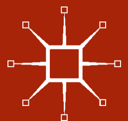
Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa

Edited by Fatima Sadiqi



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Fez, Morocco

Comparative Feminist Studies Series
ISBN 978-1-137-52047-0 ISBN 978-1-137-50675-7 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016939122

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Nature America Inc. New York

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To the loving memory of my brother Hassan

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Series Editor's Preface

For almost two decades, the Comparative Feminist Studies (CFS) series has addressed fundamental analytic and political questions involved in the cross-cultural production of knowledge about women and feminism. The series seeks to engage the politics of scholarship and knowledge in relation to feminist organizing and social justice movements, and is designed to foreground writing, organizing, and reflection on feminist trajectories across the historical and cultural borders of cultures and nation-states. Drawing on feminist thinking in a number of fields, the CFS series targets innovative, comparative feminist scholarship, pedagogical and curricular strategies, and community organizing and political education. It explores a comparative feminist praxis that addresses some of the most urgent questions facing progressive critical thinkers and activists today.

Over the past many decades, feminists and social justice activists across the globe have been variously successful at addressing fundamental issues of domination, exploitation, and liberation. In our search for gender justice in the early twenty-first century, however, we inherit a number of the challenges our mothers and grandmothers faced. But we are also confronted by new challenges as we attempt to make sense of a world indelibly marked by the failure of settler-colonial and postcolonial (and advanced) capitalist and communist nation-states to provide for the social, economic, spiritual, and psychic needs of the majority of the world's population. Globalization has come to represent the interests of corporations and the free market rather than self-determination and freedom from political, cultural, and economic domination for all the world's peoples. The project of US empire building, the rise of Islamophobia in the USA and Europe, and the global consolidation of "national security" regimes, alongside the dominance of corporate capitalism and neoliberalism, kills, disenfranchises, and impoverishes women everywhere. Militarization, environmental degradation, heterosexist state practices, religious fundamentalisms, sustained migrations of peoples across the borders of nations and geopolitical regions, environmental crises, criminalization and the rise of carceral regimes of rule, and the exploitation of gendered bodies and labor by governments and corporate capital all pose profound challenges for feminists at this time. Neoliberal economic policies and discourses of development and progress mark yet another form of colonial/imperial governance, masking the exercise of power over people's lives through claims of empowerment. Recovering and remembering insurgent histories and seeking new understandings of political subjectivities and citizenship have never been so important, at a time marked by social amnesia, global consumer culture, and the worldwide mobilization of fascist notions of "national security."

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These are some of the very challenges the CFS series is designed to address. The series takes as its fundamental premises the need for feminist engagement with global as well as local ideological, historical, economic, and political processes, along with the urgency of transnational feminist dialogue in building an ethical culture capable of withstanding and transforming the commodified and exploitative practices of global governance structures, culture, and economics. Individual volumes in the CFS series develop and sustain gendered epistemologies anchored in the history and experiences of the Global South, providing systemic and challenging interventions into the (still) largely Euro-Western feminist studies knowledge base. The series highlights work that can and needs to be done to envision and enact cross-cultural, multiracial feminist solidarity.

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Chapter One

Introduction: The Centrality of Women's Movements in the Post-revolution Dynamics in North Africa

Fatima Sadiqi

Abstract The introduction presents the central argument of the book, namely that the interaction between different types of colonial heritages and various types of post-colonial rule in North Africa[1] created new actors and agents, as

[1] Defining North Africa has never been an easy task (see Sadiqi et al. 2009). Although generally seen as the coastal region from Egypt to Mauritania, North Africa has often been associated with similar cultures farther south on the continent. In mainstream Western literature, North Africa is often defined in relation to its Mediterranean and Middle Eastern civilizations, hence the use of "Northern Africa." In this volume, North Africa is used to refer to the following countries Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania. The last four countries are also referred to as the Maghrib. In other words, North Africa refers to all the states on the northern rim; or not quite as Sudan is included. Also, Chapter Two refers to countries of the Arab Spring which are in West Asia–Syria.

In terms of size, the largest country is Algeria, followed by Libya, then Mauritania, then Egypt, Morocco, and finally Tunisia. As for demographics, Egypt is the most populous country (around 90 million) and Mauritania the least populous one (around 3 million). In between, Sudan counts 45 million (around 11 million in South Sudan), Morocco (around 33 million), Algeria (around 30 million), Tunisia (around 10 million), and Libya (around 7 million). The distribution of these populations is not even. In Egypt most people live in three regions that are considered among the most populated in the world (over 3820 people per square mile): Cairo, Alexandria, and the banks of the Nile. In Sudan, most people live in the north. In Libya, 90 % of the population live along the coasts. In Morocco some 58 % of the population live in cities and are concentrated in the northwestern part of the country, west of the Atlas Mountains. In Algeria, 45 % of the population is urban, with almost 91 % concentrated along the Mediterranean coast. In Tunisia, about three-quarters of the population live in the coastal and urban regions. In Mauritania, most people live in and around the capital, Nouakchott. In terms of economy, the wealthiest countries are Algeria and Libya, with important supplies of petroleum and, in the case of Algeria, natural gas. The rest of the countries rely heavily on a varying mixture of agriculture,

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F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_1

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well as new ambiguities and dilemmas, that culminated in the so-called Arab Spring and the subsequent developments in which women's movements have occupied center stage. To address this argument, women's movements are first contextualized within the overarching historical and political sources of power in North Africa. A presentation of the chapters of the volume follows, with a focus on how they address the book's argument either conceptually or through country-specific studies. Taken together, the chapters of this book open new venues of research on North African studies and offer possibilities for comparison at the local, regional, and global levels.

Unexpected and transformative uprisings broke out in North Africa and quickly spread to the Middle East and the rest of the world in 2010–2011. Spontaneous, leaderless, youth-driven, and backed by social media, these uprisings called for *karamah* (dignity) and democracy. Various analyses of this unique phenomenon have attempted to capture its meanings (see, for example, Dabashi 2012; Gelvin 2012; Ramadan 2012; and Pollack 2011). However, significant as they are, these analyses do not highlight, let alone center, the role of women before, during, and after the uprisings and focus only on women's "remarkable" and "spectacular" presence *during* the uprisings. Hence, for example, Dabashi's characterization of the uprisings as "delayed defiance" (a sort of rebellion against both domestic tyranny and globalized disempowerment) and the "end of postcolonialism," seem to be sexless and ungendered, thus presumably male. Moreover, as the events unfolded in the four or so years that followed the uprisings and allowed the Islamists to co-opt the revolutions, women's recognition in the spaces of authority shrank and their voices were muted in the ensuing geopolitics. It is as if women made the stories of the revolution but did not own them. Yet women in the region continue to be vocal, and the debates on their rights continue to fill the public spheres. This volume seeks to understand, contextualize, and explain these facts through an overall conceptual framework and a number of country-specific analyses.

The main argument of this volume centers the uprisings as a "revolution"[2] instigated by the new actors, but also the new ambiguities, that post-colonial rule in North Africa created, and highlights women's movements in the making and aftermath of this revolution. This argument is addressed both

migration remittances, and mining. Egypt, Algeria, and Libya experienced highly centralized and planned economies under socialist regimes but started to open to market economy in the 1990s and 2000s. Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, and Mauritania have liberal economies generally governed by the law of supply and demand.

[2]These laws were heavily criticized before and after the so-called Arab Spring. The Islamists of Morsi wanted to make the law more conservative and the military of Sissi call for "modernizing it." What is important from the perspective of this book is that succeeding regimes fragilized the Egyptian family law through frequent and sometimes conflicting changes.

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conceptually and through facts; hence the adoption of an approach combining academic, activist, and political perspectives. Conceptually, a complex, overarching theoretical framework is adopted, where five interrelated notions interlock: a post-revolution "Center" as an ideological middle-ground space where secular and Islamist paradigms confront each other over women's rights; women's feminist persistence in the face of cultural resistance and backlash; the ongoing creative disobedience that characterizes women's post-revolution expressions; gender as a "lived" category; and the twin paradoxical realities in women's lives, political participation and denial of authority, and how this ambivalence of inclusion is "manipulated." The underlying thread tying these notions together is the rise of women as new actors in the region and the new (state) ambiguities that accompany this rise. This conceptual framework is addressed by various country-specific cases.

Reading through the chapters in this volume allows an understanding of how women's movements operate in post-revolution North Africa, a heterogeneous region at the levels of history, religion, culture, society, regime style, and language in spite of a shared "standardized" Arabic and Islamic culture. Until recently, studies of North African women's movements have largely been limited to single aspects of women's achievements; in providing a broader perspective, this volume allows more insight into the shaping role of the larger superstructures of power as well as the rich variety of women's experiences and their potential contributions to African, Middle Eastern, and global feminist thought. By offering a far-reaching historical scope that precedes the revolution and extends into the aftermath, the chapters cut across different temporal, historical (pre-/post-revolution), national, and linguistic frameworks, thereby expanding the study of women's movements in North Africa beyond singular national contexts and highlighting the role of Islam while still paying close attention to local characteristics.

From the perspective of this volume, the most important aspect of religion is its impact on the design of family laws, the first documents that the countries of North Africa drafted after independence. North African family laws differ in the degree of deference to shari'a law (Islamic law) affecting women and the family. The oldest personal status law (or family law) in North Africa is the Egyptian personal status law of 1920. This law was revised in 1979 and in 2000.[3] The second family law was produced in Tunisia and realized the

[3]The 1979 law is also called "Jihan's Law," a pejorative nickname for it and the personal status law of 2000 law is called "Suzanne's Law," again a slandering nick name (Margot Badran, Personal communication). As for Egypt, the secular states under Sadat and Mubarak produced the Jihane Sadat and Suzanne Mubarak Laws, respectively, which were heavily criticized in the Arab Spring. The Islamists of Morsi wanted to make the law more conservative and the military of Sissi are calling for "modernizing it." What is important from the perspective of this book is that succeeding regimes fragilized the Egyptian family law through frequent and sometimes conflicting changes.

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ambition of a cohesive urban and modern elite to have one uniform law that applied to all Tunisian citizens.[4] This law not only prohibited, but also criminalized, polygyny. It also inscribed gender equality in the text and guaranteed women's rights before, during, and after marriage. Further, the law was based on progressive innovation and reforms in Tunisia. Because of Tunisia's choice of modernization since the nineteenth century and the colonizers' resistance to this modernization, the family law was conceived as an instrument of this modernization.

The Moroccan Personal Status Code, or Mudawwana, was promulgated between November 1957 and January 1958, that is, 1 year and 2 months after the independence of the country in November 1956. The promulgation of the Mudawwana aimed at two things: to supersede the Berber customary laws and reassure the tribes and conservative nationalists that the traditional patriarchal order would be maintained, and to signal the country's independence from France by reaffirming many pre-colonial Maliki principles. This text was modified twice through reforms, in 1993 and 2003, but it is still short of the Tunisian code.

In Algeria, the ruling elite waited 22 years before promulgating its first family law in 1984. This temporization was due to the conflict between feminists, who fought for progressive laws, and the ruling elites, who were determined to preserve the patriarchal family as set in the Maliki jurisprudence.

The Sudanese Personal Status laws were based on shari'a and were not really influenced by Western models. The Sunni branch that informed the family laws in this country was influenced by the Hanafi School, deemed more conservative than the other schools.

In Libya, family laws were associated with al-Gaddafi and his *Green Book*. The regime enhanced women's rights through progressive laws and restrictions on men seeking divorce or seeking a second spouse in a clear use of state feminism to enforce the leader's image inside and outside the country.

In Mauritania, the 2001 Personal Status Code is based on a "respect" of tradition, such as a woman's right to divorce without her husband's permission. The laws improve certain aspects of gender relations, such as the requirement of a woman's consent before marriage, and maintain certain forms of gender inequalities, such as the fact that the "tutor" (most commonly a male relative) can marry off a woman under 18 if he determines it is in her interest. The word "interest" is not defined, and the silence of a minor girl is understood as consent.

In sum, family laws in North Africa have historically functioned as a means of bringing religious laws under control by centering them on the family. The nature of this procedure obviously depended on the nature of the ruling regime styles, and the interaction between the latter and the instrumentalization of religion served authoritarianism and patriarchy and created resistance

[4] According to the law first applied only to Muslims, but in 1957 it was extended to cover all Tunisians.

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that, enhanced by fast-moving technology, deeply transformed North Africa and resulted in the sudden eruption of the 2010–2011 revolution. The chapters of this book address various aspects of this transformation and hence allow for various linkages with the central argument of the volume.

Chapters of the Volume

The volume is divided into two parts comprising five and fourteen chapters. The first part contextualizes the various emerging post-revolution dynamics and lays the groundwork for the country-specific discussions in the second part. As stated at the beginning of this introduction, the conceptual framework adopted in this volume is based on five interrelated notions: a post-revolution ideological "Center" where women's issues are prominent; women's persistence in the face of cultural resistance and backlash; the "between secular and Islamic space" that characterizes women's post-revolution expressions; gender as a "lived" category that explains women's "lived" experiences; and the twin paradoxical realities in women's lives, political participation and denial of authority, and how this ambivalence of inclusion is "manipulated."

Chapter Two, "The Center: A Post-revolution Space for Women's Movements in North Africa. Morocco as an Example," introduces the concept of the "Center" as a post-revolution public space where secularists and Islamists confront each other, creating more room for a diversity where women's issues, being the main bone of contention, occupy center stage. As a result, these issues, inherently imbricated in the tripartite web of state, religion, and identity, are becoming more versatile as more categories of people are becoming visible in the public sphere of authority. This "insider" view of the Center defies any simplistic analysis that "lumps together" women's voices as either "modern" or "backward" and enlarges the theoretical scope of any approach to North African women's issues. This view is corroborated by the wide variety of North African women's experiences that the chapters of this volume reveal.

Chapter Three, "Women and the Arab Spring: A Transnational, Feminist Revolution," centers women's "persistence" as a crucial aspect of their participation in the 2010–2011 revolution in spite of the backlash that followed the initial euphoria. This persistence is an important entry to the contextualization and conceptualization of women's transnational revolution in the region. Women's agency is shown as cutting across class, age, and level of education and taking various forms that range from the use of social media to art and literature. Through these expressions, women not only accompany men; they voice their plight and show the world that their voices will remain. This last point is explored in more detail in El Nossery's chapter.

Chapter Four, "Creative Disobedience: Feminism, Islam, and Revolution in Egypt," is a reflection on the intersections between feminism, Islam, and revolution over time into the open-ended present. The author argues that a revolu-

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tion in Egypt capable of realizing a truly democratic state and society must include a full-fledged feminist revolution in order to dismantle patriarchal structures and practices inimical to the creation of an egalitarian state and society. She contends that integral to this feminist revolution—and its success in leading to a democratic future for Egypt—is moving from a patriarchal to an egalitarian understanding and practice of Islam. The chapter also underlines the *longue durée* of feminism and revolution—feminism as public activism was born and reborn in revolution—and of religious unity defiantly asserted and reasserted as part of revolutionary practice in Egypt.

Gender as a conceptual tool of analysis is used in Chapter Four, "Gendering the Egyptian Revolution," to depict the various roles that women played before and during the revolution, their hopes and frustrations, and the impact they left through various channels of communication, especially social media, as well as to reflect on personal involvement with these issues. Hence various questions, often related to the gender aspect of this involvement, are raised: how to go beyond telling stories or narrating observations to making sense out of the events when a woman is part and parcel of the revolution; how to explain and understand facts through the use of the gender concept; and so forth.

On the other hand, Chapter Six, "The Lipstick on the Edge of the Well: Mauritanian Women and Political Power (1960–2014)," addresses yet another conceptual dilemma that accompanies any reflection on women and politics in the region: the existence of the twin realities of women's strength and ability to have and hold a voice in the public sphere and their marginal status in the public spheres of decision-making. Using an anthropological approach, the author depicts the dynamics of Mauritanian women, politics, and ethnicity from 1960 to the present day and women's roles as agents in these dynamics and unveils the strategies of a male patronage power that seeks to maintain itself by manipulating women's breakthroughs and their immediate interests. The author contends that the passage of women from the backstage to the stage qualifies less as an argument of gender equality "in progress"—one of the trappings of democracy—than as the individualistic tendencies of female political and economic actors, also in search of opportunity.

Part Two groups the country-specific chapters that in one way or another speak to one or more aspects of the overall conceptual framework. Hence, Chapter Seven, "About North African Women's Rights After the Arab Spring," resonates with Lessourd's "dilemma" as it focuses on the paradox of women's activism and participation in the recent revolutions, their subsequent political marginalization, and their fear of the rise of Islamist ideology. The author highlights the fact that women activists across the region are concerned about the intentions of Islamist parties and fear that they will implement discriminatory, reactionary policies. The chapter argues that the overthrow of dictatorships is insufficient in itself and that it is only when repressive governments are replaced by democracies that one may consider the popular revolution in

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the Middle East and North Africa to be meaningfully progressive. Since women make up half of the region's population, any democratic developments must improve the social and legal status of women in North Africa. Comparing the countries, the chapter states that Tunisian and Moroccan societies have stronger civil institutions and are hence in a better position as far as hope for democracy is concerned.

By tackling women's "persistence" as well as the secularist versus Islamist constitutional rhetorics on equality and women's rights, the three chapters on Egypt address various aspects of the conceptual framework adopted in this volume. Hence, Chapter Eight, "Women's Rights and Equality: Egyptian Constitutional Law," uses a rich theoretical framework to highlight and analyze the language of "women's equality" in successive Egyptian constitutions. The chapter focuses on conversion of the revolutionary spirit of the uprisings into constitutionally mandated civil liberties in the new constitution as a means to regulate—and restrict—newfound freedoms through law. This use of democratic rhetoric to disguise other less democratic aims is presented as a tactic familiar to the region, whether clothed in imperial, authoritarian, or neoliberal garb. The various pre- and post-revolution constitutions of Egypt are shown to feed into each other with respect to the use pro-equality and pro-Universal Declaration of Human Rights—for women and family.

In parallel, Chapter Nine entitled "The Struggle of Egyptian Women for Equal Rights Continues: Two Steps Forward, One Step Backward" uses personal involvement in pro-women law-making to critically review Egyptian women's activism throughout modern history and link this activism to post-revolution constitutional reforms. The chapter assesses the evolution of Egyptian women's constitutional status with an eye to whether it reflects women's actual level of (political) participation and standing within society. Hence an examination of the Egyptian constitutions of 1923, 1958, 2012, and 2014 as well as the Constitutional Declaration of March 2011 are used to highlight and analyze articles dealing specifically with women's issues as well as others that have direct bearing on women, such as the articles on non-discrimination, state identity, and the relation between the state and religion. The legal steps forward have constantly been hindered by conservative steps backward, but this hindrance ironically serves as a push for persistence in demanding more women's rights.

Chapter Ten, "Women, Art, and Revolution in the Streets of Egypt," focuses on women artists from Egypt who struggle to find means to access the public sphere through cultural forms while resisting being labeled as feminists or identified as "only women," seeking instead to be recognized as citizens struggling alongside men for their right to freedom, dignity, and fairness. Furthermore, the chapter argues that the world is witnessing the birth of what may be termed a "parallel revolution" unfolding underground and led by women. This revolution, what Hamid Dabashi calls a "delayed defiance," is gradually accelerating Egypt's transition to democracy and social justice

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through "a new imaginative geography of liberation in which ideas of freedom, social justice, and human dignity [are] brought forth to the collective imagination of the revolutionaries—an imagination already cultivated in literary and artistic forms."

A zoom-in on Sudan is provided in Chapter Eleven, "Notes on Sudanese Women's Activism, Movements, and Leadership," which centers the various types of women's mobilizations in Sudan to first demonstrate the variety of these types and then to highlight Sudanese women's agency and leadership in present-day North Africa. Hence, four kinds of women's mobilizations/associations in Sudan are discussed: those represented by the secular left of the Sudanese Women's Union or the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army and its offshoots; the cultural nationalists/religionists including the Islamist women of the National Islamic Front, the National Congress Party, and scattered Christian groups; NGOs; and grassroots as well as anarchistic/collectivist activists of various ideologies and agendas, including youth organizations such as Girifna ("We are fed up") that bridge youth, collectives, and the grassroots. The chapter contextualizes the emergence of these versatile voices, highlighting such an emergence as striking in itself, and considers the diverse array of activism as it attests to women's variety of leadership. Geared toward civic networking, Sudanese women's movements and leadership are shifting the focus from the relationship of state politics with gender issues to grassroots concerns—an innovative stance that resonates with the conceptual framework of this book.

As for the Libyan case, Chapter Twelve, "Revolutionary Nuns or Totalitarian Pawns: Evaluating Libyan State Feminism After Mu'ammar al-Gaddafi," argues that the challenges that face contemporary Libyan women directly reflect the accumulated specificities of personalized control, ideology, and historical inheritance that differentiate Libya and al-Gaddafi from other totalitarian nations and leaders. This chapter situates post-revolutionary Libya as emblematic of "decolonization" periods and argues that the most pressing concerns for Libya's female citizens do not arise from a gendered arena but rather arise—overwhelmingly—from a politicized climate of instability. Persistence of women's rights demands in this troubled country is a feat in itself.

Three chapters focus on Tunisia and also resonate with some of the concepts that frame this volume, namely secular/Islamist dynamics, persistence, agency, and gender. Chapter Thirteen entitled "Tunisian Women's Literature and the Critique of Authority: Sources, Contexts, and the Tunisian 'Arab Spring,'" builds on life stories about women's education in colonial times, their voices and writings, pioneering women (such as doctors), women's press, and girls' opposition to colonial education to tell the story of Tunisian women in the public sphere of authority and explain their post-revolution gains and remarkable roles. By interrogating oral documents, the chapter highlights Tunisian women's specificities in engaging with authority and the diverse methods by which they carve out their own spaces of both self-expression and collective activism.

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Chapter Fourteen is entitled "Engendering Tunisia's Democratic Transition: What Challenges Face Women?" It centers the post-revolution transition moment to highlight the unique role of Tunisian women's movements, particularly Non Government Organizations (NGOs), in safeguarding hard-won rights and keeping the democratic spirit alive. Female Tunisian activists significantly helped an anti-women's-rights backlash and created the right context for pro-women legal reforms, such as the inscription of equality and parity in the 2014 constitution. In the chapter the post-revolution transition of Tunisia is considered as a genuine proof of the fundamental role of women's activism in women's recent positive legal and political gains in terms of gender equality as well as democracy. In parallel, the chapter draws attention to new risks for women, namely the rise of religious parties promoting conservative agendas.

In the same vein but using a different angle, Chapter Fifteen "Women and Leadership in the Post-Arab Spring: The Case of Tunisia" focuses on the post-revolution period and centers the October 26, 2014, legislative elections to explain the unexpected victory of the secularists over the Islamists and associate this victory with Tunisian women's long-time struggle for equality and democracy. The author explains this remarkable role of women by contextualizing it in the history of the Tunisian women's movement and women's resistance to the conservative Islamist ideology that threatened to roll back women's gains.

The post-revolution situation in Algeria and the position of women within it is addressed in Chapter Sixteen, "The Algerian Woman Issue: Struggles, Islamic Violence, and Co-optation." This chapter shows how a peculiar form of Algerian women's representation has participated in consolidating populist ideology and authoritarian politics to the detriment of rule of law and how this precludes women's participation in decision-making. The chapter argues that women's remarkable agency in defying the extreme Islamist violence that targeted them in the 1990s was co-opted by the state and used by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in his "policy of inclusion" that ended the bloody 1990s civil war, allowing him to position himself as the sole "savior" of the country. Further, the quota system was in reality used to consolidate the politics of authoritarianism, populism, and electoral fraud. But Algerian women activists persist and strategize: today, they are using the political opening of autocratic rule to set up non-government organizations (NGOs) and wage struggles against gender discrimination.

