Policy Reform for Increased Transparency, Accountability, and Good Governance in the Tunisian Extractive Industries

Alexander P. Martin

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RESEARCH REPORT

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Alexander P. Martin
Tunis Business School, University of Tunis
Tunisian civil society actors: This broad coalition includes two distinct groups of civil society actors who are operating within this policy subsystem.

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ABSTRACT

Through a critical application of the Western-centric policy theory Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), this paper seeks to demonstrate the extent and manner in which a broad advocacy coalition is working toward improving the accountability and good governance of the Extractive Industries in Tunisia by encouraging the implementation of pro-transparency policies as a means to combat corruption.

As these actors are advocating for policy reform in natural resource governance, a particularly sensitive sector due to its economic, employment, sustainable development, and environmental implications, progress towards specific policy goals has been incremental. Tangible advocacy gains, such as the government’s publication of oil contracts, have been achieved while policy goals such as Tunisia joining the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) have not been realized. This is partly due to policy-makers’ resistance to change within a context of gradual and limited adoption of ‘open government’ mentality, lack of information, and a prevailing argument that transparency will negatively affect investment. The wider issue of insufficient government transparency that is afflicting post-revolutionary Tunisia is also addressed.

This report uses the ACF as a framing tool but provides a critique of its application to the context of the Tunisian natural resources sector. It identifies that in the case of policy actors in Tunisia who are seeking to improve the accountability and good governance of the natural resources sector through the implementation of increased transparency policies application of ACF would not accurately map the reality. ACF’s terminology has provided an effective focus to the research but the assumptions ACF makes, such as the existence of at least two Advocacy Coalitions, core and policy core belief systems, policy brokers, policy entrepreneurs, stable dialogue partners, stable parameters, and an easily identifiable policy subsystem, does not apply. The forcing of this policy framework into this context would lead to misleading analysis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACF - Advocacy Coalition Framework dans l’énergie et les mines
CSQAC - Counter Status Quo Advocacy Coalition
CPG - Gafsa Phosphate Company
CTTEM - La Coalition Tunisienne pour la Transparence
EITI - Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
ETAP - l’Entreprise Tunisienne d’Activités Pétrolières
MoEM - Minister of Energy and Mines
NRGI - Natural Resources Governance Institute
OGP - Open Government Partnership
SOEs - State Owned Enterprises
SQAC - Status Quo Advocacy Coalition
INTRODUCTION

Natural resources in Tunisia are not plentiful, contributing to approximately 8% of the GDP, depending on production\(^1\),\(^2\), but remain a vital source of employment in the producing regions of Tunisia that lack economic diversity and central government investment\(^3\). Therefore, this sector is key to addressing regional disparities and sporadically experiences popular upheavals related to natural resources. In addition, the opaque management of the sector is symptomatic of the wider issue of lack of government transparency that is afflicting post-revolutionary Tunisia.

This work is an application of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) to a North African state undergoing a post-revolution and post-authoritarian democratic transition. With the revolution both causing instability in the political system but also acting as a catalyst for the opening of numerous policy sub-systems, this paper poses a challenge for the application of a policy theory that assumes a degree of stability.

The articles specifically related to natural resources in Tunisia’s 2014 Constitution have provided the primary legal basis for advocacy, while the progress towards increasing transparency and accountability are the results of gradual reform seeking to address a range of social issues of inequality, sub-national development, unemployment, and environmental degradation in natural resource producing regions.

Reform issues which are advocated for within the natural resource sector relate to economic and labor issues, sustainable development, and the environment. Therefore, applying ACF terminology, a broad, albeit not entirely coordinated advocacy coalition has emerged that is working towards demanding greater transparency and accountability in the natural resource sector.

The spearhead of this broad advocacy coalition is La Coalition Tunisienne pour la transparence dans l’énergie et les mines (CTTEM), a group of 13 Tunisian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) advocating for the implementation of specific transparency and governance related policies: legislation that supports their constitutional rights for subnational and sustainable development, environmental safeguards, and government transparency and accountability for revenue distribution. Some of these policy aims have been partially achieved (disclosure of natural resource contracts) while others have not yet been achieved, for example, Tunisia’s adherence to the EITI. CTTEM, therefore, represent the ‘core’ of the broad advocacy coalition seeking to assert further constitutional rights regarding government transparency and tangible policy change, e.g., contract disclosure and Tunisia joining EITI.

The actors in the ‘periphery’ of the broad advocacy coalition share similar core beliefs, namely transparency and accountability, but are either bandwagoning with CTTEM’s policy goals or have their own region-specific goals ranging from employment and fair hiring processes to cutting extraction industry pollution and providing clean drinking water. The demands are often directed at local SOEs or private companies, like Gafsa Phosphate Company, chemical companies in Sfax and Gabes, oil refineries in Tataouine, or at governorate headquarters to state officials who have limited power to change the situation of protesters and certainly do not make sufficient structural changes. These actions have a less direct impact on change at a policy level. However, their pressure on the government is contributing to the creation of an environment that is conducive to policy change. Core and periphery actors may not share the same ‘core policy beliefs’ but they share ‘core beliefs’ therefore making them part of the same broad advocacy coalition.

The research also addresses a secondary issue of the role INGOs play in supporting the effectiveness of local actors’ advocacy, by providing funding, training, and technical assistance, through assessing the extent to which local advocacy is shaped and aided by international support. The case study examined in this research is the Natural Resource Governance Institute’s (NRGI) role in supporting CTTEM.

ACF is employed to analyze the cohesion of local and international actors’ advocacy in this policy

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\(^3\) National unemployment stands at 15% (http://www.ins.tn/fr/themes/emploi) but is higher in the natural resource producing governorates of Gafsa (28.2%), Gabes (24%), Kebel (25.8%) and Tataouine (32%): http://monii.ben.chaaben.over-blog.fr/2016/08/taux-de-chomage-par-gouvernoret-2010-2016.html
subsystem based on their shared core beliefs, namely government transparency and accountability in natural resource governance. This report offers a revision to this framework, suggesting that an advocacy coalition can feature both 'core' and 'periphery' actors, who vary in approach and whose advocacy strategies are uncoordinated but share core beliefs regarding the good governance and transparency of the sector and have a mutually assisting impact towards policy change.

This research aims to illustrate the extent and manner in which a broad coalition is advocating for policy change aimed at improving transparency, accountability, and good governance in the extractive industries in Tunisia.

This photo is the 5 elected civil society representatives of the EITI multi-stakeholder group with the head of the Parliamentary Energy committee and head of National Anti-corruption Authority

*from Left to Right* - Taoufik Ain (Mining Basin Association for Investment and Development (ABMID), Amer Laarayedh (Member of Tunisian Parliament and Head of Parliamentary Energy Committee), Chawki Tebib (Head of National Anti-corruption Authority - INLUCC), Manel Ben Achour (I-Watch), Chokri Hmidi (Tunisian Association for Transparency in Energy and Mines - ATTEM), Aymen Latrech (Association for Development without Boarders - ADSF), and Foued Kraiem (Tunisian Association for the Environment and Nature - ATEN).


**METHODOLOGY**

This research employed qualitative methods of data collection and analysis; one-on-one semi-structured qualitative interviews were the primary method of inquiry supported by analysis of online coverage of NR issues from media outlets and CSO statements, NRGI press releases and blogs, and EITI standard updates. Seventeen individual interviews, face-to-face and via Skype, with male and female representatives of Tunisian civil society, international organizations, government officials, and journalists were conducted. These included representatives of the CTTEM civil society coalition, NRGI in Tunisia, I-Watch, freelance journalists, and governmental representatives. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The interviews addressed the following issues: strategies to achieve civil society policy goals, transparency, efficiency in policy advocacy, progress in advocacy, and resistance to change. The sampling method for this work is the identification of key actors in the policy subsystem in addition to interviewee recommendations.
Prior to the revolution, governance of Tunisia’s natural resources was a closed box, lacking legislative or public scrutiny and controlled by State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and key government and ruling family figures. After the revolution and the subsequent removal of President Ben Ali and the Trabelsi clan, reform of SOEs has been minimal. It would be inaccurate to claim that all staff in Tunisian SOEs and ministries related to natural resource governances are against transparency, as this research shows. However, there are individuals who seek to retain their positions of privilege. In addition to agentic factors, a range of structural factors contribute to the resistance to reform in post-revolution Tunisia and have forced transparency initiatives to take a back seat, namely the legal and governance framework, the governmental priorities of security and economic reform and governmental instability, in addition to external factors, such as IMF demands of budget deficit reduction and implementing austerity measures.

**Status Quo Advocacy Coalition (SQAC) vs. Counter Status Quo Advocacy Coalition (CSQAC)**

In an attempt to satisfy the requirements of ACF, this report demonstrates how two Advocacy Coalitions can be identified. However, the caveats of this forced analysis, discussed later in this report, demonstrate ACF’s incompatibility with this case study. Certain actors in SOEs and certain government officials can be grouped into a contra-transparency, Status Quo Advocacy Coalition (SQAC) that plays a role in resisting change to the governance of the sector. The influence the SQAC exerts in order to protect its position of privilege results in the creation and proliferation of arguments against the notion of transparency and good governance, namely the economic impact of such policies and regulation. The SQAC is mostly composed of the following:

- **State Owned Enterprises (SOEs):**
  
  1. Enterprise Tunisienne d’Activités Pétrolières (ETAP) controls Tunisia’s hydrocarbon resources and is responsible for foreign company exploration and extraction contracts. 
  2. Gafsa Phosphate Company (CPG) controls Tunisia’s mining, process and exportation operations. These companies protect their corporate interests and their cooperation or resistance are an important condition for change to occur.

