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Abstract

Despite implementing comprehensive decentralization laws, emerging democracies often achieve limited success in improving the inclusiveness of local governance. A potential factor limiting the inclusiveness is the lack of cooperation. What factors determine the inclination of mayors to cooperate, and what are their implications for transparency? I answer these questions through conducting a case study of Tunisia, where mass resignations paralyze the local governance following the implementation of the Code of Local Collectives in 2018. I evaluate the mechanisms that produce divergent inclinations to cooperate based on a set of interview data recently collected among 39 municipalities in socio-economically divergent regions with mayors, city council members, civil society members, and a governor. I examine their implications for transparency based on a Transparency Index developed by an independent organization for all 350 municipalities. The findings from interviews suggest that partisanship ties constitute the most substantive factor perpetuating hierarchical relations among the elected officials and the appointed bureaucrats, as they can enable mayors to focus on large scale projects at the expense of cooperative modes of governance. A mixed effect analysis on the Transparency Index of municipalities within governorates with identified partisanship ties (n=174) indicates that the transparency score is lower in instances where the mayors and the governors belong to the same ideological family.

1. Introduction

Democratizing countries often initiate fiscal, administrative and political decentralization reforms based on policies advocated by international institutions, such as the World Bank or the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) (Andersson, 2002; Cheema and Rondinelli, 2007; Clark, 2018a; Suleiman, 1999, p:148). These reforms are built upon the assumption that decentralization can ensure the consolidation of the transition processes, as it enables citizens to develop democratic *habitus* and awareness of their rights. Democratization is also assumed to reduce regional inequalities, provide benefits to the poor, check the power of the central government, and prevent a transition back to a tyrannical form of government (Cook and Morgan, 1971; Gellar, 2005; Olowu, 1999; Tocqueville, 2010; Westergaard and Alam, 1995). Moreover, individuals produce outcomes that are more efficient where the resource management constitutes a decentralized structure instead of governance based on top-down, hierarchical schemes (Agrawal Brit and Kanel, 1999; E. Ostrom and Gardner, 1993; E. Ostrom, 1990; Ostrom et al., 1994; Wang, 2009; Harb and Atallah, 2015).

Despite their widely acknowledged merits, the decentralization programs among emerging democracies often fail to achieve policy objectives such as eliminating corruption or bringing the decision-making system closer to citizens, as the local government becomes "instinctive, blind, and full of prejudices, devoid of rules" (Tocqueville, 2010, p:1213; Batterbury and Fernando, 2006; Harb and Atallah, 2015; Rondinelli et al., 1983). Such passive tyranny can lead to a situation in which citizens are disengaged from the political process and unable to exercise their constitutional rights (Gannett, 2005; E. Ostrom, 1996; V. Ostrom, 1997).

Decentralization reforms can lead to "elite-capture" as the local elite can encroach upon the decentralizing laws in order to enrich their personal power (Bardhan, 2002; Clark, 2018a; Echeverri-Gent, 1992; Huque, 1986; Johnson et al., 2003; Sarker, 2003; Slater and Watson, 1989; Vengroff and Ben Salem, 1992). One of the central tenets of a successful decentralization program is the creation of institutional mechanisms that prevent the consolidation of power among elites (Agrawal, Brit and Kanel, 1999). In particular, the absence of mechanisms of accountability at the decentralized level can remove the incentives for mayors to take into consideration the interests of local citizens (Andersson, 2002). As a result, contrary to the initial expectations, decentralization

can produce outcomes inimical to equality and more prone to conflict and mismanagement of public goods (Ribot, 2002).

The ability of decentralization to generate benefits is conditional on activating participatory forms of governance and the presence of financial, political, and administrative capacities at the local level to manage responsibilities, a framework inimical to “elite capture” (Cook and Morgan, 1971; V. Parker, 1995, p:23-36; Schleifer, 2000). The endurance of the transitioning phase, the protection of individual liberties, and the enhancement of state administrative capacity are elements conditional upon the active engagement of citizens within the democratic process (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2019; Back and Hadenius, 2008). Likewise, the practice of democratic *habitus* at the local level can contribute to the process of democratization at the national level (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2019). Indeed, the self-governing communities constitute the fundamental element for freedom to flourish (V. Ostrom, 1999). Furthermore, the participation of ordinary citizens in the democratic process can generate popular mobilization, advancing reforms and leading the transition to fruition (Haggard and Kaufman, 2012).

2. Case Selection and Puzzle: Tunisia

In examining conditions under which decentralization may lead to an inclusive and transparent mode of local governance instead of a hierarchical and non-transparent one, I am focusing on the case study of Tunisia, the only case that followed the transitioning phase out of the Arab uprisings. Exploring the case of Tunisia allows me to carry out potential implications for other emerging democracies, particularly for regimes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region that share a similar institutional heritage and that may engage in an institutional reconfiguration for decentralization in the near future. The unique institutional context as the only democratizing country out of the Arab uprisings makes Tunisia a critical case in the region, as understanding the dynamic of democratization and decentralization processes in Tunisia not only tells us how these phenomena may work in other countries, but also whether reform might be attempted at all. Moreover, observing Tunisia offers opportunities for policymakers and practitioners to improve these processes if other countries do carry them out.

Tunisia constitutes an ideal case to study the structures of decentralization, not only because it is the only success story of the Arab uprisings, but also because the country carries substantive internal case variation with regards to the key determinants for development and municipal properties, including the levels of investment, citizenship trust, and administrative status. This variation is due to its long history of centralized governance, informal political competition under authoritarian rule, and a uneven development scale. In that perspective, studying the Tunisian case will make valuable contributions to the broader comparative politics literature through understanding how the implementation of a uniform set of laws differs in the process and outcome of local governance based on the characteristics specific to the region.

The implication of variation in key determinants is evident in the events occurring following the implementation of the 2018 Code of Local Collectives that promised to bring the decision-making body closer to citizens, which was applauded by domestic and foreign observers alike. The Code generated optimism among Tunisians, especially for the youth who were elected to the local councils in large numbers (Yerkes and Yahmed, 2019). Only two years have passed since the implementation of the Code and the conduct of the first free and fair local elections in Tunisia's history. While some municipalities have received international recognition for maintaining transparent self-governing capabilities and including citizens as stakeholders in decision-making processes, the lack of resources, hierarchical governance, political conflict and mass resignations have disrupted the structure of local governance in other municipalities. This has led to a failure of service delivery, a worsening of trust in the political class, and a decrease of initial optimism within the decentralization process (Al-Bawsala, 2019; Crisis Group, 2019). Explaining this variation through examining factors both at the micro and macro levels can open venues for the scholarly understanding of decentralized governance and appropriate institutional designs for maintaining cooperation at the local level.

The political developments following the 2011 Revolution, the 2014 Constitution, and the subsequent process of peaceful transfer of power indicate that Tunisia is consolidating its democracy. However, the peaceful transfer of power at the elite level tells us a little about whether democratic practices and service delivery generate improvements for the masses, including more efficient, transparent and accountable modes of governance. Some of the problems that Tunisians experience, including persistent corruption and the absence of development, could be related to the

failure of transitions at the elite level in generating a more open and transparent form of governance for the citizens (GLD, 2016; Meddeb, 2018). This process can in turn lead to democratic erosion and the emergence of more authoritarian forms of politics as citizens lose trust in the existing democratic mechanisms. A 2018 Pew Research survey indicates that 70% of Tunisians are dissatisfied with democracy in their country (Kent, 2019), whereas another survey conducted in the same year by Afrobarometer indicates that 55% of Tunisians are against a multiparty democracy (Afrobarometer, 2018).

The traditional approaches to democratization tend to discount the role of citizens in forms of governance and consider them passive and helpless recipients of orders (V. Ostrom 1997)¹. As a result, the literature on democratic transitions often shows a lack of interest for understanding the process of governance at the subnational level, based on the assumption of a top-down relationship occurring from the political center to the periphery in a uniform manner (Clark et al., 2019; Doner and Hershberg, 2009; Gibson, 2005). Most of the studies on the MENA region focus on the arrangements at the elite level with top-down institutional analyses, rarely incorporating implications of political openings in the day to day life of the citizens (Clark, 2018a; Chomiak, 2011; Pace and Cavatorta, 2012; Volpi et al., 2016). However, much of the political engagement in the region, including the protests leading to the Arab uprisings, was caused by regional inequalities or the marginalization of the peripheries (Kherigi, 2020). Furthermore, what appears to be a uniform transition process in the region can yield very different outcomes based on differences in national and local processes (Fortier, 2018, p:20).

¹ The traditional approaches towards democracy are highly ambiguous with regards to whether changes in the political system can generate self-governing capacities. Schumpeter (1950) defines democracy as the "institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realize the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will" (p: 269). Dahl (1973) argues that polyarchy is composed of participation among citizens and competition among political agencies. Huntington (1993) defines a regime as democratic if the decision-makers are elected through fair, honest, and periodical elections where candidates freely compete and the entire adult population can vote. Hadenius defines democracy as "by the freely expressed will of the people whereby all individuals are to be treated as equals" (1992). Sartori (1987) classifies democracies by emphasizing different components, including majority rule, participation, equality, freedom, consensus, coercion, competition, pluralism, constitutional rule. Cheibub et al. (2010) define democracy as regimes in which government offices are filled through elections. Saward (1994) argues that "a democratic political system is democratic to the extent that, and only to the extent that, it involves realization of responsive rule-appropriate outcomes.

This study speaks to the broader literature of local governance in emerging democracies, as well as the literature on local governance in the MENA region. The theoretical framework would be able to account for these two cases, as democratization constitutes part of a continuum from authoritarian rule to consolidated forms of democracy, and the delineation from authoritarianism to democracy is increasingly blurred (Cavatorta, 2015, p: 145). However, the phases and structure of democratization may not occur at a uniform level, and the institutions of governance often carry the legacies of former modes of governance. As a result, much of the phenomena related to the structure of local governance for authoritarian regimes are observable among emerging democracies. Furthermore, given the mass demands for political change amid the inability of the current structure to respond to the needs of the citizens, the endurance of authoritarian forms of governance over long spans of time is questionable, particularly among the MENA countries that face constant threats of revolution. Therefore, many of the challenges that Tunisia faces today with regards to reforming its institutions may be applicable to the challenges in other countries of the region in the near future.

In the next section, I develop my theoretical framework to examine the local politician-bureaucratic networks in emerging democracies. In order to account for the absence of cooperative behavior among mayors, I refer to the networks among bureaucrats and local politicians.

