’ knowledge acquisition as potential gateway to the job market. This paradigm mirrors a restricted definition constructed around the notion of human capital and an instrumentalist role of education, despite the importance to develop students as *socio-economic entrepreneurs of their future* (UNESCO, 2009). In fact, the national law does not acknowledge students as autonomous and key socio-economic actors in society. Universities then do not prioritise internship, civic engagement activities or education for democracy, engaging students with society.

In this framework, students were asked what social responsibility is and what role students ought to play in Tunisia. In particular, the term social responsibility was

associated to 14 different categories¹⁶⁶, clustered into the following themes: social justice, respect of others, citizenship and social awareness/consciousness. These were mainly linked to post-revolution renewed sense of social and political engagement, implying:

- a revival of citizens' freedoms, rights and duties towards society;
- an open confrontation for social justice, social inclusion and human dignity;
- a commitment to citizens' well-being, community and society at large;
- the shared respect for others opinions, beliefs and behaviours.

The revolution was a significant first-hand experience for all students. Individual and collective social awareness are considerably preconditions for change to address political and social challenges. As commented by a student, social responsibility:

[...] is the engagement of a person and groups to societal problems looking for solutions. Social responsibility is an attitude to be developed, a feeling which can be natural or caused by an event (AS1).

Social responsibility is then defined as a feeling, an attitude, a duty, a shared culture, an identity and it consists of solving problems, engaging and acting in a common social space. Furthermore, social responsibility is also associated with active participation in terms of volunteering activities and democracy development. These two elements are

¹⁶⁶ Categories were defined and analysed with Nvivo software.

also considered key in social capital development. As highlighted in the following extracts:

- Social responsibility is to be engaged in volunteering action towards society (E8); and also:
- [...] a student in Tunisia needs to have social responsibility in order to achieve a democratic system (E3).

To the same extent, students' academic/intellectual contribution is also linked to academic social capital and social responsibility. In fact, the development of a complex identity as students but also as citizens favours what can be defined as *academic social responsibility*. In fact, this extract defines specifically that:

[Student social responsibility] is to be an intellectual ready to engage into society. A student needs to play a political, social and technical role (S9).

The reference to students' technical and professional contribution to national development can also be understood in terms of impact on community social and economic wider benefit. Students need to be integrated in society sharing their knowledge and making a contribution to societal problems, implying a complex and articulated political, social and intellectual commitment towards society. However, government HE policies, framed around students' marginal roles in society, might act against students' own awareness limiting the nature of agency itself. To the same extent, this extract identifies how to be a student:

[...] is to improve intellectually, to have a knowledge and awareness of problems predominant in the country, to improve dysfunctions (E7).

In Tunisia, however, opportunities to channel opinions and to become socially engaged are still exceptional to most students. In particular, it is critical how to enhance this social awareness; how to create environments/conditions functional to social engagement and how universities and students can be *actors-partners* in social responsibility.

Political and socio-cultural settings are interconnected main determinants for social responsibility development. Lack of civil and political rights affects freedoms of expression, association and political participation. For civic participation cannot flourish if curtailed, pre-empted or neutralised. In fact, after the revolution, according to a student and member of the Ngo, what has changed the most, is undoubtedly:

Freedom of speech. Students can express themselves, they organise manifestation but at the level of system [...] we have not reached yet the level we need. There are always aspects that remain in the shadow and there is no real control of our future. Before there was not hope, no freedom of expression, nor means. Nowadays, we still do not have the means but hope and freedom of expression (Interview F2, N).

Freedom of expression is a basic right to achieve a political democratic transition. Social participation can flourish if existing conditions allow for collective actions, shifting individual awareness to public actions, crucial also to student social responsibility. In Tunisia, however, the specific socio/political system was based on the reproduction of regime's own propaganda. To the same extent, political coercion and bureaucratic control over associational activities hindered any developments both at the institutional and individual level. In fact, after the revolution, a student confirmed that:

There is a radical change because before we were really limited even, for example, in the budget we could use. We were always

obliged to hang and show Ben Ali's portrait (as the merit of it came from him...) [...] Before, in order to open an association, it was really an headache, a puzzle as it was required to go through the municipality, the province and Ministry's authorisation [...] Nowadays, on the contrary, there is not only a myriad of all kind of associations in any possible fields with a greater choice but also in our activities, we are a lot freer than before (Interview, F1, E).

On the other hand, in universities, this democratic shift has also implied unanticipated confrontations as the abuse of personal freedoms can subjectively foster conflicts. In particular, as a professor at the humanities faculty explained, after the revolution:

[...] what really changed, I think, are certain teachers-students' relationships. I mean, before the revolution, given that there was a dictatorship, an authority, a university police [...] students have been framed within it [...] a relation of authority and respect. Last year, some students were on strike to ask marks' revision. They criticised our evaluation system with a slogan "passing exams is a right". They also swore against us (the teachers). Never this would have happened prior the revolution (Interview F4, H).

Students were controlled under a system of authority and contextual threats, dictating also students-professors relationships. A reverential respect to authority has long limited freedom of expression that is key to democracy. However, the contestation *passing exams is a right*, is rather problematic and alarming. In fact, it relates to a deeper level of resentment and denunciation against the HE evaluation system, university academic standard and academic staff professionalism. In this sense, a humanities student also confirmed disaffection with faculty management:

[...] there are some problems with exams, teaching issues, also the halls of residence [...] and it is not related only to the faculty, we always try to see what are the other problems of

society [...] we try always to change this system (Interview F1, H).

In fact, post-revolution freedom of speech allowed students to raise issues closer to their interests and expectations in relation to exams' evaluation, teaching quality or feedback, compromising their formation and welfare. Furthermore, teaching quality and professors' level of qualification, was also highlighted by an engineering student:

A student in Tunisia is someone pushed to learn by heart classes and exercises from professors often poorly qualified in order to pass the academic year (E15).

To the same extent, during field observations in the humanities faculty, it has been noticed that a professor called in a group of students into an empty class to hand in marked examinations. The professor started calling out students by name in order to return the exams and if a student was not present, the paper would have been passed to someone in contact with him/her, resulting in one person collecting up to 4 or 5 exams. Lack of privacy, poor feedback on exams and poor academic standards might also mirror students' disaffection towards their learning experience. In addition, when students tried to approach the issue of having received *unjustly* a low mark, trying to "bargain" for higher evaluation, the feedback was often: "read it back! That is what you deserve". The existence of an antagonistic relationship can exacerbate faculty-wide cooperation, mutual respect and trust upon which social responsibility and academic social capital are developed. In fact, students' academic, professional and personal development is also determined by the type and level of education.

In particular, generational change is a continuous process. In present-day Tunisia, students could be the determining factor of social change, contributing to cultural innovation, economic development and democratic participation. However,

this cannot happen in a void. Universities need to intervene in sustaining both human and social capital development. In fact, a student highlighted:

Faculty has to support an education to form responsible, active and aware students. However, the education system is not able to provide for students' needs. For this, student's role has to change from receiving to participate in order to make correction to the system with a cultural, political, social participation: student/student; student/university; student/society (S28).

Several factors then act as preconditions to students' social participation: identity; family background; campus environment; students-professor-administration relationships; as well as, socio-cultural and political environments (pp. 82, 83). Universities and student unions are in control of a social agenda. However, the presence of existing barriers such as government censorship, campus-life fragmentation, society-wide lack of civic culture and personal motivation can hinder participation. As such, students' awareness and motivation might face different constraints affecting identity building and decision-making processes, including:

1. **University barrier:** focus/pressure on class or exams; lack of social activities.
2. **Political barrier:** lack incentives or initiatives; censorship; lack of safety.
3. **Generational barrier:** no support; passive example from previous generation.
4. **Cultural barrier:** adaptation and conformism to *status quo*.
5. **Personal barrier:** lack of motivation, power and means; sense of resignation.

In particular, a student and member of the NGO, recalled how during the pre-revolutionary period:

[...] there were two factors influencing my engagement: myself and the system in general. Before maybe I was a bit more focused on my study, my professional career more than doing social activities. Moreover, even if, sometimes you have some desire to do something, there was a hurdle in the idea of “we cannot make a change” and “that’s the way it is!” We did not have power and we also had the influence of previous generations [...] they were passive and we had this image in front of us.

[...] before the revolution I had many ideas but the problem was also at cultural level. In my town there was no cinema, theatre or public spaces for cultural activities or conservatories. For this, I wanted to create those spaces in my town [...] but I could not see any means except trying to get hold of a political institution, the mayor or a person in charge but it was something unthinkable (Interview M1, N).

Personal aspirations can flourish in a supportive cultural environment. Social networks favours social engagement but they can also turn it into an “unthinkable mission”. In particular, in a non-Western and semi-democratic system like Tunisia, findings revealed that a major constraint to students’ social responsibility development was linked to the socio-political system. In fact, as expressed by a student:

The problem is also that many students say “I do not care” “this is not my business”. They do not do anything, they stay passive and they behave as spectators. But there are also many students who are aware of, those students who during Ben Ali were blocked because they feared, nowadays they react better, they talk, they say: “this is good and this is not”. Even if there is still the feeling of fear, they are passing the message (Interview F1, H).

A system based on potential repercussions or tangible threats was in place for decades, shaping students’ identities and freedom of consciousness. It was not merely a question of being passive, it was a relationship based on defined boundaries of what is allowed and what is not. Furthermore, universities have been largely controlled in relation to

their active role in society, resulting in decades of impoverished associational life and democratic stagnation. In this sense, a student critically commented:

[...] being a student in a transition period and after a revolution it is a bit difficult. You can feel a whole generation is abandoned and it is looking for its identity and many of them are engaged in associative life and express their opinions (AS5).

Students played a central role during the 2011 uprisings, taking to the streets to protest in defence of citizens' rights, freedom of speech and association restrained by regime censorship, generating resignation, passive adaptation and underground dissents (pp. 58, 59, 108-112). The revolution slowly exposed complex habits of direct repression which have long prejudiced individual and community associational and political attitudes. According to a student, prior to the revolution:

There were two types of students: those who are considered "passive", they do not express themselves. Others have decided to make a choice of expressing themselves and to employ their time in the student union, criticising the government. After the revolution, young people have changed a lot. It is possible to realise a greater interest in the associative and social life. It is also important to realise that those who were passive, they were so because they did not have the occasion to express themselves through associations (AS4).

Political and social change can thus consolidate participation. A thriving associational life enhances personal awareness and self-confidence as opportunities become more available. As explored earlier, the regime's demise determined new windows of dialogue but also new emergent political, cultural and social confrontations. As a student commented:

Before [the revolution], there was no reference to NGO [...] everything was under the stream of the regime. Now that the opportunities are open for everybody, it is a release for many people to express themselves [...] although there are some transgression of limits [...] but all in all it is a beneficial change [...] so there is motivation and they are mobilised to do something for the good of the community [...] Students have to find a part in civil society and society in university [...] they have to be prepared to face society (Interview F1, N).

In fact, associations were often linked to the regime and not free to pursue their own independent agenda. As a result, opportunities and motivation for social engagement were regarded deficient, creating a gap between universities, students and society. After the revolution, social agency reshaped the boundaries of an increasingly contested public arena that affected also students' identity formation and universities' civic and democratic role. A present, participation then conveys alternative meaning for students to question their role in society, as latent civic networks facilitate more democratic and cohesive environments.

Findings showed how students have comprehensive knowledge, understanding and interest in being socially engaged. They also outline self-awareness on their role as citizens and duties towards society. However, social capital has been long under-realised and social networking under-utilised to support students' engagement. Social and public activities were often deterred with menaces and repercussions, widespread government control, political corruption and social clientelism (pp. 115, 116). This complex and structured system has ultimately created what I define as "*the under-utilisation of academic social capital for social responsibility*". In Tunisia, social engagement was not hindered by the absence of social awareness, students' identity building or sense of responsibility but mainly by the socio-cultural and political

settings restraining the nature and scope for participation and limiting social networks' development. The shadowed presence of a pro-regime agenda limited means and channels for social communication. At present, however, the gradual recognition of basic freedoms and rights can favour the development of a "normalised society" where citizens are able to express opinions more openly and, foremost, where personal awareness can be translated into actions to reverse habits of passivity, underground dissents, acceptance and resignation.

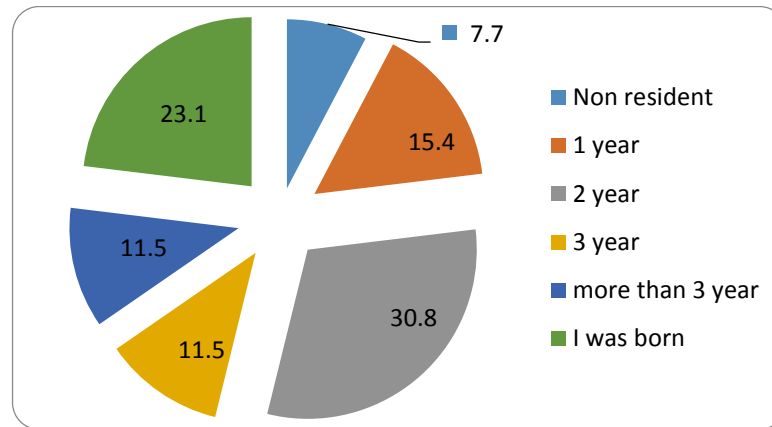
The next section deals with social capital development in Tunisia, exploring how university social responsibility can also be functional to students' social capital creation and identity building.

Social Capital, Society and Student Identity-Building

Identity is often a fundamental element framing the realisation of individual civic engagement. Social networking fosters social capital and context-based civic knowledge in different socio-political and cultural settings (p. 83). Social awareness and sense of belonging are also normally rooted and developed via spatial, emotional and intellectual connections to city environments. The proximity to a determined environment helps to develop awareness as a result of a gradual process of personal commitment, interpersonal trust and social networks' building. In this sense, findings show 23% of participants were born in the city of residence, 11,5% lived for over three years; whereas 42% had been living there between two and three years. For this reason, it is possible to consider participants to have a *low-to-medium* level of

community belonging, often linked to the development of interconnected social networks.

Figure 9– Student period of residence¹⁶⁷.



In this sense, family and neighbourhood settings are also important sources of social capital. However, if students need to adapt to new environments, this might delay civic participation as social trust tends to be lower and friendship ties weaker. For this, active participation is a dialogic *action-reaction* dynamic towards the community people live in.

In the context of post-revolution Tunisia, however, interpersonal social trust tends to be lower. Personal and family protection becomes a priority and social cohesion can be negatively affected, constraining social capital creation (see chapter 3). Table 12 indicates that more than half of students perceive others as helpful¹⁶⁸. However, only around 20 per cent as trustful/highly trustful, whereas 22 per cent of

¹⁶⁷ Students could choose amongst a list of 11 items with the addition of an *Other* category (see Appendix V on research questionnaire - English version).

¹⁶⁸ In particular, 57% of engineering against 46% of humanity students rated others as helpful; while 25% of humanities' students against only 7% of engineering as trustful, suggesting engineering students more inclined to value team-work or cooperation with others whereas humanities students have higher inclination to social capital as nearly one out of three would trust others, potentially suggesting a rational vs. emotional attitude.

them have a neutral stance rating others neither helpful nor trustful and only less than 4 per cent think others egoist.

Table 12 – Personal Trust in other people.

	All Sample	Engineering	Humanity
Highly Helpful	1,90%	3,80%	0%
Helpful	52,05%	57,70%	46,40%
Highly Trustful	3,70%	3,80%	3,60%
Trustful	16,35%	7,70%	25%
Nor Helpful nor	22,25%	23,10%	21,40%
Egoist	3,70%	3,80%	3,60%

In this sense, findings show a general sense of confidence and positive expectations for social cooperation but only moderate level of generalised trust. In particular, levels of trust highlight from one side, Tunisia’s relatively peaceful transition to democracy if compared to other Arab countries¹⁶⁹; and, from the other, a positive tendency to social capital formation and constructive social interrelationships as a by-product of revolutionary grassroots movements. In particular, students identified as main reasons of civic and social engagement: improving quality of life, dialogue, ease social tensions and making new friends¹⁷⁰. In fact, around half of respondents defined quality of life as the most important reason. Quality of life, despite being a broad category, often refers to personal and collective well-being including health, happiness and satisfaction in life, showing commitment to personal and community socio-cultural improvement. Most likely, however, in the context of post-revolution economic

¹⁶⁹ Contrary to revolutionary movements protracted into civil wars like in Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Egypt or Syria.

¹⁷⁰ As noted above, data confirm that *sense of community belonging*, was always rated as low as only 9%.

recession in Tunisia, economic improvement might also be perceived as an indicator of life quality at a personal and national level.

Table 13 - Most important reasons for student participation in group/association¹⁷¹

		All Sample	Engen.	Human.
Most important reason	Improve quality of life	47,75%	41,70%	53,80%
	Improve dialogue/ease social tensions	10,25%	16,70%	3,80%
	Make new friends	9,90%	8,30%	11,50%
	Change community social/political	6,25%	12,50%	0%
2nd most important	Make new friends	15,9%	16,70%	15,10%
	Address community problems	14%	16,70%	11,30%
	Improve quality of life	13,8%	12,50%	15,10%
	Change community social/political	11,9%	12,50%	11,30%
	Economic development	10,75%	8,30%	13,20%
3rd most important	Make new friends	25,45%	29,20%	21,70%
	Improve dialogue/ease social tensions	14,85%	16,70%	13%
	Respect religious values	10,6%	12,50%	8,70%

Furthermore, the reference to community social and political participation in the post-revolution period also highlights a higher subjective perception with reference to civic engagement and political participation to address community problems and improve social tensions. On the other hand, making new friends is the most relevant preference across the dataset. In university environments, meeting new people, sharing similar ideals and projects or having fun are considered the main determinants and primary forms of socialisation, characterising students' social capital inside and outside the classroom combining both academic and social networking.

¹⁷¹ Data values refer to valid percentage only (excluding missing entries).

In particular, university colleagues and close friends can actually play an important role in supporting social capital for civic engagement, as reported by a student:

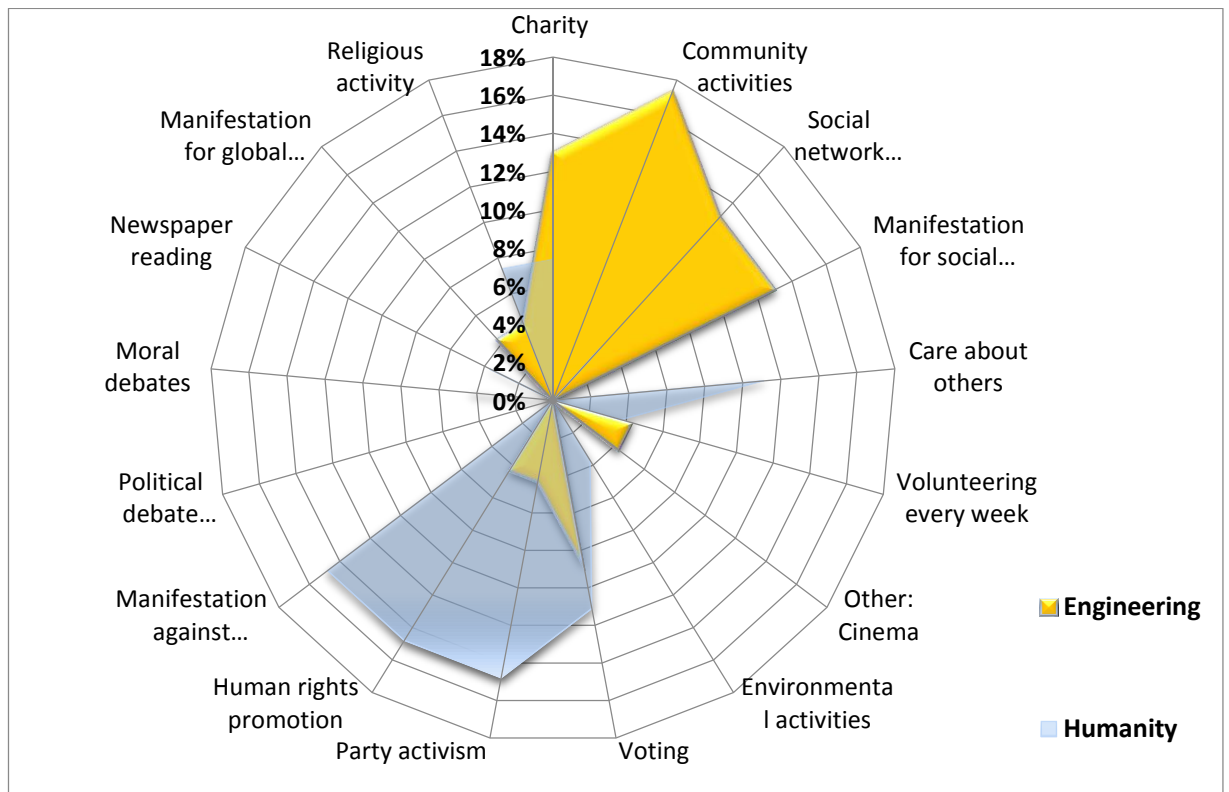
... [We] some students from Law faculty and other from my neighbourhood, we just help poor people but it is not political (Interview F2, H).

