

Tunisia: Past, Present and the Future

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Ifriqiya (Africa)

- **Question:** Where does the name **Ifriqiya (Africa)** derive from?

Ifriqiya (Africa)

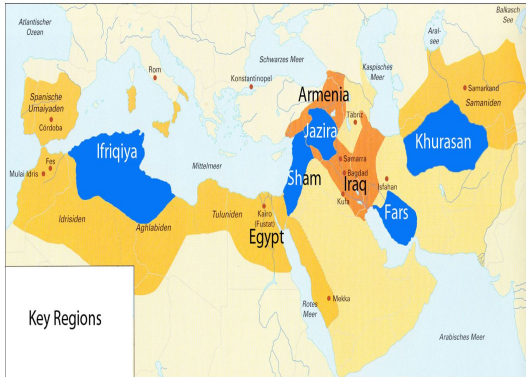


Figure 1: (image source: kapitalafrik.com)

Answer

- Name given to the area held by Umayyad Empire (9th Century).

Tunisia - Arab, African or Mediterranean?



Figure 2: Hint (source: wikipedia)

Independence Movement

- Neo-Destour Party, UGTT (Tunisian General Labour Union, 1946)
- Key actors within Neo-Destour: Habib Bourguiba and Salah Ben Youssef
- Bourgibists vs Youssefists: North East vs. South

Independence Movement

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- Bourgibists vs Youssefists: North East vs. South
- Also pragmatists (with the West) vs. conservatives?

Habib Bourgiba Presidency (1956-1987)



Figure 4

Main Pillars of Bourgibism

- Independence
- Reformation, centralization
- Advancing women's rights
- Pragmatism in foreign policy
- Arab-Tunisian identity

The Family Code (1959)



Figure 5

Family Code

- The most progressive family code in the Arab World
- Women's right to divorce, child custody, banning polygamy
- A central tenet of Tunisian identity

Education reforms

- In 1956, about 25% of schoolchildren went to school, in 1968 over 75% (Sylvester, 1969 p22)
- About a quarter of the national budget went to education
- Secular oriented, open for girls

Economic Policy

- Shifting between socialism-cooperatism and liberal reforms
- 1956-1970s: state-sponsored industrialization and agricultural cooperatives
- 1970s on privatization (limited)

Foreign policy

- Pragmatism, sided with the Western block
- Palestinian issue: two-state solution
- Critical of Nasser and Arab Nationalism

Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI)

- Founded in 1981
- Leader: Rachid Ghannouchi
- Opposition to economic policies and progressive family law.

Bread Riots (1983)



Figure 6: Women in Kef joining the riots

Causes and Consequences of Bread Riots

- Economic stagnation in Europe and Tunisia
- IMF Program
- Rise in bread prices due to government cutting subsidies
- Consequence: Rise of Ben Ali

Ben Ali's "Medical Coup"

- November 7, 1987
- Doctors signing off a statement that Bourguiba's health is unfit to rule.
- Interior Minister Zine El Abidine Ben Ali becoming President

Ben Ali Era (1987-2011)



Figure 7

Ben Ali's Policies

- Economy: continuation of liberalization
- Crony relations around the presidency
- Restriction of political competition
- "Police state"

The birth of Ennahda–1987



Figure 8

Opposition Coordination

- Ennahda's imprisonment and exile abroad
- Exile: moderation on social issues
- Emerging coordination among opposition parties abroad
- 18 October Coalition for Rights and Freedoms (2005)
 - Seculars, Islamists, leftists

Revolution

- Rise in food prices (2011)
- Corruption and oppression
- Regional inequalities and unemployment

Self-immolation of Muhamed Bouazizi

- Street vendor in Sidi Bouzid (interior)
- Confiscation of food stall by the municipal police
- self immolation in protest



Figure 9: Muhamed Bouazizi (Allah yarhamhu)

Protests

- Protests spread to other areas, urban and rural
- Confrontations with the police, military and police shifting sides
- Announcement of economic packages, political liberalization, reshuffling the cabinet

Ben Ali flees!



Figure 11: Source: magrebvoices.com

Elected National Constituent Assembly



Figure 12

TROIKA Government

- Semi-presidential
- Ennahda (Islamist), CPR (centrist), Ettakatol (leftist)
- weakening state authority
- continuing economic challenges
- terrorism concerns, assassination of leftist activists
- dissolution in January, 2014 (Nobel Prize in 2015)

2014 Elections

- : Three main ideological families: Burgibist, Islamist, leftist
- Nidaa Tounes: Regime successor party
- A coalition of Ben Ali bureaucrats, leftists, disillusioned

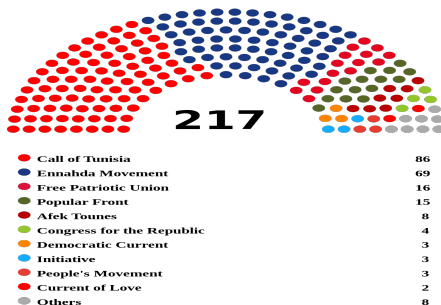


Figure 13

Bourgibists vs Youssefists?