3. Theoretical Framework

The foundational theoretical assumption of this study is that all members of the community, including voters, politicians, and bureaucrats are utility-maximizer individuals. These community members engage in a 'political exchange' while facing a variety of institutional constraints generating alternative political outcomes, including variations in the levels of cooperation (Buchanan, 1984, p:48-50; Buchanan, 1987; Tullock, 2004, p:17). This framework assumes that self-interest guides people's behavior in office or administrative positions, and therefore there is no inherent preference for any policy or ideology for the politician who attempts to maximize political survival. Similarly, the goals of bureaucrats include expanding the size of one's own department and improving the benefits accompanying the particular position (Alston et al., 2018, p:159; Niskanen, 1975; Tullock, 2004, p:23). Hence, bureaucrats have the capacity to manipulate the agenda for legislative action in

order to secure outcomes favorable to their own interest, including setting constituents against one another and ensuring budgets do not exceed a certain level (Buchanan, 1984, p:57).

The mechanisms of cooperation between local and central governments in emerging democracies often carry high levels of transaction costs due to the ‘legacies’ of the former regime (Illner, 2003). The opening up of the political space creates mutually advantageous relations among the bureaucratic and political networks to profit from such situations through voluntary networks that internalize the externality (Buchanan and Tullock, 1962, p:90). The social capital accumulated between these distinct entities enables them to establish these networks, which are “social constructions constituted in large part by the shared understanding of participants” (Sowers, 2013, p:13; Loschi, 2019, p:97). Following Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti’s (1994, p:167) framework, I define social capital as the features of relationships, including trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of interactions through facilitating coordinated actions. The sources of social capital can be divided in two categories: social capital at the level of central government, including bureaucrats, MPs, and party networks, and social capital at the local level with the local stakeholders, including civil society, council members and local administrative units.

Mayors may consider social capital at the local and national level as substitutable goods and prefer referring to their social capital at the national level rather than the local level. As the voters have imperfect information about both the effects of policy and the predispositions of politicians², the elected officials tend to increase the scope of their own authority over resources instead of establishing transparent and participatory mechanisms (Coate and Morris, 1995, p:1212; McGinnis and V.Ostrom, 1999). The methods of increasing their personal authority include using large public projects, such as building airports or stadiums that benefit certain interest groups or constituencies, rather than direct cash transfers³ or transparent methods that benefit the society at large (Alston et

²According to this framework, voters may successfully observe the implementation of a project (ex: whether a construction project is completed), yet they have imperfect information about the extent to which a project benefits to their community or special interest groups and whether politicians are susceptible to bribing (Coate and Morris, 1995). For instance, a politician may lay out a road to increase the benefit of a certain estate, yet because voters do not know about the optimal location of the road, they can’t be completely sure whether the road was at the wrong place at all (Coate and Morris, 1995; Tullock, 1983). Hence, large-scale projects can appeal to both interest groups and voters who have less information about benefits than politicians, encouraging even “good” politicians who do not take bribes to focus on large public projects (Coate and Morris, 1995).

³ Although cash transfers from municipalities to citizens is not a very common phenomenon in MENA, it is a common phenomenon in Latin America (de Janvry et al., 2007).

al., 2018; Coate and Morris, 1995). While mayors may not be able to undertake such large-scale projects by themselves, they can cooperate with national-level politicians and bureaucrats⁴. As a result, the ties of local candidates to the central government can be an asset in campaigning and winning their posts (Matsumoto, 2009, p:303). Therefore, mayors may prefer their connections to be at the central rather than local level as participatory local governance could prevent engagement in projects that would increase their authority and receive positive attribution.

Future career opportunities can also influence the goals and institutional loyalties for bureaucrats, and their political appointments can lead them to prioritize the achievement of goals for their political units, encouraging them to implement large scale projects that mayors demand (Dahlstorm and Lapuente, 2017). This process then can lead to further politicization of the bureaucracy, a common phenomenon within the developing world (Brass et al., 2020).

In an environment of high transaction costs and reliance, most transactions take place within a framework of favor exchange or the pursuit of political advantage (Shleifer and Vishny, 1993). Networks serve to reduce the transaction costs between units, thereby bringing a greater level of efficiency for service provision among the municipal bodies. In this instance, generating hierarchical networks within the bureaucratic structure would constitute a rational response among the elected officials in emerging democracies, as citizens' expectations for service delivery may increase as a result of their broader expectations of democratization, including social justice and greater accountability (Crisis Group, 2019). Yet, as it takes time for a complete implementation of fiscal decentralization, the resources available at the municipal level may not be able to respond to such heightened expectations of citizens. The following two diagrams, modified from Ostrom (2014, p:94-6), illustrate two alternative production frameworks of local governance based on citizen participation:

⁴ Specific to Tunisia, engaging in such large scale projects would require the municipalities to cooperate with specific ministries, such as Ministry of Youth and Sports or Ministry of Transport.

Figure 1: Rules in Use vs. Rules in Form: An Application of Ostrom's Framework.

Figure 1.1: One way relationships among participants in local governance.

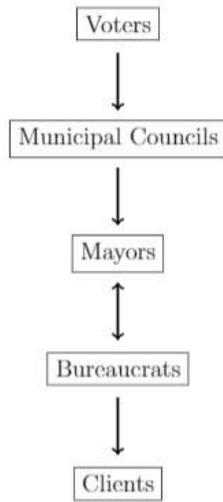
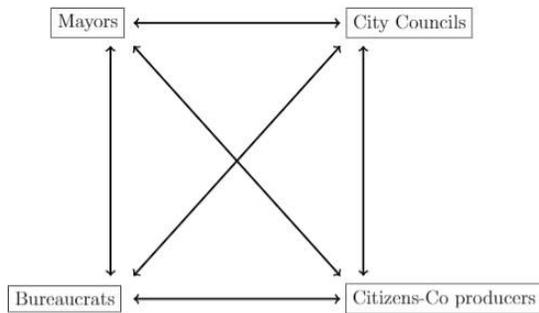


Figure 1.2: Two way relationships among participants in local governance



In the case of one-way relationships among participants (Figure 1.1), the only existing mechanism of coproduction is between mayors and bureaucrats who decide on budgets and projects, whereas the rest resembles a form of patron-client relationship. The mechanism of co-operation between mayors and bureaucrats at the expense of other stakeholders is developed through the exclusionary network structures. A two-way relationship (Figure 1.2) exists in cases where local governance mechanisms resemble the envisioned structure as the local stakeholders, including civil society associations, citizens, elected officials, and governors representing the central government jointly participate in local governance. Citizens constitute active participants of this framework as they engage in local council sessions.

A mechanism that can lead to the endurance of hierarchical ties among the elected mayors and the governors (Figure 1.1) are the political ties in democratizing settings. In democratic regimes, the top level of bureaucrats is often appointed by the executive or legislative powers, naturally involving political considerations. While political parties in emerging democracies often lack policy platforms and focus on ‘catch all’ issues (Bielasiak, 2005; Innes, 2002), they can nevertheless help the mayors and bureaucrats to establish the social capital needed to generate hierarchical governance mechanisms by providing venues to reduce collective action costs and form group cohesion by establishing a platform for the communication of ideas and strategies (Tarrow, 1995; p:22). Groups who have greater capabilities for solving collective action problems have greater capacities to support politicians, assuring a favorable distribution for themselves and prevailing in competition (Buchanan and Tullock, 1962; Olson, 2009; Alston et al., 2018). In instances when a group acquires greater capacity for organization, this leads the group to obtain further power in cases where it is in the winning coalition, and diminishes the political power of the governing coalition if it is in the opposition (Alston et al., 2018). Hence, a greater resource allocation to municipalities may exist in instances where an efficient partisanship and ideological network alignment between the bureaucrats and council members prevails. This would then, in turn, decrease the need for mayors to engage with the horizontal social capital at the local level. Moreover, reduced resource allocation may exist in instances where such network alignments are absent or located among the bureaucrats and opposition forces within the local councils.

Political capital can develop among different party settings. For instance, under repressive institutions, the covert organizations can depend upon strong social ties to generate mutual trust and serve as a basis for mobilization (Alhamad, 2008, p:43). These ties can endure in democratic settings as the bonds established under the authoritarian rule may enable these political parties to establish network relations. The authoritarian-successor parties, defined as “parties that emerge from authoritarian regimes, but that operate after a transition to democracy” (p: 158) may also carry a bonding ideology based on a shared set of values (Loxton, 2015, p:158-165)⁵. I propose the following hypotheses:

⁵Specific to Tunisia, Ennahda constitutes as case of a political organization that operated under the authoritarian regime, whereas Nidaa Tounes and the parties that split from Nidaa Tounes refer to the authoritarian-successor parties. I provide more discussion about these parties under “Case Study: Tunisia” section.

Hypothesis 1: Political and ideological ties through the existing party networks serve as bonding mechanisms between the elected mayors and the appointed bureaucrats to establish social capital and exclude local stakeholders from the decision-making process.

The political capital established under authoritarian rule, independent of the regime-successor parties, can also generate mechanisms of trust and bondage among the elected officials and bureaucrats, contributing to the rejuvenation of hierarchical ties among the local councils. City council members under the regimes often constitute part of the bureaucratic hierarchy, thereby engaging in repeated interactions with members of the bureaucracy. Moreover, serving under the authoritarian regime can provide a mechanism of bonding between mayors and bureaucrats based on a shared ideology built upon upholding the principles of the regime. In many emerging democracies, revolutionaries accommodate the existing bureaucratic order rather than engaging in an overthrow to ensure continuity and stability (Suleiman, 1999). This provides a platform for the local elite incorporated into the local governance structure to utilize their already developed ties with the bureaucracy under democratic governance. Hence, the bureaucratic linkages obtained under the authoritarian regime may provide the mechanisms for mayors with ex-regime backgrounds to construct less cooperative municipal governance structures. I thereby propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: The ideological and network ties derived from serving under the former regime serve as a bonding mechanism between the elected mayors and appointed bureaucrats to establish social capital and exclude local stakeholders from the decision-making process.

Finally, I discuss the implications of hierarchical ties for the modes of governance. I expect that the presence of social capital at the level of bureaucracy encourages mayors to construct non-transparent forms of governance. In contrast, mayors who lack social capital at bureaucratic level would follow more transparent procedures, as they would need to demonstrate their cooperative attitude in order to avoid potential repercussions:

Hypothesis 3: Mayors with political and ideological ties with the appointed bureaucrats are more likely to establish non-transparent modes of governance as opposed to mayors who lack such ties⁶.