In Morocco, the westernmost country of North Africa, the fate of women's movements in the aftermath of the revolution is quite a different story, but still a story that resonates with the conceptual framework of this book, specifically the conservative/progressive dynamics and the state's ambiguous discourse. This is corroborated by Chapter Seventeen, "Moroccan Women in Limbo: On Liminal Citizenship and the Quest for Equality," which addresses a stark contradiction in the official discourse on Moroccan women's citizenship: a legal/modernist discourse that is inscribed in the constitution and the 2004 family law (Mudawwana) and a religious/traditionalist discourse that voids the first

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discourse of its meaning. The chapter explains how the two contradictory official discourses continue to undermine Moroccan women's quest for equality and participatory citizenship. By examining the factors that underlie the discourse of the modern state conservatism, the chapter shows how these factors have constructed an ambiguity that nullifies the advances made in the law in the last decade or so, hence hindering the implementation of societal change and resulting in women's "liminal citizenship." Digging into the roots of this stalemate, the chapter explains how patriarchy in Morocco is intricately woven into the fabric of society and culture and is nourished by a religious narrative that functions at all levels—mostly in the highest political spheres, where checking women's aspirations to full citizenship is one part of the Moroccan state's structure that needs to be dismantled for change to begin.

The stubborn patriarchy line is taken up in Chapter Eighteen, "Moroccan Women's Cultural Rights: A Psycho-social Perspective on Cultural Paradoxes," which addresses Moroccan women's difficult accommodation of modernity and tradition in a heavily patriarchal society as well as the limitations of legal progress. The chapter demonstrates how the interaction between conscious and unconscious socio-cultural attitudes and reactions governs the daily lives of Moroccan men and women as well as their interpretation of and reaction to institutional regulations, including legal reforms. In the chapter's framework, it is as important to consider the inefficient and biased interpretations of the legal system in Morocco so as to analyze the cultural patterns of thought behind them, a challenging enterprise because of the unconscious character of these patterns.

In addition to citizenship and cultural issues, women in Morocco face economic issues. Given that the country does not have oil and suffers one of the highest percentages of female illiteracy in the region, considerable focus is put on human resources, an aspect of which is economic empowerment of women through activism and civil society. This is illustrated in Chapter Nineteen, "Women's Economic Empowerment in Morocco: The Case of Social Entrepreneurship," which addresses the economic aspect of the "Moroccan Spring." The chapter highlights the miserable situation of rural women in Morocco and centers the need for economic empowerment as a way out of poverty in the post-revolution era. To highlight the importance of this type of empowerment, the chapter provides an overview of the initiatives undertaken by the Moroccan state, international organizations, and NGOs, referring to their positive aspects but also highlighting their limitations and pointing out the need for innovation in this respect. This is what the chapter proposes in the form of a unique strategy: the Anaruz Network, designed as a sharp shift from traditional (state and NGO) approaches to economic empowerment to a sustainable method of economic empowerment for Moroccan rural women. Anaruz, directed by one of the authors of this chapter, is presented as a pioneering social enterprise that was born from a long-term experience in the management of different projects. The chapter also provides testimonies from real actors in the field who attest to how Anaruz empowered them both

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individually and collectively to act as agents of change not only in their families but also in their communities.

Last but not least, Chapter Twenty, "Reflections on the 20-February Movement: Hope Renewed, Hope Frustrated for Women," uses a personal approach to dissect the ideologies behind the Moroccan version of the revolution and women's role in it. The chapter contextualizes Moroccan women's participation in the 2011 uprisings (the 20-February Movement), the hopes that this participation engendered, and the subsequent backlash on women's rights. Using a combination of theoretical assumptions, interviews, and observation, the chapter dissects the evolution and fluctuation of the participation of Moroccan women in the uprisings with two major aims in sight: first, to identify and discuss the major elements that dominated the political and human rights discourse of the 20-February Movement, and second, to investigate a theoretical framework within which this discourse may be analyzed and made sense of.

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Part One
Contextualizing Women's Movements in North Africa: Conceptual Issues

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Chapter Two

The Center: A Post-revolution Space for Women's Movements in North Africa: Morocco as an Example

Fatima Sadiqi

Abstract Using the case of Morocco, this chapter argues for the emergence of the "Center" as an ideological middle-ground space between the increasingly antagonistic paradigms of secularism and Islamism in post-revolution North Africa. Including versions of the two paradigms but also stretching the space to allow for more diversity, the Center is partly created by women's issues as these have been consistently used as the bone of contention between secularists and Islamists. The main differences between the various hues of conservative and Islamist ideologies relate to women's "allocated" freedoms. As part and parcel of the demands by civil society and the population at large, women's issues are becoming more diversified and polyvocal as a variety of actors and agents are increasingly gaining visibility in the public sphere of authority.[1]

Introduction

The "Center" in this chapter refers to an ideological middle-ground space between the increasingly antagonistic paradigms of secularism and Islamism in post-revolution North Africa. Including various versions of the two paradigms but also stretching the space to allow more diversity, the Center was partly created by women's issues as these have been a consistent bone of contention between secularists and Islamists. As an integral part of the various demands of civil society and the population at large, women's issues are becoming more diversified and polyvocal as new actors and agents gain

[1] I owe a debt of gratitude to Anette Borchorst (Aalborg University) and Hanne Petersen (University of Copenhagen), who read and commented on the first draft of this chapter. Their extensive knowledge of the Center in the political and legal fields was important in reformulating some of my initial ideas.

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_2

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visibility in the public sphere of authority.[2] This diversification is, in turn, being nourished by new values (such as dignity) and new approaches (such as the use of social media and transnational networking). In other words, the Center is both a space for hitherto marginalized voices and a space where women's demands "converse" with, among other elements, human rights demands and cultural demands.[3] It is a new physical (and virtual) site of protest that emerged in Morocco with the February 20 Movement, and it continues even after this movement has been substantially weakened because this space answers a real need at the national public discourse level. Up to the pre-revolution era, national discourse was dominated by secularist-Islamist frontal antagonisms, which in turn were reflected in the increase of tension between women's rights organizations and Islamists.[4]

In retrospect, struggle over the relationships between gender, religion, and the state in Moroccan politics and academe is not new. Started in the 1940s as an outcome of the clash between nationalism (blended with tradition) and colonialism (constructed as "modernity"), this struggle has been growing since the 1960s, along with post-colonialism, decolonization, Islamism, and increasing demands for democratization. Consequently, the clash between the two poles of secularism and Islamism intensified, especially with the advent of new means of technological communication (social media), resulting in substantial reforms and culminating in a post-reform and post-revolution Center space. In other words, the uprisings changed the culture/politics/experience of the people, and this changed the country.

In an attempt to circumvent the complex nature of the Center as a post-revolution space for women's rights, this chapter addresses and relates three major issues: (1) the history of the secularist-Islamist dichotomy in Morocco, (2) a comparison of the two ideologies, and (3) the new Center as neither exclusively secular nor exclusively Islamist but diverse, protest-based, and pragmatic.

The Secularist-Islamist Dichotomy

In Morocco, the secularist-Islamist dichotomy has a history of its own. Initially termed a "conservative/modernist" dichotomy, it was born in the 1940s after the French colonizers promulgated the 1930 Berber Dahir

[2] See Sadiqi (2014, Chap. 3) for a detailed definition of authority in the Moroccan context.

[3] Women's rights advocates (activists, academics, and politicians) have always backed Morocco's transitional phases, from nationalism through state-building, democratization, and the Moroccan Spring.

[4] This is most exemplified in the 1990s; see Sadiqi (2014). I also argue in the same book that secular versus Islamic feminist discourses reached a stalemate at the onset of the twenty-first century and ceased to reflect the realities on the ground, and I propose a larger-than-Islam framework in which the women-related Berber discourse needs to be included.

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(decree), which required Berbers to come under the jurisdiction of French courts. This promulgation transformed the country in an unexpected and unprecedented way by instigating three things: nationalism, the birth of a "Moroccan" identity, and the marginalization of the Berber issue as an "element of discord." These mighty transformations were in turn accompanied by two trends: a conservative one and a modernist one. While both trends supported nationalism and Moroccan identity, and also the marginalization of the Berber issue as a dividing element, they significantly differed in their reactions to the West and modernity. Conservatives opposed any influence of the West, especially in family and social matters, and modernists viewed the Western aspects of Morocco as progress that did not contradict the Arab-Muslim identity of the country. The dichotomy was then qualified as "conservatives versus modernists." It was important in this colonial era to construct Moroccan identity as primarily Arab and Muslim. With the advent of independence and state-building, the Arab-Muslim identity became Morocco's official identity, but the need and desire to keep a window on the West were irresistible. Hence, the type of modernity brought about by the French (e.g., the French system of education and the French lifestyle) appealed to Moroccans, especially the elite. This explains the co-existence of conservatism and modernity from the 1940s onward. This dichotomy was not supplanted by decolonization, and it is being problematized by the so-called Moroccan Spring. But pre-Spring facts are relevant to the understanding of these spectacular and relatively quick transformative shifts.

From the 1970s onward, with rampant political Islam in the background, the conservative-modernist dichotomy developed into a secularist-Islamist one. It is important to note that this new development did not supplant the initial modernist-conservative dichotomy but politicized, and hence polarized, it and rendered it more complex. In other words, Islamists, de facto conservative, claimed a new view of Islam that discarded traditional customs and mores but highlighted nostalgia for the past. These views clashed with those of modernists, de facto secularist, who valued some aspects of tradition but targeted the future. While the conservative-modernist dichotomy is more clearly seen at the social level, the secularist-Islamist dichotomy is more visible in politics and ideology. Consequently, while the former dichotomy is generally accommodated in Moroccans' behavior and way of life, the latter dichotomy produces clear divergences among Moroccans. For a better understanding of the complexities involved, the relevant categories need to be elucidated to show the affinities between modernists and secularists on the one hand and conservatives and Islamists on the other hand.

Modernists/Secularists

Modernists/secularists share a focus on the present and the future, but the designations do not entail the same representations and meanings in the Moroccan context. Linguistically speaking, *'asri* (modern) derives from

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'asr (era) and means "of this era." This concept is general and spans all walks of life from the family through the street to the government. Modernists are generally urban and educated, and, without denying religion, they do not highlight it. The concept of *'ilmani* (secularist) mainly spans the public sphere, especially its political and legal aspects.[5] Like modernists, secularists tend to be educated and urban, but they view religion as more of a private than a public matter. More specifically, as the Moroccan monarch is believed to embody the highest political and religious authority, secularists espouse modernity but stress the separation of religion and politics in the public spheres. This is the reason why, for example, Moroccan secular feminists have always sought to improve, not replace, shari'a (Islamic law). For secular forces, Islamic law is an ancient form of law that works only in religious fields, and they believe that Muslim countries require modern secular laws. Indeed, for secularists, religion should operate only in social life and should not interfere with secular politics; otherwise society will go backward, particularly because the past is internalized as a "glorified era" in Moroccan culture. Furthermore, with compulsory primary education, progress and modernization have been achieved, and this in itself constitutes a great impetus for secular forces. Both modernists and secularists capitalize on women's education and empowerment to cross the religious barriers set by the conservatives/Islamists.

Modernists/secularists were very instrumental during the state-building phase after Morocco's independence from France in 1956 and during the decolonization era and have continued to be instrumental in current times. Indeed, at its inception, the state (monarchy and the government) presented itself as "the modernizer" of Morocco. At the heart of this "modernization" project dwelt a combination of urbanization, industrialization, bilingual education (Arabic and French), business, and trade exchanges with Europe, especially France. At the social level, the French style in matters of dress and way of life was widely encouraged. Beyond the state, the modernist intellectual trend that emerged from within the nationalist movement back in the 1940s, led by Hassan Ouazzani, continued to gather momentum, especially among the urban elite. During the decolonization decades that followed independence, the concept of "modernist" lost some of its semantic charge, but it is still a valid progress-linked category. As for the concept of "secularist," it is gathering momentum and absorbing the modernist concept because secular forces value modernity and progress.[6]

[5] The words "secular" and "secularism" derive from the Latin word "saecularis" (meaning "of a generation, belonging to an age") and have a Catholic origin: the Christian idea that God exists outside time led medieval Western cultures to use "secular" to refer only to temporal affairs that did not involve specifically religious matters. However, like most concepts when linked to "lived experiences," the term "secularism" has adapted to the overall socio-cultural and political contexts.

[6] The terms *modernists* and *secularists* are used interchangeably in the rest of the chapter.

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Conservatives/Islamists

In their references, conservatives/Islamists focus on the past more than the present or the future. The term *taqlidi* (conservative) derives from *taqlid* (imitation). In the decades that preceded state-building, nationalism and the struggle for independence were the main concerns and conservatism was a way of sustaining the Arab-Muslim identity of the country. However, during the state-building phase, conservatives had to cohabit with modernists without being absorbed into them. It was important at that time to maintain the conservative-modernist dichotomy because Morocco wanted to be both part of the larger Arab Umma (nation) and modern. With the coming of political Islam, globalization, and social media, the schism between conservatives and modernists has widened and become more complex. Consequently, the conservative trend (or part of it) hardened into an Islamist faction after the emergence of political Islam in Morocco. Although Islamists do not constitute a homogeneous group, they all share the use of Islam in politics as a sine qua non condition.

As with modernists/secularists, conservatives/Islamists capitalize on women's issues in their campaigns and debates. But unlike the former pair, there is a clear difference between conservatives and Islamists in Morocco. This is manifested in the existence of conservative but not Islamist political parties and in the fact that conservative feminists may be secular. The reason is that tradition as a value system spans private and public spaces and governs Moroccans' lives in no trivial way. While modernists/secularists, and to a certain extent conservatives, view tradition (including the "traditional" language, Berber) as part of a legacy that needs to be promoted, Islamists discard many [or certain] traditions as "wrong interpretations of the Qur'an" and advance a new, homogenizing version of living, practicing, and ruling in the name of Islam.

In politics, modernists tend to support secularists and conservatives tend to support Islamists, although the latter are not necessarily against modernity and some of them may support secularists. This chapter focuses on the secularist-Islamist dichotomy in politics, as it is this dichotomy that both bears on women's issues and stirs most tension and debate in the post-revolution Center. The best way to appreciate these ideas and their larger ramifications is to compare secularists to Islamists.

A Comparison of Secularists and Islamists

Theoretically speaking, the application of secularism and Islamism varies from country to country in the Arab-Muslim world. Although all Arab-Muslim countries consider Islam a state religion and a legal reference, and therefore part and parcel of politics, religion does not play the same role in every country. The differences were constructed during the state-building phases when each country chose as a frame of reference a specific madhab

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(Islamic school of jurisprudence) that best fits its political structure.[7] For example, Morocco chose the Maliki madhab because it acknowledges the religious authority of the ruler and hence is suited to a multi-ethnic, multilingual country like Morocco. In other words, the ways political and religious authorities function in Muslim-majority countries, as well as the means and degrees of the application of shari'a law in their legal systems, vary. In Morocco, secularists do not in general see their stance as opposing Islam, but they see it as opposing Islamists in an overarching context where monarchy (expected to protect both trends) rules. Indeed, secularists and Islamists in Morocco exhibit both surface commonalities and deep underlying divergences.

Commonalities

Within the overall Moroccan ruling system, where the supreme religious and political authorities are prerogatives of the king, the majority of secular and Islamist forces do not contest this reality. Of course, each trend has its own moderate and extremist versions, but in general both secular and Islamist forces acknowledge the position of the king as a source of stability and the supreme and ultimate arbiter in cases of a clash between parties.[8]

In addition, both secularists and Islamists claim democracy (albeit from different standpoints[9]), focus on women's issues to fuel debates, make extensive use of social media, and compete for international attention in an increasingly globalized world. However, the two forces exhibit significant underlying differences.

Underlying Differences

The initial modernist-conservative polarization hardened into a secularist-Islamist divide with the advent of the twenty-first century and the emergence of Berber identity pursuant to the 2010–2011 revolution in the region (Berber was made an official language in the 2011 constitution). From governance to everyday life, secularism and Islamism continuously bump into each other, and hence they have come to display sharp underlying divergences that separate them despite their surface similarities. These divergences range over the role of religion in political and social life (theocracy), the understanding of

[7] "Introduction," this volume.

[8] This acknowledges a long tradition in which the monarch has assumed these functions. In modern history, the Moroccan monarchy has survived colonization, decolonization, and the so-called Arab Spring. Its cultural roots and longevity are mainly due to the fact that the monarchy came to Morocco hand-in-hand with Islam.

[9] These different views of democracy are clarified in the following section.

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democracy, women's issues (especially their work outside the home), citizenship, violence against women, and international politics.

Of these, theocracy is the central point of contention between the two camps. For secular forces, theocracy represents a huge historical retreat that threatens to plunge Moroccan society into the darkness of the medieval ages, whereas Islamists feel that the secularization of politics threatens their very existence. These stances have repercussions on the social lifestyle of citizens. Hence, secular forces maintain that people should be free to dress as they want and show male–female intimacy in public, for example, claiming these as rights that the government should not interfere with. Islamist forces, however, hold that people's behavior, especially women's behavior, must meet the requirements of the Qur'an and that society must be "purified." Although the current Islamist government does not forcefully impose Islamic law, it encourages common people to guide their lives by Islamic values and women to wear the veil. This trend is enhanced because tradition is deep seated and easily conflated with religion.

Because of the political structure of the country and the reforms that took place in the 1990s, Morocco was spared regime change and a strong version of the upheavals that occurred throughout the region in 2010–11. Nevertheless, the Islamist party, Justice et du Développement (PJD; Justice and Development Party), won a massive victory in the elections of November 25, 2011, partly due to the many modernists and secularists who gave it a pragmatic, not a religious, vote. The party then promised to implement secular legislative, administrative, and judicial principles; respect human rights and freedom of the press; and support women's rights. Because of Morocco's multiparty system, where no single party can have an absolute majority in the parliament, the PJD shares power with other parties but holds the majority of seats (30 %).

However, after a couple of years in office, the Islamist party went back on its promises, especially in the domain of women's rights (it allowed only one woman cabinet minister and assigned her the women's, children, and handicapped portfolio); openly encouraged moralizing Islamist rhetoric in national debates and among intellectuals and the youth, whether in the press, on TV, or in virtual media; attempted to lower the age of marriage; and so on. The party was heavily criticized by the secular and some of the Islamist electorate and was forced to somehow qualify its statements in the second version of the government, when it added four women as deputy ministers. In its last year in office, the PJD is no longer keeping its ideology out of politics, partly in preparation for the 2016 elections. On June 17, 2014, Abdelilah Benkirane, the party's secretary-general and current prime minister, answered a question in the parliament as to the status of women's rights in the following terms:

> Today, there is a problem with women's role in modern society; women don't even find time to get married, to be mothers or to educate their children. Why don't they embrace this sacred status that God gave to them?[10]

[10]The translation from Arabic to English is the author's section.

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This statement ignited a fierce reaction by women's non-government organizations (NGOs) and secular forces and was attacked on various social platforms, by the press, and in electronic media. Critics highlighted the government's failure to solve the country's economic problems and its recourse to offending women, hence revealing the party's true anti-women's rights agenda. Khadija Rouissi, an opposition member of the parliament, qualified the prime minister's statement as "a threat—an insult to all Moroccan women and all the fights waged for many years."[11]

Overall, secularist and Islamist views on democracy clash: whereas the former view democracy as individual freedom and liberalism and do not make room for Islamists, the latter view democracy as illiberalism. These are deep and far-reaching differences that divide secular and Islamist forces, especially on issues that concern women and their lives, and they pose a substantial problem for the future of Morocco. Women's rights organizations and the feminist camp in general (academe in particular) view the use of Islam in politics as a real danger and a backlash on what women and secular forces have managed to achieve. Hope for the possibility of remedying the situation is facilitated by the Center space that arose from the Moroccan Spring.

The Post-revolution Center: A Space for Diversity, Protest, and Hope

The Moroccan Spring, whose mouthpiece was the February 20 Movement, brought about a new space in the public sphere of authority. This new space is neither secularist per se nor Islamist per se. I term it the "Center," but it is not a center space between the two ideologies; rather, it encompasses and transcends them. It is a space of diversity where various actors enter the scene and create interaction—Berber activists, radical secularists, radical Islamists, and so on—and where networking is enhanced by social media, and where change is relatively quick. The Berber issue fits into the class issue in the sense that rural areas (predominantly Berber) do not exhibit a class system and hence are read as "backward." The Berber issue also relates to the gender issue in the sense that the benefits accompanying the official status of Berber concern urban men and women more than rural men and women. Finally, the Berber issue fits into the clash between conservatives/Islamists and modernists/secularists in the sense that it is instrumentalized by conservatives and Islamists to maintain the status quo so far as the Berber language and culture are concerned.

[11] http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/19/world/middleeast/prime-minister-told-parliament-women-better-off-at-home-than-in-workplace.html?_r=0 (accessed July 16, 2014). Broadly speaking, tension between Islamists and secularists has escalated in recent years, and the war of words is sometimes translated into physical violence, as the April 24, 2014 killing of an Islamist student by a left-wing extremist attests to. Indeed clashes between Islamist and leftist students in Moroccan universities are frequent.

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Basically a public space, the Center also exhibits "private" aspects because it uses social media, where "location" may be public or private. In this space, women's rights voices, especially secular ones, seem to be moving from a conciliatory and defensive stance to a confrontational and more aggressive stance. But first, what is the nature of the February 20 Movement that brought about the Center?

Founded in late January 2011, the February 20 Movement appeared for the first time on the Internet in the shape of a Facebook page and a YouTube campaign video encouraging people to protest. The latter spread quickly, and on February 20, thousands of Moroccans rallied in the capital, Rabat. The demonstrations quickly spread to other cities, including Casablanca, Marrakesh, Fez, and Tangiers, as well as towns, like Al Hoceima and Safi, and villages. Initially, the demonstrators were men and women, young and old, urban and rural, educated and non-educated, politicians and academics, intellectuals and laymen, activists and non-activists, secularists and Islamists. They presented a diverse profile with no official leadership and communicated mainly through social media campaigns and virtual networking. The demonstrations were peaceful and the demands diverse, ranging from reducing the powers of the monarchy, improved democracy, a change in government, a new constitution, ending corruption, more economic opportunities, Berber rights, reform of education, and better health services.

The reaction of the king was swift. On March 9, 2011, just a couple of weeks after the massive demonstrations, King Mohammed VI announced in a live televised address comprehensive constitutional reforms that would improve democracy and strengthen the rule of law. He also announced the formation of a special commission with the mission of crafting the constitutional reforms, to be proposed to him not later than the following June, after which a referendum would decide on the contents of the draft constitution. In another live address aired on national TV channels on June 17, the king announced that the referendum was to take place on July 1, 2011. The referendum sanctioned the constitution almost unanimously.[12]

The 2011 constitution brought reforms unprecedented in the history of Morocco, such as more executive power and authority to the prime minister and the parliament, greater independence of the judiciary, the elevation of Berber to official language status, and increased power to some independent

[12] However, the February 20 Movement criticized the commission in charge of preparing the draft of the constitution on the grounds that its members were appointed and not elected. Although invited to participate in the work of the commission, members of the February 20 Movement refused, and they also refused an invitation to participate in the government. Even when King Mohammed VI pardoned and in some cases reduced the sentences of 190 prisoners on April 14, 2011, including Islamists, some protesters viewed the reduced sentences of Islamists as a typically self-serving action by the government, and wanted to keep up the pressure to urge additional reforms. Further, the leaders of the movement rejected the constitutional reforms as insufficient and called for continuing protests and a boycott of the referendum.