Students tend to be more motivated if they feel part of a group where they find support, their voices can be heard, values and ideas shared, as well as, activities/projects developed. Friendship further represents an important value for social capital generation fostering trust, confidence and respect. The preference towards social rather than political participation seems also to be very relevant to the Tunisian context. Commitment to social responsibility can also be disjointed from politics. In fact, social awareness to relief conditions of more marginalised members of society might be more relevant than political participation due to low levels of trust in the government (see chapter 6). This element can also confirm how students positively evaluate their social agency.

Furthermore, awareness is also connected to individual identity characterised by a complex set of determinants defining personal habits, likes or dislikes and interests, which, in turn, define the type of social capital, a person develop. Figure 10 shows a significant difference between the two faculties. In fact, engineering students identify more distinctly with civic/social activities (i.e. local communities activities; volunteering; human rights promotion; charity); while humanities students considered political activities as the main channel for identity development (voting; party

activism; manifestation against unjust law)¹⁷². In this sense, taking into consideration sample size and potential bias, humanities students seem to indicate how being politically active can be an effective and most suitable option to respond to unmet expectations, like faculty disaffection or personal frustrations (possibly linked to personal socio-cultural or economic difficulties).

Figure 10– Personal identity most important characteristics¹⁷³.



Personal engagement and involvement in society for humanities students seem to be rather associated with on-campus *traditional* forms of political protests, manifestation, active dissents or criticism towards government policies, often leading to open

¹⁷²The nuance between social/civic and political activities is used as a broad category which does not exclude the very fact that often cultural and social activities have a political agenda; as well as, often political activities have socio-cultural impacts, determining nature, implementation and scope of actions.

¹⁷³ List of 18 items, including a *Other* category (see Appendix V on research questionnaire - English version). T-test showed no statistical significance difference amongst two populations (see Appendix VI – T-test, Table 22).

confrontations. On the other hand, engineering students consider *non-traditional* forms of engagement within the university context such as charity, community engagement, volunteering, social networking and manifestation for social or global concerns, linked to an alternative identity building and social awareness.

Findings then seem to suggest some underlying trends and prospective interconnections between types of degree, campus embedded culture, students' identity (including family economic and cultural background) with social awareness, social capital and civic engagement. In particular, traditional channels of political self-expression consider individual agency as antagonist-confrontational towards the system, whereas non-traditional ones imply a shift towards a constructive-cooperative paradigm for community well-being and social commitment. In terms of identity building, despite regime censorship, findings confirm how political and social participation are very significant in students' identity definition.

On the other hand, civic engagement, community volunteering, as well as, engagement in Islamic-linked activities, are not rated as the most significant. In particular, low commitment to both social activities linked to mosque and Islamic associations, as well as, civil associations, has restrained social capital development in Arab countries contributing to the democratic deficit. In addition to this, voting and newspaper reading - all defined key social capital indicators in Western contexts - are also rated very low, suggesting the necessity to redefine analytical categories, existing inter-relationships and contextual dynamics peculiar to the Arab region. In semi-democratic systems like Tunisia, "government propaganda" embedded a political paradigm undermining generalised trust and social networks. Information access and reliability, also foundational to social capital, were, before the revolution, biased to portray a "*fictional Tunisia*". As a student highlighted:

Before there was an overall supervision from the old regime to limit internet access. There were some bloggers who used to fight to show realities in Tunisia but there were always some control to stop websites. So it was not so easy and I was not aware that there were so many problems, crises, fighting within the country [...] after everything exploded, information began to be more accessible [...] from that point, myself and other people, we felt the need and necessity to make a move, trying to spread the information as much as possible (Interview F2, N).

Control and censorship over information limited students' awareness, social trust amongst members and across different groups. In non-democratic settings, information access and available resources are scarce, often bypassed via clientelistic channels and thus undermining democratic practices.

In Tunisia, however, the gradual political openness to basic freedoms and citizens' civic rights has impacted on information transparency and media reliability¹⁷⁴ affecting students' motivation to participate in society while enabling pre-existing *latent social capital* ties (pp. 26, 27, 64, 65, 110). In fact, as a student confirmed:

I got involved in a social activity in September 2011 after the revolution. Maybe after the revolution I had the need of doing something, to take action and to influence it since I could see that there was a need coming from society (Interview M1, N).

In these terms, participation can be absent, conformist, subversive or marginal when existing circumstances do not enable and promote social commitment. In particular, academic social capital holds the potential to foster students' involvement to (see Chapter 3, pp. 82-86):

1. be socially engaged and motivate each other to participate;

¹⁷⁴During Ben Ali regime, politics was almost a *social taboo* and national politics was a subject to avoid in public discussions (criticism to the regime or the President, if reported to authority, would have led to repercussions).

2. build social awareness and self-confidence by contributing to social well-being;
3. promote associational life to produce positive change.

After the revolution, socio-political taboos and religious or cultural preconceptions tended to overshadow self-expression and social participation. As a student confirmed:

[...] before the revolution it was frustrating. I was afraid because there was a censorship, because I wear the scarf. There were always menaces, there were always policemen or armed people. I was afraid but after the revolution it is something different. I am really free, there is more freedom and enjoyment: it is becoming a way to have fun. It is helping me to make a change in my personality, to have more self-confidence, to have new relationships with people, to be more open, sociable (Interview F3, H).

Public settings can often exert pressure on people’s trust, personal security and self-confidence. In such circumstances, barriers to social participation tend to redefine opportunities to fulfil personal expectations as social trust and self-esteem are foundational elements to motivate participation.

In this sense, as table 14 shows, over two thirds of respondents believe they can positively change and improve life conditions¹⁷⁵.

Table 14 – Do you think your engagement can change/improve people lives?

	All	Engineering	Humanities
Yes	70,70%	76%	65,40%
I do not know	27,4%	24%	30,80%
No	1,90%	0%	3,80%

¹⁷⁵ Engineering students show a higher perception of social change with 76% positive responses.

Social networks then are means to enhance students' voice and empowerment. Students seem confident that civic engagement can generate suitable circumstances to improve society. Local communities can then make use of universities' rich and available resources to make a considerable impact. This critical change was also reported by another student member of the NGO:

Before, we did not have enough freedom or motivation to do no matter what. After the revolution, there are plenty of associations that have been founded and, as consequence, everybody can join them, willing to change something in the present context (Interview F1, N).

To the same extent, as shown in table 15, around half of respondents believe group activities can largely impact the community they live in. In this sense, if engineering students confirmed higher awareness of individual impact on community (see table 14); humanities students consider groups to be more effective when it comes to make a change in the community (around seventy per cent against forty per cent engineering students)¹⁷⁶.

Table 15 – Community Impact: most important group of belonging.

	All Sample	Engineering	Humanities
Very large extent	17,3%	16%	18,50%
Large extent	32,7%	24%	40,70%
Neither large or small extent	44,2%	48%	40,70%
Small Extent	1,9%	4%	0%
Very small extent	3,8%	8%	0%

¹⁷⁶ These considerations can, however, depend upon period of time they have joined an association; type of activities developed within the group; personal expectations; individual perceptions of impacts on community improvements.

Humanities students seem then to embrace more specifically an optimistic/ideological approach linked to group engagement but a lower level of individual self-consciousness. However, this can reflect research findings showing how humanities students are less involved in volunteering or community projects. Engineering students, instead, who are more involved in social participation and volunteering might have a higher self-awareness but also a more realistic/moderate position on the extent to which groups can effectively impact local communities.

In this sense, the revolution and the fall of a dictatorial regime, allowed new opportunities for democratic and social participation through associations and social networks (including social media once banned or restricted during the regime) to support the creation of social capital for social responsibility. Findings confirm that context fosters identity building and personal motivation. Furthermore, friendship and social trust but not religious or associational life appeared to be key factors for social and political participation. The *civic vs. political* engagement divide between engineering-humanities faculty seems to confirm different students' identity building related also to faculty embedded culture, *practical vs. theoretical* approach to real-life problems and different level of social awareness.

The next section considers social capital for social responsibility in the university context, exploring implications for students' civic engagement.

University and Students' Academic Social Capital

Academic social capital refers to social networks and social interactions based on knowledge sharing and linked to volunteering and civic engagement developed within universities by students, professors and administrative staff in connection with society. In particular, it refers to individual and institutional cultural capital linked to human capital intended as education, skills, knowledge and academic credentials, which defines and forms available social and economic resources. Nonetheless, it is often difficult to understand which conditions allow for its realisation; what type of social networks are required and how universities develop platforms functional to it. Students, in particular, can form their identity and generate social capital for civic engagement through:

- peer experience based on sharing knowledge, information and opinions;
- educational, cultural and professional development with other students, academic staff and external actors;
- social responsibility activities in cooperation with local communities and the faculty administration.

In this framework, students initially indicated¹⁷⁷ what role students ought to have in Tunisian society in order to explore connections between academic and professional social capital associated and conducive to civic engagement. In this sense, one student commented:

Students in Tunisia should build themselves in society. They should be active in society either through student participation or through sharing their opinions. To be a student means that

¹⁷⁷ From questionnaire open-ended questions, processed with Nvivo software.

you should be a human being belonging to humanity in active, practical, mental and thinking terms (S7).

Academic social networks if developed in line with strategies underpinning university social responsibility, can be functional to civic engagement, as students share a common space, cultural proximity, educational prospects, similar interests and needs.

Another student also highlighted:

[...] it is to be academically and socially prepared in order to participate in the development of society and to have a role in the progress of future generation (S28).

Students seem to generally acknowledge their active role in society linking their educational experience to participation in society as both being an individual and collective duty. In this framework, universities are ideal places to foster social knowledge and community projects. Furthermore, students ought to be:

[...] responsible towards the country in all aspects and to be well educated at political and intellectual level [...] and, secondly, to improve intellectually, to have a knowledge and awareness of problems predominant in the country, from which to correct dysfunctions (E7).

To the same extent, social responsibility articulates a sense of belonging and participatory attitudes that can be passed onto future generations. Universities can become a platform where both resources and means can be available to foster engagement. As table 16 shows, around half of respondents confirmed that their social, political or cultural engagement was also linked to the university context. However, 68% of engineering against 30% of humanities students confirmed their engagement linked to the university, reinforcing previous findings on how the two faculties can

have different impacts on fostering academic social capital and students' social responsibility.

Table 16 - Student engagement linked to university.

		All Sample	Engineering	Humanities
Is your social/political engagement linked to University?	YES	49%	68%	30,80%
	NO	51%	32%	69,20%

In particular, it is central to consider how both membership and group homogeneity¹⁷⁸ are important elements to define nature and type of social relations. In fact, if social capital is embedded in closed groups - such as family, tribe, religious sect, same gender groups, etc. - this can foster intra-group bonding ties, negatively affecting cross-groups bridging social connections (p. 101). Findings show that two thirds of students belong to a group with a low level of homogeneity while around a third to a group/association with a medium-high level of homogeneity. This can suggest that academic social capital formation in Tunisian public universities is mainly characterised by looser bonding and more bridging ties as students might come from different cities, different socio-economic, political, religious and cultural backgrounds, but still sharing a wide-range of similar interests, needs and habits. In

¹⁷⁸ Group homogeneity included seven indicators: Community; Family; Sex; Religion; Education; Economic status; Clan (see Appendix V on research questionnaire - English version). Levels of homogeneity reflect cluster of participants' answer related to group characteristics. In particular, low level refers to groups characterised by only 1 or 2 indicators (out of the 7 above-mentioned); medium-high corresponds to a group sharing 3 to 4 indicators; whereas, high level of homogeneity consists of group with over 4 indicators. These indicators were used as previously identified and used during a World Bank project presented in the paper "A Dimensional Approach to Measuring Social Capital: Development and Validation of a Social Capital Inventory" by Deepa Narayan and Michael F.Cassidy (2001), to assess the relevance of heterogeneity in group membership positively associated to social capital development in local communities in Uganda.

this sense, creating bridging ties amongst students and across groups can foster social cohesiveness beyond potential dividing lines and also it can reduce confrontations, supporting dialogue and inclusiveness that is functional to positive “social capital” (pp. 99, 100).

Table 17 - Most important group level of homogeneity.

	Tot N	Valid Percent
None	1	1,80%
Low level (1-2)	37	66,10%
Medium-High level (3-4)	16	28,60%
High level (> 4)	2	3,60%

On the other hand, as shown in table 18, internet/social media networks and socio-cultural associations are the most important groups of belonging¹⁷⁹. In this sense, findings indicate a prospective generational shift in social capital creation from pre-revolution regime controlled traditional socio-cultural participation channels¹⁸⁰ to post-revolution non-traditional internet-related engagement (especially with reference to younger generations). In particular, the low or latent development of social responsibility third missions in public universities, might reflect students’ low level of volunteering and civic participation. Engineering students expressed higher involvement in socio-cultural, internet and volunteering activities, but lower participation to religious/Islamic associations. As explored earlier, humanities students, instead, tended to be equally involved in religious/Islamic and student

¹⁷⁹Removal of regime censorship on internet-based social media also granted freer use in the post-revolution period. Social media, during the Arab spring, have played a crucial role to obtain visibility internationally and, to facilitate social networking and access to reliable and up-to-date information on occurring events during the revolution, forming a stable platform to social capital creation.

¹⁸⁰ Regime policies banned any political activities overtly challenging the government, limiting student clubs linked mainly to socio-cultural activities, as in other Arab counties (see chapter 3).

union/political related activities¹⁸¹, whereas volunteering is still rather marginal. In fact, 22% of humanities against only 4% of engineering students are active members of the student union; whereas 30% humanities against none of engineering in political organisations¹⁸².

Table 18 – Most important group of belonging.

		N Tot	All	Engineering	Humanities
Most important group	Internet/social media	12	23,5%	29,2%	18,5%
	Socio-cultural	10	19,6%	29,2%	11,1%
	Religious	8	15,7%	4,2%	25,9%
	Student Union	7	13,7%	4,2%	22,2%
	Volunteering	5	9,8%	16,7%	3,7%
Second most important	Socio-cultural	13	29,5%	33,30%	25%
	Political	6	13,6%	0%	30%
	Sport	6	13,6%	16,70%	10%
	Internet/Social media	5	11,4%	12,50%	10%
	Religious	4	9,1%	8,3%	10%
	Professional Union	4	9,1%	16,7%	0%
Third most important	Internet/Social media	13	32,5%	27,3%	38,9%
	Social action	6	15%	13,6%	16,7%
	Volunteering	5	12,5%	9,1%	16,7%
	Professional Union	4	10%	18,2%	0%
	Socio-cultural	3	7,55%	9,1%	5,6%
	Religious	3	7,5%	9,10%	5,60%

To the same extent, engineering students rated volunteering as the third most important group with around 17 per cent of preferences; while humanities only as the fifth most important group, highlighting a recurrent trend between the two faculties. On the other hand, the overall lower rate of engagement in volunteering activities might be linked to pre-revolution censored associational activities which, if persisted, might also affect the consolidation of civil society and university-community partnership in the long term (pp. 106-112).

¹⁸¹Although, results could also be influenced by size and sample.

¹⁸² As emerged in previous analysis, bias in students sample might affect this trend.

In relation to social capital, social responsibility and democracy, a lower participation in political parties or student union might confirm a general level of youth disenchantment to politics and/or sense of mistrust towards governmental institutions, despite personal awareness and commitment to social and political change. Participation in religious associations/groups is also rated relatively low, around 10% across the dataset, suggesting a low impact on students' engagement, although generally a positive indicator of civic engagement and social capital creation¹⁸³ (pp. 68, 69). The control exerted by the regime over public and socio-political religious-based activities might once more explain the politicised impact on Islamic associational role in Tunisia. However, 26% humanity students rated religious association or religious-related activities as the most important group of belonging, relatively high if compared to around 4 per cent of engineering. This can be linked to the previously explored on-campus *secular-religious* polarised environments in the humanities faculty between Islamic-affiliated and left wing student unions (contrary to engineering faculty).

To the same extent, difference in students' family socio-cultural background and *non-scientific* vs. *scientific* specialisation might be further considered. The contentious role played by Islamic political parties and the Islamic-affiliated student union, side-lined by the growing public presence of ultra-conservative Salafi groups, might show growing interest in joining Islamic associations amongst undergraduates, despite the 2014 parliamentary election results¹⁸⁴. In this sense, existing *civic-political-religious* factors might develop an alternative paradigm in the Tunisian

¹⁸³ Overall, low students' commitment might suggest students can find alternative sources to interact with social networks and identify alternative personal motivation to engage.

¹⁸⁴Last October 2014 parliamentary election, won by secularist party Nidaa Tounes (39%) and followed by Islamist Ennahda party (31%), has changed the results of 2011 election which, at that time, granted the Islamic Ennahda party to govern the coalition in the three year-long *ad-interim* government with over 40%.

context, combining and reconnecting Islamic values, religious activities and political or social engagement. In this sense, the undergoing process for national political pacification might ease increasing tensions in highly polarised faculties.

Furthermore, from field observations, campus environments and educational facilities in terms of classrooms, technological infrastructures, libraries and campus cultural and social life organisations, can explain types and nature of opportunities for civic engagement and social networking. As highlighted earlier, the engineering faculty organised events with professional companies and open-door socio-cultural events fostering a wider sense of on-campus community belonging, whereas this has not been noticed in humanities faculty where mainly academic conferences were advertised. Universities' academic social capital and local networking are key to support services to the community via volunteering and community projects but also to engage students within the democratic and civic life. In Tunisia, interactions amongst students from different faculties and with other faculties nation-wide is a missing element which can reinforce students' social participation while increasing social capital stocks across faculties and cities. In particular, universities can contribute to students' social capital development thanks to inter-faculty and community-wide networks involving several actors to generate structural, cognitive and relational social capital including public institutions, students, professors, administrative staff, community partners and private companies.

For instance, findings confirm a medium level of *student-to-student* academic social capital as around a third of respondents ask other students to explain course material and nearly half of them explain course material, as well as participate in team project (**red answers**).

Table 19 – How often have you experienced the following situations this year¹⁸⁵?

ALL SAMPLE	Quite often	Often	Sometime	Never
Ask another student to explain class materials	7,5%	24,5%	60,4%	7,5%
Explain other students class materials	9,4%	35,8%	54,7%	0%
Team study project	15,40%	30,8%	34,6%	19,2%
Understand others perspective in class discussion	23,5%	25,5%	39,2%	11,8%
Discuss with people of different race/ethnic origin	31,5%	22,2%	31,5%	14,8%
Discuss with people of different economic status	32,7%	34,6%	25%	7,7%
Discuss with people of different religious beliefs	17,3%	28,8%	46,2%	7,7%
Discuss with people of different political views	41,5%	37,7%	18,9%	1,9%
Use information to understand social problems	20,8%	24,5%	45,3%	9,4%
Connect class materials to social problems	18,9%	20,8%	35,8%	24,5%
Learn class materials by heart	15,1%	39,6%	30,2%	15,1%
Apply learnt theories to practical problems	8%	30%	42%	20%
Develop competences of informed/ active citizen	8%	16%	44%	32%
Discuss with a Professor class contents outside	13,50%	21,2%	48,1%	17,3%
Discuss with a Professor study/professional career	1,9%	24,5%	45,3%	28,3%
Take part in an internship	13,2%	9,4%	41,5%	35,8%
Volunteering via faculty or academic professors	13%	16,7%	50%	20,4%
Volunteering via student union or other	20,8%	17%	35,8%	26,4%

To the same extent, students also bridge relations via sharing knowledge/information in classroom or during group exam preparation and open discussion with students from different socio-economic, religious or political opinions (**red answers**), fostering also mutual understanding, information exchange and cooperation. On the other hand, around 40% of respondents stated they use class materials to understand and engage

¹⁸⁵List of 10 items in addition to the *Other* category (see Appendix V on research questionnaire (English version)).

with social problems; although 23% have never done so and 19% never applied learnt theories to practical problems, with over 50% of participants confirming that they have learnt class material by heart (**green answers**). Findings then suggest that universities have not yet structurally adopted a pedagogical framework to foster critical and engaged students. To the same extent, around 30% never developed competences as informed and active citizens and 44% only sometimes, confirming underdeveloped university SR in terms of courses on civic engagement and education for democracy that are crucial to students' formation conducive to civic engagement (contrary to students' expectations as previously explored in relation to university social responsibility).

In relation to *students-professor* networking and social capital building (**blue answers**), students seem to reconfirm that they do not often engage with professors in relation to discussing class materials or career development, confirming weak ties and low level of interactions or social networking. The lack of communication, interpersonal connections and information sharing can often lead to antagonistic and power-based dynamics, limiting also generalised trust. In fact, a student and member of the NGO, argued that:

The problem was mainly at communication level, it was not easy to communicate with professors or the administration. There has always been a barrier, we could not improve things. Even if we, the students, had some ideas to improve the environment and information, we had no ears who could hear us. They wanted to impose everything and they did not want to listen to our propositions on what we really wanted (Interview M1, N).