In Section 4, I outline the Tunisian case study in order to test the hypotheses.

4. Case Study: Tunisia

To test my hypotheses, I have chosen Tunisia as my case study. Tunisia is the only state-based regime change from the Arab uprisings that is continuing the process of democratic transition. Prior to the revolution, the primary function of local governance was to serve as a mechanism of clientelistic distribution, including distributing money and jobs to regime supporters, the political party, and the relevant associations (Clark et al, 2019; Volpi et al., 2016). Any discussion related to local issues required clearance from the capital, as the administrative duties of local councils limited their engagement within public affairs (Ashford, 1965, p:83; Volpi et al., 2016). While Tunisian municipalities embodied a decentralized administration through a formal framework, the political and administrative decision-making was conducted through a deconcentrated order through appointed administrative ties (Loschi, 2019, p:98). Only candidates loyal to the regime were able to run for the local councils (Sadiki, 2002). The *Omda* (district chief) constituted the foundational structure of a deconcentrated administrative order, expanding the network to the Ministry of Interior and its Directorate of Local Authorities (Volpi, 2013, p:369). Within that framework, the governors were responsible for approving the procedure and execution of decisions at the municipal level (Tizaoui, 2009). The forms of tutelage and oversight from the central government reduced the responsibilities of the municipalities' to the management of buildings and services, primarily trash collection (Clark et al., 2019). While municipalities managed urban planning, they exercised little influence over vital services, including health and education (Yerkes and Muasher, 2018). Councilors' roles were limited to providing personal services, such as generating official documents and trying to influence public spending on infrastructure and public goods, such as electricity, water, or roads (Benstead, 2019). While lacking any substantive formal or informal powers, most of the municipalities were also in debt, lacked qualified staff, and relied heavily on the

⁶ I am unable to test hypothesis on transparent governance for mayors with background in the former regime, as I lack aggregate data on the prior affiliations of mayors.

state for funds (Clark et al., 2019). The hierarchical structure of local councils substantively curtailed the ability of citizens to engage in local governance (Turki and Verdeil, 2015, p:23).

The 2014 Constitution and the 2018 Code of Local Collectives formally expanded the authority of local decision-making bodies and bestowed active engagement upon citizens within the decision-making process. Local councils chosen through elections elect mayors, who execute the laws pertaining to their jurisdiction, such as planning, public security, investment, and taxes. Mayors, in coordination with municipal councils, decide on the local budget and projects (Yerkes and Muasher, 2018). Council members contribute to the council's agenda, elect the mayor, and decide on the implementation of projects brought to the council through majority vote. Citizens and civil society engage with the council through the introductory and regular sessions, held at least four times a year, where they can make their demands and provide oversight for council activities. Furthermore, citizens and civil society can attend commissions and working groups on specific issues, such as cleaning, health, accounting, and family, to be able to further develop a working structure and shape the agenda of the council on specific issues.

As of 2019, there are 350 municipalities in Tunisia, spread across 24 governorates. 86 of these municipalities are new, meaning that they were formed in 2016. The municipalities rely on the national government for the provision of water, energy, and direct cash, whereas responsibilities such as transportation, garbage collection, slaughterhouses, lighting, and paving of local roads are provided by the municipalities (Turki and Verdeil, 2015). Other provisions, such as parks, government offices, stadiums, schools, malls, and hospitals are built through cooperation between different agencies, including mayors, governors, ministries, and participants from the private sector. Following the revolution, more resources have been allocated from the national to the local level, as the budgets of municipalities quadrupled (Turki and Verdeil, 2015, p:23). However, municipalities are still suffering from both lack of monetary and human resources, including the absence of competent administrative personnel and low levels of technical supervision (Al-Bawsala, 2019). In particular, the internal revenues for municipalities remain limited, as 60.3% of Tunisians do not pay municipal taxes and the municipalities are not able to coordinate with the local police to enforce payment, as all police forces respond to the Ministry of the Interior through gubernatorial, rather than municipal, channels (Al Bawsala, 2019). Other revenue sources, such as the Loan Fund, require majority approval for the projects from local councils with the condition of repayment,

which can be challenging to implement for many of the municipalities. Shortages in internal revenues and conflict within councils ensure the reliance of municipalities on the central government for finding resources to their projects.

The 2018 Code leaves it up to the local governance agencies to determine the structure of governance (Yerkes and Muasher, 2018) and citizens, as well as elected officials, often hesitate to take the cases of hierarchical governance at the local level to the Administration Court. Therefore, the mechanisms that can ensure an inclusive form of participation are weak, whereas the budgets available for municipalities, vis-à-vis the central government, remain substantively limited. These conditions can provide venues for clientele relations to persist (Crisis Group, 2019).

In the MENA region, political parties remain persistent elements within the political sphere, spanning different layers of democratic and autocratic rule (Storm, 2003). Clientelism and direct linkages serve as their primary functions, constituting a substantive determinant of citizens' political involvement (De Miguel et al., 2017). In Tunisia, the 2011 revolution precipitated the closure of the Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique or Democratic Constitutional Party (RCD), and the formation of the democratically elected Constituent Assembly in 2011 through competitive elections. After the implementation of the Constitution, the first elections for the Assembly of the Representatives of the People took place in 2014, with the Nidaa Tounes Party taking the first, and the Ennahda Party taking the second place. Nidaa Tounes is a regime successor party that attracted many bureaucrats of the Ben Ali regime (Gelvin, 2015). Ennahda is a conservative party with an Islamist background that was precluded from competition and suppressed under the authoritarian rule, yet maintained an underground party organization (Wolf, 2017). In authoritarian contexts within MENA, Islamist activism constitutes an important factor of identity construction at the local level (Singerman, 2004). Nidaa and Ennahda are organizations carry their own ideologies, such as Bourguibism⁷ or Islamism, as well as extensive network structures that enable partisans to relate to each other and offer privileges for party members (Strom and Cavatorta, 2018; Wolf, 2017; Wolf, 2018b; Zederman, 2015). Furthermore, initial estimates suggest that many bureaucrats from the

⁷ Bourguibism is an ideology often shared among the members of the regime successor parties in Tunisia, referring to a national narrative around Bourguiba as the founder of the nation (Zederman, 2015). Among its adherents, Bourguiba represents a leader marching his society towards independence, modernity and reformation, including advancing the rights of women (Zederman, 2016).

former regime retained their posts, and about 80% of candidates to local councils in 2018 were members of the former regime's RCD party (Klaas and Dirsus, 2014; Wolf, 2018). The current structure provides opportunities for mayors who had former regime ties or political organizations to utilize their networks to serve their constituencies.

I differentiate the current mayors and council members based on two sets of electoral lists: independents and partisans. Independents refer to council members who got elected to the local council without affiliation to a national party organization⁸. These individuals competed under party banners that were present either only in their own communities or only a few communities. Partisans refer to council members who competed through lists of parties with representation at the national level. Data collected by civil society organization Al-Bawsala indicates that mayors from Ennahda won 131 mayoral seats, Independents 127⁹, Nidaa 77, Jabha Sagabiyya 12, Democratic Current 3, and finally Afaq Tounes 2. A rough estimate suggests that 36.1% of the mayors belonged to parties without representation at the Legislative Assembly, while 63.9% of the mayors belong to parties with representation at the Legislative Assembly.

Nidaa Tounes has recently split into smaller Bourguibist-leaning parties, including Machrou Tounes, Tahya Tounes, Qalb Tounes, and Free Destourian Party. Some mayors also split into these new parties, whereas others remained within Nidaa (Al Bawsala, 2019). While these Bourguibist parties compete against each other in elections, they are willing to accommodate each other; the main cleavage remains between the Ennahda/Islamists and the Bourguibist parties (Grewal and Hamid, 2020; Nessma, 2020). In this environment, both shared ideological and network structures can serve as mechanisms for elected mayors and bureaucrats to build social capital to perpetuate their existing linkages. Partisan mayors can benefit from institutionalized party structures to further their projects more easily with the affiliated parliamentarians and bureaucrats. This can have

⁸ More formally, they are classified as mayors whose party did not participate in 2014 elections or had any seats in the parliament prior to the 2018 Municipal Elections.

⁹ The independent lists constitute one of the most substantive electoral groups elected through the 2018 Municipal Election. Sasmaz et al. (2018) indicates that independents mainly consist of three groups: Civic Lists: non-partisans or former partisans without party intervention, lists for dissents of major political parties, and "party lists in disguise": individuals belonging to political parties yet run as independents because of the gender quota allocated to municipalities.

implications for the type of projects that they implement and the inclusiveness and transparency of governance at the local level.

5. The Role of the Governor in Municipal Governance after 2018

This partial decentralization framework still affords a substantive level of influence for governors, who represent the Ministry of the Interior through constituting the head of governorates – subdivisions of the largest administrative units. The 11th chapter of the 2014 Directory published by the Ministry of the Interior indicates that “the Governor, under the authority of the Minister of Interior, undertakes the administration of public affairs of the governorate and supervises the public security” (Wizārat al-Dākhiliyyat, 2014, p:10). The 2018 Code identifies the rights and duties of governors pertaining to municipalities as objecting to the decisions of the Municipal Council to the Court of Administration (Clause 278)¹⁰ on issues such as referendum requests (Clause 32), tax collection (Clause 143) and perceived instances of personalismo (Clause 279). The governor can also take issues associated with contracts, budgets, and transactions undertaken at the municipal level to the Court of Auditors (Clause 108; Clause 163; Clause 174) and manage the budget of municipalities in the absence of a mayoral initiative (Clause 172; Clause 175). The governor can also oversee the voluntary dissolution of councils (Clause 204; Clause 209), assign representatives for license and permit distribution (Clause 258), ensure the execution of environmental policing (Clause 266), intervene in cases of mayoral neglect (Clause 268), and terminate councils engaged in unlawful activities (Clause 302). Indeed, governors opposing municipal decrees and the municipalities appealing against governors overwhelm the current working load of administrative courts (Crisis Group, 2019).

Representing the head of state, the governor is the president of the regional council, which is the collective organization within the governorate. Many of the resources are allocated to municipalities through these regional councils (Al-Bawsala, 2019)¹¹. The governor works in coordination with the

¹⁰ Clause 278 of the 2018 Code of Local Collectives indicates that the local council members and citizens can take issues up to the Administrative Court in instances where Municipal decisions undermine individual and public freedom.