- **Government offices:** Ministry of Energy and Mines (MoEM) and the Prime Minister’s Office. The MoEM’s remit includes contracts negotiation, providing licenses and permits, and maintaining direct contact with investors. As the head of government, the Prime Minister (PM) plays an oversight role ensuring licenses and contracts are checked by legal advisors before being published. The PM’s Office also coordinates the national governance and transparency strategy established by the Open Governance Partnership, which also includes coordination with the MoEM and civil society. Importantly, this research does not paint all government staff with the same ‘opaque actor’ brush, as certain actors are making steps towards implementing transparency.

- **Members of the National Parliament:** Collected research data alleges that politicians are either part of lobbies or have been subject to lobbying efforts regarding transparency legislation.

There are two caveats with the framing of an SQAC. Firstly, the actors in SQAC are deliberately almost invisible. The research can identify where these actors reside but not who they are. The scope of this research does not have the means to uncover evidence of corruption. As explicitly pro-corruption discourse will not be found, it is impossible to discern the core beliefs of SQAC actors. Instead, anti-transparency actions for any reason, can be shown to serve SQAC interests. For example, the MoEM appears to be in favor of policy reform because it is working towards implementing EITI, a government commitment. However, because EITI membership has not been achieved, it could be assumed that the ministry is therefore impeding progress because it has no interest in accountability and good governance reform. EITI is not, however, hence the slow reform process.

Second, it ignores the reality that the Tunisian governmental system was constructed by authoritarian leaders and is in need of comprehensive reform. The labelling of SQAC is misleading as it ignores that the structure of the system has an equal or greater influence than the agency of individuals. Individuals are not innately corrupt, but are unfortunately caught

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in a system that is in need of reform and are limited in what can they can realistically achieve.

In the post-revolution era, a broad counter-status quo advocacy coalition (CSQAC) has emerged “on the basis of congruency (not consensus) in their belief system” (Hoppe and Colebatch, 2016: 131). The caveats with the grouping of a CSQAC are addressed below. Their common objectives are increasing transparency and improving the governance of the natural resources sector. This informal grouping is composed of Tunisian CSOs, INGOs, journalists, some sympathetic pro-reform civil servants, and protesters/protest movements who employ different advocacy tools and are seeking reform in different aspects of the governance of the natural resources sector which has not significantly changed since the revolution.

Their grievances with the sector, such as the lack of employment, regional development, corporate social responsibility, levels of industrial pollution, and state corruption, have existed prior to the revolution (see Description and Framing of the Issue) but the relative freedom provided by the post-revolution governments allowed the CSQAC to take shape.

CSOs working on natural resource issues existed in Tunis, Gabes, Gafsa and Tataouine but INGOs (NRGI and PWYP) have provided training and capacity-building to support their advocacy efforts, making them a more effective platform in addition to forming a coalition encompassing some of these CSOs (CTTEM). This also applies to the journalists and government officials who have been able to discuss extractive sector issues with greater knowledge thanks to INGO training.

Tunisian civil society actors: This broad coalition includes two distinct groups of civil society actors who are operating within this policy subsystem.

1) La Coalition Tunisienne pour la transparence dans l’énergie et les mines (CTTEM): 13 CSOs with specific transparency and good governance goals around the socio-economic and environmental impact of the extractives sector that came together in 2014 to form a coalition. CTTEM advocates for transparency, accountability and good governance in the natural resource sector. CTTEM’s devotion to this subsystem, its clear policy goals, and policy reform successes, position it in the ‘core’ of this advocacy coalition.

2) Organizations that want to see a transparent and accountable Tunisian government, but who engage in projects related to the extractive sector e.g., I-Watch.

- International NGOs: Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI)2 and Publish What You Pay (PWYP) seek to achieve their aims of extractive industries transparency partly through empowering local CSOs with similar policy goals by providing capacity-building and funding. Their approaches seek to ensure local ownership. Adherence to the global standards of EITI is one of NRGI’s country-specific objectives in Tunisia. NRGI acts neutrally and adopts a multi-stakeholder approach by also providing technical assistance and capacity-building to government and journalists. From an ACF perspective, these two INGOs cannot be labelled as, or act as, ‘policy brokers’ because they are not neutral but are instead working towards their organization’s own strategic international goals.

- Protesters: this is a broad definition because protests in the natural resource producing regions vary depending on local needs. The demands of protesters include specific issues such as employment, environmental impact, and corporate social responsibility. However, grievances are linked to the same core beliefs: 1) lack of transparency, in matters such as staff recruitment processes or reports on harm caused by resource extraction, and 2) good governance, regarding the allocation of ‘development’ funds. For example, the Kamour protests included demands to the government, such as allocation of 20% of the region’s natural resource revenues to be reinvested in improving infrastructure and create projects and demands aimed at the private sector to include corporate social responsibility, e.g., the creation of 1,500 jobs in oil companies and 3,000 jobs in the environment company (CPG affiliate). These groups engage in contentious politics.

9 https://nawaat.org/portal/2017/04/28/%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%A8-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%85-%D8%A4%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%B3%D9%82%D9%88%D8%B7-%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%87/
10 Al Chourouk: http://www.alchourouk.com/26749/666/1-%D8%A9%D9%86%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%A9%AF-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%A9-

Although campaigns such as Winou el Petrol, supported by social media activism #WinouelPétrole, have been stigmatized due to allegations of politicization and the spreading of misinformation, they have succeeded in garnering media and public attention and spurring a debate around the need for improved government transparency in natural resources, thus contributing to a ripe environment for policy advocacy in the sector. International donors prefer funding professionalized entities while certain movements such as the Kamour protests relied on local funding to support its sit-ins.

**Media:** journalists and outlets that report issues and civil society activities play a role in raising public awareness around natural resources issues. Journalists interviewed for this research and outlets such as Nawaat and Inkyfada are pro-reform, pro-transparency and can be grouped into the CSQAC. Rawdha Dabbabi from HBS Tunis noted that the dominant media is supportive of the SQAC as it discredits protesters as “troublemakers and therefore their grievances are not really heard”. Otherwise, media coverage of natural resource issues is often objective reporting.

**Energy Committee in the Tunisian Parliament:** Article 13 of the constitution stipulates that the energy committee needs to approve all natural resource contracts. Therefore, MPs’ beliefs in the principles of good governance and government accountability are as important as their technical capacity to understand contracts. Thus, committee members tend to follow their parties line on energy policy, it is difficult to determine whether the energy committee consists, in ACF terms, of policy advocates or policy brokers.

**Government officials:** To say that all staff in ministries are against transparency would be misleading. This research identifies former and current ministry staff on energy policy, it is difficult to determine whether committee members tend to follow their parties line on energy policy, it is difficult to determine whether the energy committee consists, in ACF terms, of policy advocates or policy brokers.

The caveat with framing this broad group of policy actors as the CSQAC is that not all the policy actors conform to the ACF requirement of being bound together by a shared set of normative/fundamental ‘core beliefs’. Beyond a reductive assumption that the CSQAC’s core beliefs are shaped by Tunisia’s neo-patrimonial, post-independence (1956-2011), which was defined by ‘providing’ for the people largely through public sector jobs, in a ‘social contract’ of no political resistance, it is difficult to identify exactly what ideologically ties these policy actors.

Neither does the grouping of these actors under the term ‘advocacy coalition’ assume their cohesion or collaboration. Their connectivity is based on their existence within the same natural resource policy subsystem and on their collective belief that the Tunisian government should increase transparency and govern the natural resource sector with accountability. ACF would define this as shared ‘policy instrument beliefs’, due to the fact that increased transparency policies and mechanisms are means to pressure the government and SOEs in order to achieve the ends of accountable and good governance practices.

However, the broad CSQAC’s ‘policy core beliefs’ are split between: 1) regional demands for sub-national reinvestment of natural resource profits, equality in employment opportunities, and reversing environmental degradation, and 2) advocacy focused at national government level that seeks to reform the formerly authoritarian system by implementing a revenue management mechanism, inclusion of oversight actors, and adherence to the EITI international standard.

To address the absence of ‘core beliefs’ and the lack of shared ‘policy core beliefs’, the distinction between core and periphery actors within the broad advocacy coalition identifies the breadth of policy actors with similar desires for accountability and good governance in the extractives sector, which can be achieved through increased transparency.

A forced application of ACF would entail: 1) a deliberately almost invisible Advocacy Coalition, and 2) a broad Advocacy Coalition that is only bound by ‘policy instrument beliefs’. Therefore, this report identifies actors who are resistant to transparency measures against one broad Advocacy Coalition (AC), of core and periphery actors, who seek accountability and good governance in the Tunisian natural resources sector ‘ends’ through the ‘means’ of advocating for increased transparency policies.
DESCRIPTION AND FRAMING OF THE ISSUE

This policy subsystem emerged as a consequence of pre-revolution employment and economic issues due to state corruption, unfair employment processes and a lack of regional development. In the post-revolution era, the anti-corruption theme is prevalent, but the advocacy focus is on increasing government transparency, part of the ongoing revolution process and removal of deep-state patronage networks.

The 2008 Gafsa Mining Basin Riot, a precursor to the 2011 Revolution, represents the start of advocacy in this policy subsystem, albeit under an authoritarian governance structure. Negotiations between the government and activists, labor unionists, and unemployed workers was not a possible option as “Ben Ali used to block everything” (Taoufik Ain13). Therefore, a series of protests, including hunger-strikes and sit-ins, and riots took place in response to the high rates of regional unemployment, the worsening economic situation, and the corrupt and non-transparent recruitment processes of the CPG, the National Phosphate Company and the major employer in the Gafsa governrate. The regime held a monopoly on access to information and was able to prevent these events from reaching public opinion through controlling the media. The only coverage of the events by state-owned outlets claimed protesters were pro-regime representatives of cTTem.