To the same extent, *student-professors* and *student-administrative staff* networks, shared norms and trust have not been consistently embedded in Tunisian public

universities. Limited channels for open and cohesive dialogue or constructive confrontation amongst students, the administration and faculty members, seems to play a crucial role, affecting on-campus interactions and cooperation. In particular, findings seem to further suggest how the development of co-constructive relations with professors can improve students' self-esteem not only in terms of commitment to study programs but also social/civic awareness. In fact, a student pointed out how:

It is fundamental to have communication in a framework of respect and improvement. Administration needs to provide for the optimal conditions for students and professors to work properly for good learning. Professors need to contribute to improve the faculty and the nation [...] they need to instruct them (students) at level of consciousness...you do not have to be passive, you need to be responsible and aware of the situation we live in. Students need also to be responsible towards the other two parties. It is required respect and motivation (Interview M1, E).

Furthermore, in relation to university third missions fostering *student-community* and *students-industry* networking (**grey answers**), findings suggest that only one out of five have participated quite often or often in professional internship, while 36 per cent have never done so, reinforcing previous considerations on public universities' low commitment to students professional development via internships, despite being one of both government and student's main priority. Seemingly, as previously explored, 29 per cent of respondents confirmed having participated often in volunteering via university while 37 per cent via their student union or other organisations; however, over 1 out of 5 have never done it. These assumptions can suggest the significance of further fostering academic social capital for social responsibility in partnership with the local community. In fact, a student critically considered:

There are lots of shortcomings. Faculty has to support an education to form responsible, active and aware students. However, the education system is not able to provide for students' needs. For this, student's role needs to change from receiving to participate in order to make correction to the system with a cultural, political, social participation - student/student; student/university; student/society (S28).

In this sense, Tunisian public universities have not yet constructively established a coherent campus-wide framework fostering social capital for social responsibility involving all parties (administrative staff, professors, students, industries and civil society). In particular, the imposition of a top-down authoritarian decision-making process resulted in:

- disregarding students voices and expectations;
- undervaluing the role of students as partners and members of universities;
- limiting students actions in and outside the campus;
- creating an *us vs. them* frame, often based on authority and mistrust.

For this, in Tunisia, academic on-campus and off-campus social capital development seemed to be latent or rather fragmented, despite students' personal awareness and commitment to democracy, social and civic engagement. Society-wide hierarchical power structures and limited university-community dynamics have had significant implications for *students-professor-administration-society* relations and networks' development.

Academic social capital creation in university, during the pre-revolution period might also have rather restrained wider political engagement or embedded democratic

attitudes. Nonetheless, the revolution experience has allowed for *latent social capital* development enabling social relationships for community engagement. Students, in fact, are active in socio-cultural, political, civic or religious activities fostering social cohesion beyond socio-cultural, religious or economic differences. Social networks in university contexts seemed to be characterised by loose bonding but wider bridging ties. Furthermore, internet related social media seemed also to complement class-related *student-to-student* social capital creation, characterising new forms of *virtual-to-real* social engagement amongst undergraduates.

The next chapter further explores findings in relation to the literature review. In particular, it identifies future implications of democracy, social capital and social responsibility development in Tunisian public universities.

CHAPTER 7 –University Social Responsibility in Tunisia: Contextualising Research Findings

Introduction

This chapter aims at further engaging research findings to the literature's main debates and identified gaps, exploring what impacts and emergent considerations, university and students' social responsibility, might have in present democratic transition in Tunisia. The interconnection between recent revolutionary movements, universities' social role in the 21st century, Islam and democracy can help understanding political and socio-cultural changes in the region. As explored in earlier chapters, research limitations in terms of sample size and potential bias are important aspects to take into considerations in the light of presented arguments and critical reflections. In particular, three sub-sections explore the implications of:

- 1- Islam as a re-emerging discourse in post-revolution Tunisia and its contribution to the development of democracy, social capital and social responsibility.
- 2- The role Tunisian public universities have in fostering on-campus inter-communicative environments, curricular and extra-curricular civic engagement programs, including education for democracy.
- 3- Students' social networks and academic social capital in relation to students-professors-administration-community's complex dynamics.

In the conclusion, the role and missions of Tunisian public universities are addressed in relation to socio-cultural, political and economic factors of a post-revolution changing society.

Islam: Democracy, Student Identity and University Social Responsibility

The predominantly bipolar post-World War II world order gravitated around US and USSR hegemonic superpowers. The end of the Cold war, instead, promoted a neo-capitalist economy and supported representative democracy as dominant paradigm based on political pluralism in the framework of civic, political and human rights. In the Arab world, however, post-colonial authoritarian regimes fostered a subaltern process of unaccomplished democratisation due to restricted political and civil freedoms, cultural censorship, corruption and clientelism. The post-independence social transition to modernity consolidated a hybrid system and conflicting discourses between Arab nationalism, favouring neo-colonial Western values-system and institutions; and, political Islamism rooted in socio-economic, cultural and religious traditions. The recent social uprisings in Arab countries suggest how unresolved tensions around the *Islamic vs. secular* divide affect society's reconfiguration and democratic consolidation in the region. Popular demands for democracy, freedoms, justice, dignity and employment represented a landmark in North African modern history. However, in Tunisia, growing social tensions, political instability and public security concerns, swiftly exacerbated political dialogue and social pacification.

Moderate and radical Islamic parties and associations are considered important actors in the new framework of social responsibility and social capital development

for social cohesion and democracy building. Democracy, social responsibility and civic engagement are increasingly determined by the confrontational interplay between *Western-secular* and *Islamic-religious* paradigms which are central to Tunisian societal development. Islamic values and beliefs can offer a shared cognitive-emotional and social platform underpinning trust, social networking and volunteering activities. Islam then represents the most prominent and popular alternative discourse to identity building, personal and collective motivation for social or political engagement, as fulfilment of religious tenets. In this sense, what is the role of Islam in the aftermath of the Arab spring? How does the *Islamic vs secular* divide shape Tunisian society? Do Islamic values contribute to students' identity to foster social responsibility?

Public universities are critical not only for students' professional formation but also for democracy and students' civic and political engagement. For this, the research findings engaged to explore with three key issues:

- 1- democracy and Islam;
- 2- students' identity and Islam;
- 3- Islamic values and students' social responsibility/civic engagement.

In fact, universities can offer a platform where students from diverse economic, social and religious background engage to respond to complex societal challenges. In post-revolution Tunisia, however, universities are facing growing pressure to address social issues related to democracy, community socio-cultural development, religious and

social tolerance while engaging with questions of teaching quality, research excellence and students' unemployment.

Islam and Democracy

From an historical perspective, societies develop context-based socio-cultural, economic and ethical structures which shape local habits, traditions and specific value-systems. In Arab countries, the embedded *non-integrative* semi-democratic model (see p. 160) often censored oppositional political and social forces, including Islamic associations and political parties to the detriment of integrative channels for public engagement. The conflicting paradigm based on a subjective *adherence* vs. *rejection* approach to democracy, unfolds an understanding of more complex processes linking personal and collective awareness to political participation, social responsibility and civic engagement. For this, how have recent socio-political changes and political processes in Tunisia impacted democratic attitudes?

Findings show high levels of respondents' awareness and adherence to democracy and democratic principles in relation to: freedoms, citizens' rights and duties, respect, tolerance¹⁸⁶, dignity and power to the people. The study considers government-citizens relationships within a more dynamic reality, characterised by coexisting and conflicting narratives within three groups: *positivist/idealist*; *negativist/idealist* and *realist/pioneering* (p. 157-160). In particular, public opinion in Arab societies confirmed how the majority would be ready and supportive of a

¹⁸⁶ Democracy, however, was never directly associated to Islam or Islamic values but generally associated to religious tolerance, showing a progressive adaptation and contextual hybridisation to a Western-biased definition, limiting the scope to reconceptualise and redefine it to emerging socio-political and cultural realities.

democratic system (Ciftci, 2010). However, findings rather revealed how democratic political systems and the practice of citizenship in Tunisia or Arab countries carries different challenges, analytical categories and conflicting understanding on politics, government's role and Western influences. Personal awareness and identity building are often interlinked elements underpinning decision-making and actions. In these terms, democracy as a category and practice can become a contentious, incoherent and interchangeable concept readapted to changing political circumstances.

To the same extent, the democratic gap in the Arab region was considered in relation to the presence of non-democratic and/or military regimes (Nasr, 2005); geopolitical international interests (Diamond, 2010), including US and Western countries supporting autocratic regimes (Bayat, 2007). In Tunisia, in fact, central government controlled and censored democratic participation, political opposition, including Islamic parties, social life and the media (Sadiki, 2002), affecting basic political, social and civil freedoms (Lawner, 2012). The top-down authoritative and self-reinforcing coercive system resulted in lack of opportunities for democratic participation and trend of social engagement's under-development. In university context, findings seem to suggest that despite significant achievement of freedom of speech (p. 215), associational life (p. 220, 230) and access to information, including the internet (p.229); lack of university reform (p. 201, 202), the replacement of university police with new forms of faculty control and restricted freedoms of manifestation (p.200), have rather halted a process of wider democratic reforms. As a consequence, however, the democratic deficit rather derives to specific local and/or national contexts characterised by low level of trust in government institutions; the lack and infringements of basic freedoms; low political participation especially in the youth; as well as, non-democratic practices of corruption and clientelism (as during the Ben Ali

regime). For this, grassroot movements which allowed for unprecedented socio-political reconfigurations did not impact much upon the crystallisation of reproduced social control and censorship¹⁸⁷.

Furthermore, oppositional forces (liberal-democratic, Islamist or leftist) have been systematically confronted with regime coercive, economic, political and bureaucratic power, suffocating also social mediating structures (Singerman, 2004). In particular, Islam has been identified as a key category impacting on post-revolution democracy building in Tunisia. In this sense, despite scholars often argued democracy and Islam (i.e. Islamic values and norms) are reciprocally exclusive, according to Tessler (2010) and Stepan (2011), Islam is not an obstacle to democratisation in the framework of a political project both democratic and Islamic. The study highlighted how the co-presence of alternative and conflicting discourses of *public vs. private* Islam in relation to moderate and radical political Islamic parties has impacted adversely upon the post-revolution democratic process. For this, in Tunisia, the political vacuum occupied by moderate Islamic party Ennahda has raised concerns of transparency and trust as political interests are mixed with religious purposes. Islamic political party, oppressed and marginalised during the regime, regained a public role despite the fact that Islam is not “something new to Tunisian society” (p. 164).

On the other hand, the social and public confrontational role occupied by radical Islamists has challenged freedom of expression, political stability, public security and social cohesion undermining democracy and social engagement. Findings confirmed how the creation of parallel power structures (p. 165) such as political

¹⁸⁷The new anti-terrorism law on 25th July 2015, approved by the Parliament with 174 votes in favour and only 10 abstentions, confirms new national security measures, potentially also impacting on citizens' rights. (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/07/25/massacre-tunisia-anti-terror-law/30659205/>, accessed on 07/08/2015 at 13:58).

parties, associations, including university student unions, have exacerbated conflicts (especially in the faculty of humanities), confirming that the problem is “nor Islam or religion but the radical Islamists who are using religion for other projects and personal needs” (p. 166), linked to the use of Islam in the political and public sphere. In public universities, the secular project (p. 180, 182) has also disconnected Islamic values and principles in favour of a modern and scientific higher education.

In Tunisia, nation-state building consolidated conflicting political, social and cultural relationships between a secular Western inspired citizenship and Islam socio-political realities. Democracy thus opens to subaltern analytical categories in relation to political rights and basic freedoms within a post-colonial *secular vs. Islamic* political project. In this sense, the fragile and fragmented socio-political normalisation process is the real precondition to democracy sustainability. Post-revolution political cohabitation has marked a crucial step towards democracy building by re-establishing the contribution of an Islamic political and social agenda. However, the 2014 parliamentary and presidential election’s success by Nidaa Tounes secular party seems to suggest a counter-alignment to redefine national political stability and social dialogue. In particular, the changing paradigm from private to public Islam has raised issues of political trust, public security and contribution to society. Furthermore, universities are rather regarded as secular institutions for scientific knowledge production. However, the *secular vs. Islamic* division might compromise dialogue between secular and Islamic-related students’ unions, affecting democratic attitudes of respect, dialogue and cooperation (as in the humanities faculty).

Islamic values and identity

The research also aimed at further understanding what role Islamic values have on identity building, social trust and civic engagement. Islam and Islamic values are foundational to shape personal consciousness, social relationships and shared common beliefs in Tunisian society. Islamism has been defined as “liberticidal, anti-democratic, anti-feminist and anti-progress movement”, based on the indiscriminate use of physical violence and proselytism aiming at “Islamising” society (Charfi, 2008: 329). However, in Tunisia, findings highlight how identification with Islam is an important and complementary source, potentially promoting social capital and social responsibility in line with democratic principles. In particular, identification with Islam is not a self-evident, homogenous and static process as Islamic values coexist and interact with overlapping narratives - Islamic moderate and radical or secular (p. 174-178). In particular, students tend to confirm a medium-high level of adherence to the five pillars of Islam as *Shahada* 79%; *Sauf* 72%; *Salat* 68%; and the holy book, *Quran* 77%; but to a less extent *Zakat* 51% and *Hajj* 30% (p. 175). Furthermore, in the Tunisian context, findings confirm the adherence to a moderate version of Islam with lower levels of identification with *Hijab* (22%); the notion of the *Ummah* (Islamic community/brotherhood) with only 24%; *Romdhan* (fasting month) with 48%; and *Shariaa* around 21% (p.175).

Regime policies have also shaped the higher education system to accommodate the Arabic and Islamic tradition within the predominant framework of modernity, national identity and citizenship. Findings show how freedom of expression (22%), tolerance (19%), human rights (17%) and human dignity (14%) seem to constitute the most important *secular/western* values, linked to individual political, civic and social

rights and duties in reference to democratic principles¹⁸⁸. On the other hand, Islamic principles mainly refers to ethical and spiritual values linked to devotion to God. As a consequence, Islamic values have not fostered directly a culture for civic engagement, limiting Islamic social capital. In particular, in relation to Islamic social capital, government censorship restrained opportunities to democratic and civic participation with limited influence of Islamic values on identity formation, fostering a fragmented and subaltern model for social responsibility. In fact, findings confirm how around 51% of students identified with *Zakat* (compulsory donation or charity); 57% with *Adal* (Justice) and *Sadaqa* (community participation); 49% with *Maslah* (public good) and 36% with *Tatawa* (Volunteering).

Findings then confirm previous study (Hassan, 2002), when Islam and Islamic political parties or associations have a lower impact on society's cultural, political and social development, it normally leads to the development of a hybrid system. In fact, religious values coexist with other value-systems in influencing individual and collective identities. In Tunisia, moderate level of religiosity and identification with Islamic principles suggest the rejection of a conservative interpretation of Islam. However, the transition from a *traditional* to a *modernised* and *globalised* society can explain students' exposure to an alternative value system (i.e. Western secular democracy), as Islam is not the primary framework of reference¹⁸⁹. In fact the study highlights how, if Islamic values have a moderate influence in Tunisian society, this

¹⁸⁸Democracy, nationalism, political rights, freedom of association and social participation are not perceived as core elements in students' identity (p. 150). This might confirm a generalised under-developed status of social participation and civic engagement as result of passive adaptation to regime policies and low level of trust in public institutions despite individual high level of individual awareness.

¹⁸⁹ As such, cultural, linguistic, religious, political and socio-economic differences can lead to the development of subaltern and complex narratives in the definition Tunisian national identity impacting on individual value-framework, including reference to: *coloniser vs. colonised*; *tradition vs. modernity*; *religion vs. secular*; *French vs. Arabic*; *Berber vs. Arabic*; *urban vs. rural*.

might increase complexity due to subaltern adaptations between embedded Islamic and secular traditions.

In university contexts, findings confirm how universities' role in promoting religious activities was largely dismissed with 73 per cent of preferences, mirroring emergent post-revolution conflicting relationships between Islam, society and politics. This might confirm how the construction of a secular education system (Kazem, 1992) has hindered Islamic values and norms to determine structural, relational and cognitive social capital that are central to identity building and civic behaviours. On the other hand, radical Islamist groups also had a negative impact inside and outside universities, posing a threat to democracy building (Torelli et al, 2012). In fact, post-revolution confrontations in universities have exacerbated degree of co-habitation. Findings (p.180-183) seem then to confirm how Islamic activists sustain a conflicting system based on the development of "states within states", offering an alternative model to democracy and social capital (Clarck, 2004).

In post-revolution Tunisia, the Islamic revival, in its moderate and more extremist version, has undoubtedly reconfigured political and social contexts. However, findings highlighted how Islamic values and norms can foster social cohesion and democratic dialogue (p.183) but, also it is also fuelling social fragmentation within the present process of *unfamiliar democratisation* (Boose, 2012). On the other hand, findings highlighted how Islam and Islamic values might not represent a primary source of students' identity formation; although this might change as moderate and radical Islamic parties and associations are increasing their influence in society. In public universities, religious traditional and modern secular sets of values are rather complementary, although still evolving within a conflictual and politicised framework. In fact, if Islamic and Western value-systems seem to be both supportive

to social responsibility, trust and commitment to society; confrontational elements, specifically in faculty of humanities, might limit academic social capital, democratic dialogue and social responsibility. Islamic values then could contribute to foster democratic and civic attitudes for active engagement. However, existing political and socio-cultural barriers are hindering a change in socialisation patterns, fostering social conformism and the under-utilisation of Islamic social capital for social responsibility.

Islamic values and civic engagement

Religions are important resources not only for individual identity formation but also can be foundational also to democracy building, social capital creation and civic engagement (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Bourdieu, 1990; Fukuyama, 2002; Smidt, 1999; Furrow et al, 2004; King, 2003; Ozorak 2003), as well as, Islam in Arab countries (Faour, 2010; Sarkissian, 2012; Hunt-Hendrix, 2011). Islamic beliefs, values and social practices have a direct influence on students' identity, their sense of belonging, trustworthiness, social awareness and commitment to society. However, family, education and religious institutions form complex and, at times, competing paradigms for social and ethical norms. According to findings, in fact, family is the most trusted group, followed by friends (most important group across dataset), associations (third with 47% of preferences); and, to a lesser extent, mosques/religious associations (p.171). Trust in government institutions, instead, was the lowest rated as the third most important group¹⁹⁰. Religious associations in comparison to families, friends and

¹⁹⁰ This, in turn, also suggests controversial issues related to democracy building due to lack of citizens' confidence and low levels of political participation.

associations are considered less influential to build students' trust and to promote context-based engagement.

In this framework, Islamic associations and mosques have only partially fostered social responsibility, volunteering and civic engagement. The control exerted by the regime over Islamic associations restricted their role in offering a platform for volunteering, to educate to tolerance, respect and democratic values of social justice and mutual cooperation. In fact, students' participation in religious associations/groups is relatively low, on average around 10% across the dataset. Furthermore, respecting religious values or acting in accordance with them, is considered as third most important reason for students' participation with only 10,6% of preferences (p. 225). This reflects a different situation if compared to catholic associations in Western countries (Marta, Rossi, & Boccacin, 1999; Putnam, 2000). To the same extent, findings have also confirmed low participation across the dataset in religious activities (i.e. mosque, religious associations). Engineering students rated participation only between 9 and 4 per cent; whereas humanities students rated it as most important group with 26% (p. 237), corresponding to higher level of on-campus *secular-religious* polarised and conflicting environments. As a result, Islamic associations have generated higher levels of spiritual capital while developing political subversive emancipatory actions against government's repressive policies, to the detriment of promoting volunteering based on Islamic social values.

In relation to students' decision-making processes, findings further confirm how family, friends and media technologies are the most influential determinants. Religious institutions are only rated alternatively 19% in engineering and 14.3% in humanities students as fourth within second most important opinion-making reference

(p. 173). Most likely, these assumptions reconfirm how coercive policies¹⁹¹ have restrained the opportunity to develop Islamic social capital and social networks in the public sphere. In this framework, findings suggest that there is not a strong relationship between students' trust, opinion-making, identity building and civic engagement in relation to Islamic values and participation to mosques/religious associations. The study seems to confirm previous studies (Jamal, 2007), since political participation, civic engagement and Islamic social capital might not be self-reinforcing (contrary to Western contexts). In fact, there are interrelated factors undermining social capital creation, civic engagement and democracy building, such as:

- The lack of civic engagement activities promoted by mosques or Islamic associations.
- The under-utilisation of Islamic values as a framework to foster social capital for social responsibility and volunteering projects.
- Islamic institutions' low influence on students' decision-making, trust and motivation for engagement.
- Existing conflicting tensions between Islamic vs. secular socio-political agenda.

On the other hand, it is also relevant to assess if post-revolution changes might contribute to allow Islamic associations to foster the development of democracy in Tunisia, given the risk of repressive policies to prevent the extremist drift (Cavatorta, 2006). In fact, post-independence secularisation and nationalisation policies have reproduced a positivistic and modern conception of universities as sites of scientific

¹⁹¹ In Tunisia as in other Arabic countries, Islamic charitable institutions were replaced with state-run substitutes ending independent Islamic charitable institutions (Bremer, 2004).

knowledge production. Findings also suggest how universities should have a neutral stand without promoting religious activities (p. 182), despite the need in universities for dialogue and tolerance between politicised student unions (p.167). Public universities can facilitate the establishment of intercultural and inter-faith coexistence as in the case of the engineering faculty. However, as in the faculty of humanities, they can also experience in-campus tensions, lack of dialogue, trust and cooperation due to secular vs. religious polarisation (see Raill et al, 2006). In particular, in the engineering faculty, the presence of a students' parliament representing all students has created a platform for mutual understanding, respect and dialogue (p. 210), limiting oppositional dynamics related to the *secular-religious* divide. In university contexts, political Islam can potentially unsettle social participation while fostering academic social capital fragmentation, detrimental to the development of campus cohesive and democratic environments.

