

## Did Islamism Become What States Made of It?

### A Realist-Constructivist Approach to Islamist Foreign Policy in Egypt and Tunisia

**[DRAFT: not for quotation without authorisation from the author]**

**ABSTRACT:** *The rise to power of Islamists in Tunisia and Egypt marked an important turn in the history of the Islamist movement. This paper provides an analysis and critical assessment of the implications of the Islamist rise to power in these countries by looking at their foreign policy. The study proposes a survey of the exchange of official visits between states since the rise to power of an-Nahḍa and the Freedom and Justice Party. On this basis, it discusses to what extent the international relations of Egypt and Tunisia have changed under the rule of Islamist governments. By referring to realist constructivism as the theoretical framework for analysis, the study claims that Islamism has adapted to the norms and constraints of International Society. Therefore, the study concludes that Islamism has become “what states made of it” rather than the state becoming what Islamists wanted it to be.*

*BRISMES Annual Conference 2013, 24-26 June 2013 University College Dublin, Ireland.*

*Egypt in the Arab Spring: Multidisciplinary Research Perspectives, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University 27 June 2013, Cairo Egypt.*

*SeSaMo Annual Conference 2013, 17-19 September 2013, University of Pavia, Italy.*

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*"Only stones do not change in 20 years, but people do."*  
Rashid al-Ghannūshī  
Leader of an-Nahḍa Movement

## 1. Introduction

A great deal of uncertainty has emerged in international politics as well as in academia when Islamist parties rose to power in the Middle East in the wake of the Arab uprisings of 2011 and 2012. The implications of this unforeseen phenomenon are still to be properly assessed. This paper develops a theoretical analytical framework and applies it to the cases of the Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt and an-Nahḍa in Tunisia, to assess to what extent Islamism, as a political force in power, determines a transformation of the foreign policy of these states.

The methodology of the study is a process-tracing analysis of the first steps in foreign policy undertaken by the Egyptian and Tunisian governments of the FJP and an-Nahḍa. The study proposes a survey of the exchange of visits between high-level state officials of Tunisia and Egypt with other international political actors on the regional and global spheres. It then considers three examples in which the relations established by these exchanges of visits have been put under stress by diplomatic and political crises. It then provides an overview of the economic bonds established by each state through soft-loans, aid, and foreign direct investments with other states and multilateral organisations.

This constitutes the empirical backbone upon which the essay builds considerations of a theoretical nature from a realist-constructivist perspective. By realist-constructivism I refer here, to "a constructivism that involves a self-contained set of arguments about why power cannot be, in any way, transcended in international politics."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the focus on Islamist political actors is combined with the consideration of material limits and constraints imposed by the dynamics of power of international relations.

The argument is that, although Islamists came into power with an agenda informed by the constitutive elements of their political identity, social interactions with other states' diplomacies and scarce material resources have imposed constraints over their political agency, limiting their capacity of "transcending" power in international politics. Embedded in the network of relations and practices that they inherited from the previous regimes,

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Thaddeus Jackson et al., "Bridging the Gap: Toward a Realist-Constructivist Dialogue," *International Studies Review* 6, no. 2 (2004): 338.

Islamists in power thus far, have not been in a position to significantly alter the foreign policy of the states they now run, notwithstanding the fact that these foreign policies have always been at antipodes of their political agenda.

As the title of this paper anticipates, the idea is to draw an analogy between the Wendtian conception of anarchy as the result of social processes of interaction<sup>2</sup> and Islamism. According to this analogy, as much as is misleading to reify anarchy in international relations as the incontrovertible “nature of things”<sup>3</sup> based on self-help and power politics, then the same applies to Islamism which, this paper claims, has become “what states made of it” rather than projecting its customary agenda in the international realm. Interaction and then international socialisation as well as material constraints are processes that have reconfigured the identity and consequently the interests of Islamist governments in Tunisia and Egypt.

At the time of writing the FJP and An-Nahḍa have been in power for about one year; it is too early to propose definitive conclusions, but their intense diplomatic activity is still indicative of trajectories of foreign policy which will further consolidate and then institutionalise with time.

The essay begins by introducing the realist-constructivist assumptions of the study. Then it proceeds with a brief historical overview of the rise to power of Islamists in Tunisia and a survey of the main visits exchanged with other international actors. The same process is repeated with reference to the case of Egypt. Section 7 discusses how, in situations of crises, these relations have been severely tested, but has remained overall unchanged. Section 8 overviews the credit lines, aid and direct investment relations that Tunisia and Egypt have established to tackle their serious economic situation. Finally, the paper resumes the theoretical perspective and, with reference to its empirical component, assesses to what extent Islamism has become what states make of it.

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992).

<sup>3</sup> I am referring here to the discussion of “nature of things” or “natural necessity” that is presented by Jackson and Thaddeus in Jackson et al., "Bridging the Gap: Toward a Realist-Constructivist Dialogue," 338-9.

## 2. Realist-Constructivism as Interpretative Theoretical Framework for Empirical Analysis

In order to assess and evaluate how the rise of Islamism in the region has influenced the foreign policy of states as Tunisia and Egypt, this paper adopts as an interpretative framework realist-constructivism. Scholars of the Middle East have already discussed the limits of realism in explaining the international relations of the region<sup>4</sup> and constructivist scholars have debated the limits of constructivism itself.<sup>5</sup> Realist-constructivism has emerged as a perspective that aims at complementing at least some of the deficiencies of both approaches.<sup>6</sup>

A realist-constructivist approach is considered as particularly appropriate for the tasks of this essay because, on the one hand, its constructivist component highlights how Islamism defines its interests and policies through a relational practice in which relations with other states have a constitutive function determining at least some of the items of the Islamists international relations agenda.<sup>7</sup> Whereas, on the other hand, the realist component, concerned with the material means and capabilities of these states, shows that norms and ideas that inform the foreign policy of Islamist governments are inevitably constrained in their implementation by the availability of resources and means to effectively project power in the international realm.

Samuel Barkin has argued that realist-constructivism “could study the relationship between normative structures, the carriers of political morality, and uses of power. And, as a result, realist constructivism could address issues of change in international relations in a way that neither idealist constructivism (with its ultimately static view of political morality) nor positivist-materialist realism (with its dismissive view of political morality) can manage.”<sup>8</sup> By operationalizing this approach, this essay is also an opportunity to assess how realist-

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<sup>4</sup> Michael N. Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab politics : negotiations in regional order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> J. Samuel Barkin, "Realist Constructivism," *International Studies Review* 5, no. 3 (2003).

<sup>6</sup> A useful discussion of the potential of realist-constructivism and the different ways in which it can be conceptualised is Jackson et al., "Bridging the Gap: Toward a Realist-Constructivist Dialogue."

<sup>7</sup> Most notable constructivist approaches to the study of the Middle East are Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab politics : negotiations in regional order*; Marc Lynch, *State interests and public spheres : the international politics of Jordan's identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Fiona B. Adamson, "Global Liberalism versus Political Islam: Competing Ideological Frameworks in International Politics," *International Studies Review* 7, no. 4 (2005); Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim politics : reimagining the umma*, Transnationalism (London: Routledge, 2001); Morten Valbjørn and André Bank, "The New Arab Cold War: rediscovering the Arab dimension of Middle East regional politics," *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 1 (2012).

<sup>8</sup> Barkin, "Realist Constructivism," 338.

constructivism can be applied to the context of Middle Eastern politics and evaluate its heuristic potential.

Barkin's agenda for realist-constructivism certainly exceeds the scope of this paper, nonetheless the following pages will cover at least part of it, by showing how Islamism is far from being a "static political morality" in international politics and claiming that, by entertaining relations with other states, it adapts to the norms and institutions of international society. But the social construction of intersubjective meanings (and, in this case, the meaning of Islamism in foreign policy), is not the only component of this analysis. Although Islamism in the Middle East is showing a powerful capacity of mobilisation in symbolic terms, its limited material resources and means available to exercise power, also explain why the governments of Islamists have rationalised their ideological commitments and adapted pragmatically to the international role they acquired by becoming the ruling government of a state with an international status.

How does the operationalization of realist-constructivism look like? The constructivist component of this study materialises in the survey of the exchange of visits that states have undertaken after that an-Nahḍa and the FJP have taken power. States' visits, and the related symbolic value that these visits carry, are representative of the social nature of international relations. These visits are, in fact, acts of recognition<sup>9</sup> of the status of relations between states and their respective governments and therefore are indicators of the web of relations that Islamist governments have inherited from the previous regime since when they accessed state offices and they further developed.

The realist component which complement the constructivist analysis amounts to the consideration of the economic situation of Tunisia and Egypt and, in particular, the policies that the respective governments have adopted to receive financial credit from international multilateral institutions and through soft-loans, investments and aid, provided by other countries to recover from a dramatic economic and social situation.

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<sup>9</sup> I am referring here to the concept of recognition as an international social practice with a constitutive value for the status of political actor. See Mervyn Frost, *Global ethics : anarchy, freedom and international relations*, Critical issues in global politics (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009). 27.

### 3. The Rise to Power of An-Nahḍa in Tunisia

The rise to power of an-Nahḍa in Tunisia began with the end of Zīn al-ʿĀbidīn Bin Aly's regime on 14 January 2011 under the pressure of mass protests began in November 2010. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of January Rashīd al-Ghannūshī, the leader of An-Nahḍa returned to Tunis after twenty years of exile. At the same time, a military junta was in charge of 'protecting the revolution' while a transitional government was formed to then lead to the elections of a National Constituent Assembly (NCA).<sup>10</sup>

Notwithstanding the continuation of riots and disorders in the country in the following months, the authorities established an interim constitution in March 2011, agreed on an electoral law and formed an Electoral Authority in August and, in October, elections were held to form the NCA. An-Nahḍa played only a marginal role in the uprising, but as in the case of the FJP in Egypt, territorial organisation and structured leadership, has rewarded an-Nahḍa with favourable electoral results. The Islamist group obtained 41% of the vote, taking 89 out of 217 seats in the NCA, followed by the other political formations including the Congress for the Republic (CPR), Popular Petition, and Ettakatol all obtaining between 20 to 29 seats.

The NCA elected al-Munṣif al-Marzūqī, a human rights activist and leader of the CPR, as interim president of the Tunisian Republic, and then voted in office a coalition government<sup>11</sup> led by an-Nahḍa under the premiership of Hamādy Jabāly. By leading the government's coalition and having obtained absolute majority in the NCA, Islamists became the most prominent political force in the country, thus marking an historical turn for Tunisia, after decades of dictatorial rule during which an-Nahḍa was banned. Although an-Nahḍa's leader al-Ghannūshī maintains a pivotal political role, he did not run for political offices.

