

Regionalism in New Democracies: Sub-National Variation in Tunisia’s 2014 Parliamentary Elections*

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Abstract

Under what conditions, and by what mechanisms, do voters’ experiences of the “old regime” impact electoral politics in new democracies? Like many post-colonial authoritarian regimes, Tunisia’s history of economic and political development is a story of severely uneven geopolitical incorporation into the state. In the contemporary period, region therefore stands as a proxy for divergent *social contract legacies*, conceptualized as longstanding “pacts” between regime and society defining the benefits and boundaries of citizenship in material, ideational, and coercive terms. We argue that subnational – i.e. regional – variation in state-society relations under authoritarianism will have long-term impacts on political competition after regime change; specifically, we argue that these legacies shape 1) regional voting returns, b) the attitudes and preferences of voters in key policy areas, and c) the salience of these preferences as determinants of vote choice. We develop a qualitative historical framework for regionalism in the case of Tunisia, generating a set of expectations about regional variation in effect and significance of preferences as predictors of vote choice. We then analyze electoral returns from the October 2014 legislative election and an original survey of Tunisian voters in five geopolitically diverse regions conducted at polling stations on the day of these elections. We find that region conditions the relationship between preferences and vote choice in a manner consistent with our historical framework – particularly with regards to preferences over lustration, or the desire to ban former regime figures from political participation. Regionalism thus stands as one channel through which authoritarian legacies of state-society relations impact electoral contestation in newly democratizing states.

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1 Introduction

How do histories of state-society relations under authoritarianism impact electoral contestation in newly democratizing states? Under what conditions, and by what mechanisms, do voters' opinions and experiences of the "old regime" become significant determinants of vote choice in early democratic elections? A compelling literature in comparative politics has demonstrated the path-dependent effects of authoritarian policies and institutions on the political systems of new democracies (Collier and Collier 1991; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2011). Many of these investigations have leveraged cross-national research designs in order to assess the impact of national political histories on the dynamics of political competition after regime change. Yet cross-national research designs tend to overlook within-country variation in these historical experiences – namely, the ways in which state-society relations under authoritarianism are constructed unevenly throughout national territory (Herbst 2000; Migdal 1988; O'Donnell 1993). In turn, they often neglect to account for how longstanding patterns of regional favoritism and marginalization may shape the preferences and choices of voters within countries at the sub-national level.

Leveraging an original survey of Tunisian voters in five geopolitically diverse regions conducted during the country's October 2014 legislative elections, this paper builds on existing literature to investigate the role of regionalism in shaping electoral politics in Tunisia's new democracy. Tunisia's post-colonial history is a story of severely uneven geopolitical incorporation into the state. Region therefore stands as a proxy for divergent social contract legacies with the power to shape three central components of political systems: 1) regional voting returns, b) the attitudes and preferences of voters in key policy areas, and c) the salience of these preferences as determinants of vote choice. In the latter category, we argue specifically that the effect of preferences over lustration – a term borrowed from transitioning post-communist democracies, and used here to refer to preferences regarding banning individuals associated with former ruling party the Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD) from standing for office – on vote choice will vary significantly from region to region based on previous social contract legacy relationships between regions and the central Tunisian state.

In this paper, we build a theory of social contract legacies and their importance in understanding electoral dynamics in new democracies, arguing for why these need to be understood at a sub-national level. We develop a qualitative historical framework for understanding legacies of regionalism in Tunisia under successive authoritarian regimes, analyzing these trajectories in light of the current party system in order to explain electoral outcomes and determinants of vote choice and to generate a set of testable hypotheses regarding sub-

national variation in determinants of vote choice in 2014. We then move to an empirical analysis of the exit survey data, in which we demonstrate that preferences over lustration are an important determinant of vote choice among Tunisian voters. Lustration preferences are rendered politically salient in the 2014 election elections by the presence of “old regime” members (in the form of the Nidaa Tounes party) among vote options during this electoral contest. In our analyses, we investigate a series of interactive sub-group effects to understand variation in lustration preferences. While we find that possible alternative hypotheses including social class, cohort effects, human capital, and employment sector measures exert little influence over the effect sizes and significance of these vote-determining preferences, region emerges as an important sub-group variable and accounts for significant variation in the effect and significance of the preferences on vote choice, most significantly so for lustration preferences. We conclude with a discussion and the implications of our study for future research on social contract legacies.

2 The Importance of Region in Politics

In this section, we build on previous theoretical and empirical work to develop theory about the origins of regionalism under authoritarianism and its impact on elections in transitioning democracies. We conceptualize social contracts as longstanding “pacts” between regime and society that define the benefits and boundaries of citizenship in material, ideational, and coercive terms. Pacts grounded in the state-building processes of authoritarian regimes structure long-standing relationships between sub-national communities and the central state; when state-building plans take on a regional dimension, as in the case of Tunisia, they can render region as a politically salient sub-national group for years to come. Regional social contract legacies thus become one important channel through which authoritarian legacies shape transitional politics, influencing early elections via their impact on the preferences and expectations of voters vis-a-vis the central state and the party system.

First, why are regional disparities in governance and state-society relations often so pronounced in post-colonial authoritarian states such as Tunisia? Post-colonial regimes gaining independence from strong colonial powers often lacked the capacity to effectively project state power throughout national territory, which affected their ability to incorporate residents equally and at the same time into the fold of national citizenship (Migdal 1988).¹

¹This dilemma proved to be particularly acute in new states whose borders have been drawn artificially, in which the nascent regime is tasked with incorporating new regions and populations with little pre-existing connection to the central authority.

State-building regimes with limited resources must choose when and where to invest, and early decisions pertaining to the endowment of certain geographic areas with social, material, and infrastructural resources exert strong path-dependent effects on later-day patterns of regional development (Herbst 2000). Exogenous geographical sources of regional variation, such as the presence of natural harbors or mineral resources, interact with the intentions of centralized development strategies. For example, states embracing a growth strategy of export promotion may favor coastal areas prime for trade because of their utility in the export business (Richards and Waterbury 2007). Importantly, some aspects of governance and development under authoritarianism may be more nationally coherent while others are more geographically concentrated; policies belonging to the former category may be easier to implement over diverse territory or else may be viewed as a greater source of strength for the regime.

Variation in development strategies is also significantly determined by elite political motivations, or quickly becomes so. Authoritarian regimes utilize various forms of regional corporatism as a long-term survival strategy of political control, investing and cultivating favor in politically important regions while ignoring and repressing others (Bates 1974; Kramon and Posner 2013).² Regime leaders often engage in explicit forms of regional favoritism and reward home areas through an uneven distribution of development resources including policies such as biased taxation and redistribution (Kasara 2007), asymmetric public goods provision (Kramon and Posner 2013; Burgess, Jedwab, Miguel, Morjaria and Miquel 2013), and public employment schemes or state-run enterprises concentrated in certain areas (Schleifer and Vishny 1994). Hodler and Raschky (2014) provide significant cross-national empirical evidence of this phenomenon through an analysis of satellite data from 126 countries over 17 years, finding that that sub-national regions have more intense nighttime light (implying higher levels of development) when the current political leader has been born in that region.

The empirical regularity of uneven development at the sub-national level begs a second question: how do long-term patterns of regional favoritism and marginalization shape the dispositions and electoral behaviors of citizens, even after regime transition? When are legacies of social contracts relevant, and to whom are they salient? O'Donnell (1993) develops the concept of geographic “brown areas,” where state power is not projected strongly, and where “components of publicness and citizenship fade away at the frontiers of various

²Though we are primarily interested here in studies of authoritarian regimes, work by Ferejohn (1974) and Goss (1972) demonstrates this also occurs in well-established democracies.

regions.” The concept of “brown areas,” while disgusting, suggests a linkage between geospatial patterns of under-investment and differential experiences of citizenship and the social contract. Specific modes of marginalization, punishment, and reward visited on sub-national regions should produce specific forms of the social contract and, thus, specific convictions of the population vis-a-vis the state and its policies. The common practice of expropriating the resources of agricultural regions in order to redistribute wealth in urban areas to avert protest (Bates 1974), for example, signifies an extractive and likely repressive paradigm of state-society relations in rural areas, compared with a more provisional and somewhat representational social contract enacted in urban regions. Rural citizens under such policies will likely come to disfavor the principle of state intervention in the economy, as in practice these policies have led to loss of resources.

While states are certainly able to cultivate other constituencies that may be cross-cutting with respect to region – social class, for example, or a certain religious sect – it is often easier for states to concentrate major resources regionally than according to any other social logic, particularly those post-colonial states with low capacity and limited resources. Likewise, episodes of repression visited upon a particular community are likely to impact neighbors, local businesses, and other local figures and institutions, no matter the original social logic of the attack, in an important way. Region thus comes to stand as a proxy for divergent long-term experiences of state and regime. Moreover, trajectories of state favoritism and popular alienation are likely to prove mutually reinforcing over time, as regions once alienated from the sphere of state power will lack access to the important discretionary channels of influence through which to make future claims. These long-term and long-standing relationships between citizen and state are the stuff of which cleavages are made (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). The notion of experiences under authoritarianism shaping the long-term opinion profiles of citizens resonates with findings from the post-Soviet literature, including a number of studies of how national experiences of Communist rule shaped the ideological leanings of voters in new democracies measured in a variety of ways (Pop-Eleches and Pop-Eleches 2012; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2014; Tucker 2006; Markowski 1997).

With regards to the impact of social contract legacies on electoral competition, our argument builds on previous work regarding how regional patterns of state-driven development, marginalization, and redistribution have influenced electoral outcomes *under* authoritarian regimes in the Middle East (Blaydes 2011; Lust 2005, 2009), and extends this line of inquiry towards understanding how these same longstanding policies structure the salient attitudes and preferences of voters *after* authoritarianism, during transitional elections (Ma-

soud 2014; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2011). First, we note that longstanding dispositions of citizens towards a central authority and towards key debates of politics are unlikely to transform overnight, even in the event of a popular revolution.³ Open electoral competition, contested by freely organized parties vying for vote share, allows these public preferences to matter in a way they previously have not. Second, we note that figurative legacies of authoritarianism – collective experiences of long-term marginalization and favoritism – are rendered even more politically salient by the presence of literal “old regime” members in the political sphere during democratization. Even in democratic transitions spurred by revolution, regimes rarely disappear altogether,⁴ leading to strenuous debate surrounding lustration – the question of whether, and under what terms, old regime affiliates should be invited to continue participation in politics.⁵

Literature from the post-Soviet transitions has examined the conditions under which citizens in free elections vote “legacy parties” – representing previous less-than-democratic periods – back into office. Analyzing a number of post-Communist Eastern European states, Tucker (2005) finds support for the “transition model” of voting, which predicts that old regime parties will perform best in regions where the economy is weak during transition. Analyzing early democratic elections in several regions, Jhee (2008) finds that strong economic performance *prior* to regime transition increases the vote shares of authoritarian successor parties in national elections, providing a link between longer-term experiences of authoritarian governance and voters’ tolerance for legacy political actors. Yet by modeling vote choice as a straightforward choice between “old” and “new” parties, these works skirt questions of the degree to which popular preferences over lustration actually matter – and how these preferences function – in the context of a transitioning democracy. Moreover, while most studies employ subnational (i.e. regional) voting returns as their unit of analysis, therein highlighting regional differences in popular support for legacy actors, these authors stop short of investigating subnational heterogeneity in the *processes by which citizens of*

³In fact, the extremely short duration of Tunisia’s revolution against Ben Ali makes it even less likely that citizens in the process of overthrowing their president have acquired new idea or new self-identities as political subjects (Beissinger 2013).