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commissions. The title "Prime Minister" was changed to "Head of the Government" in the new constitution, and this position was endowed with three powers that had previously been prerogatives of the king: presiding over the government council, appointing members of the government, and dissolving the parliament.[13] As for the parliament, it was vested with the power to pass laws on most issues. Notably, by recognizing centuries-old, marginalized Berber as an official language, the constitution asserted the Arab-Berber bilingual identity of the Moroccan state, a major break from the hitherto monolingual (Arabic only) official identity of the country.[14]

In a sense, these new reforms instigated divisions in the February 20 Movement and revealed the huge gap separating secularists from Islamists. Struggle over leadership and the withdrawal of Al Adl wa lihsan (Justice and Benevolence), a banned Islamist association, after the PJD won the election of November 25, 2011, resulted in a sharp decrease in the frequency of the protests.[15]

Notwithstanding the gradual decrease in the momentum of the February 20 Movement, the latter created a space in which diverse groups could meet without having to converge, a space with two platforms: physical and virtual. This space is seen by many as a way of bringing a lost vibrancy and dynamic interaction to public debates. Some media platforms that were instrumental in promoting the February 20 Movement on the web created their own social media mouthpieces. An example is the bilingual (Arabic and French) collaborative website "Mamfakinch" (No Concession), which was created by a group of young Moroccans of both sexes who were inspired by the February 20 Movement. Mamfakinch seeks to entrench the democratic values of individual freedoms and human rights in society; calls for radical social, economic, and political reform; and claims diverse political persuasions. Seen by many critics as a "citizen" medium, it promotes free speech and the right to criticize decision makers, especially the government. As such, Mamfakinch is a valuable source of information that the mainstream conventional media does not supply, misinterpret, or simply discard. Mamfakinch has inspired a growing

[13]The king remains the military commander-in-chief and retains his position as chair of the Council of Ministers, the Supreme Security Council, and the primary bodies responsible for security policy. A new constitutional provision also confirms the king's role as the highest political and religious authority in the country, with the right to preside over the cabinet in serious matters, such as those involving religion, security, or strategic policies.

[14]As stated previously in the chapter, the monolingual identity of Morocco was decided in the 1930s after the Berber Dahir (decree) was promulgated by the French colonizers to divide Morocco along ethnic lines of "Arabs" and "Berbers." In fact, the decree rallied Moroccans together in the name of Islam, initiated nationalism, and conflated the Moroccan identity into "Arab-Muslim."

[15]The poor performance of the PJD in the government after 2 years pushed some February 20 Movement members to continue protesting, while others wanted to give the government more time.

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number of Facebook groups and blogs that continue the spirit of the February 20 Movement.

Physically, the Center is characterized by spectacular networking between diverse forces. For example, with the recognition of the Berber language, Berber NGOs, including some feminist ones, have entered the public field and woven relations with various other networks and NGOs, especially human rights and women's rights associations. This culture of networking, which has always constituted a powerful strategy of the feminist movement, asserts the role and significance of feminists in the Center.[16]

In sum, the February 20 Movement created a space where both secularists and Islamists can meet. This new value of co-existence with divergence is not easily applied, but it is there to stay. The new space is characterized by protest[17] as a means to achieve goals.[18] In order to understand the protest-laden, post-revolution Center, a conceptualization of the notion of protest is needed.

Conceptualization of the Notion of Protest

The emerging Center is a middle ground between the secularist and Islamist trends in Morocco and a new space of protest. Although the non-homogeneity of their protestors and their demands is a threat to something like the Center, the space, once created, is irreversible and will have permanent effects even if tensions break it apart. From the 1970s onward, substantial theory and research have been produced on social movements and the link between resource mobilization and political process. This theory and research were crafted from various disciplines, including sociology, political science, and social psychology.[19] Classical theories of protest (e.g., Berkowitz 1972; Gurr 1970, and Lind and Tyler 1988) attribute people's participation in protest to a desire to express grievances resulting from deprivation, frustration, or perceived injustice. However, scholars of social movements, such as Klandermans (1984), McAdam (1982), and McCarthy and Zald (1977), suggest that protest is generally instigated by efficacy, resources, and opportunities. Yet other scholars such as Reicher (1984), Simon et al. (1998), and Klandermans and De Weerd (2000) shift the focus to collective identity as the main instigator of protest. Further, Van Zomeren et al. (2008) highlight the role of emotion in protest. According to all of these authors, the more politics is discussed within networks, the more efficacy

[16] More on this in the last section. See the section on the conceptualization of the notion of protest below).

[17] There is a difference between the notions of "protest" and "contestation" in the context of social revolution: whereas the latter demands a regime change, the former does not.

[18] It is important to note that prior to the February 20 Movement, negotiation was the main means to achieve goals in Moroccan civil society at large and by women's groups specifically (see Ennaji 2013).

[19] Klandermans and Roggeband (2007).

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is enhanced and the more individual grievances are transformed into shared grievances and group-based anger, which in turn translate into protest participation. According to Jacquelien van Stekelenburg and Bert Klandermans (2010),[20] protest is "a form of collective action and of social movement participation at the same time."

Taken together, these theoretical aspects of the notion of protest are useful in the preliminary understanding of the concept of protest. However, concepts are bound to be constrained by the overall socio-cultural and political paradigms of specific contexts. In Moroccan culture, protest and contest are not new; the pre-colonial, colonial, modern, and post-modern eras witnessed various protests and contests against oppression and colonialism. The Moroccan nationalist movement emerged out of street protests directed at a controversial 1930 Dahir seeking to establish separate Arabic and Berber legal systems. Ritualized protest, like the Latif prayer and commemorations of invented national anniversaries, including the May 16 Berber Dahir and Throne Day, abound in the history of Morocco. Today, protest, sometimes referred to as "politics by other means," is recognized as an essential component of the now acknowledged meeting between institutional and extra-institutional politics in the country.

Characteristics of the Emerging Center

As a concept, the Center is about the public sphere and the public discourses it generates. It may be seen as an example of what Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 111) call a space that does not restrict the "political field" to "political professionals" involved in the production of "political ideas, programs, and concepts"; the Center is thus not about political discourse per se. The allusion to political parties in the previous sections does not mean that there is a center in these parties. In the post-revolution Moroccan context, the Center exhibits the following characteristics: it does not have a clear leadership, it transcends the boundaries of the secularist-Islamist dichotomy, it uses conventional and social media (virtual space), and it is porous (i.e., with open boundaries that are not clearly delimited). Hence, seemingly incompatible standpoints (secularist and Islamist) may co-exist and converse without converging. Subsequently, the Center is bound to be complex and multifaceted because it addresses different important facets of a complex and quickly changing reality. In practical terms, the Center expands beyond the reform movements of the 1990s and 2000s and, as such, does not easily fall within Anglo-American or Western European frameworks of what constitutes a "political center" because the base of social reform is expanded and the relations with politics is not direct.

[20] http://www.surrey.ac.uk/politics/research/researchareasofstaff/isppsummeracademy/instructors/Social%20Psychology%20of%20Protest,%20Van%20Stekelenburg%20%26%20Klandermans.pdf (accessed July 12, 2014).

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The Center is an answer to the stalemate of the secularist-Islamist dichotomy in Morocco and beyond. It somehow conciliates the illiberalism and non-inclusivity of the Islamists with the absence of a niche for the Islamists in the secularist camp. It does so by addressing real questions in a pragmatic way and demanding quick and efficient answers; these questions relate to the heavy weight of patriarchy; lack of clarity on the nature of "a secular state"; the importance of secularism as a value for the state; the need of a secular space as an important pre-condition for the advancement of human rights, including cultural and language rights; and so on.

It is important to note that within the Center, secularism is not seen as the absence of religion, but rather as a state structure that defends both freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief within a state religion where law is not derived from God and where religious actors cannot impose their will on public policy. A secular state does not simply limit religion; it also maintains the essential right of religious freedom as a duty, not a favor. This means that it defends the freedom to worship and the right to maintain places of worship like mosques, churches, and temples while also defending minorities from attack.

Religious freedom also includes the right to challenge dominant religious interpretations of the Qur'an, to change one's religion, and to leave it altogether. These rights are crucial not only for women but also for religious minorities, and they require a secular state to implement and reinforce them. In fact, only a secular state can allow religious fundamentalists to have a voice and limit the inevitable harm they may cause. In sum, the divide is not inherently between the categories of "religious" and "secular," but between the categories of "anti-secular" and "promoters of secular values."

The Center is also a way of protecting democracy by obliging both the secularists and the Islamists to respect democratic rules. Given the complexities involved, it would perhaps be more meaningful to speak of a plurality of Centers in the field between secularists and Islamists—or perhaps middle grounds (in the plural). This makes sense because of the numerous "types" of secularists and Islamists in the Center. Within this context, "inbetweeness" could be a recognizable experience for many Moroccans, North Africans, and Middle Easterners (male or female).[21]

Women's Issues in the Center

Although the February 20 Movement did not specifically target women's issues, it is thanks to decades of women's struggle for their rights that issues like education and health care are at the top of the movement's agenda. Further, it was the protest culture that secular women's activists instilled in the

[21] Hanne Petersen (personal communication).

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public sphere that opened the door to large-scale demonstrations both in support of or against women's rights, as in the 2000 Rabat and Casablanca marches, respectively. Indeed, more generally, the physical/virtual networking between civil society associations (including the feminine and feminist ones) have greatly facilitated the recent protests in Morocco and beyond.

A number of women-related issues are now raised in the Center: Islamist rhetoric that aims at rolling back women's achievements in terms of rights; the escalation of gender-based violence pursuant to the escalation of Jihadism in the region; domestic violence;[22] rape, ignited by the case of Amina Filali, a 16-year-old victim who committed suicide after being forced to marry her rapist; sexual harassment; and so on. In addressing these issues, secular feminist forces are trying to gain initiative. Thanks to their endeavors, Article 475 of the penal code was modified so that the rapist faces heavy charges even if he marries his victim, and sexual harassment was criminalized. In addition, women's rights are at the heart of the new political settlements in Morocco. These rights are increasingly included in "mutual accountability frameworks" between donors and aid recipients in governmental institutions with the aim of regulating political dialogue, aid, trade, gender aspects, and wider economic relations. It seems that, theoretically, in the long run the Center will allow a broadening of the support base for women's rights movements through engagement of new youth activists and women in rural areas and urban slum areas. Initiatives to transform development programs to embed gender equality, women's participation, and youth empowerment are on the agenda (Ennaji 2013). However, there is a growing feeling that the chief obstacle to these goals is the rise of fundamentalist movements in the region and the failure of political Islam to manage politics and be inclusive.

Morocco has come a long way since its independence in matters of women's rights. The women's movement has never ceased to grow, changing its strategies according to new elements in the public arena, networking with other forces (especially secular ones), keeping a link with new generations, and embracing the new social media. The continuity of the Moroccan feminist movement is not without a cost and not without hurdles, but it is persistent.

Conclusion

The analysis of the post-revolution Center space presented in this chapter may be extended to the rest of North Africa and the Middle East because women's issues—and reconstituted gender relations—in this region are increasingly

[22] Progressive as it is, the Mudawwana (the Moroccan family law) does not address gender violence in a clear way.

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situated in the middle grounds between varying degrees of secularism and Islamism. These issues are also increasingly influenced by other strong belief systems (which may be "scientific," such as the economy and economists in the West) and hegemonic globalization.

Whatever the constraints, the use of gender as a lens through which emerging politicized identification processes within the public field are analyzed is a promising area of inquiry that brings together various feminist voices in the region and across the globe. From the perspective of this chapter, this approach brings to light a plurality of identity configurations at play in post-revolution Morocco and the region—ethno-linguistic and non-ethno-linguistic, Islamist and secular—that were marginalized or elided in the process of decolonization. This in turn allows a contextualization of the dominant post-revolution narratives in Morocco and the region, including the public role of Islam, women's roles, and recent reforms regarding women's legal status. The chapter also depicts the central importance of gender politics in forging these narratives, and hence it exemplifies how the three axes of identity—religion, ethnicity, and gender— were activated during the revolutionary moment and are being nourished in the aftermath of the revolution.

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Chapter Three

Women and the Arab Spring: A Transnational, Feminist Revolution

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Abstract Spanning the Middle East and North Africa region and using real cases, this chapter traces the trajectory of euphoria, backlash, and persistence that has marked women's participation in the Arab Spring transnational revolution. The chapter reveals how in revolutions, as in wars, norms and values are suspended "for the duration" in order to accommodate necessary breaches of what is normally considered appropriate. It also shows that when the crisis is over, the cultural police try to restore traditional gender norms in an attempt to "squeeze the genie back into the lamp." The chapter highlights how women in the Middle East and North Africa are learning various lessons from the different revolutions, starting with the Algerian revolution, going through the Palestinian revolution, and moving on to the Arab Spring.

Introduction

There is a pattern in women's political participation during times of national crisis: they're in when they're needed; they're out when they're not. The Algerian revolution provides the template. In 1954, women rose with the men to oust the French, who had colonized their country for 124 years. So effective were the women that Frantz Fanon immortalized their ways of fighting in his famous phrase "stratégie-femme." Shortly after the French were expelled in 1962, a new government was formed, and ironically, less than 1 % of the national assembly members were women. Some agreed to the conditions for staying at home; others left the country with the hope that they could continue to function as Algerian activists in exile. This denial of political recognition to women who had fought for national independence is what has come to be called the Algerian Lesson. Palestinian women applied its rules to their

For inviting me to present versions of this chapter, I thank Fatima Sadiqi at the Isis Center for Women and Development (Fez, Morocco) and Roxanne Bibizadeh and the Humanities Council at the University of Warwick (England).

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_3

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experiences during the intifadas of the late 1980s when the men tried to suppress them. This lesson is once again being learned.

In this chapter I will trace the trajectory of euphoria, backlash, and persistence that has marked women's participation in the transnational Arab Spring revolution. Despite widespread academic and journalistic criticism of the label, I refer to these events as a revolution because many participants prefer the term. Naming matters; in revolutions, as in wars, norms and values are suspended "for the duration" in order to accommodate necessary breaches of what is normally considered appropriate. When the crisis is over, the cultural police try to restore traditional gender norms. In other words, they try to squeeze the genie back into the lamp. To declare a revolution over sanctions that process. To describe a revolution as ongoing makes room for the abnormal and the unexpected; it opens up new possibilities.

I call the revolution transnational because it involved not just one people exceptionally up in arms against its colonizers or unjust rulers; several societies simultaneously rose up against cruel men. Even if not all those dictators are gone, the people now realize that they too have power. They are listening to each other's music, admiring each other's art, reading each other's stories, and building their own activism out of those resonances.

Euphoria

Between late 2010 and mid-2011, revolutions broke out in seven Arab countries: Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, and Syria. In each case, women were highly visible. The fact that they were there with the men was not surprising. In Hamid Dabashi's words: "They are the voices and visages cultivated in the public domain for decades and centuries. It has taken relentless work to enable these girls and women to show the courage, the imagination and, above all, the audacity to come out on the streets to demand their rights" (189). What was surprising were their large numbers and high visibility. Women's presence in the places of protest was registered not only in the media but also on city walls.

In Egypt, women figured in graffiti—a formerly forbidden art—most notably in Muhammad Mahmud Street off Tahrir Square. Alaa Awad renders the mass of women activists in his exquisite image of an army of ancient Egyptian Amazons that he titled *Pharaonic Women in Battle*. In an interview he said that his motivation was respect: "We wanted to recognize the key role of the women whom we respect very much."[1]

Drawing inspiration from Ancient Egypt, Awad's painting represents women mourning 70 soccer fans the government killed in Port Said in January 2012. Awad chose a mural from the 10,000-year-old tomb of Ramose to depict twenty-first-century women marching like slaves as they accompany their pharaoh on his journey to the next world. But these women are no

[1] http://artforum.com/words/id=30394 (accessed July 19, 2014).

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slaves. Defiantly, they approach the sarcophagus containing the souls of the soccer martyrs. These powerful women are the spiritual guardians of the government's victims, whose souls the human-headed bird Ba will deliver to heaven.[2]

It is not only the number and visibility of women in the revolutions of all the Arab Spring countries that surprises, but also their ongoing resistance and insistence on remaining in the public sphere, often at great personal cost. Unlike Algerian women in the 1960s, they are not returning home. They are staying where their bodies can be seen and their protests heard.

In Tunisia, long considered the most progressive of all Arab countries with respect to women's rights, women were prominent actors in the January 2011 revolution. Sihem Ben Sedrine, human rights campaigner and spokesperson for the National Council for Liberties, was at the forefront of the demonstrations demanding reform of the constitution as well as the ouster of President Benali. They succeeded: Benali was replaced and the third constitution, passed in January 2014, gave women equal rights and duties.

During the early days of the Egyptian revolution, the women in Tahrir protected each other, manned access to demonstrations, and made sure that no one entered the square armed. All the while they mixed freely with the men, even living with them in the tent city that Tahrir became. As in Tunisia, their demand for the removal of their dictator, Husni Mubarak, was met.

On February 20, 2011, Moroccan women joined students and workers to demand reform of the Mudawwana, or family code. Within a few days, the king announced his intention to reform the constitution to enshrine women's civic and social equality.

On October 24, 2011—nine months into their revolution and a few days after 32-year-old journalist and politician Tawakkul Karman returned from Oslo with the Nobel Peace Prize in her hand—Yemeni women filled Sanaa's Change Square and the streets of Taiz and Aden. They carried signs with messages like "Ali Salih (president at the time) the butcher is killing women and is proud of it." They spread out colorful arrays of veils and burned them in a spectacular signal to men that they were no longer needed and to the tribes that they were without honor when they did not protect women from government thugs.

"We will not stay quiet. We will defend ourselves if our men can't defend us. Tribes who ignore our calls are cowards without dignity," said one of the demonstrators.[3] The women of Yemen, too, were instrumental in toppling their dictator.

Not only in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, and Yemen were women out in the streets and squares, but also in Bahrain, Libya, and especially Syria, where

[2]Thanks to Basma Hamdy for explaining the origin of the mural and for sharing an email from ʻAwad about the source and meaning of the *Naʼihat* (mourners) (Durham, NC, March 29, 2014).

[3]http://www.cnn.com/2011/10/26/world/meast/yemen-protests/ (accessed July 19, 2014).

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women sometimes demonstrated without their men but with their children. On November 11, 2011, a video was uploaded on YouTube of a women's demonstration calling for the release of political prisoners and repeating the transnational revolution's demand: "The people want the fall of the regime."[4] Women were marching shoulder to shoulder, and it seemed that a new day was dawning.

Women Icons

Several prominent individuals joined the crowds of women revolutionaries. There are too many to name, so I will touch on a few who have retained their public personas until today, four years later. Some have presented themselves as Muslim, like the veiled 26-year-old Egyptian Asmaa Mahfouz, whose January 18 Facebook call to arms was said to have brought the Cairene masses to Tahrir Square on January 25, 2011.

A member of the 2008 Egyptian April 6 Movement, Mahfouz challenged men in particular to go to Tahrir: "Whoever says women shouldn't go to protest because they will get beaten, let him have some honor and manhood and come with me on January 25." Her appeal was directed to men worn down by decades of authoritarian rule. Modestly clad but bold in speech, she seemed to offer emasculated men the opportunity to resume their masculine roles in society. At this early stage she did not make woman-specific demands.

That was not the case in Morocco, where Asma Lamrabet (director of the Women's Center for Women's Studies, part of the Islamist Rabita Mohammadiya in Rabat) became especially active after the suicide of Amina Filali on March 13, 2012. In accordance with the law, Filali had been forced to marry her rapist, and her disgust was such that death was preferable to life with a predator. She was a casualty of a law that allows rapists to marry their victims, thereby exonerating them and lifting the shame from the woman's family. Lamrabet was among the people who led the charge against this detestable law. The outcome of this and the ensuing numerous demonstrations of women's rights organizations led to the repeal of the law and the its replacement by a law that sentences the rapist to 30 years of imprisonment regardless of whether he marries his victim or not.

Yemeni Tawakkul Karman, head of Women Journalists Without Chains, is the youngest person to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Actively opposed to Ali Salih since 2007, she called for "days of rage": "The combination of dictatorship, corruption, poverty, and unemployment has created this revolution," she said. "It's like a volcano" (Prashad 2012, 69). And when the Nobel committee wanted her prize "to be an important signal to women all over the world," Karman retorted: "This prize is a victory for Arabs around the world and a victory for Arab women … I am so happy and I give this award to all of

[4] www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKPtUWT_fiE&list=PLXhuzKSXJ9OSeMwlQ7qrxCajozFoPeBB6&index=6 (accessed July 19, 2014). See also Dabashi 2012, 187.

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the youth and all of the women across the Arab world" (74–75). She had fought a dictator and led her people in the Yemeni revolution not for "women all over the world," but for Arab women and youth.

Secular activists joined their Islamist sisters. Nawal El Saadawi, the charismatic symbol of Egyptian women's century-long refusal of injustice, wrote to me of her amazement to have been warmly welcomed by young Muslim brothers and sisters.

Situating her Tahrir experience in a long line of revolutionary activism going back to the 1946 girls' demonstration she led against the English, Nawal writes in her 2013 memoir, *al-Thawrat al-'arabiya* (*Arab Revolutions*), that she feels she is again "that schoolgirl walking in the demonstration and shouting: Down with the king! Down with the English! As though time did not exist" (El Saadawi 2013, 97–99). Protesting injustice and corruption has been a way of life for her and also, she insists, for the Egyptian people, who recognized the unholy trinity of Mubarak, the USA, and Israel. Tahrir was merely another, although perhaps more exciting, link in a chain of revolutionary events that made all her struggles worthwhile. "I can scarcely believe that this is the same Egypt that caused me so much sadness and hardship … Tahrir became my *watan* [nation] for which I have been searching since childhood" (112–113). In moments of danger, the day in 2011 when the baltagi, or government thugs, charged the crowd on horse- and camel-back, childhood memories filled her with courage, anger, and fearlessness. There is something powerful, pure, and true in "the anger of a child," she writes in her autobiography. This child's anger produces numbness, "a state which I realized later precedes every courageous act, even if that act were to throw oneself under the wheel of a train" (El Saadawi 1999, 163, 268). In its narration, such courage empowers others to do the same.

In Syria, two Alawite women with opposed trajectories have grabbed headlines: Samar Yazbek and Bouthaina Shaaban. Yazbek's 2012 memoir, *A Woman in the Crossfire,* narrates her harassment by government thugs, her failed attempts to defy the government, and her exile in Europe, whence she continues protesting.

At the other end of the Alawite spectrum is Bouthaina Shaaban. Author of the 1988 feminist tract, *Both Right- and Left-Handed*, she became Bashar al-Asad's right-hand woman. Political power pre-empted her earlier Islamic feminist defense of women's rights. Last year, she published *Damascus Diary: An Inside Account of Hafez al-Asad's Peace Diplomacy, 1990–2000,* celebrating her time working with Hafiz as his interpreter and advisor. After the 2014 re-election of Bashar al-Asad and the outraged reaction in the West, she appeared on YouTube: "*I would like to say to all Western officials who say they will not acknowledge it—gone are days when legitimacy was derived from the West … It is the Syrian people who make this election legitimate. Its neither William Hague, nor the US, nor France.*"[5] *Shaaban is an exception to*

[5] http://rt.com/news/164380-syrian-election-legitimate-vote/ *(accessed June 8, 2014).*

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the powerful Arab women who have risked much during the past three years to speak on behalf of women. But her case is instructive: women's visibility in their countries' revolutions is not necessarily good for women even if it is excellent for national image.

Women in official politics seldom signify advances in women's rights. A quick survey of Arab Spring countries reveals how little has changed on the official front. While Bahrain's number of women parliamentarians increased from 3 % in 2009 to 10 % in 2013, and Libya's rose from 8 % to 17 %, Syria's percentage has remained steady at 20 % and Tunisia's 28 % in 2009 dropped to 27 % in 2013. In Yemen, despite the Nobel laureate's voice, there are still no women in parliament, and in Egypt, the 2 % representation of women in the 2009 parliament remained unchanged in 2012. In 2013, no numbers were recorded.