In 2014, Tunisia created an Open Government Transparency Initiative (EITI)17. Transparency Initiative (EITI)17. Tunisia’s intention to join the Extractives Industry Transparency Partnership (ATTEM), Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali announced Tunisia’s first OGP commitment; second, due to the sustained advocacy work by NRGI in bringing CTTEM have become a stable and reliable civil society ‘dialogue partner’ in the subsector thanks to factors behind the 2008 uprising.

Ain points to the emergence of the shared ‘core belief’ that the CPG and government must increase their levels of accountability and reverse decades of systemic marginalization of Tunisia’s producing areas. Increased transparency was the means to achieving these goals.

“If we examine the slogans [of protesters] in 2008, the theme was transparency. The youth revolted to demand transparency in the recruitment process [of the Gafsa Phosphate Company]. That’s the real reason in 2008, corruption in the recruitment process. Then this theme expanded to demand development, social justice, etc...” (Ain)

Three years later, the ‘Freedom and Dignity’ Revolution marked the beginning of significant changes in various sections of the Tunisian political system. With regards to the natural resource sector, increased political pluralism and civic space allowed new actors access to what was a previously restricted policy subsystem. Thanks to Decree Law 88, which granted legal freedoms and liberties to civil society actors, civic space opened and international organizations were permitted to operate in Tunisia with fewer restrictions.

Instead of engaging in forms of contentious politics, policy actors and advocates for change were able to engage the government in thorough dialogue; the government was more open to cooperation than a dictatorship that forced civil society actors into being confrontational. Rather than conducting sit-ins and blockades, CSOs are able to lobby the ministers and officials.

CTTEM have become a stable and reliable civil society ‘dialogue partner’ in the subsector thanks to two factors. First, Tunisia’s commitment to Open Governance Partnership (OGP) requires the government to be working with civil society representatives on their ‘steering committee’. CTTEM’s policy goal of EITI membership is Tunisia’s first OGP commitment; second, due to the sustained advocacy work by NRGI in bringing the CTTEM and government actors together. ACF would classify NRGI’s work as ‘policy broker-ship’, however as NRGI’s goal is to “help countries manage their natural resources for the public good”16, it is not a neutral actor.

The revolution represented a rupture in a policy subsystem. The following gradual deconstruction of authoritarian governance in Tunisia has not directly led to the transparent and accountable governance of the state’s natural resources while border and interior governorates of Tunisia remain socio-economically marginalized. However, subsequent promises made by the Tunisian government to improve transparency, as a result of advocacy, have provided a foundation for further transparency advocacy.

In 2012, as a result of advocacy from the Tunisian Association for Transparency in Energy and Mining (ATTEM), Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali announced Tunisia’s intention to join the Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI)17.

In 2014, Tunisia created an Open Government

13 As a workers union representative, Taoufik Ain was an active participant in the 2008 protests and continues to advocate for Gafsa’s development as President of Association Bassin Minier pour l’Investissement et le Développement (ABMID) and as a regional representative of CTTEM.


Partnership National Action Plan (OGP NAP)\textsuperscript{18} which included various commitments to governmental reform but lacked any provisions regarding natural resources or EITI membership. Articles 12, 13, 32, and 136 of the 2014 Constitution, which include references related to freedom of information and governance of revenues generated from natural resources, provided further foundations for advocacy.

As the OGP process is inclusive, following consultation with CTTEM organizations, (ATTEM, ATDD, ATCP) and other CSOs e.g. Article \textsuperscript{19}, who are members of the OGP steering committee, the revised 2nd NAP (2016-2018) featured EITI membership as the first commitment \textsuperscript{20}.

Despite these government commitments, EITI’s increasingly demanding standards (2011, 2013, 2016) are making the process of advocating the Tunisian government to join more difficult. Pressure to match Jebali’s initial promise and more comprehensive transparency and accountability standards of EITI is proving challenging for the MoEM and Tunisia’s state-owned oil and phosphate enterprises, \textit{Entreprise Tunisienne d’Activités Pétrolières} (ETAP) and \textit{La Compagnie Des Phosphates de Gafsa} (CPG), respectively.

The revolution created an expansion in the policy subsystem and has led to the emergence of a broad advocacy coalition that seeks to ensure government policies are implemented in compliance with the constitution. Organizations already working on advocating for change in natural resource governance formed an official\textsuperscript{21} coalition, CTTEM, in order to ensure Tunisia’s laws and regulatory bodies synchronize with the new constitution.

**ADVOCACY COALITION STRATEGIES**

It is vital that the work of this broad AC addressing natural resource governance is framed in a post-revolution political context. This context features a sense of disappointment that the revolution has not met expectations and has not changed the lives of enough Tunisians, as socio-economic grievances persist. Furthermore, there is a belief that corruption permeates all sectors of government; the government is untrustworthy, and old-regime lines of patronage remain active. Meanwhile, the government maintains a suspicion of civil society actors and a sensitivity to criticism. These perceptions and attitudes make dialogue more challenging and imply the difficulty for transparency advocacy actors and the opposing resistance to policy reform.

There are another three factors that slow dialogue and advocacy processes: 1) the disorganization of ministry portfolios and the regular changing of the Minister of Energy and Mines negatively affect reform progress.; 2) MPs being caught between addressing popular demands, such as growth or employment for their governorates, party lines, and the pressure to increase transparency also confuses their advocacy; 3) the lack of technical capacity within the energy committee, required to understand and evaluate oil contracts that require their approval, slows decision-making.

Considering this political context, this next section addresses the range of advocacy strategies that actors in the advocacy coalition adopt ranging from CTTEM’s collaborative, dialogue and consultation-based advocacy approach to the contentious politics, confrontational approach of protesters, NRGI’s broker and convener of reform via capacity-building and informative advocacy, I-Watch’s Gramscian ‘oppositional-resistance’ version of civil society activism that combines confrontational and collaborative approaches. Lastly, it will also address the role media plays in advocacy.

1) **Cooperation and collaboration approaches**

a. **CTTEM’s dialogue and consultation-based advocacy approach**

Rather than engaging in protests and other forms of contentious politics, CTEEM have developed a functional, working relationship with the MoEM in order to inform and apply pressure and seeks to work with the government.
“CTTEM is kind of a think tank that proposes solutions, helps the government find solutions, get the people together; government, civil society population, companies” (CTTEM National Coordinator, Charfedine Yakoubi).

Yakoubi seemed to be against ‘confrontation’ with the government through engaging in protest while stressing the importance of developing relations with government officials in order to find “structural solutions”.

“This is the shift that civil society should make; how to be more flexible, to find new ways. It is a long-term thing but we should work on the shift of the relationship between civil society and the government” (Yakoubi).

This is a normative perspective of advocacy stipulating that to influence policy, civil society does not have to be as confrontational as it was before and during the revolution. Engaging in contentious confrontational politics may be a necessary approach to get AC actors invited to the ‘policy table’, but now that CTTEM has a channel to the government, tactics of persuasion, deliberation, and negotiation are more effective tools. CTTEM could engage in confrontational politics as a fallback option.

“Before the Ministry (of Energy and Mines) was against the coalition (CTTEM), but now it is more open to discuss and talk. And we, as CSOs, we should be more flexible. That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t talk about transparency, but we should be more pragmatic in dealing with this matter” (Yakoubi).

Yakoubi argues that a ‘long-game’ strategy and coordination is necessary rather than the sporadic and region-specific protests movements. He was in favor of systemic, national solutions that benefit everyone rather than unsustainable local fixes, thus settling CTTEM apart from protest groups.

“Because the governance of extractive industry is not a question of simply sharing the revenue, it is a long activity that should be done through organizations that work on the long term. This is our strategy, it is first working on making pressure or advocating for transparency of governance in the extractive industries in Tunisia” (Yakoubi).

The validity of this collaboration perspective is shared by Kais Mejri, a government official and former director in the Ministry of Energy, but is a part of the broad AC. Although Mejri critiques the motivations of some civil society actors, he is firmly in favor of civil society-government collaboration providing they ‘pull their weight’ and bring something of value to the table.

“Most of the time civil society wants media (attention) and (to create) a buzz. They should be interested in working together and give more added value to the decision process. They are not participating regularly when they are invited. They don’t prepare well their files and their reports. Civil society needs to prepare more and develop their capacities to make studies. They should work as ‘Think Tanks’. They don’t have enough capacity to do that.” (Mejri)

He also thinks that civil society, as informed and educated actors, and the government should be working together on finding solutions for these issues.

“So, it should be people who are realizing the importance of these issues and experts, who know about different experiences and benchmarks from different experiences to learn what are the problems, opportunities and risks in order to, with the government, think of a better way to improve the management of this sector without making a lot of problems.” (Mejri)

Mejri’s perspective questions whether CSOs can only perform this ‘added-value’ role if they have had sufficient funding, training and capacity. ‘Core’ AC actors in CTTEM in addition to I-Watch staff and journalists have received capacity-building training, but only due to the presence of INGOs that can provide relevant expertise.

b. NRGI’s balanced and positive information-based impact

This research revealed that civil society, journalists, and civil servant interviewees were complimentary about the role NRGI are playing in supporting/assisting their advocacy. Despite the risk that an international organization may impose its will on local actors, the mutual goals and shared core belief (transparency and good governance) have led to a co-operative relationship between NRGI and local Tunisian CSOs, journalists, and government staff. This is due to NRGI’s strategy.