⁴Brownlee (2011) develops the concept of an “incomplete revolution,” observing among other things that modern authoritarian regimes are complex organisms comprising numerous branches of government – administration, bureaucracy, party, armed forces – and thousands of individuals.

⁵While some scholars have argued that electoral support for authoritarian successors poses a threat to democratic consolidation (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi 1996), other scholars have advocated against lustration, arguing that old regime members who have been spurned are likely to spoil a democratic transition, and that these individuals may lend crucial governance experience to the management of regime transition (Lust 2012).

different regions decide how to cast their votes, including variation in the electoral salience of preferences over lustration.

In keeping with literature discussed in this section, we expect regional social contract legacies to shape both a) regional voting returns and patterns of support for legacy parties and b) the attitudes and preferences of voters in key policy areas, including preferences over lustration, preferences over taxation and redistribution, and preferences over the role of religion in governance and law. We push the logic of regionalism in new democracies one step farther, however, to argue that these same historical patterns of regional favoritism and marginalization also determine c) the comparative salience of these preferences as determinants of vote choice. In other words, we expect that regional social contract legacies, refracted through the current policy offerings of parties and the status of one or more parties as “legacy” parties, will structure regional variation in the size and significance of vote-determining preference variables for legacy and non-legacy parties alike.

Contextual understanding of regional social contract legacies and current party systems allows us to make predictions as to which preferences will vary most in their predictive capacity subnationally, and as to where certain preferences will prove most salient. We therefore develop a qualitative historical account of regionalism in Tunisian state-building and development, followed by analysis of the main 2014 parties’ histories and current platforms, before outlining specific hypotheses for the case of Tunisia in section 3.2.2. Generalized hypotheses, however, will adhere to the following logic:

- When legacy parties are present, effects of lustration preferences on vote choice will vary significantly between regions, in keeping with those regions’ histories of favoritism or marginalization. Lustration preferences will be most salient in determining a) votes for legacy parties and b) votes for parties born out of opposition movements to the authoritarian state.
- Effects of preferences corresponding to aspects of governance implemented unevenly under authoritarianism will vary also regionally, in keeping with those regions’ histories of favoritism or marginalization. These preferences may be salient in determining vote choice for legacy and non-legacy parties, depending on these parties’ platforms.
- Effects of preferences corresponding to more nationally coherent authoritarian policies will be more consistent throughout regions. These preferences may be salient in determining vote choice for legacy and non-legacy parties, depending on these parties’ platforms.

3 The Politics of Region in Tunisia

This section introduces a historical framework for understanding regional social contract legacies in post-colonial Tunisia, provides context regarding the Tunisian party system and the 2014 legislative elections, and develops a series of specific hypotheses regarding how regional social contract legacies may be expected to shape three dimensions of electoral competition in Tunisia, as outlined in the previous section. We first investigate the aspect of authoritarian governance varying most dramatically according to region in post-colonial Tunisia, namely *policies of economic development and distribution*; we note that in state-driven economies with high discretionary powers accorded to central planners, such as Tunisia, policies of development and distribution determine not just the wealth that individuals and communities accumulate, but serve also as a proxy for patterns of differential incorporation into the material social contract. We then show that the state's tendencies of *repression towards organized religion*, another important aspect of authoritarian governance, have historically been more uniform across region, providing a conversely *national* experience of ideological control.

3.1 Legacies of Favoritism, Punishment, and Marginalization: Regional Development in Tunisia

Following independence in 1956, the regime of independence leader Habib Bourguiba embarked on extensive policies of social modernization and economic growth promotion, carving out a central planning role for the state in Tunisian society that would continue under his successor, Zine el Abedine Ben Ali, through the 2011 revolution (Cammett 2007). A combination of exogenous characteristics of Tunisia's regions – proximity to the coastline, presence of natural resources, and the strength of tribal affiliation in influencing forms of social organization – and expression of political opposition provided the grounds upon which state policies have operated to marginalize some governorates and develop others over time (Moore 1965). In a recent report on rural development in Tunisia, Boughzala and Hamdi (2014) note that while the state has expended some provisional resources on rural and interior regions in recent decades, few investments were made in the diversification and modernization of these regional economies throughout the country's history, leaving citizens in rural areas dependent on low-wage, low-skill work in single-sector economies centered around agriculture and mining. These experiences stand in great contrast with the state-building and development policies enacted in Tunisia's northeast (including the capital Tunis) and

mid-eastern coast (known also as the *Sahel*), which have successfully promoted diversification and industrial growth, improving standards of living as manifest in a growing middle class.

At the outset of independence, Tunisia’s indigenous industrial base was very small, with a majority of commercial and industrial ventures owned and managed by Europeans (Bellin 1994).⁶ A series of three-, five-, and ten-year plans responded to this imbalance with a strategy of intensive state-led development, pursuing at first a program of mutli-sectoral ISI intended to develop domestic capitalists and provide employment for Tunisians in urban regions.⁷ Like many “modernizers” of his era, Bourguiba’s ideology of state-building cast development as an emulation of European modes of production and social organization, and the state shunned many established aspects of Tunisian social and economic life, including the public role of Islam, small-scale farming and fishing, and the semi-nomadic tribal organization of communities in the south (Murphy 1999, 7). Regional political tensions also began during the country’s struggle for independence, when Bourguiba, who hailed from Monastir in the Sahel region, clashed with fellow nationalist Salah Ben Yusef, from the southern governorate Djerba, who favored a more Islamic-friendly Tunisian state and opposed Bourguiba’s stance on allowing French troops to remain in Tunisia during the transition to home rule (Khalil 2014). Stripped of his functions within the nationalist party, the RCD, Ben Youssef found widespread support in the south, where he organized a number of demonstrations that resulted in clashes with Bourguiba supporters.⁸ The drive to punish Tunisia’s south, in confluence with a governing ideology privileging more urban and cosmopolitan citizens, may well have influenced Bourguiba’s choices regarding the regional distribution of public investment during crucial early years of independence, which heavily favored Tunis and his home region of the Sahel (Perkins 2014).

After the short-lived “socialist” and ISI period (Murphy 1999), the Tunisian regime became an early liberalizer in North Africa, refining a strategy of export-promotion supported by infrastructural investment, close ties between the state and select domestic capitalists (Bellin 1994, 1991), and a legal framework offering fiscal incentives and networking support

⁶The Tunisian regime did not nationalize foreign firms or expel foreign businessmen to the same extent as its more radical counterparts in the 1960s (Richards and Waterbury 2007), and as a result maintained close ties with France that would pave the way for extensive bilateral trade with Europe and intensive policies of export promotion in the 1970s and 80s (Cassarino 1999).

⁷By 1969, the state was a majority owner of more than 80 firms in textiles, agriculture, and energy production (Bellin 1994, 34).

⁸Further opposition to the central state was demonstrated through low turnout rates in the country’s first election; for example, 71 percent of Medenine voters abstained from the first parliamentary elections in 1956 (Moore 1965).

to domestic and foreign firms.⁹ Beginning in the early 1970s, a series of new laws and trade agreements encouraged foreign investment, with benefits again overwhelmingly accruing to Tunis and to the Sahel coast.¹⁰ Findlay (1984) shows that between 1973 and 1978, foreign firms established some 86,500 new jobs, of which 45,000 were created in Tunis and the north-east, and 22,000 were created in the Sahel, leaving fewer than 20,000 of these jobs distributed around the entire remainder of the country. In the forty years since, the benefits of Tunisia’s outward orientation have failed to penetrate inward. Even in comparison to the distribution of public and domestic investment, disparities in the regional allocation of foreign investment have remained extreme; as of 2010, 95% of foreign direct investment concentrated in the coastal governorates of Tunis, Bizerte, Nabeul, Sousse, Monastir, and Sfax, where only 60% of Tunisia’s population lives (Boughzala and Hamdi 2014). Some 90% of new jobs creating during this decade were also created in these six governorates.

The late 1980s and 1990s saw the first concerted efforts to redress regional inequality in Tunis; a series of “integrated development plans” sought to improve human capital measures in poor regions, with a focus on education and primary healthcare. Yet Boughzala and Hamdi (2014) argue, “these were not enough to change the main resource-allocation mechanisms or significantly reduce the level of inequality. Many institutions were created for the sake of regional development, but none of them could initiate and implement major comprehensive plans for the poor regions.” Despite an array of fiscal incentives offered, private investment, which had historically followed public investment into Tunisia’s coastal areas, neglected to penetrate into the interior. Meanwhile, stabilization and structural adjustment programs implemented under the aegis of IFIs during this period also contributed to mounting inequality in Tunisia, which by this point had taken on a clear regional cast. Rather than reduce industrial incentives and subsidies, which were concentrated in Tunis and the Sahel, the state targeted subsidies on basic consumer goods, attempting to repeal longstanding

⁹Numerous studies have compared Tunisia’s development strategy since the 1970s to the Asian Tigers; as Harrigan, Wang and El-Said (2006) note, “in policies not too dissimilar to the East Asian countries, Tunisia in the 1970s pursued a strategy of picking winners,’ that is, the government would voluntarily pick some activities, develop them and when profitable open them up to the private sector (3).

¹⁰Tunisia began its offshore regime in 1972, offering steep tax incentives for both foreign and Tunisian producers via the 1972 Foreign investment Law (Richards and Waterbury 2007). Further laws in 1992 and 2006 streamlined and reinforced these the initial package of incentives (Bank 2009)(13). Tunisia also began financial liberalization in the late 1970s, opening up to foreign banks in 1981 as a means of securing the capital necessary to continue the expensive network of subsidies and incentives promised to Tunisian entrepreneurs and foreign investors (Murphy 1999). Finally, Tunisia’s trade relationships are extensive. In 1976, Tunisia became the first Arab state to sign an Association Agreement with the EEC, providing duty-free access to European markets, which accounted for roughly 80% of Tunisian exports under the Ben Ali regime, and guarantees of development aid from European states (Bank 2009).

bread subsidies, contributing to riots in 1978 and again in 1984 (Dillman 1998). Finally, the period from the 1990s onward witnessed structural change in the form of dramatic growth in services and tourism (Bell, Yucelik, Duran, Nsouli and Eken 1993), both of which are naturally centered in coastal (in the case of Tunisia’s large beach tourism industry) and centralized urban (in the case of service industries, such as call centers) settings.

Figure 1: States surveyed for this project



Over more than half a century, programs of state-driven development and social modernization have developed and rewarded the North-East and Sahel regions at the expense of the south and the interior. Legacies of regional favoritism, reward, and punishment under authoritarianism are visible in a number of observable indicators over time. Figure 1 shows the five states or “governorates” chosen for survey sampling for the empirical component of this project,¹¹ while Figures 2 and 3 show how economic and social development indicators vary across the regions that these governorates represent. As shown in Figure 2, data on regional poverty rates collected by the Tunisian national statistical institution, INS, shows persistent regional disparities.¹² Data on per capita consumption suggests parallel dis-

¹¹See the following section for detail regarding the selection of Tunis, Sfax, Gafsa, Beja, and Tataouine for the empirical component of this project.