In particular, the development of an Islamic-dominated *public sphere* has fomented new conflicting tensions confirmed by the establishment of “parallel institutions” linked to Islamic political parties/associations. Furthermore, findings show how the return of *public Islam* has raised confrontations and conflicts. In universities, students do not seem to be relating civic engagement, trust and identity formation to Islamic values. In the current transition period, the development of new narratives for social responsibility and democratic participation might not be flourishing due to the political instability, reproducing patterns of control and censorship (Lawner, 2012). In addition to this, the emergence of radical Islamic movements can jeopardise political dialogue, transparency, accountability and social cohesion, engendering social mistrust and a sense of cultural threat, determining a re-interpretation of personal freedoms. In Tunisia, if successfully implemented, the

undergoing normalisation and pacification is an important step to build a more inclusive and democratic environments beyond *nationalism/secularism vs. political Islam* power-struggle dynamics, limiting centripetal radical social forces in order to sustain the co-development of society.

The next section addresses and explores the development, limits, barriers and implications of universities' social responsibilities in Tunisia.

University Social Responsibility

In the last 20 years, higher education has globally grown in investment, demand, offer differentiation, national wealth production and jobs' creation. Fast changing socio-cultural de-colonisation and post-hegemonic political contexts have shaped *North vs. South* unequal economic development based on knowledge *production* and *consumption* dynamics. The predominant neo-liberal and Western-centred model favoured the implementation of privatisation policies, redefining public services, labour dynamics and social agency. Universities have thus become key actors in developing knowledge-based and market-driven economies based on *scientific vs. humanities* profitability logics, social-cultural commodification and standardisation, redefining students as customers or consumers.

In Arab countries, national privatisation policies supported the implementation of a university-industry-government development model, placing national economic and graduates' employability at the centre of universities' entrepreneurship. However, growing socio-economic inequalities, structured unemployment, unaccomplished economic liberalisation and brain-drain dynamics, undermined social sustainability

and the capacity of public universities to foster corporate social responsibility and democracy in the region. In this sense, in post-revolution undergoing democratic processes, Tunisian public universities have been unable to reconfigure their role to meet job market requirements, to effectively commit to its social role and to develop an engaged university model.

Tunisian Public Universities Mission-s

The adoption of a dominant university-industry-government triple Helix model (Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz, 2000) increased global competitiveness and innovation strategies, dividing universities in centres of excellence and centres of reproduction (King et al, 2011). The distinctive market-oriented institutional mission of economic utility and income generation readapted the notion of service, management, accountability and corporate responsibility (Bridges, 2007). However, the revitalisation of universities third missions for civic engagement has favoured the development of new ethos, supporting social responsibility and democracy (Cooper, 2011; Mollas-Gallart, 2002; Vasilescu, 2010; Watson et al, 2011). In Arab countries, modernisation and globalisation have gradually hybridised society, determining conflicting binary value-systems (Camilleri, 1984) and deepening political, social, economic and cultural “*subaltern mundialisation*” (Bensaad, 2011). Furthermore, government policies supportive of economic growth, technological innovation and students’ employability undermined the development of an engaged university model (Bouhamed et al, 2010), leaving universities in the Arab region with a deficit in community-university engagement initiatives (GUNI, 2014). In this sense, Tunisian public universities have adopted a subaltern model characterised by limited autonomy

due to government control, low levels of Arab-Arab higher education cooperation and limited university social responsibility programs (UNESCO, 2009).

In particular, the 2008 HE national law emphasised knowledge transfer, economic development, students' employability, research and education quality as key priorities, marginalising important issues such as democratic citizenship, civic skills and social responsibility. Findings identified public universities as institutions which ought to provide *free education* (41%); excellence in *teaching* (21%); transfer *employability skills* (21% - 32% for humanities students); promoting *professional internship* (13% - 20% for engineering students); as well as, developing its social dimension mainly via *civic engagement courses* (15%) and promoting *civic and moral behaviour* (12%) (p. 190). For this, education is considered a public good, contrary to global trends of privatisation and commodification. Tunisian public universities are also intended as sites for civic engagement and democratic citizenship, promoting volunteering, community-wide research project and supporting on-campus socio-cultural initiatives. Students seem then to value university third missions, in partnership with economic and social stakeholders in line with international trends (pp. 81, 82) while questioning the establishment of a *semi-entrepreneurial* triple-helix model, potentially contributing to social tensions. In particular, contrary to government policies, the under-developed university-community-industry-government model limits the potential to reduce the gap between knowledge acquired in the classroom, students' expectations and community well-being.

Furthermore, teaching quality and employability skills are still regarded as underachieved, despite government's endeavour to develop a knowledge economy via human capital formation. For this, institutional autonomy, competitiveness, teaching and research quality and outreach initiatives, emerged to be as key areas of reforms.

In fact, findings suggest how strategies to achieve a market-driven education within the triple-helix model might have neglected:

- teaching quality and professional formation (p. 191);
- degree devaluation pushing graduates into under-demanded careers (p.192, 193);
- opportunities for public/private internships (p.193, 194).

Low commitment to support students' professional internships, fragmented strategies and unresponsive management can affect students' learning experience. The reproduction of a traditional educational model based on face-to-face teaching modules detached from context-based knowledge, failed to address socio-economic challenges and to adapt to socio-political democratic changes.

In fact, professional internship and university social dimension lie at the heart of university third missions. To the same extent, respondents believe universities need to be more active in promoting civic behaviour (83%); civic engagement courses (81%); social inclusion (80%) and volunteering (78%), which are key to both curricular and co-curricular education objectives (p. 197). Findings also highlight a potential pattern characterised by a *humanities theoretical vs. engineering practical* divide, as humanities students, rated higher courses on civic engagement while engineering students volunteering and civic engagement activities. (p. 190, 197). As such, public universities have only partially embraced an *engaged university* model and only marginally developed partnerships with public-private external stakeholders within the local community (Cooper, 2011). In fact, findings suggest how “universities need to make a contribution in the formation of an attitude and an

understanding/awareness of social problems” (p.195). In Tunisia, outreach activities are still fragmented; whereas universities’ social mission, as per the governmental 2008 HE reform, has not yet been institutionalised (Bahri 2012), undermining students, professors and administration cohesive cooperation. In addition to this, findings also confirm how students’ welfare¹⁹², needs, interests, learning expectations and faculty services might be under-performed, affecting the development of a student-centred university (Neary, 2012).

On the other hand, political participation (40%) and engaging in political debates (30%) are not regarded as central university missions. Reflections upon a de-politicised public university might imply a rejection of students’ traditional forms of political activism. The general resentment against the presence of a university police (p.200, 216), controlling and censoring on-campus activities (confirming previous studies Holmes, 2008; Hussayini, 2012), might also open new windows for students’ social and civic engagement, adopting a socialisation model based on cohesion and consensus rather than conflicts. However, the low level of trust in government and political parties, instead, have deepened post-revolution political power-struggles and confrontations between radical right and left-wing student unions (Boukhars, 2014). In this sense, findings, contrary to the literature, open up to further understanding how, in Tunisia, students’ civic engagement and social responsibility might not be linked to political participation and democracy building (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Campante & Chor, 2012). In this sense, freedom of expression, civic engagement and political participation can re-establish a new sense of citizenship, despite the challenges of political instability and social violent confrontations.

¹⁹² In fact, students’ socio-political and economic right defence was rated by 70% of respondents (p.195).

University Social Responsibility: Barriers and Implications

As previously explored, in the Arab region and particularly in Tunisia, there is a lack of research on universities social responsibility programs (including students' social responsibility) and data availability in reference to outreach programmes (GUNI, 2014; UNESCO, 2009). In pre-revolution Tunisia, findings highlight how government's control and censorship over universities and students' life, fostered habits of political *dis-trust* and civic *dis-engagement*. University social responsibility and students' civic engagement could not have flourished in the absence of basic freedoms, influencing students' awareness and attitudes (p.207, 216). Civil society organisations have also been either functional to government national propaganda or confronted with censorship and violations (Sadiki, 2002), limiting their public role in society. In this framework, the gradual removal of regime control redefined the political and social life, opening to civil associations. After the revolution, the flourishing of new associations has changed attitudes and available opportunities, confirming how 52% of respondents believe universities should fund civil society organisations (p.197). However, universities slow responsiveness in developing a framework for university-community relationships (p. 222-225), can still hinder students' participation.

In Tunisia, university social responsibility would necessarily imply a progressive change in attitudes and habits rooted into campus life. As findings suggest, universities seem to act more as a brake rather than a vector, highlighting how a political consensus is required to identify the nature, definition, scope and strategies to be implemented in order to support universities and students in their respective wider societal roles (p.206-209). Moreover, despite students' awareness to civic participation

(**motivation**), there is a lack of institutional **capacity** and under-developed social **networks** to enhance civic life (see Kirlin, 2002; Ridha, 2013). In this sense, universities would need also to promote an alternative social agenda, moving beyond crystallised dynamics, historically based on confrontations, authority and mistrust.

In this perspective, if the Arab spring has encouraged individual and collective awareness and commitment to political and social change, socio-political dynamics can still generate low cooperation, passive adaptation or growing dissent. In fact, 47% of respondents never took part in volunteering activities whether via their faculty, professors, student union or other organisations (p. 240). For this, participatory opportunities might not flourish in the presence of non-supportive *professor-students-society* integrated learning programs. Professors can lead to educating students as aware and critical citizens promoting civic engagement courses to understand and address social problems¹⁹³. In particular, if students tend to foster academic and social networks by bridging relations with students from different socio-economic, religious or political opinions, universities need to support students' engagement in local communities, public institutions and businesses (p.240-242). This is an important missing element that can be considered foundational to support cohesion and dialogue in contexts characterised by diverse social settings.

In this sense, findings have suggested how different factors can explain the under-development of university and students social responsibility, as the:

- low level of volunteering and social responsibility's embedded culture;
- lack of trust/cooperation amongst students, professors and administration;
- lack of institutional autonomy, transparency and accountability;

¹⁹³ Only 8% of respondents applied quite often theories to practical problems and developed competences of informed/active citizens; whereas, respectively 20% and 32% have never done it (p. 238).

- campus police control and censorship over associational activities;
- *semi-democratic* system limiting social, political and civic engagement.

These barriers shed a light on how, in Tunisia, political and civil rights' restrictions based on government control over universities' autonomy, transparency and accountability limited also the development of a social dimension. The study suggests that the promotion of USR in Tunisia is still marginal¹⁹⁴ and fragmented and the development of a more democratic society is a precondition for establishing a *normalised society*.

In countries like Tunisia, characterised by pseudo-liberal economies and semi-democratic political systems, social and civic participatory attitudes have suffered from restricting freedoms, governmental disincentives, clientelism and corruption. In this sense, there is an inverse and negative connection between university social responsibility and student participation. Social responsibility's under-development can be mainly associated to context-based political and socio-cultural environments, rather than linked to lack of students' interests, identity building or personal awareness. Post-revolution dynamics suggest that students and civic associations have emerged as main social actors and drivers of social change. However, new opportunities need to be considered in the framework of political and social tensions, restricting available resources (including the development of Islamic social capital), channels of expressions or individual freedoms. Tunisian public universities are witnessing political changes and emergent socio-economic challenges that could be addressed

¹⁹⁴ Findings also showed a difference in USR development between Engineering and Humanities faculties, being the former more pro-active in the development of in-campus events, clubs and external relationships with both companies and local communities; and the latter, more characterised by a fragmented approach to USR often led by professors or single departments.

successfully only by adopting common strategies with public institutions, the industrial sector, civil associations and community leaders, potentially leading to the gradual redefinition of their role and missions in society.

The next section explores social capital development as a central factor to students' social responsibility.

Academic Social Capital and University Social Responsibility

Social capital is a multi-dimensional and context-based concept referring to embedded social, economic, cultural or political interrelationships, determining social agency. In this sense, type and complexity of social relations might lead to information sharing, trust and community cohesiveness. Social and political participation can also favour better democratic and civic environments (as explored in Western-centred contexts). However, in Arab countries, social relations can be rooted in different value-systems and socio-cultural environments within semi-democratic political systems, exerting control over civil society and restraining civic and political participation. As a consequence, social trust, civic engagement and political participation might not be self-reinforcing. In Tunisia, the government tended to control social mediating structures in the public space, including Islamic associations. In this sense, the development of social capital in autocratic political systems might not be conducive to democracy but rather supporting a co-opted paradigm where the state confronts civil society, fostering habits of passive adaptation. Secular and Islamist associations can

be antagonist to central governments and disenfranchised from active engagement or political participation.

Universities also contribute to social capital generation. In fact, they can enhance channels of communication, information sharing and most often knowledge-led socialisation which are basic characteristics of *academic social capital*. Students, professors and the administration determine the type and nature of social ties, connecting intra-faculty networks with private companies, public institutions and local communities. In particular, social exchanges can develop and support intellectual, cognitive and relational social capital but also social capital for social responsibility and civic engagement.

Academic social capital

Social capital often implies social relations based on power relations. Individual and/or collective economic and non-economic interests often reproduce shared norms of reciprocity, trustworthiness, community-wide associational membership and political participation for higher levels of community well-being (Hanifan, 1916; Bourdieu, 1980; Coleman, 1998; Putnam, 1993, 2000, 2007). However, in the Arab region, Islamic social capital specifically refers to universal Islamic principles within conventional social settings based on Islamic welfare and social participation (Farooqi, 2006; Bremer, 2004). In Tunisian public universities, however, the study identified three main categories of academic social capital and social networks:

1. **Student-to-student:** primary form of social capital, as students tend to share time and spaces, information, interests and habits; but also functional to socio-cultural, political and civic engagement.
2. **Students-to-professors:** referring to students' formation (i.e. class delivery; exams and evaluation); but also linked to professional career and internship, or community programs.
3. **Students-to-community/industry:** linked to university third missions to enhance institutional social responsibility in cooperation with local community, associations, public institutions or companies.

Multi-layered and multi-dimensional social networks interconnect simultaneously different institutions (i.e. public, associational and private companies), and actors (i.e. students, professors, administrative staff, community leaders or company managers). In particular, findings confirmed how *students-to-students'* academic social capital is only moderately developed, as 32% of students ask peers to further explain class content (60% only sometimes); and 45% explained it to others students (55% only sometimes). To the same extent, 46% of respondents have taken part in team projects, although 19% never did. These elements confirm how universities offer an important platform of dense interactions as students co-share direct benefits primarily linked to their academic performances. Furthermore, academic social capital is particularly relevant in promoting dialogue amongst students from different race/ethnic origin (54%), economic status (67%), religious beliefs (46%) or political views (79%) which can be conducive to mutual understanding and trust but also tolerance and social cohesion (p. 240, 241).

On the other hand, universities only marginally have achieved to educate students as informed and active citizens, as only 24% of students stated to have often or quite often developed such competences. This, in turn, can undermine civic engagement and, foremost, democratic behaviour. In particular, critical learning is a central element that prepares students to understand social problems and make informed decisions. On the other hand, findings confirm previous study, as 45% of respondents have used information to understand social problems; while 39% have connected class material to social problems and only 38% applied theories to practical problems (Kazem, 1992). Furthermore, 55% of respondents confirmed learning often class material by heart and 30% of them only sometimes. In particular, lack of pedagogies and curricular design, connecting students' learning to society, can be detrimental to their formation, individual engagement and self-awareness. Seemingly, the development of fragmented networks can limit opportunities, impacting on available channels for dialogue, students' involvement and ownership (Morgan & Streb, 2001).

To the same extent, student-professors relations seem to be characterised by weak ties based on authoritative relationships (p. 214), affecting shared information and informal networking including norms of trust and trustworthiness. In fact, only 26% of respondents discussed study or professional career with a professor (28% never did); and 35% discussed class material outside class (17% never did) (p.239). To the same extent, professors seem to have low influence on students' opinion-making (rated fifth within third most important group with less than 10% of preference) (p.170), despite the fact that undergraduate students often find motivation or consider them as leading figures (p. 206). Findings have also highlighted the extent to which students might develop an antagonistic attitude and sense of dissatisfaction towards both

professors and administrative staff, negatively affecting dialogue, cooperation and social capital formation (Mitchell, 2010).

In relation to university third missions, findings confirmed that 68% of engineering but only 30% of humanities students had the opportunity to participate in social, cultural, political or religious engagement via the university or student union. This divergent result has suggested the extent to which faculties are central to support favourable conditions for academic social capital. However, findings also confirm how taking part in an internship or volunteering activity is still relatively under-developed due to lack of available opportunities. In fact, only 22% of respondents took part in an internship during their study against 36% who never did. Furthermore, students tend to participate more often in volunteering activity promoted by student union (37.8%) than by the university (29.7%). Notwithstanding, around 23% of respondents never took part in any volunteering projects, whereas on average 43%, only sometimes (p. 240).

In this sense, the lower degree of engagement outside the university can undermine both employability skills and levels of “*civicness*” development (UNESCO, 2009 - p. 93). In fact, academic social capital creation in Tunisian public university might not have fostered political and social participation, often under-resourced and fragmented (contrary to Putnam 1993, 2000). To the same extent, volunteering, voting, political party engagement or associational membership are rated relatively low (p.227, 229), identifying a weak link between civic engagement, trust in the government and support for democratic institutions in Tunisia. In particular, universities social responsibility and academic social capital need to be understood within a wider framework of social-political censorship, reproducing attitudes of social conformism or adaptation. Furthermore, findings confirmed how in semi-democratic

political systems, authority favours lower level of social trust, participation and civic engagement (Hussainy, 2012; Youth Arab Report, 2007). Universities' third missions can directly address questions of democracy sustainability, corporate social responsibility and civic engagement to generate social capital and social cohesiveness. In Tunisia, the possibility to foster latent social ties for civic engagement and democratic participation can support decreasing confrontations in public universities.

Students' Identities, Social Capital and Civic Engagement

In the Arab region, opportunities for civic engagement and volunteering are often largely limited, unstructured and under-developed (Hamami, 2012; Marseille Conference, 2010; Duncan, 2012). Students' social participation is determined by several factors and preconditions: personal identity; family background; campus environment, students-professor relations; as well as, socio-cultural and political context. In particular, identity building is a key element (Younnis et al, 1997) as students develop self-awareness, sense of belonging, trust and commitment. Furthermore, social networks are characterised by complex dynamics defining three different but interconnected dimensions (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998):

- **Relational:** social trust, obligation, social participation and community improvement.
- **Structural:** institutional network ties and network configuration.
- **Cognitive/emotional:** spaces, interests, habits, narratives, emotions and languages.

In the research context, findings confirm how family and friends are an important source of socialisation, combining relational and structural social capital foundational to engagement (p.171). To the same extent, 23% of participants were born and resident in the same city and nearly 23% were resident there for three or more years (while 31% up to two years), suggesting a *low to medium* level of sense of community belonging, trust and networks' building, connected to cognitive and emotional social capital¹⁹⁵. Furthermore, respondents perceived others as helpful (52%) and trustful (around 17%), and only 22% had a more neutral stance, defining others as neither helpful nor trustful (p. 224). Level of personal trust is central to social capital generation as it can reinforce students' participation and personal motivation. To the same extent, in university contexts, findings also suggest students' engagement in associations is characterised by a low level of group homogeneity with 66% of responses (p.236), identifying stronger/inclusive or "bridging" ties but looser exclusive or "bonding" ties within groups/associations (Putnam, 2002)¹⁹⁶.

High density of campus social relations generates weaker bonding ties but stronger bridging networks. Bridging social capital is considered positive as it fosters dialogue and mutual understanding amongst members of different socio-economic, political, religious and cultural backgrounds (as explored earlier). It also fosters social cohesiveness and inclusiveness which might favour civic engagement. For this, enhancing opportunities for civic engagement with local associations can strengthen and deepen social commitment during post-conflict's transition process. In particular, respondents rated associations as the third most important group of trust in a difficult situation (p.171), highlighting how associational life can foster trust. In this sense, if

¹⁹⁵ Lower level of community belonging might be connected to less developed social networks in new context, often away from neighborhood where they have grown up.

¹⁹⁶ Research, however, did not aim at further understanding associations' activities in relation to social capital "dark side" (Van Deth & Zmerli, 2010) and also could not assess level of students' involvement.

universities continue to sustain a *dis-engaged model*, latent social capital formed within faculties might remain under-developed.

In particular, in university contexts friendship helps to generate trust, confidence and tolerance. Findings confirmed previous studies, as students engage in society aiming at improving quality of life; fostering dialogue or easing social tensions; making new friends and addressing community problems¹⁹⁷ (p.225) (Cicognani et al, 2008). For this, personal awareness associated with the possibility to make a change in local communities is an important aspect for identity building to support democracy in non-democratic countries (Paxton, 2002). To the same extent, In particular, findings show that students tend to perceive their engagement as positively improving/changing people lives (71% of responses) and around 50% believe that can positively impact the community they live in (p.231, 232). In fact, social participation can reinforce self-confidence. Furthermore, change community social and political participation represents the most important reason of personal engagement (p.225), confirming how, during the post-revolution period, active citizenships is based on shared responsibilities.