¹¹ Al-Bawsala’s 2019 annual report outlines the current resource distribution structure from the central government down to the localities. In particular, 86% of the resources from central government are allocated in coordination with the local councils, whereas 14% is allocated in coordination with the regional councils chaired by the governor.

regional offices of the governorate, as well as the ministerial departments and national agencies (Crisis Group, 2019). This entitled position enables the governor to control the municipal police force and local ministry offices. As implementing any project requires cooperation from multiple ministries, this framework enables him/her to ease or restrict the works of municipalities (Kherigi, 2020). In fact, reasons for resignation among mayors include the lack of freedom, problems with the municipality police, and problems with the central government (Al-Bawsala, 2019). Currently, the chief of government and the Ministry of the Interior appoint the governors, often involving a process of bargaining and conflict among different political parties within the government (Okkez, 2015; Gobe, 2016). While the office of the governorate is supposed to be free from any partisan decision making, Clark et al. (2019) document how the political affiliation of governors played a substantive role in the construction of special delegations in local councils following the revolution. Many of the governors have backgrounds in the former regime (Crisis Group, 2019) however, the data that I collected indicates that some have current affiliations with Ennahda or the UGTT or are completely new in their position.

Resource allocation from the central government to municipalities takes place in a nine-year period, starting in 2018 and ending in 2027 with only 21% of the total resources transferred to the local level at the end of the period (Crisis Group, 2019). However, given the lack of political will within the central government and the fiscal deterioration facing Tunisia, this amount is likely to stagnate and even further deteriorate (Crisis Group, 2019). Although there is no official date set, the regional council elections are currently proposed to take place in 2020, until which time the governor continues to be the president of the regional council¹². As the head of regional councils, the governors cooperate with the appointed regional representatives of ministries to allocate resources for municipal-level projects. Many senior officials, including the governors, are reluctant to cede their authority to locally elected agencies, indicating that politicians favor the interest of their party over that of the state (Crisis Group, 2019).

The governor interviewed in this study defines his role as a “soldier” between the ministries and municipalities, as the position carries out the orders of the ministries for the municipalities.

¹² After the first elections Regional Councils will have both appointed and elected members where governors will be one of the appointed members.

However, governors maintain a certain level of jurisprudence in determining on the allocation of resources from ministries to municipalities. Three factors determine the allocation of resources to the municipalities, with the first factor being the number of people living within the municipalities, as more populous municipalities receive more resources. The second factor is the ability of municipalities to execute projects, which is determined by the success rate of the number of projects previously presented. However, the evaluation criteria is ad-hoc, and based upon the governor's personal evaluations, so may fluctuate from governorate to governorate. Furthermore, the conflicts within the municipalities that lead to the failure to obtain a majority to execute projects can cause the governor to rescind the budget. Lastly, there is positive discrimination against the small municipalities by providing them with more resources based on the belief that these municipalities are more deficient in their resources to be able to sustain themselves.

The existing mechanism presents two major venues for personal relations of mayors to acquire resources throughout the governorate for their municipalities. The first is through the role of governors as "soldiers" between the ministries and the local governments, as the partisanship relations of ministers make the resource distribution scheme vulnerable to partisan considerations. In fact, many elected officials and civil society activists refer to "triangulate relations" among the partisan mayors, partisan ministries, MPs, and the governor in describing how mayors develop their ties to provide services for their constituencies. Mayors often refer their concerns to MPs representing their political parties in districts, and MPs refer those issues to ministers who then execute projects through the engagement of governors. Secondly, as there is no formulaic scheme that mayors utilize in determining the 'efficiency' of municipalities, the personal considerations of governors can determine which municipalities obtain what amount of resources. These factors may contribute to a "clientele" exchange between governors and mayors¹³.

¹³ While a single definition of clientelism does not exist in the literature, Hicken (2011) identifies multiple factors that make a relationship between two agencies as clientele. The first is a close and personal relationship with a patron (Mainwaring, 1999), the second is reciprocity, that is delivery of a good or benefit by someone is a direct response to a reciprocal benefit from the receiver (Piattoni 2001, Robinson and Verdier 2013). In reciprocity, targeting always comes with strings attached (Hicken, 2011). The third is the presence of vertical relations between the agents engaged in a clientele exchange (Lande, 1977), and the fourth is the iteration of interaction (Hicken, 2011). The exchange between a bureaucrat and a mayor is in its nature distinct from an exchange between a voter and a politician. Among many differences, the most important one is the absence of a ballot box in structuring relations between the mayors and governors. This can have implications for the extent to which the relationship between mayors and governors may become dyadic, contingent, hierarchical and iterative. I discuss the extent to which relationship in the context of Tunisia may be clientele after presenting my findings.

6. Research Design

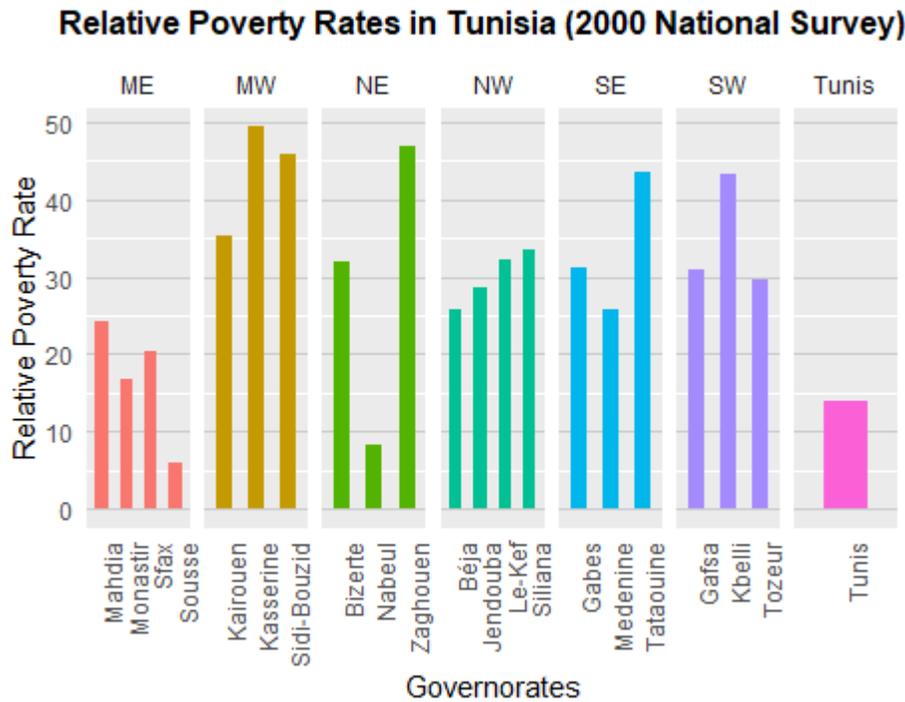
In evaluating the relations between mayors and governors, I rely on interview-based evidence, with interviews conducted among mayors and civil society and council members¹⁴. The data was collected through a three-stage sampling. At the first stage, I chose the geographical regions, in the second stage I chose the governorates within the regions, and in the third stage I chose the municipalities. There is a broad discrepancy in Tunisia between the levels of development among the regions along the coast versus the regions within the south and the interior (Sadiki, 2019). I therefore included regions with as diverse locations and levels of socio-economic development as possible, conducting interviews in Mid-East, Mid-West, North-West, South-East, and the Tunis Capital regions¹⁵. In that sense, my research design exploits Tunisia's high level of intra-country variation, addressing the levels of socio-economic development and orientations towards governance to nullify the effects of omitted variable bias (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994).

At the second stage, I chose governorates from within the regions. At this level I employ purposeful sampling that enables me to choose interviewees to outline specific mechanisms based on the theoretical framework (Masullo and Ocantos, 2019). Three factors motivated my choice for the governorates among regions. The first factor was my motivation to include a diverse set of governorates across different socio-economic levels within Tunisia. In that respect, I refer to the relative poverty rates in Tunisia, based on 2000 National Survey, as a proxy for the development figures prior to the revolution. The relative property rate accounts for the percentage of the population in a given region with under 50% of the mean income (Bibi et al, 2011), presented through the following graph:

¹⁴ On a few occasions, I was also able to interview the Secretary Generals (head of the administrative units).

¹⁵ I was not able to conduct interviews among South-West and North-East regions due to limited resources available.

Graph 1. Relative Poverty Rates in Tunisia (2000 National Survey)



I diversify the governorates based on their levels of development (Graph 1) by choosing from amongst mid, high, and low levels of development. The second factor is related to my ability to access to interviews. Due to my prior contacts with civil society organizations, I had greater access to municipalities within governorates that had denser populations, which led my sampling to be more heavily focused within governorates with higher population densities. The third factor is related to the theoretical framework proposed in the study, with an interest in diversifying the political background of mayors and governors.

The sampling method at the level of governorate and municipality, and a list of the people interviewed, can be found in the appendix. Overall, I interviewed 25 mayors, 20 council members, and 18 individuals active in civil societies in Tunis, Monastir, Gabes, Sfax, Ariana, Al Kef, and Kairouan governorates. The interview arenas covered 11.1% of all municipalities in Tunisia. Like any non-randomized selection process, my selection method presented potential biases to be considered. The first potential bias was related to accessibility. Due to resource constraints, I often lacked access to the regions the furthest away from the capital of the governorates (centre ville). The second potential bias was, due to the snowballing sampling effect, I had more access to mayors

with political parties. Hence, the independent mayors from municipalities furthest away from the centre ville are undersampled in this study.

I conducted the interviews between May and August 2019. The interview language was mostly Modern Standardized Arabic (Fusha), although in cases where the interviewees spoke English, or volunteer translators were available, the interviews were conducted in English, and in rare occasions in French. The interviews were semi-structured, and an open ended question was included at the end, asking interviewees if they would like to add anything else. Clark (2018b) indicates that, in the authoritarian states of the Middle East, most topics are sensitive and interviewers should therefore avoid using laptops or recording devices that could make the interviewees uncomfortable. I therefore only recorded responses in a notebook, and with the permission of interviewees. I then transcribed the notes to a computer. Some interviews were conducted in a group format or, having started in an individual format, turned into group interviews through the arrival of other individuals to the interview site, such as additional council members or local administrators. In order to protect the identity of the participants, I present the interview locations at the governorate level only. Furthermore, I redact the interview location of the governor in order to protect his/her identity.

