

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

The Tunisian General Labor Union, especially its local branches, plays a key role in the process of Tunisia Revolution which was started their act in supporting anti-Ben Ali protests. The Tunisian General Labor Movement is known by its French acronym *Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail* (UGTT). The UGTT is one of Tunisia's most powerful players in organizational terms.

The Tunisian General Labor Union is an independent organization that focuses on trade union organization and national democracy for all organizations where they gain legitimacy and strength that come from the union. The goal is focused on economic and social, promoting awareness, raising the defense of the moral and material interests of their situation.

In the context of international relations, The Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) has a program related with the value from Western Country. Their programs are: First, support of all the peoples struggling for the recovery of sovereignty and self-determination and support the struggle of the liberation movements in the world, second, support and strengthen the trade union labor movements of the oppressed, third, cooperate with world union labor movements according to the principles of the General Tunisian Labor Union, fourth, establish an independent national economy which is free from all dependency and achieve equitable distribution of national wealth to ensure that the aspirations with defense of public and individual freedoms and the consolidation of democracy and respect

for human rights.<sup>1</sup> The programs are motivated by the values that have been created from the western countries. We already know that almost all Middle East country do not teach the value of an individual freedom, respect of human rights, consolidation of democracy, and the distribution of national wealth. Authoritarian government makes the free system impossible to be applied such as individual freedom limitation, violation of human right, uneven distribution of welfare for the people. All of those systems are centrally controled by the leader. The values that have been invested by the western countries, especially from the European Union is very helpful for the UGTT role's in the Tunisia Revolution in 2011.

The General Tunisian Labor Union is the country's strongest civil society organization. For decades preceding the democratic change in Tunisia, the UGTT has played a major role in organizing and maintaining popular resistance to the dictatorship and continues to play a positive role in the democratic transition since January 2011. While trying to maintain its distance from political power in Tunisia and even despite tense and sometimes outright antagonistic relations with the various governments before and after the revolution, the UGTT is nevertheless considered neutral enough. In addition, its roles are popular and powerful enough to resolve crises and to settle disputes.

During the months following the revolution of January 2011, the union played a central role in cooperating the various political players and in creating a consensus for a peaceful democratic transition. Independent intellectuals as well

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<sup>1</sup> *About The Union: Definition.* (n.d.). Retrieved on March 3, 2015, from UGTT Official Web Site: [www.ugtt.org.tn](http://www.ugtt.org.tn)

as key players from a broad political spectrum find the UGTT as a perfect space to work out a consensual plan for the transition period which eventually led to the first popular and democratic elections in the country since its independence on 23 October 2011.<sup>2</sup> In her article entitled *How a Leftist Labor Union Helped Force Tunisia's Political Settlement*, Sarah Chaves said that “Without the muscular involvement of a powerful labor union, it is unlikely that Tunisia’s remarkable political settlement would have come about”.<sup>3</sup>

The General Tunisian Labor Union (UGTT) is a symbol of their country’s struggle for independence, human rights and dignity. The interesting is that at the beginning the leaders in UGTT did not provide support for the overthrow of President Ben Ali for two weeks during the uprising. However, because the UGTT local branch activists protest against Ben Ali, it makes imperative for executive leaders to support Ben Ali protest. Over the years, the UGTT has experienced a great deal of internal struggle that resulted in relations with Tunisia’s authoritarian regimes varying between periods of tight political cooperation and periods of relative autonomy.<sup>4</sup>

At first, the movement of the Tunisian revolution started from Tunisian youth. They protested about the limited jobs provided by the government. It was

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<sup>2</sup> Asmi, L. E. (2013). The Tunisian General Labor Union. *Global Labor Column*, p. 1-4.