¹²Boughzala and Hamdi (2014) attribute the apparent progress of the south and northwest in official statistics during this period to those regions’ loss of population in migration to the coast, a “safety valve” alleviating some of the social pressures of underdevelopment in these regions. From a different perspective,

parities in quality of life. Finally, Boughzala and Hamdi’s graphic capturing the geographic concentration of Tunisia’s employment opportunities in 2010, shown in Figure 3, provides insight into the scale of the discrepancies of opportunity facing coastal and inland, northern and southern regions directly prior to the 2011 revolution.

Figure 2: Indicators of Regional Disparity (Tunisian INS)

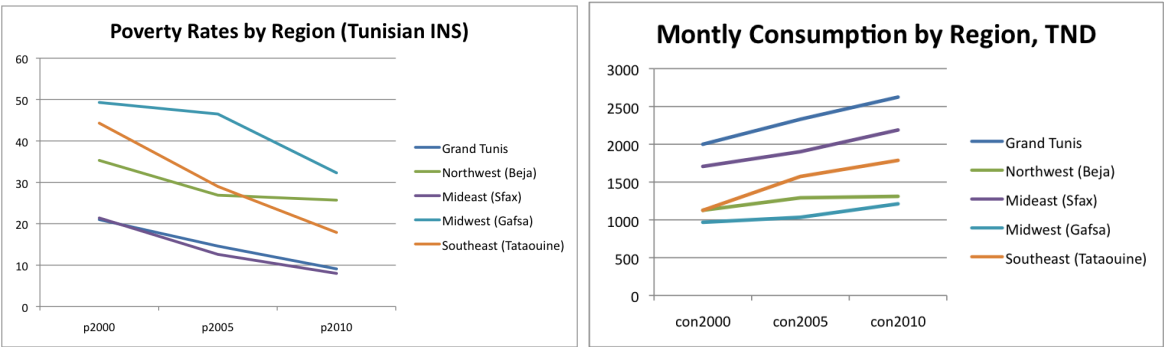
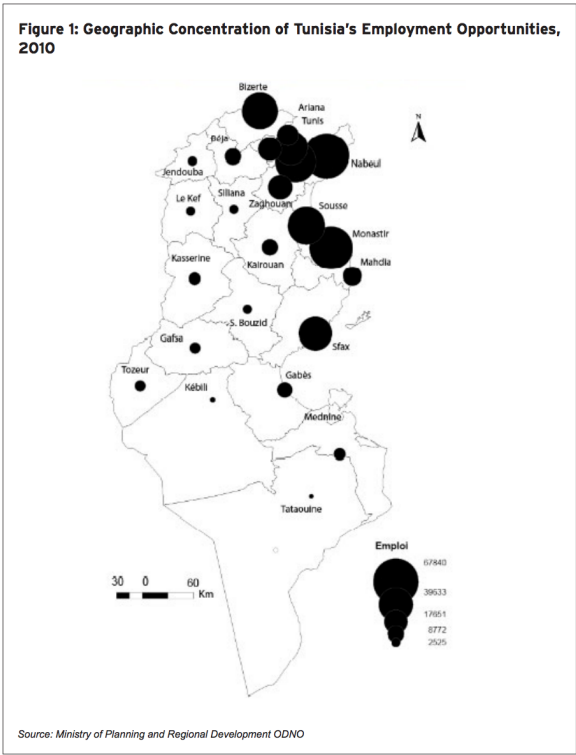


Figure 3: Concentration of Employment (Boughzala and Hamdi 2014)



citethibou2011 investigates how the Tunisian state has developed new approaches to social measurement on issues such as poverty, designed shore up a narrative of progress. Even if the true trend is towards improvement in these regions, the persistent gaps between Tunis and Sfax on one hand, and Gafsa, Beja, and Tataouine on the other, speak to ongoing salience of divergent social contracts.

In large part because of their marginalization, Tunisia's southern and interior regions have historically been home to a small yet ideologically diverse cohort of opposition leaders. Though the south was the home of the political opposition, and its underdevelopment and neglect inspired its activism, the physical space of the south was not always the actual site of opposition activity. Because of limited employment and educational opportunities, many of these opposition leaders and activists worked and studied in Tunis, Sfax, and Sousse while their families maintained homes in the south. It was in these more urban areas where they incorporated other members of the opposition from the cities' disenfranchised sections, carried out opposition activities, and were targeted by the regime. Nasserist and Ba'athist leaders that headed opposition to the Bourguiba regime in the 1960s and early 1970s were southern and drew support from the southern governorates. A number of prominent leaders of the Mouvement Tendance Islamique, which mounted a significant Islamist challenge in the 1980s, later becoming the Ennahda movement, hailed from the southern governorates of Gabes, Medenine, and Tataouine. "Bread riots" against the state's roll-back of consumer subsidies during the structural adjustment period concentrated in the south, and independent labor mobilization against state-owned mining firms in the mid-2000s in interior regions of Gafsa and Redayef have been cited as precursors to the 2011 revolution (Allal 2013).¹³ Though these groups differ in how they envision the nature of the alternative state (i.e. secular nationalist, socialist, Islamist, etc.), they all decried the corruption of the centralized state, and called for reforms to patterns of redistribution that harmed the south as well as other interior and disenfranchised populations in Tunisia.

The Bourguiba and Ben Ali state-building and governance strategies also included policies that were implemented more evenly from a regional perspective – namely, the secularization of the Tunisian public sphere and the repression of the country's Islamic institutions. Both the Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes were invested in creating a modern and secular Tunisia, a project in which the country's Islamic history and identity were relegated to a position of secondary importance. Initially, the regime largely focused on consolidating its legitimacy and control by purging the ruling party of dissenters, and then turned to other activists and opposition groups, and "widespread religious discontent was too diffuse and disorganized to threaten Bourguiba's political position" (Moore 1965). However, as the Islamist political opposition began to organize more formally in the 1970s and 80s (Perkins 2014), the state began to institute national policies to bring individual expressions of reli-

¹³Patterns of popular mobilization during the revolution also have clear regional implications, as protests began in the southern town of Sidi Bouzid and spread across the south and the interior west before breaking out in the capital.

giosity, religious institutions, and religious spaces under state control. The state passed laws to discourage public displays of religiosity; for example, in 1985, the Ministry of Education passed legislation banning women from wearing the hijab at public education institutions and governmental buildings.¹⁴ In addition, the regime decreased the autonomy of the Zitouna University, an independent Islamic institution rivaling well-known Sunni centers of learning in Egypt and Iraq. The university, affiliated with the Zitouna Mosque and a modernist, moderate school of Islamic thought of the same name, witnessed increasing government control of its curricula and a strict ban on any political activities or involvement. Finally, the regime controlled mosques, preventing these spaces – which have often fallen beyond the control of the state to the detriment of authoritarian regimes (Kurzman 2004) – from being utilized by political opposition. The Ministry of the Interior required the approval of – and sometimes even distributed pre-written – sermons given at Friday prayers under Bourguiba. In 1988, the Ben Ali regime passed a law in 1988 that prohibited “any activity in the mosques, in the form of speeches, meetings, or writings, by people not belonging to the institution that oversees their work, unless authorized by the premier,” a thinly veiled ban of political activities in these spaces. Though Tunisia’s south is often characterized as more conservative and religious than the north, these policies of repression towards organized religious life were national in nature, conceived by centralized ministries and instituted in cosmopolitan and rural areas alike. In contrast with the roll-out of economic modernization, the state made a concerted effort to extend its doctrine of secularization throughout the country; whether this is because the state viewed organized Islam as a greater threat than poverty, or because it was simply less costly to police mosques than to promote sustainable growth in non-strategic areas, remains unclear.

3.2 The Importance of Regionalism in Tunisia’s 2014 Elections

Understanding the importance of region in Tunisia’s ongoing transition, particularly its formal contested politics, requires considering regional social contract legacies in light of the current landscape of political parties in Tunisia. First, we introduce background information on the 2014 elections and current political players, and then outline our expectations about the impact of social contract legacies on the three components we previously identified: a) regional voting returns, b) regional variation in preferences of voters in key policy areas,

¹⁴Anecdotal evidence from these periods indicate that men with long beards, often considered to be a sign of Islamic piety, were often disproportionately targeted by police regardless of their political activities (interview with Hizb-u-Tahrir, December 2014).

and c) regional variation the salience of these preferences as determinants of vote choice.

3.2.1 Background on the 2014 Parliamentary Elections

On October 26, 2014, 3.59 million Tunisians voted in the country's first parliamentary elections. These were the first regular elections held since mass demonstrations led to the formal end of President Zine el-'Abidine Ben 'Ali's 23-year reign and more than a half century of single-party rule in January 2011, beginning a wave of protests across the region popularly known as the 'Arab Spring.' In this section, we recount previous developments in electoral politics during the democratizing period, and discuss the platforms and histories of three key parties whose bases of support this paper will analyze: Ennahda, Nidaa Tounes, and the Front Populaire.

Tunisians had previously voted to elect a National Constituent Assembly (NCA) consisting of 217 lawmakers on October 23, 2011. Islamist party Ennahda placed first in the NCA elections with 37.04 percent of votes, resulting in a plurality of 89 seats, and formed a coalition with two secular parties: the Congress for the Republic Party (CPR), founded in July 2001 but not legalized until after the revolution, which placed second, and Ettakatol, formed in April 1994 by Mustapha Ben Jaffar and other activists as a social democratic party and officially recognized in 2002, which placed fourth.¹⁵ The NCA was charged with two tasks. First, it was to appoint a president, and did so by electing Moncef Marzouk of the CPR party by a vote of 153 to 3 (with 46 blank votes and abstentions) in December 2011. Second, it was to draft and pass a constitution within one year, a task which proved significantly more challenging. Disputes between the Ennahda-led Troika government and the opposition extended negotiations beyond the year mandate period, with parties unable to agree over the appropriate structures of representation for Tunisia and the appropriate place of Islam in public life. Public frustration over the lack of progress led to frequent protests against the Troika culminating in a major political crisis in August 2013, when

¹⁵A number of other notable parties contested the 2011 NCA elections. The Popular Petition (Al-Aridha ash-Sha'biyya), which emerged in 2011 as less of a party than a group of independent candidates running on the same lists under the leadership of Mohamed Mechmi Hamdi, and won 26 seats with a significant portion in Hamdi's home district of Sidi Bouzid. Both Ettakatol (full name in Arabic: Ettakatol ad-Dimuqrati min Ajl il-Amal wal-urriyyat) and the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) were opposition parties remaining from the limited political contestation permitted by the previous regime. The Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) was founded in 1983 as a secular liberal political party under the leadership of Ahmed Najib Chebbi and Maya Jribi, gaining legal recognition in 1988. Though neither party won any seats in parliamentary elections under Ben Ali and the PDP boycotted contests throughout the 2000s, both parties served important leadership roles as the small opposition permitted under Ben Ali, most notably during the 18 October Coalition for Rights and Freedoms formed in 2005. In the 2011 election, the parties won 20 and 16 seats, respectively.

mass demonstrations both for and against the government paralyzed political and economic life in Tunisia. In the fall of 2013, spurred by protests and the second political assassination in a six-month period, the parties entered into a national dialogue. Though negotiations stalled several times, the Ennahda-led Troika government ultimately agreed in December 2013 to cede power to a differently constructed interim government under a new prime minister. The NCA reconvened, and the new Tunisian constitution was adopted on January 20, 2014.

