

FAO INVESTMENT DAYS
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The rural and agricultural roots of the Tunisian revolution: new challenges for development

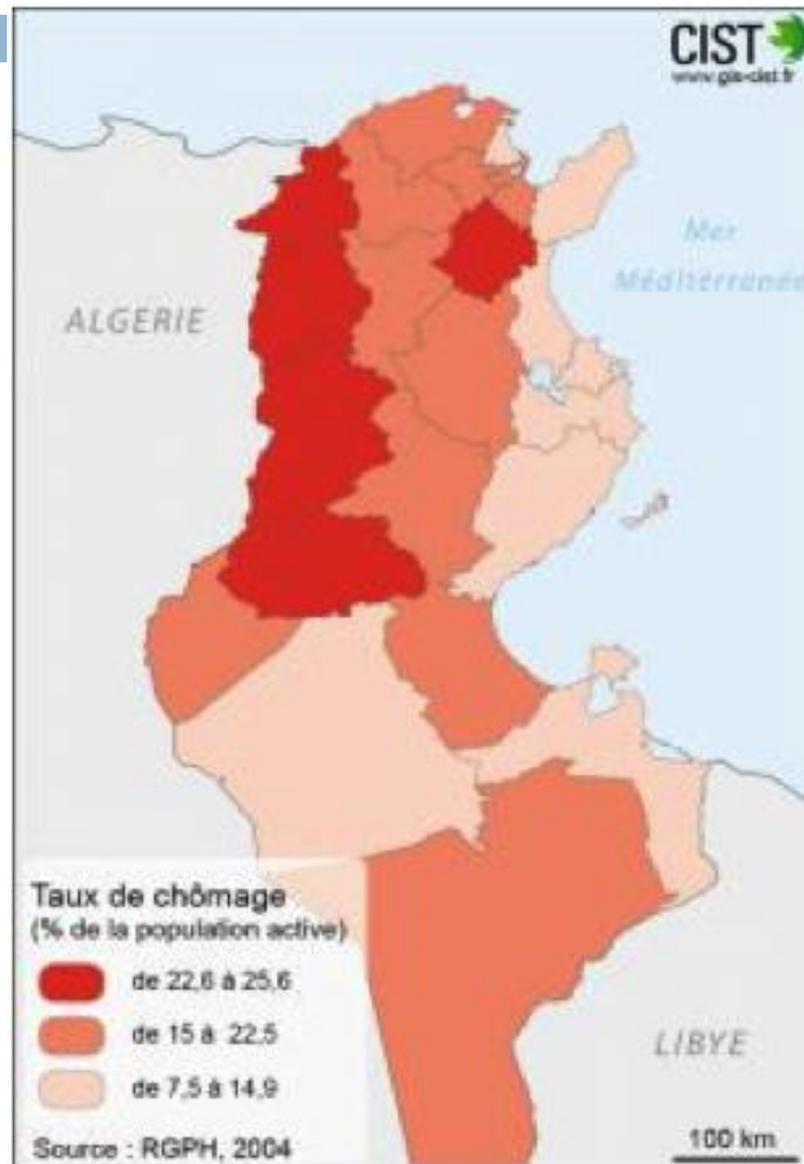
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Presentation outline