▸ Theory of change: NRGI’s multi-stakeholder approach means that they work with government, media, MPs, and CSOs and facilitate avenues for dialogue between these actors. This enables them to appear impartial thus helping all policy actors trust them.

▸ Non-interference: While NRGI has a global agenda of “improving the governance of natural resources to promote sustainable and inclusive development”22

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they are not advocating directly. Instead, they are providing financial and technical support to enable and empower CSOs to have ownership over their advocacy efforts. Interview data collected for the research demonstrates a lack of interference due to the alignment of donor funding priorities and AC actors’ agendas and need for technical training and capacity-building.

**Information and informed-advocacy:** Due to the complexity of the natural resources sector and the difficulty in understanding oil contracts, NRGI provides training and capacity-building assistance. If CTTEM is to fulfil their aspiration of operating as a ‘think tank’, they require training and capacity-building. NRGI’s role also features the dissemination of information and use of Resource Governance Index (RGI) reports to inform civil society and government actors (see Tunisia RGI ranking for mining and oil & gas and Tunisia’s progress). Tunisia’s ranking of 26/89 for oil & gas and 46/89 for mining (of 89 countries surveyed) is classified as ‘Weak’, meaning that “A country has a mix of strong and problematic areas of governance. Results indicate that resource extraction can help society, but it is likely that the eventual benefits are weak”. RGI, however, has also been an effective tool for persuading government officials of the merits of transparency and used as an incentive for the implementation of further reform. From a civil society advocacy perspective, it is a quantitative measurement of progress.

While Buduru and Pal claim that some international governance indicators “fail to identify clear paths that the developing countries could use to improve governance quality” (2010:524), the RGI scoring system offers an indication to resource-producing countries of which specific areas they can improve and how to develop an enabling environment, thus improving governance of the extractives industries. In Tunisia, it has been the main tool that CTTEM and other CSOs use to incentivize the government to adopt reform. For example, results from 2013 RGI (49/100) led to the government to work on contract disclosure, consequently giving them a higher score in 2017 (56/100). Likewise, the government uses the RGI to demonstrate progress; MoEM Khaled Kaddour referenced Tunisia’s improved score during a national TV interview.

**2) Confrontation and contentious politics approaches**

There are actors within the broad advocacy coalition that adopt a Gramscian ‘oppositional-resistance’ approach to policy change. This distinction helps to identify differentiation between other actors based on their approaches.

**a. I-Watch**

I-Watch holds an advocacy approach that is between cooperative and confrontational. For example, they meet with ministers to express their ‘demands’ but apply pressure differently, favoring, according to Senior Programme Manager, Manel Ben Achour, “a different strategy from other CSOs”. They chose not to operate as part of CTTEM despite sharing core beliefs and core policy beliefs, instead preferring a pluralistic approach to activism.

“It is true that we work together in conferences and events and we share some goals, but I believe the diversification of advocacy actors is important. If I-Watch goes to meet the Minister of Energy and then the coalition goes with the same goal to meet the minister, it will have a stronger effect than us as one coalition going to meet the minister once.” (Ben Achour)

They maintain a suspicion of local experts as ‘transparency’ has different meanings from private and public sector perspectives, forcing their advocacy to look outside of Tunisia for impartial support.

“It’s so difficult to work with national ‘experts’ because they are never independent. Every expert is working for ETAP or the governmental institutions or the private sector. So, in the two cases, we can’t deal with them because it maybe causes a conflict of interest. So that’s why we are trying to handle with international experts.” (Ben Achour)

There is criticism of the career paths that experts choose, as Ben Achour points to how ETAP staff shift from supporting national interests to corporate interests.

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23 NRGI Tunisia Country Profile: http://www.resourcegovernanceindex.org/country-profiles/TUN/oil-gas

24 Tunisian National News Channel - Daily News Update (13/11/2017) - Interview with the Minister Khalid Kaddour. http://www.watania1.tn/%D9%86%D8%A3%D8%A9%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA/%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A8-D8%B1-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D9%84%D8%AF-%D9%82-%D9%84%D8%B1-%D8%AE-%D9%84%D8%AF-%D9%82-%D9%88-%D8%B1-%D8%A7-%D8%B9-%D8%A8-%D8%A9

“There are individuals who work at ETAP or [the General Director of Energy] DGE and within 5 years, they are employed in the private sector. So, there is a problem with individuals acquiring expertise and then benefiting the private sector instead of the public sector. We see this as a conflict of interest problem in that confidential information can be leaked.” (Ben Achour)

b. Protests and demonstrations

Not all actors in the policy subsystem seek to negotiate with the government. Rather they issue demands based on local needs. In general, protesters seem less willing to engage with the government since they feel the government ignores their issues. However, there is variation amongst protesters. While some cases have led to violence, some seek to negotiate.

The protest movements plan an important role of building pressure on the government; Taoufik Ain believes that the “Government only operates under pressure”, therefore creating ‘windows of opportunity’ for further advocacy. Regarding the effectiveness of protest, journalist Nada Trigui is more sceptical and believes the government “doesn’t respond.”

There is diversity in protests as different regions have different needs. Recognition of the diversity and city-specific issues that lead people to protest is important and grouping all protesters together is reductionist, yet they share a largely confrontational approach, rather than an elite-lobbying level advocacy approach. Trigui has reported on the real lives, demands and priorities of protesters.

“Each region is very specific about the fight it is pursuing. For example, if we talk about Gabes and the mining basin, it’s more about the water cuts. In Gabes, it’s about pollution and gas emissions; water and sea pollution. The article [she wrote] also covered the issue of Jemna, which is a land ownership issue. So, we cannot really say that these movements between themselves coordinate but within the same issue, there are different movements, not one single movement in each region. They coordinate between themselves on a city level.” (Trigui)

This demonstrates the range of issues that cause different groups in different cities to engage in specific advocacy and protest campaigns. Not all of these grievances are policy-specific and ACF’s emphasis on issues specific to the policy sector does not suitably capture inter-sectoral linkages or coordination along other axes than policy issues. However, the shared core belief that transparency is lacking, e.g., in the case of the chemical companies in Sfax and Gabes not admitting the extent to which their industry causes pollution, or the CPG not having a transparent recruitment process, are constants that bind these periphery actors of the pro-transparency AC. However, employment remains an overriding factor behind protests.

“Protests are mostly about jobs but, on the other hand, you cannot blame them, someone who is jobless, for this. They have different priorities. In other places, there seems to be more of the ‘radical’ approach. More in Sfax because there is lot more investment, private investment. The movement is bigger but the lobbying for the chemical company is bigger, so that’s more conflictual. People do not stick to the company in Sfax because it’s a matter of life and death or investment will be lost if it shuts down, because there is another investment in the region. In Gafsa it’s different. If the phosphate company shuts down it will be a loss cause it’s the only industry.” (Trigui)

CPG’s profits are decreasing as its workforce is becoming more bloated from pressure to employ more people, even in meaningless jobs. CPG’s production has also decreased since 2011. While protesters focus on pressing local needs, such as job creation, CTTEM’s focus is on policy related to good governance and transparency. Contrary to Trigui’s observations, Simon Ilse (HBS) has noted the beginning of coordination among environmental groups. This may see the development of an environmental advocacy coalition.

“Anti-pollution groups from Gabes, Sfax, Gafsa, are increasingly connecting with one another. And there is a new alliance, namely the Coalition Pour La Justice Climatique Societal et Environnemental (CPJCL). They are in the process of being legalized. Before the Gabes people were fighting the chemical company and saying, ‘get the phosphate production out of my town, if you put it somewhere else we don’t care’, but now it’s more coordinated and united, and not only questioning where it happens but if it happens. Should it be one of the pillars of the Tunisian industry policy? And what are the alternatives?” (Ilse)

3) Role of media in advocacy

Interviewees talked about the media’s importance in
disseminating information, raising public awareness, and crucially, creating suitable conditions for influencing policy change. For example, Wissem Heni (NRGI) thinks media plays an important role in the advocacy process.

“We used the media to put pressure and we made this issue an issue of public opinion. The impact happened not only because of civil society asked for this but also because of the groundwork we did with the government and with media outlets. I think a civil society without media can’t do anything. If you want to have an impact, you have to have these linkages between civil society [and other actors].” (Heni)

The two journalists interviewed for this research were critical of their content, suggesting the reporting is limited and simplistic or sensational, also that CSOs report more controversial issues that state media outlets choose not to address.

“Some journals (newspapers) have written some pieces with ‘numbers’ about pollution and it seems pretty objective, for example, how much are the emissions, since when, since when the industry was established and why the people are protesting, what they are claiming. But I didn’t feel any bias, neither towards the citizens nor the government. Generally, they report what Hela Cheikhrouhou (Minister of Energy and Mines) said, asked her about her opinions. So, let’s say I think they don’t have a clear stance. They just show things as they are.” (Trigui)

To support Trigui’s point, particular HuffPost Maghreb and LaPresse articles are cases of uncritical reporting, using figures without further analysis. The complexity of the extractives sector is adding to the simplistic media coverage of issues. NRGI expertise was able to point out where information is located thus helping journalists find information, in addition to providing reports, etc.

“It was in the training of NRGI, they told us it was a ‘mine of information’ and material for journalists. So, I started digging in that report. But it was there, it’s just no one touched it. Maybe this is analytical, but this is ‘reporting properly’.” (Hafewa Rebhi)

Rebhi was critical of other reports on the extractives sector from major Tunisian outlets. “They don’t provide context or the frame. Maybe because I had the opportunity to benefit from other training from abroad, not just NRGI.” She added that they only cover strikes, and even then, she criticized the coverage of such events.

