



Model Arab League

Annotated Bibliography for Tunisia

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This annotated bibliography was created to serve as a research resource for students taking part in the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations' Model Arab League Program. With the understanding that research can be intimidating and time consuming, an effort was made to find a set of scholarly articles that give a detailed background and thorough account of the current situation for this League of Arab States member. Included are annotations designed to give a description of the source with the intention of students completing the research on their own. There has been an attempt to focus on more contemporary scholarship, specifically post-9/11 and post-2011 (so-called "Arab Spring") where possible, as these are two phenomena that fundamentally changed politics in the Arab world. These sources should provide students with a solid basis for understanding the country they are representing in both regionally and globally significant issues as well as the interests of other countries within the League of Arab States.

1. Zouheir A. Maalej, "The 'Jasmine Revolt' has made the 'Arab Spring': A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Last Three Political Speeches of the Ousted President of Tunisia," *Discourse Society*, Volume 23, Number 6, November 2012, pp. 679-700. •• Before Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali (former president of Tunisia) fled the country, he famously gave three speeches. Besides the fact that these speeches were conducted as an emergency response to the spreading Tunisian revolution, detailed analysis of the language Ben Ali used in each speech demonstrates critical changes in political posture and power. Most notably, Ben Ali increasingly used Tunisian colloquial Arabic in his second and final speech, revealing his distress and lack of preparation. This article gives a detailed dialectic analysis of Ban Ali's three speeches including his use of Standard vs. colloquial Arabic and his use of pronouns to create a discourse of inclusion and exclusion in Tunisia.
2. Duncan Pickard, "Challenges to Legitimate Governance in post-Revolution Tunisia," *The Journal of North African Studies*, Volume 16, Number 4, December 2011, pp. 637-652. •• Following the Arab Spring and the governmental changes it brought about, much ink has been spilt over the nature of the new governments. Especially in the West, the focus is on whether these governments will have an Islamic or secular character. In Tunisia, Islamic political parties were repressed by the Ben Ali regime which may have contributed to the success of the an-Nahda (an Islamist party) in post-revolution elections. At the same time, an-Nahda's leader, Rashid al-Ghannushi, is widely known to be politically moderate and in favor of a secular-neutral government. The challenge facing Tunisia's new government according to Tunisians is not determining its religious or secular character then, but is instead addressing practical issues that affect Tunisians every day, like reforming the police security services and reducing unemployment. This article illustrates the post-revolution political landscape in Tunisia and describes the local

challenges the new government faces.

3. Simon Hawkins, "Who Wears *Hijab* with the President: Constructing a Modern Islam in Tunisia," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Volume 41, Number 1, 2011, pp. 35-58. •• Under Ben Ali, Tunisia was an Islamic state according to the constitution but the government was avowedly secular. On top of this, the Ben Ali government did not take a secular-neutral approach to religion within Tunisia and upheld a ban on the *hijab* in public institutions like schools and other government buildings. Secularization in Tunisia however is not the same as that of Turkey for example, wherein radical secularization was enforced seemingly overnight. Instead, Tunisian secularization is seen more as a gradual process of modernization and was initiated by notable Muslim modernists like Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi. This article illustrates the ways in which the Ben Ali regime sought to exert control over religion within Tunisia as a means of inculcating modernization. From the perspective of Ban Ali, public religion was a relic of the past to be thought of affectionately and allowed for the elderly, but a young woman wearing a *hijab* was treated as a threat to modern Tunisia.
4. Jennifer Hill and Wendy Woodland, "Contrasting Water Management Techniques in Tunisia: Towards Sustainable Agricultural Use," *The Geographical Journal*, Volume 169, Number 4, December 2003, pp. 342-357. •• Although Tunisia as a whole experiences an annual water deficit, northern regions close to the Mediterranean Sea usually have an annual water surplus that is conducive to agriculture. Regions of Tunisia further south are desert and therefore the people living there are reliant on dams and/or rainwater harvesting to obtain their water. While the dams provide southern Tunisians with short term agricultural viability, this is only to a subsistence level at best and is unsustainable. In considering the long term, reliance on rainwater harvesting is unpredictable, and the dams cause environmental degradation because of increasing surface area to volume ratios as the reservoir walls deteriorate. This article explains Tunisia's water situation in the short and long term, one which has allowed Tunisians to evade drought for now but is predicted to fail relatively soon.
5. Maamar Sebri, "Residential Water Industry in Tunisia – A Descriptive Analysis," *The Journal of North African Studies*, Volume 18, Number 2, February 2013, pp. 305-323. •• Like its North African neighbors, Tunisia's climate is mostly characterized as desert with some Mediterranean landscape in the north. Even though Tunisia is continuously at a water deficit, almost 90% of Tunisia's fresh water goes to agriculture. Desalinization of sea water in Tunisia has been explored, but because the process is fossil fuel intensive, it is not as cost effective as it might be in other more resource rich Arab countries. Because of Tunisia's situation in terms of water, the country has actually been very progressive in terms of its water policy. The National Company for Water Management and Distribution