<sup>3</sup> Chaves, S. (2014, March 7). *How a Leftist Labor Union Helped Force Tunisia’s Political Settlement*. Retrieved on March 15, 2015, from Carnegie Endowment: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/03/27/how-leftist-labor-union-helped-force-tunisia-s-political-settlement>

<sup>4</sup> Bishara, D. (2014). Labor Movement in Tunisia and Egypt. *Stiftung Wissenschaft and Politik*, p. 1-2.

not proportional to the number of youths who had completed undergraduate education. Based on the facts, Tunisia is a country in the Middle East which has the best quality of education which statistic defeats Egypt. However, it is not equal to the number of jobs that exist so that the number of unemployed in Tunisia is very high. Based on the available data, the number of unemployed in Tunisia annually increases about 14%. It was also strengthened by events in 2008 in which there was a lot of unemployment in the central-west city of Gafsa. Regardless being a phosphate mining town in Tunisia, the unemployment rate in Gafsa was very high (over 40%). Mining results were only enjoyed by President Ben Ali and his family while the people of Gafsa suffered. People then protested against the regime of Ben Ali, so that they could take benefit from the mines produced in the region. This protest was at first aided by the national Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT).<sup>5</sup>

The revolutionaries were motivated to come down to the streets because of serious poverty, food prices raise, and chronic unemployment. The serious poverty was caused by geographical inequality and corruption. The geographical inequality means there are major differences in the development that occurs between Tunisian coastal areas and rural areas of the country. The development with construction of large scale was done in Tunisia coastal areas such as infrastructure development and public facility. Economic and business activities are concentrated in the coastal areas of Tunisia, so in rural Tunisia there are many

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<sup>5</sup> Sarsar, M. C. (2013). Tunisia: Revolution As A New Form Of Political Transistion Persuasion. *ISPI*, p. 2-3.

unemployment. In addition, corruption is also the second reason of serious poverty because the authoritarian government system, facilitated the Tunisian President Ben Ali for corruption. Ben Ali and his family have almost all big business in Tunisia, control of major privatization of state assets, retain every major licenses in all areas, and receive a commission on almost every major business transactions. The business environment was characterized by injustice, the absence of the rule of law, intimidation and extortion. Great corruption caused a sharp decline in both local and international investment. Thus, it also effect the higher inflation in Tunisia which resulted in the high price of food. Chronic unemployment was characterized by a very high unemployment rate. Based on the data, Tunisia had 6000 unemployed people of which 200,000 held college diplomas.<sup>6</sup>

Tunisian revolution was born orphan, which meant the revolution had one or a group or party to take over the leadership. The main issues at the core of the Tunisia Revolution background was high unemployment wich was an impact on poverty experienced by the society. Civil society played a role in influencing the labor movement for a mass movement in the Tunisian revolution, in which they demanded to be given a job by the government. The labor organization gave the power of society.

Based on the facts, the authors attempted to analyze further how the role of the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) in Tunisia Revolution as the strongest

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<sup>6</sup> Ayed, M. B. (2013). The Dynamic for Transition in Tunisia and Their Implication On Economy. *Forum*, p. 7-9.

civil society organizations in Tunisia helps Tunisian civil society to achieve democracy.

## **B. Research Question**

How is the role of the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) in Tunisia Revolution 2010 - 2011?

## **C. Theoretical Framework**

### **1. Interest Group**

Interest group is an important part of a community where they have become part of a political system in a country. Interest is the general aspect, permanent, and important of all the political system, such as a system of democracy, authoritarian or totalitarian. Interest groups present in all levels of government, starting from the national, provincial and local. They have an important role in international relations.

Interest group is a group of people with a common passion who are organized and mobilized to affect political change. However, Shattschneider in 1971 believed that,

“interest group is an association that attempts to bring about the adoption and execution of certain policies without nominating candidates for the great offices, without fighting election, campaign and attempt to get complete control of government.”<sup>7</sup>

The concept between interest group and political party is different in which interest groups are less similar to political parties. Both try to influence

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<sup>7</sup> Maisel, S. (2009). Schattschneider Dual Contribution. In F. Baumgartner, *Interest Group and Agenda Setting* (pp. 520-526). United Kingdom: Oxford Press.

public policy but interest groups influence the policy without following the electoral process and are not responsible to the public. Interest groups may influence the nomination of candidates who are sympathetic to their goal, even though the interest group influence the candidates, they are run under the party banner, not the interest group banner. Interest groups usually focus on specific programs or issues and are rarely represented in the formal structure of government.

