



OPEN ACCESS

EDITED BY

Judite Gonçalves De Freitas,
Fernando Pessoa University, Portugal

REVIEWED BY

Carmela Lutmar,
University of Haifa, Israel
Felipe Pathé Duarte,
Nova School of Law, Portugal

*CORRESPONDENCE

Drew Landskroner
✉ dlandskroner@uoc.edu;
✉ drew.landskroner@gmail.com

RECEIVED 21 October 2025

REVISED 03 January 2026

ACCEPTED 16 January 2026

PUBLISHED 05 February 2026

CORRECTED 03 March 2026

CITATION

Landskroner D (2026) Information as a strategic resource: elite power dynamics and media control in Tunisia.
Front. Polit. Sci. 8:1729798.
doi: 10.3389/fpos.2026.1729798

COPYRIGHT

© 2026 Landskroner. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.

Information as a strategic resource: elite power dynamics and media control in Tunisia

Drew Landskroner*

Open University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain

The article analyzes the role of information as a strategic resource in the power structure within the context of Tunisia's evolution, with the aim of studying how control of information has shaped the political context since the Tunisian Uprising. The study focuses on the reemergence of elite control over the media and public discourse, particularly during the term of President Kais Saied, drawing parallels with the regime of Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. The analysis adopts the theoretical framework of the sociology of power, which conceptualizes power as a continuous competition between actors seeking to maintain or improve their hierarchical positions through the use of resources such as information. The methodology combines historical analysis with a case study focusing on recent developments in the country. The results indicate a trajectory in which the 2011 revolution is interpreted as a 'linear' temporal transformation of power, led by a mobilized population, with a return to 'circular' power relations marked by competition between elites and the marginalization of citizens, which has redefined the media landscape under Saied's leadership. It concludes that control of information remains a central mechanism for sustaining hierarchical structures in Tunisia, showing continuity between past and present authoritarian practices.

KEYWORDS

democratic backsliding, information control, MENA (Middle East and North Africa), power dynamics, power resource, sociology of power, international relations theory, Tunisia

1 Introduction

With the re-election of Kais Saied as the president of Tunisia in October 2024, both 'media freedom' and the freedom of expression have been considered to have experienced significant decline (Hassan, 2025). The decrease in 'public debate' and the return of media restrictions and censorship is considered by many to have begun, or at least, faced a key turning point, in 2021, with the declaration of the state of emergency by President Saied (Nafti, 2025).

The main question that the present article attempts to address is how the changes in the media landscape in recent decades may be explained, using the theoretical framework of the sociology of power as its main tool of analysis. The sociology of power, an innovative ontological proposal for better understanding the inner workings of power relations within large hierarchical systems, which will be outlined in the following section, allows for an alternative interpretation of motives behind the actions of key actors in the media and political landscape. The convenience of this type of analysis results from the ability that the sociology of power provides to identify such motives without, or at least, with less, distractions from 'justifications of elites that may be simply discourse, used as a resource of power' (Farrés-Fernández, 2019b, p. 42).

Information control is undoubtedly a fundamental pillar of power, and one that has already been widely recognized and analyzed (Luo and Rozenas, 2022, p. 4; Voltmer et al., 2021, p. 847). The sociology of power identifies the monopolization of ruling elites of power resources in

informational domains, affirming that the control over the flow of information is another instrument or weapon to be wielded by actors in order to accumulate power by impacting decision-making processes, such as those of the members of a society or collective: ‘The control of information is an essential factor in the decision-making process and, therefore, in the ability to accumulate [power]’ [translation by the author from the original Spanish text] (Izquierdo-Brichs and Etherington, 2017, p. 186). In the case of Tunisia, both recent events in the country, as well as those that can be observed historically are clear examples of manipulations and uses of the resource, and the value it has for the actors with regard to their accumulation of power.