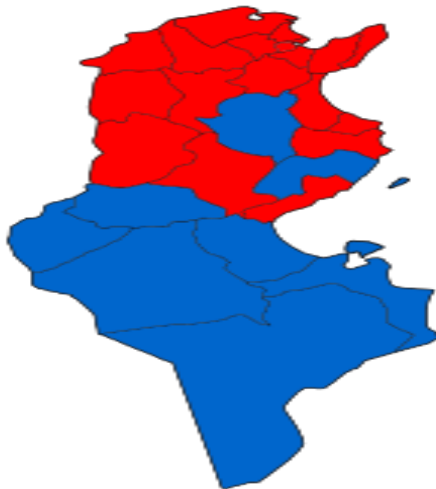


Figure 14: Red: Nidaa Tounes first, Blue: Ennahda first

Beji Caid Essebsi (2014-2019)

- Initial coalition between Nidaa Tounes and Ennahda
- Important bills:
 - Reconciliation law, the Code of Local Collectives
- Failures in other fronts (Constitutional Court, economy)
- Split from Nidaa to smaller Bourgibist parties

New elections and the rise of new figures

- Death of President Beji Caid Essebsi on July 25th, 2019
- New elections scheduled
- Notable new actors: Kais Saied, Nabil Karoui, Abir Moussi
- New parties: PDL, Kalb Tounes, Karama Coalition

Rise of Kais Saied



Figure 15: Source: BBC Arabic.

Saied's campaign

- A law professor, ran an outsider campaign
- Slogan “The people want” reminiscent of revolution
- Campaign against corruption
- Electoral program emphasizes decentralization
- Modest budget
- Strong support from the youth, disillusioned

President Saïed drinking coffee at a popular coffee house



Figure 16: Source: Maghrebvoices.com

Saied and Karoui



Figure 17

2019 Parliamentary Election Results

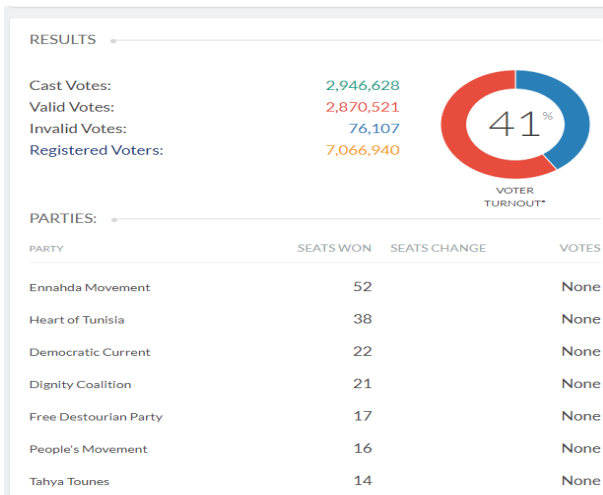


Figure 18: Source: <https://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/3175/>

Governments under Saied Presidency

- Weak on legitimacy, public support
- Unable to solve economic problems
- COVID 19 crisis
- Conflicts within the parliament
- Corruption and ideological ambiguity
- Police making a comeback

July 25th, 2021

- Activating Article 80 of the Constitution
- Kais Saied's decision to suspend the parliament
- Dissolution of the cabinet, lifting immunities
- Judiciary taking action against corruption
- Kais Saied: Fixing the revolution

Initial Supporters

- The labor union, majority of citizens, military, army
- Political parties (except Ennahda, Kalb Tounes, some leftist ones)

September 22nd Decree

- Rule by decree and ignore constitution
- Continue suspension of the parliament
- Prepare for a referendum and regime change

Some Factors

- Lack of trust in political class
- Low turnout
- inability of parties to institutionalize their base

Tunisians Perception of Corruption

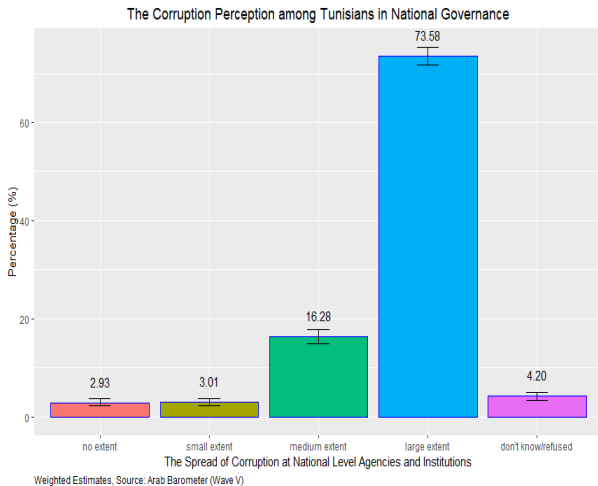
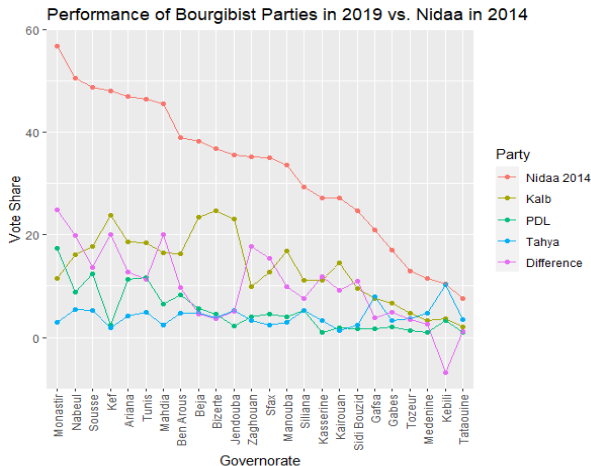


Figure 19

Party Institutionanlization



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Figure 20

Moving forward – what is ahead?

- A new form of governance – direct democracy and presidentialism
- Role of parties unclear
- Role of the Union unclear
- Role of bureaucrats likely emboldened

Tunisia- Achievements and Shortfalls

- Achievements: peaceful transitions of power, free and fair elections
- Remarkable improvements in freedom of expression
- Failures: solving economic issues, institutionalizing a stable party structure.