There are many factors which make the interest group powerful. First, size and membership. The size greatly affects the strength of the interest groups. The bigger size it has, the more strength it has that makes it more influential. This will affect the movement carried out by the interest groups. The lobby is not only done to the elite, but also to the community. In addition to the size, the membership is also influential. Membership will affect the quality of the interest groups. When the membership of interest groups has a high quality such as higher salaries and higher education, it will affect the funding contributions or network of a group. If they have more money, they will often receive and donate more, and if they have higher education, it will make it easier to access influential people and easier to get legitimacy from the people.<sup>8</sup> Second, access to government and policy makers. It is paramount for interest groups to influence public policy. The interest group will be much stronger when they have easy access to the government, for example access to precedents. The access to precedents is important when the policy change is not yet implemented. It can be done through lobbying

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<sup>8</sup> Linden, E. (2011). What Makes an Interest Group Powerful? . *Modern World Governments*, p. 1-5.

with political figures. Therefore access to powerful political figures is important to be obtained.<sup>9</sup> Third is the rise of single issue group. Interest groups will be easier for them to mobilize the community in response to the growing issue. It will be easy to involve the issues that exist by providing programs for the success of their interests.

According to Gabriel Almond (1956), there are several types of interest groups that are anomic groups, non-associational group, institutional group and associational group<sup>10</sup>:

1. Anomic group is a group that is formed between the elements in society spontaneously without values and norms that regulate. It is done in the conventional form of participation.
2. Non-associational group is a group which is characterized by its unorganized and its activities are temporary, for examples are family groups, ethnic, or ancestry.
3. Institutional group is a formal group which are structure, vision, mission, duties and functions as an articulation of interests, for examples are political party, military, legislative, and etc.
4. Associational group is a group consisting of the community which function is to articulate the interests of its members to the government or corporate owners of capital.

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<sup>9</sup> Winden, F. V. (2002). Interest Group Behaviour and Influence. *Creed* , 5-6.

<sup>10</sup> Rahman. (2007). Kelompok Kepentingan. In Rahman, *Sistem Politik Indonesia* (pp. 86-87). Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu.



Interest group is an important part in a political system. Almond (1956) argues that the political system is a system of interaction that is present in all societies that are free or independent in carrying out the functions of integration and adaptation through the use of physical coercion are more or less valid. Almond (1956) describes the systems in figure 1.1:

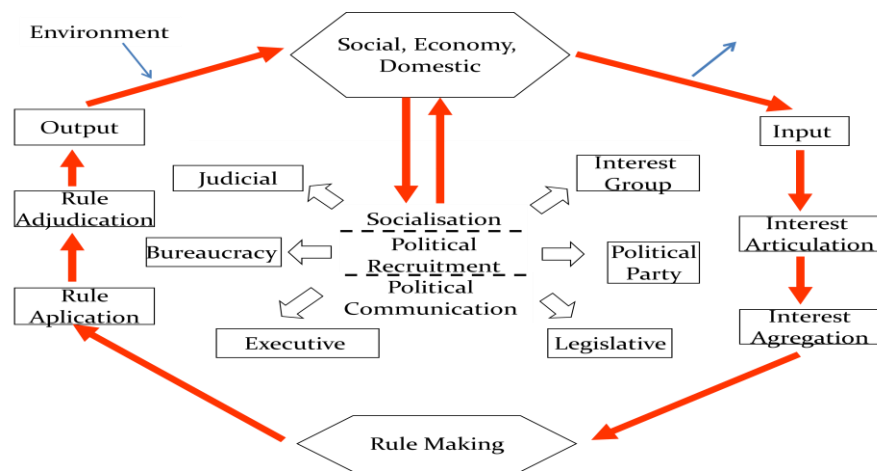


Figure 1.1  
Political System Structure and Function

## 2. Revolution Theory

Revolution is the most spectacular form of social change. It is a sign of a fundamental split in the historical process which reshape society and human. This theory emerges in response to the industrial revolution that was occurred in Russia.

According Sztompka (2002), the revolution has five differences with other forms of social change<sup>11</sup>. The differences are:

<sup>11</sup> Salim, A. (2002). *Perubahan Sosial, Sketsa Teori dan Refleksi Metodologi Kasus Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana Yogya.