As explored earlier, engineering students identify themselves with civic/social activities (i.e. local communities activities; volunteering; human rights promotion; charity); while humanities, to political ones (voting; party activism; manifestation against unjust laws)¹⁹⁸ (p. 227). On the other hand, social capital indicators such as volunteering, voting, newspaper reading or religious-linked activities are all rated very low. As such, in the research context, exposure to government-controlled media (i.e.

¹⁹⁷ Post-revolution socio-political and economic tensions linked to social and civic activism have had most likely a major impact on respondents' perceptions.

¹⁹⁸ This might suggest students' *traditional vs. post-modern* forms of personal engagement. The former related to political protests, manifestation, active dissents towards government policies; the latter related to charity, community engagement, volunteering, social networking and manifestation for social or global concerns, addressing new awareness and perspectives to the role of engineers in society.

radio, television, newspaper) can distort access to information and foster lower social trust towards the government (p.229). In this sense, information that is central to social networking and trust amongst members, in non-democratic settings, seems to be rather endangered and often bypassed via indirect channels. In fact, regime policies of control and censorship have also restrained channels for students' expression, democratic practices (i.e. voting) and opportunities for volunteering activities, including Islamic-oriented.

In this sense, regime policies promoted a *conformist social capital* based on clientelism, corruption, passive adaptation to pro-regime socio-political propaganda. In this framework of subaltern and asymmetric social capital creation, the regime also arbitrarily limited university social dimension, fostering the under-utilisation of academic social capital for social responsibility. In particular, social injustices, police repression and restrictions on basic freedoms can undermine students' self-confidence and imaginary; but also can increase level of awareness and capacity building (Carmon, 1997 in Larsen et al, 2004). In fact, social capital can be latent but not absent as students form their identity despite the lack of self-expression and participatory opportunities. In particular, personal awareness and identity building reflect students' aspirations and commitment to improving community life. However, under authoritarian regime, social capital under-utilisation can have a negative impact upon political participation and civic engagement.

In post-revolution Tunisia, pre-existing *latent social capital* ties can enhance new channels of social networking, communication and exchange. Politics, once a taboo during the Ben Ali regime, became a main topic of discussion in the media, including the internet. Furthermore, participation in public demonstration and strikes, have become common practices of direct citizenship, once banned by the regime. In

fact, findings also indicate a shift in social capital creation from pre-revolution *traditional* participation in socio-cultural activities to post-revolution *non-traditional* internet-related engagement¹⁹⁹ (p. 237). In particular, this might suggest how new generations tend to form their identities and construct networks via new media technologies, expanding the range of opportunities to engage while developing *on-line to off-line* connections (in Ellison et al , 2007; Angrist, 2013; Saleh, 2012). In parallel, engagement in socio-cultural associations/activities still is relatively high, mirroring a continuity with pre-revolution forms of engagement (Duncan, 2012). On the other hand, humanities students reconfirm a higher level of personal engagement in political (30%) or student union groups (22%); whereas engineering in socio-cultural (29, 2%), volunteering (17%) and professional union (17%)²⁰⁰.

In this sense, students' academic social capital is linked to available opportunities universities develop with external stakeholders. In Tunisia, academic social capital and student social responsibility still remain underdeveloped²⁰¹, confirming how government policies have failed to fully develop students as *socio-economic entrepreneurs of their future* (UNESCO, 2009). For this, students' learning experience and professional career are important priorities that can be pursued in connection with civic engagement and social responsibility.

¹⁹⁹ Internet and social media (partially censored during Ben Ali regime), is across dataset the most important group/mean of students' engagement.

²⁰⁰ Only engineering students confirmed being member of professional association, highlighting once more existing differences between the two faculties in relation to career and employment opportunities.

²⁰¹ In this sense, student social responsibility reflects a *sociology of emergences*, "which could develop an inquiry into alternatives that are contained in the horizon of present possibilities, by adding to the existing reality the possibilities and future expectations it contains" (Santos, 2012: 56).

Summary

The relationship between Islam, university social responsibility, students' civic engagement and democracy has been explored in the context of post-revolution Tunisia. In relation to university social responsibility, the *entrepreneurial model* government-industry-university paradigm has revealed structural deficiencies and limitations. In particular, students' employability and internship opportunities are still under-achieved. On the other hand, the side-lined development of a university *engaged model*, yet to be consolidated in Tunisia, holds the potential to implement a framework to develop democratic and civic skills bridging the gap between public universities and their surroundings (Najem, 2012). However, the contextual underdevelopment of university social responsibility is a critical factor contributing to students' academic social capital underutilisation. For this, social capital creation resulted in fragmented and only partially connected to civic engagement or not directly associated to students' political participation. Seemingly, students-to-professors ties were defined as weak and often antagonistic, affecting trust, cooperation and dialogue. To the same extent, lack of structured university-community partnerships undermined the promotion of professional internships and volunteering activities.

In the Tunisian context, students show understanding, commitment and self-awareness of what democracy, social responsibility and civic engagement refers to. The relationships between students' identities, Islam and democracy confirmed the presence of a binary but non-exclusive value-system. Western-secular and Islamic-religious frameworks contribute to identity formation, although still within conflicting narratives. In this sense, Islamic values and Islamic social norms are complementary to modern ideals of freedoms, tolerance, human rights, social justice and civic

engagement. However, families and friends rather than Islamic institutions, civil associations or government institutions are considered primary source of social trust, influencing students' decision-making and personal opinion. The existence of a fragmented and conflicting socio-political paradigm, where the government acts as competitor and opponent to both Islamic and civic associations, has fostered political, religious and cultural cleavages, limiting citizenship and democracy. After the revolution, the emergence of centripetal social forces, in particular the involvement of radical Islamic extremists, has affected political stability and social cohesion. In public universities, the presence of an Islamic-affiliated student union has also fostered tensions, undermining trust, cooperation and dialogue while reshaping campus life. In this framework, universities are called to address new social challenges co-constructed around *secular vs. religious* conflicting lines and to reconsider their role towards social responsibility and civic engagement for democracy sustainability.

The next section presents research conclusions exploring main contributions and recommendations for further research in relation to university social responsibility and academic social capital in Tunisia.

CHAPTER 8 - Conclusion

The study has emphasised how legal, structural, educational, political as well as collective and subjective dynamics are major factors influencing the nature, definition, implementation and development of social responsibility in the university context. Governmental policies regulating universities' governance, autonomy and academic freedom have had an impact on the development of both curricular and extra-curricular programs. To the same extent, political, social and cultural habits also play an important role in determining university-community partnerships. These elements are central in order to grant universities the capacity to develop a coherent strategy to implement institutional *third missions*. In particular, both local and national contexts can enhance main identified barriers, resulting in lack of available opportunities. Social networks and academic social capital have been considered as two intertwined elements, defining the type and nature of relations amongst different actors within universities.

The importance of creating bonding ties across faculties and bridging ties amongst faculty members with local communities are key aspects to support collaborative participation and inter-communicating networks for information sharing. At an individual level, students' identity building, civic engagement courses and participating in community projects are interrelated features defining students' social responsibility. Furthermore, family, friends and personal values, including Islamic values, are considered central to students' awareness and motivation. Social and political participation, however, might be adversely affected if antagonistic narratives such as *secular vs. Islamic, democratic vs. authoritative/semi-democratic, Arabic vs.*

Western, are framed and reproduced fuelling socially or politically constructed tensions and conflicts.

The study has underlined how Tunisian public universities have only marginally developed their social dimension. At present, there is a dominant pattern of under-utilisation of social capital for social responsibility. In this sense, despite recent efforts to reform the higher education system, following also undergoing waves of change from recent revolutionary movements, the existing legal framework, supporting the development of a university entrepreneurial paradigm, is limiting public universities to coherently implement third missions and wider societal engagement. As a matter of fact, university social responsibility could potentially foster partnerships with civil society organisations to enrich students' civic skills and the development of more democratic environments. However, students have been largely kept aside as potential partners, constraining their active involvement in society and limiting their contribution to university social responsibility due to the reproduction of non-integrative approach to university-community partnership.

Considerations on University Social Responsibility and Academic Social Capital

In the Tunisian context, public universities are institutions rooted in social and economic environments, endowed with rights and duties defining their role and missions. In fact, they implement strategies to meet objectives in relation to the:

- provision of professional formation (i.e. teaching);
- pursuit and advancement of knowledge (i.e. research);

- commitment to local communities' public service (i.e. public-private partnerships).

In particular, universities, operating within a framework of top-down decision-making dynamics, need to address their missions in line with existing barriers and constraints. Freedom of expression, association and participation are not only foundational rights and essential components of a democratic society but are also basic requirements for individuals and institutions to act free from censorship, threats or other kind of interferences in respect of cultures, values, national laws and religious principles. Restrictions to basic freedoms limit available opportunities to express ideals, emotions and opinions or sharing information to move beyond authoritative and coercive systems.

These elements had also an impact on students' education, the pursuit of knowledge, employability and direct involvement in the local community as an integral part of their learning experience and endowed rights and duties. The present situation in the Arab region calls for developing democratic mediating structures to avoid social fragmentation. In higher education, it is a compelling need to develop appropriate conditions to enhance university social responsibility by creating a new legal framework based on political support and new social dynamics within campuses to foster professors, administrative staff and students' interrelationships. In this sense, supporting academic social capital for social responsibility is an important precondition for a sustainable and self-supportive model of an *engaged university*.

In this sense, there are four main aspects to be considered and re-assessed in order to foster university social responsibility in public universities:

- a) **Legal framework:** the 2008 HE reform enacted before the regime change in Tunisia failed to address specifically university's social dimension - including civic engagement programs and education for democracy – unlike other international experiences. In particular, pre-revolution policy identified universities as central players for economic growth and national development, overshadowing institutional commitment to social, civic and democratic development. At present, after the 2011 regime change, despite greater freedoms of expression, association and enacted decentralised reforms (i.e. appointment by election of faculty deans), governments in power have not yet presented an integrated higher education national reform, failing to recognise universities and students' role as agents of democracy building.
- b) **University autonomy:** the centralised system of governmental control over university autonomy has been limiting university third missions in three important aspects: academic freedom, curriculum and extra-curriculum development and funding availability. In particular, governments have not only provided general guidelines regulating university missions and objectives but also rather limited and defined budget expenditures; imposed faculty subjects, degree, examination and curriculum contents as well as the development of extra-curricular activities. In this framework, restrained institutional autonomy has limited institutions' flexibility to develop external partnerships and community projects, whereas the lack of academic freedom has prevented the establishment of innovative pedagogies promoting context-based knowledge, reflecting critical and problem-solving approach to theories. In particular, the absence of extra-curricular or co-curricular courses on civic engagement, democracy and social participation have undermined universities' capability to

meet students' demands and to address socio-cultural cleavages and post-revolution emerging challenges.

- c) **Campus life:** university social responsibility foremost begins from within faculties as faculty ethos, embedded culture and opportunities represent institutional wider commitment to public good. Post-revolution removal of police in the campus has guaranteed more freedom for associational life to flourish; however, informal control and bureaucratic barriers are still in place. The necessity not only to remove informal control, threats or interference but also to fully promote new student-run societies; on-campus awareness raising events; faculty awards for civic engagement; funding projects and foster a community-oriented campus, is still far from established. To the same extent, international cooperation and inter-faculty projects can be key in fostering networking, good practice sharing and wider pedagogic and research-intensive partnerships.
- d) **External partnerships:** social responsibility is rooted in specific context-based environments in cooperation with associations and local communities to promote volunteering or related civic engagement projects, including research-led partnerships. Universities ought to be more pro-active in establishing a structured framework and offering students a platform with available participatory opportunities to the benefits of local communities, contributing to society's democratisation process. However, the lack of government support in promoting social participation was linked to pre-revolution legal restrictions of national associational law; under-developed institutional commitment; lack of faculty embedded culture and limited funds. These factors have all contributed to a gradual impoverishment of university-community social

relationships. In this sense, university social responsibility is still an emergent element of universities' third missions.

In this framework, students' social responsibility, closely linked to university social responsibility, has been largely affected. Students are not educated to become promoters of democratic practices and to develop comprehensively citizenship rights. In fact, they are often secluded from faculty decision-making process and engagement to society mainly due to the presence of a socio-political system based on control and censorship. To the same extent, the 2008 HE reform did not clearly identify what role students might have in society or evaluate education for citizenship and democracy. The centrality of volunteering and civic engagement was not acknowledged, limiting also students' potential contribution.

These considerations further highlight existing structural constraints in opposition to research findings reporting students' high degree of awareness and demands for courses on civic engagement and opportunities to actively engage in society, both relevant to their learning experience. The establishment of a society generally promoting a democratically inspired system is distinctly characterised by tensions and contradictions. However, it cannot be pursued if the same democratic-like values and principles are not shared within public institutions and further fostered in society at large. In particular, the divergence between students' identities, self-awareness and individual experiences and expectations in their everyday life reflects shortcomings of an unaccomplished modernisation and democratisation process, affecting also available channels for dialogue, communication and expression. To the same extent, growing disillusionment in relation to government policies and public institutions' administration has fostered

habits of passive adaptation or subversive opposition linked to lower levels of generalised trust and non-active political participation.

In terms of university and students' social responsibility in support of academic social capital, Tunisian public universities are still dominated by an inadequate and conflicting framework amongst different actors, both on-campus and with external partners. As mentioned earlier, university and students social responsibility can only be achieved if all parties are considered in its development and implementation. At present, universities are affected by several lines of cleavages which are counterproductive to academic social capital understanding and development:

a) **Students' formation:** academic social capital for social responsibility is primarily formed by student-to-student interactions. Despite significant time spent in contact with other students on a daily basis, social relations are often either linked to courses/exams' revision or to developing friendship ties (i.e. fun, hobbies, going to cinema or meeting for a coffee); but less interconnected to social engagement and extra-curricular volunteering activities. In particular, course content and class materials are often not integrated and connected to real-life problems; students' formation as engaged citizens is either low or in some circumstances absent; associational life opportunities inside or outside the campus are also generally lacking or fragmented. Academic social capital then is not generally linked to students' social responsibility. As a result, universities need to revise strategies to offer wider opportunities to critically engage students in local communities; to redefine class material contents,

scope and purposes; to promote an inter and intra-faculty platform for students to share spaces, information, common goals, expectations and activities.

b) **Intra-campus relations:** secondary forms of social relations are developed amongst different agents: namely students, professors and/or faculty administration staff. Campus hierarchical and authoritative environments have supported a system based on top-down power relations which cemented separation, limited dialogue and, to the same extent, lack of reciprocity. After the revolution, the removal of government censorship and control has gradually questioned and partially undermined authority leading to open confrontations. In this sense, faculty social trust has further fragmented along antagonistic dividing lines creating what can be defined as a multi-layered *us vs. them* frame, preventing the flourishing of bonding and bridging ties. In this sense, the recognition of the Islamic-inspired students union has to some extent increased conflicts and tensions with the secular left-wing one (i.e. humanities faculty). These aspects have highlighted a peculiar dynamic which emerged more clearly in the post-revolution period. In fact, existing barriers and limitations have led to the gradual impoverishment of campus social networks, reducing opportunities for information sharing, trust, dialogue and the realisation of a shared culture of respect and active participation, functional to the promotion of society-wide benefits.

c) **Political context and external relations:** political context has been a central element in developing social capital for social responsibility in Tunisia. Social, civic and political participation has been largely organised and shaped by government policies selectively granting or denying legal recognition to associations with wider implications to campus civic and political activities.

As a result, political and democratic participation was often prevented for security reasons or closely monitored to maintain the *status quo*. Furthermore, in higher education, the development of a government-centred triple-helix model has *de facto* limited available funds and thus excluded local communities to create social networks with universities. Despite post-revolution changes, universities are still hesitant to open partnerships with associations. As a result, university-community cooperation are mainly restricted to cultural or sport activities, jeopardising commitment to political, social and civic programs for students' awareness raising and volunteering.

In this sense, universities have not yet embraced the revolutionary ethos in line with the aspiration for a more democratic and participative society based on new public-private partnerships. In fact, this has also precluded university-community social networking, thus limiting the latent potential behind students' formation to include professional, humanist, democratic and civic skills. This confirms how during the transitional and post-revolution period the *old system* might still endure. Unchallenged embedded cultural, political and social habits can reproduce and be compliant with pre-revolutionary regime settings rather than implementing radical changes. In turn, this has suggested that long-term social political and economic reforms are crucial for a university social responsibility framework to be adopted and implemented.

Considerations on the Role of Islam and Islamic Values on Students' Identity, Democracy and Social Responsibility

Universities form public arenas often built upon shared places, interests, habits and values. In modern societies, traditional religious and modern secular values have often played an important role in identity building, creating a reference framework for individual awareness and motivations to engage. In particular, in Tunisia the binary *secular vs. religious* paradigm has over the last sixty years created contrasting and often controversial policies in relation to what role Islam plays or ought to play in society. This approach has often implied Islamic associations being oppositional and subaltern to mainstream government secular ethos to the detriment of Islamic principles and values' positive valorisation. As a matter of fact, this has also determined processes of dysfunctional re-adaptation from traditional to modern identities and frames of reference. After the revolution, society has been further fragmented along *moderate vs. radical* Islamic lines affecting political stability and social cohesion under the present democratic process. The following themes are then considered relevant to understand existing connections amongst democracy, university social responsibility and Islam:

- a) **Islam, politics and democracy:** the abrogation of constitutional ban on political parties, allowing also Islamic political parties to run for national election, has been a major democratic achievement as it ended over fifty years of regime's undemocratic one-party rule. On the other hand, despite political balkanisation, the Islamic Ennahda party became a key political force actively contributing to the development of a rather successful

democratic transition. However, the democratisation process left unresolved the rise of religious extremist groups, pursuing an alternative agenda often via violent public acts to destabilise political dialogue between moderate secular and religious parties. To the same extent, this has affected universities as confrontations have exacerbated campus environments and students' welfare. As such, the socio-political contribution to democracy provided by Islamic-inspired parties or associations, has been partially controversial, leading in some cases to anti-democratic activities - including recent terrorist attacks - questioning the role, scope and extent to which Islam as a religion and political Islamic parties/associations have to play. On the other hand, there is a growing need to foster inclusive policies for marginalised social and religious groups within mainstream politics to foster a more deliberative decision-making process and structured dialogue across different sections of society based on religious tolerance.

- b) **Islamic values and identity:** Islamic faith, values, norms and beliefs are historically considered central elements of Tunisian society. Islam as a social, political and ethical system of reference has influenced national development, as it also constitutes state religion in Tunisia, interconnecting shared identity with other neighbouring Arab-Islamic countries. Post-revolution social and political tensions have impacted upon students' perceptions of Islam as a religion and Islam in the public domain embedded in political and social discourses. Furthermore, the ambivalent relationship between the private and family sphere and, after the revolution, the political, ethical and social role of Islam has raised concerns of

transparency, authenticity, trust and governability. On the other hand, Islamic values are not the only or most influential in terms of students' social responsibility and civic engagement but rather complementary for its realisation. In fact, students seem to build their identity based on a hybrid system including both modern-secular-democratic and Islamic-traditional values. These considerations have confirmed how both sets of values are perceived and can be understood as theoretically synergetic rather than antagonistic to social responsibility. In this sense, there is a clear necessity of re-evaluating and re-habilitating the contribution of Islamic values towards democracy building in the Tunisian context, rather than marginalising it, while fostering the recognition and respect of both value-systems.

c) **Islamic association and social responsibility:** since Tunisian independence, Islamic associations played a marginal social and civic role in the creation of social capital for social responsibility. In fact, government dominated the political power-struggle, affecting dialogue and the positive contribution to community-wide shared public good. Furthermore, it also paved the way for Islamic associations' political and social *defensive-aggressive* strategies to grant survival through independence. The demise of traditional Islamic *waqf*, government control over mosques' activities and limited space available for Islamic associations in the public sphere, have further restrained the flourishing of social, civic and cultural activities. Underground and outlawed political activities were often carried out in the shadows, reducing Islamic associations' public visibility and counter-narrative. In this sense, the Jasmine revolution allowed Islamic associations

to act freer from government restrictions, opening new windows for civic engagement based on Islamic philanthropy supporting social responsibility. However, for this to happen, a wider political, cultural and social normalisation and pacification process is needed to reconcile existing cleavages.

In this framework, Islamic associations have often operated in seclusion from society due to conflicting and antagonistic dynamics against government policies, adopting a subaltern role. Another key element identified, in post-revolution transition, is the extent to which socio-political forces will succeed in supporting a cohesive dialogue and tolerance, also inside universities. The re-integration of Islamic philanthropic associations and Islamic social corporations in the development of welfare provisions via Islamic social capital and related networks such as charities supporting volunteering and active civic engagement are key preconditions to widening students' participatory opportunities in the creation of shared public good.