“I see rushed conclusions. They are sensational. They don’t produce deep investigations like a ’60 Minutes’ documentary. They are not that convincing. They are not doing their job properly. There are some local media and activists on Facebook who are reporting and doing the work of journalists and some CSOs have started reporting as journalists because of the void but they are activists. For example, FTDES are doing very good work on Gafsa and Gabes.” (Rebhi)

The media are playing a role in advocacy but do journalists share the same core beliefs or policy core beliefs? Hafewa is a more conscientious breed of journalist; she admitted spending days collecting documents and studying the hydrocarbon code prior to writing about the subject. Publishing in critical or analytical outlets, such as Nawaat, Middle East Eye, Economist Maghreb, means their work has a smaller reader base, thus a reduced national impact.

“When it comes to transparency, I have a bias. We can’t be unbiased when it comes to transparency and social justice. Why are there wealthy regions and other underdeveloped regions, despite their natural resources? So, it makes questions about things and you get angry and want to understand why. As a journalist, I will support any effort that leads to more transparency and justice.” (Rebhi)

31 Forum Tunisien des Droits Économiques et Sociaux: https://ftdes.net/actualite-ftdes/
**POLICY OUTCOMES: REFORMS TO NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE**

*Legal basis for advocacy*

Articles 12, 13, 32, and 136 of the 2014 Constitution have provided a legal framework and have been used by civil society actors as a basis for further policy advocacy. The advocacy of Association Tunisienne pour la transparence dans l’Énergie et les Mines (ATTEM), a member of CTTEM, played a major role in the drafting and passing of Article 13.

“No natural resources belong to the people of Tunisia. The state exercises sovereignty over them in the name of the people. Investment contracts related to these resources shall be presented to the competent committee in the Assembly of the Representatives of the People. The agreements concluded shall be submitted to the Assembly for approval.”

This clause is a marked improvement as the basis for AC actors’ advocacy strategies as neither the previous constitution nor any pre-2011 amendments made explicit references to the governance of natural resources. However, as this NRGI report based on the study of global experience with parliamentary approval of contracts regarding the implementation of Article 13 highlights, the parliamentary oversight can bring benefits but could cause further potential problems for transparency advocates.

“Parliamentary approval of contracts can also entail significant risks, including: politicization of the contracting process; lack of capacity in parliament to properly review contracts; creation of a process that obstructs or delays investment; creation of a legal means for contracts to deviate from the law; and corruption.” (NRGI, 2016)

In addition to the constitution providing the impetus and albeit potentially problematic basis for advocacy, Tunisia’s civil society law (Decree Law 88) crucially provides space for AC actors to operate. Kaissey highlights the importance of legal support for an advocacy space by comparing the Tunisian situation to Algeria, where Transparency International in Algeria were not permitted to operate. “The laws were not on their side. They were not allowed as an NGO to function in any way.”

*Open Government Partnership*

Tunisia joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in January 2014. The OGP national action plan of 2016-2018 includes the Tunisian government’s commitment to join EITI.

“This commitment is intended to promote transparency and accountability in the area of natural resources in order to enhance this sector governance and build trust between the government, business and civil society as well as to improve the business environment and make Tunisia a model of transparency in the MENA region.”

Therefore, the Tunisian government is making promises and implying they are working towards making commitments. This is a significant step towards increasing transparency because AC actors can ensure the government is keeping their word and maintain pressure on the MoEM to conform to international standards and benchmarks such as the EITI standards.

*Open Data Platform*

Not all change has occurred due to civil society pressure. The broad AC includes actors within the government who have sought to increase transparency. NRGI describe the Open Data Platform as “a major achievement”, an initiative for which Kais Mejri takes credit.

“I initiated this project in August 2014, and it was by coincidence, because a friend of mine working in Saudi Arabia, and I invited him to talk about what are the different ways to disclose information and to make something attractive for people and a very wide media to communicate. And I was thinking in the beginning about a website but he told me that there are different new ways and tendencies to work. And he’s a founder and member of the Open Gov group, he’s one of the experts and he asked me and gave me the tool and helped me. So, they influenced us to have the right or appropriate tool.” (Mejri)

Mejri is an example of a civil servant initiating change to the system. He demonstrates that a simplistic

34 Open Governance Partnership: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/
35 Open Governance Partnership – Tunisia page: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/countries/tunisia
Periphery actor pressure from the Winou el Petrol campaign, therefore, was conducive to changing the environment that helped policy change occur.

“Contract disclosure is a win for civil society. We had never imagined that one day the Ministry of Energy would disclose the contracts. I consider we succeeded in that people are talking about NR issues. There is public awareness about the sector. This is a relative success because some people are aware of and are demanding their rights in what was previously a black box issue that people avoided. Civil society has opened up this topic for public debate.” (Ben Achour)

The RGI, however, shows that there is a gap between the legal framework and implementation. Therefore, civil society’s work does not stop with just policy reform, but these gains need to be put into practice. What civil society does with the published contracts is vital for further stages of advocacy pressure. CSOs need to continually engage in training and capacity building to analyze and critique published government data. If CSOs are not making good use of the data, the government might argue that they don’t need to publish information in the future.

2) Sustained Pressure to join EITI

Although Tunisia has progressed towards obtaining EITI membership, such as being in the final stage towards complying EITI principles, CTTEM’s specific policy goal has not been achieved. The former CTTEM national coordinator accused the Ministry of Industry of blocking the adoption process, but what has been achieved is a ‘relative’ success of sustained advocacy pressure on the government to make the first step towards EITI accession. This incremental victory which will, in turn, be used to exert further pressure on the government to uphold its commitment. Bouazza demonstrates how Minister Cheikhrouhou was convinced to pursue EITI adoption.

“Tunisia has yet to join EITI. The Minister (of Energy and Mines) promised that they will join in 6 months. That’s why we met with her. There was a lot of discussion with her as the minister refused EITI in the beginning." (Sihem Bouazza)

Ben Youssef was more skeptical about the ministry acting on their commitments.

“The government has put EITI as the first commitment on the OGP action plan. So that’s a good achievement but I don’t know if the government is going to proceed to the next step. Maybe it’s just another promise.” (Ben Youssef)
The government appeared determined to engage with EITI on their own terms, insisting the civil society ‘Quartet’ is included in EITI as the civil society representative. EITI standards stipulate: “In each implementing country, a multi-stakeholder group (MSG) comprised of representatives from government, companies and civil society is established to oversee EITI implementation.” This includes civil society groups appointing their own representative. There may be an added value for the transparency advocacy process, in having the powerful and influential organizations of the Quartet in the MSG. However, as far as many CSOs are concerned, the Quartet is not sufficiently separate from government. UTICA’s Bouchamaoui’s presence is a blatant conflict of interest as she heads oil companies and has corruption cases against her. Furthermore, having the government appoint CSO representatives to the MSG is against the letter and the spirit of the EITI.

The election of civil society representatives for the MSG is due to take place in March. Minister Kaddour is continuing to work towards fulfilling the official commitment of EITI membership and, as part of this transparency, has appointed a new general director, Mohsen Mansouri, to oversee the process.44

Manel Ben Achour demonstrates how AC actors are sustaining their pressure on the government regarding EITI.

“The government started the process of MSG formation under the assumption that it is adhering to the EITI criteria before joining, so they started the process backwards. But unfortunately, the EITI stipulates that the MSG representatives are appointed in an independent manner. However, the quartet was appointed as the CSO representative without consultation with civil society, which is a violation of the EITI standards and I Watch perceives this as dismissive of civil society, which is unacceptable. That is why we attended several meetings with the former Minister of Energy, Hela Cheikhrouhou, and with the current minister Mr. Kaddour. We haven’t reached a solution, but we are working on ensuring that the MSG includes independent actors that represent civil society.” (Ben Achour)

3) Increasing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) combined with regional and sustainable development

A problem specific to the production of natural resources is the issue of how profits from are redistributed and reinvested into the producing regions. There is constitutional support to advocate for this matter, from Article 13, but it requires implementation and for the private sector and SOEs to engage in greater CSR measures and the government to investment to further development. For example, the Tataouine governatorate has a 60-million-dinar development budget, yet the local people are not witnessing sufficient change or seeing these funds implemented.43 CSR is not included in oil contracts, but Nidaa Tounes MP, Leila Ouled Ali46, recently presented a draft law on its inclusion. Minister Kaddour supported the idea, as it would also encourage transparency, but insisted it should be voluntary rather than mandatory.47

“During colonization, CPG was better. It provided us with free water and free electricity. Now CPG has abandoned its CSR.” (Ain)

Ain points to the many occasions on which his CSO (ABMID) has entered into negotiations with the government as a relative success. However, despite the seat at the table, advocacy and protests have focused on CPG because there have been no other forms of development.

“Nothing has changed since 2008, especially in the mining basin. There is no political will to develop these regions. That’s why protests continue until today. Phosphate production is halted in my region. Because even though CPG is the biggest company in the region, unemployment rates are extremely high in the mining basin at over 40%. That’s why everyone targets CPG. The government didn’t develop the region besides for CPG.” (Ain)

Ain also recognizes that CPG can only do so much and different ‘development’ projects need to occur, with businesses and the government required to find alternative forms of employment outside of the phosphate industry.

“Employment happens as a result of development, not because of the mining.” (Ain)

42 The Quartet consists of four major Tunisian CSOs: the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH), and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers (OANAT). They have a historic working relationship but increased their collective credibility through mediating a national political dialogue during a political deadlock in 2013.