1. Revolution raises a very broad changes in the dimensions of society, namely economic, political, cultural, social organization, and the human personality.
2. In all these fields, the changes are radically, fundamental, and it touches social function.
3. The changes occur quickly and in a sudden like an explosion of dynamite in the middle of a slow stream of historical process.
4. Revolution is shows which "stand out", the time is very quick and easy to remember.
5. Revolution raises specific emotional and intellectual reactions and it has a blast of mass mobilization, enthusiasm, stir, excitement, optimism and hope.

Lenin (1902) argued that a revolution can succeed if it is done in several ways: First, the uprising should not lean on a conspiracy and not upon a party, rather it must rely upon the advanced class. Second, insurrection must rely upon a revolutionary upsurge of the masses. Third, insurrection must rely upon "a defining moment" in the history of the growth of the revolution when the activity ahead of the people is at its peak when there are doubts in the enemy and in among the weak, the half-hearted and irresolute comrades of the revolution has been strong .

Revolution is a manifestation that occurs on a large scale. In the revolution, the change can be planned in advance and can be done with violence or violence. Character traits of violence in the revolution is understood as a result

of the situation when the change of values and norms that have caused the sudden emptiness of values and norms are adopted by society. Revolution is understood as the conditions and circumstances of how the conflict between the elite or class frustrating.

In the process of revolution, there must be a revolutionary group that plays a role in the revolution. Lenin (1902) argued that propaganda is done by way of a revolutionary group to appeal to the masses. A propagandist communicates a complex and many-sided message to a limited number of workers, those who are interested in gaining a wide understanding of class-struggle ideas.

Alfred McClung Lee & Elizabeth Briant Lee (1972) in his book *The Fine Art of Propaganda* mentions seven propaganda techniques that are widely known<sup>12</sup>, that are:

- a. *Name Calling* is a technique in which propaganda is done by providing on an idea, institution or organization. The goal is to make the desired object of propagandists to respond accordingly without the need to examine or look for evidence. Thus it means a kind of negative words are used to create an unfavorable opinion of the competition in the viewer's mind.
- b. *Glittering Generalities* is a technique to connect something to the 'good word' which is used to make the target receive and approve something without examining the evidence.

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<sup>12</sup> Lee, A. M. (1939). *The Fine Art of Propaganda: A Study of Father Coughlin's Speeches*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

- c. *Transfer* is a technique that uses power, sanction and the influence of something more respected and revered than anything else in order to make "something" more acceptable. This can be done by using the most influential and respected in a certain environment.
- d. *Testimony* is a technique to give a chance to those who admire or hate to say that an idea or program or product, or someone is good or bad.
- e. *Plain Folks* is a propaganda technique using propaganda speaker in an effort to convince the target that he and his ideas are good because they are part of the “people”.
- f. *Card Stacking* is a propaganda technique that includes the selection and use of facts or lie, illustrations or irregularities, and logical or illogical statements to give the best or worst case on an idea or a program. This technique chooses argument or evidence to support a position and ignore the things that support that position.
- g. *Bandwagon* is a technique used in order to convince the target that all members of a group and where the target is a member receiving the program, and therefore the target must follow the group and soon joined the group.

#### **D. Implementation Of Theory**

##### **1. Interest Group**

The Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) is an organization that has an important role to the Tunisian revolution. UGTT has the same role as interest

groups. As it is known, Tunisia is the first successful country in the Middle East to implement democratization process. The Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) is very supportive of the resignation of President Ben Ali on January 14, 2011. The General Tunisia Labor Union (UGTT) provide support to the civil society movement in Tunisia. UGTT is like actor which support Tunisia civil society. As we know that Middle East societies are very submissive and fearful of its leaders. UGTT as interest groups instills the value of the Tunisian people to keep them out of the authoritarian system to democracy. Support comes from the labor movement in Gafsa, where civil society protests against President Ben Ali because they do not have jobs. Gafsa mining region is developed, but the people who live in those areas suffered high unemployment. At that time, UGTT successfully influence the government after President Ben Ali was overthrown, for example was when Fouad Mebazza as Chairman of the Parliament of Tunisia's was appointed as interim president after Ben Ali was overthrown. This was achieved by agreement between the interim government and the UGTT on February, 8 2011. The Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) urged against Mebazaa government to ratify a law such as international human rights treaties.

The Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) has a very strong position, because it has around 7,000 members after the Tunisian Revolution. This number of members are spread across many different levels, namely the provincial, national and local level. Revolutionary movement which has started from local level finally broke into a national movement. In addition, the leadership of UGTT has easy access to lobby against the government. The Tunisian General Labor

Union (UGTT) is an independent organization getting support from the European Union. Financing organization receives donations from the European Union. After the revolution and it becomes democratic country, UGTT provides solutions to create new job opportunities where companies come from European countries and almost all manufacture product are sent to European countries.

The Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) gives effect to the political system. Revolution occurs because it is supported by several factors: economic, social, and domestic politics. UGTT is an interest group that serves to convey the articulation of the interests of the Tunisian civil society that does not have a job to do the revolution and protest President Ben Ali to resign from the government. In the process of revolution, UGTT politic communication and socialization of value are adopted in a democratic system. Those values are communication, socialization, and political recruitment to the legislatives, executive, judicial, political parties and also influential in government bureaucrats. The desire to make a revolution is very high that eventually results in the decision that the Tunisian revolution must be carried out with the support of civil society.

We can see the process of Tunisia Revolution in the figure of Political System by Gabriel Almond (1956):

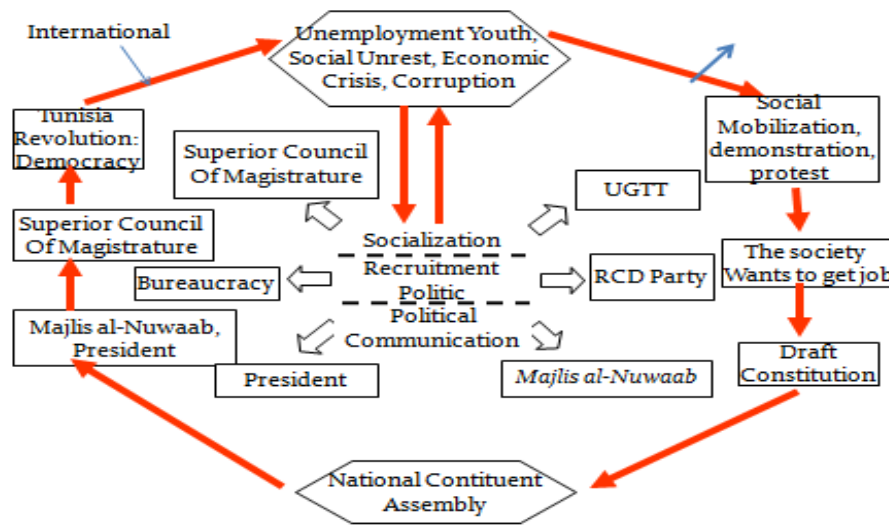


Figure 1.2  
Tunisia Political System: Structure and Function

## 2. Revolution Theory

The General Tunisian Labor Union as interest groups has been successful to make the revolution in Tunisia. This is done by means of propaganda. There are two ways to achieve revolution:

### a. Card Staking

The General Tunisian Labor Union (UGTT) is very good at utilizing the existing situation in the middle of the Tunisian people who are experiencing severe social frustration against the current administration. Based on the facts, UGTT movement was triggered by the real events happened in the Tunisia society. First, Tunisia faced serious economic problems, such as chronic unemployment, balance of payments deficit, and heavy state subsidies and unequal control of the prices of basic commodities. This was indicated by high unemployment especially among the youths. Still, many of the rural and urban poor, including small

businesses that were not able to compete against the world market. Tunisia faced 10% inflation and external debt 46% of GDP. According to Al Jazeera (2011) the unemployment in Tunisia reached more than 44%.<sup>13</sup> These were the issues used by the UGTT to do the revolution. The General Labor Tunisian Union (UGTT) encouraged people to protest. This happened after a young Tunisian named Bouazizi was committed self-immolation. They did demonstrations against the government.