In order to test Hypothesis 3, I utilize the Transparency Index¹⁶ for municipalities for 2019, as developed by Al-Bawsala – an internationally recognized civil society organization and anti-corruption watchdog in Tunisia (Yerkes and Muasher, 2017). The Index ranges from 0 to 100, with the maximum transparency score as 68%, the minimum as 0%, the mean as 25.4%, and median as 26.6%¹⁷. I merge the data of the municipality index with data that I collected on the political affiliation of governors who served in 2019 within the governorate for at least a six-month period. In particular, by examining newspaper archives, I code that a governor is affiliated with political movement or shares an ideology if he actively participated in a political organization prior to or

¹⁶ The ranking of municipalities based on their Transparency Score can be accessed here: <http://baladia.marsad.tn/transparence/>

¹⁷ The transparency score is constructed from multiple components. 70% of the score is based on whether the municipality respects the right to information. Of the 70%, 50% is allocated based on access to information: automatic publication to website and response to the information requests. 5% is allocated whether the responsible party for publishing information is published, 5% for whether annual access report is available, and 10% for publications on the Official Gazette of Local Communities. The remaining 30% of the score is based on the transparency of Municipal Governance, with 15% of that 30% allocated based on the internal system of municipalities, and the remaining 15% allocated for the open sessions.

after his appointment, served in cabinets or as chief of staff under ministers belonging to specific political movements, served in the former regime party (Democratic Constitutional Rally), was reported to favor a political organization by at least one major newspaper, was considered for ministerial positions by specific political parties, or served in any union organization. I was able to identify the affiliations of 11 out of 24 governors who served in 2019 for a period of at least 6 months, covering 174 out of 350 municipalities¹⁸. The Table 1 presents the information on affiliations of the governors with sources listed in the footnote:

¹⁸ I was not able to find information about the partisan affiliation for the remaining 13 governorates.

Table 1. Identified Ideological Affiliations of Governors

Governorate	Party/Ideology	Tie description
Ariana		
Beja	UGTT	High executive position in the UGTT prior to appointment ¹⁹
Ben Arous		
Bizerte		
El Kef	Nidaa/Bourguibist	Nominated by Qalb Tounes for the position of Interior Ministry ²⁰
Gabes	Ennahda	Former high position in Ennahda ²¹
Gafsa	Ennahda	Ennahda lobbied for his appointment to the National Guard ²²
Jandouba		
Kairouan	Tahya/Bourguibist	Resigned to run for Tahya Tounes ²³
Kasserine		
Kbili	Ennahda MP opposed	Appointment criticized by an Ennahda MP ²⁴
Mahdia		
Manouba	Bourguibist	Appointment in 2015 encouraged by Nabil Karoui from Nidaa Tounes ²⁵
Monastir	Nidaa/Bourguibist	Listed as belonging to Pre-Revolution Bourguibist Party in a newspaper and criticized for favoring Nidaa Tounes by the local office of Machrou Tunis ²⁶
Nabeul	Afaq/Ennahda	Served as the chief of staff under Ennahda-led Ministry of agriculture, also a previous candidate of Afaq Tunis ²⁷
Sfax	Bourguibist/Free Destour	Considered joining the Constitutional Movement (A Bourguibist Party) prior to his position as a minister ²⁸
Sidi Bouzid		
Siliana		
Sousse		
Tataouine		
Tozeur	Bourguibist/Machrou	In his CV listed as the founding member of the Machrou Tounes Party ²⁹
Tunis		
Zagouan	Ennahda	Listed as a member of Ennahda Shura Council and Ennahda Governance and Transparency committee ³⁰

¹⁹ Source: <http://archive.vn/msboI>

²⁰ Source: <http://archive.vn/QPQws>

²¹ Source: <http://archive.vn/ldvEc>

²² Source: <http://archive.vn/fevbi>

²³ <http://archive.vn/a15Fq>

²⁴ <http://archive.vn/ohXJ5>

²⁵ <http://archive.vn/GK8Sd>

²⁶ <http://archive.vn/BGjCn>

²⁷ <http://archive.vn/xU6Yu>

²⁸ <http://archive.vn/GK8Sd>

²⁹ <http://archive.vn/h5a4g>

³⁰ <http://archive.vn/YeQnZ>

Overall, I identify four governors with potential ties to Ennahda, seven with potential ties to Bourguibist movements, and one with ties to the UGTT (Tunisian General Labor Union). In the analysis, I only include municipalities where I can identify the political ties of governors. I merge the Transparency score with the political affiliation of the mayor elected in the 2018 Municipal Elections and the potential political ties of the appointed governors.

7. Discussion: Hierarchical Governance with the Central Government

I begin the discussion by providing an aggregate analysis of the responses to key interview questions pertaining to Hypotheses 1 and 2³¹. The full list of questions can be found in the appendix. The first value in Table 2 indicates the number of mayors and council members giving an affirmative response, whereas the second value indicates the number of mayors and council members who provide a negative response^{32,33}:

Table 2. Distribution of Responses to Key Questions

Position	Personal Relationship Important/Not	Mayor's Party Helps/Does not	Personal Relationship Good/Not Good	Served Prior to 2011
Mayors	15/4	12/3	11/6	3
Council Members	10/0	6/1	5/5	2
Total	25/4 (29)	18/4 (21)	15/11 (27)	5

Overall, 15 of the mayors and 10 of the Council Members interviewed indicate that the personal relations of the mayor with the central government are important for the municipality to be able to obtain resources, whereas only 4 mayors disagreed that personal relations are important. 12 of the

³¹ Questions: “Do you think that personal relations with the central government are important for obtaining resources?”, “Does your party help in establishing personal relations?”, “Are your personal relations good with the central government?”, “Is this the first time that you exercise an official role in state institutions?”

³² The mayors and council members who provided neither affirmative nor non-affirmative response, such as “My relationship is neither good nor bad” are excluded from the count. Some interviews that were cut short are also excluded.

³³ The question on party help was directed only to mayors/council members who got elected through a national political party list. In some rare occasions independent mayors indicated that their coalition party helps them, which were also included in the analysis.

mayors and 6 of the Council members indicated that the mayor's party helps in structuring relations with the central government, whereas 3 mayors and a council member disagreed. 11 mayors and 5 council members thought that the mayor's personal relations with the central government were good, whereas 6 mayors and 5 council members think that the relations were not good. It is important to note that only one of the mayors interviewed from the independent lists thought that their personal relations were good, whereas 4 of them thought that they weren't. Finally, 3 of the mayors and 2 of the council members interviewed served prior to 2011 on local councils.

The aggregate data indicates a consensus among mayors and council members that personal relations are important, and that the party of the mayor helps in structuring personal relations. Yet, a more substantive variation exists in their evaluations about whether the personal relations of mayors with the central government are good. In order to test Hypothesis 1, I first analyze the explanations for why personal relations matter, and how parties help to structure personal relations. Then I examine specific reasons for why personal relations are good or not good. In testing Hypothesis 2, I analyze the responses on personal relations for mayors and council members who served prior to 2011. Then I combine the responses of mayors and council members with responses of civil society and other council members to discuss the implications for participatory local governance.

Personal relations can help mayors and council members: find projects³⁴; expand services such as water provision³⁵; ease the relationship with the central government³⁶; help accelerate the process for implementation of projects³⁷, including within bureaucracy³⁸; and obtain exceptional funds³⁹. In that framework, party networks help mayors gain technical skills⁴⁰, establish linkages with MPs, ministers⁴¹, and governors⁴², and find investment opportunities⁴³. It is also possible that, when the mayor faces an obstacle in the implementation of a project, the council members reach out to the

³⁴ Interview in Gabes, 07/15/2019

³⁵ Interview in Kairouan, 05/23/2019

³⁶ Interview in Kef, 08/06/2019

³⁷ Interview in Sfax, 07/02/2019

³⁸ Interview in Sfax, 07/02/2019

³⁹ Interview in Sfax, 06/26/2019

⁴⁰ Interview in Gabes, 07/16/2019

⁴¹ Interview in Tunis, 08/19/2019, Interview in Kef, 08/06/2019

⁴² Interview in Gabes, 07/16/2019

⁴³ Interview in Sfax, 06/26/2019

MPs from their parties for assistance⁴⁴. An opposition council member in a municipality within Gabes where the mayor is from Ennahda indicates that the governor is close to Ennahda, so the municipality receives more investment than the other municipalities, but if the mayor was not from Ennahda, there would be no investment⁴⁵. Another opposition council member where the mayor is from Ennahda also indicates that the governor helps the municipality with a project of building a stadium due to party ties⁴⁶.

Some independent mayors think that they face additional obstacles when they try to reach the central government and governors, whereas partisan mayors can receive help for their projects more easily^{47 48}. A mayor from Monastir indicates that his independence entails both positive and negative dimensions⁴⁹. On the negative side, he lacks the attention derived from belonging to a governing party, whereas on the positive side he avoids a potential partisan clash with the central authorities. This brings the potentiality that partisan ties may not be useful under all conditions, as negative partisanship, conflict within parties, and conflict within organizational goals can make partisan affiliation a handicap, reducing its usefulness in accessing the central government resources, including from the governor.

The main tension between the central government and the municipalities occurs between pro-Ennahda and anti-Ennahda lines. An Ennahda mayor from Sfax indicates that the central government opposes municipalities in which mayors are from Ennahda⁵⁰. Another council member from a municipality where the mayor is from Ennahda indicated that the central government checks the rise of Islamists [Ennahda] by controlling their resources, as the mayors from Ennahda do not wish to collaborate with citizens⁵¹. An Ennahda mayor from Monastir indicated that the governor tried to help parties closer to him, and the procedures are easier for the mayors closer to the Bourguibist camp to reach the governor⁵². In a municipality in Kairouan where the mayor had just resigned, the secretary general indicated that the governor was declining the projects from their

⁴⁴ Interviews in Monastir, 07/30/2019 and 08/01/2019.

⁴⁵ Interview in Gabes, 07/16/2019

⁴⁶ Interview in Gabes, 07/15/2019

⁴⁷ Interview in Monastir, 07/29/2019.

⁴⁸ Interview in Kef, 06/08/2019.

⁴⁹ Interview in Monastir, 07/26/2019.

⁵⁰ Interview in Sfax, 07/02/2019.

⁵¹ Interview in Sfax, 07/03/2019.

⁵² Interview in Monastir, 07/26/2019.

municipality because of differences in political views between the governor and the mayor elected through Ennahda⁵³.