2 Methods

The theoretical framework on which the present article is based is the sociology of power, a relatively recently arising theoretical approach, although one which has already generated significant theoretical work, debate, and analysis in its brief lifetime (Camps-Febrer, 2019; Camps-Febrer and Farrés-Fernández, 2019; Farrés-Fernández, 2018, 2019a,b; Goenaga-Sánchez, 2016; Izquierdo-Brichs, 2008; Izquierdo-Brichs et al., 2019; Izquierdo-Brichs and Lampridi-Kemou, 2009; Izquierdo-Brichs and Massansalvador-Serra, 2018; Izquierdo-Brichs and Etherington, 2017; Izquierdo-Brichs and Feliu-Martínez, 2016; Soto-Reyes et al., 2017; Izquierdo-Brichs and Farrés-Fernández, 2008; *Sociología del Poder: Orígenes y Desarrollo*, 2020). The research carried out under the framework helps to establish a basis for understanding the systems in which we find ourselves and the interactions that take place within these systems with the use of analytical tools that hold their ground across both temporal and geographic contexts. Given the novelty of the theoretical framework a summary of the main ideas of the proposal, together with an explanation of its potential usefulness for application to cases such as the present, has been included below.

The sociology of power can be defined as a ‘system theory’ for exploring the functioning of large hierarchical societies taking into account the underlying dynamics implied by said hierarchical nature. The theory provides the methodical instruments for interpreting the behavior of elites in the system, based on the premise that these individuals or groups of individuals are in a ‘continuous competition’ for the ‘accumulation of power’, not necessarily because they wish to be constantly competing, but as a result of the dynamics of the system itself (Izquierdo-Brichs and Etherington, 2017, p. 15–23). Under the sociology of power, who and what may be considered as actors represents a key divergence from many other theories in international relations and political sciences. The definition of actors can be understood as ‘...normally exclusively the individuals who form part of the elites who control sufficient power resources to affect the system’ (Farrés-Fernández, 2019a, p. 257). The difference between actors and elites may be understood as elites being made up of groups of actors, where those who find themselves at the top of these groups, with positions that allow for control over a hierarchy, whereas actors are any of those who have ‘relevant positions in a system’ and, at times, may include groups not part of the elite, namely, the ‘mobilized population’ (Farrés-Fernández, 2018, p. 88).

The need for elite-actors to maintain and accumulate power implies that the decisions made by said actors revolve around preserving or bettering their positions through the use of power resources, which include concepts such as the state, capital, coercion, ideology and, of

particular importance with regard to the present analysis, information (Izquierdo-Brichs and Etherington, 2017, p. 127). Information is a highly relevant and sought after power resource, as shown by the ‘great efforts made by various actors’ to gain control over it. The power resource can be separated into two main facets, namely, media and education which are those that provide ‘control over the information that citizens receive’, and information services and data, as ‘information that is held about citizens and other actors’ (Izquierdo-Brichs and Etherington, 2017, p. 191). The former has been of particular note as a weapon in the hands of the elite in Tunisia both during the years of Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali’s regime and in the current context, under Saied, contexts in which media concentration and censorship have seemingly played important roles in the Tunisian system.

The present analysis is carried out as a case study, in line with the definition proposed by Gerring, as an ‘intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units’ (Gerring, 2004, p. 352), providing a comparison of different time periods and political regimes with specific regard to Tunisia. The comparison, rather than being with other countries that have experienced similar periods of political transition, corresponds to that of a ‘temporal variation’ (Gerring, 2004, p. 343; Bartolini, 1993), to best underline the patterns of continuity and change in Tunisia, while simultaneously explaining that these patterns may be applicable as well to other systems and contexts. The materials upon which the analysis is carried out include reports from different organizations whose activities entail investigations into matters of human rights violations, independent think-tanks, research and reports from different scholars and experts in media studies, information control and censorship, democratic transitions, and Tunisia.

The reliance on predominantly secondary sources reflects the nature of the focus of the article, the aim of which is not to generate new primary data, but rather to provide an alternative interpretation of existing data through a new analytical lens. Additionally, access to certain forms of primary material, including some media content, could be considered to be limited in certain periods of the Tunisian context examined, due to restricted public and online availability, or accessibility only through third-party archives and repositories, the content of which was, in many cases, unable to be contrasted with the original sources to confirm authenticity. Accordingly, the importance given to triangulated secondary sources was a deliberate methodological choice to ensure analytical rigor, while acknowledging the inherent limitation in terms of empirical originality.