Research Relevance

The research aimed at investigating the extent to which university and students' social responsibility have been framed and implemented in Tunisian public universities. It explored how socio-political and cultural settings have shaped academic social capital, democracy, the role of Islam and Islamic values in society. The literature review has evidenced that there are little and no substantial studies in the Arab and specifically Tunisian context with reference to both the pre and post-

revolution transitional periods. In fact, this empirical study offers a significant contribution to the understanding of universities and students' social role in factual settings in relation to educational implications and embedded social relations interlinking democracy and Islam. In particular, the research raised critical questions and provided understandings about the relationships between governmental policies and universities' social and democratic contribution to students' social agency and civic role. It considered the nature, recent developments and existing constraints, Tunisian higher education institutions are facing as providers of education. It also offered an understanding of how post-revolution tensions and contradictions are impacting upon evolving socio-cultural contexts, universities' missions and students' expectations.

In Tunisia, universities' contributions to democracy have been historically delegitimised, being largely secluded from society while delimiting institutional latent potentialities of existing infrastructures and available human resources. Faculties can be enablers of change supporting partnerships with economic and social partners. However, it would be necessary to reconsider critically their role to improve their public and civic responsibilities. In this sense, despite the limited scope of the research as part of an individual effort, it is considered an original study as:

- It questions constraints while reevaluating public universities, students and local communities' role towards democracy in the Arab region.
- It examines Tunisian public universities' missions and role in society within the Arab and international trends of higher education reforms and specifically in relation to the development of democracy and social responsibilities.

- It highlights structural factors contributing to the realisation of university and students' social responsibility in Tunisia.
- It explores social capital and in-campus social networks as key elements supporting university social dimension and students' civic engagement.
- It considers the role of Islam, Islamic values and Islamic associations for social, political and civic participation, influencing campus life, students' identity and democracy building.

In particular, it has offered a contribution to understanding the extent to which the “Arab spring” favoured social and democratic changes through grassroots movements supporting democracy sustainability in the region. In particular, the demise of the authoritarian regime has paved the way to a re-articulation of social agency and the role of Islam in state-citizens relationships. The investigation of a relatively under-researched topic in the Arab region - particularly the case of Tunisia - highlighted how shifting political and social changes have led to the emergence of new challenges and constraints, also in universities' environments. The lack of studies focusing on universities' social role in Tunisia and generally in other Arab countries has not only restrained the scope for wider debates within HE national reforms in the region but also limited available data for comparison and scientific analysis between national universities in Tunisian, but also across universities in neighbouring North African countries.

Indeed, in Tunisian public universities, social responsibility, despite its crucial implication and significance, is still rather marginalised and it presents structural under-achievements. To the same extent, the study has offered a primary

understanding of the main issues related to university social responsibility, social capital formation, the role of Islam and Islamic values in a critical and comprehensive way by using both questionnaires and interviews which are foundational for comparative further studies in this field of research. In fact, to the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first of this kind in Tunisia or in any other Arab country approaching the issues of university third missions in its wider cultural, political, religious and social contexts. As such it can contribute to national and international debates on higher education reforms in the Arab region, as well as, within international cooperation programs. Specifically, it has considered the implications of a new institutional paradigm for the realisation for third missions in public universities reconsidering the role of universities as social agents of change.

In particular, this can be better understood in relation to the potential and synergetic role that both secular and Islamic associations can have to promote civic engagement, against embedded habits of under-utilisation of students' social capital for social responsibility. Government policies limiting universities' autonomy and governance might have undermined cohesive policies for democracy sustainability while downgrading students' civic engagement. To the same extent, universities' social dimension functional to academic social capital can play a crucial role in bridging connections to foster agency within and across faculties. Students' civic skills for social responsibility are best enhanced if new public spaces are created to promote social engagement. Furthermore, it is relevant to consider and to understand Islamic social capital and Islamic values contribution to students' identity development, social capital formation, civic engagement and democracy building in the framework of supporting society-wide dialogue, tolerance and cohesion. In particular, Islamic social capital, values and civic norms can be functional to addressing social responsibility

issues and community engagement, despite existing challenges presented by the extremist drift.

Research Limitations

The need for further research in the field of university third missions is key to identify educational paradigms linking students' social responsibility to democracy building within a wider framework of international economic and socio-cultural changing global order. In this framework, the present research has been conducted in a specific period of political and social turmoil in the aftermath of the “Jasmine revolution”, generally limiting the time for data collection. On the other hand, the study has also been limited to the following elements:

- 1- It draws data from only two faculties, engineering and humanities, within one public university and does not offer a comparison across public institutions nationwide in Tunisia, nor across other institutions in neighbouring countries. Furthermore, it does not include private institutions including international universities which are more likely to have more autonomy in terms of governance, type of funding, performance criteria and accountability. Private institutions might also attract a different type of student including most likely international students, developing different types of social network and academic social capital. To the same extent, it did not include Islamic institutions of higher education such as Ez-Zitouna University to investigate

different accounts and explore more directly Islamic social capital and the role of Islam in society.

- 2- The sample is restricted to mainly undergraduate students who are most directly involved in higher education and, to a lower extent, university professors. However, it excludes post-graduate students, administrative staff, deans or government policy makers, key actors to developing an integrated framework for university social responsibility. Furthermore, the sample did not include international students who would bring important insights on global trend of international mobility linked to education, job markets and interconnected social networks.
- 3- The sample could not represent more conservative religious students, as well as, other religious minorities, limiting information gathered on students' views and attitudes towards social responsibility, relevant to analysing coexisting and alternative social realities linked to Islamic social capital.
- 4- The study mainly focuses on the relationship between universities' third missions, specifically its social dimension, students' social responsibility, students' identity formation and Islam, as well as academic social capital in university contexts. However, it does not include accounts from civil society organisations and other community partners. To the same extent, it did not refer to Islamic associations that are active in the development of volunteering and community service, including charity and social fund raising.
- 5- Literature review, official documents and other related reports have been mainly drawn from English, French sources. However, due to the researcher's background, it was not possible to read directly Arabic sources which might

have enriched the analysis, presented other lines of investigation or alternative approaches to the present study.

In this sense, the exploratory empirical research focused on a limited case study to understand contextual social dynamics in Tunisia. For this, it is intended as a contribution to knowledge, opening novel and innovative frames to explore gaps in knowledge in the area of higher education in Arab countries.

Recommendations for further studies

The study has raised critical questions, provided information, explored new arguments, debates and offered recommendations regarding public universities' missions, students' role in society and the relations between Islam, democracy and civic engagement in post-revolution Tunisia. Findings and related data analysis presented in chapter 5, 6 and 7 have therefore highlighted and suggested other lines for further and possible investigation in the field:

- 1- There is a need for more data regarding university social responsibility and third missions' activities across different public universities in Tunisian and the Arab region to allow for comparison, identification of best practices and definition of common patterns in order to assess enabling factors or existing barriers. To the same extent, it is important to explore further students' social responsibility to propose alternative strategies in order to enhance their engagement in society.

- 2- It is crucial to understanding the role and missions of private universities, including religious higher education institutions to define alternative trends in university social responsibility to be studied and best practices shared, relevant to the region.
- 3- It is important to include more than just one university and more than two faculties within a wider national framework to better understand the nature, level and type of academic social capital developed within and across faculties, exploring constraints and opportunities. Furthermore, academic social capital for social responsibility needs to be explored in relation to its economic relevance, such as students' employability and career development (as these have also emerged as central element in the study).
- 4- To the same extent, academic social capital needs to be studied as a separate category in a wider context, including Islamic-led social networks in relation to its diverse and contextual development of student-student, student-professor and student-community social networks. The analysis of different categories could help to better understand students' identity building; barriers to civic engagement; degree of engagement; type and nature of engagement within complex dynamics.
- 5- It is crucial to include religious conservative or ultra-conservative students in order to consider their views and the role Islamic associations, Islamic values and Islamic social capital play towards democracy, social participation and civic engagement. In particular, the increasing involvement in the public sphere of Islamic political parties, associations and also affiliated student

unions can determine a shift in the definition of public good, welfare and social services in the post-revolution context.

- 6- There is a necessity to examine views from other actors not accounted for in the present study, including faculty deans, university rectors, policy makers and civil society organisations to better understand and to explore existing dynamics with specific reference to complementary approaches, interests and existing relations amongst universities, government and local community leaders. In other terms, consistency in the development of a common platform for communication and actions within local communities is foundational to explore social change and latent individual/collective agency.

In this framework, understanding the development of underlying socialisation processes defines also the level of *democratic-ness* a determined society can develop, supported by shared norms and civic attitudes. Social change is often transitory and permeates across generations sharing values, personal/collective awareness and norms of social behaviours. In fact, the interplay between subjectivity and social agency is often framed by overlapping narratives.

A shift in socialisation patterns also involves new assessment, categorisation and understanding of emergent connections between subjective reflections and changing contexts and dynamics. In this sense, contexts determine social agency as much as social networks, values and human relations frame civic behaviours. Social relations are co-constructed as patterns of social change are interconnected and can originate from unanticipated events as, for example, revolutionary movements. Latent narratives often are restricted by oppositional *push-pull* processes, as they strive to

find a voice within power-embedded discourses in an attempt to influence social consciousness. This can also be related to democracy within a framework of structural re-adaptations. In particular, the interface of both synergetic convergences and incompatible resistances between global neo-capitalist trends and Tunisian-North African-Arabic national contexts have determined complex and conflicting dynamics. In these terms, the establishment of a new political, economic, cultural and social order is considered key to integrate undergoing transformations while limiting confrontations and tensions dominating a contested public sphere to allow emergent social forces to actively redefine social consensus, political legitimacy, citizens' freedoms and rights.

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APPENDIX

Appendix I - Cover Letter to the Rector



The University of
Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM • CHINA • MALAYSIA

The Rector

(edit as necessary)

Professor Simon McGrath
Centre for Research on Higher,
Adult and Vocational Education

School of Education

Jubilee Campus

Wollaton Road

Nottingham, NG8 1BB

Dear Sir

Introducing Simone Temporin

It is my great pleasure to introduce to you, Mr Simone Temporin, who is a doctoral student at the University of Nottingham under the joint supervision of myself and Professor John Morgan. Simone is visiting Tunisia to conduct fieldwork for his PhD on student social engagement in Tunisian higher education.

Simone is hoping to be able to gain access to a small number of staff and students at the University to explore experiences in supporting students' social engagement. It is intended that this research will inform both national and international debates about the roles of students, staffs and institutions in supporting such engagement, and Simone will discuss with the University how best to feedback the analysis. I can confirm that his proposed work has been through a full ethics review at the University of Nottingham, and that data will be anonymised.

I would be very grateful for any assistance you could provide him in accessing both staff and students and any relevant University and national policy documents whilst he is Tunisia. Please contact me if you have any queries about this.

With many thanks in anticipation.

Sincerely Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. McGrath', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Professor Simon McGrath BA Hons PGCE MSc PhD FRSA

Chair in International Education and Development

Director of Research

Appendix II - Confirmation and Consent Form

Simone Temporin

Email: ttxst17@nottingham.ac.uk

University of Nottingham

Main Supervisor:

Professor Simon McGrath

simon.mcgrath@nottingham.ac.uk

School of Education Research Ethics Office:

educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Iconfirm that I have freely agreed to participate in the research project.

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me.

I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.

I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.

I understand that I will be audiotaped during the interview.

I understand that data will be stored, both survey hardcopies and audiotapes by the researcher and only the researcher will have access to them.

I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Participant Signature: _____ Name: _____ Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Name: _____ Date: _____

Fiche de confirmation et consentement:

Simone Temporin

Email: ttxst17@nottingham.ac.uk

University of Nottingham

Encadreur:

Professeur Simon McGrath

simon.mcgrath@nottingham.ac.uk

Bureau Éthique de la Recherche:

educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Je..... confirme que j'ai librement accepté de participer au projet de recherche.

J'ai lu la fiche d'information des participants et la nature et le but du projet de recherche a été expliqué.

Je comprends l'objectif du projet de recherche et ma participation.

Je comprends que je peux me retirer du projet de recherche à tout moment et que cela n'affectera pas mon statut, maintenant ou dans l'avenir.

Je comprends que les informations obtenues lors de l'étude peuvent être publiées, mais je ne vais pas être identifié/e et mes résultats personnels resteront confidentiels.

Je comprends que je vais être enregistré/e lors de l'entrevue.

Je comprends que les données seront stockées, les copies papier de l'enquête et des enregistrements audio-parlé chercheur et seul le chercheur aura accès à eux.

Je comprends que je peux communiquer avec le chercheur ou le superviseur si j'ai besoin de plus d'informations sur la recherche, et que je peux communiquer avec le coordonnateur de la recherche en éthique de l'École d'éducation, Université de Nottingham, si je veux déposer une plainte concernant ma participation dans la recherche.

Signature du participant: _____ Nom: _____ Date: _____

Signature du chercheur: _____ Nom: _____ Date: _____

تأكيد وموافقة:

سيمون تمبورين

جامعة نوتنغهام

Simone Temporin

Email: ttxst17@nottingham.ac.uk

University of Nottingham

المؤطر:

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أخلاقيات البحوث المكتب:

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أنا أؤكد بأنني وافقت طوعا على المشاركة في مشروع البحث.

لقد قرأت ورقة المعلومات المتعلقة بالمشاركين ولقد تم شرح لي طبيعة مشروع بحثي وغرض منه

لقد فهمت الغرض من مشروع بحثي ومشاركتي فيه •

أدرك أنه قد انسحب من مشروع بحثي في أي مرحلة وأن هذا لن يؤثر على وضعي الآن أو في المستقبل •

وأنا أفهم أنه يجوز لي نشر المعلومات التي تم الحصول عليها أثناء الدراسة، ولكن ستبقى النتائج نظرية الشخصية

• خلال المقابلة أفهم أن يتم تسجيل •

• أفهم أن سيتم تخزين البيانات، والنسخ الورقية للمسح والصوت الوحيد من قبل الباحث والباحثة من الوصول إليهم •

- أدرك أنه قد اتصل بالمؤطر أو المشرف إذا كنت بحاجة إلى المزيد من المعلومات حول البحث، وأنتي قد اتصلت منسق أخلاقيات البحوث في كلية التربية، جامعة نوتنغهام، وإذا كنت ترغب في تقديم شكوى بشأن مشاركتي في البحث

توقيع المشارك: _____ الاسم: _____ التاريخ _____

توقيع الباحث: _____ الاسم _____

التاريخ: _____

Appendix III - QUESTIONNAIRE INFORMATION SHEET

Simone Temporin

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The present research explores issues related to the role of education in Tunisia and in particular the external social dimension. It is intended to investigate the relationship between university and society through participation in existing networks with external stakeholders. The questionnaire will ask questions related to individual activities through social networks and personal perceptions of social participation, citizenship, as well as, social and civic values.

There is a double aim linked to the present research: the first is to further understand what role higher education in Tunisia could play in social engagement; the second is to evaluate students' perceptions regarding the social vision of the university and their role as part of the society they live in.

The questionnaire data will be anonymous and confidentiality regarding any of data collected is guaranteed. Data collected will be used only for research purposes and presented solely in educational settings at professional conferences and in academic journals, always in an anonymised form and no disclosure will be made to any third party.

Participants are not obliged to take part in this survey. Even if you initially agree to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice, without providing a reason and without any personal consequences. Your participation will not affect your relationship with the institution involved in this project.

The Survey consists largely of multiple-choice and some short open ended questions. It will take around 20-30 minutes of your time. At the end of the survey, you will find the possibility to leave your personal details if you wish to take part in an interview as a follow up of the present survey, in order to have the possibility to discuss further the themes of the survey.

This is the second part of the research: intended to guarantee a fuller account on the answers given in the survey. If you indicate a willingness to participate in the interviews and you are chosen for the final sample, then you will be contacted to arrange for the interview. Again, you may change your mind at any point of this process and withdraw your consent without prejudice.

My gratitude for your participation to the survey!

FICHE D'INFORMATION DU QUESTIONNAIRE:

Simone Temporin

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Encadreur:

Prof. Simon McGrath

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Bureau Éthique de la Recherche:

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La présente recherche explore les questions liées au rôle de l'éducation en Tunisie et en particulier la dimension sociale. Il vise à étudier la relation entre l'université et la société à travers la participation à des réseaux existants avec les acteurs public-privés externes. Le questionnaire pose des questions liées aux activités individuelles à travers les réseaux sociaux et les perceptions personnelles de participation, la citoyenneté sociale et les valeurs sociales et civiques.

Il y a un double objectif lié à la présente recherche: le premier est de mieux comprendre comment l'enseignement supérieur en Tunisie pourrait jouer un rôle dans l'engagement social; le deuxième, est d'évaluer les perceptions des étudiants concernant la vision sociale de l'université et de leur rôle dans le cadre de la société dans laquelle ils vivent.

Les données du questionnaire est anonyme et la confidentialité des données est garantie. Les données recueillies seront utilisées uniquement à des fins de recherche, présenté uniquement en milieu scolaire lors de conférences professionnelles et dans des revues académiques, toujours sous une forme anonyme et aucune divulgation ne sera faite à aucune tierce partie.

Les participants ne sont pas obligés de participer à cette enquête. Même si vous avez initialement acceptés de participer, vous êtes libre de retirer à tout moment sans préjugés, sans fournir de raison et sans aucunes conséquences personnelles. Votre participation n'affectera pas votre relation avec l'institution impliquée dans ce projet.

L'Enquête se compose essentiellement de questions à choix multiples et des questions ouvertes courtes. Il faut compter environ 10 minutes de votre temps. À la fin de l'enquête, vous trouverez la possibilité de laisser vos coordonnées personnelles si vous souhaitez prendre part à une entrevue en tant que suivi de la présente étude, afin d'avoir la possibilité de discuter ultérieurement les thèmes de l'enquête.

Cette deuxième partie de la recherche: vise à garantir un plus ample exposé sur les réponses données à l'enquête. Si vous indiquez une volonté de participer à des entrevues et vous êtes choisis pour l'échantillon final, alors vous serez contacté pour organiser l'entrevue. Encore une fois, vous pouvez changer d'avis à tout moment de ce processus et retirer votre consentement sans préjugés.

Je vous exprime ma gratitude pour votre participation à l'enquête!

ورقه استبيان معلومات

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هذا البحث يدرس و يحلل القضايا المتصلة بدور التعليم في تونس ، خاصة في سياق البعد الاجتماعي. و إنه يهدف إلى التحقيق في العلاقة بين الجامعة والمجتمع من خلال المشاركة في الشبكات القائمة مع أصحاب المصلحة الخارجيين. سوف يطرح الاستبيان الأسئلة ذات الصلة بالأنشطة الفردية من خلال الشبكات الاجتماعية والتصورات الشخصية عن المجتمع و المواطنة والمشاركة الاجتماعية، والقيم المدنية.

هناك هدف مزدوج لربط هذا البحث: الأول هو أن نفهم ماذا يمكن التعليم العالي في تونس أن يقدم كدور في المشاركة الاجتماعية، والثاني هو تقييم تصورات الطلاب حول الرؤية الاجتماعية للجامعة ودورها كجزء من المجتمع الذي يعيشون فيه.

سوف يتم التعامل مع الاستبيانات بتكتم و سرية مع عدم الكشف عن أي هويته، فيما يتعلق بأي من البيانات التي تم جمعها. وسيتم استخدام البيانات التي تم جمعها فقط لأغراض البحث حيث سيتم استعراضها ضمن المؤتمرات المختصة و المجلات الأكاديمية، و دائما بتكتم على الهويته وسوف لن يتم الكشف عنها إلى أي طرف ثالث.

المشاركة ليست ملزمة في هذا الاستطلاع. أنت حر في الانسحاب في أي وقت، حتى لو وافقت في البداية بحق لك سحب موافقتك دون إبداء الأسباب. مشاركتك سوف لن تؤثر على علاقتك مع المؤسسة المشاركة في هذا المشروع.

المسح يتكون من اختيار من عدة إجابات وبعض الأسئلة المفتوحة قصيرة. سوف يستغرق حوالي 10 دقائق من وقتك. في نهاية الدراسة، وسوف تجد إمكانية ترك التفاصيل الشخصية الخاصة بك إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة في مقابلة لاحقة كمتابعة للمسح الحالي، من أجل الحصول على إمكانية لمواصلة مناقشة موضوعات الدراسة.

الجزء الثاني من البحث يهدف إلى الحصول على معلومات و تفاصيل أكثر فيما يخص الاجابات التي قدمت في المسح. إذا أبدت الرغبة في المشاركة، و في حال تم اختيارك، سوف يتم الاتصال بك وترتيب لقاء، مرة أخرى، في حال غيرت رأيك في أي لحظة من هذه العملية تستطيع سحب مشاركتك بدون أي إحراج .

إعادة ورقة الإجابة تعني موافقتك على المشاركة في هذا البحث، وموافقتك على تحليل البيانات المتضمنة

!لكم امتناني على مشاركتكم في المسح

Appendix IV - RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE: French version

QUESTIONNAIRES SUR LES RELATIONS UNIVERSITÉS-COMMUNAUTÉ-ÉTUDIANT.

PART A: Définitions préalables.

Selon ta propre expérience, que signifie pour toi le mot « Démocratie »?

Qu'est-ce que la « Responsabilité Sociale » selon toi?

À ton propre expérience, qu'est-ce que signifie être un étudiant en Tunisie et quel rôle doit-il avoir?

PART B: Participation à groupes et/ou associations.