Tunisia's Islamist-led government has been facing a daunting task since the beginning. State's security and stability have been undermined from 2010 to 2013 by riots and turmoil across the country due to the popular perception of an inactive government, a difficult economic conjuncture and the emergence of Salafist factions challenging reforms occasionally with violent protests. Between 2010 and 2011 the country GDP growth dropped dramatically from 3 % to -1 %, although it then recovered to 3% in 2012. The outlook for 2013 will attest more or less at the same level. The unemployment rate, nonetheless, is

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<sup>10</sup> *Al-Majlis al-Wataniy al-Ta'sisiy*, a more precise translation would be the National Foundational Assembly.

<sup>11</sup> The coalition includes an-Nahḍa, the CPR and leftist at-Takatul.

alarming and shifted from 13% of the labour force in 2010, to almost 19% in 2011 and has remained around 16% for 2012 and 2013.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Tunisia has been witnessing the rise of political violence. The killing of political leader Shukry Bel 'Aïd in February 2013 has provoked a crisis that led to a cabinet reshuffle and the nomination of a new prime minister: 'Alī al-'Arayyīḍ, a long-standing member of an-Nahḍa as his predecessor.

The Islamist rise to power in Tunisia differs from the case of Egypt for a more prudent approach and a governmental role shared with other non-Islamist groups. The political agency of the government has been limited by constraints determined by the difficult economic situation, the constant threat to security and stability and, at least in part, by the power-sharing agreement with non-Islamist groups.

#### **4. Surveying Tunisian Foreign Policy under an-Nahḍa**

Let us focus on two areas for the analysis of Tunisia foreign relations that are regional and global international relations. Tunisian foreign policy towards great powers interests two main actors, that are the USA and the EU, including its individual state components. In both respects, Tunisian foreign policy under Islamist rule has been under the sign of continuity with the previous regime.

Relations with the USA did not seem to be significantly altered by the rise to power of an Islamist party. It could have been reasonably expected a more tense relationship with a government led by an-Nahḍa. Its intellectual leader al-Ghannūshī has called for friendly relations with the West in the past but more often he has criticised the role of the USA in the region and beyond for its double standards, the misrepresentation of Islam and the support for Israel.<sup>13</sup> If we consider the ideological commitments of the party and thus its political identity, the premises for a friendly relationship with the USA were feeble at the beginning of an-Nahḍa's governmental activity.

Notwithstanding this, the Tunisian government engaged promptly in rather intense diplomatic activity with no preconceptions reflecting its ideological basis. This was also possible because both parties were indeed interested in mutual diplomatic engagement, indeed the USA has immediately implemented a rather proactive diplomatic initiative with Tunisia. Secretary of state Hillary Clinton visited Tunisia even before the formation of the

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<sup>12</sup> Source International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Azzam Tamimi, *Rachid Ghannouchi : a democrat within Islamism*, Religion and global politics (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). 173-81.

Islamist government; she called for reform and democratisation in the country and the peaceful reformation of the country towards a democratic path. In September 2011, the interim Foreign Minister Kefi exchanged the visit with Clinton in Washington and eventually signed a joint agreement for partnership with the USA.<sup>14</sup>

With the formation of the an-Nahḍa-led government, relations continued to flourish. Al-Ghannūshī visited the USA before the formation of the government in Tunisia and declared in several occasions intention to cooperate with the USA. During a meeting at the US Council on Foreign Relations, he has been questioned about previous declarations in which he declared support for Saddam Hussein's regime during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and defined the USA "enemy of Islam". Al-Ghannūshī replied that "only stones do not change in 20 years, but people do", thus showing a clear intention of revising his views on the USA.<sup>15</sup> Al-Ghannūshī has also judged the US policy towards the Arab uprising and, with regard to Obama's presidency, he declared that: "I'm really pleased and I think his policies toward the Arab Spring are good and positive."<sup>16</sup>

Relations between Tunisia and the USA reached the highest peak of harmony within the framework of the first "Friends of Syria Conference" (of which more below) held in February 2012. In this occasion, Clinton met with President Marzūqī, the Foreign Minister Rafiq 'Abd al-Salām and Prime Minister Jabāly. For Tunisia in particular, this was an opportunity to carve out a regional and international role as the spearhead of the "Arab Spring". Clinton's declarations following the meeting marked the friendly character of Tunisian-American relations defining the meeting "excellent" and declaring that the "political side of the revolution is going quite well"<sup>17</sup> thus, indicating the possibility of economic aid and cooperation in order to facilitate the transition of the country.

As in the case of Egypt, nonetheless, Tunisia experienced phases of crisis in US-Tunisian relations with regard to the events of September 2012, related to the anti-Islam film protests (to be discussed below). A few weeks after the riots nonetheless, Clinton met with

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<sup>14</sup> U.S.-Tunisia Joint Political and Economic Partnership. Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Remarks With Tunisian Foreign Minister Mouldi Kefi at Signing Ceremony," ed. US State Department (New York 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, "Tunisia's Challenge: A Conversation with Rachid al-Ghannouchi," Council on Foreign Relations, <http://www.cfr.org/tunisia/tunisias-challenge-conversation-rachid-al-ghannouchi/p26660>.

<sup>16</sup> Marc Lynch, "Rached Ghannouchi: the FP interview," [http://lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/12/05/ghannouchis\\_advice](http://lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/12/05/ghannouchis_advice).

<sup>17</sup> Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Remarks Following Meeting With Tunisian President Marzouki," ed. US State Department (Tunis 2012).



the foreign Minister 'Abd al-Salām in Washington and the meeting was an occasion to reiterate the collaborative relations on both sides with Tunisia committing to the protection of US citizens in its territory.<sup>18</sup> Overall then, the rise of Islamists to power in Tunisia has not altered the relations with the USA which committed to economic aid and cooperation towards a democratic transition within the country.<sup>19</sup>

Tunisian relations with the EU and its members have been also under the sign of continuity. The first visit abroad of the newly appointed Tunisian Prime Minister Jabāly was, not casually, to Brussels. Of particular importance for Tunisia is the process of cooperation that has been established with the EU under the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy since 1995, when Tunisia signed the EU Association Agreement.<sup>20</sup> This process not only continued, but was even furthered under the Islamist government of an-Nahḍa which, in November 2012, agreed on a new action plan<sup>21</sup> and signed a document for a new advanced partnership with the EU. Overall, the EU has committed to new investments and aid to Tunisia totalling 160 million of Euros in 2011<sup>22</sup>, the funding comes under the conditions of continued democratisation and human rights implementation.

But, whereas relations with the EU are overall smooth, bilateral relations with European countries are more nuanced. France has always been a loyal ally of Bin' Aly and has seen with suspicion the leadership of an-Nahḍa and al-Ghannūshī in particular. At the beginning of the uprisings, Paris boldly stood on the side of the dictatorship and, only later, changed side to establish friendly relations with the new Tunisian regime. In November 2011, the Foreign Minister of France has declared confidence in the capacities of an-Nahḍa, after a phone call with al-Ghannūshī, with whom France has always had a tense relation.<sup>23</sup> Al-Ghannūshī himself has been harshly critical of France, but in the months following the establishment of the government, an-Nahḍa has announced the interest of normalising relations with France. In 2013, there were ministerial visits between France and Tunisia and then a presidential

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<sup>18</sup> "Clinton, Tunisian Foreign Minister Abdesslem Before Meeting," ed. US State Department (Washington2012).

<sup>19</sup> Provide details

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<sup>22</sup> Délégation de l'Union européenne en Tunisie, "Coopération technique et financière," [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/eu\\_tunisia/tech\\_financial\\_cooperation/index\\_fr.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/eu_tunisia/tech_financial_cooperation/index_fr.htm). Bernard Yaros, "Tunisia Now an EU Privileged Partner," *tunisia-live*, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/11/20/tunisia-now-an-eu-privileged-partner/>.

<sup>23</sup> AFP, "Tunisie: Juppé appelle Ghannouchi " <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2011/11/08/97001-20111108FILWWW00413-tunisie-juppe-appelle-ghannouchi.php>.

visit of Marzūqī to the French President Hollande in February, which is expected to be reciprocated in mid-2013.

The cases of Germany, Italy and the UK are more straight-forward. Germany has entertained high-level relations with the Islamist government of Tunisia committing to aid and cooperation with Tunisia since the instauration of the new government. Berlin has exchanged regular visits with Tunisia at the highest level. Italy has held ministerial visits with Tunisia in particular as regards issues of illegal migration towards the southern coasts of Italy. The UK has been among the most pro-active supporters of the newly established Tunisian leadership. Exchanges of high-level visits took place between the countries and both President Marzūqī and al-Ghannūshī received an award from the Royal Institute for International Affairs.

Overall, EU-Tunisian relations have confirmed with the newly established regime the trajectory of cooperation established with Bin'Ally. Notwithstanding minor cases of friction with individual member states, the EU has even boosted its cooperation with Tunisia. Bilateral relations with EU countries are also strong and supported by the considerable volume of trade that connects Tunisia with the states on the northern shore of the Mediterranean.

Tunisian foreign policy towards the region is primarily related to two sub-regions: the Maghreb and the Gulf. Relations with other Maghreb states, in particular with neighbouring Libya and Algeria are particularly strong. It is not a coincidence that the first visit abroad of the President Marzūqī was indeed to Libya.

Libya is an important partner for Tunisia because is its second market for export (after the EU) and hosts a considerable amount of Tunisian workers in the order of tens of thousands.<sup>24</sup> In the past, the two countries have even attempted a process of political integration, which al-Ghannūshī has recently revived as an interesting perspective for regional politics. Also, Marzūqī has advanced the idea of increased integration with Libya especially by taking a pro-active stance in the broader framework of the Arab Maghreb

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<sup>24</sup> Saoussen Ben Romdhane Emanuele Santi, Mohamed Safouane Ben Aïssa, "Impact of Libya's Conflict on the Tunisian Economy: A Preliminary Assessment," *North Africa Quaterly Analytical* Second Annual Quarter(2011): 8.