3 Results

3.1 Information control during the regime of Ben Ali

During the Ben Ali regime and throughout the Tunisian Uprising, the media was used as a power resource to spread propaganda and carry out political marketing. Ownership and management of media sources was dominated by those linked to Ben Ali, his clan, and others connected to the regime, typically controlled by actors associated with the government, with both entry into and permanence within the media sector dependent on these actors and under their control (Al Khatt-Reporters Without Borders, 2016; El Issawi, 2012; INRIC, 2012). The choice of sources of information was considered to be ‘extremely limited’ during this period (Al Khatt-Reporters Without Borders, 2016),

guaranteeing that the population only receive the information deemed appropriate to the elites in control of the system. Examples can be found across all media formats, with popular private television channels such as Hannibal TV having been founded by Larbi Nasra (Miladi, 2021, p. 277), related by marriage to Ben Ali, public television channels, such as Canal 21 and TV7 - both of which changed their names after the revolution (Ben Saad-Dusseaut, 2015, p. 265–266) - directly under state control (Elouardaoui, 2013, p. 62), radio stations such as Mosaique FM launched by Belhassen Trabelsi, the brother-in-law of Ben Ali (Labidi, 2017, p. 127), and numerous others.

Publications by opposition parties, such as those of *Al-Maoukif* of the Progressive Democratic Party, *Mouwatoun* of the Democratic Forum for Freedom and Work, and several others reported significant restraints in terms of funding, with a lack of access to state subsidies, in terms of distribution, and even in terms of obtaining sources of information for their publications, as shown in interviews conducted by Reporters Without Borders with editors of the different media sources. Comments from Mustapha Ben Jaafar, as the managing editor of *Mouwatoun* included the effects of the fear of vendors, 'Mouwatoun is invisible because that is what the government wants, and because vendors are scared', reflected as well in the comments of Rachid Khechana, as the editor of *Al-Maoukif*, 'Printers and distributors are also [in addition to potential channels of information] subjected to a great deal of harassment' (Reporters Without Borders, 2007). Furthermore, journalists for privately-owned newspapers frequently received instructions to only report on information from *Tunis Afrique Presse*, the governmental news agency, which was considered to be controlled by the interior ministry, significantly limiting the scope of the 'appropriate limits' of their coverage (Bour, 2016; Mtibaa, 2013, p. 85; Reporters Without Borders, 2007).

Information thus, can have been considered a mechanism of controlling the population, as well as influencing the decisions made within Tunisia throughout the entirety of the Ben Ali Regime. From the standpoint of the sociology of power, this may be interpreted as follows:

'Information can be both a source of power in the hands of the population and a mechanism for controlling it.... If even decision-makers work on the basis of manipulated information, the situation of the population will logically be much worse. Thus, control over sources of information by both the elites and the population implies an enormous capacity to influence decisions and the definition of preferences on both sides... Misinformation thus becomes a fundamental resource'. [translation by the author from the original Spanish text] (Izquierdo-Brichs and Etherington, 2017, p. 192-193)

The population under Ben Ali may be considered to be another power resource during this period, up until the beginning of the revolution, when, as a mobilized body, it may be interpreted that it transformed temporarily into an actor. While the power relationship between competing elites is always one of a circular nature, with 'relative aspirations' in which they constantly struggle to better their positions and accumulate more power in comparison from other competing actors in order to maintain their positions or move up in the hierarchies of their respective systems, the power relationship held by the population, as an actor, must be defined in a different manner (Farrés-Fernández, 2018, p. 88, 97–99; Izquierdo-Brichs and Lampridi-Kemou, 2009, p. 20).

During the Tunisian Uprising, the population of Tunisia consciously identified its needs and mobilized, marking the beginning of a linear power relation. Symbolically speaking, the 'needs' included putting an end to injustice, corruption, repression, and poverty, and, more literally speaking, overthrowing the elites ruling over the hierarchies, especially at a governmental level, with Ben Ali in the spotlight (Saidin, 2018, p. 70–78; Schraeder, 2012, p. 662–675; Hess, 2013, p. 254–268). Information was also a tool for the population during its period as an actor, with social media playing a role in the 'mass mobilization' and activism, thus further emphasizing the important role of information as a power resource within Tunisia's system (Lowrance, 2016, p. 173; Wang, 2011, p. 2).