Yet, not all mayors and council members agree that party ties are important or hinder their ability to govern. A mayor from Sfax thought that his affiliation with Ennahda never constituted a problem in structuring his relationship with the central government⁵⁴. A council member from Nidaa, in a council led by an Ennahda-Nidaa coalition where the mayor is from Ennahda, indicated that the mayor had good relations with the governor, and the governor treated each municipality equally⁵⁵. On the conflict and factions within parties, a mayor elected from Nidaa in Monastir indicated that he was not able to utilize his party as a vehicle to establish personal ties with the central government due to the conflict within his party⁵⁶. Furthermore, some council members described conflicts between mayors and governors, not because of their party affiliation, but because of organizational interests as both offices attempted to maximize their sphere of influence⁵⁷. In Kef, a council member emphasized that conflict existed despite the similar ideological outlook between the governor and the mayor⁵⁸. Similarly, some municipalities described neglect, despite ideological congruence between mayors and governors. An Ennahda mayor from Gabes described the municipality as an “orphan municipality”, indicating that the support from the central government was low⁵⁹. The mayor thought that this might have been because the municipality as far from the capital of the governorate, and maybe it as deregulated due to pressure from different mayors.

The discussion above dealt with the first part of the Hypothesis 1, namely the “Political and ideological ties through the existing party networks serve as bonding mechanisms between the elected mayors and the appointed bureaucrats to establish social capital...” The evidence presented pointed out instances where political ties could help establish relations between governors and mayors. Some mayors indicated that their parties helped established ties with governors and ministers, whereas some mayors and council members indicate that mayors struggled with establishing good relations with governors because they belonged to opposing ideological camps.

⁵³ Interview in Kairouan, 05/24/2019.

⁵⁴ Interview in Sfax, 07/02/2019.

⁵⁵ Interview in Monastir, 07/25/2019.

⁵⁶ Interview in Monastir, 07/22/2019.

⁵⁷ Interview in Kef, 08/08/2019, Interview in Monastir, 07/19/2019.

⁵⁸ Interview in Kef, 08/08/2019

⁵⁹ Interview in Gabes, 07/09/2019.

Finally, some independent mayors posited that their municipalities received less attention from the governors and ministries due to their lack of political ties.

Yet, while partisanship substantively matters in structuring relations with the bureaucracy, it does not appear to be the only determining factor. “Hyper partisanship” does not appear to be the case, and governors are not necessarily hostile to all mayors not sharing their ideology. Furthermore, in some cases, governors may be responding to the behavior of mayors. For instance, in the municipality within Sfax where the mayor complained about hostility of the governor, Nidaa members had resigned en masse from the local council to protest mayor’s clientele ties. Hence, governors from an opposing ideological background may be stricter towards perceived clientele behavior of mayors, whereas co-partisan governors may be more tolerant of mayors disregarding councils and engaging in clientele distribution. The governor-mayor relations in Tunisia appear to be informed by additional considerations as well, including the size and budget of municipalities, differences in the interests of the governorates and municipalities, and local conditions such as party alliances.

At the next stage, I focus on the second part of Hypothesis 1, namely that established political and ideological ties between mayors and governors exclude other local stakeholders from the decision-making process. Independent mayors often emphasized their strength in bringing different stakeholders to the table through avoiding partisan conflict⁶⁰, a point also reflected in the observations of civil society and council members⁶¹. In contrast, some council and civil society members complained about the implications of partisan decision-making, leading to a lack of inclusive local governance in areas with partisan mayors. In Gabes, opposition council members and civil society members complained that mayors took decisions along party lines at the expense of other council members and independent civil society organizations. A council member, who indicated that the mayor received favorable treatment from the governor, went on to describe that the mayor prioritized his party’s support mechanism over council members, and council members from Ennahda distributed important commission seats among themselves⁶². As a result, some of the council members in that municipality applied to the Administrative Court to complain about

⁶⁰ Interview in Monastir, 07/28/2019 and Interview in Monastir, 07/29/2019.

⁶¹ Interview in Gabes, 07/11/2019 and interview in Monastir, 07/20/2019.

⁶² Interview in Gabes, 07/11/2019.

the partisan behavior of the mayor. A Civil Society Member active in Gabes indicated the conflict at the national level influenced conflict at the local level. Ennahda mayors made much of the decisions through internal party mechanisms that extended through the party's Shura Council, and the governor provided administrative help to mayors from Ennahda⁶³.

In Monastir, the main beneficiaries of network resources with the governor appeared to be the mayors affiliated with Nidaa. A Civil Society Member who was active in three adjacent municipalities where one mayor was from Nidaa, another one was from Ennahda and the final one was independent, described how the political ties enabled mayors to deliver specific services to municipalities, allowing them to disregard other stakeholders in local governance⁶⁴:

The central government gives more importance to the municipality from Nidaa compared to the other municipalities [in the region]. If the governor and the mayor are from the same party, they can have better relations. We asked for a delegation office in our municipality... The governorate chose to establish the delegation office here rather than the other regions due to the partisanship ties between the mayor and the governor and the strong civil society... In most of the municipalities [in Monastir] Nidaa governs by itself... There are conflicts between parties.... The mayor prioritizes party lines over civil society and provides resources to the civil societies which are closer to him... For the participatory budgets there is voting. For other things, such as deciding on roads, the mayor makes the decisions by himself.

As the quote indicates, the civil society member thought that the mayor's political ties enabled him to make local governance less inclusive for citizens and to potentially expand clientele benefits to his co-partisans. An opposition council member from another municipality in Monastir indicated that, because the mayor was from Ennahda, there as conflict between the governor and the mayor. Therefore, as a council member from a Bourguibist party he handled the municipal affairs with the governor by himself⁶⁵. He claimed that his Bourguibist connection enabled him to structure a relationship with the governor, who served as a linkage with the Ministry of Culture to build a culture center in the municipality. After finalizing the culture center, he will present his project to

⁶³ Interview in Gabes, 07/12/2019.

⁶⁴ Interview in Monastir, 07/30/2019.

⁶⁵ Interview in Sousse, 07/30/2019.

the council, and the council will approve it. Yet, the mayor was unaware of the project that he was developing with the governor.

Another detrimental outcome from the partisan decision-making for participatory governance is due to the responses of council members. Amid partisan bickering and political conflict at the local councils, some council members resign⁶⁶, whereas others apply to the Administrative Court to challenge the decisions taken by the mayor⁶⁷. Another strategy is to resist the mayor through utilizing the existing participatory mechanisms with the civil society and other council members⁶⁸. Opposition council members can also ally with the local administration in order to block the de jure power of the mayor⁶⁹, or they may choose to do nothing while letting the former hierarchical modes of governance to take over⁷⁰. Each of these acts can have ramifications for an inclusive local governance. For instance, doing nothing leads the dominant party to take control of the municipality at the expense of other stakeholders, whereas confrontation within formal sessions reduces citizen participation⁷¹ and derails the ability of municipality to implement projects⁷². Resigning from the local council can have a negative influence on service delivery, particularly if most council members resign, which obliges the council to hold a new election⁷³. Application to the Administrative Court can strain internal council relations⁷⁴ and allying with local administration can increase the confusion about the responsibilities of different units.

Next, I analyze whether serving under the prior regime generates enough social capital for mayors and other local stakeholders to exclude other local participants from the decision-making process (Hypothesis 2). As a follow-up question to those mayors who served prior to 2011, I asked whether their prior experience helped establish personal relations. A mayor from Monastir indicated that his experience helped him maintain a working relationship with the Loan Fund while not mentioning Ministers or the Governor⁷⁵. A mayor in Gabes, who served as a council member prior to 2011,

⁶⁶ Interview in Tunis, 08/16/2019.

⁶⁷ Interview in Gabes, 07/17/2019.

⁶⁸ Interview in Monastir, 07/30/2019.

⁶⁹ Interview in Gabes, 07/10/2019.

⁷⁰ Interview in Gabes, 07/09/2019.

⁷¹ Interview in Gabes, 07/08/2019 and Interview in Sfax, 07/01/2019.

⁷² Interview in Kef, 08/06/2019.

⁷³ The 2018 The Code of Local Collectives, Article 205.

⁷⁴ Interview in Sfax, 07/01/2019.

⁷⁵ Interview in Monastir, 07/22/2019.

indicated that his experience did not help in current relations, because Tunisia has changed a lot since then. However, he indicated that his party [Ennahda] helped establish relationships because it is a governing party⁷⁶. Another mayor from Gabes, who served in the period between 1995 and 2010 as a vice-president, also indicated the role of his party [Ennahda] in establishing relations with the central government rather than his personal relations acquired under the prior regime⁷⁷. An opposition council member from his municipality also indicated that the mayor's party, rather than his personal experience, generated hierarchical relations with the central government⁷⁸. The two council members who served prior to 2011 did not assess any benefits pertaining to greater access to ministers and governors for themselves⁷⁹. In fact, one of them complained about how local governance was better prior to the revolution as there was a smooth distribution of funds from the central government without partisan conflict paralyzing the system⁸¹. I am, therefore, unable to find enough evidence to support Hypothesis 2 at this stage, yet it is important to note the low sample size (n=5) of mayors and council members who served in local governance prior to 2011.

Finally, I test the third hypothesis on a Transparency Index developed by Al-Bawsala, discussed at length under the Research Design section. The following graph presents the transparency score for the top two political parties, along with the other parties classified as Left/Liberal⁸² and the independents:

⁷⁶ Interview in Gabes, 07/17/2019.

⁷⁷ Interview in Gabes, 07/16/2019.

⁷⁸ Interview in Gabes, 07/16/2019.

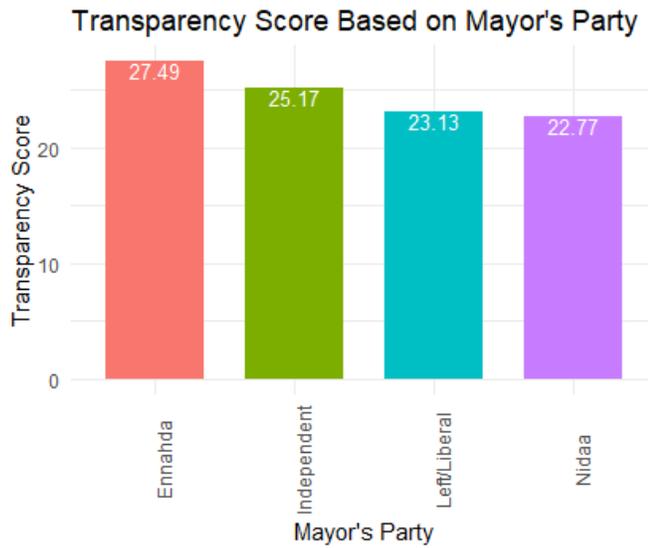
⁷⁹ Interview in Le Kef, 08/09/2019.