Table 1: National Constituent Assembly Election Results (2011)

Party	Percentage of National Vote	Seat Share
Ennahda	37.04	89
CPR	8.71	29
Population Petition	6.74	26
Ettakatol	7.03	20
PDP	3.94	16
The Initiative	3.19	5
Democratic Modernist Pole	2.79	5
Afek Tounes	1.89	4
Tunisian Workers' Communist Party	1.57	3
People's Movement	0.75	2

The results of the 2014 parliamentary elections looked different from the NCA election results – and, indeed, the majority of parties contesting elections in 2014 had changed in some way as a result of the political turmoil of the Troika period. Significant movements and refashioning of parties were motivated in large part by the desire of secular leadership to produce a government less dominated by Ennahda and its allies. Influential new players emerged, including Nidaa Tounes, the Front Populaire, the Free Patriotic Union (UPL),¹⁶ and Afek Tounes.¹⁷ Meanwhile, Ennahda remained essentially intact from the first elections, defined by an internal cohesion and discipline among its members unmatched in the Tunisian political scene. CPR and Ettakatol saw a number of their members and supporters defect

¹⁶The Free Patriotic Union (UPL), a party offering a platform that promotes a free-market economy and rejects Islamism, placed third and won 16 seats. The party was formed by millionaire Slim Riahi after the revolution, but garnered only 1.25% of votes in the first election and credited a more professional campaign with the improved outcome in 2014.

¹⁷Afek Tounes saw its representation rise from 4 to 8 seats between 2011 and 2014. The party, currently headed by Yassine Brahim, was formed in 2011 and coordinated with other like-minded players in various ways over the previous three years to achieve more balance in the system. In April 2012, Afek entered into an alliance with the PDP, the Tunisian Republican party, several other minor parties and independent candidates which spawned the Republic Party, though the party ultimately left that alliance and ran its own list and platforms in the 2014 elections.

to newer parties as a result of what was considered a betrayal to their core tenets when the parties' leadership agreed to participate in the Troika government with Ennahda. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, the parties won 4 and no seats, respectively, in 2014.¹⁸ Final tallies for the 2014 parliamentary election resulted in 27.8 percent of the vote going to Ennahda and 37.6 percent of the vote going to Nidaa Tounes, a new party formed in between the elections.

Table 2: Parliamentary Election Results (2014)

Party	Percentage of National Vote	Seat Share
Nidaa Tounes	37.56	86
Ennahda	27.79	69
UPL	4.13	16
Front Populaire	3.64	15
Afek Tounes	3.02	8
CPR	2.05	4
Democratic Current	1.95	3
People's Movement	1.34	3
National Destourian Initiative	1.34	3
Current of Love	1.20	2

The 2014 parliamentary elections placed in competition, and Tunisians primarily chose between, three distinct types of parties. The first was the Ennahda party. The party defines itself as a civic Islamist party, and it is known to voters as such. The party's 2014 platform highlighted the importance of Tunisia's Islamic identity, praising the accomplishment of the Troika government in uniting a country under a constitution that "combined the principles of Islam and the essence of modernity" in laying "the foundations for the rule of law and respect for individual and public freedoms and human rights." The party also calls for the revival of the Zaytouna University system to teach the moderate, modernist thought of Tunisian Islamic philosophers as a means of combating both social justice issues as well as extremism. However, the 2014 platform also stated that in passing this constitution, the country had transitioned beyond key identity questions into a phase in which economic development must be prioritized; indeed, the document was titled "Towards a Rising Economy and a Secure Country." The platform proposes a market economy with a role for government in addressing the social justice (housing, education, healthcare, and environmental) needs of

¹⁸PDP, under the new name of the Republic Party, similarly failed to win any seats in 2014. Al-Aridha as-Sha'biyya also contested the elections a new name (at-Tayyar al-Mahabba, or the Current of Love'), though the party won only 2 seats.

Tunisians through economic development centered on the idea of “inclusive development,” a term which means that national development projects also seek to reduce the gaps between different regions, specifically working to develop the economies and infrastructure of internal regions and redistributing national wealth towards these projects. The party’s precursor movement was founded in 1981 but had not contested elections since 1989. As noted in the previous section, Tunisia’s Islamist movement has historically played a central role in political opposition to the Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes; indeed, many of Ennahda’s current leaders were exiled or imprisoned by the regime during the 1990s.

The second party was Nidaa Tounes. Nidaa is a secularist big-tent party that incorporates a number of different political forces into one body united in its opposition to Ennahda specifically and Islamism more generally. By far the strongest of new players in the 2014 elections, the party was formed after the 2011 elections and is composed of members of the former ruling party (the Constitutional Democratic Rally), secular leftists, members of the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) and the national employers’ union (UTICA), and members from former secular opposition parties under Ben Ali. Despite this heterogeneity, its leadership is known among voters as having been part of the previous ruling party apparatus – including the party’s president, Beji Caid Essebsi (also elected president of Tunisia in 2014), who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1981 to 1986. During the 2014 elections, the party issued three separate platforms detailing their positions on cultural, social, and economic issues. The economic platform develops a detailed development plan for Tunisia based on a free market economy for business and a moderate welfare role for the state with regards to unemployment and health issues. However, while the plan is national in scope, it does not focus on the importance of overcoming regional inequalities. Instead, Nidaa calls for increased integration of Tunisian into a larger global and regional (here, meaning North African and Mediterranean) economy in order to achieve economic development for the country.

The third type of party includes a number of small parties that are positioned in opposition to the Troika parties, particularly Ennahda, as well as Nidaa Tounes. These parties constitute a similar type of party in that they are secular and do not contain old regime members; rather, they are composed of members from the opposition under the old regime or of new political actors that were uninvolved in politics during the authoritarian period. Where these parties differ is in their position on how best to achieve economic development for the country. Of these small parties, we chose to analyze the preferences of voters for the Front Populaire (Al-Jabha Ash-Sha’biyya), a coalition of leftist parties

(including the Workers Party and the Democratic Patriots Movement) formed in 2012 in an effort to consolidate the resources of and better represent left and labor interests in the country. Espousing one of the clearest political platforms among small parties, the coalition advocates for a strong government role in regulating industries, opposing privatization, and redistributing wealth to improve living conditions. The Front Populaire’s 2014 political platform also has an implicit regional component; for example, in emphasizing reform to Tunisia’s natural resources sector in order to sell and improve the standards of living for miners, the party advocates for fair and targeted regional development.¹⁹ Unlike the small secular parties that placed well in the 2011 election, including Ettakatol and the CPR, Front Populaire has no history of popular mobilization or electoral contestation prior to the 2011 revolution, and therefore carries no particular symbolic mantle as a bearer of opposition to the old regime.

As a result of the party offerings during the 2014 elections, the three main axes of competition and along which voters made their choices were the Islamist-secularist divide, choices about the nature of economic development, and positions regarding the old regime.

3.2.2 Hypotheses and Expectations for the 2014 Elections

In line with existing literature, our expectations regarding components a) and b) of the dependent variable are comparatively straightforward. First, we expect a) *regional voting returns* to “map onto” patterns of development and marginalization examined in the previous section, with support for Nidaa Tounes, representing the “old regime” to many Tunisians, concentrated in the country’s north-east and the Sahel region. Support for non-legacy parties should correspondingly be stronger in the south, the interior, and the north-west.

Second, we expect that b) *popular preferences over three key issues* – lustration, taxation and redistribution, and the role of religion in politics – will also be shaped by these regional social contract legacies. Citizens in favored regions should be less supportive of lustration, less supportive of redistribution, and less supportive of shariah as the basis of law. Based on more extreme subnational variation in development and distributive policies, we expect the difference between marginalized and favored states regarding redistribution to be larger in magnitude than those associated with support for shariah.

Third, we develop hypotheses regarding c) *regional variation in the salience of these three preferences as determinants of vote choice*, operationalized as an interaction term be-

¹⁹In contrast, a party like the Free Patriotic Union (UPL) proposes a free market economy with several regional free trade zones and significant privatization efforts.

tween each preference variable and each region in the survey. Following the logic laid out in our theoretical section, our hypotheses here are based on 1) the degree to which particular issue areas of governance under authoritarianism varied by region, 2) the legacies of the parties themselves (or lack thereof) prior to democratization, and 3) the current policy offerings of the parties. We recall here that policies of economic development and distribution were implemented very unevenly across regions in authoritarian Tunisia, whereas policies related to the role of religion in politics were more nationally coherent. We recall also that Nidaa Tounes represents some elements of the “old regime,” while Ennahda existed as an opposition network under authoritarianism, and the Front Populaire has no history of organization as such before regime change.

Finally, we note that because of the multiparty voting space and multivariate nature of our vote choice model, the inverses of our hypotheses are not assumed to be true; for example, while we expect that *opposition to lustration* will be a significant determinant of Nidaa Tounes vote in favored regions, we don’t necessarily assume that in these same regions, *support for lustration* will be a significant determinant of either Ennahda or Front Populaire vote.

Below, we summarize formal hypotheses for the comparative size and significance of interaction terms between region and our three preferences variables.

- **Lustration:** effects should vary highly according to region
 - In favored regions, opposition to lustration should be a significant determinant of Nidaa Tounes vote
 - In disfavored regions, support for lustration should be a significant determinant of Ennahda and Front Populaire vote
- **Shariah:** effects should be consistent across regions
 - In all regions, support for Shariah should predict support for Ennahda
 - In all regions, opposition to Shariah should predict support for Nidaa Tounes
- **Redistribution:** effects should vary according to region
 - In favored regions, opposition to redistribution should predict Nidaa Tounes vote
 - In disfavored regions, support for redistribution should predict Ennahda vote
 - In all regions, support for redistribution should predict Front Populaire vote

Our argument regarding the impact of regional social contract legacies on the determinants of vote choice during democratization will be nullified if we observe no significant

effects associated with these interaction terms. For additional leverage, we test alternative hypotheses based on other social/demographic groups that may be correlated slightly to regional populations, and which might have feasibly formed the basis for alternative regime strategies of selective development and marginalization. These groups include age cohorts, social classes, individuals of similar education status, and public vs. private sector employees. We analyze the strength of these alternative explanations in the same manner as our region variable, both alone and in interaction with our three key preference variables.

4 Data Collection

We test our argument with original data collected through a carefully designed survey project, intended to capture both voter preferences and behavior as well as regional variation in the relationship between these preferences and behavior. On the day of the parliamentary elections, we partnered with enumerators from the Tunisian non-governmental organization *Sawti*, *Sawt Chebab Tounes* to administer an exit survey to 1,157 Tunisian voters as they exited polls in the governorates of Beja, Gafsa, Tataouine, Tunis, and Sfax. In this section, we justify our use of an exit survey as the best method through which to answer questions about the linkage between voting behavior and political preferences, and detail our sampling strategy.