This phenomenon has been extensively studied by several authors, who comment on the ways in which channels such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube were used for the diffusion of information in order to reach 'a larger portion of the Tunisian society' and to serve as sources of information for journalists and international media channels (Breuer et al., 2015). Studies such as those of Lotan, et al. provide evidence of the importance and reach of Twitter flows, for instance, in terms of reaching mainstream media channels. Examples of the information flows analyzed by the authors included tweets such as 'I have been an activist for 20 years of my life. What is happening in #Tunisia is unprecedented in Arab World #sidibouzid.', among others, which were quickly 'amplified' by bloggers and journalists (Lotan et al., 2011). References to social media content can also be observed within the publications by different news channels, for example, in the article published by Al Jazeera on December 20, 2010: 'Footage posted on the Facebook social network site and YouTube showed several hundred protesters outside the regional government headquarters, with lines of police blocking them from getting closer to the building' (Al Jazeera News Agencies, 2010). Information, in this regard, was used for generating awareness and support for the mobilizations.

3.2 Changes in the media and public information following the fall of Ben Ali

Following the fall of Ben Ali in 2011, there were significant changes in the media and in public information. The results of the mobilization of the population of Tunisia, those key moments arising from their conversion from power resource into actor, led to the country being perceived as a 'success story' within the MENA region, although one left in a phase of transition and with continuing issues and manipulations by various actors (INRIC, 2012; El Issawi, 2012; Henneberg and Yerkes, 2024, p. 2; Internews, 2024, p. 11–48). With the linear power relation having reached its end upon the achievement of the goals of the population, demonstrated by rights that included, with regard to the resource of information, for example, those connected with freedom of expression and higher media freedom, the outlook was seemingly positive, with new initiatives being developed (INRIC, 2012). The era of perceived media freedom did not last long, however.

Indicators of a return to politically controlled media and current context have since marked the Tunisian context with the shifts in power the country has seen in more recent years. Saied was elected in 2019, and, not yet halfway through the presidential term, in 2021, he shut down parliament, removed Hichem Mechichi from his position as prime minister, carrying out a 'power grab', and further adding to his own accumulated power while working to reduce the power of

other actors in the system. A negative image of the party, Ennahda, for instance, was generated, working to turn the population against it and draw away from the power of the actors in the party, while ‘consolidating’ Saied’s own power (Henneberg and Yerkes, 2024, p. 3).

Through a constitutional reform, Saied accumulated further power through his political position, adding to the powers of the presidency while reducing checks and balances in place through the other branches. The use of power to silence opposers and opponents in this manner has drawn comparisons to that of the context prior to the revolution, with some going so far as to comment that ‘the generally repressive environment of the Ben Ali era...has been restored.’ (Henneberg and Yerkes, 2024, p. 3) Comparisons to Ben Ali and his regime are inevitable, given their relatively close distance in time within the country and can be explained by the ongoing power competition. As can be interpreted through the sociology of power, the actions of Ben Ali, just as the actions of Saied, have been performed by these actors with the aim of maintaining or improving their place in the competition. The removal of other actors from the competition or the reduction of their power serves to further enhance their own power, a part of a continuous pattern: ‘The struggle for the democratization of information is as old as hierarchies themselves. The ability to decide what information reaches other actors in the competition [for the differential accumulation of power] or the general public is an important power resource.’ [translation by the author from the original Spanish text] (Izquierdo-Brichs and Etherington, 2017, p. 194).

As a result of several key events, the ‘state of media freedom’ has been cited to be in decline in recent years in Tunisia (Internews, 2024, p. 6; Nafti, 2025). Among these events, the entry into force of Decree-Law 54 of September 2022 can be observed, a law which has been seen as a tool for President Saied to persecute those he considers as enemies or critics, and to censor media professionals, journalists, and activists in general (Henneberg and Yerkes, 2024, p. 8). The law was passed under the discourse of fighting against disinformation, and yet, on the contrary, is viewed by many as another mechanism of information control, used to prevent the spread of information contrary to the goals of Saied or that could potentially draw away from his power, or contribute to the power of other actors in such a way that could be detrimental to the accumulation of his own.