⁸⁰ Interview in Kairouan, 05/23/2019.

⁸¹ Interview in Kairouan, 05/23/2019.

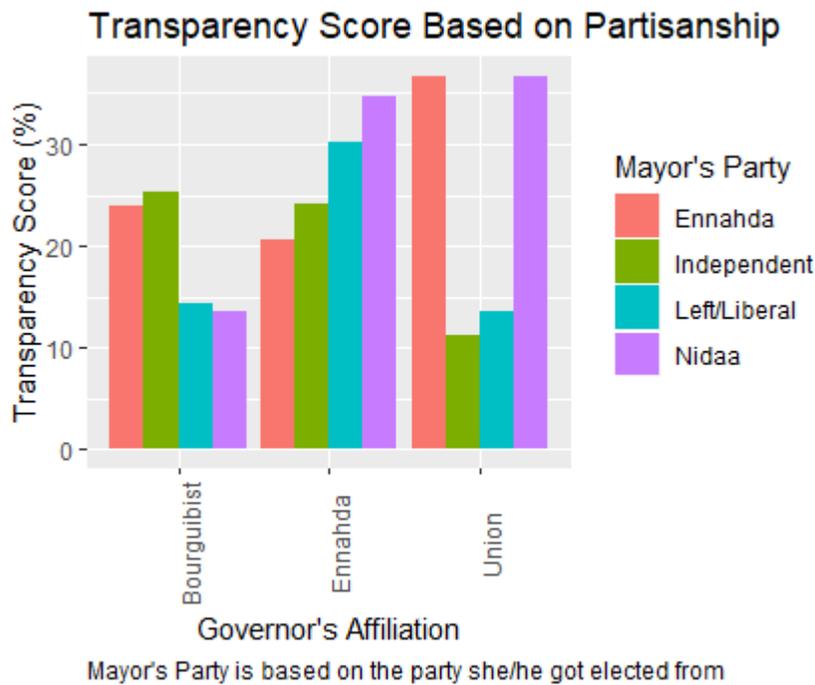
⁸² Including Jabha Sagabiyya, Democratic Current and Afaq Tunis.

Graph 2. Transparency Score by Party



As Graph 2 indicates, the transparency scores of municipalities with independent mayors is 25.2%, mayors from left and liberal parties is 23.1%, and the regime successor, Nidaa, is 23.1%. The transparency score for Ennahda is slightly higher than the transparency scores of the other three groups at 27.5%. Graph 3 further breaks down the transparency scores by Governor's Affiliation:

Graph 3. Transparency Score Distributed among Governor's Affiliation and Mayor's Party



As illustrated in Graph 3, the transparency score of municipalities exhibits a substantive level of variation based on the affiliation of the governors. Among governors classified as Bourguibist, based on Table 1, the Transparency Score for mayors elected from the Ennahda list is 24.0%, independent lists is 25.3%, left/liberal party lists is 14.3%, and from the Nidaa list is 13.5%, which is the lowest among the group.

Among governors with Ennahda backgrounds, the transparency score for mayors elected through the Ennahda list is 20.6%, independent lists is 24.1%, left/liberal party lists is 30.2%, and the Nidaa list is 34.7%. Finally, in the governorate where the governor had a background in UGTT (Beja), mayors elected through Ennahda lists have a Transparency Score of 36.6%, mayors elected through Nidaa lists have a transparency Score of 36.7%, whereas mayors from the leftist Popular Front have a 13.5%⁸³ Transparency Score, and the Transparency Score among the mayors elected through the independent lists 11.2%.

I employ a mixed effect model in conducting an analysis on the transparency score, which assumes that observations within a level, the random variable groups, are correlated. In this case, the random variable is at the governorate level. I conduct a “Match Scale” which takes the value of 1 if an ideological congruence exists between the political orientation of the Governor, identified through his/her political activism, and the political party affiliation of mayor (Bourguibist-Bourguibist, Ennahda-Ennahda, Union Background-Leftist). The Match scale takes the value of 0 if the mayor is from an independent list, and -1 if a negative ideological congruence exists between the political orientations of the mayor and the governor, such as the mayor is close to Ennahda and the governor is closer to Bourguibist parties or vice versa⁸⁴. I develop two models to test the hypothesis. The first model, named Type 1, includes all governors with potential ties that I identified in Table 1. The second model, named Type 2, includes governors with strongly identified ties⁸⁵:

⁸³ No liberal party was able to win a mayoral post in Beja, whereas Jabha Sagabiyya [Popular Front], a leftist party, holds two of the mayoral posts.

⁸⁴ In one instance (Kbili) the governor’s appointment was criticized by an Ennahda MP. In that instance, I simply coded -1 for that governor’s association with Ennahda, and 0 for the other parties. In another instance, the governor of Beja comes from a unionist (UGTT) background. Since the UGTT has traditionally had negative relations with Ennahda, I code -1 for municipalities in Beja, the leftist party Popular Current as 1, and all the rest as 0.

⁸⁵ I exclude the municipalities from Kbili, where the only partisan evidence is governor’s appointment being criticized by an Ennahda parliamentarian, Nabeul since the governor was a candidate for Afaq Tounes and served only as a Chief of Staff for an Ennahda minister, and Beja as the only affiliation is being a former executive of the UGTT.

Table 3. Statistical Models

Dependent variable:		
Transparency		
	Type 1	Type 2
Match Scale	-5.905*** (1.970)	-6.528*** (2.295)
Constant	21.534*** (2.016)	21.465*** (2.417)
Observations	174	125
Log Likelihood	-752.828	-537.727
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,513.657	1,083.454
Bayesian Crit.	1,526.293	1,094.767

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The results suggest a statistically significant and negative relationship between the transparency score of municipalities and the ideological affiliation between the mayors and governors, indicating that for each shift in partisanship from [-1,1] the transparency score decreases by about 5.9 percentage points. It also suggests that this relationship is statistically significant at p-value=0.05, indicating that partisanship between the appointed governors and elected mayors can generate ramifications for transparency. The results are also robust in the Type 2 model; with a coefficient value of -6.5, the Match Scale is statistically significant at p=0.01.

8. Conclusion

This research illuminates the relationships between the bureaucratic and locally-elected units following the implementation of the decentralization law in Tunisia. The findings indicate that the partisanship ties constitute formidable venues through which elected mayors establish networks of relations with appointed bureaucrats, in order to decrease their reliance on the horizontal forms of social capital at the municipal level. These networks operate in an environment of high reliance on the central government due to constraints on municipal resources, as well as high transaction costs between the central government and local agencies. A statistical analysis of the Transparency Score indicates that partisan networks have ramifications for transparent forms of governance; if the mayors and the governors belong to the same ideological family, the local governance structure tends to become less transparent. The qualitative data collected also supports this dynamic: governors appear to be more tolerant or even helpful to co-partisan mayors' hierarchical rule, as opposed to mayors from an opposing ideological background.

The relationships between mayors and the central government established under the authoritarian rule does not seem to generate sufficient levels of social capital for mayors to be able to utilize their personal relations to handle municipal affairs, therefore preventing a reversion to the hierarchical structure. This could be because the political capital derived from the prior regime is built upon weak foundations of generating working relations rather than voluntary networks based on a sense of a shared ideology and destiny. However, the low sample size of mayors and council members in this study who served prior to 2011 is a cause for caution in making definitive conclusions. I plan to collect more data on mayors and council members who served under the prior regime in my upcoming fieldwork.

It is also important to briefly discuss whether the hierarchical relationships between governors and mayors resemble a clientele relationship in a democratizing Tunisia. As discussed earlier, four factors that make a relationship clientele are the presence of dyads, contingency, hierarchy, and iteration (Hicken, 2011). The relationship with governors resembles a close and personal dynamic. However, reciprocity may not be applicable in defining it, as the alliance is based upon a shared ideology, and the mayors are neither obliged, nor have much of the means, to reciprocate the priority afforded by the governors. Yet, the relationship may evolve in the future, particularly with

the elections to regional councils, as the alliance between governors and mayors may become crucial for governors to retain their power in a setting where the council president is chosen by an internal election. The interaction between mayors and governors is iterative to the extent that they engage in repeated actions to discuss local governing issues. In that framework, the exchange appears more one-sided, with some mayors and council members receiving priority in resources in exchange for ideological loyalty shared with the governors. While it is possible to conceptualize loyalty as an iterative process, it is important to note that the political success of governors may not be as salient today as it would be following the elections to the regional councils. As the governor interviewed in the study indicates: “The governor does not need the municipalities, but the municipalities need the governor.” To summarize, while the dyadic and contingent nature of the relationship resembles a clientele dynamic, it lacks reciprocity based on repeated interactions, leaving out some major components of clientelism. Yet, the reciprocity and iterative nature of interactions may become more salient following the elections to new regional councils.

The regional council elections will be partisan in their nature, with political parties wielding their resources for electoral advantage. As a result, the structure of the decision-making may reflect upon the existing partisan cleavages, and decisions may reflect partisan interests. Furthermore, the office of governorship will continue to hold substantial levels of power due to its role as an intermediary between ministries and municipalities. As the governors continue to be appointed by the cabinets, the partisanship considerations may continue to reflect their appointments and subsequent decisions on the allocation of resources. Hence, the regional council elections may inadvertently strengthen the clientele ties, creating new winners and losers at the local level from the outcome of this process.

My findings support the literature, suggesting that the appointment of bureaucrats based on partisanship loyalty incentivizes them to support their co-partisan office holders (Dahlstorm and Lapuente, 2017). It is possible that the short term improvements in efficiency through partisanship networks can generate greater transaction costs in the long term, as the appointment of bureaucrats and the election of mayors come to depend on the maintenance and expansion of hierarchical networks at the expense of horizontal, consensus-based resource management. As a result, the framework of local governance can develop a permanent loophole of high transaction costs and inefficient local governance management. Moving forward, de-politicizing the appointment

procedure for bureaucrats in Tunisia might be a feasible strategy to improve the oversight and distribution of resources to the municipalities. This can generate a two-way monitoring process by separate career structures, which may be more successful at bringing about an inclusive governance structure (Dahlstorm and Lapuente, 2017 p: 187). However, this reformation also carries the risk of simply increasing the transaction costs for partisan mayors, as governors may further lose incentives to engage with the municipalities.

