

OSTROM WORKSHOP RESEARCH SERIES

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Ostrom Workshop Research Awardee*

“Mechanisms of Local Governance in Emerging Democracies: A Case Study of Tunisia”



Wednesday, February 26, 2020

12:00–1:00 PM • Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park

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

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[Salih Yasun](#) is a Ph.D. Student at the Department of Political Science and Adam Smith Fellow at the Mercatus Center of George Mason University. He holds a Master’s degree in Applied Statistics from Indiana University and employs mixed method research examining democratization, local governance and property rights in the Middle East and North Africa region. Salih’s dissertation focuses on Tunisia to understand the conditions under which cooperative local governance can be established in emerging democracies.

Presentations are open to the public (see our website for papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon (sturgeon@iu.edu; 812/855–3151).