The definitions contained in the law for such crimes were notably ‘vague’, allowing for the interpretation in whatever way best suited the underlying interests in play, and leaving excessive room for manipulation and misuse of the law. A particularly noteworthy example can be found in Article 24, which states:

‘A penalty of five years’ imprisonment and a fine of fifty thousand dinars shall be imposed on anyone who knowingly uses information and communication systems and networks to produce, disseminate, broadcast, or send, or write false news, false data, rumors, false or falsified documents, or documents falsely attributed to others with the aim of infringing on the rights of others, harming public safety or national defense, or spreading terror among the population...’
[translation by the author from the original French text] (DCAF, 2022, Article 24, Décret-loi n° 2022-54 du 13 septembre 2022)

Under the provisions of the article, arrests such as that of journalist Mohamed Boughalleb have been carried out. Boughalleb, who had recurrently spoken out against the president, was detained for the

alleged spreading of false news (Amnesty International, 2025). Similar strategies can be observed under Ben Ali, for instance, through the detention of human rights lawyer and opposition party member, Mohammed Abbou, for the alleged ‘dissemination and propagation of false and malicious information likely to disturb public order, defamation of the judiciary, incitement of citizens to break the law of the Republic and presentation to the public of writings likely to disturb public order’ (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2007).

The 2022 Decree-Law has also resulted in ‘self-censorship’, possibly due to the fear generated in journalists and others in the communication sector (Henneberg and Yerkes, 2024, p. 8; Human Rights Watch, 2023). Despite the comparisons made to the Ben Ali regime, at least for the time being, some authors argue that levels of repression from 2021 have not reached the same negative level as those prior to the revolution, with those most impacted by the information control being activists and journalists, while the population at large ‘does not fear violent repression’ in the same way as during Ben Ali’s time in power (Henneberg and Yerkes, 2024, p. 12). Media control through the implementation of law 54 can be argued to have sharpened Saied’s control over the population as a power resource, nonetheless, having ‘controlled public discourse’ and subsequently modifying public views as a result of the information that reached them.

3.3 Findings

The findings commented on in the present article show that, while there have been significant shifts in the dynamics of information control in Tunisia since the Tunisian Uprising and the end of the regime of Ben Ali, the competition for the differential accumulation of power by Tunisia’s elites remains a key underlying factor, and, while the elites in power may change, the importance of information as a power resource, does not. Control over the resource remains of utmost importance in the competition, and the transition from a relatively more open media environment during the first post-revolution years, to more recent situations, under Saied, can potentially be explained by this fact. With the expansion of Saied and his government’s power, information has been consistently used to shape public opinion and prevent opposition and narratives that could challenge those beneficial to them, with developments such as the introduction of Decree-Law 54 in 2022 further illustrating the ‘backsliding’ into authoritarian patterns. These contexts demonstrate that information has been a key power resource for Saied, just as it was for Ben Ali. On the one side, the ‘silencing of critics’ and continuous censorship of media professionals and activists prevents the public from being able to have full access to the information regarding relevant circumstances. On the other side, the use of the media as a propaganda tool spreads the information that those in power wish for the public to receive, influencing, or attempting to influence, their opinions and positions. Both means of information control prevent the public from being able to make informed decisions.

4 Discussion

The present article emphasizes the pivotal nature of information as a power resource in Tunisia in both the past and present. Despite the initial optimism following the Tunisian Uprising within the field of

media freedom, freedom of expression, and similar rights, the trend back towards centralized media control under Saied's presidency marks the short-lived disruption from the typical patterns in the system following the population's conversion into an actor. The control over information will likely persist as a power resource for as long as the actors remain competing for differential power within the system of Tunisia, which is to say, indefinitely. Thus, the recent fall back into patterns of censorship and media control should come as no surprise. The temporary change following the fall of Ben Ali in 2011, in which freedom of expression and independent media thrived, could potentially be considered a result of the change in the condition of the general population from power resource to actor with the mobilization that took place.