Appendix

Research Design Continued

From the Middle East region, I chose the governorates of Monastir and Sfax. The reason for choosing these two governorates among the four was twofold. The first was to increase the number of mayors with backgrounds in Nidaa Tounes, a regime-successor party with a high concentration of former officials. Monastir is the birth town of Bourguiba, the first president of Tunisia, and constituted the center of recruitment for Tunisia's new elite under the First Republic, establishing the regime's "historic stronghold" and "backbone" (Buehler and Ayali, 2018; Cammett, 2007, p:57; Entelis, 1980, p:171). As it was Bourguiba's birthplace, the Monastir governorate received the bulwark of investment during his reign. As identified by Sasmaz et al (2018), many of the former RCD members made comebacks to the political scene through the Niddaa lists. In the aftermath of 2018 elections, Monastir constituted the governorate where the regime successor party, Nidaa Tounes, became most successful relative to its performance in other governorates, earning 35.48% of the mayoral posts in the governorate. Focusing on Monastir, therefore, increased my propensity to interview mayors with a background in the prior regime. Moreover, the governor of Monastir came from a Bourguibist background, enabling me to investigate potential ties with Bourguibist political agencies. In Sfax the governor came from a Bourguibist background, but Ennahda and the independents combined hold 20 of the 23 mayoral positions. Therefore, choosing the governorates of Monastir and Sfax from the Middle East region enabled me to compare the mechanisms of governance among similar cases with one major distinction: in Sfax, the majority of mayors did not belong to the same political/ideological line as the governor, while in Monastir a substantive portion of the mayors did.

From the South-East region, I chose the governorate of Gabes, because Gabes presented a case where the majority of mayors and the governor had ties to Ennahda. In particular, 11 of the 16 mayoral posts belonged to Ennahda in Gabes, with independents holding the rest of the posts. Moreover, the governor was a member of the Ennahda Shura Council prior to his appointment to the position of the governorate.

In addition to these three governorates, I conducted field research within the governorates of El-Kef, Kairouan, Tunis, and Ariana. In both El-Kef and Kairouan, governors had backgrounds in Bourguibist organizations, and the mayors came from a diverse group of political parties.

I relied on multiple mechanisms to sample at the municipal level. First, I used direct outreach by visiting municipalities without prior contact and asking the elected officials present if they would like to participate in my study. In that matter, I attempted to find the most similar cases by limiting the only variable to that of theoretical interest. I interviewed the mayor if they agreed to take part in the study. In some cases, the mayor was not present or available during the time frame, so I interviewed the available council members. Another method used was snowball sampling through my personal contacts, particularly from the civil society organization of Al-Bawsala, which focuses on transparency in local governance, in order to establish contacts with the civil society members who engage in observing the local governance structures. After establishing my contacts, Al-Bawsala volunteers often provided me with contact information for mayors. I employed further snowball sampling by asking interviewed subjects if they could provide contact information for potential subjects. In addition, I tried to oversample the new municipalities as, in the early stages of my research, I discovered that these municipalities often face additional resource challenges, presenting further complications for the relationships between the central government and municipalities. The following table presents: the list of municipalities visited; their population; municipality type (new or old); and the people interviewed, with “M” standing for “Mayor”, “C” standing for “Council Member”, and “CSO” standing for “Civil Society Organization”.

Table 4. The List of Interviewees

Governorate	Municipality	Population	Type	People Interviewed
Tunis	Kram	74132	Old	1 M, 1 CSO
Tunis	Bardo	71961	Old	1 CSO
Tunis	Ariana	114486	Old	1 C
Tunis	Tunis	637568	Old	1 CSO
Sfax	Hench	32247	Old	1 M
Sfax	Chiha	27268	Old	1 M, 1 CSO
Sfax	Gremda	40862	Old	1 M, 1 CSO
Sfax	Hajeb	19455	New	2 C
Sfax	Sakiet Eddaier	44511	Old	1 M, 1 CSO
Sfax	Awebed Khazanet	34944	New	1 M
Sfax	Nasr	16976	New	1 M, 2 CSO
Sfax	Sakiet Ezzit	60244	Old	1 M, 1 C
Sfax	Sfax	280566	Old	1 M, 1 C, 1CSO
Gabes	Bouchemma	12182	New	1 M, 1 CSO
Gabes	Chenini Nahal	19586	Old	1 M
Gabes	Gabes	99426	Old	1 M, 1 CSO
Gabes	Ghannouch	28051	Old	1 M
Gabes	Katana	13310	New	1 M
Gabes	Mareth	30410	Old	1 M, 1 CSO, 1 C
Gabes	Metouia	12507	Old	1 C
Gabes	Habib Thamer Bou Atouch	19320	New	1 CSO
Gabes	Tbelbou	21727	New	1 M, 2 C, 1 CSO
Gabes	Oudref	9058	Old	2 C, 1 CSO
Kairouan	Kairouan	165761	Old	1 C, 2CSO
Kairouan	Sbikha	40206	Old	1 C
Kairouan	Bouhajla	47615	Old	1 C
El Kef	Bohra	6168	New	1 M
El Kef	Kef	60876	Old	1 C
El Kef	Kala Sinan	15621	Old	1 M
El Kef	Marja	5472	New	1 M
Monastir	Manzil Kamil	8432	Old	2C
Monastir	Manzil Farsiy	3603	Old	1 M
Monastir	Jammal	50275	Old	1 M, 1 CSO
Monastir	Ben Hassan	8801	Old	1 M
Monastir	Amiet Hojjaj	8121	Old	1 M , 1 C, 1 CSO
Monastir	Amiet Touazra	6261	Old	1 M
Monastir	Amiret El Fhoul	5255	Old	1 C
Monastir	Teboulba	37485	Old	1 C
Monastir	Ksar Hellal	49376	Old	1 M
			Total	64

Interview Questionnaire:

Questions for mayors and municipal council members:

1- How long have you been serving the local community?

2- Why did you decide to join the local / municipal community?

3- Is this the first time that you exercise an official role in state institutions?

- Before or after the revolution?

4- Do you think that the constitution and the the Code of Local Collectives have helped Tunisia to move to a more inclusive form of government for all? Why not?

5- What is the role of citizens in local government in your area?

6- What are the main projects in your municipality?

What are the main problems in your municipality?

7- Do you think that personal relations with the central government are important for obtaining resources?

- Does your party help in establishing personal relations?
- Does your past experience help in establishing personal relations?
- Are your personal relations good with the central government?

8- What do your constituents usually ask of local government?

9- Many projects require resources from the central government. Do you think that focusing resources on the central level affects your performance in municipal service? Do you think that the centralization of resources hinders the participatory mechanisms of local governance? Why and why not?

10- Do you think that there are conflicts between the parties in your municipal council?

11- Do you think that the administration affects the decisions of the municipality?

12- Do you think that civil society is strong in your area?

13- Statistics indicate that the participation rate of Tunisians in local government is low. Why do you think?

14- What do you think your municipality can do to increase the effective participation of citizens in local government?

15- Do you have any additional comments?

Questions addressed to members of the municipal council

1- How long have you been serving the local community?

2- Why did you decide to join the local / municipal community?

3- Is this the first time that you exercise an official role in state institutions?

- Before or after the revolution?

4- Do you think that the constitution and the municipal law (the Code of Local Communities) have helped Tunisia to move to a more inclusive form of government for all? Why not?

5- Do you think that participatory democracy mechanisms are in your municipality?

6- What is the role of citizens in local government in your area?

7- What are the main projects in your municipality?

8- Do you think that the decision-making process in your area is done in an all-inclusive way?

9- Do you think that personal relations with the central government are important for obtaining resources?

- Does mayor's/your party help in establishing personal relations?
- Does mayor's/your party help in establishing personal relations?
- Are your/mayor's personal relations good with the central government?

10- Do you think that the mayor takes decisions alone or after consulting the municipal council and citizens?

Why?

11- Do you think that there are conflicts between the parties in your municipal council?

- Are decisions made based on partisan alliances? What are the most prominent party alliances?

12- Do you think that the lack of transparency and corruption are problems in your area?

13-Do you think that the administration affects the municipal decisions?

14-Do you think that services in your area are given on the basis of party loyalty? If so, Why do they act on the basis of their party affiliation?

15-Do you think that your municipality's budget is sufficient to meet the needs of the region?

16-Do you think civil society is strong in your area?

17. The statistics indicate that the participation rate of Tunisians in local government is low. Why do you think?

18- What do you think your municipality can do to increase the effective participation of citizens in local government?

19- In your opinion, what determines the size of the budgets distributed to the municipalities? Do you think the mayor's personal relationships are a factor in determining the size of the budget?

20- Do you have any additional comments?

Questions addressed to civil society organizations

1- How long have you been active in civil society?

2- What are the goals of your organization in general?

3 - What are the main goals of your organization regarding local governance?

4 - What kind of methods do you use to achieve your primary goals?

5- Why do you think that the participation rate in local government is low in Tunisia and low or high in your region?

6- Do you think that the decision-making process in your area is done in an all-inclusive way? Why and why not?

- What do you think civil society organizations and citizens can do to obtain a more effective form of local government?
- What do you think municipal councils and mayors can do to increase citizen participation in local government?

7- Do you think that the constitution and the municipal law (Local Communities Magazine) have helped Tunisia to move to a more inclusive form of government for all? Why not?

8- What is the role of citizens in local government in your area?

9 - What are the main projects in your municipality?

10- Do you think the relationship between the mayor and the central government is good? Why?

11- Do you think that the relationship between the mayor and the central government helps the president in obtaining resources?

12-Do you think that the mayor takes decisions alone or after consulting with the municipal council and the citizens? Why?

13- Do you think that there are conflicts between the parties in your municipal council?

14- Are decisions made based on partisan alliances? What are the most prominent party alliances?

15-Do you think that the lack of transparency and corruption are problems in your area?

16- Do you think that the administration affects the municipal decisions?

17-Do you think that services in your area are provided on the basis of party loyalty? Why do they act on the basis of their party affiliation?

18-Do you think that your municipality's budget is sufficient to meet the needs of the region?

19-In your opinion, what determines the size of the budgets distributed to the municipalities? Do you think the mayor's personal relationships are a factor in determining the size of the budget?

20- Do you have any additional comments?

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