The General Tunisian Labor Union (UGTT) is organized to Tunisian civil society. When a large demonstration happened in the Sidi Bouzid done, then it also led to a general strike in several areas in Tunisia. Demonstration that occurred in Tunisia finally overthrew President Ben Ali. The message conveyed by the UGTT was very influential on the UGTT's role in the Tunisian revolution. The message was conveyed which issues involved public welfare, public freedoms, and human rights. The impact expected by the UGTT was finally realized that the authoritarian regime has ended. As an interest group that is supported by the EU, it opens the excellent cooperation with the countries in Europe, that almost all products from Tunisia such as basic materials are sent to Europe, Europe becomes a major actor in the economic cooperation.

#### b. Bandwagon Technique

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<sup>13</sup> Rifai, R. 2011, January 23. *Tunisia's Uprising*. Retrieved on March 15, 2015, from Al Jazeera:<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/tunisia/2011/01/201114142223827361.html%29>



The Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) is the main actor which is very influential in Tunisia Revolution. The General Tunisian Labor Union is the only trade union in Tunisia which have access to the international community such as the European Union and also has very easy access to the government. Along with the process of revolution, the Tunisian General Labor plays a dual leadership. In this way, it will always give importance to the UGTT position. UGTT is an organization that is open to all professionals, be it teachers, doctors, or labors and among others. It unites the poor segments of society as well as the middle classes which together make up a significant portion of Tunisia's population. UGTT represents 1 million unionists out of a total population of more than 10 million people.

#### **E. Hypothesis**

Based on the problem and the framework explained above, the hypothesis are drawn as follows:

First, The General Tunisian Labor Union (UGTT) as part of interest group is powerful in fostering the social movement as well as serves as actor in Tunisia Revolution because of:

- a. Size and membership
- b. Access to Government
- c. The rise of single issue

Secondly, The General Tunisian Labor Union (UGTT) as international interest group is powerful enough to influence the civil society through propaganda as revolutioner group using two techniques:

- a. Bandwagon Technique
- b. Card Staking Technique

#### **F. Purpose of Writing**

Every academic paper has its own purpose of writing, the writer in this thesis has some purposes to achieve by writing this paper, that are:

1. This paper is intended as a means to apply theories which the writer obtained during the course, as well as to make deeper understanding of the course.
2. This paper is written in order to explain and also to understand more about the role of The Labor Union as a part of interest group to democratic transition especially in the case of Tunisia during the Arab Spring.
3. This paper is also written as the requirement to finish the writer's study in International Relations Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in order to get her bachelor degree.

#### **G. Scope Of Writing**

In order to avoid disintegration of research result, there is a need for limitation in writing an academic writing. Here, the writer limits the scope of writing started prior the revolution era, during the revolution emerged in Tunisia until the overthrow of Presiden Ben Ali from his presidency and also after authoritarian regime which fell down in 2010 - 2011.

#### **H. Research of Method**

The methods of writing to address the matter into the paper. This paper use the deductive method (general to specific). It based on the theoretical framework that pulled to a hypothetical conclusion which proven through empirical available data.

The method of collecting the data is library research with the help of printed media like books references, magazines, newspaper, journal, report of many sources and also electronic media, especially internet in which the data are secondary sources. Those data will be analyzed with the theory that is determined before. It is to prove that the hypothesis is accurate and finally answer the core problem. Although this paper uses a secondary data, the writer selects accurate data and check the reliability of the data to accomplish the trustworthy research.

## **I. Organization of Writing**

Chapter one is discusses the background of the problem purpose of Writing for explaining the purpose of the study, research, theoretical framework, hypothesis, research method, research area and systematic of writing .

Chapter two discusses more about The General Tunisian Labor Union (UGTT) successful effort as interest group and also its power in Tunisia Revolution in the context of International Relations.

Chapter three consists of the elaboration and description of the actual condition occured Tunisia by exploring the phenomena in many aspects.

Chapter four discusses more about The General Tunisian Labor Union (UGTT) successful effort as the strongest civil society to foster democratic transition in Tunisia through propaganda.

Chapter five contains conclusion and closing of the study. It summarizes the points described in chapter one into chapter four, especially the role which bring success to UGTT in Tunisia Revolution 2011.