With the reconversion of the population back into a power resource, having reached its goal and arrived at the endpoint of the linear power relation it represented, the political elite and other actors quickly rose once again to seize and manipulate the resource. The article suggests that information control is not a temporary strategy, but simply an integral and constant part of the power competition, and the ongoing use of both legal and institutional mechanisms to suppress opposition and limit access to critical information. The sociology of power clearly shines a spotlight on the nature of the phenomenon: 'It is paradoxical that the field of information, one of the most symbolic from the point of view of liberal democracy, is one of the most elitist and least democratic that exists.' [translation by the author from the original Spanish text] (Izquierdo-Brichs and Atherington, 2017, p. 194).

While the present analysis focuses on the Tunisian case in particular, performing a temporal rather than a spatial comparison, the mechanisms commented with regard to the Tunisian case can also potentially be considered to be applicable to other contexts. Other authors, such as Johansson-Nogués and Rivera-Escartin, in the process-tracing they carry out regarding causal mechanisms of re-autocratization in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, include 'control over the domestic narrative' among the key conditions of authoritarian reemergence in recent decades, representing clear examples of the use of information as a power resource for the consolidation of power by the actors of each system (Johansson-Nogués and Rivera-Escartin, 2025, p. 1, 11–12, 14). Future research will potentially be centered around analyzing such causal mechanisms and the connection with 'de-democratization' (Rivera Escartin, 2023a, p. 2; Rivera Escartin, 2023b, p. 12–14; Tilly, 2007, p. 188–189) processes in further detail, with the inclusion of interviews with journalists, activists, and other key players, as well as potential collaborations with Tunisian academia, which could help to track advances in the ongoing context and incorporate local scholarship and provide a more robust triangulation of the study.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Author contributions

DL: Writing – original draft, Writing – reviews & editing.

Funding

The author(s) declared that financial support was not received for this work and/or its publication.

Acknowledgments

The framework of the sociology of power employed in this article was inspired by the research of Dr. Guillem Farrés-Fernández and Dr. Ferran Izquierdo-Brichs. Their works were instrumental in shaping the theoretical basis of the analysis carried out, however it is important to clarify that neither reviewed or validated the content of this article. Additionally, the author would like to thank the two reviewers, whose comments and contributions were invaluable in improving the content of the analysis.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared that this work was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Correction note

This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the scientific content of the article.

Generative AI statement

The author(s) declared that Generative AI was not used in the creation of this manuscript.

Any alternative text (alt text) provided alongside figures in this article has been generated by Frontiers with the support of artificial intelligence and reasonable efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, including review by the authors wherever possible. If you identify any issues, please contact us.

Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

References

- Al Jazeera News Agencies (2010). Riots reported in Tunisian city: Al Jazeera Media Network.
- Al Khatt-Reporters Without Borders (2016). Media Ownership Monitor: Tunisia
- Amnesty International (2025). Urgent action: Tunisia: Prominent journalist arbitrarily detained. London: Amnesty International UK.
- Bartolini, S. (1993). On time and comparative research. *J. Theor. Polit.* 5, 131–167. doi: 10.1177/0951692893005002001
- Ben Saad-Dusseaut, F. (2015). La Tunisie aux urnes. Le rôle des réseaux sociaux dans la transformation post-dictature. *Communication et organisation. Revue scientifique francophone en Communication organisationnelle* 47, 254–270. doi: 10.4000/communicationorganisation.4985
- Bour, H. E. (2016). Être correspondant régional en Tunisie: De l'aliénation au pouvoir à la liberté totale. *L'Année du Maghreb* 15, 115–128. doi: 10.4000/anneemaghreb.2836
- Breuer, A., Landman, T., and Farquhar, D. (2015). Social media and protest mobilization: evidence from the Tunisian revolution. *Democratization* 22, 764–792. doi: 10.1080/13510347.2014.885505
- Camps-Febrer, B. (2019). Layers of security: the security sector and power struggle in Morocco. *Contemp. Arab Aff.* 12, 107–124. doi: 10.1525/caa.2019.121007
- Camps-Febrer, B., and Farrés-Fernández, G. (2019). Power and the security sector: thoughts from the sociology of power. *Contemp. Arab Aff.* 12, 3–18. doi: 10.1525/caa.2019.121001
- DCAF (2022). Décret-loi n° 2022–54 du 13 septembre 2022, relatif à la lutte contre les infractions se rapportant aux systèmes d'information et de communication. Available online at: <https://legislation-securite.tn/latest-laws/decret-loi-n-2022-54-du-13-septembre-2022-relatif-a-la-lutte-contre-les-infractions-se-rapportant-aux-systemes-d-information-et-de-communication/>
- El Issawi, F. (2012). Tunisian media in transition. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1–24.
- Elouardaoui, O. (2013). The crisis of contemporary Arab television: has the move towards transnationalism and privatization in Arab television affected democratization and social development in the Arab world? *J. Arab Muslim Media Res.* 6, 51–66. doi: 10.1386/jammr.6.1.51_1
- Farrés-Fernández, G. (2018). Análisis de conflictos y Relaciones Internacionales, una elaboración teórica de Sociología del Poder: Causas de la Guerra del Líbano de 2006 [Ph.D. thesis]: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universitat Autònoma de Madrid.
- Farrés-Fernández, G. (2019a). Reanalysing international conflicts: proposals from the sociology of power. *Int. Stud.* 56, 255–271. doi: 10.1177/0020881719857512
- Farrés-Fernández, G. (2019b). Security sector reform and the competition for power in Lebanon. *Contemp. Arab Aff.* 12, 39–54. doi: 10.1525/caa.2019.121003
- Gerring, J. (2004). What is a case study and what is it good for? *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 98, 341–354. doi: 10.1017/S0003055404001182
- Goenaga-Sánchez, A. (2016). El sector bancario libanés y su papel en el diseño y reproducción del orden social, político y económico del Líbano contemporáneo [Doctoral thesis]: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universitat Autònoma de Madrid.
- Hassan, T. (2025). Tunisia. Human Rights Watch. Available online at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/tunisia> (Accessed July 16, 2025).
- Henneberg, S., and Yerkes, S. (2024). Avoiding the Election Error in Tunisia: Why U.S. Policy Should Focus on Real Reform, Not Votes (Policy Notes No. 148). Washington Institute for Near East Policy.
- Hess, S. (2013). From the Arab spring to the Chinese winter: the institutional sources of authoritarian vulnerability and resilience in Egypt, Tunisia, and China. *Int. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 34, 254–272. doi: 10.1177/0192512112460258
- Human Rights Watch. (2023). Tunisia: Cybercrime Decree Used Against Critics. Available online at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/19/tunisia-cybercrime-decree-used-against-critics>
- INRIC (2012). General Report. Available online at: http://www.inric.tn/rapports/en/INRIC_Rapport_final_en.pdf
- Internews (2024). Tunisia media landscape assessment 2024: United States Agency for International Development.
- Izquierdo-Brichs, F. (2008). Poder y felicidad: Una propuesta de sociología del poder. Madrid: Catarata.
- Izquierdo-Brichs, F., and Etherington, J. (2017). Poder global: Una mirada desde la Sociología del Poder. Barcelona: Ediciones Bellaterra.