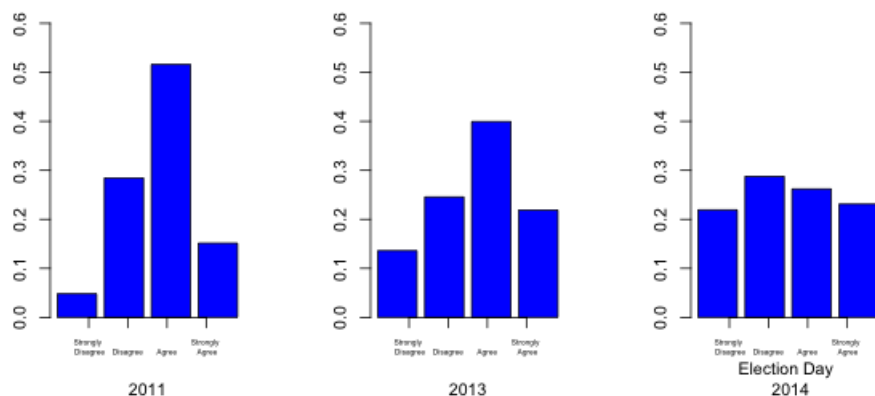
The Methodology of Exit Surveying

Exit polling is a not a new methodology. Media and partisan organizations have employed exit polling in democratic contexts since the late 1960s, largely as a tool for parallel vote tabulation. These polls include questions designed to capture the demographics of voter turnout and vote choice, and only more rarely include questions normally included in opinion polls about political and policy preferences. In our study, we deviated from traditional exit polls and conducted what we call an exit survey. This carefully designed instrument allowed us not only to determine the characteristics of voters in Tunisia, but to directly link political behavior with political preferences. Each survey respondent was asked to answer a battery of open- and closed-ended questions related to social and demographic background, policy preferences and ideological commitments, and past and current political behavior.

We believe that capturing the preferences and reported voting behavior from voters at the time of voting (or as close as legally possible, given restrictions on entering polling stations) provides the clearest possible snapshot of this crucial election at the grassroots

level. As Crow, Johnson and Bowler (2015) document, post-election polls typically inflate the proportion of people who voted for the winning candidate, at all levels of government, because respondents “bandwagon” due to perceived norms of social desirability (Atkeson 1999). Similarly, Gelman and King (1993) demonstrate how responses to polls conducted before elections are variable as well, influenced by campaign events. In addition, preferences may be volatile and changing in newly democratizing contexts. As demonstrated in the figure below, the distribution of opinions among Tunisian voters about the highly salient issue of religion in politics changed drastically in the three years following the 2011 uprising, becoming significantly becoming more polarized by the parliamentary election day in 2014.

Figure 4: Agreement with “The government and parliament should enact laws in accordance with the Islamic shari’a” among Tunisian voters, 2011-2014



Finally, nationally-representative public opinion surveys often do not contain a large enough sample of voters for researchers to conduct robust analyses, or neglect to ask questions specifically about vote choice, particularly in the Middle East. For example, the 2014 Arab Barometer surveyed 1,119 Tunisians, out of which 707 reported that they voted in the 2011 National Constituent Assembly elections. The instrument did not contain a question asking voters about their party choice, but did include a question which was phrased, “Which of the existing parties is closest to representing your political, social and economic aspirations?” Only 579 respondents articulated a party, 379 of whom were also self-reported voters. The most ‘popular’ party, Ennahda, had 194 self-reported voters, but the rest of the parties had numbers in the tens. Most problematic is when these numbers are divided into governorates. Looking at the governorates that we analyze in this paper, there are 80 voters in Tunis, 40 in Sfax, 25 in Beja, 20 in Gafsa, and only 12 in Tataouine, the vast majority

of whom do not articulate their party choice. These small sample sizes are to be expected in nationally-representative samples that do not specifically target voters, and approximate reported percentages of national turnout. However, given the types of questions asked and the distribution of voters sub-nationally, it is difficult to know which voters supported which parties in the 2011 elections. In addition, the small sample sizes poses difficulties for making inferences about voters in general, and make it nearly impossible to detect any sub-national variation in voters preferences.

As a result of these many issues, we believe that surveying voters on the day of voting, rather than months before or after, captures the closest relationship between preferences and vote choice. By asking voters about their ballot and their opinions immediately after they vote, we are able to capture the most accurate measurement of vote choice and voter preferences, before either type of response is influenced by real-world events, additional information, or the passage of time.

Sampling Methodology and Missingness

Our sampling methodology involved a combination of strategic and random sampling, in an effort to capture important variation within Tunisia and to adequately employ limited resources. We strategically sampled at the governorate level on key observables, and then randomly selected districts and delegations within these governorates. Though our survey does not amount to a nationally representative sample of Tunisians, it is a representative sample of Tunisian voters in five diverse and politically important regions of the country.

In a previous section, we outlined broad differences in sub-national patterns of development and integration, drawing a distinction between a developed coastal and capital area, and a neglected interior and southern area. Yet within this broader dichotomy, there are specific histories associated with each region. We selected to survey and analyze voter survey data from one governorate exemplifying each region’s social, economic, and political history; Tunis in the northeast, Sfax on the center coast / Sahel, Tataouine in the south, Gafsa in the interior west, and Beja in the northwest. Here, we describe each governorate in an effort to detail why we believe this represents an important region in Tunisia:

- The Beja governorate is located in Northwest Tunisia and is home to 303,032 Tunisians (2004 Census). Though geographically close to Tunis, the region is rural and its economic base agricultural, serving as the center of the fertile Majardeg valley wheat-growing region for centuries. Beja exemplifies the long-term marginalization of Tunisia’s

agricultural communities. Early efforts at collectivization collapsed by the 1970s, leaving previously small-scale landowners without land tenure, resulting in major waves of migration to urban poverty belts surrounding Tunis and other cities.²⁰ Public investment in agriculture fell sharply throughout Bourguiba’s rule as food imports increased. Beja residents have historically supported opposition parties, including a path-defining vote for Tunisia’s Communist list during the regime-founding 1956 elections (Moore 1965).

- The governorate of Tataouine is located in southern Tunisia, and borders both Algeria and Libya. It is a large desert district with an agricultural economy and a population of only some 150,000. The region has a history of being isolated from the patronage systems of the central government both politically and economically, and is characterized as a place where familial and tribal ties exert a strong political influence. Tataouine has a long history of supporting opposition – most notably, Islamist opposition – since the country’s independence; the majority of leaders from Ennahda have ancestral roots in the region, and Tataouine voted in high rates for the party in both the 2011 and 2014 national elections. Nasserist and Ba’athist movements have also hailed from Tataouine and nearby southern states. The diversity of oppositional political ideologies finding support in the south suggests that the opposition had less to do with tribal affiliations or conservative and rural traditions, and perhaps more to do with its low level of incorporation into the state.
- The Gafsa governorate is located in Tunisia’s central west region with a population of 337,331 and is representative of the Central Tunisia. It is home to the city of Gafsa, its capital, which houses one of the largest phosphate mines in the world and is the center of the country’s mining industry. Beginning in 2008, the region witnessed a series of grassroots strikes and protests against the state-owned Gafsa Phosphate Company, the region’s primary employer. The movement decried corruption and poor labor practices at the GPC – practices standing in stark contrast with the nature of public sector employment in other contexts, where employees benefit from high wages and generous social protections. Among other grievances, the GPC had cut its payrolls by nearly 75% between 1980 and 2006, and the state had failed to provide any alternative programs of diversification and job creation. New syndicates formed

²⁰Data provided by (Murphy 1999) shows a net migration of 37,790 Tunisians from “interior” to “litoral” (coastal) regions from 1970 to 1975 alone.

during the 2000s, including the Union of Unemployed Graduates, also have a strong presence in the mining region (Gobe 2010).

- The Sfax governorate, located in southeast Tunisia, has a population of 955,421 and is home to the country’s second largest city of the same name. Sfax is representative of the “Sahel” region, a coastal region spanning from the south of Hammamet to Tunis’s ancient capital, Mahdia, and which has been traditionally rich in both business as well as politicians. Sfax is home to a number of Tunisia’s most prestigious hospitals and universities, as well as other industries including phosphate processing, some agriculture and fishing, and public utilities providing ample public sector employment. In addition, both former presidents of the first republic hailed from the region (Bourguiba was born in Monastir and Ben Ali was born in Sousse, and both families kept ancestral homes in these areas), and their governments included many Sfaxians.²¹
- Finally, Tunis is the country’s capital and largest urban center, home to 2.6 million of the country’s 10.9 million inhabitants. Tunis serves as the seat of the national government and hosts the headquarters of the country’s financial and tourism industries. Tunis is Tunisia’s most diverse city, home to many rural migrants concentrated in lower class neighborhoods to the city’s south, as well as a strong concentration of wealthy and upper middle class Tunisians in the city’s northern suburbs. Though most of Tunisia’s opposition leaders hailed originally from the south, most spent their careers in Tunis (and some in Sfax), where they migrated to find work and education opportunities. It was in these more urban areas where they incorporated other members of the opposition from the cities’ disenfranchised sections, carried out opposition activities, and were targeted by successive regimes.

Selecting these five governorates resulted in a sample of seven electoral districts (Beja, Gafsa, Sfax 1, Sfax 2, Tunis 1, Tunis 2, and Tataouine).²² We then randomly selected six delegations for each of the seven electoral districts through weighted random sampling, with weights constructed from national census population data at the delegation level. From each delegation

²¹The sons of the region were over-represented in the country’s first post-colonial national elite under Bourguiba (Moore 1965), and under Ben Ali, they served as a majority of the Ministers of the Interior and Prime Ministers – those charged with overseeing the secretive repressive apparatuses of the regime and from whom were demanded the highest level of loyalty.

²²Electoral districts in Tunisia are generally concurrent with governorate, except in the case of governorates with major cities, in which case governorates are split into two electoral districts. Districts are further divided into delegations, the smallest administrative units through which polling stations are assigned. Delegations range in population from under 10,000 to over 90,000 inhabitants, but most contain between 20,000 and 40,000 residents.

selected, a polling station was chosen randomly from lists provided by the Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Elections (ISIE). In total, 42 polling stations were surveyed.

Interviewing was conducted by trained Tunisian enumerators using paper and pencil surveys (see attachment for full questionnaire). One enumerator was placed outside each selected polling station for the duration of voting hours. Enumerators selected interview candidates using a randomization technique wherein the enumerator approached every third voter leaving the polling station until a voter agreed to be interviewed. Enumerators repeated this technique for each interview. Before interviewing, all potential subjects were introduced to the content and purpose of the survey and to their rights of refusal and termination. Each enumerator collected between 25 and 30 surveys, and interviews on average lasted 15 minutes each.