Union which is a project that he attempted to revive in a number of visits in North Africa including Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco.<sup>25</sup>

There have been, nonetheless, occasions of tensions with Libya, for example with regard to the extradition of the former Gaddafi's Prime Minister al-Baghdādi 'Ali al-Maḥmūdi who was arrested in Tunisia and then transferred to Libya without the consent of Marzūqī. Furthermore, the Libyan-Tunisian borders have been particularly tense with occasional episodes of violence which have caused the temporary closure of frontiers. Part of the issue, is due to the increased activity of the Salafist movement in Tunisia, which has been blamed also to the porous borders with Libya and Algeria. Overall, nonetheless, the interests in cooperation have outbalanced the reasons for attrition between Tunis and Tripoli. With both countries experiencing profound changes, Libya and Tunisia have established amicable relations and, as in the previous cases, the rise of Islamists to power has not determined significant changes in foreign policy, at least until the time of writing.

The case of Algeria is more puzzling because, notwithstanding the fact that Buteflīqa's regime has remained substantially immune to the Arab uprisings, Tunisia has enlisted Algiers within the ranks of its regional allies. This is confirmed for example by the fact that Buteflīqa has participated to the first commemoration of the Tunisian revolution on 14 January 2012 along with the Libyan interim Prime Minister 'Abd al-Jalīl and other Arab leaders, thus confirming that the change of regime in Tunisia has not altered relations between the two countries to a significant extent.

The second regional area of interest for Tunisian foreign policy is the Gulf. Following the fall of Bin 'Aly, the new Tunisian government has maintained its friendly relations with the monarchies of the Arab peninsula. In an interview, al-Ghannūshī has declared that he has "constantly affirmed the importance of the Tunisian-Gulf relationship, starting with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and the rest of the Gulf countries."<sup>26</sup> Qatar and Saudi Arabia play a particularly influential role in this context.

The case of Saudi Arabia is perhaps the most challenging. The Saudi regime had excellent relations with Bin 'Aly's Tunisia and it is not coincidental that the former dictator found refuge in Saudi Arabia after the fall of his regime. Notwithstanding this, there have been

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<sup>25</sup> Mohammad al Makki Ahmad, "Tunisian PM Ghannouchi: 'Syrian People Will Soon Achieve Victory'," al-Monitor, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/01/al-ghannouchi-the-syrian-people.html#ixzz2WIDH3YnZ>.

<sup>26</sup> "Tunisian PM Ghannouchi: 'Syrian People Will Soon Achieve Victory'," <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/01/al-ghannouchi-the-syrian-people.html>.

exchanges of visits between the two states that indicate how Tunis is fundamentally available to entertain relations with Riyadh. President Marzūqī has visited Riyadh in occasion of the summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference but his requests to extradite Bin' Aly have fallen on deaf ears. Before him, Prime Minister Jabāly visited the Saudi Kingdom in February 2012. Reports on this visit show that the main items in agenda between Tunisia and Saudi Arabia were related to the Syrian crisis and the organisation of the Friends of Syria conference held in Tunis in the same month.<sup>27</sup>

Another issue of a more ideological character has been the indicator of an uneasy relationship between the Islamist Tunisian regime and the Saudi monarchy. As we will see also with regard to the case of Egypt, Saudi Arabia looks with concern at the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the region, also because some of its derived groups constitute the internal opposition within the kingdom and the regime is worried about a possible expansion of social and political protests within its borders.<sup>28</sup> An incident regarding a declaration from Ghannūshī is particularly telling of this concern. In a meeting with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), al-Ghannūshī declared that after the year in which Arab republics witnessed momentous revolutionary changes the time has come for monarchies (including Saudi Arabia) to deal with the demands of their peoples. Unless Arab monarchies embark on reforms, so goes al-Ghannūshī's argument, they will be overthrown by popular protests.<sup>29</sup> Media outlets reported the declaration which sounded destabilising for the political elites of the Gulf. Al-Ghannūshī, reacted by invoking a Zionist conspiracy in which WINEP would have manipulated his declarations to seed divisions among the Arabs.<sup>30</sup> In a later interview with the Saudi-owned *as-Sharq al-Awsat*, the leader of an-Nahḍa revised his statement but he, nonetheless, claimed that the Gulf states need to undertake reform.<sup>31</sup> The incident is an indicator of how relations with Saudi Arabia are rather jumpy and the

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<sup>28</sup> The relations between the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist movements operating in Saudi Arabia have been studied for example in Stéphane Lacroix and George Holoch, *Awakening Islam : the politics of religious dissent in contemporary Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> The declarations are recorded on the web, and, notwithstanding the following corrections, these were in fact directed clearly to the Kingdoms and Saudi Arabia. See Washington Institute for Near East Policy, "Sheikh Rachid Ghannouchi's Remarks at The Washington Institute, Nov 30, 2011 ." (2011).

<sup>30</sup> Wiem Melki, "Washington Institute For Near East Policy Releases Recording of Rachid Ghannouchi," <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2011/12/22/washington-institute-for-near-east-policy-releases-recording-of-rachid-ghannouchi/>.

<sup>31</sup> "A talk with the Ennahda Movement's Rachid Ghannouchi ", *Asharq Al-Awsat* <http://www.aawsat.net/2011/12/article55243841>.

political agenda of Islamists in Tunisia do not fully concur with the interests of the Saudi elite and their regional aspirations.<sup>32</sup>

This leads to the consideration of the case of Qatar which, however, has been constantly supportive of Tunisia's new Islamist regime. Qatar and Tunisia have exchanged several official visits even before the rise to power of an-Nahḍa. The emirate of Doha, has shown strong support for the Tunisian transition contributing significantly in terms of investments and aid to the country.<sup>33</sup> An aspect that is even more relevant is that Ghannūshī and an-Nahḍa, as much as the Muslim Brotherhood, enjoy excellent relations with the Qatari emirate. Qatar is not coincidentally the host of several Islamist organisations and intellectuals including the prominent 'ālim Yūsif al-Qaradawī, with whom Ghannūshī met in December 2011.<sup>34</sup>

Differently from the more nuanced case of Saudi Arabia, Tunisian-Qatari relations are excellent. Several high profile visits were exchanged between the two countries, Qatar has been highly supportive of the Islamist government in Tunisia and has been granting considerable aid and robust investments in the country. Qatari support to the Tunisian opposition against Bin'Ally dates back to even before the rise to power of Islamists. In 2006, the Bin'Ally's regime shut its embassy in Qatar down due to a polemic with the Qatar-based al-Jazeera which aired a documentary critical of the regime including an interview with Marzūqī.<sup>35</sup>

The nature of relations between an-Nahḍa and Qatar has been characterised also by the polemics caused by the visits of the Qatari royals to Tunisia. Although an-Nahḍa is profoundly committed to strong relations with Doha, not all sectors of the Tunisian population see this with favour. The presence of Qatar to the commemoration of the Tunisian revolution in 2012, for example, has sparked the reactions of leftist and secular movements in Tunisia, which harshly dispute the status of Qatar as a Tunisian partner in its quest for democratisation and reform. Social media and party declarations have conveyed much criticism from sectors of the Tunisian populations regarding the role of Qatar. An-

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<sup>32</sup> On the nature of Saudi relation with the Muslim Brothers see also Bernard Haykel, "Saudi Arabia and Qatar in a Time of Revolution," (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2013). Lina Khatib, "Qatar's foreign policy: the limits of pragmatism," *International Affairs* 89, no. 2 (2013).

<sup>33</sup> Mention figures

<sup>34</sup> Ghannoushi is part of the board of the International Union for Muslim Scholars which is directed by Qaradawī and based in Qatar.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/Oct/26/Tunis-shuts-down-embassy-in-Doha-over-Al-Jazeera-bias.ashx#axzz2VKzUW8I4>

Nahḍa however defended strenuously the role of Qatar condemning its critics in Tunisia and defining the Doha's emirate a "sister country" whereas an-Nahḍa's Foreign Minister 'Abd Al-Salām condemned any action damaging Qatari-Tunisian relations.<sup>36</sup> One final example that sums up effectively, an-Nahḍa's view on the relations with the Gulf is a al-Ghannūshī's declaration given during a public talk in which he declared that "Tunisia revolution is supported by the EU, by the U.S., by Turkey, by Qatar. This is [sic] the main supporters of Tunisia – current Tunisia government."<sup>37</sup> The absence of Saudi Arabia from the list is a noticeable and hardly casual.

Beyond North Africa and the Gulf, Turkey is also an important regional player with which the an-Nahḍa-led government has established good relations. Ghannūshī has pointed out how the Turkish form of Islamist governance epitomised by the AKP, widely overlaps with an-Nahḍa's political ideal.<sup>38</sup> On the diplomatic level, the Tunisian Islamist government has exchanged several high-level visits with Turkey's officials demonstrating a collaborative relation. Tunisian leaders have declared their admiration for Turkey's Islamist government as a successful combination of Islam and democracy but also as an economic model for development.<sup>39</sup> Turkey has increasingly played a regional leadership role in conjunction with the Arab uprising which it has interpreted as an opportunity to establish a regional alliance among Muslim majority states especially in context ruled by Islamist movements. Although it has not the same economic leverage of Gulf states, Turkey's foreign relations with Tunisia have been shaped by its use of "soft power" to coalesce consensus over its Islamist governmental experience and economic growth.

A final case regards the visits exchanged with Iran. Tunisia under an-Nahḍa has maintained its relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. In Bin 'Aly's time, Tunisian-Iranian relations have been kept at a low profile though there has been exchange of visits especially for economic cooperation.<sup>40</sup> With the rise of the new government, Iranian officials have visited Tunisia, the Foreign Minister Salehi has visited Tunis in April 2012, and have declared their intention of boosting cooperation and relations with the new government. Notwithstanding

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<sup>36</sup> <http://tap.info.tn/en/index.php/politics2/7505-mfa-rejects-all-that-is-likely-to-harm-tunisian-qatari-relations> ;

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2013/05/31-tunisia-democracy-ghannouchi#/full-event/>

<sup>38</sup> See for example his interview with the Financial Times in which he claims that "we are close to the AKP, my books are more available in Turkey than they are in Tunisia".

<sup>39</sup> Need reference

<sup>40</sup> "Tunisia: President Ben Ali receives Iranian foreign minister," *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 2004 Jul 15 2004.

this, the divisive issue of the Syrian conflict seems a difficult obstacle marring Tunisia-Iranian relations, thus explaining the rather cold character of relations between the two countries.