- Izquierdo-Brichs, F., and Farrés-Fernández, G. (2008). La competición por el poder entre el Islam político y los militares en Turquía: del conflicto a la estabilidad. *Rev. Estud. Int. Mediterr.* 5, 109–132. doi: 10.15366/reim2008.5.006
- Izquierdo-Brichs, F., and Feliu-Martínez, L. (2016). Estructura de poder y desafíos populares: La respuesta del régimen marroquí al Movimiento 20 de Febrero. *Rev. Estud. Polit.* 174, 195–223. doi: 10.18042/cepc/rep.174.07
- Izquierdo-Brichs, F., Feliu-Martínez, L., and Mateo-Dieste, J. L. (2019). Un siglo de movilización social en Marruecos. Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra.
- Izquierdo-Brichs, F., and Lampridi-Kemou, A. (2009). “La sociología del poder en el mundo árabe contemporáneo” in Poder y regímenes en el mundo árabe contemporáneo. ed. F. Izquierdo-Brichs (Barcelona: Fundación CIDOB), 17–60.
- Izquierdo-Brichs, F., and Massansalvador-Serra, F. (2018). Poder y regímenes en Asia Central. Barcelona: Ediciones Bellaterra.
- Johansson-Nogués, E., and Rivera-Escartin, A. (2025). Authoritarianism's reemergence in North Africa and the Middle East: the cases of Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. *Contemp. Polit.* 22, 1–19. doi: 10.1080/13569775.2025.2509338
- Labidi, K. (2017). “Tunisia's media barons wage war on independent media regulation” in *In the Service of Power: Media capture and the threat to democracy*. ed. A. Schiffrin (Center for International Media Assistance), 125–135.
- Lotan, G., Graeff, E., Ananny, M., Gaffney, D., Pearce, I., and boyd, d. (2011). The Arab spring| the revolutions were tweeted: information flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. *Int. J. Commun.* 5, 1–12.
- Lowrance, S. (2016). Was the revolution tweeted? Social media and the jasmine revolution in Tunisia. *Dig. Middle East Stud.* 25, 155–176. doi: 10.1111/dome.12076
- Luo, Z., and Rozenas, A. (2022). Ruling the ruling coalition: information control and authoritarian power-sharing. *Q. J. Polit. Sci.* doi: 10.2139/ssrn.2978254
- Miladi, N. (2021). “16. Tunisia: the transformative media landscape after the revolution” in Arab media systems. eds. C. Richter and C. Kozman (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers), 267–284.
- Mtibaa, M. (2013). “L'agence Tunis Afrique Presse a-t-elle réussi sa mutation vers un média de service public?” in Médias publics arabes et transition démocratique. ed. H. Bour (Tunis: Éditions IPSI), 83–100.
- Nafti, H. (2025). Tunisian Media: An Increasingly Curtailed Space for Debate Arab Reform Initiative. Available online at: <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/tunisian-media-an-increasingly-curtailed-space-for-debate/>
- Reporters Without Borders (2007). A textbook case in press censorship for the past 20 years. Available online at: <https://rsf.org/en/textbook-case-press-censorship-past-20-years>
- Rivera Escartin, A. (2023a). Elite polarization and democratic backsliding in Tunisia: tracing agency-driven mechanisms. *Democratization* 31, 871–890. doi: 10.1080/13510347.2023.2284873
- Rivera Escartin, A. (2023b). Approaches to explain political transitions: The case of Tunisia [Ph.D. thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona]. Available online at: <https://www.tdx.cat/handle/10803/688618>
- Saidin, M. I. S. (2018). Rethinking the “Arab spring”: the root causes of the Tunisian jasmine revolution and Egyptian January 25 revolution. *Int. J. Islamic Thought* 13, 69–79. doi: 10.24035/ijit.06.2018.007
- Schraeder, P. J. (2012). Tunisia's jasmine revolution & the Arab spring: implications for international intervention. *Orbis* 56, 662–675. doi: 10.1016/j.orbis.2012.08.009
- Sociología del Poder: Orígenes y Desarrollo. (2020). Sociología del Poder. Available online at: <https://www.sociologiadelpoder.com/sobre-la-sociologia-del-poder>
- Soto-Reyes, J., Bouajaj-Hadiq, Y., Domínguez-Teruel, A., and Lecumberri-Iribarren, A. (2017). La distribución del poder en la Libia post Gadafi: un análisis desde la Sociología del Poder / The Distribution of Power in Post-Gaddafi Libya: A “Sociology of Power” Analysis. *Rev. Estud. Int. Mediterr.* 23:4. doi: 10.15366/reim2017.23.004
- Tilly, C. (2007). Democracy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- United Nations Human Rights Council (2007). Opinions adopted by the working group on arbitrary detention (a/HRC/4/40/add.1). United Nations.
- Voltmer, K., Selvik, K., and Hoigilt, J. (2021). Hybrid media and hybrid politics: contesting informational uncertainty in Lebanon and Tunisia. *Int. J. Press/Politics* 26, 842–860. doi: 10.1177/1940161221999266
- Wang, F. Y. (2011). Social media and the jasmine revolution. *IEEE Intell. Syst.* 26:5751213. doi: 10.1109/MIS.2011.34