By the fall of 2011, the euphoria of the revolutionary beginnings was already abating, even in liberal, woman-friendly Tunisia, where the status of women was debated in the months leading up to the October elections (Gray 2012). The backlash had begun, and it looked like Algerian women's experiences would be repeated in Tunisia.

Backlash: Rape as a Weapon of War

Yemen's Tawakkul Karman lamented, "They are trying to obliterate women's participation in the revolution and in building a mature civil society." Are she and the many analysts who declare that the Arab Spring was bad for women correct in their downbeat assessment?

At First Blush, the Answer Seems to be Yes

New governments—overwhelmingly Islamist—have cracked down on women's public presence.[6] Even worse are gangs on the prowl for female prey, who turn streets and squares into forbidding zones of sexual violence. In Libya, for

[6] Monica Marks defends Tunisia's Islamists against detractors, pointing out that 42 out of 49 women elected to the Constituent Assembly were Nahdawis. She claims that this is the case because al-Nahda was the only party "to fully respect gender parity rules (mabda' al-tanasuf) for electoral lists (passed in May 2011)." Further, women won over undecided voters"(Gana 2013, 225). Marks attributes Tunisian women's problems to embedded social norms and to mutual suspicion between secularist women and Islamists, who see secularists "as an elite, French-speaking minority whose concerns are self-serving, superficial, and far removed from the lived realities of most Tunisian women" (241).

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example, the International Criminal Court found evidence that in the early days of the Libyan revolution Mu'ammar al-Gadhafi had ordered mass rapes.[7]

From Syria, Ratib Shabu writes of the many women who have been raped (often by government thugs), condemned for their victimization, and ostracized so that their families and society can continue to breathe easily.[8] Reports from Syrian refugee camps describe the dire conditions that force girls and women into prostitution to keep their families alive.

In November 2013, Yara Bayoumy published an alarming statistic that sheds light on Egyptian women's status almost three years into the revolution: "99.3 % of women and girls in Egypt are subjected to sexual harassment."[9] In her June 2014 article, "'This Is Our Square': Fighting Sexual Assault at Cairo Protests," Vickie Langohr confirmed the persistent targeting of women demonstrators in Tahrir.

Exaggerated? Perhaps. But these reports reflect what is happening in other Arab Spring countries as well. While the hardships women suffer are specific to local conditions, sexual intimidation is widespread. Between February 2011 and mid-2012, the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) targeted revolutionaries, especially women (Badran 2014, 49). Soldiers imposed virginity tests on young female protesters and attacked them. In an electrifying event in December 2011, police stripped the milaya off a veiled protester to reveal her blue bra. They kicked and beat her as though unaware of the ubiquitous phone cameras; the image went viral.

People flooded the streets, with women out in front in what has been called the largest demonstration ever mounted by Egyptian women. Women's bodies in public space became an iconic symbol both of their determination to be there but also of their vulnerability to uniformed men's violence. Ironically, the "blue bra affair" helped the government make the argument that women should leave the streets and squares. Paul Amar has written persuasively about the regime's method of using young men to spread panic about the dangers to women's honor should they venture out. The strategy, he explains, is to expel women from public places. As I will argue shortly, such scare tactics have not worked.

[7] Elisabeth Flock "Women in the Arab Spring: the other side of the story," *Washington Post* June 21, 2011.

[8] Ratib Shabu, "Women in the Syrian Revolution." In Rustum, M. "Huquq al-nisa? fi Suriya qabla wa athna' al-thawra: khitab wa haqiqa," May 2014, 16. Available from: http://hivos.net/Hivos-Knowledge-Programme/Themes/Civil-Society-in-West-Asia/node_8905/node_31181 (accessed June 9, 2014).

[9] Founded in 2010, HarassMap is an organization dedicated to ending "the social acceptability of sexual harassment and assault in Egypt" (available from: http://harassmap.org.en).

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Persistence: Rape as a Crime Against Humanity

Is it callous to look for the silver lining to this terribly dark cloud hanging low over Arab Spring countries? No; I believe it is crucial to discern the outlines of another future that will justify the terrible costs so many have paid in their struggle against tyranny. Far from acceding to pressure to leave public space, women are organizing against sexual predators.

I will turn briefly to recent developments in Egypt, where Amal Abdel Hadi urges patience and optimism: "The revolutions have not failed women because they gave them the chance to be there and to see that if they don't force themselves into the space, they won't achieve. We have to force it."[10]

In June 2014, Vickie Langohr reported on the militia-like activities of concerned Egyptian women who have formed a group called Operation Anti-sexual Harassment, or OpAntiSH. They have learned that it is not enough to stop attacks in medias res; they have to intervene "before, during and after attacks. OpAntiSH volunteers are in Tahrir during most major protests. They distribute cards with the hotline numbers and flyers advising people what to do if they see an assault … Volunteers wear white T-shirts that say in red 'Against Harassment' on the front and 'A Square Safe For All' on the back. Another team waits in apartments close to Tahrir with first aid items, clothing and shoes for survivors, who have often been stripped during their assaults."

Is the Algerian Lesson being heeded? Yes. They will not be stopped from demonstrating despite continued attacks. They refuse to be silenced through shaming or to accede to the exoneration of rapists in order to maintain the honor of the woman's family. Amina Filali's suicide in Morocco is a message for all: rapists are criminals and they must be brought to justice. Women will not be stopped from occupying the streets and squares, where they can compel attention to their rights and stolen dignity. Mira Shehadeh fearlessly painted her mural *No to Harassment,* not caring that the men around her were staring as she depicted a veiled woman spraying insect repellent at little men who dropped like flies.

In its founding statement, OpAntiSH notes, "Women's participation … is a main part of the group's philosophy. Participants … are very much aware of the magnitude of the risk that they are under in case of participating in such an initiative. But this group of men and women believe in full and equal participation of women without trying to impose protection or guardianship from men." At the first open meeting of the group on November 29, 2012, it was suggested from the floor that women not participate in rescues. Group members responded, "This is not open for discussion. If someone doesn't want girls to participate, he shouldn't come."

[10] http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/12/us-arab-women-spring-analysis-idUSBRE9AB00O20131112 (accessed March 3, 2014).

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The wall of shame associated with rape that had formerly silenced women is beginning to crumble: "Survivors' televised stories of assault have also challenged the belief that being assaulted is a source of shame."[11] Women are no longer afraid to talk about mass sexual attacks or concerned about hurting the image of Tahrir. Some call these wounded women heroes, "no less than any man who gets injured or attacked or beaten or detained." Samira Ibrahim, who was subjected to a "virginity test" and sued the army doctor who carried it out, is widely recognized as a revolutionary icon. Her face appears in graffiti all over Cairo.

The message is clear: women are in the place of protest, the public sphere, and that is where they are going to stay. On February 6, 2013, in a large anti-assault demonstration, women carried "huge banners of feminist icons, from Huda Sha'rawi, the first president of the Egyptian Feminist Union in the 1920s, to singer Umm Kulthoum and socialist activist Shahinda Maqlad … Discussions of women's demands in the march were interspersed with performances of songs about women's revolutionary role … The anti-assault movement will continue, calling on others, as OpAntiSH did." In a widely circulated video, they called on women to "come and stand against the rapists … This is our square; this is our revolution."[12]

Even in conservative Yemen, where girls are expected to cover upon reaching puberty, young women are unveiling and protesting, often and most effectively through Facebook. Shaima Jamal, for example, wrote in June 2014 to her over 12,000 followers: "I don't need a husband … I don't need to cover to be respectable … Can you, my friends, accept me as I am?" From inside her country's capital she is inciting her peers to follow her. Her call to unveil is not in itself liberating, but in the conservative culture of Yemen any action against traditional expectations is liberating.

So I wonder: what has empowered these women in countries where women's public presence has historically been stigmatized and activists are told to stay home lest they be raped?

Let me digress briefly before answering this question. When I was in the Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School, I hated history: too many dates and names of kings and words I could not understand. What did "rape and pillage" mean? Probably war, I thought at the time, because it was invariably mentioned in connection with men's fighting tactics. I had no idea what women were doing while the men were away at the rape and pillage front, dying and killing for their country. It was only later that I started to pull those

[11] "In the two weeks after January 25, 2013, several women, including two who had been assaulted in November 2012—Yasmine al Baramawy and Mosireen filmmaker and OpAntiSH member Aida al-Kashef—spoke in graphic terms about their experiences, sometimes talking for more than five uninterrupted minutes" (Langohr 2013. Available from: http://www.merip.org/mer/mer268/our-square [accessed May 29, 2014]).

[12] http://www.merip.org/mer/mer268/our-square (accessed June 11, 2014).

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words apart and learned that raping women had for millennia been considered legitimate in war. In the late twentieth century, international bodies began to contest the naturalness of rape in war. That fact was seared into our collective consciousness after the revelations about the Rwandan and Bosnian Serb-controlled rape camps. These camps, constructed during the 1990s, compelled action. In 1998, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda handed down a judgment that rape in war is a crime against humanity punishable with death. In 2001, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia convicted eight rapists of crimes against humanity. Even if this law has not significantly changed facts on the ground, it is changing attitudes. While rapists in some places seem not to expect punishment, women are beginning to expect justice. Who is providing guidance in this revolutionary moment?

Vision Out of Chaos

Some women artists and writers are painting and writing their vision out of chaos, knowing that the political revolution cannot succeed without the social revolution. They are addressing the crisis of violence against women that has spread panic at home and traveled across national borders. Graffiti has been at the forefront of Egyptian women's activism.

Since December 2012, some young artists have organized a collective they call Women on Walls, or WoW. Veiled and unveiled women have come together to paint the walls of Cairo, Alexandria, Mansura, and Luxor. They cover over men's misogynist graffiti with images relaying urgent messages about violations of women's rights and women's role in the revolution. What happens, they ask, "when graffiti, an illegal art, becomes the strongest form of resistance in a country plagued by dictatorship, sloppy media, and an unfinished revolution? But, more importantly, what if this resistance art becomes the key tool for a message about women? How do we take an art form that was the voice for a revolution and use it to lead development and to become the alternative media for other issues?"[13] In a February 2014 YouTube video, young women spoke with Mia Grondahl, the Swedish photographer who has photo-archived Tahrir graffiti in *Tahrir Square: The Heart of the Egyptian Revolution* (2011) and *Revolution Graffiti: Street Art of the New Egypt* (2013). They explained their symbols and motivations. Many paint eyes—women's eyes and men's eyes. Women, one of the artists explained, are looking at the men and telling them that they have a vision beyond the current harassment. Those who paint men's eyes have two goals: they want the men to know that while they ogle women, they are being watched.[14] The young graffitists of WoW are

[13] http://womenonwalls.com/in-mansoura-join-us-or-if-you-cant-follow-our-daily-journal-and-flickr/ (accessed July 19, 2014).
[14] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBuTFUlu6WY (accessed July 16, 2014).

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artist-activists who believe that art can engage directly in politics and create new futures. Nada Barakat wrote on March 6, 2014, that they have "started cooperating with women's initiatives and leading feminist organizations like Nazra and HarassMap and talking with representatives from groups such as the Uprising of the Arab Women and the Women and Memory Forum … WoW is now growing fast and expanding its reach through Facebook, where it has some 4000 fans. It plans to develop its current Web-blog into a larger Website in order to document more of its work and provide space for artists."[15] The women are not deterred by continued harassment even while they are painting, for they are out in the streets and squares together and ready to repel the predators.

Theater has provided another channel for Egyptian women to denounce the violence that has plagued the revolutionaries since shortly after the peaceful beginning. Playwright Laila Soliman (b.1981) was fully cognizant of the easy dismissal of art activism, and so she called her 2011 Tahrir play, and the coalition that grew out of it, "No Time for Art."[16] Yet its repeated performances of people chanting the names of hundreds of Tahrir martyrs, demanding justice, proves the opposite and affirms the vital role of art in revolutionary practice. Art matters so much that the new states, like their predecessors, are using draconian measures against dissident artists.

In Tunisia, despite the Islamist al-Nahda party's ballot box victory in October 2011 and their consequent control of women in public places, women have not been cowed.

Artist Nadia Jelassi's somber installation *Celui qui n'a pas,* exhibited during the Printemps des Arts show in the Palais Abdeliya in the northern Tunis suburb of La Marsa, enraged al-Nahda. On June 10, 2012, religious extremists attacked the exhibition. Islamist messages sprayed on the walls outside read "Let God Be the Judge" and "Tunisia is an Islamic State."[17] They had interpreted the installation to mean that unveiled women should be stoned. In fact, Jelassi was critiquing the Islamist practice of stoning women for adultery, even in cases when adultery is in fact rape. After Jelassi was arrested, images of her installation went viral.[18] The virtual image was more powerful because it was

[15] http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/5610/30/Women-on-walls.aspx.

[16] In October 2011, Soliman was awarded the Willy Brandt Special Award for Political Courage. Brinda Mehta calls the play "a work-in-progress that is subjected to multiple revisions, re-enactments … The 'unfinished' nature of the series inhibits any definitive version of the uprisings through its shifting decentered perspectives" (Mehta 2014, 221).

[17] Le Nevez, A. & Ikram Lakhdhar, I. "Artworks and Property vandalized during a Night of Tension in Tunis," June 11, 2012. Available from: http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/06/11/artworks-and-property-vandalized-during-a-night-of-tension-in-tunis/#sthash.GzadQ0X7.dpuf (accessed November 17, 2013).

[18] http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/823378/tunisias-culture-minister-flip-flops-on-censored-artist-nadia (accessed November 17, 2013). For a cynical take on

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more portable than the real object. Thanks to Islamist ire, Jelassi's condemnation of their misogyny has traveled. And now, from exile, Jelassi continues to decry the excesses of the Islamists. What matters is not the al-Nahdawis' iconoclasm and targeting of women but the fact that most Tunisians finally feel free to criticize their government even while remaining wary of Islamists.

Women's creative vision may also come in writing. In a June 19 email to me, Nawal El Saadawi wrote, "The revolutions are all aborted including OWS. But creativity is never aborted that is why we write. God wrote his books for the same reason."

In the introduction to a collection of essays about the Arab Spring titled *Writing Revolution*, Syrian Samar Yazbek asks, "Can writing also be a valid form of engagement, though it entails occasionally stepping back from the reality on the ground?" Responding positively to her rhetorical question, she suggests that the written word in its new, especially its virtual, context is "now for everyone, and the short texts shared on the pages of Facebook activists have become important documents" (Yazbek 2013, 1). Theories will follow, along with "a new form of literature to describe them … Writing in a time of revolution is part of the process of change" (2, 7). Writing is witness, but it is also productive. Beyond social change, writing may also produce new identities, turning activists into artist-activists. Samar Yazbek connects writing to art to political activism to more stories: "These diaries turn death into a canvas for painting, a darkened mysterious canvas that appears before me upon the chests of unarmed young men going out to die" (Yazbek 2012, 13). Initial skepticism about the value of writing disappeared when she realized "that these diaries were helping me to stay alive" (50). While enabling her psychological survival, writing also serves the critical, ethical function of witnessing to and denouncing government atrocities.

Syrian artist Diala Brisly is equally committed to a future when peace and justice for women will have been achieved. In the meantime, her artistic activism forced her into exile, and since 2013 she has lived in Istanbul. In this image of a woman carrying her burden of roses, we can see the determination to keep walking despite bombs exploding around her. In this image, Brisly affirms that dreams matter more than the wounded body because they live on in the psyche of the people. In June 2014, she told Deutsche Welle that Syria's "art scene is flourishing more than ever—in exile … We never heard from each other and didn't have any kind of network. Now we meet up and we can work freely and make our revolution art."[19] Her paintings evoke hope and the

the "neo-orientalist" (not political) representations of women veiled and unveiled and the suggestion that the artists themselves were the ones to create the scandal in order to attract attention, see http://www.ibraaz.org/essays/73 (accessed February 25, 2014). A Ministry of the Interior spokesman "insinuated that the whole incident had been staged by the artists themselves" (available from: http://www.ibraaz.org/essays/54 [accessed March 1, 2014]).

[19] http://www.dw.de/syrian-art-flourishes-in-exile/a-17681159. Brisly's art can be found at http://diala-brisly.blogspot.com.tr/ (accessed June 8, 2014).

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power of women to overcome violence and dream of another future no matter how hard the regime tries to kill it.

Lebanese curator Rasha Salti elaborates on these visions out of chaos: "When I am asked to opine on the 'sorry' or 'awry' state of the Arab spring, I smile wryly and insist, I do think it's a spring, not a winter, nor a summer, and certainly not an autumn … By virtue of my profession as a visual arts curator and film programmer, I have the privilege of apprehending the world … through the fabrications of artists, filmmakers, novelists, poets, musicians and dancers … our civility and solidarity are recorded in poems, novels, paintings, photographs and films … In 2013, an ever growing number of Arab artists has not only rescued me from surrendering to despair, but given me the strength to imagine that the future is mine, ours."[20] The future will be hers, theirs, as long as there are artists and writers ready to appropriate the language of power to make the Arab Spring blossom again and turn that spring into a springboard for action.[21]

Conclusion

The Algerian Lesson is being learned because this revolution is both transnational and feminist. Women are not merely accompanying men in their protests against unlivable worlds; they are demanding attention to their plight as women whose rights as citizens have been systematically overlooked and whose bodies are threatened and violated. Thanks to social media, they are responding to each other and to their local circumstances, often across national borders and between homeland and diaspora. No longer isolated events, the separate revolutions have created contrapuntal resonances so that energy in one place can revive exhaustion in another. Whenever their rights and dignity are threatened, women know where to go for their voices to be heard.

Samar Yazbek has correctly observed: "The fall of the dictators across the Arab world marks the start of the true revolution" (Yazbek 2013, 6). It is not in the toppling of presidents for life or in ballot boxes or in new constitutions that the success or persistence of revolutions can be detected, but rather in the continuity of women's revolutionary activism, consciousness, and creativity. Few are ready to govern today, but as long as they continue to listen to each other and refuse to give up on their demands for justice and dignity, in 20 years they may well be ready.[22]

[20] http://gulflabor.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/%E2%80%A6-And-Justice-for-All.pdf (accessed January 3, 2014).
[21] With thanks to Cathia Jenainati for this felicitous turn of phrase.
[22] http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-07-02/millennials-are-rise-middle-east-and-bring-their-own-agenda (accessed July 3, 2014).

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Chapter Four

Creative Disobedience: Feminism, Islam, and Revolution in Egypt

Margot Badran

Abstract This chapter is a reflection on the intersections between feminism, Islam, and revolution over time into the open-ended present. It argues that a revolution in Egypt capable of realizing a truly democratic state and society must include a full-fledged feminist revolution in order to dismantle patriarchal structures and practices inimical to the creation of an egalitarian state and society. The chapter argues that integral to this feminist revolution—and its success in leading to a democratic future for Egypt—is moving from a patriarchal to an egalitarian understanding and practice of Islam. It points to the *longue durée* of feminism and revolution—feminism as public activism was born and reborn in revolution—and of religious unity—defiantly asserted and reasserted—as part of revolutionary practice in Egypt.

Introduction

In the 1919 Egyptian revolution, upper-class women, mature in age and numbering some two hundred, left the confines of their houses and went out into the streets adjoining Midan Tahrir. These were the first demonstrations organized and carried out by women as part of the nationalist protests demanding an end to British colonial rule. Working-class women and men streamed into the streets and neighborhoods in spontaneous uprisings. It was these women, with their men, who took hits from British bullets and became the first martyrs. The lower-class poor, men and women alike, eventually disappeared from the public political scene, pulled by the demands of their daily toil. In the aftermath of the revolution and the gaining of formal (but incomplete) independence, upper-class women were expected to withdraw from political work and retreat to their homes as male revolutionaries turned to building a new nation on their own. Women disobeyed pressures to withdraw from public political work. Instead they set up Egypt's first ever feminist organization as a base from which they would continue their political struggle for the inseparable rights of the nation and women. Impelled by their revolutionary fervor,

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_4

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in defiance and self-assertion, women gave birth both to a feminist movement in Egypt and to new selves.

In the 2011 revolution, women and men, mostly but not only youthful, from a large middle to lower swath of the citizenry, numbering first in the thousands and later in the millions, rose up demanding an end to corrupt rule. At the end of the first legendary "18 days" in Midan Tahrir, when women and men united in militancy had expelled the corrupt autocrat, women, whose continued public presence and political work became an irritant for many, were again expected to depart from the scene. This was dramatized by the physical and sexual attacks against them during the march on International Women's Day less than 3 weeks after the ousting of the dictator. As before, women in defiant disobedience stayed their ground in public. Women, now with many men on board, mostly of the younger generations, asserted a re-energized feminism as part of their continuing revolutionary work.

During the 1919 and 2011 revolutions, Muslims and Christians carried banners with crescents and crosses entwined in Midan Ismailiyya, which after the 1952 revolution became Midan Tahrir. Displaying their solidarity as Egyptians in open defiance of the cunning "divide and rule" tactics of despotic colonial and postcolonial regimes. Muslims and Christians, signaling awareness of past attempts to stir up communal violence, were refusing to be pitted against each other. Proclaiming religious solidarity has been a hallmark of Egyptian revolutions.

These capsules point to the *longue durée* of feminism and revolution—feminism as public activism was born and reborn in revolution—and of religious unity—defiantly asserted and reasserted—as part of revolutionary practice in Egypt. In this chapter I reflect on intersections between feminism, Islam, and revolution over time into the open-ended present. I argue that a revolution in Egypt capable of realizing a truly democratic state and society must include a full-fledged feminist revolution in order to dismantle patriarchal structures and practices inimical to the creation of an egalitarian state and society. I also contend that integral to this feminist revolution—and its success in leading to a democratic future for Egypt—is moving from a patriarchal to an egalitarian understanding and practice of Islam.

I approach this chapter from the vantage point of a historian (of Egyptian feminist and cultural history) and a participant in the ongoing 2011 revolution who has remained in Egypt since late December 2010.[1]

[1]This chapter is based on historical research and is informed by continuing on-the-ground interactions, interviews, and conversations. It also draws upon my historical research, popular and scholarly literature, print and electronic press, and social media. Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995; *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009; and

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Ongoing Revolution/s

One year after the outbreak of the 2011 revolution, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) had assumed de facto power after the fall of the previous regimes and was out to celebrate the first anniversary of the revolution as a *fait accompli*. People responded in rapid defiance, claiming "al-thawra mustamira" (the revolution is ongoing). This statement became an instant political slogan insistently repeated. The term "ongoing revolution" aptly evokes, as well, the revolutionary *longue durée* of unfinished business in Egypt. In this chapter I use the idea of ongoing or continuing revolution in reference to both the *longue durée* of revolutionary struggle in Egypt and the ongoing 2011 revolution. I also use Dabashi's construct of "open-ended revolution," which evokes a plethora of revolutionary desires and possibilities.[2]

If we unpack revolution in Egypt we find three nested revolutions: "political evolution," commonly called "revolution," typically named for its starting year; the unmarked "culture revolution"; and "feminist/gender revolution." Of the three types of revolution, the ongoing 2011 revolution has been most beleaguered as a political revolution which by now has been effectively stalled. Meanwhile, the culture revolution and the feminist/gender revolution proceed, and it is in this sense that the 2011 revolution continues.[3] Culture and feminist/gender revolutions as ongoing processes exist in "the before" and "the after" of (political) revolutions in Egypt and impart to revolution a dimension of continual "live-streaming."[4] (Political) revolutions, as militant insurrections, can be put down through force by authorities in ways that culture and feminist/gender revolutions cannot. Along with understanding revolution as continuous—the *longue durée* (the long but not linear sweep) of revolution in Egypt—I work as well with Arendt's notion of (political) revolution as constituting a new beginning. Moments of (revolutionary) new beginning, Arendt contends, produce new subjectivities.[5]

"Women Marching for Revolution in Egypt: A Participatory Journal," in Mounira Charrad and Rita Stevens, eds.