Our largest analytical challenge with the data was low reporting of vote choice in the governorate of Beja, where fewer than 20% of voters surveyed revealed their party choice. In other governorates, an average of 57% of voters disclosed their vote choice, providing an adequate sample and allowing for within-governorate analysis of vote choice within the framework of an interactive model. As a result, we exclude Beja from the analyses presented in the paper. In the pooled sample including Beja, missingness of the vote choice indicator does not correlate with any of our three preference variables: preferences over religious law, preference over redistribution, and preferences over lustration. Additionally, relative closeness of our vote choice percentages to observed returns on the district level suggests it is not the case that voters for any particular party are significantly more likely to 1) refuse interview or 2) refuse to share their vote choice. These two preliminary validity measures suggest that our models are not significantly confounded by patterns of missingness in the data.

Description of the Data: Key Variables and Some Demographics

Our key independent variables include three questions asking individuals' preferences over issues that we expected to be important in predicting vote choices, based on the type of party choices available to voters during the 2014 parliamentary elections. The first question asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, "The government and parliament should enact laws in accordance with the Islamic shari'a," intended to capture preferences about the role of religion in politics, and specifically legislation. The second question asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, "The government should increase taxes on the wealthy in order to increase spending on social

spending,” intended to capture preferences over the redistribution of wealth. The third and final question asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, “Members of the old ruling party (the Democratic Constitutional Rally) should be banned from participating in politics.” All three questions included four answer options, ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.”

Our dependent variable of interest is vote choice. We asked respondents to indicate their vote choice for 2014 in one of two ways in an effort to illicit the highest rate of response possible. First, we asked whether the respondent voted in the 2011 NCA elections, and if so, for which party the respondent voted. We then asked, “Today, did you change your vote? For which party did you vote?” This strategy of eliciting the answer to the vote choice question was developed in collaboration with our local partners at *Sawti*, who suggested – we believe correctly – that first asking the respondent for his or her vote choice in 2011 would allow the question to seem less abrupt.

For our alternative explanations, we employ four demographic variables. First is a cohort variable, which divides our sample into four quartiles by age. Second is an income group variable, which divides our sample into four quartiles by reported income. Third is a variable indicating individuals’ work sector, coded as 1 if the respondent reported working in the public sector and 0 if the respondent reported working in the private sector. Fourth and final is a five-category variable measuring level of education, ranging from illiterate to a bachelor’s degree or higher. Finally, we employ a region variable that indicates in which of the five governorates the respondent lives, votes, and was polled.

Here, we provide brief description of each demographic variable employed in our exploration of alternative hypotheses, with particular attention to how these distributions vary according to region. Figure 5 shows that the age of voters skewed slightly younger in Tataouine and Beja, suggesting that the widely-discussed “youth boycott” of the 2014 election was stronger in urban and industrial areas than in rural ones. (We note that according to 2014 census data, the median age for each region falls into the 25 - 29 range.) Figure 6 shows that median voter incomes in each region fell into the range of 500 - 800 TND monthly, making voters slightly wealthier than the population at large. A small number of very wealthy voters (15,000 TND or more) surveyed in Tunis’s northern suburbs skews average voter income upwards in the capital. Table 3 shows that voter across regions self-report significantly higher levels of education than the general population, with little variation between region. Finally, we note in Table 4 that percentages of voters employed in the public sector are in the 30 - 40% range in Tunis and Sfax, and comparatively higher in Gafsa, Beja,

and Tataouine. Trends in public vs. private sector employment among voters follow largely trends observed in the general population, with the exception of Gafsa, where voters are significantly more likely to be public sector employees, and where – as introduced earlier in this section – large mobilizations have taken place in recent years against employment practices in state-owned mining firms.

Figure 5: Age Distributions by Region

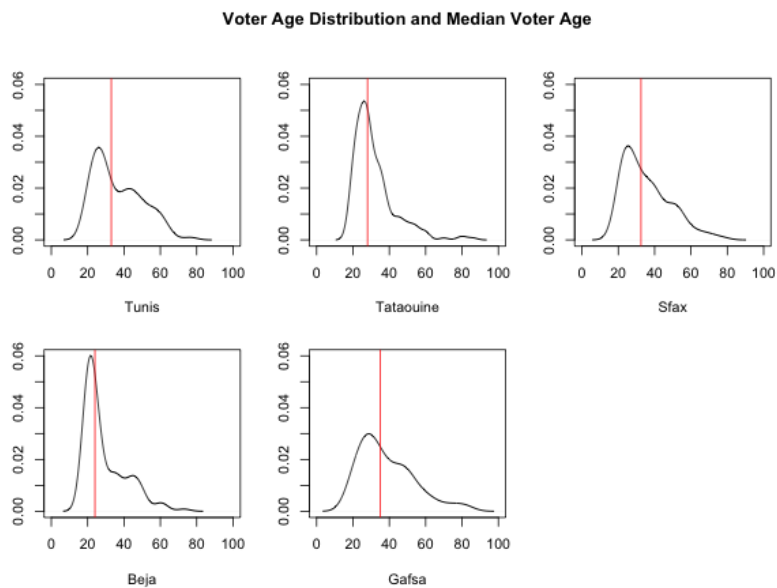


Figure 6: Income Distributions by Region

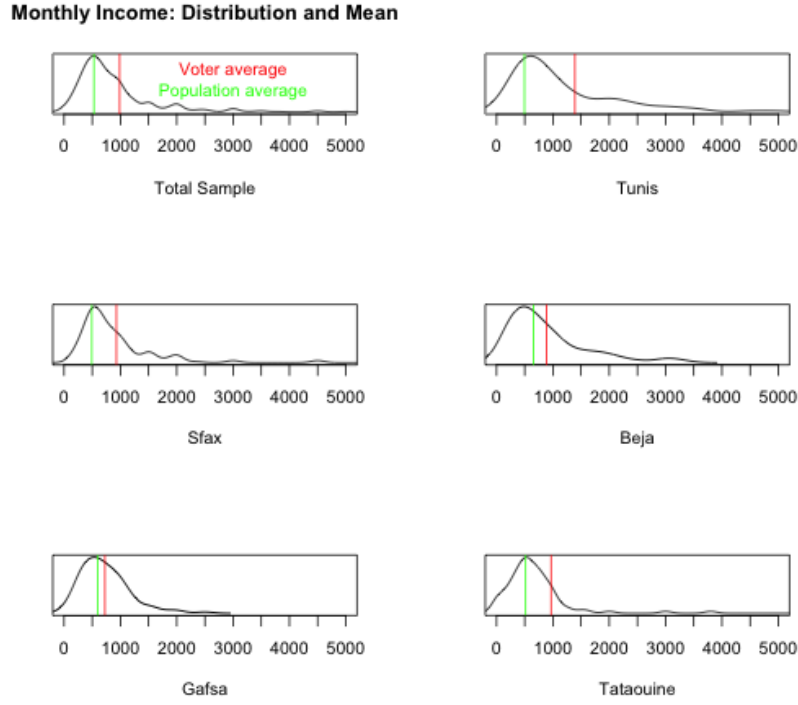


Table 3: Education among Voters, Compared with General Population (Arab Barometer 2013)

	Percent Voters with BA degree	Percent population with BA degree	Percent Voters with secondary degree	Percent population with secondary degree
Tunis	59	11	82	56
Sfax	56	10	80	37
Gafsa	46	13	80	50
Beja	57	31	83	58
Tataouine	56	14	81	50
Total Sample	56	14	81	50

Table 4: Employment Sector among Employed Voters, Compared with General Population (Arab Barometer 2013)

	Percent Voters in Public Sector	Percent Population in Public Sector	Percent Voters in Private Sector	Percent Population in Private Sector
Tunis	32	41	68	59
Sfax	38	39	61	61
Gafsa	53	39	46	61
Beja	41	61	59	38
Tataouine	54	66	46	33
Total Sample	41	33	59	67

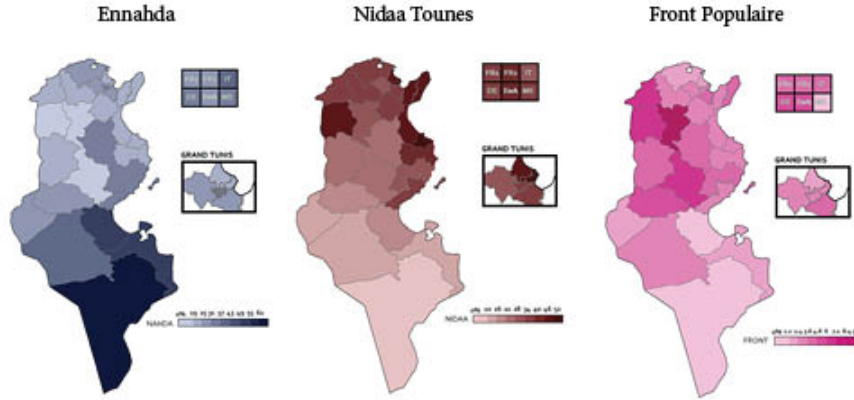
5 Regionalism in Tunisia’s 2014 Parliamentary Elections

As outlined above, we identify three levels where we expect regionalism to matter and its effect to be evident. Here, we present these results separately.

5.1 Regional Differences in Electoral Outcomes

As elaborated in the previous section, we argue that regional social legacies shape regional variation along three dimensions of electoral competition: a) regional electoral returns, b) the attitudes and preferences of voters in key policy areas, and c) the salience of these preferences as determinants of vote choice. This section provides descriptive analysis to these first two components of the dependent variable. We then use a series of models to assess the third component, variation in the determinants of vote choice for key political parties.

Figure 7: Maps of Electoral Results, 2014



Regional social contract legacies appears to “map onto” *subnational voting returns*, as evidenced by the maps in Figure 7 and the table of voting returns in Table 5. Greater numbers of citizens in the north-east and the Sahel, including Tunis and Sfax, voted for Nidaa Tounes, while Ennahda support is concentrated in the south, and Front Populaire support in the interior western region.