The overview of the visits exchanged between Tunisia and other states at regional and global levels shows that, overall, the rise of Islamists to power in Tunisia did not entail major shifts in the foreign policy of the country. The an-Nahḍa-led government has no preconception towards the continuation of the same diplomatic relations which the previous regime has entertained with global and regional powers. As the phases of crisis discussed in below will further confirm, an-Nahḍa political identity of Islamist actor has not determined significant changes which have altered the international status of the Tunisian state and its geo-political role.

The main shifts that can be noted are the restoration of relations with Qatar, the more complex character of relations with Saudi Arabia and a stronger interest in regional integration and cooperation with neighbouring countries as Libya and Algeria. But these aspects do not seem to have major repercussions neither as regards the character of Tunisia as international political actor nor over the regional balances that characterised the area in the pre-2011 period.

Overall the case of an-Nahḍa's government in Tunisia corroborates the thesis that Islamism has thus far tended to adapt to the dynamics of power of international society in which the Tunisian state is embedded. By taking office in the Tunisian government has inherited the international status and relations established by the previous regime. An-Nahḍa found itself entangled in the web of relations and social practices that any state needs to manage in international society to uphold its status in front of other actors. Although some of these relations are not consistent with its political identity, the an-Nahḍa government does not have the means to transcend power constraints; turning down a visit from a powerful actor as the USA or the EU would have meant paying a price in international isolation and economic support which the state cannot afford. As we shall see, the case of Egypt will further confirm this tendency.

## **5. The rise to power of the FJP in Egypt**

On 11 February 2011 popular uprisings forced Hosni Mubarak to step down after thirty years of dictatorial rule. Mubarak's regime was replaced by a military junta, the Supreme Council

of Armed Forces (SCAF), which was in charge of leading a transition towards general parliamentary elections and then presidential elections.

With enormous difficulties and among several attempts to manipulate and subvert the transition process, eventually Egypt held parliamentary elections between 28 November and 11 January 2012. All parties were allowed to participate, including the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), which was purposely set up by the Society of the Muslim Brothers to field its candidates in the elections.

The FJP received the relative majority of votes, about 35%, in the parliamentary elections. This majority allowed the FJP to acquire 216 seats in the lower house of parliament (*Mājlis al-Sha'ab*)<sup>41</sup> out of 498 seats, and to obtain 105 seats out of 180 elected seats in the Shura Council (*Mājlis al-Shura*), i.e. the higher parliamentary assembly.<sup>42</sup> Although the Muslim Brotherhood played only a marginal role in the popular uprisings of the previous months, its electoral performance at the parliamentary elections was strong.<sup>43</sup>

The second phase of the Muslim Brotherhood's rise to power in Egypt consists of the election of the President of the Republic. The Brotherhood initially declared that it would not field candidates for the president's office, but later proposed Khayrat al-Shāṭer as the FJP candidate. The Higher Presidential Electoral Committee, however, judged al-Shāṭer non-eligible and then FJP chairman Muḥammad Mursy became the FJP candidate. The elections run-off was contested between Mursy and the SCAF candidate Aḥmed Shafīq, the latter was defeated by a narrow margin.

The third phase of FJP's rise to power was the formation of the Constituent Assembly (CA). The CA, composed by 100 members, including MPs, judiciary, SCAF members and notables, was formed on 8 June 2012 in order to draft a new constitution. The majority of the members of the CA are representatives of Islamist forces, including the FJP.<sup>44</sup>

On 24 July 2012, Mursy nominated the prime minister of the first post-Mubarak government and has chosen a low-profile and technocratic personality, Hishām Qandīl. The foreign

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<sup>41</sup> This assembly is elected for two thirds through a proportional electoral system and with a majoritarian system for the rest of the seats.

<sup>42</sup> Source Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

<sup>43</sup> The Islamists of the FJP were challenged mainly by the Salafist groups which obtained the second relative majority in the country. The coalition of the Salafist factions 45 sets in the Shura Council and 125 seats in the lower chamber as a coalition composed by al-Nour, Building and Development and al-Asala.

<sup>44</sup> How many?



Minister Muḥammad Kāmel-ʿAmr remained the same of the previous transitional government an indicator that Mursy does not intend to give major signs of change in foreign relations. With a robust majority in the parliament and the CA, in charge in the presidential office, and having nominated a majority Islamist government, the FJP became in control of the most important political offices of Egypt for the first time in history, thus marking an historical turn for the country.

Nonetheless, the FJP's rise to power faced fundamental challenges. On 14 June 2012, the Higher Constitutional Court declared null the parliamentary elections at the *Majlis al-Sh'ab* on the basis of the fact that the electoral law was deemed unconstitutional.<sup>45</sup> This led to the call for new elections to be held in April 2013. Furthermore, the SCAF maintained its hold on power occasionally issuing controversial decrees and interfering with the mandates of the parliament and the executive. The security situation remained also critical and often dubiously managed by the SCAF-led security forces which often provoked tensions and the eruption of violence.<sup>46</sup> In addition to this, the judiciary has in various occasions challenged the decisions of the president, often undermining its effective capacity to govern.

Furthermore, the FJP has to face also the secular and leftist oppositions although these have been only partly capable of influencing the process due to their internal divisions. The main way they intervened was by boycotting the Constituent Assembly. The Salafist factions have also been another challenge for the FJP rule. Although allied in the parliament, they have questioned the FJP Islamist political identity and subtracted votes and support from its own constituency.

In addition to all this, Morsi and the FJP government inherited a disastrous economic situation worsened by almost two years of economic disruption due to the uprisings and political uncertainty. Between 2010 and 2011, Egypt's GDP annual growth dropped from 5% to less than 2 % and the IMF forecast the country's annual growth to remain around 2% until 2014 with obvious consequences for the public debt. Unemployment was at 9% in 2010 but will reach 14% in 2014<sup>47</sup> thus seriously undermining the perspectives of social and political stability for the country.

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<sup>45</sup> Reference to court judgment. Also the Majlis al-Shura has been declared illegitimate in May 2013.

<sup>46</sup> On 12 August 2012, Morsi reshuffled the military top offices removing long-time top officers from the Mubarak era. The changes nonetheless did not seem to soften the position of the military leadership towards the Islamist government.

<sup>47</sup> International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2013

Although in charge of the top offices of the state, FJP's political agency has been seriously undermined by the constraints imposed by its antagonistic actors including the SCAF, the judiciary branches of the state, internal opposition, and international powers suspicious of FJP's political plans as well as a daunting economic outlook.

## **6. Surveying Egyptian Foreign Policy under the FJP**

Egyptian foreign policy has always been at the antipodes of the Islamist political agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood. After years of cooperation with western superpowers, peace with Israel and regional isolation, the rise to power of Islamists in Egypt in 2012 could have been reasonably expected to determine a U-turn in its foreign policy. This section shows that this is not the case. Even though Egyptian foreign policy has been in sharp countertendency with the traditional Islamist political agenda, the survey of the visits exchanged between the Islamist government of Egypt and regional and international powers, shows that the rise to power of Islamists has not determined a significant change neither in Egypt's foreign policy nor to the regional political context. Egypt has maintained and in some case reinforced the same diplomatic contacts that were operative under the previous regime with only some adjustments.

As in the previous case let us consider two levels of analysis. The first is Egyptian foreign policy towards the great powers as the USA, China and the EU and the second dimension is the regional context. Mursi's foreign policy towards world powers marks a continuation with the previous administrations. In the year following his election, the Islamist president has made a clear effort to maintain amicable relations with the USA. Secretary of State Clinton was among the first foreign officials at a high-level to visit post-revolutionary Egypt in July 2012, when she met with members of the SCAF but also with Mursy. After the meeting with Mursy and the Foreign Minister Kāmel- 'Amru, Clinton announced that "We believe America's shared strategic interest with Egypt far outnumber our differences. And we know that Egypt's future is up to the Egyptian people, but we want to be a good partner." <sup>48</sup>

In the months following Clinton's first visit, exchanges of visits and several phone calls between high-level officials have intensified including direct phone calls between Mursy and Obama. Mursy met again with Clinton in September 2012 at the UN General Assembly

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<sup>48</sup> Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Remarks With Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr," ed. US Department of State (2012).

inauguration,<sup>49</sup> whereas US Senates delegations have held meetings with the Egyptian Foreign Minister in a number of occasions. In January 2013 a delegation of US Senators met with Mursy and during the meeting has been discussed the possibility of a visit of the Egyptian president to the American Senate in Washington. In March 2013, the newly appointed Secretary of State John Kerry paid a visit to Egypt meeting with the Foreign minister and renewing the US commitment to friendly relations with Egypt while commending the role of the government in dealing with the Gaza crisis of 2012 and supporting the opposition in Syria (of which more below).<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, there have been talks of a possible visit of Mursy to the White House but this has not taken place yet also due to events which will be further considered below.

Although, relations with the USA have undergone crises, overall, the rise to power of Islamists has not entailed a significant alteration of US-Egyptian relations. Contrarily in occasions as the Gaza-Israeli conflict of November 2012 (to be further investigated below) and with regard to matters of security cooperation in the Sinai, both presidents have declared reciprocal .

The same can be said when looking at the visits that have taken place between the EU, its members and Egypt. In September 2012 Mursy has undertaken an official visit to the European Union in Brussels which has marked the beginning of a positive relation with its institutions. The visit was later to be reciprocated by the President of the EU Council Van Rompuy, in January 2013.

EU member states have also entertained close relations with the Egyptian Islamist government exchanging official visits. Mursy has paid official visits to Italy and Germany and received the visit of the UK Foreign Minister in the first months of his mandate. The Egyptian president has met with the French president in New York at the UN General Assembly inauguration in September 2012 but, although he scheduled a visit to Paris, this has not taken place for contingent reasons. Overall European countries follow with attention the developments in Egypt. They see democratic transition essential for the country, they are concerned with the flux of migration in Europe which is also related to Egypt's economic situation. Overall they favour the establishment of a privileged relationship within the

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<sup>49</sup> Senior State Department Official, "Background Briefing on Secretary Clinton's Bilateral Meeting with Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi," ed. US Department of State (2012).

<sup>50</sup> John Kerry, "Joint Statement With Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohamed Amr," ed. US State Department (2013).

framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the establishment of an Islamist government has not altered this process.

The only sign of discontinuity in terms of relations with great powers was, perhaps, the choice of Mursy to pay its first official visit outside the Middle East to China, in August 2012. The decision can be explained as the will to show a degree of autonomy from foreign interference and, in particular, from the USA, which sees China as an obvious contender in terms of global geopolitics. Mursy's move can also be seen to facilitate foreign investment in Egypt, although the visit produced only minor economic benefits eventually.