43 EITI, Multi-stakeholder governance: the power of three: https://eiti.org/oversight


45 http://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/news/tataouine-protests-1079869515

46 https://majles.marsad.tn/2014/fr/elus/Leila_Ouled_Ali

This research report has identified actors, their approaches, and their successes in the policy reform process and the groundwork they have laid for further reform. However, there are tangible and intangible factors that are resisting further change.

This report identifies specific actors in SOEs and certain government officials as a counter-transparency Status Quo Advocacy Coalition (SQAC) that play a role in resisting change. The influence the SQAC exerts in order to protect its position of privilege results in the creation and proliferation of arguments against the notion of transparency and good governance, namely the economic impact of such policies and regulation. This results in reduced support for the pro-transparency advocacy coalition; what interviews describe as a lack of ‘political will.’

In addition to these political-economic arguments, interviewees pointed to the gradual shift in Tunisian political culture; the self-deprecating notion that ‘Tunisia isn’t ready’ and that a mentality of transparency has not been embedded, as other reasons for resistance to advocacy. Furthermore, government decisions are also responsible for the incremental progress. In particular, regularly changing the minister who oversees natural resource policy deprives the policy subsystem of a ‘stable dialogue partner’ from the government’s side to work with CTTEM.

Overall, there has been incremental progress towards policy change in CSR and development. An important victory is that parliamentarians and CSO actors within the AC are in negotiating positions to start the process.
From the perspective of the pro-transparency AC, it is having an adverse effect on policy advocacy as changing of ministers due to cabinet reshuffles and ministry portfolio alternations, negatively affects the advocacy process, depriving the policy subsystem of a pair of stable dialogue partners. Yakoubi points to the frustration for CTTEM in constantly rebuilding relations with the government.

“We found, as a CSO coalition, we have connections with the ministry and these people. And now we have to build another relationship with (different) civil servants and it’s difficult to make them understand the problem and to understand what is EITI. We must start from zero, it makes change less rapid.” (Yakoubi)

A change of minister in the Ministry of Energy and Mines occurred during the data collection process. CTTEM felt they were making progress with Former Minister Hela Cheikhrouhou. After a process of trust-building and NRGI capacity-building, CTTEM had developed a working relationship, were able to meet with her, to the point where they had the ‘ear’ of the minister and were able to affect change. Cheikhrouhou had taken the MoEM a small step towards joining EITI by stating that the ‘principles’ of the initiative would be implemented. CTTEM was concerned this was not sufficient and were able to meet with her to discuss this issue. During this meeting with CTTEM “the minister promised that they will join in 6 months” (Sihem Bouazza). After it seemed like progress towards EITI implementation had been made, a new Minister of Energy and Mines, Khalid Kadour, was appointed in September 2017 after a cabinet reshuffle, leaving Cheikhrouhou’s promise unfilled.

**SOEs ETAP and CPG – Advocates of opacity but problematic enterprises**

Interviewees pointed towards the state-owned oil company ETAP and the state-owned phosphate company CPG as the bodies most resistant to change and determined to maintain opacity in the sector. Indeed, both state-owned enterprises have commercial interests but also a responsibility to the state. This paper frames them as actors and bodies that are, for the most part, resistant to pro-transparency advocacy. The following quotes from interviews identify ETAP as the major obstacle to change from their pre-revolution structure or to embrace reform.

As actors’ resistance to transparency and accountability do not openly advocate for opacity but remain deliberately almost invisible, Melki notes the discrepancy in ETAP’s discourse and practice.

“Personally, and from what I hear, I think ETAP is very resistant to transparency. Although we met with the CEO of ETAP and he sounded pro-transparency, behind the scenes they are resistant to transparency.” (Melki, NRGI)

An interviewee discusses further details about how ETAP will seek to keep the sector opaque and data classified.

“If you look at them [ETAP], I think they are behind stopping everything. We have requested details from the national oil company, their functions, ins and outs, number of employees, the partners, the fiscal exchanges. This is where the political will suddenly stops. My own theory is that it’s never going to happen [Tunisia joining EITI] because when they signed up in 2012, it only covered one aspect. But now, with the new EITI standards, the shit will hit the fan if they disclose this information. ETAP is a catastrophe. I don’t want to go into the contracts and the beneficial owners. In 2016, it was restructured even further.” (Anonymous interviewee)

Latrach links ETAP to the extensive corruption in the sector.

“The disaster facing the sector is corruption. Some people and some companies have made a lot of personal gains. They have a vested interest in not losing those gains. Some officials have gained more from bribery. If you try to fight corruption, these people with a vested interest will do the impossible to not change the status quo. Companies have found a ripe environment for corruption. ETAP especially is a disaster. It has to be restructured ASAP.” (Latrach)

Simon Ilse (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Tunisia) points to how the natural resources sector is a tangled administrative web designed by the former regime to maintain control.

“The whole architecture of the hydrocarbon sector in Tunisia is so complicated and so complex and has so many weird administrative-legal tricks to it, and I think it’s purposefully done like that because there are only a few people who sit in ETAP, or in other places, that can de-block this whole circus, and this is what Ben Ali wanted, this is why it is like it is. This is one of the systematic problems of the sector, they didn’t reform this, they didn’t simplify it. This Tunisian expert, who worked in France for a long time, told me that in no country that he has known, the contractual hydrocarbons regime is so complicated as it is in Tunisia. I didn’t realize before that the Ben Ali regime
was designed in a way that only a few people can de-block things, and they get paid a lot of money. It is very clever, and this is why it’s so hard to smash it. It’s difficult to reform because once you start to pull somewhere, and we know, from our experience the parliamentarians cannot reform any of this because they don’t know what’s happening, they don’t have any deeper knowledge either. You need an armada of experts to go through this or you completely abolish the system and start from scratch.” (Ilse)

In addition to ETAP, the CPG is resistant to reform.

“We believe that CPG, a giant company, is weakened by corruption within it. We don’t know anything about production, expenses, revenues. There is no transparency.” (Ain)

Despite the access to information law (Law No. 22 of March 24, 201648), I was not able to conduct meaningful interviews with ETAP or CPG representatives during the research process to cross-examine these claims. I met with an ETAP official but I was told that authorization from the CEO was required before any of my questions could be answered. I was instead directed to their website49 for information. Therefore, without sufficient evidence, this research cannot fully comprehend the SOE perspectives of advocacy for transparency, accountability and good governance. Instead the non-interview indicates that either: a) ETAP does indeed lack transparency, as other interviewees have suggested; b) ETAP is bound by restrictive legislation and is therefore unable to effectively reform; or c) ETAP is aware of the problems in the system but unwilling to reform.

This is also problematic for the application of ACF as elements resistant to change, or a Status Quo Advocacy Coalition, seek to remain concealed thus making assessment of policy actors’ core beliefs and core policy beliefs difficult to ascertain.

The resistance to transparency also had a profound influence on MPs in the Energy Committee who were concerned with economic growth.

“Many MPs are not resistant. So, I think it is the SOEs (State-Owned Enterprises). There was a draft law a couple of months ago and some MPs suggested mandatory disclosure of contracts. Not everyone voted for the law, even ones that we trained were against it. This is telling about the political tension and the relations between MPs and some of the SOE figures. Inside the ministry itself, there are some officials that are against transparency because of their relations with SOEs or because of the administrative culture that is usually resistant to transparency.” (Melki)

In addition to pro-transparency pressure, MPs and governmental staff are subject to influence and lobbying from SOEs, pro status-quo actors, who have framed transparency and good governance initiatives as strict or excessive regulation that might cripple business (Lindblom & Woodhouse, 1993: 102-103). As Ain confirms, there was government movement towards reform but pro status-quo actors sought to resist.

“Mohamed Jebali announced Tunisia’s intention to join EITI back in 201250. But there are lobbies who caused this to be stopped.” (Ain)

Latrach confirms the existence of pro status-quo or anti-transparency actors who hinder reform, rather than laying the blame on the entire government, but could not provide specific details on who these ‘lobbies’ are.

“The government, the ministry of energy and the directorate of mines want to do work but there are lobbies that are more powerful than the ministry. These lobbies can hinder reform. They don’t want reform. They don’t want oversight. They are businessmen or politicians with vested interests.”

Latrach reiterated why the broad AC seeks increased transparency, noting that accountability and potential reform is impossible with sufficient information.

“Another problem is the lack of access to information. In order for you to hold companies accountable, you have to have information.” (Latrach)

The ‘political will’ argument

Although the best outcome the broad advocacy coalition can achieve is pressure to support their interests, interviewees pointed to a lack of political will as a factor behind why further reforms have not been made.

“Nothing has changed since 2008, especially in the mining basin. There is no political will to develop these regions.” (Ain)

Bouazza identifies how Energy Minister Marzouk was in favor of adopting transparency measures but his successor, Cheikhrouhou, only developed a political will for change after an advocacy and lobbying process, after which she seemed to be interested and willing to follow the correct steps to implementing EITI. When she left her post, the advocacy process restarted.

49  www.etap.com.tn
“It all depends on political will and that of the ministry. We met him [Marzouk] and he was all for transparency and he was the one that launched Open Data. He published a statement saying that Open Data was launched thanks to civil society. So, it’s all depending on the political will. The backbone of the whole process is political will. If there is a political will in order to push forward the whole process, then concrete actions will be taken.” (Bouazza)

This identifies that, after persistent advocacy and lobbying from CTEM, a ‘stable dialogue partner’, the previously reluctant Cheikhrouhou appeared more open to working on EITI implementation. Therefore, rather than bemoaning the lack of political will, it is AC actors’ responsibility to create it. Diane Kaissy works for an international organization that champions the transparency initiative EITI, but admits the process requires AC actors to convince sufficient numbers of political parties or independent MPs to jump on their pro-transparency advocacy bandwagon. Otherwise, without the political will, policy is not realized.