[2] Hamid Dabashi, *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism*. London: Zed Books, 2012, pp. 30, 63–4, 238–41, and 245.

[3] See Dabashi, p. 238 and 241.

[4] I discuss this in "Egypt and the Art of Revolution: Brushes with Women," in Judith F. Brodsky and Ferris Olin, eds. *Women of the Fertile Crescent: Gender, Art, and Society*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Institute of Women and Art, 2012, pp. 14–33.

[5] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*. London: Penguin, 1990.

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Creative Disobedience

I consider "creative disobedience" a basic revolutionary tool.[6] Secular and religious patriarchal structures and systems, with their hierarchies of class, race/ethnicity, and gender, are held together and their power preserved and extended through strict prescription and fastidious practice of obedience. Colonial and postcolonial/indigenous ruling authorities in Egypt understood this well.

Revolutions are moments when obedience is put in abeyance and disobedience is unleashed in the form of rebellion against established orders and practices. Rebellion is disobedience. Rebellion, however, has loftier connotations morally and politically than disobedience, which is ordinarily seen as recalcitrance or, more gravely, as insubordination. Disobedience is politically subversive, culturally deviant, socially inappropriate, and religiously sinful. It is dangerous and fecund.

If obedience (*ta'a* in Arabic) is the lynchpin of patriarchy inscribed in state, society, and family, disobedience loosens the pin. Obedience and disobedience are deeply gendered. In patriarchy, women are subordinate to men (a subordination mediated by age, class, etc.), "superiors" to whom they owe obedience. In the hierarchy of age, younger women owe obedience to older women (surrogates of male elders). Younger men owe obedience to elders, including female elders. In the most proximate, quotidian sense, women owe obedience to men in the family. Within marriage—according to the common received understanding of the sharia (the "path" Muslims should follow, often called Islamic law) translated, via jurisprudence, into statutory law in Egypt as the Muslim Personal Status Law—wives owe husbands obedience along with services, which in return earn them the protection and material support of their husbands. The disobedient woman is called *nashiza*.[7] Under the Egyptian Muslim Personal Status Law, the disobedient wife can be deprived of material support.[8] There is no masculine equivalent of nashiza in Arabic. A husband

[6] Creative disobedience is related to, but slightly different from, the term "rejection" that miriam cooke and I used in our analytical typology of Arab women's feminist writings in Margot Badran and miriam cooke, eds., *Opening the Gates: An Anthology of Arab Feminist Writing*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, new expanded ed. 2004.

[7] On nashiza see Kecia Ali, "Religious Practices: Obedience and Disobedience in Religious Discourses" in *Encyclopedia of Women in Islamic Cultures*, ed., Suad Joseph. Leiden: Brill, 2007. vol. 5, pp. 309–13.

[8] In the past, the disobedient woman who left the marital home without permission could be forcefully returned by a legal convention known as *bait al-ta'* (literally, "house of obedience"). This law—backed by the received Islamic notion of wifely obedience, although formally modeled after a Napoleonic legal convention—was abolished in the 1960s. On obedience in the Egyptian Muslim Personal Law and feminist and human rights activism, see Marwa Sharafeldin, "Islamic Law Meets Human Rights:

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cannot be declared disobedient in the Islamic legal tradition, and in secular culture men (within their groups) are never deemed disobedient. Obedience is a one-way street. Disobedience is female. *Adab* (correct conduct) regulates and re-enforces genders and classifies the social practice of obedience as respectful deference, anchoring it deep in cultural behavior.

In revolutions as in political uprisings, both men and women engage in disobedience, also called rebellion. Revolution unleashes disobedience, and disobedience unleashes revolution. For rebels and their supporters, revolutionary disobedience is positive and creative. In the context of revolutionary militancy, disobedience is not gendered. In uprising mode everyone is equal; social convention, cultural prescription, and gender differentiation are put on hold. With a return to "normalcy" or the restoration of norms, disobedience becomes an infraction once again and obedience is re-imposed. The ongoing challenge for would-be revolutionaries is to create a new normal.

Revolting Women: The 1919 Revolution

The double entendre in the subtitle refers not only to women rising up but also to the deep ambiguity and even hostility that men (but not only men) in Egypt have often harbored toward women "invading" public space. In moments of turbulent uprising when numbers count, women count; patriarchal conventions are suspended. In the more "workaday" moments of a political revolution and in its aftermath, old patriarchal practices resurface.

When people rose up in the 1919 demonstrations, they were declaring themselves Egyptians in the face of the British colonialists who called them "natives." In the colonial dictionary, the word "Egyptian" did not exist. In the collective outpourings, being a man or a woman, a Muslim or a Christian—distinctions the colonizer highlighted and exploited—was not significant; what mattered was being Egyptian.

Women performed as Egyptians on the stage of the nation. While freeing and making the nation, they were making and freeing themselves. When the colonial authorities jailed and exiled male nationalist leaders, women moved to the fore. Shedding patriarchal culture's inscription of women as those in need of protection, women became "protectors of the nation."[9] Women took over: maintaining morale, handling finances, organizing economic boycotts and labor strikes, and liaising with British authorities. Their revolutionary

Reformulating qiwama and wilaya for Personal Status Law Reform in Egypt" in Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Mulki Al-Sharmani, and Jana Rumminger, eds., *Men in Charge?: Rethinking Authority in Muslim Legal Tradition*. London: Oneworld Publications, 2015, pp. 163–196, esp. pp. 171–74.

[9] On protection and feminism in Egypt, see Lucia Sorbera, "Challenges of thinking feminism and revolution between 2011 and 2014," *Postcolonial Studies*, 2014 vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 63–75.

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work was welcomed in the absence of nationalist men. After men returned, women who had performed with heroic efficiency were sidelined. The draft statement of independence that nationalist men brought back from the 1921 London negotiations was circulated for comment among male nationalist groups. The bypassed women, insisting on being part of the process, obtained a copy of the draft and published their views of the document and protested their neglect to the local press. Following the formal declaration of (partial) independence in 1922, it was made clear that women were expected to return to their homes while men rushed single-handedly to build a new sovereign nation.[10]

Activist women refused to be ejected from the House of the Nation and to be subordinate to men in nationalist work. Women had seen themselves as equal on the national revolutionary stage[11] and their equality as Egyptians was enshrined in the 1923 constitution, but suddenly they were faced with second-class citizenship when the Electoral Law conferred voting rights on men only. Shortly thereafter, on March 16, 1923, the fourth anniversary of the first nationalist demonstration, a group of women formed the Egyptian Feminist Union (al-Ittihad al-Nisa'i al-Misri) as a platform of their own from which to continue their struggle for the full liberation of their nation and gender.[12] This was the moment of public and explicit announcement of the launch of the Egyptian feminist movement, marking the passage of feminism from an unnamed new gender consciousness to named activism. Decades later the Egyptian state would officially recognize March 16 as Egyptian Women's Day.

This was also the moment that women introduced the word "feminism" into the Arabic lexicon as *al-nisaíyya*. The word al-nisaíyya in the standard Arabic of the day signified "of or pertaining to women." While given a new inflection as "feminism," the conventional meaning of al-nisaíyya allowed the term to fly under the patriarchal radar. The double meaning of al-nisaíyya reflected the "double life" of feminists who had to live by cultural conventions as they were subverting them. Much later, in the 1990s, the term *al-naswiyya* was coined to unequivocally refer to feminism and to deliberately remove the ambiguity preserved in the term al-nisaíyya.

Women, identifying as feminists, campaigned in the 1920s and 1930s for a broad range of social, economic, and political rights. Feminist activists opened up new education and work opportunities that women of the expanding middle class would exploit. This set a new trajectory in motion in the shaping of new female subjects.[13] (The extension of education and work to all classes by the socialist state in the 1950s and 1960s furthered the process of building a literate and economically productive nation of both genders.)

[10] Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation*, pp. 79–80.

[11] See Margot Badran, "Dual Liberation: Feminism and Nationalism in Egypt from the 1870s to 1925." *Feminist Issues*. Spring 1988, pp. 15–24.

[12] On the creation of the Egyptian Feminist Union see Chap. 5 in "The House of the Woman," Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation,* pp. 91–110.

[13] See Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation.*

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From the start, feminists used secular nationalist, humanitarian, and Islamic modernist discourse in advancing their feminist project.[14] This needs to be emphasized as it is not often understood. They did not operate within a secular/religious binary. In Egypt, as elsewhere, the secular/religious binary emerged with the spread of a new wave of political Islam in the 1970s, when Islamists tried to polarize the population. Prior to this, women as feminists in Egypt did not have to choose between the religious and the secular; they could keep both. The Islamic modernist strand of Egyptian secular feminism can be seen as a precursor of Islamic feminist discourse (which I discuss below) that would emerge toward the end of the twentieth century.

The term "secularism," *al-àlamiyya* appeared in the latter part of the nineteenth century, when law, except for family law, was removed from the jurisdiction of the religious authorities to the state and when the modernizing state took over from religious authorities the task of providing education for the nation. The state recognized and protected religion and religious pluralism. Attentive to history, Talal Asad has demonstrated that "the secular" and "the religious" have been porous, mutually constitutive categories.[15]

"The secular" has also had another inflection. Egyptian women simply used the term feminism, while observers often referred to feminism in Egypt as "secular feminism" or "Egyptian feminism," meaning feminism for all Egyptians as equal citizens whether they were Muslims or Christians. This mirrored the construct of "secular nationalism" as nationalism inclusive of all citizens as equals. Within the secular nation, religion was recognized and protected, and the separate family laws for Muslims and Christians were regulated by religion.

Women, unlike men, have had to religiously justify their quest for full-spectrum rights and every innovative step forward in their daily lives. Along with demanding the active enjoyment of equal rights in the public space of the nation, the feminists pushed for reform in the family. Within the context of the family, feminists accepted the notion of complementarity involving reciprocal but unequal duties and obligations for women and men as spouses and parents, and typically accepted the principle of male headship of the family. This was in keeping with their understanding of Islam as influenced by the Islamic modernist discourse of the day, which also stressed that with rights came responsibilities.[16] Feminists called for reforms in the Muslim Personal Status Law, including asking for curbs on men's practice of divorce and polygamy.[17]

[14] See Margot Badran, "Introduction," *Feminism in Islam*, pp. 1–14.
[15] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity.* Palo Alto CA: Stanford University Press, 2003.
[16] See Egyptian scholar and Islamic feminist Omaima Abou-Bakr's discussion of Islamic modernist Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduh, "The Interpretive Legacy of *Qiwamah* as an Exegetical Construct," in Mir-Hosseini, eta al, *Men in Charge?*, pp. 44–64, esp. pp. 54–55.
[17] See Margot Badran, "Gendering the Secular and the Religious in Modern Egypt: Woman, Family, and Nation" in Linell Cady and Tracy Fessenden, eds. *Gendering the Divide: Religion, the Secular and the Politics of Sexuality.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2013, pp. 103–120, and *Feminists, Islam, and Nation.*

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The year women created the Egyptian Feminist Union (1923), inaugurating their public organized feminist movement, a public act of unveiling was performed. Egyptian Feminist Union founding president Huda Sha'rawi, in her forties, and founding member Saiza Nabarawi, in her twenties, were returning from their first international feminist conference abroad. At the Cairo Railway Station, they removed the veils from their faces but kept their heads covered, in keeping with conventional understanding that this was an Islamic prescription. This public gesture accelerated the process of unmasking the face some women had quietly begun earlier, including the feminist educator Nabawiyya Musa.

Spurning invisibility and anonymity by uncovering their faces was a signal step in women's journey on the path of political activism and their own liberation, as they themselves declared. Rejecting domestic re-confinement after their entry on the public stage of nationalist militancy and refusing face veiling were interconnected. Domestic seclusion and face veiling were both mechanisms of female control, distancing women from greater immersion in public life that women were increasingly resenting.[18] The push to unveil was not instigated by colonialist pressure as has been asserted.[19] Moreover maintaining the face veil was mandated for Egyptian administrators, teachers, and pupils in the colonial state schools for girls until the declaration of independence in 1922.[20]

The face veil was referred to in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the *hijab* rather than the *niqab*, the more accurate term for face covering. According to conventional interpretation of the Qur'an, covering the head was required but not masking the face. The manipulation of language was complicit in the subterfuge of imposing face veiling on women as an Islamic requirement. Exposed to contemporary Islamic reformist thinking and debates on veiling, Muslim women as feminists refused these cultural constraints masquerading as Islamic injunctions. Some 20 years after the dramatic public unveiling at the Cairo train station, the practice of covering the face and head had largely disappeared in the urban middle and upper strata.

[18] In many interviews and conversations about the years Saiza Nabarawi repeated the story of how she and the union's president Huda Sha'rawi took off their face veils at the Cairo Railway Station. She also told me many times over the story of how she was required to veil her face after returning to Egypt from Paris, where she had been raised until her early teens, of the trauma this caused her, and how Huda Sha'rawi urged her to put on the face veil, promising that they would remove it later. These are not narratives of colonialist pressures to unveil.

[19] See Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

[20] When teacher and administrator Nabawiyya Musa was employed in the colonial state school system, she was required to wear the face veil. Only when she left for a school for girls created by the nationalists was she able to remove her face veil, which she did in 1909. Badran, Chap. 4, "Expressing Feminism and Nationalism in Autobiography: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Educator," *Feminism in Islam*, pp. 90–115.

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In another 20 years, when Islamism, or political Islam, was on the rise, the hijab would return in the form of head covering and a marker of Islamist affiliation. This sent a strong political message and adumbrated what was to come on the gender front.

Revolting Women: The 2011 Revolution Ongoing

The House of the Nation was once again shaken to the rafters in 2011, this time by an open rebellion against homegrown tyranny and mounting fears of its dynastic perpetuation. Asmaa Mahfouz, a young woman with ties to the workers' movement, issued a clarion call on Facebook to rise up. The powerful symbolism of a young woman rallying the nation was lost on no one. This mostly youthful uprising included huge numbers of women and men from the nation's broad middle to lower strata. The beleaguered dictator Husni Mubarak warned that rebels would be met with the full force of the law if they did not desist. They did not desist. In an act of national disobedience they continued to surge forth in a peaceful revolt that was met with massive force. Journalist and culture writer Mona Anis exalted in "the return of the spirit" in 2012, recalling Tawfiq al-Hakim's iconic novel of the 1919 Revolution, *Awdat al-Ruh* (*The Return of the Spirit*).[21]

Disobedience was triple tiered for young women rising up and often remaining out late for overnight vigils in Midan Tahrir, as they not only disobeyed state orders but also had to defy parental authority and social custom. Young women are not allowed the free movement that family and culture accords male youth. While rebellious men confronted authoritarianism of the patriarchal state, rebellious women had to, and did, confront the authoritarianism of the patriarchal state, the patriarchal society, and the patriarchal family.[22]

During the first 18 days of the uprising centered in Midan Tahrir, when revolutionaries were focused on removing the corrupt ruler, Egyptians were fiercely united: women and men, Copts and Muslims, the religiously oriented

[21] Mona Anis, "Return of the Spirit," *al-Ahram Weekly*, 10–16 Feb. 2011. Young director and script writer Laila Soliman's play "Whims of Freedom," performed by two women actors at the Makan cultural center in Cairo on June 21 and 22, 2014, weaves back and forth between the 1919 and 2011 revolutions.

[22] On disobedience and the family see: Mona Anis, "Return of the Spirit"; Elliot Colla, "Reading, Riting, Revolution," book review of Mona Prince, *Revolution Is My Name*. n.p. 2012, *Jadaliyya,* posted July 3, 2013, downloaded July 4, 2013, in which he remarks that "revolution entails rebelling against your family as much as the state"; Lucia Sorbera, "Challenges of thinking feminism and revolution in Egypt between 2011 and 2014," in *Postcolonial Studies,* 2014, vol. 17, no. 63–75, for a young woman's personal testimony of family confrontation; and Margot Badran, "Theorizing Oral History as Autobiography: A Look at the Narrative of a Woman Revolutionary in Egypt," *Journal of Women's History,* Summer 2013, which contains personal testimony of resisting a mother's admonition about taking part in demonstrations.

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and the secularly inclined. They protected their space in Midan Tahrir, monitoring the entry points and providing each other with necessities, such as water, food, blankets, tents, and medical assistance. In this national secular uprising, Copts protected Muslims at prayer and Muslims likewise protected Copts. Midan Tahrir of the 18 days was an idyllic template of an egalitarian society, "the golden eighteen days," as Ahdaf Soueif calls them, "that brought out the best in us and showed us not just what we could do but how we could be."[23]

When their immediate goal was achieved with the downfall of the ruler on February 11, revolutionaries fanned out from the epicenter, broadening the arena of direct struggle. As professional and working groups aired their separate grievances and demands, fragmentation surfaced, and the initial show of solidarity between Islamists and others dissipated. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces stepped into the power vacuum to put down continuing uprisings. Counter-revolutionary elements appeared; *felool,* or remnants of the old regime with their hired thugs, and other opportunists and malcontents began to sow chaos.

In 2011 as in 1919, following the initial stage of revolutionary militancy, women felt pressure to vacate public space and cede political activism to men. As before, women stood their ground, making it clear they were there to stay. (By then vast numbers of women routinely populated public areas, going about the demands of their daily lives in the workforce and in meeting family needs.) When women went out for the first time as a group during the revolution in a celebratory march on International Women's Day on March 8, they were met with physical, sexual, and verbal violence from angry young men, whether mercenary thugs or free-wheeling misogynists. The following day, when women protested against this violence, they were arrested by the military and subjected to the infamous "virginity tests." One of the young women, Samira Ibrahim, brought legal charges against the military. In December 2011, the virginity tests were suspended, but the military doctor who conducted the tests was acquitted in March 2012. Huge numbers of women and men railed against the virginity tests and rallied around Samira Ibrahim.[24]

The violence against women continued. During rallies in front of the cabinet building in December, a young woman was stripped of her *abaya* (a traditional black cloak) by soldiers, thrown to the ground, and kicked. The photograph of the woman stripped half naked in a blue bra, lying prone with a soldier's boot above her torso, went viral. On December 20, women protested in a massive demonstration.[25] The following Friday, women and men together

[23] Ahdaf Soueif, *My Country, Our Revolution.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012. See Mona Prince, *Revolution Is My Name.* Cairo: 2012 (privately published) for an account of her experience during the 18 days.

[24] Sherene Sieikaly, "The Meaning of Revolution: On Samira Ibrahim," *Jadaliyya*, Jan. 28, 2013, downloaded July 10, 2015.

[25] See Sherine Hafez, "Bodies that Protest: The Girl in the Blue Bra, Sexuality and State Violence in Revolutionary Egypt." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Vol. 40:1, Autumn, 2014.

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set out from Al-Azhar to denounce the brutality against women, chanting "women are the red line," and to protest the murder of the popular revolutionary Shaikh Imad 'Iffat, a prominent religious scholar in Al-Azhar's Dar Al-Iftah.[26] Women marchers became targets of opportunists and misogynist thugs and troublemakers, who resented women "trespassing" (to use Mernissi's term)[27] in public space. At the same time, attacks against women served as attacks against the revolution.

A feminist surge followed the initial phase of militant uprising, as it had in the aftermath of the 1919 revolution, yet with significant differences. This time women and men together, mainly youth, created a feminism of their own in the open-ended arc of the long feminist revolution. It is a feminism rebooted in the volcano of violence. It rises from deep within the patriarchal culture and the vortex of political struggle. It is a feminism that insists that gender, human beings as men and as women, must be included along with class, race or ethnicity, and religion in the effort to move from patriarchal authoritarianism toward the realization of an egalitarian culture in the state, society, and family.

I see a new strand of feminism triggered by the physical and sexual violence perpetrated against women.[28] It is felt and recognized but often unnamed. Young women and men have joined forces in combating the ongoing sexual aggression (*tahharush*) against women, standing firmly united in securing the public space essential to keeping the revolution alive. Anti-sexual-violence activists not only works to stop violence through direct action, but it investigates the root causes and contexts of sexual violence and works to turn around the thinking of offenders whom they detain. The activists develop and share with offenders a feminist analysis of aggression against women that is contextualized in the sociology and culture of their environment.

The feminism of female and male youth is found in the flow between their revolutionary activism and their everyday lives. Another developing

[26] I participated in both of these marches and wrote about them in my journal. For an extract from the journal see Margot Badran, "Women Marching for Revolution in Egypt: A Participatory Journal."

[27] Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*. New York: Perseus Books, 1994.

[28] I am picking this up in interviews with anti-*tahharush* activists. The number and range of groups is vast. See Angie Abdelmonem, "Reconceptualizing Sexual Harassment in Egypt: A Longitudinal Assessment of *el-Taharrush el-Ginsy* in Online Forums and Anti-sexual Harassment Activism," *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research*, vol. 1. No. 1, summer 2015 pp. 24–47. These groups operate in similar and different ways. It is only among some that an incipient feminism can be detected; these engage in trying to ascertain the causes of molestation from boys and young men they detain and among whom they try to inculcate another way of thinking that resonates with certain feminist principles. For a recent overview and call for an intersectional movement see Mariam Kirollos, "Sexual Violence in Egypt: Myths and Realities," *Jadaliyya*, July 16, 2013, downloaded July 20, 2015.

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manifestation of new feminism can be detected in the context of daily existence as post-militancy revolutionaries resume everyday life. Many seek new forms of work that enable them to advance their revolutionary goals. They simply cannot go ahead with life untouched by their revolutionary experience, and they clearly acknowledge this. Young men and women are well aware that both are constrained, albeit differently, by the patriarchal family. Their new feminism involves renegotiations of family relations to work out interactions that are more egalitarian and accord them more leeway, more independence of thinking and action. This feeds into and is part of their tweaking of constraining cultural conventions.

The new feminism springs from new subjectivities born of revolutionary defiance and militancy. It is a bottom-up feminism. It is a feminism of practice: immediate, grounded, act-oriented, unnamed, and undeclared. The new feminism and feminist revolutionaries operate deep inside the family, society, and culture. The new feminism is honed in the longer, slower slog of ongoing revolution. Time is on its side.

The 1919 and 2011 revolutions were and continue to be secular revolutions by and for all Egyptians. They have not been framed by religion, but religion has been a source of inspiration and legitimization. Principles that Islam and Christianity endorse are reflected in revolutionary calls for freedom, equality, social justice, and dignity (which are also feminist goals).

Islamism, especially the Islamism of the elders, is resolutely patriarchal, suffocating the more open voices among Islamist youth. Political Islam pits the secular and the religious against each other and forces people to take sides. Many outside Egypt and the region tend to equate Islamism with Islam. Non-Islamists (including both the religiously inclined and the secularly oriented) hold that Islam is inspiration; it is principles, not a political project and not government. When political power aligns with religion, it can impose its version of religion on the ruled. While Islamists want to separate the religious and the secular, they want to unite the political and the religious.

During the Islamist presidency of Mohamed Morsi, not just conservative but also reactionary words and actions relating to gender were resuscitated. There were rants by Islamists on the floor of the parliament insulting to women. There were attempts in the language of "Islam" to eliminate the legally required minimum marriage age (one of the first two gains of the feminist movement back in 1923) and to roll back other gains. There were calls from the floor of the parliament to re-legalize female genital mutilation (FGM). In the run-up to the presidential election in 2012, Islamists enticed people in Upper Egypt with cut-rate FGM operations, despite their illegality.[29]

[29] See Mariz Tadros, "Mutilating bodies: the Muslim Brotherhood's gift to Egyptian women," *Open Democracy*, vol. 1, May 24, 2012; and Margot Badran, "Keeping FGM on the run? Between Resolution and Constitution." *Ahram Online* Jan. 10, 2013. For a historian's view on anti-FGM activism see Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, Chap. 7, Body Politic/s: Women, Power, and Sexuality in Egypt, pp. 168–91.