The regional perspective confirms the thesis that Islamists in power have not made a significant difference in terms of foreign policy and rather adapted to the conditions that they have inherited. In fact, if we survey the exchange of visits with the Gulf states, north Africa and the Levant no major changes can be noted apart for few adjustments not dissimilar to the case of Tunisia.

Mursy has carried his first state visit to Saudi Arabia in July 2012. The choice is certainly not casual, the Saudi kingdom is a major power broker in the region and choosing to exchange visits with this country meant sending a strong sign to the rest of the of the region on the geopolitical alignment of Islamists' Egypt in the country but also to the Saudi kingdom itself which, as seen in the case of Tunisia, has looked with much concern to the popular uprisings in the region and, in particular, to the role of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The months before the elections of Mursy were characterised by tensions with the Saudi administration. The power vacuum left by the departure of Mubarak has concerned Saudi Arabia in various respects including the possibility of *rapprochement* of Egypt with Iran under the control of the Muslim Brotherhood, one troubling signal was given when Iranian ships were authorised to cross the Suez Canal a few weeks after the fall of Mubarak. At a later stage, the Saudi Embassy in Cairo was shut down and the ambassador withdrawn following mass protests in the proximities of the embassy. After a visit of a delegation of Muslim Brothers MPs to the King of Saudi Arabia, the embassy was then re-opened in May 2012.<sup>51</sup> Mursy's visit to the Saudi Kingdom was then a strong sign to establish amicable relations with the kingdom. One telling anecdote captures the spirit with which at least certain sectors of the Saudi elite see Egyptian-Saudi relations. On the occasion of the visit *as-Sharq al-Awsat* published an article under the title: "The visit of Mursy to Saudi revives the

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<sup>51</sup> Al-Arabiya, "Saudi Arabia orders ambassador to return to Egypt after diplomatic spat," <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/05/04/212139.html>.

history of relations between Riyadh and the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt". The article was matched with a photo of Hasan al-Banna bowing and kissing the hand of the then king of Saudi Arabia 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Sa'ud during a visit in 1936. The not-so-subtle message from the mouthpiece of the Saudi regime, was that of depicting a subaltern relationship between the Islamist regime in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.<sup>52</sup> In the months following the state visit of Mursy, other visits were exchanged with the Saudi Kingdom. Mursy went again to Saudi Arabia in January 2013 and lower level meetings were held in other occasions with the Foreign Ministers and his equivalent. Saudi Arabia has committed to support and financial aid for Egyptian economic recovery and above all found in Mursy's Egypt a strong ally on the front of the Syrian conflict where the two countries share their support for the opposition to al-Asad.

Qatar is another country with which Egypt has maintained strong relations, especially in conjunction with the rise of Islamists in power. The Qatari authorities have exchanged several visits with Mursy, the foreign minister and the Prime Minister Qandīl. Qatar has shown outright support for the government of the FJP, it has intensified its relations with the country and sponsored significant investments and aid representing among the most significant initiatives to recover the economy of Egypt. As in the case of Tunisia, Qatar has thus pursued a policy of support for Egypt, which it defined as the "big sister of the Arab world."<sup>53</sup> The Qatari emirate has become a leading partner for the Islamist government of Egypt and its relations with this country continue thus in the trajectory of cooperation with Muslim Brotherhood that was already taking place at the times of Mubarak.<sup>54</sup>

From the perspective of regional relations, Egypt under Mursy has developed also relations with its African neighbours. Mursy has been particularly proactive in the African Union Assembly and has exchanged several visits with Northern Sudan. For Egypt relations with Ethiopia and North Sudan are important also for the management of the water basin of the Nile river which is of essential importance for the sector of agriculture. A new regional role in Africa, is perhaps the main difference with the previous regime, which has however snubbed African relations for decades. The overall geopolitical consequences of this shift in

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<sup>52</sup> Zayid Bin Kamy Jaddah, "Ziayara Mursy lilSaudiya Tu'aiyd Tarikh 'Alaqa al-Riyadh bi Jam'a al-Ikwan al-Muslimin Fiy Misr [trans. The visit of Mursy to Saudi revives the history of relations between Riyadh and the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt]," *asharq al-awsat*, <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=12277&article=685584&state=true>.

<sup>53</sup> State Information Services, "Egyptian-Qatari relations " <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?CatID=1094>.

<sup>54</sup> On Qatar's relations with the Muslim Brother compared to Saudi Arabia see Khatib, "Qatar's foreign policy: the limits of pragmatism."

foreign policy remains, nonetheless, only of minor importance with consequences relevant above all for states on the southern border of Egypt.

More relevant is Egypt's stance towards other regional powers and in particular Iran and Turkey. Egyptian-Iranian relations have changed significantly under Islamists' rule. Since 1979, Egypt interrupted relations with the Islamic republic of Iran, with the rise of the FJP into power, the Iranian president Ahmadinejad visited for the first time Egypt within the framework of a summit of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, in February 2013. The visit has been preceded by at least two other visits from Iran's foreign minister Salehi. Furthermore, Mursy took part to the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Teheran in august 2012. Interpreting the choice to resume relations with Iran is not easy task, as there are several aspects to take into account. The first is that, the resumption of relations with Iran is instrumental to challenging the leadership of Saudi Arabia in the region and not a genuine rapprochement. The second aspect is that the visits exchanged between the parties have never been official state visit but took place into the context of broader multilateral organisations in particular the NAM and the OIC, to be noted is that Ahmadinjad visited even Saudi Arabia in occasion of the Mekkah OIC summit of August 2012, thus showing that participation to these meetings is not entirely indicative of the character of relations between the states that participate to these. Another context in which visits between Egypt and Iran intensified regards the "Islamic Quartet" initiative to deal with the Syrian situation (of which more below). Thirdly, most of the visits have been occasions of tensions rather than signs of an emerging entente.

In occasion of the NAM meeting, Mursy has declared its full support to the Syrian opposition defining al-Asad's an "oppressive regime that has lost its legitimacy"<sup>55</sup> and then indirectly criticising the Iranian regime (with Ahamdinejad sitting in front of Mursy during the declaration) for its support to al-Asad. While this declaration "sounded like music" to Saudi ears, it was a profound embarrassment for Iran, which was the host for the meeting. Ahmadinejad's visit to Cairo was similarly "schizophrenic" in its outcomes. Whereas Mursy received in person the Iranian president, on the other hand, the FJP and other state's apparatuses hastened to clarify that "Egypt's relationship with Iran will never come at the expense of Gulf nations" thus showing that the Egyptian overture towards Iran was

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<sup>55</sup> Arab Republic of Egypt Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Statement of the Arab Republic of Egypt on Opening Session of the XVI Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement ", ed. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2012).

particularly cautious.<sup>56</sup> Overall, thus, the exchange of visits with Iran marks only a partial correction to the previous interruption of relations, this can be understood as an act of normalisation towards a regime that shares a common Islamist denominator with the Muslim Brotherhood but the re-establishment of Egyptian-Iranian relations, to date, have not modified regional geostrategic balances in significant measure.

The last case particularly relevant from a regional perspective is that of Turkey. Not dissimilarly from the case of Tunisia Turkey is seen by the Islamist government of Egypt as a possible model of development. Relations between the two states in the post-Mubarak era have been excellent and were marked by a number of reciprocal visits followed by agreements on cooperation and investments. Mursy has visited Turkey and addressed the AKP general assembly in September 2012 thus underlying the degree of harmony between the two Islamist governments also under an ideological light. Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister, has not missed the opportunity to reinforce Turkish relations with Egypt since the beginning of the uprisings when he sided clearly with the protesters. The rise of Islamists in Egypt has then been reasons for deepening the relations with Turkey but this only marks a partial modification of Egyptian-Turkish relations since also at the times of Mubarak, relations were overall amicable between the countries.

Finally, it shall be considered, the case of Israel. Egypt has recognised Israel in 1979 and although recognition of Israel is anathema for Islamists as the Muslim Brotherhoods and then the FJP, they nonetheless made clear since the outset that their rise to power would have not had consequences in this respects, at least not on the short term.<sup>57</sup> In an interview with the CNN, Mursy declared with reference to the Camp David Accord that: "I respect the peace treaty. I am keen on respecting what Egypt has signed as a state previously, at the international level."<sup>58</sup> Similarly Rashād al-Bayoumi, one of the deputies of the Muslim Brotherhood Supreme Guide, has declared with reference to the Camp David Accord that "we are convinced that the agreement is governed by international laws and political

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<sup>56</sup> AP, "Egypt: Iran's Ahmadinejad to visit Cairo this week," <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/egypt-irans-ahmadinejad-visit-cairo-week>.

<sup>57</sup> It shall be mentioned that the Egyptian parliament in March 2012 approved a motion to ask the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador from Egypt and the withdrawal of Cairo representative in Tel-Aviv. The motion approved unanimously remained only on the paper. See Khaled Elgindy, "Egypt, Israel, Palestine: Prospects for Peace After the Arab Spring," *Cairo Review* 6(2012): 174.

<sup>58</sup> CNN, "Transcript: The Situation Room," <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1301/08/sitroom.02.html>.

considerations. Thus we in the Muslim Brotherhood cannot cancel it in with the single stroke of a pen.”<sup>59</sup>

There has been no exchange of visits between the two states, but that has been the case also with Mubarak. Nonetheless Egypt has played a pivotal role with regard to the November 2012 conflict in Gaza for which it negotiated a ceasefire between the parties. Furthermore, there are signs of cooperation between Israel and the FJP's Egypt with regard to security in the Sinai after a series of attacks against Egyptian security forces. Similarly, the management of the Rafah Crossing at the border with Gaza has been overall in continuity with the previous administration apart for the allowance of symbolic visits of foreign ministers to Gaza. Overall, Israel has hardly perceived any major difference with the rise of Islamists in Egypt since the government has only voiced opposition and criticism towards Tel Aviv but has pragmatically maintained the status quo inherited from the previous regime.

As in the case of Tunisia, the survey of the exchange of visits between Egypt and regional and global political actors shows that the rule of the FJP has been in continuity with the past. The web of relations which constitute Egyptian statehood in international society has thus far prevailed over the capacity of the Islamists to implement an agenda at odds with it. Notwithstanding their governmental role the FJP has not been interested nor capable of transcending the constraints that international society has imposed on it and has, consequently, adapted to these rather than presenting any significant challenge. The following analysis of foreign policy in action will further confirm this thesis.