(SONEDE) was created in 1968 and it enacted a graduated system of water tariffs based on income some years later. This article illustrates the effectiveness of the water tariffs put in place by SONEDE in Tunisia and includes graphs detailing how the tariff rates have led to reduced, and therefore more sustainable water use.

6. Mounir Saidani, "Revolution and Counterrevolution in Tunisia: The Forty Days That Shook the Country," *Boundary 2*, Volume 39, Number 1, Spring 2012, pp. 43-54. •• Most people date the beginning of the Tunisian revolution, and the beginning of the Arab Spring then, to December 2010 when Muhammad Bouazizi self-immolated in front of the office of the regional governor. However, seeds of discontent in Tunisia can be dated much further back, and protests involving self-immolation were recorded at least two years earlier in 2008. The Tunisian revolution spread virally throughout the country because of the common situation faced by the majority of citizens, namely that of poverty, unemployment, lack of social mobility, and lack of legitimate representation in the government. This article describes the lead up to and the first forty days of the Tunisian revolution. Specifically, it highlights the role that social media and Tunisian labor unions played in the success of the movement.
7. Stefano M. Torelli, Fabio Merone, and Francesco Cavatorta, "Salafism in Tunisia: Challenges and Opportunities for Democratization," *Middle East Policy*, Volume 29, Number 4, Winter 2012, pp. 140-154. •• After the Arab Spring began in Tunisia and spread elsewhere, Tunisia appeared to fall out of the media's limelight because it is a small less significant geopolitically. This may be due to the fact that many in the media assumed Tunisia was a relatively secular liberal Arab state and that it would make an easy transition over to liberal democracy. As it turns out, Salafi Islamist parties like Ennahda won the majority of seats in the Tunisian parliament in its October 2011 elections. This article explains the historical events that have fostered Salafism in Tunisia, eventually leading to its political prominence in the modern day. It would be incorrect however to paint all Salafists in Tunisia with one brush as there are various political inclinations under the umbrella of Salafism. This article also familiarizes the reader with important Arabic terms and the differing manifestations that Salafism takes in the political sphere.
8. Abdeljelil Temimi, "Symposium on Youth of the Revolution of Dignity and Democracy, Thursday, February 17, 2011," *Boundary 2*, Volume 39, Number 1, Spring 2012, pp. 113-135. •• The Tunisian revolution was largely characterized by dissatisfied youth, many with a college education yet unable to find gainful employment in their own country. Although Tunisian youth were the ones organizing protests and sit-ins during the revolution, it appears that they have reaped none of the benefits. Many of them feel as if their revolutionary movement was usurped by conservative and religious political

organizations after the ousting of Ben Ali, and they remain unhappy with the current course of Tunisia. This course, according to them, is one that is not addressing the practical problems facing the majority of Tunisian citizens like unemployment, but is one that is more concerned with political power grabbing. These Tunisians continue to be critical of the new government, as shown by this translated transcript of a youth symposium that took place in 2011.