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On the international front, in March 2013 the Morsi government opposed the UN Commission on the Status of Women's draft statement on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women and Girls, explaining their position in a way that clearly articulated their reactionary gender project.[30] These threatening words and actions put feminists on high alert.

With disaffection mounting against Morsi, youth spearheaded a campaign in the spring of 2013 called the Rebel, or Tamarrud, Movement to gain signatures for his removal. After gaining over a million signatures, and winning support from other quarters in the process, a countrywide march, the most massive ever, was held on April 30 to demand his ouster. The desired outcome happened at the hands of the military on July 3. It is not my intention here to engage in an analysis of the politics and propriety of the removal but only to note that the experience of Islamist rule ignited passionate discussion countrywide about religion and the state. Both secular and religious conservatives argued that religion and rule should be separated. Islamists, predictably, held firm. For most, the discussion was about religion and politics, not religion and culture.

Can Islam become a force for a revolutionary feminism? In the Egypt of today, where youth constitute the majority of the population and women make up half the population, and where major segments of the country rose up in revolt and were thereby transformed, the old narrow patriarchal culture, re-enforced by a patriarchal version of Islam, is out of sync with what Egyptians want for Egypt and for themselves. Those trying to keep the spirit of the revolution alive resolutely continue the quest for freedoms and rights and for ways out of hegemonic controls in the state, society, and culture. They do not show themselves against Islam, and indeed have been creating an Islam of their own, as Sherine Hafez observes.[31] But they are against whatever condones and props up inequalities and injustices. They have also seen too much of how Islam can be manipulated and instrumentalized to preserve the status quo and for political gain. Finding in Islam support for a progressive agenda remains a challenge.[32]

Muslim women scholars in different locations around the globe have articulated a discourse of gender equality based on their own readings of the Qur'an and Hadith. In the late 1980s and 90s, progressive secular Muslim women intellectuals and writers, intrigued by this new discourse, hailed it as

[30] See Margot Badran, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood: A project of patriarchal extremism." *Ahram Online*. Mar. 28, 2013.

[31] See Sherine Hafez, *An Islam of Her Own: Reconsidering Religion and Secularism in Women's Islamic Movements.* New York University Press, 2011.

[32] These observations are based on considerable interaction I have had with young revolutionaries, both women and men, since the early days of the uprisings. I was invited by a group of youth (around 30 were in attendance) to talk about Islamic feminism in the early spring of 2011. They were interested and open, but how Islamic feminism could be a force for change they found a conundrum.

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an "Islamic feminism."[33] While Egypt was not an early site of the production of Islamic feminist discourse, since early in this present century Egyptian scholars have made important contributions to the production and spread of this discourse of egalitarian Islam through rigorous work on new knowledge production. Omaima Abou-Bakr, professor of English and Comparative Literature at Cairo University, articulates with persuasive clarity arguments for gender equality within an Islamic framework, arguments that disrupt the hard-held notion that the Qur'an endorses male authority and the related idea of the supremacy of male authority in state and society.[34] She is also a co-founder of the Women and Memory Forum, which conducts workshops and conferences, such as the 2012 Conference on Feminist and Islamic Perspectives: New Horizons of Knowledge and Reform.[35] The Women and Memory Forum collaborates with the global network Musawah (Equality), formed in Kuala Lumpur in 2009, to promote egalitarian understandings of Islam in combination with human rights discourse and insights gained from women's lived experience. The network also supports on-the-ground efforts around the world to reform Muslim Personal Status Laws. It held a conference in Cairo, coinciding with the first year of the revolution, when it had already been planned to move the headquarters of Musawah from Kuala Lumpur to Cairo, although the decision was later made to move the headquarters to Rabat. It is to be expected that Islamic feminism in Egypt for the foreseeable future will concentrate on knowledge production and oral history gathering. The Women and Memory Forum has been collecting testimonies on women's experiences in the ongoing revolution. It remains to be seen what possible two-way impacts there might be of women's revolutionary experience and Islamic feminism and what forms they would take. It is very likely that a lengthy process of spreading awareness lies ahead, but time is on their side.[36]

[33] On the initial emergence of Islamic feminism in the 1990s see Badran, Chap. 9, "Towards Islamic Feminisms: A look at the Middle East," in Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, pp. 215–241. Orig. pub. Asma Afsarrudin, ed., *Hermeneutics and Honor in Islamicate Societies*. Harvard Monograph Series. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

[34] For her most recent work see "The Interpretive Legacy of *Qiwamah* as an Exegetical Construct in Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Mulki al-Sharmani and Jana Rumminger (eds.), Men in Charge? Rethinking Autorithy in Muslim Legal Tradition, London, Oneworld, 2015, p. 44–64."

[35] The proceedings have been published; see Omaima Abou-Bakr, ed., *Feminist and Islamic Perspectives: New Horizons of Knowledge and Reform*. Cairo: Women and Memory Forum, 2013.

[36] For an exploration of the incipient movement of Islamic feminism in Egypt, see Sawsan Al-Sharif, *Al-Haraka Al-Nasawiyya Al-Islamiyya fi Misr* (The Islamic Feminist Movement in Egypt). Cairo: Rawafid Publishing, 2015. See also Mulki Al-Sharmani, "Islamic Feminism: Transnational and national reflections," *Approaching Religion*, vol. 4, no. 2, Dec. 2014, pp. 83–94; Hoda Al-Saadi, "Islamic Feminism in Egypt between Acceptance and Refusal," in Jean Said Maksisi, Rafif Reda Saydawy, and Noha Bayoumy, *Arab Feminism: A Critical Perspective*. Beirut: Center for Arab Unity

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In Egypt, both religious and secular patriarchalists, who alike use conservative views of Islam to shore up their hegemony, find gender equality threatening. But they are in a bind. If they want to establish a democratic order in Egypt, as they claim, they are stymied from the start if citizens cannot be be deemed equal. The spread of progressive thinking makes it harder to pin inequality on Islam—to make the religion the cause of unequal citizens and human beings. Islamic feminist discourse, often simply referred to as an egalitarian discourse of Islam, was used by activists in recent years in Egypt in a tough uphill battle to reform the Muslim Personal Status Code. The battle demonstrated more the intransigence of patriarchy in the name of Islam than the limited potential of egalitarian readings of Islam.[37] With the revolution, legal reform was superseded by other demands. During Islamist rule the major hope was that the reforms in the Muslim Personal Status Law would not be hijacked. Now is not the time for the resumption of a serious campaign to ameliorate the inequities in the Muslim Personal Status Code, but the proponents of an egalitarian transformation stand well prepared when the time is ripe.

Back to Beyond the Veil[38] and Forward

The symbolic unveiling by two feminists in 1923 did not inaugurate the process of unveiling the face, but it did speed up the process. By the early 1940s, not only the face cover but also the head cover had disappeared among the urban middle and upper strata. Women and society were moving "beyond the veil."

In the 1970s, the rising Islamists instigated a "return to the veil" (in the form of the hijab that covers the head and hair), starting at the university campus (their early major recruiting ground) and encouraging young women to take up the practice. The hijab became a highly visible sign of a "return" to Islam cum "flag" of affiliation with Islamism. Politicized religious forces against the secular state as the enemy. Re-veiling also had a wider, more amorphous cultural dimension through its resurrecting of what was touted as "the"

Studies and the Lebanese Association of Women Researchers (al-Bahithat), 2012, pp. 417–28; and Margherita Picchi, "Egypt in transition: what future for Islamic feminism" in Anna Maria Di Tolla and Ersilia Francesca, eds., special issue on North Africa, Transition and Emerging Actors, Berber Movements, Gender Mobility and Social Activism *Studi Maghrebini*, 2016.

[37] For an excellent treatment of this campaign by a participant who is also a scholar specializing in Islamic-based law and women's rights, see Marwa Sharafeldin, "Islamic Law Meets Human Rights: Reformulating *Qiwamah* and *Wilayah* for Personal Status Law Reform Advocacy," pp. 163–196 in Mir-Hosseini et al, *Men in Charge?* On efforts of pioneering feminists in Egypt early last century, see Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation*, pp. 124–35.

[38] The term "beyond the veil" evokes the title of Fatima Mernissi's book, *Beyond the Veil: Male–female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society.* Cambridge, MA: Schenkmann, 1975; rev. ed., Bloomington IN: University of |Indiana Press, 1987.

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correct practice and aligning culture and the people with political Islam. (While the majority interpretation of the Qur'an holds that the hijab is required, there are interpretations to the contrary.)

By the time of the 2011 revolution, the hijab in the form of covering the head and hair had become standard wear. By then, however, the hijab had morphed into colorful, eye-catching headgear, often accompanied by tight jeans, among youth who had adapted it as a cultural expression of their own. The hijab had long ceased to be a show of affiliation to Islamism or an expression of modesty.

During the brief Islamist rule, when a reactionary form of Islam was raised to a high decibel level, religion was in the air and impassioned debates abounded. Now, in 2016, the country is 2 and a half years away from the end of the Islamist regime. The new feminism is penetrating, however gradually, more widely and deeply in society and culture. Islam away from ideology and politics provides solace in difficult times. If it is a do-it-yourself moment in feminism, it is a do-it-yourself moment in Islam. People are working out the religion for themselves or simply carrying on as they have been accustomed to do. Revolutionary youth are rebuilding lives of their own, including understanding Islam for themselves.

After the 1919 revolution there was a move to unveil (to remove the face cover); now some 4–5 years after the 2011 revolution, there is once again a move, however slow, to unveil (this time to remove the head cover). The first unveiling was accelerated by a consciously feminist impetus. The second unveiling is not emanating from an explicit feminist awareness and activism but rather is appearing at a moment when a spirit of feminism released by revolution is in the air among the young.

In Cairo I have recently observed that some women are removing the hijab. When I asked people from different walks of life and different parts of Cairo if they had noticed this, several replied in the affirmative. They heard that for some this resulted from experiencing Islamist rule. Others confided that they no longer associated veiling with religious practice and felt that they could be good Muslims without it. Still others related that the hijab had become not just meaningless but an encumbrance. Women are conveying both religious and secular arguments for unveiling. They are leaving veiling behind but not leaving Islam. In an article in *Ahram Online,* veteran journalist Hani Shukrallah notes the move to discard the hijab, asking in his title, "Are Egyptians now less Islamic?"[39] What is Islamic? Who gets to say? Egypt is moving once again back to "beyond the veil," and the feminist and culture revolutions carry on. Disobedience is creative. If the revolution is open ended, so is our understanding.

[39] Hani Shukrallah, "Are Egyptians now less 'Islamic'?" *Ahram Online*. May 14, 2015. On the new unveiling see Koert Debeuf, "Egypt's Quiet Social Revolution." *Democracy Lab.* Cairo, June 18, 2015.

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Chapter Five

Gendering the Egyptian Revolution

Dina Wahba

Abstract Based on the author's personal involvement as a young activist in the Egyptian revolution as well as engagement with various theoretical backings, this chapter explores the centrality of gender in the revolution that swept over the country. Gender is used as an analytical tool throughout the chapter and as a means to render the ups and downs of women's participation in the revolution. Hence, the chapter depicts how women's build-up to the revolution in terms of political mobilization developed into active participation in the making of this revolution through politicized activities and proximity activism, and how a counterrevolution using sexual harassment, virginity tests, and systematic violence against female protestors hindered the revolutionary process. This chapter is not merely a personal quest; it is also an attempt to use research to explore the Egyptian revolution from a feminist perspective.

Preamble This chapter was written in 2012. Since then many events have unfolded; I believe that I have become almost another person by now. However, for the sake of documenting a time of history and for capturing certain ideas and feelings that erupted during exceptional times, I leave the chapter as it is even if I am now in a different state of mind.

Introduction

How can you study when your country is going through a revolution? How is it possible to research, theorize, and synthesize when your mind, heart, and soul are somewhere else? This chapter was written with the voices of Tahrir Square in the background, whether via the Internet, telephone, social media, or my own physical presence there; these voices are the soundtrack to and inspiration for the words I write here.

I begin with an anecdote, or maybe several: the story of Samira Ibrahim, who stood in defiance of the military; the girl, Set el Banat (the best of girls), who was caught on camera being beaten by the military, igniting a massive demonstration; or perhaps even Asmaa Mahfouz, who made the now famous video calling for protest. Whosever story I tell, I also tell my own. This is my revolution, their revolution, our revolution. However, this chapter is not only about telling

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_5

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stories or narrating observations; it is about making sense out of the events I, and my country, have lived through over the past year. I chose gender studies because there are so many things that I have seen and experienced that did not make sense to me, and I wanted to understand and, perhaps, be able to explain.

I wanted to understand why I have always felt vulnerable walking the streets of Cairo. I wanted to understand why the streets never felt like they belonged to me. On that momentous day, January 25, 2011, I was scared of many things walking into Tahrir Square: thugs, police, men with beards, or maybe it was just men in general. During the 18 days of our revolution, I not only felt safe, but more importantly, I felt powerful. The square was an egalitarian and inclusive space; I felt I was accepted and that I belonged. However, this feeling did not last for long. After less than a month, in this same place where I had felt so welcome, I was shouted at and told to go away. This is exactly what I want to make sense of and what I focus on in this chapter. Why would I feel powerful on some days and vulnerable on others? How could 18 days of empowerment change what public spaces mean for women in Egypt?

This chapter is not merely a personal quest; it is also an attempt to explore a research question from a feminist perspective. In Harding's depiction of feminist research, she explains how research aims are closely linked to the origin of the research questions (1987, 8). In my quest for answers, I aim to contextualize women's presence in Tahrir Square and highlight the continuity of their participation in the revolution with the years of struggle that preceded this event. At the same time, I will also problematize women's role in the revolution.

This chapter aims to gender the Egyptian revolution of 2011, exploring the centrality of gender in this momentous event. I will break this topic down into two sections. The first one will gender the build-up to the revolution in terms of political mobilization. Here, I highlight the continuity of women's participation in both the political sphere and the Egyptian revolution in order to show how the 'surprise' related to women's mass presence in the nationwide protests was unfounded. I will also look at women's politicized activities. The second part aims to gender the revolutionary processes and examine the centrality of defying patriarchy in the toppling of the regime. Here, I also analyze literature that addresses the revolution in relation to gender issues, and I examine how much this event has or has not contested the prevailing gender regime. I then turn my lens to gendering the counterrevolution, emphasizing how issues such as sexual harassment, virginity tests, and systematic violence against female protesters are used to hinder the revolutionary process. Finally, I address the backlash against women's rights and the centrality of women in the ongoing struggle for Egyptian identity.

Theoretical Issues: Women, Nationalism, and Revolution

This chapter is based on theories that address the relation between feminism and nationalism with an eye on the Egyptian context. The ideas of scholars who have attempted to gender national processes are useful in my gendering

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of the Egyptian revolution, both conceptually and to help grasp the complex relationship between women and nationalism.

The relation between feminism and nationalism is very complicated in the Middle East, as women's rights movements in the region emerged either as a reaction to or grew out of nationalist projects (Baron 2005, 9). Badran explains how the Egyptian feminist movement arose because women were denied political rights after independence in 1922. Egyptian feminists realized early on that the push for women's rights was a separate battle from the nationalist struggle (Badran 1995, 207).

In *Secularism, Gender and the State in the Middle East*, Nadje al-Ali emphasizes how feminist causes within anti-imperial struggles have often been sacrificed for the sake of the nation (al-Ali 2000, 46). However, she also notes the points of convergence between nationalist and feminist projects, such as modernization plans that provide women with education and work opportunities. al-Ali refers to Beth Baron's account of Egypt in showing how feminism and nationalism have always been in conflict. She tends to agree with Baron's view that, despite women's participation in national struggles, nationalist leaders have bestowed very few rights on women. Al-Ali refers to the contradiction, highlighted by Baron, between women's mobilization in national struggles and their exclusion in the aftermath. al-Ali mentions that even though the Egyptian women's movement has its roots in nationalist and anti-imperialist movements, Egyptian feminists have long struggled against charges of collaborating with Western imperialism. She notes that many feminists have actually internalized this charge and have come to perceive feminism as a Western import (al-Ali 2000, 47). Taking into consideration the concepts presented above, one notices the resemblance between the nationalist projects in the post-colonial period and the current post-revolutionary redefinition of the state.

As for women and revolution, despite the fact that revolutions have occurred in very different historical periods, it is vital to draw lessons from their combined history. In *Woman, War & Revolution* (1980), various essays discuss the relation between revolutions and women in the Italian, Chinese, American, French, Russian, and Cuban contexts (Lovett and Berkin 1980). These essays examine the role of women prior to, during, and in the aftermath of revolutionary processes. In an attempt to integrate more contemporary and relevant literature on revolutions, I also reviewed the essays presented in *Gender and National Identity* (1994), which look at women in the context of the Algerian liberation struggle, the Iranian revolution, the Afghani revolution, and the Palestinian Intifadas. Although each context is highly specific, several commonalities may be summed up in the fact that women engage with both the opportunities and challenges of revolutions.

The "women question" seems to be essential to every revolutionary project (Moghadam 1994, 10). Gender issues are central to both the political and cultural aspects of movements, yet gender is often ignored in studies of revolution and nationalism (Moghadam 1994, 2). It is also clear that nationalist and revolutionary projects do not necessarily do justice to women's rights

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(Moghadam 1994, 2). Women's experiences are part of the contradiction between promises of change and attempts to maintain traditional roles (Lovett and Berkin 1980, 3). In all the revolutions and national struggles mentioned above, women participated actively; however, this participation did not lead to their subsequent emancipation or prevent their exclusion in post-revolution societies. The Algerian and the Iranian cases show how revolutionary goals differ from outcomes when it comes to women. In both cases, the fact that women played an integral role and participated actively did not translate into full participation in society (Lovett and Berkin 1980, 2). Male revolutionaries tend to cling to patriarchal values and discourage women's political activism, meaning that women, more often than not, are denied political opportunities (Lovett and Berkin 1980, 80).

Taking all this into consideration, one can raise the question of whether revolutions are necessarily good for women. Revolutions produce a double burden for women: they have to perform their traditional roles as well as the role of fighter or revolutionary. Nevertheless, women's participation in revolutions and liberation struggles may lead to the legitimization of feminist demands and provide women with greater leverage in demanding their rights, as they too have sacrificed for the nation.

Every revolutionary project attempts to break away from the former regime. One way to accomplish this is to promote a model of the "new woman" through the establishment of education, new family codes, or other measures that serve the political discourse. I believe it is vital to read the contemporary situation in Egypt in the light of the vast body of literature on women and nationalist projects. In this way, I will be able to draw conclusions that both highlight opportunities for political engagement to enhance the situation of women in Egypt and clarify some of the obstacles and predominant notions in relation to women's participation in the Egyptian revolution.

Methodology

The methodological approach used in this chapter is mainly based on content and discourse analysis of secondary sources, primary material that included interviews and participant observation, and personal experience. I interviewed five women and one man who participated in the Egyptian revolution. The interviews are useful in exposing how my participants view the challenges and opportunities presented by the revolution, as well as how they view the role of women and gender in the revolutionary and counterrevolutionary processes. In order to avoid the cliché answers, I did not interview high-profile activists or women's rights "professionals." Rather, I was interested in the personal experiences and opinions of young revolutionaries.

A post-colonial approach proves useful in studying gender and revolution, as women's rights and gender projects are related to the larger economic and political configurations of power (Abu-Lughod 1998, 4). Post-colonial

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theorists, such as Lila Abu-Lughod, emphasize how political moments and upheavals are significantly characterized by a preoccupation with gender roles (Abu-Lughod 1998, 4). In the post-colonial world, ideas about the "authentic woman" are vital (Abu-Lughod 1998, 18) and women become powerful symbols of nations. This is especially relevant in revolutionary times, when national identity is challenged and women become the markers of culture (Abu-Lughod 1998, 4). In relation to this research, my use of post-colonial theory has less to do with the relation between the "West" and Egypt and more to do with how this relation influenced national projects in Egypt and how women became central to the cultural demarcation against the West. I view the revolution and its aftermath as another national project through which Egyptians are reinventing themselves and contesting their national identity; post-colonial influences play a central role as women participate in the struggle to redefine or reassert this identity.

Gendering the Build-up

In this section, I show the continuum of women's political involvement, question what is considered "political" by activists (including myself), and highlight the role of women in the lead-up to the January 25 revolution. I argue that the relation between women and the revolution was not spontaneous or momentary. If women's presence in the mass protests during January and February 2011 took many people by surprise, it was because they had been blind to women's central role in defying the regime in the years prior to the revolution.

Women's presence in the public sphere—whether in the workplace, educational institutions, or even on the streets—may have contributed to the social mobilization needed for the revolution. Women's role in fostering alternative narratives and discourses directly challenged patriarchy through actions that might have seemed apolitical even to the women themselves.

The reason people do not see Egyptian women's public presence as activism could be due to the prevalent definition of politics in Egypt as only "high politics." Politics is defined in terms of joining a political party or participating in a "formal" institution, even though people adopt other forms of resistance under an authoritarian regime. Thus, I believe it is important to challenge the predominant definition of politics and opt for other definitions that include ways in which women and men challenge authoritarianism in Egypt.

Women's Participation in the Public Sphere: Fostering Subaltern Counter-publics

The issue of redefining politics and informal political activity leads us to women's participation in civil society. Civil society is a more inclusive sphere and a place to seek change outside of formal politics. Nancy Fraser (1992) notes that as women are excluded from the public sphere, they react by creating their own spheres, which she terms "subaltern counter-publics." Subaltern

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counter-publics are discursive arenas that operate as an alternative to the hegemonic ideology (Fraser 1992). I believe that this concept is very useful when examining women's role in defying the authoritarian regime in Egypt. Nadje al-Ali writes that the women's movement in Egypt, by challenging the dominant discourses, can become a democratizing power (al-Ali 1997, 174). Organized women's groups pose a threat to the ultimate patriarch, the head of the state, who is seen as the head of the national family (Rabo and Chatty 1997, 17); indeed the very existence of women's organizations challenges this patriarchal order (Moghadam 1997, 43).

I argue that women's participation and activism in the public sphere helped produce alternative narratives that were central to defying patriarchy and triggering social transformation in Egypt. Despite their systematic exclusion, women have been active in reshaping the public sphere in the Middle East and North Africa. As film directors, journalists, publishers, magazine editors, and members of organizations and research groups, women are producing alternative narratives that challenge gender norms in their societies: "They are creating alternative discursive spaces where it is possible to redefine patriarchal gender roles while questioning the socio-cultural, economical, political, and legal institutions constraining them" (Skalli 2006, 36).

Women in the Streets: Offsetting the "Baltagi-effect"

In this section, I explore the role of women who take to the streets and participate in demonstrations. Paul Amar believes that some of the accomplishments of the Egyptian revolution can be attributed to the feminist activists who mobilized assertive women's subjectivities, reminding us that waves of political protests and strikes had been growing in Egypt in the years before the revolution, and he notes that feminist groups had become central to protest movements (Amar 2011a, 307). The Egyptian state's response to those protests was to attempt to delegitimize them through recruiting thugs (*baltagia*) to mix with protesters, shout extremist chants in order to make activists look like "terrorists," or beat civilians and damage property in the area of the protest. These practices created what Amar calls "the baltagi-effect," which was intended to generate images for domestic and international media. Protesters were portrayed as angry mobs of vulgar men or "Islamists." In response to the baltagi-effect, Egyptian feminists made plans to publicly counter these images. Several Egyptian organizations realized that having "respectable" (i.e., upper-middle-class) women in mass protests could have a key symbolic effect (Amar 2011, 309). Indeed, the inclusion of women in mass protests before, during, and after the Egyptian revolution has been crucial and strategic. The presence of women in the streets might have offset the baltagi-effect and legitimized street protests.