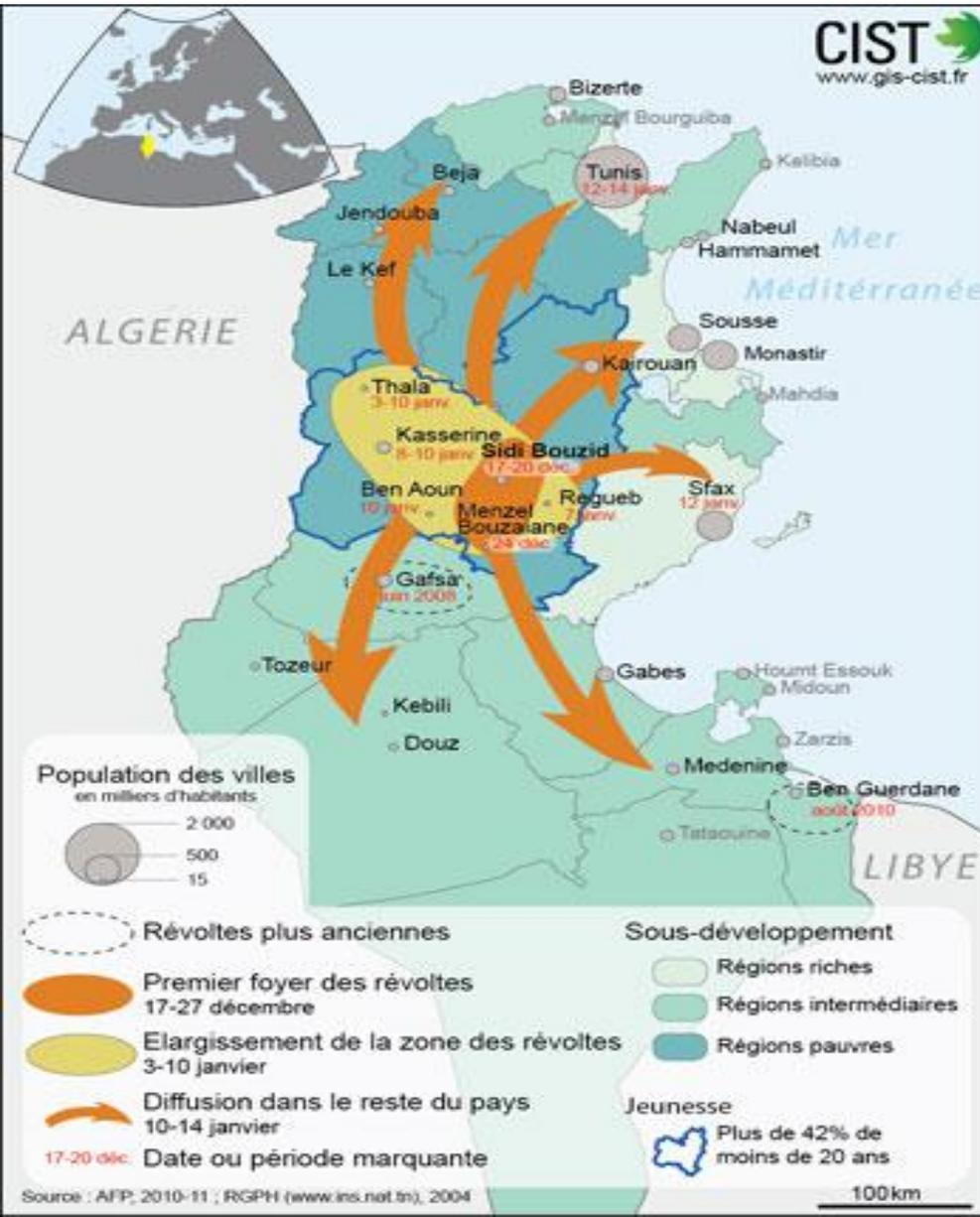
- ❑ **1. Increasing inequalities and growing unemployment rates for young graduates**
- ❑ **2. Growing regional disparities**
- ❑ **3. Marginalization of agriculture and growing food deficit**
- ❑ **4. Food issues: a political dimension**
- ❑ **5. After the revolution: persisting tensions and farmers' mobilizations**
- ❑ **6. Conclusion**

Growing unemployment rates and increasing inequalities

- **Economic liberalization** and opening to the world markets
- Promotion of **low productivity economic sectors**
- **High unemployment** rates among graduates (up to 40% in some regions)
- **growing disparities in the distribution of wealth** (10% of Tunisians own 1/3 of GDP, 20% of Egyptian own 1/2 GDP)
- **increase in poverty rates** (40% of



Growing social and spatial inequalities



- East/West Divide (TN)
- Bipartition Nile/Delta
- TN littoral: 85% of the workplaces in the manufacturing industry, 95% of the touristic facilities, 50% of the irrigated areas
- Growing inequalities between coastal and inland areas (education, living conditions, employment)
- Poverty remains mainly **rural**
- In the MENA region's, 70 % of the people who earn less than \$1.25 a day are rural.