9. Ahmed Jdey, "A History of Tunisia, January 14, 2011: The End of a Dictator and the Beginning of Democratic Construction," *Boundary 2*, Volume 39, Number 1, Spring 2012, pp. 69-86. •• As in any country that experiences a revolution, Tunisia's revolt was not a random or historically isolated event. French colonialism dominated Tunisia's past but faced indigenous resistance enough to name the area that would later become the epicenter of the modern Tunisian revolution the "triangle of death". Post-colonial border drawing forced formerly separate tribal groups together, creating some obvious societal tensions. Later, the global force of capitalism would create a deep sense of isolation and relative deprivation amongst rural Tunisians from the coastal regions that experienced international investment and development under Ben Ali. This article argues that the first signs of the modern Tunisian revolution that began the Arab Spring can be dated to a small scale uprising in an inland mining area of Gafsa in 2008.
10. Fadhel Kaboub, "From Neoliberalism to Social Justice: The Feasibility of Full Employment in Tunisia," *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Volume 44, Number 3, September 2012, pp. 305-312. •• It has been repeatedly argued that Tunisia's revolution was a product of societal dissatisfaction and rampant unemployment, especially among college graduates. Coupled with the fact that Arab countries in general are experiencing a youth bulge (52% of Tunisia's population is under 30 years of age), enormous swaths of Tunisians were destitute. The Tunisian government had artificially kept the official unemployment rate low by discounting some categories which led to a World Bank report praising Tunisia as an economic and governmental model for the Arab world. This author argues that neoliberal economic policies under the Ben Ali regime created enormous wealth disparity in Tunisia and in order to correct these, a fundamental shift in Tunisian economic policy needs to take place. This article outlines a possible plan with three phases of an Employer of Last Resort (ELR) strategy that is mainly a program of public sector employment.
11. Andrea G. Brody-Barre, "The Impact of Political Parties and Coalition Building on Tunisia's Democratic Future," *The Journal of North African Studies*, Volume 18, Number 2, 2013, pp. 211-230. •• Although Rashid al-Ghannoushi's Ennahda party won the most seats in the new Tunisian parliament (41%), it does not have a majority and the rest of the seats were won by a wide range of others. In order to create a sense of

cohesion, it appears that Ennahda has reached out to a few other political parties of secular centrist leaning in order to form a “troika” and maintain a two-thirds coalition. This does not mean however that the troika is unified, as it often has internal disagreements that may prove to be detrimental to policymaking. So, while Tunisia has made significant steps toward democratization in terms of holding elections and beginning to draft a constitution, it is difficult for any country coming out of an authoritarian system to simply switch so quickly. This article describes the many new or renewed political parties in Tunisia and the author argues that Tunisia’s current political system is actually wracked by too many parties catering to specific groups. Instead, Tunisia could benefit from the merging of parties with not too divergent interests.

12. Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, “Tunisia’s Morning After,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Volume 18, Number 3, Summer 2011, pp. 11-17. •• In 1991, Samuel Huntington (famous for writing “The Clash of Civilizations”) wrote that Tunisia was a prime candidate for democratic governance given its economic and sociopolitical situation at the time. Although Tunisian protests that began the Arab Spring succeeded in ousting Ben Ali, the interim government headed by Mohamed Ghannouchi was seen as too close to Ben Ali as well. Subsequent protests would lead to Ghannouchi’s resignation and his replacement with Beji Caid Essebsi, who had a new cabinet with “no holdovers” and got rid of the secret police. These were seen as steps in the right direction administratively, but structural problems with Tunisia’s economy remain to be addressed, like the country’s overreliance on agriculture and a weak private sector. This article describes the immediate conditions that led up to the Tunisian revolution and the current problems the people and the new government face.