

INVITATION

Renegotiating social contracts through local public administration reform: The case of Tunisia

International workshop

Tuesday 20 June, 16:00-17:30hrs CEST (Amsterdam), 15:00-16:30hrs CET (Tunis)

Online

Tunisia's transition process in 2011-2021 saw efforts to expand protections for civil liberties, hold free and fair elections, and elaborate a progressive constitution. Multiple public administration reform initiatives sought to address the significant deficit in public trust in state institutions and reshape the social contract. Initial optimistic expectations and demands for a rapid, radical break with the past came up against institutional resilience and resistance, echoing experiences in other post-authoritarian contexts.

A multitude of initiatives, initiated by government and by civil society, centred around notions of accountability, transparency and rule of law, sought to shift relations between citizens and public administration away from hierarchical dyadic exchanges favouring patronage, nepotism and discretion towards institutional rules based on universalistic, clearly defined, legally established rights and procedures that delimit the exercise of public authority.

Although almost all Tunisia's democratic gains have been dismantled in the last two years, its experience of public administration reform merit examination.

This online workshop will bring together academics, researchers, and policy makers to discuss the findings of a research project on renegotiating the social contract through citizen-facing local public administration reforms in 2011-21. The project is funded by the Knowledge Management Fund of the Dutch Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law and carried out by the Jasmine Foundation in collaboration with The Hague University of Applied Sciences.

The workshop will discuss the research findings based on survey data, interviews and focus group discussions. It will explore two specific initiatives that aimed to reshape citizen-state relations at local level through internal and external-facing reforms that sought to introduce greater transparency, accountability and participation in local state institutions.

This workshop will discuss these experiences and the merits of adopting an empirically grounded approach to public administration reform that engages with local conflicts, perceptions and dynamics that differ between different localities and regions. The workshop aims is to generate, together with expert panellists and research participants, insights that are relevant to and beyond the Tunisian case.



Programme

- Welcome and introductions
- Presentation of main research findings and policy recommendations – Dr. Intissar Kherigi, Dr. Sylvia I. Bergh and Dr. Hatem Kahloun
- Comments by panellists: Prof. Yasmin Khodary, British University in Egypt; Dr. Markus Loewe, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS); and Prof. Ellen Lust, Gothenburg University
- Open discussion
- Conclusion

The workshop will be held mainly in English with **English-Arabic/Arabic-English interpretation available**.

Please register by filling in this form [here](#), and you will receive a zoom link shortly before the workshop.