“I believe EITI’s greatest weakness is that it’s completely tied to a political will. If there is political will, it will happen. If there is no political will, it won’t happen. Tunisia is a case in point. The political will was there in 2012 but it went, and nothing is bringing it back. There are recurring incidents of ‘being transparent’ such as when a PM or minister declaring in some ad hoc summit, e.g., the anti-corruption summit in London, we’re going to implement EITI. But for me, I don’t think there is a political will now in Tunisia. Where there is no political will, EITI is not implemented.” (Kaissy)

This either identifies the limits of the AC’s advocacy strategy, and that other approaches are required, or highlights the key issue of why this ‘political will’ does not exist beyond support for a certain, limited degree of reform. The unverifiable answer would be that this is because there are economic and political interests in the extractives sector that companies, politicians, and other individuals are not ‘willing’ to forgo. This may be the case but beyond the interviewees’ reports of lobbies, this research lacks the means to verify such claims. Ilse also identifies the political will issue, but argues that creating it is beyond the AC. He argues that the gradual pace of reform is linked to how the government of national unity (Nidaa Tounes and Ennahda party coalition) are balancing and managing a range of political interests thus lacking a coherent reform agenda. Therefore, within this context, ministers are unwilling to take unnecessary risks.

“There’s a lack of political will that is connected to courage. When you are minister and every five months somebody is saying you might be out next month, are you going to have the courage to go for reforms and new programs, or would you prefer not to make mistakes? And too many ministers don’t want to make any mistakes.” (Ilse)

The ‘economic’ argument

Another counter-argument for implementing transparency, propagated by SQAC actors, is that such reforms would have a detrimental effect on investment in the sector and therefore Tunisia’s economic progress. Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa’s “technocrat” government (2013-2014) was key in pushing this ‘status quo’ agenda as it warned the assembly’s energy committee “that challenges to government policy and dubious contractual practices would result in dire effects on the economy” and should therefore “stop impeding the work of foreign oil companies.”

Aliriza identifies that because the Ministry of Industry bureaucrats “traditionally had near-exclusive jurisdiction over energy contracts,” it was reluctant to allow parliamentary oversight in the contract process.

From his experience as a civil servant and working for NRGI, Wissem Heni summarizes the perspectives of members of parliament who concerned by the economic effects of transparency reforms.

“Some MPs are against transparency and there are others who are not against it but think that if transparency is implemented, it will slow down the process of adopting laws. It’s not that they are corrupt, many of them believe that we are living in an economic crisis, and Tunisia needs investment to boost the economy, so, they should sign contracts to attract investors.” (Heni)

He also identifies the self-serving interest of MPs in opposing transparency reforms.

“They think transparency slows down economic growth. The Tunisian economy needs to improve, and they think the transparency clauses are not helping. These MPs also want to show they have overseen economic improvement in their constituencies and help their re-elections.” (Heni)

Despite his disagreement with this perspective and attempts to convince these MPs, Heni is resigned to the fact that “they have political agendas that don’t fit with transparency and good governance.” Therefore,

53 Aliriza (2014).
these MPs could either be focused on maintaining their political careers by advocating for policies that encourage growth at the expense of transparency measures, or, a cynic’s perspective, the possibility that these MPs have been lobbied by anti-transparency elements.

Yakoubi debunks the economic counter-argument by affirming that transparency is good for investment. “Some people say that transparency won’t encourage or will discourage investment, but these kinds of things are not really convincing arguments because, regarding investment for example, some companies, especially big companies, want to work in a transparent environment, they want to have clear rights and obligations.”

Ben Achour (I-Watch) also undermines the economic argument with the same claim. “Transparency will help us and will encourage oil companies to invest in Tunisia because oil companies are prevented from coming to Tunisia due to social instability. Transparency will reinforce our stability and democracy and encourage companies to invest in Tunisia. The biggest proof of this is that oil companies publish the contracts in their own countries, so it’s not a problem of publishing the information, they have already published, and they are for publishing the contracts because when the Ministry of Energy decided to publish the contracts, the staff in the ministry were scared about publishing the information, but the feedback from the oil companies was ‘for’ publishing the information, we have no problem, so we are the problem, not them.” (Ben Achour)

Kais Mejri argues that investment is not discouraged by transparency measures, but instead when NGOs act with only their own region’s interests at heart, rather than considering the whole country’s needs. “A lot of NGOs are pushing to have employment and the redistribution of money in their localities. Its revenue management, locally, and this should be discussed and should be organized in that way that doesn’t lead to some disorder or independence from some regions or in some way that some region can have money independent of others or independent of the stability of the financial system or budget system in the country.” (Mejri)

“In that way, it can lead to block the investment or make foreign investors leave the country. So, it should be thought wisely with a common consensus from all the stakeholders in the country. But if you have some NGOs that are pushing to make thousands of people recruited by petrol companies in their regions and they have how many persons of the money-revenue from this oilfield to only this locality it will be a problem. And some NGOs don’t let the government interfere; they just have direct, face-to-face with the company, no government, and just negotiate with the company. Their CSR? If it will lead to this kind of dialogue, it will be a threat to the country.” (Mejri)

Although this region-centric activism can have a positive impact on calls for wider reform by raising public awareness and increasing pressure on the government, Mejri points to the negative impact of uncoordinated action, within the same policy subsystem, on Tunisia’s economic recovery. This does not, however, de-legitimize the protester’s socio-economic grievances, particularly when there is constitutional support for their advocacy. Article 136, paragraph three, states that: “A portion of revenues coming from the exploitation of natural resources may be allocated to the promotion of regional development throughout the national territory.” This provides the basis for sustainable, regional development advocacy in producing regions, which is especially acute for inhabitants of the producing regions who feel marginalized, exploited, or fail to see the benefits of natural resource revenue return to their governorate. “We are from the [producing] region and we are paying the price of natural resource exploitation, economically, socially, and environmentally. We feel the effects of the companies in the region more than any CSO from Tunis or from Gabes. We also see the resources coming out of Tataouine in oil and gas.” (Latrach)

A middle ground exists between advocacy for CSR and sustainable development and for organizations that focus on helping local people get local jobs on one hand, and the ability to attract investment to their entire NR sector/extractives industry on the other. If the producing regions were developed and economically diversified, then the demand on the NR sector/extractives industry to produce employment would be reduced. While there are few alternative career prospects, the calls for sustainable development remains. Furthermore, development has been especially challenging to implement when Tunisia does not have the appropriate economic structures in place to determine where and how natural revenue income is distributed.

Vecra Bouzaweda, former General Director of Energy in the Ministry of Industry, Energy, and Mines, explained how the natural resource revenue is untraceable once

collected into one pot. He explained that Tunisia lacks a revenue management mechanism that allows for tracking how natural resource revenues are spent. In fact, after natural resource revenues are collected, they are included in the state budget which is allocated centrally at the level of the Ministry of Finance.

In summary, the economic argument against transparency is flawed. Article 136 is not being fully implemented and economic redistribution is not occurring; people in producing regions are not seeing benefits of NR wealth and sufficient levels of regional development are not occurring.

**A gradual mentality-shift in the context of democratic transition**

While Baumann (2017) identifies Transparency International and World Economic Forum’s gross underestimation of the Ben Ali regime’s levels of corruption, the post-revolution period has been defined by the ongoing democratic transition’s gradual shift away from opaque government practices to increased levels of state transparency and accountability. This is not unique to the natural resource sector, but part of holistic governmental and public sector reforms. This process requires not only legislative but institutional transformation. This is especially challenging when, as Mehdī Ben Gharbi, Minister of Relations with Constitutional Authorities, Civil Society and Human Rights Organizations, noted during the I-Watch #IntegrityMall conference (January 2018): “Opacity and lack of transparency is a 50-year old reflex.” But in addition to marked progress towards formalized transparency in the form of increased parliamentary and civil society oversight, the normative behavior and an institutional culture of opacity is gradually being eroded. However, Anouar Ben Khelifa, former Tunisian Secretary of State for Governance and Public Service and key actor in developing Tunisia’s first OGP action plan (2014-16), argues that further progress needs to be made, stating that: “Transparency in the disclosure of data and information from the government side is still insufficient in Tunisia. We have to work really hard on changing this mentality.”

While Ilse believes that transparency is the new mentality, his colleague adds that “the funny thing is that people are asking for this [openness in the sector], so it’s not a matter of mentality, people wouldn’t ask for if it was” (Dabbabi, HBS). Therefore, while old habits die hard, transparency is gradually becoming a norm.

access to information, the government needs to be more flexible and open. Maybe it’s a habit that’s not easy to change.” Furthermore, Yakoubi notes CTTEM use the ‘access to information’ law as a means for requesting information which hasn’t been published, but he notes that “transparency is not a fully imbedded practice.” Indeed, “because there is a lot of resistance to change inside the administration, it will not be so easy to make the administration change its way of working and be more transparent.” (Yakoubi)

However, successes in the advocacy process and data from interviews show that old habits are gradually changing and a counter-power that favors transparency is getting stronger. Wiem Melki (NRGi Tunis) identifies the incremental shift towards an acceptance of transparency.

“In the very beginning, when NRGi started, the government itself was resistant. Transparency is very tricky from the government perspective because the more transparent you are the more accountable you are. Sometimes the way they see it is the less they show the better. But little by little and with some commitment from the ministers they have become more and more transparent.” (Melki)

While Ilse believes that transparency is the new mentality, his colleague adds that “the funny thing is that people are asking for this [openness in the sector], so it’s not a matter of mentality, people wouldn’t ask for if it was” (Dabbabi, HBS). Therefore, while old habits die hard, transparency is gradually becoming a norm.

