Co-Partisanship with Mayors, Institutional Performance and Citizen Trust in Local Governance Institutions: Evidence from Tunisia

Does co-partisanship with mayors influence citizen trust in local governance institutions in new democracies? I answer this question through conducting a case study in Tunisia. I evaluate Arab Barometer (2018) survey data on trust in local governance institutions, and interview data with mayors, council members and civil society organizations. The results indicate that Tunisians who support the same political party as their mayors tend to develop greater levels of trust in local governance institutions. Both quantitative evidence through a mediation model and qualitative evidence link a substantive portion of this relationship to the perceptions of institutional performance, such as their degrees of corruption, clientelism, inclusivity and efficiency. The findings contribute to the literature by identifying the role and mechanism of co-partisanship in shaping trust in local governance institutions among the emerging democracies.

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