Table 5: Party Percentage Vote Share by Region (2014)

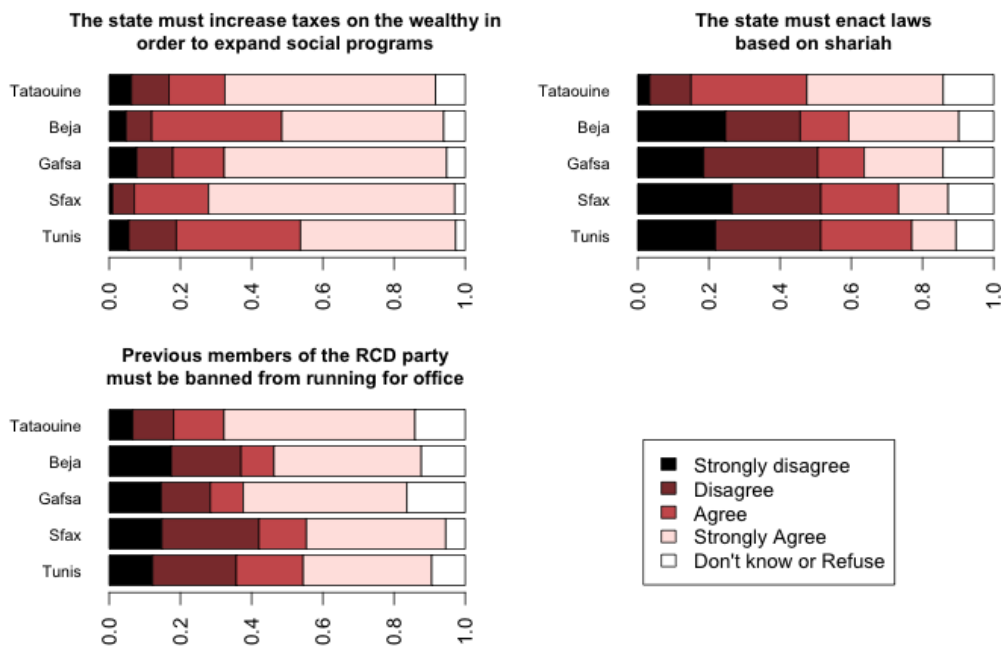
	Ennahda	Nidaa	Front Populaire
Beja	21.24	38.35	3.25
Gafsa	27.16	20.97	5.44
Sfax	33.78	34.58	3.96
Tataouine	65.41	7.68	.63
Tunis	25.96	45.39	3.07

5.2 Regional Differences in Preferences

The *preferences of voters over key issue areas*, including support for redistribution, support for shariah and the basis of law, and support for lustration, also vary according to region as evidenced by Figure 5. While no state emerges as homogeneous on any of these preferences, simple bar plots show that redistribution support among voters is lower in Tunis and higher in other governorates, including (perhaps surprisingly) Sfax. In keeping with out expectations, support for shariah as the basis of law varies less widely, although

voters in Tunis and Sfax emerge as more supportive of a secularized state than voters in Gafsa, Beja, and particularly Tataouine. Finally, voters Tunis and Sfax each emerge as less supportive of lustration, while Tataouine and Gafsa are more supportive, and Beja voters land in the middle. These distributions adhere to what we expect; regions historically favored by developmental policies are less inclined to redistribute wealth, somewhat less supportive of Islam’s role in governance, and less supportive of purging old regime members from post-revolutionary politics.

Figure 8: Distribution of Voter Preferences by State



5.3 Regional Variation in Determinants of Vote Choice

Next, we analyze the strength of these three variables as predictors of vote choice among those voters who revealed the party for which they cast their ballots in our survey ($n = 575$).²³ All analyses employ post-stratification survey weights constructed from national census population data at the delegation level.

²³Though all of the respondents in our sample of 1,157 respondents were voters, we excluded from our analyses respondents who did not reveal their vote choice. Including these additional voters in our analysis would likely have led to voters for each respective party to being coded ‘incorrectly’ – i.e., a given vote choice variable would include both individuals who reported they had voted for a separate party, and those who gave no answer but *may* have voted for the party of interest. This would have introduced significant noise into our findings.

We first conduct three separate binomial logistic regressions with outcome variables for each party of interest, in which a vote for a given party is coded as 1 and a vote for any other party was coded as 0. We similarly conducted a multinomial logistic regression, employing a variable pitting choices for the top three parties against each other. Patterns of significance on our independent variables are similar to those observed in the binomial logistic regressions. We have included the full results in Appendix A. In these pooled regressions, we observe significance on variables as might be expected given each party’s platform and “legacy” status. Voting for Ennahda instead of other party choices is significantly predicted by support for shari’a as the basis for laws, and is close to being significantly predicted by support for lustration. Voting for Nidaa Tounes is significantly predicted by opposition to lustration and by opposition to redistribution. Meanwhile, voting for the Front Populaire is a combinative secular, pro-redistribution, and pro lustration vote.

Table 6: Predicting Vote Choice (Binomial Logistic Regression Results)

	Binomial Logit Estimates ^a			Change in Predicted Probabilities ^b		
	Ennahda	Nidaa	Front Populaire	Ennahda	Nidaa	Front Populaire
Support for shari'a as basis for laws	.60*** (.16)	-.25 (.27)	-.56*** (.18)	.31	-.16	-.20
Support for redistribution	.05 (.22)	-.65* (.16)	.72* (.35)	.03	-.27	.09
Support for banning old regime	.25 (.15)	-.41*** (.17)	.29* (.14)	.12	-.56	.16

^aThe top entries are binomial logit coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

^bAverage change in the predicted probability of voting for each of the three parties from an increase from the minimum to the maximum value of each independent variable, calculated employing the observed values of the other independent variables.

We then test whether any of our alternative hypotheses are significant – i.e., whether characteristics including cohort, income group, employment sector, or education level affect the relationship between individuals’ preferences and their vote choices. We do this by estimating a series of binomial models in the pooled data, introducing an interactive term between these characteristics and the aforementioned three key preferences. Though there does appear to be some significance between individual characteristics and the way in which preferences for shari‘a government are related to voting for the Front Populaire, collectively the models do not offer empirical support for any of the alternative hypotheses (see Appendix B for tables with all the results).

Finally, we test our hypotheses regarding part three of the dependent variable – regional variation in the salience of the three preference variables as predictors of vote choice. Again we estimate three binomial models, this time including an interaction term between our three preference variables of interest and region dummies in our models. Thus, for each voter i , each of three equations reads as follows:

$$\text{logit}(\pi_i) = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 \text{Sharia}_i + \beta_2 \text{Redist}_i + \beta_3 \text{Lustration}_i + \beta_6 \text{State}_i * \text{Sharia}_i + \beta_7 \text{State}_i * \text{Redist}_i + \beta_8 \text{State}_i * \text{Lustration}_i + e_i$$

We find a number of significant results and plot the marginal effects in Figures 9 through 11 to demonstrate these findings. We describe these findings here, and analyze them in light of our original hypotheses in the following “discussion” section.

For example, while support for shari‘a as the basis of laws is positively and significantly related to voting for Ennahda in a manner that is consistent with the pooled model, the vote choice is also significantly predicted by strong anti-old regime preferences in Tunis and, to much great effect, in Tataouine. Similarly, determinants of voting for Nidaa Tounes vary by region. In Tunis, all three preferences are significant predictors of choosing the party, making it an anti-Islamist, anti-redistribution, and pro-old regime vote in that region. In Sfax, support for allowing the old regime to participate in politics is a significant predictor, while in Tataouine, opposition to a religious basis of law is. However, in Gafsa these preferences appear to have little influence on the vote choice, making preferences for the old regime the strongest predictor in Tunisia’s urban areas. Finally, determinants of support for Front Populaire also vary by region. Though support for redistribution is positively related to a vote for the party, it is only significantly so in Tunis. Meanwhile in Gafsa and Sfax, a vote for the Front Populaire is significant predicted by opposition to shari‘a as the basis of

laws – and additionally, opposition to the old regime drives support for the party in Sfax.

In order to test the joint significance of regional interaction terms associated with each preference variable, we perform a series of three Wald tests on each binomial vote choice model. Results from these Wald tests are reported in Figure 7. In models predicting support for Ennahda and Nidaa Tounes, Wald tests show the greatest level of significance associated with preferences pertaining to lustration / the desire to “ban” old regime members from politics. This finding is consistent with our hypothesis that the predictive power of preferences over lustration should vary highly according to region, particularly in determining vote choice for parties that are either a) legacy political actors (e.g. Nidaa Tounes) or b) historic networks of opposition under authoritarianism (e.g. Ennahda). In the model predicting vote choice for the Front Populaire, Wald tests show the greatest level of significance associated with preferences over redistribution. This finding is somewhat contrary to our expectation that redistribution support should predict Front Populaire vote in all regions, and is likely related to the finding that outside of Tunis, Front Populaire votes appear most strongly predicted not by distributive preferences, but rather by opposition to shariah as the basis of law.

Figure 9: Voting for Ennahda: Marginal Effects of Preferences, By Governorate

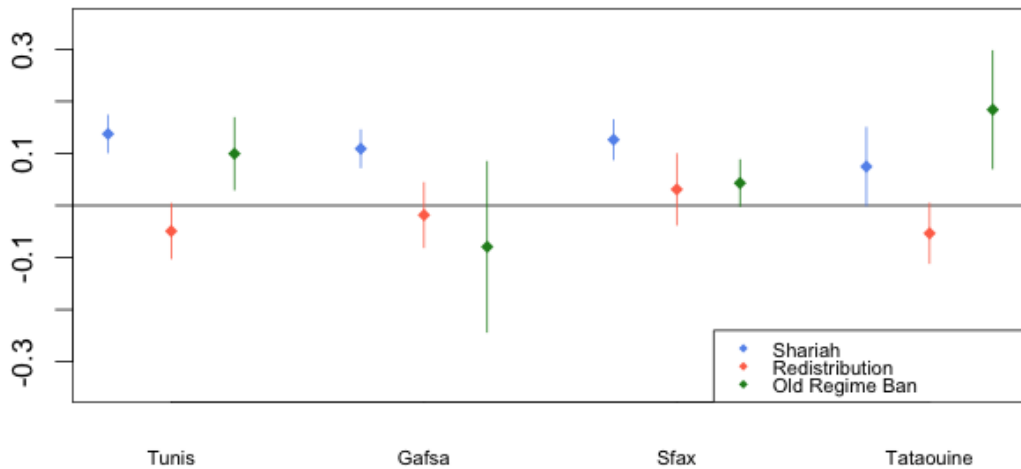


Figure 10: Voting for Nidaa: Marginal Effects of Preferences, By Governorate

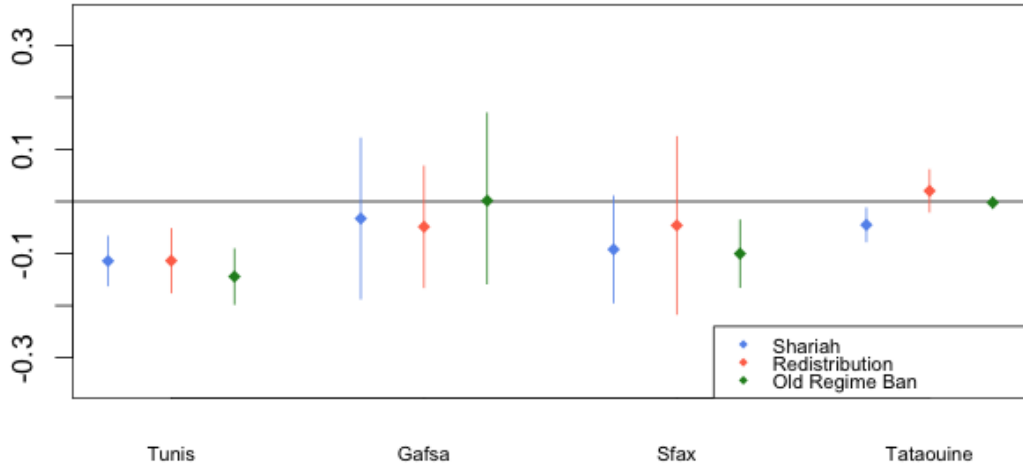
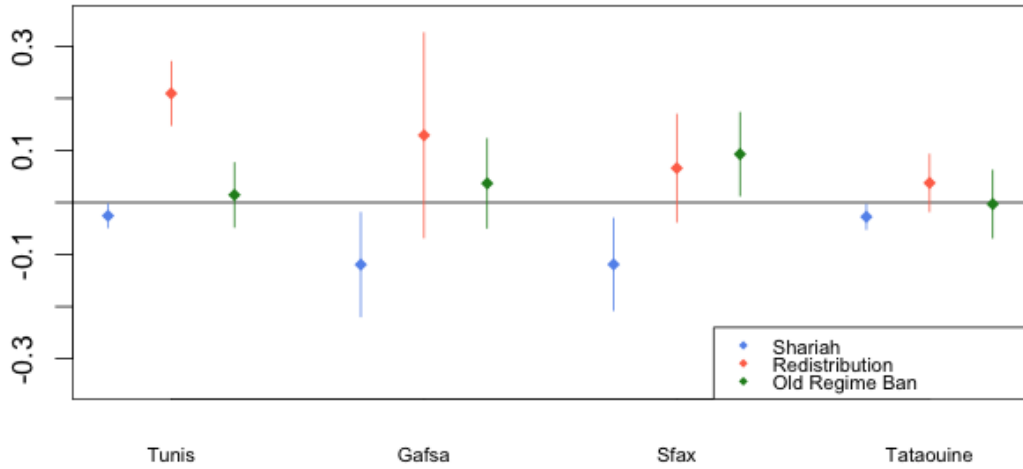