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CONCLUSION

This report attempts to apply ACF to address the work of a broad Advocacy Coalition who are linked by their activity in the same broad policy subsystem and their ‘policy instrument beliefs’ regarding transparency, accountability, and good governance, rather than their ‘core beliefs’ or ‘core policy beliefs’, in their struggle against deliberately almost invisible actors who are resistant to change and political system that is in flux due to a post-revolutionary socio-political transition. The 2008 Gafsa riot marked the start of this policy subsystem, when pro-transparency advocacy began, but the 2011 revolution accounts for a significant opening of the subsystem which enabled an extensive range of actors to participate in policy advocacy and the decision-making processes and a broad pro-transparency Advocacy Coalition to both form and operate.

This report contributes to ACF theorizing by demonstrating the practical challenges that exist in the creation of an advocacy coalition; first, in a nascent policy subsystem from the 2008 zero-base point; and second, where ‘core policy beliefs’ vary and ‘core beliefs’ are not readily identifiable.

This has been especially challenging in the specific Tunisia post-revolutionary transition political context where authoritarian, deep-state structures and practices remain intact while the political system is in a state of flux. Therefore, the usual conditions that ACF requires, namely two identifiable ACs, the necessary environment for stable dialogue partners to operate, neutral policy brokers or policy entrepreneurs, and stable parameters that exist in established policy subsystems in consolidated democracies are taken for granted.

The policy advocacy, led by CTTEM with significant support from NRGI, represents a convergence of socio-economic, developmental, and environmental issues relating: 1) specifically to the extractive industries and natural resource management, and 2) generally to the principles of transparency, accountability and good governance that, actors in the coalition believe, the post-revolution Tunisian government is insufficiently addressing. CTTEM, with NGRI support, represent the core of this advocacy coalition, based on their specific policy goals. They have been partially successful, and their advocacy has led to significant policy changes, such as the publishing of oil contracts in particular.

Periphery actors within the broad AC, such as other CSOs, journalists, and civil servants, share common core beliefs and values of freedom of information, transparency, accountability, and good governance. These actors have contributed to applying pressure on the government, thus creating an enabling environment for policy change.

The AC’s activism is supported by the recently created stable parameter of the 2014 Tunisian Constitution. They seek to ensure policies are implemented consistent with the constitution’s articles relating generally to transparent and accountable governance and specifically, to natural resources.

Policy change in the extractive industries has been a result of sustained advocacy, pressure, and INGO-led capacity-building. However, despite the values and common goals, shared by CT TEM and periphery actors, common aims have not been sufficient to overcome resistance to more rapid and concrete change. Relative gains in the advocacy process have been made but some forms of resistance persist. Notably, the vested interests of the extractive sector’s actors that pressure politicians which leads MPs to remain “unconvinced” by the merits of transparency and accountability leading to a lingering government mentality that is reluctant to act transparently. Furthermore, due to the dynamics of the Nidaa-Ennahda unity government coalition, few politicians or ministers are willing to make bold reforms which could cause unnecessary risks to their political careers.

The reform progress has been hindered by the changing of ministers and ministry portfolios, which leads to a relaunching of the trust-building process, thus slowing the overall advocacy process. Meanwhile, Tunisian SOEs appear mostly resistant to change, due in part to the protection of their commercial interests and the alleged corrupt practices. As long as the organizational structure and jurisdiction of Tunisian SOEs lack oversight, they will be able to resist advocacy pressure on increased transparency and good governance.

Despite the revolution leading to the creation of a supportive constitutional framework, an increased number of actors, governmental and civil society cooperation based on shared policy beliefs and enhanced technical capacities, policy reform has unfortunately been gradual. This has been due to context-specific factors, that account for gradual and uncertain progress in a policy subsystem that is both technically complex and emotive; namely the interests of SOEs, the lack of political will from politicians who fear a negative economic impact from increased transparency, the disruption caused by cabinet reshuffles and ministry portfolio alterations, and the
perpetuation of a pre-revolution, governmental secrecy mentality.

This case study offers an addition to ACF theorizing, namely the identification of ‘core’ and ‘periphery’ actors within an advocacy coalition. This is a potentially valuable further level of analysis to distinguish between, particularly if the ‘core beliefs’ of actors are not identifiable or ‘core policy beliefs’ of actors and advocacy coalition vary.

However, it also uncovers the limitations of ACF, in that: 1) shared values and common ‘policy instrument beliefs; 2) creative and well-informed advocacy processes; and 3) a broad advocacy coalition with policy entrepreneurship and broker-ship from international actors (INGOs) have not been sufficient to assure seamless policy reform. Neither theory can effectively account for ongoing resistance to reform from state secrecy and opacity.

While willingness for dialogue exists between key Tunisian government institutions and a range of AC actors, further transparency and governance reform appears forthcoming. However, while opaque SOE structures persist, further confrontation approaches and protests remain a distinct possibility.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are four limitations to this study. First, the analytical grouping of ‘protesters’ does not fully consider their different city and region-specific needs. Despite their similar grievances regarding the lack of transparency and good governance in SOEs which impact their lives, further study is required to address the specificities of their struggles. Due to the focus of the research on civil society impacting national policy, protesters were not spoken to directly. Their views and lived realities are instead represented via secondary reports.

Second, certain key government officials did not want to be interviewed or did not make themselves available for interviews. This has left a gap in understanding the Status-Quo Advocacy Coalition’s perspective.

Third, a broader and deeper review of how the state and mainstream media in Tunisia covers natural resource issues could be beneficial for understanding how or why the pro-transparency, Counter Status-Quo Advocacy Coalition has not gained wider public support.

Fourth, I was not able to investigate the allegations of corruption by actors within the Status-Quo Advocacy Coalition. The pro-transparency advocacy coalition’s efforts have achieved incremental change but have also been met with resistance and the accusations of corruption, collected in the qualitative data, are unverified. Therefore, this research has not been able to confirm or deny where corruption exists, and exactly which actors are engaging in corrupt practices.
## APPENDICES

### CHANGES OF MINISTERS AND CHANGES IN MINISTRY PORTFOLIO

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<th>PARTY</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Afif Chelbi</td>
<td>Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD)</td>
<td>November 2004 – February 2011</td>
<td>Ministry of Industry</td>
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<td>RCD/ None</td>
<td>March 2011 – December 2011</td>
<td>Minister of Industry and Technology</td>
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<td>Ennahda</td>
<td>December 2011 – February 2012</td>
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<td>3 Mohamed Lamine Chakhari</td>
<td>Ennahda</td>
<td>February 2012 – March 2013</td>
<td>Ministry of Industry</td>
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<td>4 Mehdi Jomaa</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>March 2013 – January 2014</td>
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<td>6 Zakaria Hamad</td>
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<td>February 2015 – August 2016</td>
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<td>7 Mongi Marzouk</td>
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<td>January 2016 – August 2016</td>
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**COMPLETED INTERVIEWS**

**CHANGES OF MINISTERS AND CHANGES IN MINISTRY PORTFOLIO**

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<tr>
<td>1 Wissem Heni</td>
<td>NRGI</td>
<td>Senior Tunisia Officer</td>
<td>20.7.2017</td>
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<td>2 Wiem Melki</td>
<td>NRGI</td>
<td>Tunisia Program Associate</td>
<td>4.8.2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Diane Kaissy</td>
<td>Publish What You Pay (PWYP)</td>
<td>Regional Co-ordinator for MENA and Asia-Pacific</td>
<td>11.8.2017</td>
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<td>4 Charefddine Yakoubi</td>
<td>CTTEM</td>
<td>CTTEM President &amp; Tunisian Association of</td>
<td>23.8.2017</td>
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<td>6 Sihem Bouazza</td>
<td>CTTEM and ATDD</td>
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<td>31.8.2017</td>
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<td>7 Rahma Ben Youssef</td>
<td>Tunisian Association for Environment and Nature (ATEN) Gabes</td>
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<td>8 Nada Trigui</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>19.9.2017</td>
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<td>Al-Bawsala</td>
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<td>15 Simon Ilse and Rawdha Dabbabi</td>
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The increased role of civil society actors is a major recent phenomenon attributed to the advancement in communication as well as to the social, political and economic transformations. This program looks at a wide spectrum of civil society actors and their role in policy-making. We study how civil society actors organize themselves into advocacy coalitions and how policy networks are formed to influence policy processes and outcomes. We also look at policy research institutes and their contribution to the translation of knowledge to policies. The media’s expanding role, which some claim to be a major player in catalyzing protests and revolutions in the Arab world, will also be explored.

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We are committed to expanding and deepening policy-relevant knowledge production in and about the Arab region; and to creating a space for the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas among researchers, civil society and policy-makers.

Main goals
▸ Enhancing and broadening public policy-related debate and knowledge production in the Arab world and beyond
▸ Better understanding the Arab world within shifting international and global contexts
▸ Providing a space to enrich the quality of interaction among scholars, officials and civil society actors in and about the Arab world
▸ Disseminating knowledge that is accessible to policy-makers, media, research communities and the general public

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The Open Society Foundations - Arab Regional Office supports a diverse group of civil society organizations, research centers, universities, and media organizations across the Arab region. Based in Amman, Jordan, and with a satellite office in Tunisia, it works to strengthen civil society in its efforts to build vibrant and tolerant societies where governments are accountable to their citizens. It currently supports the work of civil society in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Syria, and Tunisia.