1. Marquer un **X** sur OUI ou NON dans le groupe/association formelle ou informelle dont vous faites partie. Pour chaque case marquée avec "**OUI**", veuillez spécifier **à quelle fréquence**:

Groupes/Associations	Participation	
	Oui	Non
1. Groupes religieux ou spirituels (mosquée, église, groupe religieux informel, groupe d'études religieux, autre groupe à caractère spirituel)	Oui	Non
2. Groupe sociale, culturel (arts, musique, théâtre, film, festival)	Oui	Non
3. Groupe sportif (football, volley-ball, athlétique, natation, etc)	Oui	Non
4. Groupe de service de base (éducation, santé, pollution, soutien jeunes/personnes âgées, groupe d'étude)	Oui	Non
5. Comité de voisinage ou organisation de communauté	Oui	Non
6. Syndicats/Unions (d'étudiants, de commerce, de travailleurs)	Oui	Non
7. Partis politiques	Oui	Non
8. Association professionnelle (docteurs, enseignants, ingénieurs, avocats, etc).	Oui	Non
9. Action social, mobilité et manifestation publique.	Oui	Non
10. Groupe or Association sur les Networks Sociales (Facebook, Blogs, Twitter, etc)	Oui	Non
Autre groupe:		

Quelle fréquence?			
1 fois par semaine	2-3 fois par semaine	1-2 fois par mois	1 fois par mois

2. De ces groupes déjà identifiés, dont tu appartiens, indiquer seulement les **trois plus importants** (par ordre d'importance du 1^{er} au 3^{ème}). Veuillez remplir les cases correspondantes au numéro de groupes dont vous faites partie (même si un seul ou deux).

	1 ^{er}	2 ^{ème}	3 ^{ème}
1. Groupes religieux ou spirituels (mosquée, église, groupe religieux informel, groupe d'études religieux, autre groupe à caractère spirituel).			
2. Groupe sociale, culturel (arts, musique, théâtre, film, festival, etc).			
3. Groupe sportif (football, volleyball, athlétique, natation, etc).			
4. Groupe de service basic (éducation, santé, pollution, soutien jeunes/personnes âgées, groupe d'étude, infrastructure urbaine).			
5. Comité de voisinage ou organisation de communauté			
6. Syndicats/Unions (d'étudiants, de commerce, de travailleurs)			
7. Partis politiques			
8. Associations professionnelles (docteurs, enseignants, ingénieurs, avocats, etc)			
9. Action social, mobilité et manifestation publique			
10. Groupe or Association sur les Networks Sociales (Facebook, Blogs, Twitter, etc)			
Autre groupe:			

3. Depuis combien de temps participes-tu dans **les mêmes trois** groupes/organisations identifiés?

	1 mois	2-3 mois	Entre 3-6 mois	1 an	1-2 ans	Entre 2-3 ans	plus de 3 ans
1^{ère} groupe							
2^{ème} groupe							
3^{ème} groupe							

4. Est-ce que ta participation à un ou plusieurs de ces trois groupes/associations est liée aussi à l'Université (cours d'étude, stages professionnels, examens, collaborations externes, etc)?

OUI	NON
------------	------------

Si **OUI**, veuillez spécifier le lien:

5. En faisant référence seulement aux membres du **1^{er} groupe le plus important** identifié: est-ce que la **majorité** des membres est (marquer chaque case soit **OUI** ou **NON**):

	OUI	NON
La majorité est du même voisinage/village/communauté		
La majorité est de la même famille ou bien parentèle		
La majorité est du même sexe		
La majorité est de la même religion		
la majorité est du même niveau éducatif		
la majorité est du même niveau économique		
la majorité est de la même tribu/caste/ groupe ethnique-linguistique		

6. À quel degré vous participez à la **prise de décision** au sein du **1^{er} groupe le plus important**?

1. très largement	
2. largement	
3. assez/moyen	
4. marginale/peu	
5. très marginale/ très peu	

7. Dans quelle mesure les activités de ce **1^{er} groupe** ont eu, à votre avis, un impacte/ changement/amélioration sur votre voisinage ou communauté locale?

1. très largement	
2. largement	
3. assez/moyen	
4. marginale/peu	
5. très marginale/ très peu	

8. Es-que tu penses que ta participation dans ces groupes dans/avec la communauté locale puisse changer/améliorer la vie de gens?

OUI **NON** **Je ne sais pas**

9. Indiquer **seulement trois** raisons principales **en total**, par ordre d'importance, de ta participation aux groupes/associations?

	1 ^{er}	2 ^{ème}	3 ^{ème}
Identité ou appartenance à la communauté			
Nécessité d'améliorer la qualité de vie			
Nécessité d'avancer le développement économique			
Remplacer le manque de services publics			
Diminuer les tensions socio-économiques et favoriser le dialogue			
Aider les marginalisé et les intégrer dans la société			
Fournir services gratuit aux pauvres			
Avancer et donner une réponse aux besoins de la communauté			
Changer le system social et la participation politique de la communauté			
Rencontrer de nouveaux amis			
Respecter les valeurs religieuses			
Autre :			

10. En général, comment es-que tu définirais les autres personnes :

1. très serviable	
2. serviable	
3. très confiant	
4. confiant	
5. ni serviable ni confiant	
6. égoïste/individualiste	
7. très égoïste/individualiste	

11. Dans une situation de difficulté (économique, de santé, personnelle, etc), **marquer chaque case de 1 à 5**, le groupe dont tu as plus de confiance (**1** plus confiant, **5** moins confiant)?

Famille et parents	
Amis ou voisins	
Groups et associations sociaux	
Gouvernement ou Institution publique	
Mosquée ou institutions religieuses	
Autre :	

PARTE C: Perceptions, attitudes et attentes envers la société.

12. Marquer pour chaque secteur, quels sont les problèmes actuels les plus importants en Tunisie.

Marquer **X** à *chaque problème* pour spécifier *quel/quels acteur/s* parmi **Gouvernement, Industrie, Société Civile, Université, Institutions Religieuses** *est/sont le/s plus capable/s d'apporter une solution?*

SECTEUR	PROBLEME	1^{er}	2^{ème}	3^{ème}	Gouv.	Indus.	Soc. Civ.	Univers.	Inst. Rel
<u>ECONOMIQUE</u>	Chômage, absence de travail								
	Pauvreté								
	Inflation								
	Absence de crédit bancaire								
	Taxes								
<u>SANTE</u>	Maladie/Épidémies								
	Situation du système des hôpitaux								
	Manque d'eau potable								
	Problèmes de pollution et l'élimination des déchets								
<u>POLITIQUE</u>	Corruption								
	Instabilité politique								
	Absence de Libertés fondamentales								
	Dialogue politique								
	Autonomie locale								
<u>SECURITE</u>	Niveau de criminalité								
	Violence								
	Absence/peu confiance dans le système policier								
	Absence/peu confiance dans le système judiciaire								
	Absence de sécurité								
<u>SOCIALE</u>	Éducation								
	Marginalisation sociale								
SECTEUR	PROBLEME	1^{er}	2^{ème}	3^{ème}	Gouv.	Indus.	Soc. Civ.	Univers.	Inst. Relig

	Dialogue/ Cohésion social								
	Division/lutte entre groupes social/économique/religieux								
	Problèmes de drogue/alcool/prostitution								
INFRASTRUCTURE	Habitation/maison								
	Système routière/ponts								
	Système de transports								

Si vous voyez un autre problème important, veuillez le citer :

13. Dans quelle activité publique te sens-tu le plus actif/active (Indiquer avec un X)?

Activités politiques	
Activités sociales de volontariat	
Activités religieuses	
Activités culturelles	
Activités de défense des droits humains	
Autre:	

14. Dans quelles activités publiques aimerais-tu être plus actif/active (Indiquer avec un X)?

Activités politiques	
Activités sociales de volontariat	
Activités religieuses	
Activités culturelles	
Activités de défense des droits humains	
Autres:	

15. Indiquer **seulement quatre** aspects **en total** les plus importants qui caractérisent ton identité (par ordre d'importance du 1^{er} au 4^{ème}) :

	1 ^{er}	2 ^{ème}	3 ^{ème}	4 ^{ème}
Voter dans chaque élection politique				
Participer activement dans de partis politique				
Participer dans les campagnes électorales politiques				
Lire la presse ou journaux régulièrement				
S'engager dans de débats politiques				
Participer à manifestations pacifiques contre une loi injuste				
Participer dans activités pour protéger l'environnement				
Participer aux activités sociales dans la communauté locale				
Faire du volontariat chaque semaine				
Participer aux activités pour la promotion de droits humains				
Participer à manifestations publiques pour avancer problématiques sociales				
Faire de la charité				
Participer aux activités spirituelles/religieuses				
Participer dans discussions/débats éthiques ou morales				
Participer aux activités pour la récolte d'argent d'organisations internationales				
Soigner et s'occuper des autres				
Manifester intérêt pour les problématiques globales				
S'engager sur internet ou les medias, sur problèmes sociales, morales, politiques, etc				
Autres:				

16. Indiquer, de la liste suivante, **seulement trois éléments en total**, qui influence le plus ton opinion dans la prise de décision (par ordre d'importance du 1^{er} au 3^{ème}).

	1 ^{er}	2 ^{ème}	3 ^{ème}
La presse locale/nationale			
Radio			
Télévision			
Internet (Facebook, Youtube, blogs, twitter, etc)			
Ta famille			
Ton groupe sociale/ethnique/tribal, etc			
Gens autre que ton groupe sociale/ethnique/tribal, etc			
Associations/groupes dont tu appartiens			
Tes amis			
Les professeurs universitaires			
Les institutions gouvernementales			
Les institutions religieuses			
Autres :			

17. De la liste suivante, indiquer **seulement 4 valeurs en total**, qui sont pour toi fondamentales dans ta vie quotidienne? (par ordre d'importance du 1^{er} au 4^{ème}):

	1 ^{er}	2 ^{ème}	3 ^{ème}	4 ^{ème}
Liberté d'expression				
Liberté d'association				
Droits politique				
Tolérance (religieuse, de sexe, ethnique, race, etc)				
Droits de l'Homme				
Dignité humaine				
Participation sociale et publique				
Démocratie				
Égalité				
Respect des autres				
Fraternité/solidarité				
Patriotisme/Nationalisme				
Autres :				

18. À quelles de notions suivantes tu t'identifies à présent dans ta vie, quand-on parle d'Islam?

الشهادتان	
الحج	
الصوم	
الزكاة	
الصلاة	
العدل	
التطوع	
الامة الاسلامية	
الرمضان	
الصدقة	
المصلحة العامة	
الحجاب	
القرآن	
السنة	
الشريعة	
Autre :	
Autre :	

PART D: Les relations Étudiants-Université.

19. Au cours de la présente année universitaire combien de fois environ avez-vous expérimenté les suivantes activités ou bien situation?

	Très souvent	Souvent	Parfois	Jamais
Demander à un autre étudiant de vous aider à comprendre le matériel de cours				
Expliquer le matériel de cours à un ou plusieurs étudiants				
Faire un projet ou un travail avec d'autres étudiants pendant le cadre d'un cours				
Faire un lien entre ce que vous avez appris et des problématiques ou des enjeux sociaux				
Présenter ou essayer de mieux comprendre différentes perspectives (Politique, religieuse, raciale/ethnique, de genre, etc) pendant les discussions en classe ou dans vos travaux				
Discuter avec un professeur, à l'extérieur de la classe, de sujets, d'idées ou de concepts étudiés dans un cours				
Discuter de vos projets de carrière ou de performance scolaire avec un professeur				
Mémoriser le matériel de cours				
Appliquer des faits, des théories ou des méthodes à des problèmes pratiques ou à de nouvelles situations				
Utiliser de l'information pour examiner un problème ou un enjeu du monde réel (chômage, changement climatique, santé publique, changements politique, etc)				
Discuter avec des personnes de race ou origine ethnique différents				
Discuter avec des personnes d'un milieu économique différent				
Discuter avec des personnes des croyances religieuses différentes				
Discuter avec des personnes ayant des opinions politiques différentes des vôtres				
Participer à un stage, à un programme d'enseignement coopératif, à une expérience sur le terrain, à une expérience d'enseignement, etc				
Développer compétences de citoyens informés et actifs				
Participer à des activités de volontariat dans le campus ou dans la communauté, organisées par l'Université, ta faculté, ton professeur, etc				
Participer à des activités de volontariat dans le campus ou dans la communauté, organisées par l'Union des étudiants, club ou associations culturel des étudiants				

20. Au cours d'une semaine typique de 7 jours combien d'heures consacrez-vous aux activités suivantes?

	Heures par semaine							Plus de 30
	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	
Activités parascolaires (club et associations, journal étudiants, sports, syndicat, etc)								
Emploi rémunéré sur le campus								
Emploi rémunéré hors campus								
Service communautaire ou bénévolat								
Détente et activités sociales (passer du temps avec vos amis, regarder la télé, garder les contacts avec vos amis sur internet, théâtre ou cinéma, etc								
Soin de personnes à charge vivant sous le même toit (enfants, parents, famille, etc)								
Déplacement vers le campus (en automobile, à pied, avec le train, etc								
Activités religieuses de prière ou spirituelles								
Préparation pour les cours (étude, rédaction, travaux à la maison, analyses de données, etc.)								
Autre :								

21. Quelles sont, à ton avis, les missions les plus importantes de l'Université?
Indiquer **seulement quatre en total**, (par ordre d'importance du 1^{er} au 4^{ème}).

	1 ^{ère}	2 ^{ème}	3 ^{ème}	4 ^{ème}
De promouvoir une éducation gratuite pour tous				
De promouvoir l'écologie dans le campus				
D'éduquer les étudiants pour obtenir un travail pour la croissance économique				
De promouvoir l'honnêteté et des comportements civiques et moraux				
De promouvoir des opportunités pour des activités religieuses				
De promouvoir des activités pour le volontariat et l'engagement social				
De promouvoir des opportunités de stage professionnel avec les entreprises				
D'investir plus dans projets d'utilité publique et pour la communauté locale				
De financier et coopérer avec des organisations non gouvernementales pour avancer problèmes sociaux				
D'engager directement sur de débats ou participation politiques				
De donner de cours autour de la participation sociale et civique dans la société				
D'utiliser internet et nouvelles technologies dans l'enseignement				
De garantir un accès plus équitable pour les étudiants économiquement marginalisés				
De défendre les intérêts et droits socio-politique et économique des étudiants				
De développer un enseignement d'excellence				
De développer une recherche d'excellence				
Autre :				

22. Quelle rôle penses-tu l'Université doit jouer en Tunisie? Marquer **OUI** ou **NON** pour chaque case.

	OUI	NON
De promouvoir une éducation gratuite pour tous		
De promouvoir opportunités de participation politique pour les étudiants		
De promouvoir stratégies écologiques dans le campus		
D'éduquer les étudiants pour obtenir un travail dans le marché		
De promouvoir l'honnête et des comportements civiques et moraux		
De promouvoir des opportunités pour des activités religieuses		
De promouvoir des activités pour le volontariat et l'engagement social		
De promouvoir opportunités de stage professionnel avec les entreprises		
D'investir plus dans projets d'utilité publique et la communauté locale		
De financier et coopérer avec la société civile pour avancer problèmes sociaux		
D'engager directement sur de débats politiques		
De créer des emplois et participer à la croissance économique du pays		
De donner de cours autour de la participation sociale et civique dans la société		
D'utiliser internet et nouvelles technologies dans l'enseignement		
De garantir un accès plus équitable pour les étudiants économiquement marginalisés		
De défendre les intérêts et droits socio-politique et économique des étudiants		
De promouvoir projets de développement régional		
De promouvoir projets et formation d'Entreprenariat social		
Autres :		

As-tu voté dans la dernière élection de représentants de l'Union des étudiants?

OUI	NON

23. Quelle rôle es-que tu penses l'union des étudiants doit avoir au sein de l'Université?

	OUI	NON
Promouvoir le dialogue entre étudiants et professeurs		
Défendre et protéger <i>les intérêts individuels</i> des étudiants		
Défendre le droits religieux des étudiants pour toutes religions (inclus minoritaires)		
Représenter les étudiants au sein de comités de Faculté, départements, etc		
Promouvoir de clubs sportifs, organisations culturels, etc		
Influencer les décisions concernant le cours, les évaluations, le curriculum, etc		
Garantir meilleures conditions de résidence universitaires		
Favoriser et organiser projets de volontariat pour engager les étudiants avec la société		
Engager les étudiants politiquement		
Promouvoir dialogue et cohésion entre groupes différents de étudiants		
Organiser débats publiques		
Engager les étudiants pour améliorer la qualité de vie dans le campus		
Faciliter plusieurs réseaux entre étudiants pour les échanges/ coopération entre eux		
Autre :		

PART E: Informations personnelles:

Âge :		Sexe :	M ou F
-------	--	--------	-----------

Faculté/Titre d'étude/Profession	
-------------------------------------	--

Cycle/année d'études:	
--------------------------	--

Es-tu que tu vives avec ta famille?	OUI	NON
Si non, indiquer où (ex. Résidence universitaires, en location, etc):		

Depuis quand es-tu que tu résides dans la ville (Si tu ne résides pas dans la ville, indiquer autrement la ville où tu vives):	
--	--

Plus haut titre d'études acquis par tes parents (ex. Baccalauréat, formation professionnelle, Université, Master, Doctorat, etc... Si applicable):			
Père		Mère	

Quelle est la profession de tes parents (Si applicable):			
Père		Mère	

De quelle ville tes parents sont originaires (Si applicable):			
Père		Mère	

Dans le cas vous voudriez être contactés pour un entretien d'environ 20 minutes pour approfondir les thématiques abordés dans ce questionnaire, prière de remplir la fiche ci-dessous:

Prénom		Portable	
email:			

Appendix V - RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE: English translation

SURVEY ON UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS.

PART A: General definitions.

According to your experience, what does democracy mean?

According to you, what is social responsibility?

According to your experience, what does it mean being a student and what role should they have in Tunisia?

PART B: Groups/associations' participation.

1. Use an **X** on **YES** or **NO** on formal or informal group/association you belong to. For each group you have marked "YES", please specify how often you take part to:

Groups/Associations	Participation	
	Yes	No
1. Religious or spiritual groups (mosque, church, informal religious group, religious study group, other spiritual group).	Yes	No
2. Socio-cultural group (arts, music, theatre, film, festival, etc.).	Yes	No
3. Sport group (football, volleyball, athletic, swimming, etc.).	Yes	No
4. Volunteering group (education, health, pollution, social care children/senior, study group, urban infrastructure).	Yes	No
5. Neighbourhood committee or organisation	Yes	No
6. Union (Student, professional, worker)	Yes	No
7. Political party	Yes	No
8. Professional associations (doctor, teacher, engineer, lawyer, etc.)	Yes	No
9. Social action, public manifestation	Yes	No
10. Online social networks (Facebook, Blogs, Twitter, etc.)	Yes	No
Other group:		

How often?			
Once a week	2-3 times/week	1-2 time/month	1 per month

2. From the groups above identified, which you belong to, please specify only the three most important (in order of importance from 1st till 3rd). Please fill in the box in relation to the number of groups you are member of (even if only one or two).

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
1. Religious or spiritual groups (mosque, church, informal religious group, religious study group, other spiritual group).			
2. Socio-cultural group (arts, music, theatre, film, festival, etc.).			
3. Sport group (football, volleyball, athletic, swimming, etc.).			
4. Volunteering group (education, health, pollution, social care children/senior, study group, urban infrastructure).			
5. Neighbourhood committee or organisation			
6. Union (Student, professional, worker)			
7. Political party			
8. Professional associations (doctor, teacher, engineer, lawyer, etc.)			
9. Social action, public manifestation			
10. Online social networks (Facebook, Blogs, Twitter, etc.)			
Other group:			

3. How long have been member of the above three **most important** groups/organisations?

	1 month	2-3 months	3-6 months	1 year	1-2 year	2-3 year	> 3 year
1st group							
2nd group							
3rd group							

4. Is it your participation to one or more group/association linked to the University (study subject, professional internship, subject exams, external collaboration, etc.)?

YES	NO
------------	-----------

If YES , please specify:

5. In relation only to members of the **1st most important** group identified: Is the **majority** of members ... (cross **YES** or **NO** for each box):

	YES	NO
The majority is from the same neighbourhood/village/community		
The majority is from the same family or within family relatives		
The majority is of the same gender		
The majority is of the same religions		
The majority is of the same educational level		
The majority is of the same economic status		
The majority is of the same tribe/caste/ethnic or linguistic group		

6. In relation to the **1st most important** group identified, to what degree do you take part to the decision-making process?

1. To a very large extent	
2. To a large extent	
3. Average/medium	
4. Marginal	
5. Very marginal	

7. In relation to the **1st most important** group identified, to what extent, according to you, the activities developed had an impact/change/improvement in your neighbourhood/local community?

1. To a very large extent	
2. To a large extent	
3. Average/medium	
4. Marginal	
5. Very marginal	

8. Do you think your participation to these groups in/with the local community can change/improve people's life?

YES	NO	I do not know
-----	----	---------------

9. Indicate only the three **most important reasons**, in order of importance, explaining your participation to groups/associations?