Figure 11: Voting for Front Populaire: Marginal Effects of Preferences, By Governorate



These results demonstrate that the total effects we observed in the pooled sample (without region interactions) do not hold throughout the regional subgroups, and indeed that many effects are only significant in certain areas of the country. In addition to demonstrating interesting sub-national variation in the effects, the models with the state interactions provide significantly better fits for the data than the models without (see Appendix B for a comparative table). This demonstrates that if we were simply to model vote choice as a function of preferences, we would be neglecting an important source of variation and ex-

Table 7: Wald tests for joint significance of region interactive effects

	shariah	redistribution	lustration
Support for Ennahda	$\chi^2 = 7.4$ p = 0.12	$\chi^2 = 1.9$ p = 0.75	$\chi^2 = 12.7$ p = 0.013***
Support for Nidaa Tounes	$\chi^2 = 0.83$ p = 0.71	$\chi^2 = 4.8$ p = 0.23	$\chi^2 = 8.6$ p = 0.034**
Support for Front Populaire	$\chi^2 = 1.8$ p = 0.49	$\chi^2 = 7.2$ p = 0.016**	$\chi^2 = 0.53$ p = 0.28

planation for how those preferences relate to vote choice. In the next section, we discuss our results in light of our original hypotheses, highlighting substantively what these effects demonstrate about the importance of region and sub-national variation in social contract legacies.

6 Discussion: The Importance of Region

Official returns from the 2014 parliamentary elections and our analyses of the survey data demonstrate that region is important component of understanding politics in Tunisia, both in the way it shapes electoral returns and the way in which it influences the relationship between political preferences and vote choice. The salience of regionalism in Tunisia’s early democratic elections may be traced back to divergent social contract legacies, conditioned by long-term regime strategies of favoritism and marginalization towards Tunisia’s regions. In Tunisia’s 2014 parliamentary elections, Nidaa Tounes, a party conflated with the old regime, won in the coastal and capital areas that fared well under previous incorporation policies, while Ennahda and Front Populaire fared better in areas that had been excluded during these processes.

Regional variation can also condition preferences, and is particularly important for understanding predictive power of preferences that would be affected by legacies of state-society relations under authoritarianism – namely, preferences over *lustration*. Our hypotheses about the relationship between lustration preferences and vote choice – opposition to lustration should be a significant determinant of Nidaa Tounes vote in historically favored regions, and support for lustration should be a significant determinant of Ennahda and Front

Populaire votes – largely pans out in our results. Lustration preferences are significant and positively related to voting for Ennahda in Tunis and Tataouine, the location of significant repression and the home region, respectively, of the political opposition (of which Ennahda was a significant part) under previous regimes. In addition, lustration preferences are significant and negatively related to voting for Nidaa Tounes in Tunis and Sfax, regions that were most incorporated – and thus benefited the most – from previous regimes. Variation in the significance and the direction of the lustration effect on vote choice is therefore consistent with our hypotheses. We note that our hypotheses about Front Populaire are not supported in the data; support for lustration is only significant for Ennahda vote. This is probably due to the fact that voters have the choice of an opposition legacy party like Ennahda which has often referred to itself as such during campaigning and while in government, while Front Populaire, though composed of many members of opposition to previous regimes, is a newer party that does not have the same well-established legacy or brand of long-term opposition.

Confirming our hypotheses based on the more nationally coherent nature of policies pertaining to organized religion under authoritarianism, preferences over *shariah* are more consistent in their effects on vote choice across regions. Support for shari‘a as the basis for legislation is consistently a positive and significant predictor of voting for Ennahda. Our hypothesis about the relationship between opposition to shari‘a and support for Nidaa Tounes, however, is only partially confirmed: in Tunis and Tataouine, these preferences predict a Nidaa Tounes vote, while in Gafsa and Sfax, secularity better predicts support for the Front Populaire. It thus appears that Tunisians preferring a secular political system are more split in their preferences for specific parties than Tunisians favoring a more Islamist system, a finding mirroring the wider array of parties and coalitions currently identifying as secular.

Finally, we had hypothesized that preferences for *redistribution* should vary according to region based on social contract legacies; in historically disfavored regions, support for redistribution should support an Ennahda vote, while in historically favored regions, opposition to redistribution should predict a Nidaa Tounes vote. In Tunis, as expected, opposition to redistribution is a significant predictor of the Nidaa Tounes vote. Elsewhere, our hypotheses connecting distributive preferences with Nidaa Tounes and Ennahda votes are null. In addition, we had hypothesized that based on the party’s platform, support for redistribution should predict a Front Populaire vote in all regions. Though the direction of the relationship in our results is correct, it is only significant in Tunis. As noted above, it appears that outside of Tunis, Front Populaire votes are more strongly predicted by opposition to shariah

as the basis of law, suggesting that citizens outside of the capital may be viewing this small, left party more as a secular alternative to the “old regime” (i.e. Nidaa Tounes) than as a party based on distributive commitments.

7 Conclusion

In this paper, we have intended to extend previous studies of the importance of region in politics to Tunisia, a country whose ongoing democratic transition demonstrates significant regional variation. We hope that we have also advanced the study of region by moving beyond national comparisons to a sub-national level of analysis. In particular, we have demonstrated that social contract legacies shape three important components of the country’s transitioning political system: 1) regional voting returns, b) the attitudes and preferences of voters in key policy areas, and c) the salience of these preferences as determinants of vote choice. In doing so, we want to suggest that studies of democratic transition must not overlook the ways in which regional social contract legacies of authoritarianism, which have been documented to vary *sub-nationally* based on state capacity and regime choices, shape the nature of transitional politics within the same national context. Given that early elections may exert a freezing effect on the course of electoral politics moving forward (ODonnell and Schmitter 1986), understanding sub-national variation in both electoral outcomes as well as in the determinants of vote choice during these pivotal elections enables researchers to consider how legacies from previous periods may affect on-going political developments. Additional studies – in particular, additional exit surveys linking vote choice with preferences, and sampling specific sub-national voting populations – are necessary to determine the shelf life of these effects, and to determine whether authoritarian legacies continue to affect politics for a significant period following liberalization beyond pivotal first elections.

Appendix A

Table 8: Predicting Vote Choice (Multinomial Logistic Regression Results)

	Multinomial Logit Estimates ^a			Change in Predicted Probabilities ^b		
	Ennahda vs. Nidaa	Ennahda vs. FP	Nidaa vs. FP	Ennahda	Nidaa	FP
Support for shari'a as basis for laws	-.57* (.30)	-.88*** (.16)	-.30 (.29)	.41	-.17	-.24
Support for redistribution	-.44 (.26)	.55 (.39)	-.99*** (.36)	.14	-.41	.27
Support for banning old regime	-.44* (.24)	.08 (.22)	.52*** (.17)	.18	-.34	.16

^aThe top entries are multinomial logit coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

^bAverage change in the predicted probability of voting for each of the three parties from an increase from the minimum to the maximum value of each independent variable, calculated employing the observed values of the other independent variables.

Appendix B

Table 9: Cohort Effects (Binomial Regression Results)

	Ennahda	Nidaa	Front Populaire
Support for shari'a as basis of laws	.70*** (.22)	.06 (.35)	-.82*** (.23)
Support for redistribution	.26 (.32)	-.71*** (.30)	-.17 (.54)
Support for lustration	.37 (.24)	-.46* (.23)	.34 (.39)
Cohort (binary)	2.37* (1.35)	1.09 (1.47)	-5.15** (2.06)
Cohort*shari'a	-.16 (.29)	-.72* (.39)	.49** (.22)
Cohort*redistribution	-.31 (.40)	-.07 (.44)	1.03* (.56)
Cohort*lustration	.09 (.30)	-.01 (.33)	.02 (.25)

Table 10: Income Group Effects (Binomial Regression Results)

	Ennahda	Nidaa	Front Populaire
Support for shari'a as basis of laws	.45** (.18)	-.25 (.26)	-.77* (.34)
Support for redistribution	-.23 (.27)	-.34 (.31)	.26 (.68)
Support for lustration	.41 (.24)	-.54* (.23)	.38*** (.39)
Income group (binary)	-3.20* (1.98)	2.72 (2.03)	-3.18 (3.23)
Income group*shari'a	.48 (.32)	-.51* (.29)	.59 (.51)
Income group*redistribution	.02 (.34)	.21 (.51)	.33 (.74)
Income group*lustration	.54 (.48)	-.14 (.36)	-.04 (.32)

Table 11: Employment Sector Effects (Binomial Regression Results)

	Ennahda	Nidaa	Front Populaire
Support for shari'a as basis of laws	.74** (.29)	-.63** (.24)	.06 (.29)
Support for redistribution	.03 (.22)	-.88 (.67)	.69** (.28)
Support for lustration	.35 (.23)	-.55*** (.16)	-.02 (.18)
Employment sector	1.88* (1.87)	.05 (1.93)	-.53 (2.6)
Sector*shari'a	.15 (.52)	.12* (.47)	-1.25*** (.42)
Sector*redistribution	.15* (.52)	-.33 (.49)	.16 (.56)
Sector*lustration	.90 (.50)	-.10 (.36)	.83* (.45)

Table 12: Education Effects (Binomial Regression Results)

	Ennahda	Nidaa	Front Populaire
Support for shari'a as basis of laws	.83** (.62)	-.34** (.52)	-.85 (.71)
Support for redistribution	-.16 (1.19)	-.64 (.65)	8.74** (4.5)
Support for lustration	1.05* (.61)	-.27 (.57)	-.18 (.51)
Education level	.37* (.99)	.03 (.55)	6.2 (3.5)
Education*shari'a	-.06 (.12)	.03 (.10)	.07 (.16)
Education*redistribution	.06 (.25)	-.01 (.14)	-1.66 (.92)
Education*lustration	-.17 (.14)	-.04 (.11)	.12 (.12)

Appendix C

Table 13: Comparing Model Fits through Pseudo-R Squares

	Ennahda	Nidaa	Front Populaire
Model with preferences only	0.0965	0.1086	0.0915
Model with preferences*State	0.1737	0.2747	0.1497

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