## **7. Islamist Foreign Policy in Action: Three Cases**

This section proposes an assessment of the FJP and an-Nahḍa's foreign policy with reference to three cases: the Syrian civil war, the Israeli-Gaza crisis of November 2012, and the protests for the anti-Islamic film of September 2012. Consistently with the survey of the exchange of visits between states, these cases corroborate the thesis that the foreign policy of Islamist governments has been pragmatic and adapted to the norms and constraints that regulate the practices of international society.

### **7.1 The Syrian Crisis**

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<sup>59</sup> Adnan Abu Amer, "Brotherhood's Bayoumi: Egypt 'Will Not Turn Its Back' on US," al-Monitor, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/05/deputy-supreme-guide-muslim-brotherhood-interview-egypt.html>.



In conjunction with the Arab uprising of 2011 the Syrian people have begun protesting against the rule of Bashar al-Asad and called for the fall of the regime. Differently from the rest of the region the Syrian uprisings morphed into a bloody conflict upsetting the entire regional context.

Islamists, both in Tunisia and Egypt, have endorsed the cause of the Syrian opposition. The Syrian regime has a long history of harsh repression of the Islamists in Syria and, in particular, of the local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. The alliance with the opposition is, then, a natural consequence in terms of ideological affinity further fed by the emergence, at a later stage, also by sectarian rhetoric which has favoured an alignment against the Alawite regime of al-Asad allied with the shii Hezbollah and Iran.

The foreign policies of the an-Nahḍa-led government and Mursy's government, reflected this stance. Tunisia has been the spearhead of the "Friends of Syria" initiative, a diplomatic initiative attempting to develop a unified international policy in favour of the Syrian opposition. As mentioned above, it hosted the first summit of the group in February 2012, and then participated to the following meeting and vocally condemned the regime of al-Asad. Tunisian alignment with the opposition and its active international role is unsurprising, but what shall be noticed is that the policy on the Syrian crisis has established an even stronger bond with western great and middle powers which also supported and participated to meeting. Also in this case, then, the foreign policy of an Islamist government has welcomed stronger relationships and cooperation over an issue of concern overlapping with the foreign policy of states as the USA, the UK and France. Only at a later stage, a more nuanced stance emerged when news emerged of a significant involvement of Tunisians among the fighters on both sides of the conflict. In this respect President Marzūqī declared the intention to adopt measures to limit the recruitment of fighters among Tunisians, but did not backtrack on the state's policy towards the conflict.<sup>60</sup>

The case of Egypt is similar. The FJP government has sided with the Syrian opposition since the beginning. Egypt has been particularly vocal of its support for the removal of al-Asad and has defended its stance also in Teheran, as mentioned above, thus emphasising its distance from Iran and aligning with both great and regional powers as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which are leading regional forces for the cause of the Syrian opposition.

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<sup>60</sup> footnote

In an attempt to correct this stance, and thus confirming how contradictory is the FJP foreign policy towards Iran, Egypt has also sponsored the short-lived initiative of an “Islamic quartet” to deal with the Syrian crisis. The aim was gathering around the same negotiation table, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, in addition to Egypt, to negotiate an end for the conflict. Saudi Arabia has nonetheless regularly boycotted the initiative, refusing to sit at the table of negotiations with Iran.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, the initiative did not bring any major progress. The Egyptian main policy towards the crisis has remained, primarily within the framework of the initiative of the Arab League and the Friends of Syria initiative and both these contexts were inclusive of western political actors as the USA or consistent with their foreign policy. It has achieved its climax in June 2013 when, eventually Mursy has declared to shut down the Egyptian embassy in Damascus thus interrupting relations with al-Asad’s regime.

The conclusions that may be drawn by this example is that overlapping of interests between western powers and Islamist governments is sufficient to produce significant cooperation between the parties not letting ideological divisions nor old-time acrimony to interfere in establishing a common policy ground between international actors.

## ***7.2 The Israeli-Gaza conflict of 2012***

But the case of the Syrian conflict is not as indicative as that of 2012 Gaza-Israel crisis, which along with other episodes, further shows how Mursy’s Egypt can be pragmatic in foreign policy also when it comes to the sensitive issue of relations with Israel. In November 2012 Israel launched an attack against Hamas-controlled Gaza (Operation “Pillar of Clouds”). The operation would have been the litmus test for Egyptian foreign policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. Although rejection of Israel has always been a cornerstone of Islamism, Mursy, nonetheless, assumed the role of a key mediator for the ceasefire. From an Islamist-led government it could have been reasonably expected a less docile stance and perhaps even military support to Hamas but, in fact, it was almost the opposite.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> "Four-Party Talks on Syria Seek Consensus as Saudis Stay Away ", al-Monitor, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/09/quartet-on-syria-still-far-from-consensus.html>.

<sup>62</sup> See for example, the issue of the Rafah Crossing and how Mursi’s Egypt has basically left things unchanged in Gaza notwithstanding the change of regime. See also the case of the management of security with regard to the tunnels linking Gaza and the Sinai. David Kirkpatrick Fares Akram, "To Block Gaza Tunnels, Egypt Lets Sewage Flow," The New York Times, [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/21/world/middleeast/egypts-floods-smuggling-tunnels-to-gaza-with-sewage.html?\\_r=3&](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/21/world/middleeast/egypts-floods-smuggling-tunnels-to-gaza-with-sewage.html?_r=3&).

The mediator role of Mursy would have been subsequently commended by President Obama for facilitating the ceasefire between the parts in conflict.<sup>63</sup> These cordial relations between Obama and the Egyptian president were subsequently confirmed also by the latter who, in an interview to *Time*, declared that: "President Obama has been very helpful, very helpful. I can say really that his deeds coincide with his intentions."<sup>64</sup> The management of the Gaza crisis of November 2012 and the achievement of the Egypt-sponsored ceasefire, thus confirm the good relations with the USA and the unprecedented mediator role of the Islamist leadership in the conflict.

The Gaza conflict has not been the only instance in which Mursi's foreign policy has shown a rather cooperative stance with regards to relations with Israel. Israel's and Egypt's forces for example also cooperated in security operations regarding stability in the Sinai peninsula. Islamist militants based in the Sinai, attacked in August 2012 the Egyptian forces policing the Rafah crossing with Gaza killing 16. The attacks were followed by military operations in the region aiming at securing the area from armed groups threatening security and allegedly intending to penetrate within Israel. The issue of Sinai's (and then Israel) security sees a convergence of interests between Egypt's Islamist government and Israel. This determined a degree of cooperation between the two states in securing the area.<sup>65</sup> Although the issue is far from being solved to date, direct Israeli-Egyptian cooperation on this issue is another meaningful sign of continuity and pragmatism in the FJP's foreign policy.

The case of an-Nahḍa in Tunisia has not been particularly relevant with regard to the crisis in Gaza of 2012. The government has voiced criticism and condemnation on the attacks, perhaps to a higher extent of how Ben 'Aly's regime would have done. Overall, nonetheless, the stance of Tunisia Islamist government did not make a difference in the regional political dynamics. The most significant measures that has been adopted in conjunction with these events has been the visit of the Tunisian Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Salām to Gaza in the aftermath of the conflict. This was part of a series of visits allowed by Egypt which controls the Rafa crossing and that, after the conflict, has let leaders from the region to visit Gaza. These included for example the prime minister of Egypt Qandil, the prime minister of Qatar

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<sup>63</sup> The White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Readout of the President's call with President Morsi," ed. The White House (2012).

<sup>64</sup> Bobby Ghosh Richard Stengel, Karl Vick, "Transcript: TIME's Interview with Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi," <http://world.time.com/2012/11/28/transcript-times-interview-with-egyptian-president-mohamed-morsi/>.

<sup>65</sup> Amos Harel, "Israel-Egypt security cooperation at one of highest levels since peace deal, say officials on both sides " Haaretz, <http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/east-side-story/israel-egypt-security-cooperation-at-one-of-highest-levels-since-peace-deal-say-officials-on-both-sides-1.457085>.

and the foreign minister of Tunisia. One significant exception was that although Iran had expressed interest in visiting Gaza, the foreign minister Salehi was not allowed to cross the border.

### ***7.3 The Protests against US Embassy in September 2012***

Another, even more important, test for Egyptian and Tunisian foreign relations specifically towards the USA took place when mass protests erupted in conjunction with the publication of an amateurish film offensive towards Islam.<sup>66</sup> The protests sparked in proximity of US embassies and other American symbols in the region and provoked a stream of attacks and diffused violence in the day of the anniversary of the September 11 and after. Tensions reached the peak when the US ambassador to Libya was killed in an attack to the embassy in Benghazi. But the situation was not better in Tunisia nor in Cairo.

In Tunis, a mob attacked the US embassy and the surrounding facilities, including a school, on 14 September. The attacks produced material damage to the facilities, and the reaction of the police to the attacks killed four persons involved in the protests, and arrested many others. Some of the detainees (alleged members of the Salafist factions operating in the country) died in custody reportedly because of hunger strikes.

In Egypt the protests were also violent. A multitude of protesters with black flags usually associated with the Salafi movement and even al-Qā'eda, marched on the US embassy joined by youth associated with the violent fringes of soccer hooligans. The attack did not make victims, the protection wall of the embassy was assaulted by the protesters and the American flag on the embassy (torn apart in front of cameras and TV crews) was substituted by the black salafist flag.

Needless to say, the attacks against US targets soured the relations with the USA. The incidents at the US embassies in Tunisia and Egypt put in a difficult position the Islamist leaderships of each country also on the domestic front. An-Nahḍa and the Freedom and Justice Party found themselves in a situation in which they should have condemned protests for the sake of relations with the USA but, at the same time, they could not criticise the protesters, who, allegedly, were defending the dignity of Islam insulted by a blasphemous film.