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Identity or community sense of belonging			
Necessity to improve the quality of life			
Necessity to favour economic development			
To compensate lack of public services			
To reduce socio-economic tensions and foster dialogue			
To help and integrate into society marginalised people			
To give free services to poor people			
To foster and give a solution to community's needs			
To change the social system and political participation in the community			
To meet new friends			
To respect religious values			
Other:			

10. In general, how would you define other people :

1. very helpful	
2. helpful	
3. very trustful	
4. trustful	
5. nor trustful or helpful	
6. selfish/individualist	
7. very selfish/individualist	

11. In a situation of difficulty (economic, health, personal, etc.), **tick each box from 1 to 5**, for the group you would trust the most (**1** most trustful, **5** less trustful)?

Family and relatives	
Friends or neighbours	
Social groups/associations	
Government or public institutions	
Mosque or religious institutions	
Other:	

PART C: Perceptions, attitudes and expectations towards society.

12. Indicate for each sector, what are the most important problems in Tunisia at present. Use an **X** for each problem to specify which actor amongst **Government, Industry, Civil Society, University, Religious Institutions** is/are the most apt to favour a solution?

SECTOR	PROBLEM	1st	2nd	3rd	Govn.	Indus.	Civ. Soc.	Univers.	Rel Inst.
<u>ECONOMIC</u>	Unemployment, lack of jobs								
	Poverty								
	Inflation								
	Lack of financial credit								
	Taxes								
<u>HEALTH</u>	Illness/Epidemic								
	Hospitals' conditions								
	Lack of drinkable water								
	Pollution and waste system								
<u>POLITICS</u>	Corruption								
	Political instability								
	Lack of basic freedoms								
	Political dialogue								
	Local Autonomy								
<u>SECURITY</u>	Level of criminality								
	Violence								
	Lack/low trust in the police system								
	Lack/low trust in the judicial system								
	Lack of security								
<u>SOCIAL</u>	Education								
	Social marginalisation								
SECTOR	PROBLEM	1st	2nd	3rd	Gov.	Indus.	Civ.Soc.	Univers.	Relig Inst.
	Dialogue/ Social cohesion								
	Division/clash amongst social/economic/religious groups								

	Drugs/alcohol/prostitution problems			
INFRASTRUCTURE	Housing			
	Road system, bridges			
	Transportations			

If you would like to add another important problem, please specify:

13. Which public activity are you most active in (Cross with an **X**)?

Political activities	
Social volunteering activities	
Religious activities	
Cultural activities	
Human rights' defence	
Other:	

14. Which of the following activities you would like to be more active in (Cross with an **X**)?

Political activities	
Social volunteering activities	
Religious activities	
Cultural activities	
Human rights' defence	
Other:	

15. Indicate **only four** aspects **in total** the most important which characterise your identity the most (in order of importance 1st to 4th) :

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
To vote in each political election				
To participate actively in a political party				
To participate in a political campaign				
Read newspaper regularly				
To engage in political debates				
To participate in a public manifestation against an unjust law				
To participate in activities for the protection of the environment				
To participate in social activities in the local community				
Volunteering each week				
To participate in activities for human rights' promotion				
To participate in public manifestation to address social problems				
Charity				
To participate in religious/spiritual activities				
To participate in ethical/moral debates/discussions				
To participate in fund raising activities for international organisations				
Take care of others				
Raise interest for global issues				
To engage on internet or media for social/political/moral problems				
Other:				

16. Indicate, from the list below, **only three elements in total**, which influence the most your opinion in decision-making (in order of importance from 1st to 3rd).

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Local/national journals			
Radio			
Television			
Internet (Facebook, YouTube, blogs, twitter, etc.)			
Family			
Your social/ethnic/tribe group, etc.			
Other people different from Your social/ethnic/tribe group, etc.			
Associations/groups you are member of			
Friends			
University professors			
Government institutions			
Religious institutions			
Other:			

17. From the list below, indicate **only 4 values in total**, which are significant for you in your daily life. (in order of importance from 1st till 4th):

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Freedom of expression				
Freedom of association				
Civil rights				
Tolerance (religious, gender, ethnic, race, etc.)				
Human rights				
Human dignity				
Social and civic participation				
Democracy				
Equality				
Respect for others				
Fraternity/solidarity				
Patriotism/Nationalism				
Other:				

18. From the list below, which notions do you identify the most with in your life, in reference to Islam?

Vow (Shahada)	
Pilgrimage (Hajj)	
Fasting (Saum)	
Alms (Zakat)	
Prayer (Salat)	
Justice (Adal)	
Volunteering (Tatawa)	
Islamic nation (Umma)	
Ramadan	
Charity (Sadaqa)	
Public good (Maslaha)	
Veil (hijab)	
Qur'an	
Sunnah	
Shariaa	
Other:	
Other:	

PART D: University-students' relationships.

19. During the present year, how often have you experienced the following activities/situations?

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Ask to another student to explain you class materials				
Explain class materials to one or more other students				
Develop a team-project as part of a course examination				
Interlink what you have learnt in the classroom with social problems				
To explain or better understand different perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) during class discussions or workshop				
Discuss with a professor, outside the classroom, about themes or concepts explained in the class				
Discuss with a professor about career development or academic achievement				
Learn materials by heart				
Apply facts, theories or methods to practical problems or new situations				
Make use of information to examine a problem or issue of real life (unemployment, climate change, public health, political changes, etc.)				
Discuss with people of different race or ethnic origins				
Discuss with people from different economic background				
Discuss with people with different religious beliefs				
Discuss with people with different political opinions				
Take part to an internship, external teaching programme, field work, or other teaching experiences				
Develop competencies as informed and active citizen				
Volunteering inside the campus or in the local community organised by the University				
Volunteering inside the campus or in the local community organised by the Student union, student club				

20. In a week, how many hours have on average dedicated to the following activities

	<u>Hours per week</u>							
	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	More than 30
Extra-curricular activities (club/associations, university press, sports, student union)								
Paid employment in the University								
Paid employment outside the campus								
Volunteering or charity activities								
Hobby and social activities (going out with friends, watch TV, spend times with friends on internet, theatre or cinema, etc.)								
Take care of family or other leaving in the same household (babies, parents, relatives, etc.)								
Transportation to the campus (by car, walking, by train, etc.)								
Religious prayer or other spiritual activities								
Preparation for an exam (revisions, writing, homework, data analysis, etc.)								
Other:								

21. What are, according to you, universities' most important missions? Indicate **only four in total**, (in order of importance from 1st to the 4th).

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
To promote free education				
To promote ecology in the campus				
To educate students in order to find an employment to contribute to economic development				
To promote honesty, moral and civic behaviours				
To promote opportunities for religious activities				
To promote volunteering and social engagement				
To promote opportunities for professional internships				
To invest in projects for public and local community benefits				
To fund and cooperate with NGO's to address social problems				
To engage directly on political debates and political participation				
To offer social participation and civic engagement courses/trainings				
To use internet and new technologies for teaching purposes				
To guarantee more inclusive policies for economically marginalised students				
To defend socio-political students' interests and rights				
To develop teaching excellence				
To develop research excellence				
Other:				

22. What role-s do you think universities should play in Tunisia? Cross **YES** or **NO** for each box.

	YES	NO
To promote free education		
To promote opportunities for students' political participation		
To promote strategies for ecological campuses		
To educate students in order to find an employment		
To promote honesty, moral and civic behaviours		
To promote opportunities for religious activities		
To promote volunteering and social engagement		
To promote opportunities for professional internships		
To invest in projects for public and local community benefits		
To fund and cooperate with NGO's to address social problems		
To engage directly on political debates		
To create jobs and to participate to the national economic growth		
To offer social participation and civic engagement courses/trainings		
To use internet and new technologies for teaching purposes		
To guarantee more inclusive policies for economically marginalised students		
To defend socio-political students' interests and rights		
To promote regional development projects		
To promote projects and training for social entrepreneurship		
Other:		

23. Did you vote on the last student union's election?

YES	NO
-----	----

24. What role do you think the student union ought to have inside the university?

	YES	NO
To promote dialogue between students and professors		
To defend and protect students' interests		
To defend religious interests for all students (including minorities)		
To represent students within faculty committees, departments, etc.		
To promote sport clubs, cultural organisation, etc.		
To influence decision-making regarding curriculum, exams, classes, etc.		
To guarantee better conditions in students' halls of residence		
To support and organise volunteering activities to engage students in society		
To engage students politically		
To promote dialogue and cohesion amongst students		
To organise public debates		
To engage students in order to improve quality life in campus		
To foster networks and cooperation amongst students		
Other:		

PART E: Personal information:

Age:		Sex :	M or F
------	--	-------	-----------

Faculty/Degree/Profession	
---------------------------	--

Year of study:	
----------------	--

Do you live with your family?	YES	NO	
If no, specify (i.e. University hall, private renting, etc.):			

Since when have you been living in the city (if you do not live in the city, specify where do you currently live):	
--	--

What is your parents' education level (i.e. A levels, professional certificate, University degree, Master, PhD, etc.) (if applicable):			
Father		Mother	

What is your parents' profession (if applicable):			
Father		Mother	

What is your parents' town of origin (if applicable):			
Father		Mother	

In the case, you would like to be contacted for an interview of about 20 minutes to discuss in further details the themes presented in the survey, please leave your contacts in the section below :

Name		Mobile	
email:			

Appendix VI – T-test

Table 20 – Results of the T-test for the statistical differences students' responses on Islamic values.

Variable	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Islamic Value Shahada	Engineering	24	1,21	,415	,013	,990
	Human science	29	1,21	,412		
Islamic Value Hajj	Engineering	24	1,71	,464	,145	,886
	Human science	29	1,69	,471		
Islamic Value Sauf	Engineering	24	1,21	,415	-1,090	,281
	Human science	29	1,34	,484		
Islamic Value Zakat	Engineering	24	1,50	,511	,123	,903
	Human science	29	1,48	,509		
Islamic Value Salat	Engineering	24	1,33	,482	,175	,862
	Human science	29	1,31	,471		
Islamic Value Adal	Engineering	24	1,33	,482	-1,342	,185
	Human science	29	1,52	,509		
Islamic Value Tatawa	Engineering	24	1,58	,504	-,793	,431
	Human science	29	1,69	,471		
Islamic Value Ummah	Engineering	24	1,71	,464	-,704	,485
	Human science	29	1,79	,412		
Islamic Value Romdhan	Engineering	24	1,33	,482	-2,714	,009
	Human science	29	1,69	,471		
Islamic Value Sadaqa	Engineering	24	1,33	,482	-1,342	,185
	Human science	29	1,52	,509		
Islamic Value Public Good	Engineering	24	1,38	,495	-1,802	,077
	Human science	29	1,62	,494		
Islamic Value Hijab	Engineering	24	1,88	,338	1,614	,113
	Human science	29	1,69	,471		
Islamic Value Quran	Engineering	24	1,25	,442	,367	,715
	Human science	29	1,21	,412		
Islamic Value Sunna	Engineering	24	1,54	,509	-,572	,570
	Human science	29	1,62	,494		
Islamic Value Sharia	Engineering	24	1,75	,442	-,683	,498
	Human science	29	1,83	,384		

*It has a significant statistical difference on $P \leq 0.05$

Table 21 – Results of the T-test for the statistical differences students’ responses on Tunisian Universities Socio-economic Third Mission engagement.

	Variable	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Student Political Participation	Engineering	26	1,6538	,48516	,873	,387
	Human science	28	1,5357	,50787		
Ecology in Campus	Engineering	26	1,1923	,40192	-2,171	,035
	Human science	28	1,4643	,50787		
Student Employment	Engineering	25	1,1200	,33166	-,241	,811
	Human science	28	1,1429	,35635		
Civic & Moral Behaviour	Engineering	26	1,1923	,40192	,479	,634
	Human science	28	1,1429	,35635		
Religious Activities	Engineering	26	1,7308	,45234	,175	,862
	Human science	26	1,7308	,45234		
Volunteering & Engagement	Engineering	26	1,1154	,32581	-1,843	,071
	Human science	28	1,3214	,47559		
Professional Internship	Engineering	26	1,1538	,36795	,111	,912
	Human science	28	1,1429	,35635		
Investment in Public Project	Engineering	26	1,2308	,42967	-1,653	,104
	Human science	27	1,4444	,50637		
Funding Civil Society	Engineering	26	1,4615	,50839	-,278	,782
	Human science	28	1,5000	,50918		
Political Debate	Engineering	25	1,7600	,43589	-,917	,363
	Human science	28	1,6429	,48795		
Courses on Civic Engagement	Engineering	26	1,2308	,42967	,821	,416
	Human science	28	1,1429	,35635		
Protect Students’ Rights	Engineering	25	1,3600	,48990	,860	,394
	Human science	28	1,2500	,44096		

*It has a significant statistical difference on $P \leq 0.05$

Table 22 - Results of the T-test for the statistical differences students' responses on personal identity most important characteristics.

	Variable	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2.tailed)
First Important Identity	Engineering	23	9,2174	5,55924	,310	,758
	Human science	27	8,7407	5,29581		
Second Most Important Identity	Engineering	24	10,8333	5,13866	1,383	,173
	Human science	27	9,0000	4,32346		
Third Most Important Identity	Engineering	23	9,0000	5,68890	-1,379	,174
	Human science	27	11,1111	5,13160		

*It has a significant statistical difference on $P \leq 0.05$

APPENDIX VII: Nvivo coding

Figure 11. Nodes clustered by word similarity.

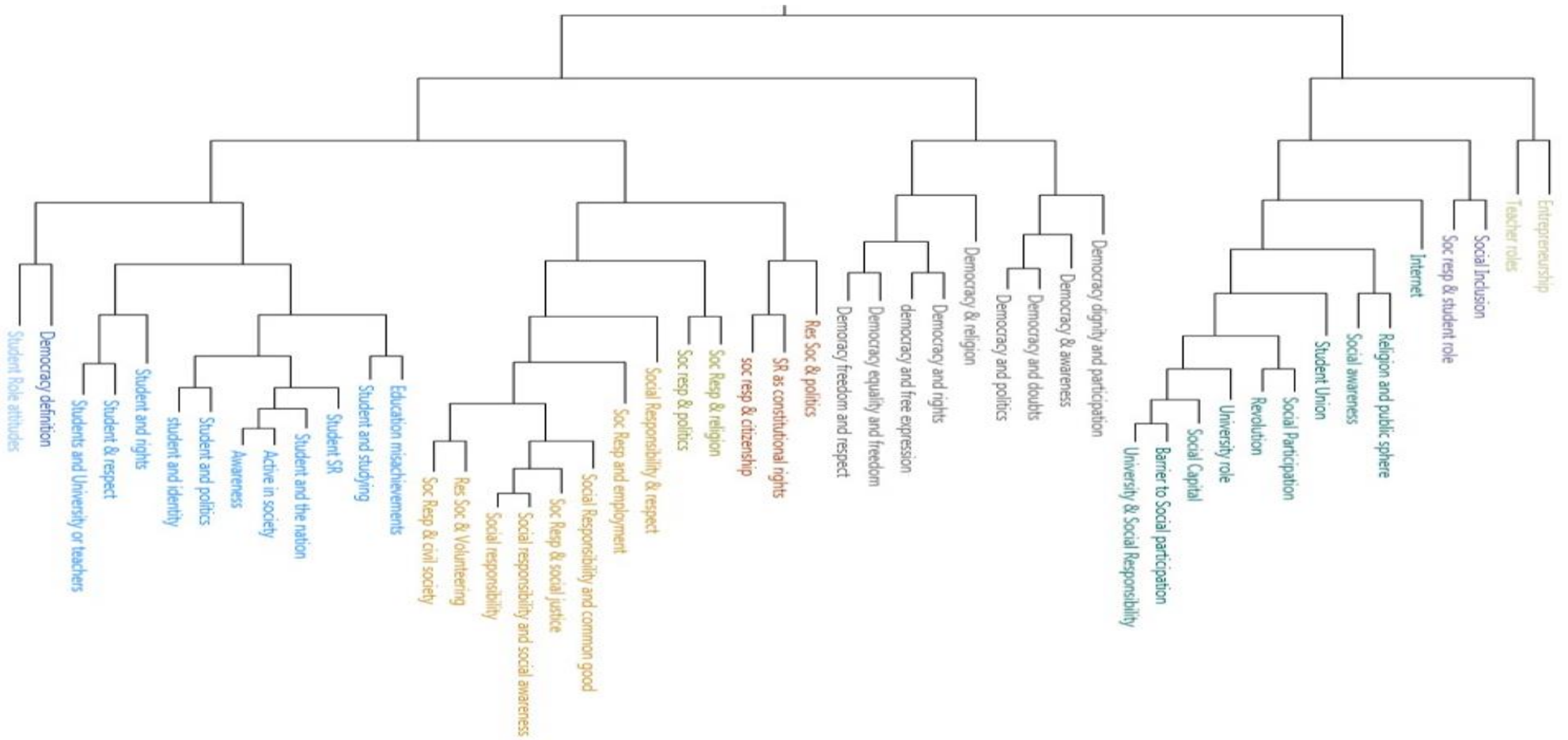


Figure 12. Nodes clustered by coding similarity.

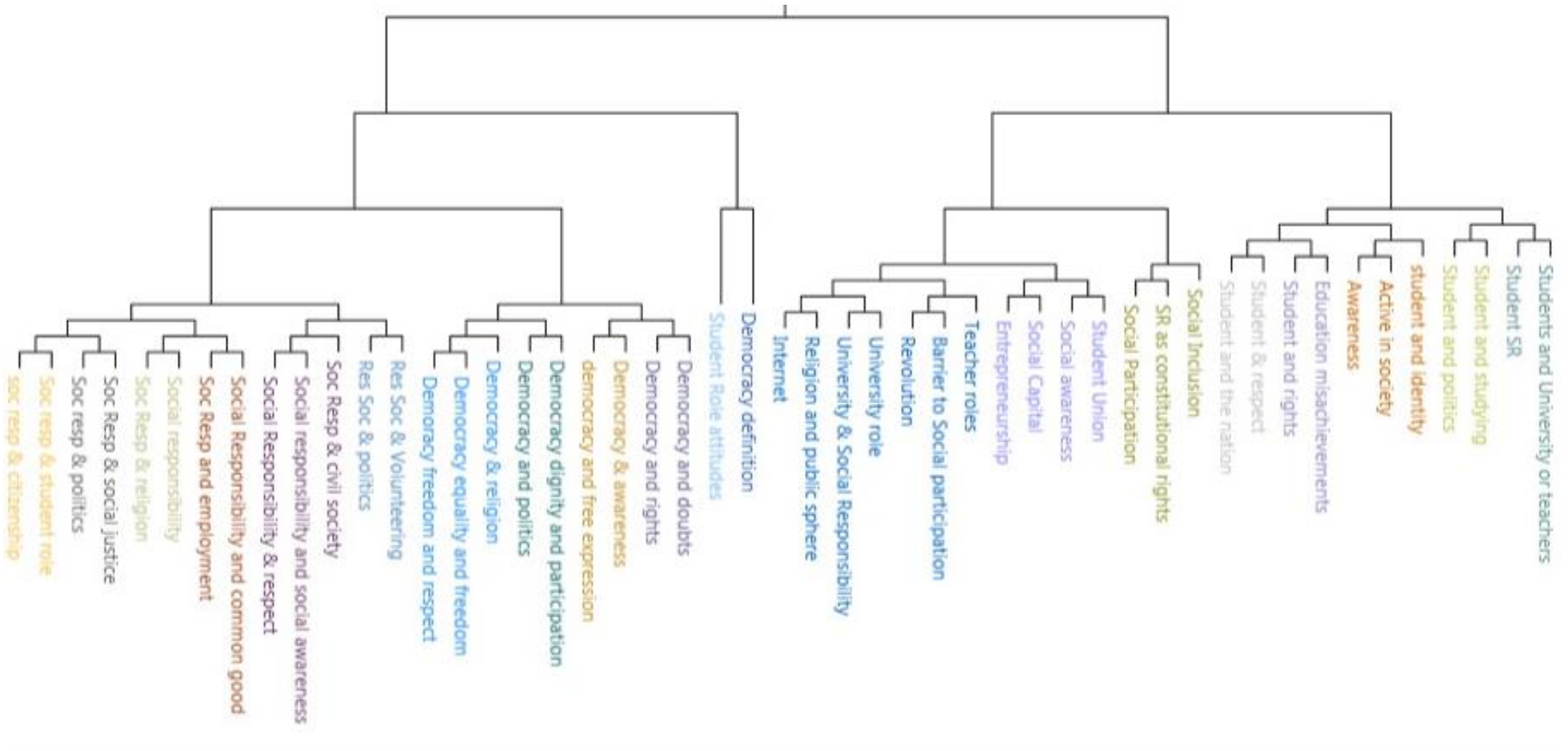


Figure 13. Example of coded transcript.

Interviews transcription Social Responsibility

ID: 1

NAME: S1

DESCRIPTION: Social responsibility is being responsible towards society and problems we experience. We do not have to be as spectators, on the contrary, it is required to always act and trying to find solutions in order to improve the daily life.

Table Form

- Social Responsibility and common good
- soc resp & citizenship
- Res Soc & Volunteering
- Soc Resp & social justice
- Social responsibility and social awareness
- Social Responsibility & respect
- Social responsibility
- Coding Density

Record 1 of 87