Marginalization of agriculture and growing food deficit

- Shifting agricultural development objectives: from food self-sufficiency to food-security
- Food consumption needs of the urban and the rural population increasingly satisfied through imports
- Shifts in consumption patterns towards diets including more animal proteins
- SAP policies: privatization of state farms, cuts in farm subsidies, farm prices' liberalization, reorganization of the farm credit system, and gradual privatization of food marketing networks, reallocation of economic resources in favor of large-scale and corporate agricultural enterprises and the irrigated sector
- Marginalization of the family farms in the rainfed sector
- Growing food deficit: 55% to 60% of consumption needs in grain

Food issues: a political dimension

- increased vulnerability to rising world food prices, has had a direct effect on the capacity of the largest fraction of the population to access staple food
- the food crisis and its consequences have contributed to the disruption of the social contract on which the legitimacy of the Tunisian regime was based
- « Bread and water, without Dictatorship! »: a major slogan of the popular protests



Farmers' protests: a reactivation of class struggle in the countryside?

Occupation of state owned farms
Strikes of farm workers
Managers of corporate farms organizing into associations to defend their interests
Contestation of the leaders of the farmers' union
Protests to lift farmers' debts contracted with the banks
Protests against private collectors of grain
Refusal to pay for irrigation

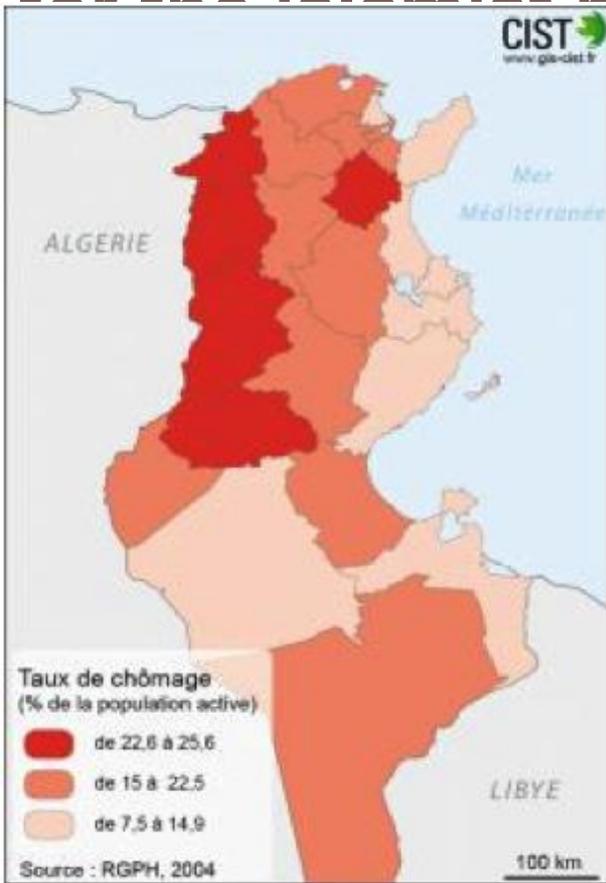


Farmers rally in front of the regional government house in Sidi Bouzid.

Conclusion

- Background impact of food prices rises and high level of food insecurity contributed to crystallize the movement of social protest
- Policy options, which submit agricultural development exclusively to the requirements of the global market, without ensuring a certain level of self-sufficiency in basic food products, are unsustainable
- Profound links between the way out of unsustainable development models and democracy in the global south.
- Representative democracy is a necessary but

Electoral geography : the Northwest, the Centerwest, home of the uprising, and major agricultural regions give the lowest share of votes for the Islamist party



Mouvement Ennahda