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<sup>66</sup> The actual causes of the protests remain rather obscure, the anti-Islam film seemed to be the occasional sparkle igniting a protest that was brewing already before the event

The FJP was somewhat reluctant in the condemnation of the embassy attacks and, in some cases, they gave the impression of double-talk, condemning the protests but also supporting these as a rightful act in defence of Islam. Eventually, an official position was reached trying to save the Islamist stance but also inviting to calm and moderation in protests and condemning violence and unlawfulness.<sup>67</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood and the FJP declared attacks on diplomatic personnel and facilities unlawful from an Islamic point of view.<sup>68</sup> Condemnations were nonetheless too late and too little for the USA. Mursy, who was going to travel to New York for the inauguration of the UNGA session a few days later, had reportedly asked for a meeting with the US president Obama, but he was turned down. A few days before the visit, Obama declared in an interview: "I don't think we would consider them [Egyptians] an ally, but we don't consider them an enemy. They are a new government that is trying to find its way."<sup>69</sup> Mursy would have replied to this stance by saying in an interview preceding his visit to New York, that he "envisioned the two nations as 'real friends'."<sup>70</sup>

The events in Tunisia brought about similar outcomes. The attacks on the embassy were repelled by the police, and in particular the Presidential Guard, reportedly dispatched by President Marzūqī after a phone call with Secretary of State Clinton.<sup>71</sup> The clashes caused the death of four protesters and several were imprisoned. The an-Nahḍa-led government, notwithstanding its Islamist character, condemned the use of violence and the attacks on the US embassy at risk of alienating part of its own constituency which is in part composed by Salafists groups which are progressively developing their own political groups.<sup>72</sup>

Overall the incidents of September 2012 regarding the anti-Islam film, have shown the willingness of the Islamists in power to maintain their friendly relations with the USA even when this position may have costs in terms of political capital.

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<sup>67</sup> Freedom and Justice Party, "Freedom and Justice Party Statement about Ongoing Clashes Outside U.S. Embassy in Cairo," Ikhwanweb, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30289>.

<sup>68</sup> Muslim Brotherhood, "Muslim Brotherhood: Islam Forbids Attacking Embassies in Any Way," Ikhwanweb, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30287>.

<sup>69</sup> Shawna Thomas, "Obama: Egypt not an ally of US, but not an enemy," NBCNews, [http://firstread.nbcnews.com/\\_news/2012/09/12/13836414-obama-egypt-not-an-ally-of-us-but-not-an-enemy?lite](http://firstread.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/09/12/13836414-obama-egypt-not-an-ally-of-us-but-not-an-enemy?lite).

<sup>70</sup> Steven Erlanger David Kirkpatrick, "Egypt's New Leader Spells Out Terms for U.S.-Arab Ties," The New York Times, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/23/world/middleeast/egyptian-leader-mohamed-morsi-spells-out-terms-for-us-arab-ties.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/23/world/middleeast/egyptian-leader-mohamed-morsi-spells-out-terms-for-us-arab-ties.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0).

<sup>71</sup> Vivienne Walt, "Political Battles in Tunisia Shade Attacks on U.S. Embassy," Time, <http://world.time.com/2012/09/16/political-battles-in-tunisia-shade-attacks-on-u-s-embassy/>.

<sup>72</sup> AP, "Tunisia's ruling party condemns US Embassy attack," The Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/feedarticle/10439793>.

## **8. Foreign and International Credit, Investments and Aid: Tunisian and Egyptian Attempted Economic Recovery (WORK IN PROGRESS)**

### **9. A realist-constructivist assessment, did Islamism become what states make of it?**

The previous pages have provided an overview of the kind of international relations that Islamists in power have established with other states. I have charted some of the most relevant diplomatic visits that international actors have exchanged since the rise to power of an-Nahḍa and the FJP, and subsequently shown how, under the stress of international crises, these relations have fundamentally held (Section 7). The analysis was then complemented with an overview of the loans and investments allocated by states to Tunisia and Egypt to support their serious economic situation (Section 8).

This provides the empirical ground to corroborate the claim that Islamism has, at least at an early stage, implemented a foreign policy that is in continuity with the regimes that previously ruled over Egypt and Tunisia, notwithstanding the fact that these regimes have always been the embodiment of what Islamists have always criticised. The case of Tunisia has shown, for example, how the an-Nahḍa-led coalition government has maintained and cultivated good relations with western powers as the US and EU. For example, even if the role of France has always been strongly criticised by Tunisian Islamists and the USA has been seen as an antagonist to their interests and key ally for their oppressor Ben' Aly, an-Nahḍa's government has nonetheless entertained good relations with both countries. On a regional dimension, an-Nahḍa has adapted to the hegemonic regional role of Saudi Arabia, notwithstanding the fact that it has provided refuge to the very dictator that has oppressed and persecuted the members of the party and has been ousted from power by the same government that is ruling Tunisia.

The case of Egypt is even more effective in highlighting the pragmatic adaptation of Islamists to the newly acquired international role of state actors. We have seen how the FJP has exchanged several visits with the USA administration. It has abided to the recognition of Israel, passed on from the previous regime, and even found a common ground for cooperation with it on security issues. Mursy has also adapted to Saudi Arabia and its regional role paying an official visit as its first visit abroad in the Middle East, notwithstanding the fact that between Riyadh and the Muslim Brotherhood there are reasons for tensions as illustrated above.

The analysis of situations of crisis as a test for Islamists in power has further confirmed how Islamist foreign policy in Tunisia and Egypt is constituted not much by static moral stances, abstract from historical and social contingencies, but rather by relations that inherited from the previous regime and its geopolitical role. The case of the Gaza crisis has been indicative for example of Egypt's mediation role, rather than taking an outright pro-Hamas stance as it could have been plausibly expected from an Islamist movement. Tunisia's foreign policy towards Syria made the most out of the overlapping interests of western powers as the USA and its role of spearhead of the Arab spring, supported by Qatar. The apologies and guarantees given with regard to the security of US diplomatic staff in conjunction with the anti-Islam film crisis of September 2012 have shown how Islamists are committed to good relations with the USA even when these may exact a significant cost in terms of political capital within their own constituency.

In addition to this the amount of funding and aid that both Egypt and Tunisia have been collecting from their international donors shows how much these governments have material limitations to their capability to project power internationally and this, at least in part, explains why they adapted to a foreign policy that does not belong to their customary stances. But the materialist and rationalist explanations of Islamist adaptation only regards one dimension of an account that, as said above, intends to be constructivist-realist.

The constructivist components of this essay highlights how relations with other states have progressively tamed Islamists and changed them into international actors that acts according to the rules and norms of international society. Consider for example the observation of international law with regard to the Camp David Accord between Egypt and Israel, or the protection of diplomatic immunity with reference to the anti-Islam film. These are primary institutions of international society<sup>73</sup> deeply settled in the practice of international actors and that Islamist governments could not (or did not want to) challenge and therefore had to internalise. One important aspect is that in the cases under study, Islamists have become the rulers of states which are in continuation with the states ruled by the previous regime. This is an important difference, for example, from the revolutionary case of Iran in which the rise to power of Islamists has entailed the termination of the previous state to establish a new one. with a new international status. When Islamism came

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<sup>73</sup> I am referring her to the English School concept of primary institution for example has defined by Buzan. Barry Buzan, *From international to world society? : English school theory and the social structure of globalisation*, Cambridge studies in international relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). 167.

to power in Iran, the Israeli embassy was converted into the Palestinian Embassy and diplomatic relations with the USA underwent one of the most serious diplomatic crises of the modern history.

By inheriting the same state that Mubarak and Bin'Ally ruled, the FJP and an-Nahḍa have found themselves within an already *constituted* geopolitical international role. The relations that these states had before the rise to power of Islamists remained relevant also after the rise to power of Islamists and became constitutive of their political identity. This is not a unidirectional process; there have been occasions to mention the emergence of foreign policy initiatives that are informed by an Islamic common denominator as the Islamic Quartet initiative for Syria and the strong relations that Tunisia and Egypt entertain with Qatar on the basis of a shared ideological commitment. There are also several declarations and symbolic actions as the state visits to Gaza that have tried to reflect more closely the Islamist tradition agenda, but these have remained in the realm of symbolic politics with not much dent into the factual course of events, thus far.

Overall, the analysis provided above shows that rather than transforming the state in what Islamists would have wanted it to be, Islamism has become what states made of it through a process of international socialisation shaped also by material constraints.

A realist-constructivist approach to the analysis of Islamist foreign policy in Egypt and Tunisia has shown, thus, how Islamism is in fact subject to a process of social construction as much as any other institution of international society. Therefore, Islamism is susceptible to change by virtue of the fact that its intersubjective meaning is reinterpreted under the circumstances that emerged in the wake of the Arab uprisings of 2011 and the web of relations that Islamists have established with their newly acquired governmental role. Although one year in office is too early to come to definitive conclusions; the analysis proposed above identifies a trajectory of change in Islamism which is captured effectively by realist-constructivism as the result of social interactions with international actors combined with the limitations imposed by material constraints and thus contributes to reduce the uncertainty that international politics has experienced with the rise of Islamists in power in 2012.



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## 11. Appendix (Work in Progress)

Sources used for the collection of the below data are of various kind. Neither the Tunisian Foreign ministry nor Egypt have a public and complete record of the visits available on-line. So the information available through the ministry have been combined with other sources as those of other states carrying out visits but also tweeter accounts and Facebook pages of ministers which cover daily their activities.