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Gendering the Revolutionary Process

In this section, I address the centrality of gender issues in the revolutionary process. By examining the relation between challenging patriarchy and defying an authoritarian regime, I will look at the ways in which masculinity in Egypt is being redefined.

Rupture: Crisis in the Gender Order

It was evident from the first day of protests that something extraordinary, a departure from the status quo, was happening in January of 2011. Hanan Sabea describes it as a "time out of time," a "rupture" from the familiar that allows us to envision another possibility of being social and political (Sabea 2012). In her vision, "isqat el-nizam" (calling for the downfall of the regime) signaled a departure from the familiar; it was not only the removal of the ruler that was sought, but rather the removal of systems of oppression, be they economic, social, or political. The revolutionary process opens the door to achieving the impossible. Sabea's words resonate perfectly with my own experience during the 18 days of the Egyptian revolution; it was everything we were used to and yet nothing like we had experienced before. Tahrir's exceptionalism opened our eyes to the possibilities of what life in Egypt could be.

Thus, this rupture inspired many hopeful people to write articles about what could come out of this revolution in terms of a restructuring of the gender order. Hania Sholkamy describes the revolution as a disengagement from the status quo, even if only for a short time. She believes that during those 18 days, the revolution was not gendered and everyone participated equally; she even describes the revolution as "gender neutral."

Margot Badran (2011) writes about the emergence of a new kind of feminism in Egypt. According to her, the youth-led revolution, with its calls for freedom and social justice, was inherently feminist in that it upheld feminist ideals of equality, freedom, and justice, even though the word "feminism" was not used. Badran believes that this kind of feminism was "embedded" in the revolution. Whether revolutionaries call themselves feminists is beside the point; the important thing is that they practice and demand the ideals of feminism. I agree with Badran that equality and justice for women should be seen as part of the wider struggle for freedom and justice. This is why various feminists and women's rights activists participated actively in the Egyptian revolution. However, what followed those 18 days showed that feminism was not so embedded in the Egyptian revolution after all. I find the idea of feminism being embedded within the slogans of the Egyptian revolution interesting for two reasons. The first is that it highlights the centrality of defying patriarchal norms in the Egyptian revolution; and the second is that it signals a crisis in the gender order, fueled by this rupture, which may have led to the imagining of prospects of justice and equality for all. Badran believes that the protesters called for an end to all kinds of inequality and an overthrow of the patriarchal

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hierarchy. Badran and Sabea's interpretation of the main slogan of the revolution, "isqat el-nizam," is that it challenged the social and political order. Patriarchy is at the heart of both; thus, in the next section, I will explore the ways in which the revolution defied patriarchy.

Defying the Regime, Defying Patriarchy

To begin, it is useful to consider the relation between the political system and patriarchy in Egypt. In Hisham Sharabi's view, patriarchy is a political and economic system, a discourse and a practice (Sharabi 1992, 83). He believes that modern Arab state systems can be considered neo-patriarchal states. Building on Sharabi's ideas, Moghadam (2004) advances neo-patriarchy as the result of the fusion between modernity and tradition in post-colonial Arab states within the framework of dependent capitalism, or what she calls "modernized patriarchy" (Moghadam 2004, 148). As the values that govern social relations are patriarchal values of kinship, a conflict exists between "modernized" societies, the family, and state structures, according to Moghadam. In the neo-patriarchal state, the father is the dominant figure both within the family and at the state level. In this context, only a vertical relationship exists between the ruler and the ruled, between the father and the child; the paternal will is the ultimate will (Sharabi 1992, 7). Women and young men, in their defiance of the old patriarch, played a central role in ousting Husni Mubarak. Defying patriarchy was to stand in direct opposition to the oppressive state.

However, this is not to overemphasize the role of the revolution in challenging patriarchy; the so-called "patriarchal bargain" had been in crisis for years before this moment. Sherine Hafez (2012) provides an interesting account of Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of the patriarchal bargain with regard to the revolutionary process. The power of the older patriarch stems from his abilities to provide for and control the members of the group. Nevertheless, as Kandiyoti notes (1988, 281), the material basis of the bargain had been collapsing in the face of capitalism and neo-liberal economic policies. Moghadam (2004, 157) adds that increased levels of women's education and employment had also challenged the legitimacy of "classic patriarchy." In the context of Egypt, Hafez looks at the preconditions for the breakdown of classic patriarchy, as outlined by Kandiyoti (1988). Among these conditions are the emergence of a new consumer culture and the dismantling of the extended family due to economic policies that Mubarak's regime had been implementing prior to the revolution (Hafez 2012, 38). Through repression and a failure to provide for the basic needs of the people, the regime disrupted the patriarchal bargain. According to Hafez, the economic situation that led many men to fail in providing for their households coupled with the oppressive nature of the regime undermined masculinity to such an extent that a shift in gender norms occurred (Hafez 2012, 39). Hafez's account is very insightful because it builds on and contextualizes Kandiyoti's (1988) notion of the patriarchal bargain.

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Hafez not only ascribes the changing gender roles to the 18 days of revolution, she also highlights the many preceding years of socio-economic transformation that led to the crisis of the legitimacy of patriarchy. She describes a scene from Tahrir Square, when men and women raised their shoes to protest Mubarak's final speech, in which he appealed to the protesters as a patriarch to his children. She believes that this symbolic act was the ultimate insult to the older patriarch. According to Hafez, this moment symbolized the end of the benevolent patriarch myth and thus signaled the end of the patriarchal bargain. In her view, the social consciousness of the people was changed forever (Hafez 2012, 39).

The Egyptian revolution heightened the already existing crisis in patriarchy. Nevertheless, as Connell (2001, 45) discusses, a disruption in the gender order does not necessarily lead to a move toward a more progressive agenda; it can also push people to rally behind restoring the patriarchal order. Looking at the events that unfolded after the 18 days of protest, I fail to see this complete breakdown in the myth of patriarchy that Hafez envisions. This may be due to the status of masculinity.

Redefining Masculinity

Any disruption in the patriarchal hierarchy and gender order implicates masculinity. Indeed, the majority of articles written about the "Arab Spring" refer to the role of masculinity in the revolts. The revolution came as a surprise to those who were unaware of events taking place in Egypt prior to those 18 days. The international media attempted to provide ad hoc explanations for the nationwide protests that erupted seemingly all of a sudden. Paul Amar (2011, 37) reviews some of these explanations and finds that most of them focused on the "crisis of Arab masculinity." The international media, in Amar's opinion, attributed the uprising of Arab youth to their sexual frustration and failure to fulfill their manhood due to socio-economic conditions (Amar 2011, 37). In her account of masculinity in Egypt, Annie Rebekah Gardner (2011) attributes rampant sexual harassment in Egypt to youth frustration and discusses how this frustration was transferred to the oppressive regime during the revolution. The same ideas flooded newspapers and were adopted by various analysts in relation to the Arab Spring.

I believe that Connell's views on masculinity are useful in understanding the "masculinity crisis" in the context of a disruption in the wider gender order. Connell (2001, 34) believes that masculinity is merely a configuration in the larger system of gender relations; therefore, it is not a crisis of masculinity that is at stake, but instead a crisis precipitates a transformation or disruption in masculinity within the entire gender order. Hafez, in accepting Connell's assertion that the patriarchal bargain is crumbling, believes that there is a reconstruction of masculinity happening in Egypt (2012, 40). She builds on Connell's account (1995) of the four kinds of masculinity: hegemonic, complicitous, marginalized, and subordinated. Hafez believes that young, marginalized Egyptian men, who have the least access to patriarchal

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benefits, attempt to differentiate themselves from females and assert their masculinity in the most extreme ways; women become easy victims in such men's attempts to compensate for their emasculation (Hafez 2012, 40). On the other hand, Kandiyoti (1994) draws a different conclusion: she believes that disenfranchised males, including Egyptian youth, will support women's rights in the rebellion against patriarchy. Subordinated masculinity contests the older patriarch by embodying a pro-feminist attitude (Kandiyoti, 197–198). Gardner believes that what it means to be a "man" in Egypt is changing, and a new order of masculinity is emerging out of the Egyptian revolution. The fact that women called on men to participate and be "men" throughout the revolution signals a reconstruction of Egyptian masculinity. This resonates with my own experience of the march organized to denounce military violence against women and support the "blue bra girl," who was stripped of her clothes and beaten on December 20, 2011. References to manhood were used to encourage men to participate; "real" men were those who were already there. Classic patriarchal notions of manhood were chanted, but they were also subverted. Real manhood was instantly redefined. The real man is not the one who keeps "his" woman at home; rather, he is the one who stands beside her in defiance of the older patriarch, represented by the army in this case. What happened after the revolution? This may be explored through gendering the counterrevolution.

Gendering the Counterrevolution

Writings on gender in the aftermath of the revolution have centered mostly on the backlash against women's rights and the marginalization of women. This backlash continues violence against women, and the rigorous attempts to restore gender norms show how central gender issues are to counterrevolutionary processes. Restricting the Egyptian revolution to only political change rather than allowing it to lead to a total transformation of the political, social, and economic order requires maintenance of the patriarchal system. I discussed earlier the centrality of defying patriarchy in the toppling of the regime; thus, following the same logic, maintaining the patriarchal system ensures a continuation of the same political culture that puts older men at the top of the hierarchy, over youth, women, and other marginalized sectors of society.

Restoring Balance

As previously argued, the revolutionary process caused a rupture that challenged the already fragile gender order. Hence, a need quickly arose to restore the gender order after the 18 days of revolution and the ousting of Mubarak.

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Violence is one way to restore the gender order and reassert the system of domination (Connell 2001, 44). According to Connell, escalating violence is itself a sign of a crisis in the gender order; if the order had legitimacy, it would not need intimidation to assert itself. This is clearly the case in Egypt, as violence against women has escalated since those 18 days. According to Connell, the violence used by the privileged group to assert its dominance ranges from sexual harassment to rape and murder. Women in Egypt suffered from sexual harassment, forced virginity tests, and aggressive beatings by security forces in the aftermath of the protests. I would add to Connell's assertion that it is not only men who use violence against women to emphasize their dominance and maintain the status quo; counterrevolutionary forces also use violence to stifle revolutionaries and ensure that the revolution provides only limited political gains.

It was on March 8, 2011, that the problems of gender injustices resurfaced. On this day, several women activists and women's rights groups called for a demonstration in Tahrir Square to commemorate International Women's Day. I participated in this event along with several friends; we were met with aggression and hostility. Less than a month after the revolution, this was the first real attempt to reassert gender norms and reaffirm the status quo. According to Hania Sholkamy (2012), there was more than one protest around Tahrir Square that day, but the women's march was the only one that met with harassment and intimidation. Sholkamy speaks about the hostility women protesters faced on that day and how they were told not to demonstrate and return to the kitchen. Women were told very clearly: you are no longer needed; go back to your ascribed gender role. Zainab Magdy (2012) notes that once those 18 days were over, "women became women again" and the gender hierarchy was hastily restored. However, Magdy also points out that whenever the revolutionary momentum was revived, "women became Egyptian" again. She brilliantly describes the fluid changes in gender roles within the revolutionary process. Because of women's continuing activism, attempts to restore gender norms escalated to systematic violence against revolutionaries and women. An infamous example of this is forced virginity testing.

Virginity Tests: Countering the Revolution Through Gender-based Violence

On March 9, 2011, the military violently ended a protest in Tahrir Square, detained several women, and subjected them to virginity tests. When army officials were questioned about this incident, they replied that the women were "not like our daughters" because they had slept alongside men in the streets during the revolutionary protests. In other words, these women had not adhered to socially accepted gender norms and were not respectable, and so men in power had the authority to do as they pleased. Parastou Hassouri (2011) explains that the army's use of sexual violence against

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women activists was meant to humiliate and discredit them, as well as to reaffirm that honorable women do not gather on the streets and do not protest. The message was that fathers, brothers, and husbands should not allow "their women" to protest and compromise their and their families' honor.

One of the women subjected to virginity testing, Samira Ibrahim, filed a lawsuit against the army, a move that Khaled Fahmy (2012) declares the most important event of 2011 in Egypt. Fahmy explains that Ibrahim's lawsuit upheld one of the main goals of the revolution: human dignity and women's right to bodily integrity. According to Paul Amar (Amar 2011, 309), using sexual violence to discredit women activists is not new. During the Mubarak era, sexual assault was used to sexualize women protesters and compromise their respectability.

A protest was called to denounce the virginity tests and other human rights violations against protesters. I witnessed this protest. Unlike the one held on March 8, more men participated and for the first time chanted against sexual assault. In the aftermath of the army's aggression against women activists, women who participated in the revolution found more solidarity and support. Women's claims were increasingly seen as legitimate and were brought within the framework of the revolution and its voicing of dissent against the military. I believe that supporting women was conflated at this point with supporting the revolution against the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the symbol of counterrevolution, and this is why more solidarity with women was shown.

Women's Demonstration (December 20): Defying Patriarchy and the Counterrevolution

Magdy emphasizes that women went out on December 20, 2011, to both denounce the injustices against them and demand an end to military rule (2012). This implies that fighting for women and with women against military violations was seen as upholding revolutionary goals and defying counter-revolutionary forces. I witnessed the demonstration on this day, when thousands of women took to the streets of downtown Cairo and brought traffic to a halt. It was like nothing I had ever seen before. The women were angry and frustrated by attacks on women activists and by military violations in general. They were protesting against the patriarchal values embodied by the military. The chants were gendered and played with subverting the notions of honor and manhood.

Counterrevolutionary forces are not limited to SCAF, those affiliated with the previous regime, or the state security system; there are also societal forces that want to maintain the status quo. As social revolution entails challenging the patriarchal gender order, the Egyptian revolution needs to expand beyond mere cosmetic changes to the ruling elite. Gender issues and women's rights must be taken as part and parcel of this process.

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Conclusion

I started the research embodied in this chapter under the assumption that the Egyptian revolution had empowered women and opened up spaces and opportunities for them. I was unaware that looking through a "gender lens" would unravel as much about the Egyptian revolution as it would about gender dynamics.

Why Does Gender Analysis Matter?

Since January 25, 2011, the situation in Egypt has been chaotic and changing. Things shift at a speed that no one seems able to cope with and more questions are raised than answers found. Other researchers working on the Egyptian revolution ask me questions: Have the Islamists really changed? Is Egypt becoming democratic? They want to know about the elections and the human rights situation. They are perplexed by the whole political situation. The topics that others find problematic seem much simpler to me when I look at them through a gendered lens.

Nadje al-Ali argues that to understand the women's movement in Egypt and women's struggle in general, one must relate it to wider debates (1997, 174). She mentions secularism and minorities, Westernization and modernity, and the nature of civil society. When I first read her work at the start of my research, I could not have agreed more. Now, I am finding it difficult to analyze or understand any issues in Egypt without looking through a gender lens. From identity politics, nationalism, and Orientalism, to the agenda of political Islam, all of these issues implicate gender and are better explained through a gender-sensitive approach. What it means to be an Egyptian man or woman is being reinvented every day. The revolution has brought up so many issues that are now being discussed, challenged, debated, and asserted; among them is gender order.

Why Does the Revolution Need Women?

My research has led me to believe that women fueled the revolution. Women's struggle can be seen as a continuum: women who were involved in prior social and political struggles participated in the Egyptian revolution and continue to fight for their spaces; they remain central to the ongoing revolution. The Egyptian revolution is at a junction; it can either turn into a social revolution or be limited to cosmetic political change. Dismantling the patriarchal structure is crucial to achieving the radical social and political transformation worthy of the name "revolution." Women who continue to defy patriarchy by offsetting the baltagi-effect, producing alternative discourses, and fostering subaltern counter-publics are vital to the realization of this goal. Moreover, granting women their rights and adopting progressive policies toward them is crucial to achieving social justice, one of the fundamental goals of the revolution. Unfortunately, I doubt this will happen under the current president

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(Muhammad Morsi). Countering the revolution through exclusion of women and youth and maintenance of the same political culture and patriarchal hierarchy has led to what we see unfolding in Egypt: a "democracy" of ballot boxes and a "democratically" elected government that does not uphold the fundamental goals of the revolution.

Old Debates and New Approaches

Throughout the research that fed this chapter, it became apparent that issues such as identity politics, secularism, Orientalism, and nationalism are still very present in Egypt. I argue that different approaches are needed to clarify the Egyptian reality. Scholars tend to marginalize women, confine political activity to the political elite and formal politics, study the Middle East through political Islam, and marginalize secular voices (al-Ali 2000, 25). The Egyptian revolution has complicated all these notions. Gender-sensitive analysis can help us explore these issues and find out whether there is an opportunity for moving toward a more inclusive trend in scholarship in the wake of the "Arab Spring." What I have tried to do here is offer a different lens through which to look at events; I have added gender to political analysis in order to explain change.

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Chapter Six

The Lipstick on the Edge of the Well: Mauritanian Women and Political Power (1960–2014)[1]

Céline Lesourd

Abstract Centering the Mauritanian case, this chapter highlights two distinct realities that characterize the equation between woman and politics: the strength of their commitment and ability to have a voice, on the one hand, and the limited place and minor role they are granted within institutions of power, on the other hand. This "paradox" is explained by a second paradox: women's passage from the backstage to the stage in politics qualifies less as an argument of gender equality "in progress"—one of the trappings of democracy—than as a strategy of a patronage power seeking to maintain itself by manipulating at all costs the individualistic tendencies of female political and economic actors, who are also in search of opportunities for success. It is this "trap" that precludes women from scoring real gains that would allow them to fully assert themselves on an equal basis with men and have a genuine impact on politics.

Women at the Meeting

An immense wasteland. Deafening music. A colossal scene. Blinding projectors. A crowd of onlookers mingles at the meeting point of militants. Dozens of Land Cruisers and other luxury sport utility vehicles seek to come closer to the center of action. Drivers honk their horns and young women shout, waving posters of the veil. Some motion wildly from the back of pick-ups. All of them wear light purple veils [*mlehfa*], the color of the candidate who will soon become president. Some of them wear caps with photos of the candidate; others, the most coquettish, have

[1]Translated from French into English by Fatima Sadiqi

The title is reminiscent of the imaginary-based *Baydhan* [Moor] that "serious" conversations—including political ones—are related to the well, the typically masculine space, while most trivial discussions are related to the tent, the female space. I would like to warmly thank Fatima Sadiqi and Kelley Sams for the translation. Céline Lesourd, anthropologist, French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), Marseille.

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_6

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> swapped the official headgear for a purple scarf that they tie on their head in the manner of a pirate, or more likely an RnB star. The security guards, overwhelmed, are regretful about having to use their authority to maintain order. "A woman's idea," comments a friend later on referring to the color of the guards' ties. The place is invaded by young girls, young women, and older ladies. Activists. And those pretending to be. Some laugh. Others sing. They discuss. In a space, in an instant … Nouakchott blushes.[2]

Since Mauritania's independence in 1960, women have had an undeniable presence in the political life of the country. Their engagement and will to act are acknowledged by everyone, as is their determination to have a place in debates. However, their weak insertion into the spheres of decision-making is also well known in spite of a multiplication of discourses supporting women and the enactment in the 1990s of laws for the "promotion of women to electoral mandates and election functions" (2006).[3]

Thus, two distinct realities characterize the equation between women and politics in Mauritania: the strength of women's commitment and their ability to have a voice versus the limited place and minor role they are actually granted within institutions of power. If, during the last 50 years, female citizens have gradually but undeniably been given the opportunity to leave their tents and go to the well—and this is proven by the statistics of the evolution of their representation—I believe that the fact of imposing women on politics urges us to look at the opposite issue: that of imposing politics on women. On which women? To serve what objectives? The passage of women from backstage to the stage qualifies less as an argument of gender equality "in progress"—one of the trappings of democracy—than as a strategy of a patronage power seeking to maintain itself by manipulating at all costs the individualistic tendencies of female political and economic actors, who are also in search of opportunities for success.

This chapter is partly based upon research that was undertaken as part of a postdoctoral project examining the trajectories of the political and economic elite in Mauritania from independence until 2008. Ethnographic data collection was conducted by the author and included in-depth observation as well as semi-structured interviews with over 100 participants (male and female former ministers and members of parliament, political party members, and women and men active in civil society). The results of this research are presented here, contextualized and updated by additional observations and interviews conducted in Mauritania in 2013–2014.

When Women Speak Out

Women in the Campaign

> The female activists sleep in after debating and moving around the city late into the night on the lookout for electoral trends … while male activists get up early,

[2] Fieldwork notes, Nouakchott, March 2007.

[3] This is the 2006-029 Ordinance, soon renamed by everyone as the "female quota law."

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> or at least earlier, after a long night of meeting in various public spaces of Nouakchott. They gather at breakfast to hear, share, discuss the news of the previous evening, predict nominations, or improvise political analyses. In late afternoon, after managing the household affairs (the driver needs to pick up the kids at school, snacks for "political" visitors need to be provided ...), some female activists put on their most beautiful purple veils [*boubous*] to start the door-to-door campaign to convince those who are still hesitant. They give promises, count, and toil to persuade voters while going from house to house ... They participate in private meetings, keep track of this or that press conference ... Who rallied who ... They pass on the news to relatives and friends ... The telephone network is saturated, just like the paved streets of Nouakchott. Banners, posters, garlands, tents, music, cars painted with the colors of a candidate ... The city celebrates the campaign. Elections are also an opportunity for entertainment ... for men and for women.[4]

This female Moorish "militancy" is not new. In tribal battles and other internal disputes, women encourage men in combat and participate in fighting through an exchange of poetry, including lullabies [*t'mari*], in which they boast of the courage of their men and the cowardice of their opponents. Since the birth of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, this female dynamic has not disappeared.

In 1958, two political parties came into conflict over the future of independent Mauritania. The colonial territories of sub-Saharan Africa, governed by the "Framework Law" since 1957, prepared for the autonomization process. They constituted a Franco-African community in pursuit of the adoption of a constitution. This constitution was to be ratified through a referendum by the "people of France." Mauritanians were divided. Those supporting and those opposing the constitution launched a tense campaign leading up to the consultation planned for September 28, 1958. The members of the PRM (Mauritanian Republican Party) advocated acceptance of the constitution, in contrast to the al-Nahda (Renaissance) movement that opposed acceptance. In the campaign in support of the constitution, the PRM, led by Mokhtar Ould Daddah, tried to mobilize their countrymen, but their mostly successful efforts were hindered by a pocket of resistance in Adrar, a regional stronghold of the al-Nahda. To sway their compatriots the Emir [prince] of Adrar and many local figures entered the campaigning process; among them was a female trader and an activist of the PRM:

> Mokeltoum traveled between Adar and Chinguetti to campaign for Mokhtar [Ould Daddah]. She set up a campaign as women do today. She met people, went to their homes [...] She explained that they should vote yes. She was very supportive of Mokhtar [...] She proved to be a popular woman there, and had strong ability to convince [...] She was a trader and a politician [...] She was truly a great lady. (Lesourd 2010, 2014)

[4] Fieldwork notes, Nouakchott, March 2007.

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The women's movement in Mauritania emerged after independence in 1960, but it had little social impact. The UFM (Union of Mauritanian Women) was born in 1964 under the influence of the French wife of the president of the republic (Marie-Thérèse Daddah) and became the (National Women's Movement) in 1966. This movement, promoted by the First Lady in 1961, was constituted of "unemployed" young mothers and offered courses in child care, nutrition, and civic education of illiterate women.