### Egypt

| Date         | Description  |
|--------------|--|
| 03/05/2012   | Muslim Brotherhood Parliamentary Delegation visits King of Saudi.  |
| 04/05/2012   | Saudi returns ambassador to Egypt  |
| 02/05/2012   | US Senate commission visits Egypt, Kerry talks to FM Amr   |
| 06/07/2012   | Italian FM Terzi visits Egypt  |
| 10/07/2012   | Mursy's visit to Saudi (Saudi Has committed to billions of dollar of aid and loans to Egypt:                                     |
| 14-16/7/2012 | Clinton visit to Egypt (Morsi and Tantawi)   |
| 15/07/2012   | Mursy takes part to AU Summit in Addis Ababa   |
| 17/07/2012   | President Mursy Visits Saudi Arabia, it's his first state visit.   |
| 11/08/2012   | Qatari Emir Al-Khalifa al-Athani visits President Mursy.   |
| 28-30/8/2012 | Morsi visits China <a href="http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Story.aspx?sid=64184">http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Story.aspx?sid=64184</a>     |
| 30/08/2012   | NAM Meeting in Teheran, Mursy's declaration Syria and FM Amr several meetings with other parts including Pakistan, Mali Nigeria. |
| 05/09/2012   | Arab League meeting Mursy endorses change of regime in the Syria   |
| 06/09/2012   | Mursy receives visit from Qatar PM and FM Sheikh Jassem  |
| 11/09/2012   | UK FM Hague visits Cairo, meeting with FM  |
| 12/09/2012   | President Mursy visits in Brussels and Rome  |
| 13/09/2012   | President Mursy Visits Rome  |
| 17/09/2012   | Contact Group with Turkey and Iran on Syria  |
| 18/09/2012   | France FM Fabius visits Cairo  |
| 18/09/2012   | Iran FM Salehi visits Cairo on the developments in Syria.  |
| 24-6/9/2012  | UN General Assembly opening session both Mursy and FM Amr present, intense sessions of meeting on any front.                     |
| 24-6/9/2012  | Several bilateral meeting between Mursy and Roussef (Brazil) H. Clinton, Hollande, Cameron, Al-Thani, Bangladesh PM at the UN.   |
| 30/09/2012   | President Mursy visit to Turkey  |
| 24/10/2012   | President Mursy meets Emir of Qatar al-Khalifa al-Thani in occasion of his visit to Gaza.  |
| 17/11/2012   | FM Amr meets Turkish FM Davutoglu to reinforce bilateral relations   |
| 17/11/2012   | PM of Turkey Erdogan Visits Egypt  |
| 21/11/2012   | Hamas-Israel ceasefire, Clinton in Visit in Cairo.   |
| 30/11/2012   | FM Amr participates to Arab-Turkish forum holds meeting with Saudi and Turkish FMs on Syria.                                     |
| 29/12/2012   | FM Amr visits Russia   |

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 03/01/2013   | North Sudan's FM visits Egypt FM.  |
| 05/01/2013   | High level delegation of the president visit to UAE  |
| 06/01/2013   | FM Amr visits Saudi Arabia, raises the issue of Egyptian political prisoners in Saudi and the status of Saudi investments in Egypt and invites the king to the OIC |
| 07/01/2013   | President Morsi receives visit of IMF including IMF head Lagarde talks about the 4.8 Billion \$ loan   |
| 08/01/2013   | President Morsi Receives visit of PM of Qatar al-Thani doubling Commitment to loans to Egypt   |
| 09/01/2013   | President Morsi meets with President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority  |
| 10/01/2013   | President Morsi meets with Iranian FM Salehi   |
| 10/01/2013   | FM meets with Iranian Counterpart. Talks on Syria  |
| 13/01/2013   | President Mursy meets Van Rompuy head of the EU Commission   |
| 13/01/2013   | FM Amr meets with Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority  |
| 16/01/2013   | President Mursy receives a delegation of US Senators (including McCain) Talks of a Morsi's visit to the congress.  |
| 19/01/2013   | Mursy Visits Saudi Arabia within the context of Arab Social Economic Development Summit  |
| 22/01/2013   | Mursy /Saudi official talks on building a bridge on the Red Sea between Saudi and Egypt  |
| 22/01/2013   | Mursy Receives Malaysian Prime Minister(who visited Gaza before)   |
| 23-27/1/2013 | Egypt's PM, Qandil, participates to Davos  |
| 26/01/2013   | FM Meeting with Ethiopian Counterpart on Africa and bilateral relations  |
| 28/01/2013   | FM meeting with Sudanese counterpart over the South Sudan issue  |
| 30/01/2013   | Visit to Berlin Germany of President Mursy, the visit to France was cancelled due to unrest in Cairo.  |
| 05/02/2013   | Ahmadinejad in Cairo for the OIC conference  |
| 06/02/2013   | OIC Summit in Cairo  |
| 23/2/2013    | Inauguration of the Foreign Policy Forum   |
| 02/03/2013   | Visit of Libyan FM on the question of Egyptian prisoners in Libya  |
| 02/03/2013   | Kerry (US) visits Cairo, meets Morsi.  |
|              | <a href="http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/03/205575.htm">http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/03/205575.htm</a>                                  |
| 07/03/2013   | Morsi meets with Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zidan   |
| 10/03/2013   | Egypt FM Visits Somalia  |
| 11/03/2013   | President Morsi meeting with Sudanese delegation   |
| 18/03/2013   | President Morsi visits Pakistan  |
| 19/03/2013   | President Morsi Visits India bilateral meetings with all officials   |
| 14/04/2013   | Meeting with Lakhdar Brahimi on Syria  |
| 04/04/2013   | President Mursy receives visit with Norwegian FM   |
| 05/04/2013   | First official Visit to Sudan  |
| 21/04/2013   | President Mursy Visits Russia  |
| 30/04/2013   | Qatar PM Sheikh Jassim visits President Mursy  |
| 09/05/2013   | President Mursy Visits Brazil  |
| 05/05/2013   | Abdelfattah al-Sisi, the Minister of Defense and Military Cooperation, headed to Turkey  |
| 10/05/2013   | Turkish President Abdullah Gul received Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. Hisham Qandil  |
| 02/04/2013   | FM Amr meets France President Hollande   |
| 26/05/2013   | Morsi takes part to AU Summit and meets with Kerry   |

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| 02/06/2013 | Ghannūshī visits Cairo |
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## Tunisia

| Date         | Description   |
|--------------|---|
| 4.6.2013     | Erdogan PM of Turkey visits Tunisia   |
| 28.5.2013    | President Marzūqī visits Turkey   |
| 23.05.2013   | Talks between prime minister and Qatar  |
| 22.3.2013    | Marzūqī Visits Germany  |
| 16.05.2013   | Cooperation project with China the fourth economic partner for Tunisia  |
| 15.05.2013   | Preliminary Visit of FM France in preparation of Mr Hollande visit  |
| 10.05.2013   | Visit of interior minister of Palestine, Said Abou Ali,   |
| 10.5.2013    | PM Laaridiye visits Gul in turkey   |
| 07.05.2013   | Kuwaiti Development Fund agrees on support for development to Tunisia.  |
| 05.05.2013   | Participation of FM to the meeting of the Arab Maghreb Union  |
| 29.04.2013   | Visit of German Secretary of State Beerfeltz, agreement on project of cooperation and development   |
| 25.3.2013    | Marzūqī attends opening session of Doha Arab Summit   |
| 19.03.2013   | Westerwelle (Germany FM) visits Tunisia   |
| 5.2.2013     | Marzūqī visits Hollande in France   |
| 27.1.2013    | Marzūqī at AU summit in Addis Ababa   |
| 12.1.2013    | Jabali visits Libya   |
| 12.1.2013    | FM Abdessalem signs MoU with Palestine to build new embassy headquarters in Ramallah and Tunis.   |
| 13.12.2012   | Burns (US deputy secretary of state) visits Tunisia, stresses democratisation   |
| 5.12.2012    | Tunisia Charge d'affaire is not allowed in his Ramallah post by Israelis in retaliation to Gaza visit.  |
| 21.11.2012   | Military MoU between Tunisia and Qatar on training co-operation and participation to military manoeuvres.   |
| 19.11.2012   | Tunisia-EU sign advanced cooperation agreement  |
| 17.11.2012   | FM Abdessalam Visit to Gaza   |
| 1.10.2012    | Marzūqī in Lima for 3 <sup>rd</sup> Arab-South America Summit   |
| 27.9.2012    | Marzūqī and Ghannūshī visit London, Chatham Prize   |
| 21.9.2012    | FM Abdessalem meets Clinton in Washington, restoration of friendly relations after Embassy/School attacks.  |
| 19.9.2012    | New Plan of Action for Tunisian European Partnership  |
| 14.9.2012    | Attack on US Embassy,   |
| 9.2012       | Participation to UN GA of Marzūqī proposal for African International Constitutional Court   |
| 23.4.2012    | Visit of Iranian FM Salehi  |
| 14-15.8.2012 | Marzūqī takes part to OIC summit in Mekka   |
| 2.4.2012     | Secretary of State Ben Abbas visits US, sovereign loan of 30m\$ and US-Tunisian Investment fund for 20m\$. The sovereign loan would enable another loan from the WB for 400m\$. |
| 13/3.2012    | PM Jebali visits Berlin, meeting with Merkel  |
| 25.2.2012    | FM announces conference of the friends of Syria to send a strong message to Asad  |

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| 24-<br>25.2.2012 | Clinton express support for Tunisia, meets with Marzūqī and Jebali   |
| 24.2.2012        | Friends of Syria Conference Tunis  |
| 16.2.2012        | Jabali visits KSA, agenda is Friends of Syria Meeting, Ben Ali extradition and economy   |
| 13-<br>15.2.2012 | Italian Minister for International Cooperation visits Tunisia  |
| 20.2.2012        | Participation to the Union of the Arab Magheb summit   |
| 13.2.2012        | Visit of the head of Abu Dabi fund for Development   |
| 12.2.2012        | Arab League Meeting in Cairo declaring support for the Syrian opposition   |
| 2.2.2012         | PM Jebali Visit to Bruxelles, joint declaration for privileged EU-TU leading to a partnership in commerce (ALECA)  |
| 31.1.2012        | Participation to AU summit   |
| 21.1.2012        | FM Abdessalam's Visit to Cairo in preparation to Council of FM of Arab League on Syria   |
| 10-<br>11.1.2012 | Visit of FM Abdessalam to Turkey, first visit abroad   |
| 2-4.1.2012       | Marzūqī visits Libya as its first visit abroad as Tunisian interim president.<br><a href="http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1ce648c6-36e8-11e1-9ca3-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2UmgMqnSr">http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1ce648c6-36e8-11e1-9ca3-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2UmgMqnSr</a> |
| 28.9.2011        | Two day visit of Qatar Prince: Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem al-Thani to Tunis.  |
| 28-<br>29.9.2011 | Task Force Tunisia-EU for the renegotiations of the EU partnership with Tu.  |
| 12.2011          | Ghannūshī visits Qatar hosted by Qaradawi  |
| 30.11.2011       | Ghannushi in US, CFR and WINEP   |
| 22.11.2011       | FM Interim Kefi, Visits USA meeting with Clinton   |
| 15.9.2011        | Erdogan Visits Tunisia, meets PM Essebsi   |
| 8.11.2011        | Phone call Juppe/Ghannūshī, attempt to normalise French/Tunisian relations   |
| 9.2011           | Turkish PM Erdogan visits Tunis  |
| 30.5.2011        | G8 agrees 20b \$ to Tunisia and Egypt in transition funding conditioned to democratic reform. Commitment will be then doubled to 38b \$ by the end of the year.  |
| 17-<br>18.5.2011 | Interim PM Essebsi visits France ahead of G8 Meeting<br><a href="http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2011/05/tuni-m27.html">http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2011/05/tuni-m27.html</a>  |
| 17.3.2011        | Secretary of State Clinton visits Tunisia  |