> She began her social work early, first with the few female inhabitants of the capital, then with those of Ksar [the old urban center], who belonged to all social strata of the country. Then gradually this educational activity was extended to the entire country, especially since 1964, with the development of the Mauritanian People's Party. (Ould Daddah 2003, 177)

This group then joined the PRM (the government party), and all women's groups were integrated into a formal movement called the UMF (Mauritanian Women's Union). These associations flourished quickly because they were composed mainly of the wives of wealthy men and political leaders. However, the margins of maneuver for the UMF movement were reduced because the single party could not for political reasons disagree with religious conservatives who were not in favor of women's demands. Consequently, the women's movement failed to reach the countryside [*badiyya*]. The discourse of these female activists did not echo outside the capital; in fact, it did not even reach the urban Haalpular and Soninké women, since these groups disagreed with the fight against polygamy, one of the movement's main demands.[5] With respect to his wife's disputed political engagement, President Daddah writes:

> Some of the assumed responsibilities of Mariem [or Marie-Thérèse, his wife] involved particularly sensitive areas for us: the evolution of women and ideology, domains that remain close enough when they are not intermingled with. Hence the reluctance—if not hostility—that she met with. So much so that in addressing these issues, she started with two specific handicaps: her origin and being a woman. But in our country, one hundred percent Muslim and conservative in its quasi-totality, a woman should not take an active interest in an area reserved for men: politics […] In this context, what a "bombshell" it was when Mariem began to speak of the necessary evolution of women, promotion of women through labor, and generalized education for girls. (Ould Daddah 2003, 178)

Despite this partial failure, which the former president and his wife attribute to the difficulty of promoting women in a country like Mauritania, other women's movements started to emerge in parallel, and some achieved great popular success. They constituted successive movements of female opposition to the central powers. In 1961, pro-Moroccan members of the al-Nahda Party,

[5] The Moorish women [*Baydhaniyat*] refuse polygamy, which is not the case for other Mauritanian women belonging to so-called "Negro-Mauritanian" communities, namely the Haalpulars, the Soninkés, and the Wolofs.

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banned in the aftermath of independence, went underground and demanded the organization of new elections. During this period, the new Islamic Republic of Mauritania had to stand up to the territorial claims of Morocco. Many opponents of Ould Daddah went into exile in the Sharifian kingdom of Morocco. Against this backdrop of unrest and distrust, women invested in politics and expressed their political preferences, disapproval, and anger through chanting poetry and lullabies [t'mari] in which they addressed social issues. This is a genuine feminine political expression.

Through their poems, women rose as genuine political agents and addressed pertinent political issues. The production of lullabies, which, as their name suggests, were intended to rock babies to slumber, used small children not as the subject of the songs but as a pretext for political demands. A soothing balm, t'mari were a female outlet.[6] At this tumultuous time, the baydhaniyyat mocked the oppression that targeted opponents. They also rejected exile, denunciation, military surveillance, and lack of freedom. "Ever since, harmless and seen as frivolous or irrelevant texts, lullabies reached the rank of political dignity to the point of being banned by the political power" (Z. Ould Ahmed Salem 1995, 780). It was through the same process that women in the 1970s expressed their opinions and participated in the new struggle. As genuine political actors, it was through songs that they conveyed kaddihin[7] ideas. Some of the revolutionary demands were indeed granted, including the revision of economic agreements between France and Mauritania, the nationalization of the mining company MIFERMA (which became SNIM), the creation of a national currency (*ouguiya*), the creation of a central bank, and the end of a one-party system. Here is an example of such poems:

My son of mine, this excellent boy
He promotes dialogue here
He boasts national unity
In a national front
Here is the program
That he strongly advocates
He calls for freedom of thought
And freedom of expression
He also has a main claim
That of freedom of association
My son of mine, this valorous one
He claims the nationalization of iron
He also wants to quickly
End our misery

(Cited by Z. Ould Ahmed Salem 1995, 784)

[6] It should be noted that the women in question were mainly Moorish, relatively young, and lived mostly in Nouakchott and in some inland cities such as Nouadhibou, Zouerate, Tidjikja, and Magta Lahjar.

[7] This was a clandestine Maoist protest movement driven by students and trade unions, whose members made up the Party of Mauritanian Kaddihin.

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This "rhymed verse guerrilla" (Ould Ahmed Salem, 1995, 785) was accompanied by covert actions that led some women to prison. In this regard, Meïnatou a female activist recalls:

> I hid leaflets under my veil, here on my stomach […] I went from house to house: information and the leaflets had to circulate. Leaflets and newspapers had to move across Mauritania, and reach the prisoners […] Even when I traveled to Laayoune, I carried them with me […] We were many women to support kaddihin in Tidjikja […] We were well organized but we had no means and we were watched very closely by the police […] There were even kaddihin moms whose husbands were in the secret information service! Moms were muzzled, women were covered with gasoline; they wanted to scare them. Some suffered so much […] Kaddihin was a personal choice; family had nothing to do with it, not like now.

Almost 30 years later, just a few days before the first round of presidential elections in March of 2007, the same Meïnatou supported Ould Maouloud and voted for him:

> It's true, he is a relative, we are from the same region. But I voted for him because this is the old politics, a genuine party for equality that gathers all Mauritanians. It's just like kaddihin […] He is a former member of the party; an old underground. He wants equality between men and women, equality between blacks and whites […] This is the kaddihin, the same thing.

During this interview, another woman, Aisha, spoke; she was a high school student in the 1970s and supported the then party of Maouloud, but more than 30 years later, the front of her house features two huge posters of Zeine Ould Zeidane: "He is a young candidate. He has ideas. Otherwise, if he was not there, I would have voted Maouloud, but Zein has more chance, Inshallah." It is in these terms that Mauritanian women can express themselves in politics. "Of course women are in politics!" They participate, advocate, get interested, invest. Their opinion is respected, heard, considered. Their opinions have sometimes put them in danger and brought them great humiliation. Mauritanian women have a way of doing politics in the feminine, using speech channels of their own. The female role is primarily to "say," to "circulate," to "hold," to "phone," to "visit homes," to distribute leaflets.

> With this campaign, I am at home, in the market. There are constantly people who walk by, departures to interior regions that constantly bring drivers here. This is the HQ. Can you imagine the pain it takes to prepare everything? To always be available. And the door-to-door in the evening. Me, I am tired with all this, I hope we will win.

But rare are women who go on from the campaign to take on positions of political power …

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Women on the Political Stage

Women started to enter the corridors of state power toward the end of the 1980s, a period during which the first feminist discourses began to flourish. Departments to which they had access were confined to two specific areas: health and the status of women. An order established in 2006 by the military government of transition mandated a numerical increase in women's participation in local and national decision-making positions. Women could access the position of councilor, but rarely that of mayor. Some women, mostly Moorish, had higher-level positions, but these remained tailored to fit "appropriate" female roles.

Small Political Steps to Promote Women

By the late 1960s, some female citizens could access the highest ranks of the Mauritanian People's Party. The strong presence of President Ould Daddah's wife was perhaps behind this. But the first woman minister was appointed only in 1975: Aïssata Kane, a Haalpular Brakna woman, who was responsible for the Ministry of Social Affairs.

After the military coup of July 10, 1978, successive governments did not include women until 1986. As President Mouaouiya Ould Taya said in a speech in Néma on March 5, 1986:

> All citizens (male and female) became players in Mauritania's national future, especially women, given the impact they have on children as the ones primarily responsible for their education and as the guardians of social values. For this, and as prescribed by our Holy Religion Islam, women must assimilate and take on the demands of the new productive society and get rid of all social barriers that have hindered the progress of our people now free and egalitarian. Mauritanian women, just like Mauritanian men, have the right to education, work, responsibility [...] This is the political will of the national leadership.

That same year Khadijetou Mint Ahmed, a former director of the Central Bank, was appointed Minister of Mines and Industry. She remained in this function until 1991. In 1991, Aicha Mariem Mint Ahmed became Secretary of State for the Status of Women and held the post until a cabinet reshuffle on January 5, 1995. She was the only woman in the government at the time. Another woman then took her position: Seniya Mint Sidi Haiba. Between 1986 and 1995, during which eight ministerial teams held office, these three were the sole representatives of Mauritanian women despite the president's call in Néma. Three years later, on November 17, 1998, after five more cabinet reshuffles, two women appeared on the list of nominations: Khadijetou Mint Boubou was appointed Secretary of State in Charge

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of Civil Status, and Mintata Mint Hedeïd became head of the Secretariate of the Status of Women. On August 4, 2000, Fatimetou Mint Mohamed Saleck was assigned Secretary of the Development of New Technologies, a department affiliated with the Prime Minister's office. The newcomer joined her two colleagues and thus increased the number of female secretaries of state.

Between 2000 and 2005, a total of seven women held various governmental positions: Ba Diyyé, head of the Department of Health and Social Issues; Salka Mint Bilal Ould Yamar, Minister of Public Service and Employment; Fatimetou Saleck Mint Ahmed, Minister of New Technologies; Naha Mint Mouknass,[8] Advisor to the President; Aïchatou Mint M'Haiham and Zeinabou Naha Ahmed, Secretaries of State for the Status of Women; and Elbetrigha Mint Kaber, who succeeded Mint Ahmed Saleck as Secretary of State at the Department of New Technologies. Thus, in 45 years (including 15 years of active promotion of women), successive governments mobilized only 14 women, and only in positions thought to be appropriate for women (status of women, health, marital status, civil service, and youth).[9]

Even in the PRDS (The Democratic and Social Republican Party, the party of former President Taya), a few months before the coup of 2005, the program of political advancement of women was without results. In the absence of any records of the numbers of male and female party adherents, or even of gender-based distribution of political posts, all one can do is assess the access of women to key positions within the party. The Secretary General (Boulah ould Mogueye) was a man; the congress that elected the executive office members had seven women out of 67 members (10 % female representation); and the same executive office had three women out of 13 members. No woman was

[8] Naha Mint Mouknass, Advisor to the President, is the first woman to lead a political party in Mauritania. Daughter of Hamdi Ould Mouknass (former Minister of Foreign Affairs under Ould Daddah rule), Naha Mint Mouknass was elected to succeed her father as head of the party in 2000. With Louisa Hanoune, she is, to our knowledge, one of the few women to have access to such a responsibility in the region. In Morocco, Nabila Mounib heads a leftist party.

[9] Aïchatou Mint Jiddan was a candidate to the presidential elections in November 2003 but obtained only 0.47% of the votes. Originating from Kiffa, she claimed herself "on the side of the opposition" and put forward a program characterized by proposals relating to women: the institution of a security motion for divorce and proposals against excision and physical abuse of females, such as over-feeding girls. Many of her critics accused the regime of Ould Taya of fabricating this candidate, this "joke," to show foreign observers an image of a democratic and gender-egalitarian Mauritania.

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ever chair in the five cabinets[10] that the party ran, and in the 15 services that the cabinet counted, only three women had positions of responsibility (as consultants or leaders of political programs).

At the national level of party representation, of 53 sections [*moughata'a*[11]], only one was headed by a woman, who was none other than the president of the General Women's Committee of the PRDS and also a member of the executive board and a senator. The party, which should have had been a pioneering force in the political integration of women, exhibited the same inequalities and deficiencies seen in the political world in general and in public service at large. Women were present in female-oriented structures (such as the National Women's Party Committee), but senior management positions (Secretary General, Director of Staff) were not allocated to them; these appointments were the prerogative of the project manager or counselor or were allocated to those in intermediary decision-making positions. At the national level, there has been a virtual absence of female representation.

All in all, the presence of women in the Mauritanian state apparatus and official organs of power has remained merely symbolic despite 20 years of a pro-women discourse. While women engaged in politics, politics did not engage with women.

The Quota Maneuver

The first transitional government (set up on August 9, 2005) put in place by Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall and the Military Council for Justice and Democracy (CMJD) included three women: a Minister of Youth and Sports (Mehia Mint Ahmed) and two secreta ries of state, as always for the Status of Women and New Technologies (respectively, Noubghouha Mint Ettelamid and Meyena Mohamed Sow Deyna). The female presence was similar to that in previous governments: three women and a majority of secretaries of state occupying the usual female positions. But the CMJD decided that those who would come after must go further. Accordingly, on August 22, 2006, an order "on the organic law relative to the promotion of women's access to electoral mandates and elective functions" was born entitling women a minimum quota of 20 % of seats in municipal councils.

Quickly, rumors, fantasies, and ignorance of the specific wording turned the law into a political generalization. Ignorance spread like wildfire. Everyone talked about the "new law that requires a quota of 20 % women in politics," saying things like, "One MP in four will be a woman," "The Senate will count

[10]These cabinets surrounded the Secretary General and constituted the "staff" of the PRDS. Through cabinets, specific areas such as relations with civil society, training of cadres and activists, and follow-up of the popular structures of the party were managed.

[11]"Department" or, in the case of Nouakchott, "district."

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20 women," and "Women will now have more power." But the 20 % concerned only mayors and councilors; for parliamentary seats, the picture is different. Citizens, male and female, informed or not about the totality of the measure, chose their camp, with public opinion divided between those who were "for the quota" and those who were "against the quota." Naha Mint Mouknass, president of the party and former Advisor to the President of the Republic, expressed her displeasure in the press:

> This was a big joke […] Why not a quota for the disabled or youth under 34? I am against hollow and immature slogans. I am for merit; not for filling the assembly and city halls with quotaized women.[12]

Lack of training was always invoked by opponents of the quota, whether male or female:

> One cannot engage in politics if you cannot read or write. Here, there are women in big parties and in a good positions, who never even went to school, they can count, read a little, but that's not enough! We should not demystify responsibilities! […] We cannot continue with everything and anything![13]

Another argument against the order, integral to the first objection, was that lack of women in administration and decision-making positions (private or public companies) meant that there were few women able to succeed in the places offered to them:

> Who will be women in politics? Illiterate traders? Women who sleep all day? There is no stock of women who are trained and competent in Mauritania, who can take the places that Ely offers them […] Who can really be able to do that? […] So it will be anyone […] and we will say that it is the fault of women?[14]

Those who were in favor of the quota saw it first and foremost as part of a logical continuity: "In our country, women do a lot of politics, now they will have jobs," and a proof of change to come: Bringing women in politics is a great democratic progress; it enriches the discussion, brings it closer to people and their concerns. I am happy for women! And I support them![15]

Some women claimed that they deserved this power because "Mauritanian women are different! Strong women! They know politics well!" As for the "pro-quota" camp, talk was about lack of training for girls, the collapse of the

[12] Jeune Afrique no. 2390, October 29–November 4, 2006.
[13] F., former leader of a political party, March 2007.
[14] M., NGO (Non-Government Organizations) director, March 2007.
[15] Civil servant, March 2007.

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Mauritanian school system, poor access of women to decision-making positions, or their difficulty in accessing jobs in the administration.[16]

In the aftermath of the 2006 and 2007 elections, and despite the media hype around this, "positive discrimination", women were still not truly well represented within the institutions of power. It was true that the municipal councils were full of women (sometimes more than 30 %), because only municipalities were subject to the notorious minima. The question was, once elected, what type of responsibilities would these women have? As for the office of mayor, it remained in the hands of men: only three women won this seat out of 53 moughata'a (5%)—three women from 1222 competing lists. It was in urban areas, specifically in Nouakchott, that these positions were won, including the municipalities of El Mina, Sebkha, and Tevragh-Zeina. The first two are areas mostly inhabited by Haratin[17] and black Mauritanians. The two women who managed these areas were known—just like the party they represented (including the APP[18])—to embody the religious ideas and identities of these poor and troubled districts. In contrast, it should be noted that the third city hall was won "by accident": Ould Hamza, first on the winning municipal Rally of Democratic Forces (RFD) list, was elected to head the urban community, which placed female reformer Yaye Ndaw Koulibali at the head of the municipality of Tevragh-Zeina,[19] according to the agreement signed.

[16] It is rare for women to have access to positions of responsibility in public administration. A 1992 survey identified 49 women out of 832 in decision-making positions (less than 6 %) (Mint Abdallah, 1992), but, as noted by Amel Daddah (2003, 59): "If we limit ourselves to only the first three categories (Minister, Secretary General, and Special Advisor), the share of women in the total number of individuals placed in positions of decision-making in the ministries moves to 0.47 % (against 5 % for men)." A more recent study (2002) reported that women have occupied a third of the decision-making positions at intermediate levels (directors of staff, counselors of decision-making men, 1 % of general secretaries and leaders of missions) since 1992, which remains derisory. However, statistical analyses suggest that significant progress has been made with respect to girls' access to primary schooling: gross rates of female enrollment stood at 88.9 % against 88.5 % for boys for 2001–2002 and 92.7 % against 90.7 % for girls and boys, respectively, for 2002–2003. In contrast, 43 % more boys than girls were attending junior secondary school in 2000, compared to only 31.3 % more in 1990 to 43 % in 2000.

[17] Descendants of enfranchised slaves (sing.: Hartani).

[18] The APP, the party of Messaoud Ould Boulkheir, is constituted of Haratin and Nasserists.

[19] The mayors of each municipality must vote among themselves for the president of the Urban Community of Nouakchott (CUN). Because Ould Hamza was elected to the presidency of the CUN after his election in Tevragh-Zeina, the seat went to Mrs. Koulibali. In 2013, Ould Hamza left the urban community seat to a woman, Maty Mint Hamady, the first woman president of the CUN. For more details on the function of the town hall of Nouakchott and the CUN, see the work of Armelle Choplin (2009).

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Thanks to affirmative action, nine women accessed the new senate, which counted 56 total members, a female representation of 16 %. During the last term of President Taya, only three women were senators. Again, this phenomenon, limited to the urban capital, inflated the figures and the actual scope of the 2006-029 order; the law stipulated that senatorial lists should be led by a woman in the electoral districts of Nouakchott, but the rule did not apply to the rest of the country. Consequently, the Nouakchott Senate was feminized (eight women senators out of nine) as the first names on the lists were de facto elected. In this case, the authority of the chiefs of the badiyya was not threatened. One does not talk politics under a tent.

Of 95 seats in the National Assembly, 17 were filled by women (17.8%).[20] Four of them (almost a quarter) were elected in Nouakchott and the others in the national lists,[21] which relativized the amplitude of the phenomenon touted by the press and politicians. Again, the urban effect was clear. But even in Nouakchott, of a total of 41 lists in competition, only four were headed by a woman! This suggests that the majority of MPs were elected indirectly, even involuntarily. The women were on the list in conformity with the law; their presence met a very specific logic.

Toward a More Feminized Government?

Pursuant to the notorious order of more women in government, it was upon a careful gleaning of the successive government formations from Sidi Ould Cheikh Abadallhi (2007-2008) to Muhammad Ould Abdel aziz (2009-Present) that the conventional arithmetical mode of recruitment established by their predecessors perdured. Women are not more numerous in government than before the "quotas"; they represented 9 % of ministers between 2008 and 2009, and they have been assigned to the same positions for 40 years (social affairs, women's status, new technologies, and health). Likewise, the various ministerial formations of the Aziz system have counted 11 % female ministers, and the positions provided for women have remained within the "feminine" scope. However, Coumba Ba was appointed by Ould Abdel Aziz as Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in charge of African Affairs in 2010. The case of Coumba Ba is an opportunity to highlight the fact that Negro-Mauritanian women have been poorly represented in the government. Although the first female minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania was

[20] Three deputies under Taya out of 75 (4 %).

[21] There were three polls on the election day: one for municipal elections and two for the legislative elections, as deputies had to be chosen from both a regional and a national lists. The National Assembly proposed 81 regional seats and 14 seats for the "national deputies."

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Haalpular, the trend quickly became focused on, among women, the appointment of baydhaniyyat.[22]

In addition, it is worth noting that the "tanks" of recruitment for these three particular social categories—often referred to by more acerbic Mauritanians as "maids"—offered numerous similarities for 20 years. Take, for example, the case of women who accessed the ministerial function through recruitment by co-optation within the National Import and Export Corporation (SONIMEX). This was the case for Fatimetou Mint Khattri, minister to Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi, and Mintata Mint Hedeid under Ould Taya. Other women had a close parental relationship with a politician (usually a "daughter of"or a cousin first degree), as was Khadijettou Aicha Mint Ahmed, who in the Ould Daddah era was appointed Minister of Mines and who is the daughter of an executive of the Mauritanian People's Party. Later on under Taya, Diye Ba, daughter of Ba Mamadou Samboly, was a minister under Daddah; and so were Fatimetou Mint Mohamed Saleck,[23] daughter of Moustafa Saleck Ould Ahmed; Naha Mint Mouknass, daughter of a former minister and founder of a political party under Daddah. During the transition period, the CMJD appointed Sow Meyana Mohamed Deyna (State Secretary to the Prime Minister responsible for New Technologies), daughter of a former member/mayor/minister. Finally, under Mohamed Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi, Noubgouha Mint Mohamed Vall, daughter of a famous businessman and accomplice in the aborted coup attempt of March 16, 1981, Selma Mint Teguedi, sister of Limam Ould Teguedi (Secretary General of the National Assembly and minister under Ould Taya and then nominated by Sidi Ould Cheikh Addallahi).

Conclusion: The Tent Closer to the Well

Female Political Showcases

Numerous speeches and promises have been much ado about nothing and have left women more political "animators" than actors in their own right. The evolution of their representation is obvious—from a total absence of women ministers in the 1960s, to a single nomination in the 1970s, to a rate of 11 % women ministers at the beginning of 2014. But even as women gradually accessed the public scene, they were confined to second-level activities: they

[22] In the successive governmental formations, black Mauritanians have constituted about 20 %, while the Moors, by contrast, have been particularly well represented.
[23] Military head of state in 1978; one of the perpetrators of the July 10, 1978 coup that ousted Mokhtar Ould Daddah.

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animated tents, went door-to-door, and created ambiance in meetings. Indeed, this female para-political investment helped to attract onlookers and spectators and transformed electoral campaigns into genuine festive events:

> We must emphasize the link with voters, proximity […]. The tents, and all the trimmings, help the visibility of VIPs. For the youth, it is an occasion to dredge, and for us, it is useless.[24]

The more women there are in the tents, the more visitors there are, creating opportunities to meet and exchange a few words. It is a seduction operation (Lesourd 2010b). In a sense, women participate in political marketing, a screen that they embody in the service of power—not for their own interests?

Elected or appointed, women function as a smokescreen raised before donors who take pride in the good results, as in a recent official report:

> A regional high-level meeting for the promotion of women's political participation for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, the third of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG 3) was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Childhood and Family and the United Nations Programme for Development (UNDP) […] It led to the adoption of a consensual agenda with strategic and operational policy proposals that will contribute to improving the political participation of women. It must be remembered that Mauritania has achieved substantial progress in the field of gender in recent years. It has adopted a series of regulations that target positive discrimination to improve women's representation in elected office. This has fostered a representation of women in Parliament and 19 % of the seats in municipal councils.[25]

Access to positions of power by women represents tangible evidence of democratization in the same way that appointment of a token Hartani or Negro-Mauritanian candidate does (Antil & C. Lesourd 2012). Negro-Mauritanians, Hartani, and women are nominated because the powerful are required to do so. The nomination of a woman for the presidential office is perceived as a novelty rather than as evidence of social change and political mutation, as seen in this excerpt from the Moroccan press:

> Mrs. Mint Moulaye Idriss, 57 years old, holds a doctorate in financial engineering. She is currently the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Mauritanian Agency of Information (MAI official). She is the second woman to be a candidate in a presidential election in Mauritania after Aicha Mint Jedeine who postulated in 2003 against former President Maaouiya Ould Taya (1984–2005). In

[24] Interview with C., political leader of an opposition party, May 2014.
[25] See http://www.mr.undp.org/content/dam/mauritania/docs/documents_publications/RAPPORT%20RENCONTRE%20REGIONALE%20PPF%20VF%2009%20Oct%202012.pdf.

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> Mauritania, an Islamic country where Sharia is in effect, women occupy only 20 % of elected positions in elected institutions.[26]

Finally, even though the "quota" can propel more women into high-level positions with titles like senator, congresswoman, or councilor, women are still viewed as being fit only for secondary responsibilities rather than for true positions of power. A municipal councilor—even if she takes advantage of her symbolic status and the other benefits tied to her function—is not a mayor. The 26 women parliamentarians may debate in their respective chambers on behalf of a particular region or village—but in the badiyya, men hold the reins of local power in the eyes of all and therefore retain their place in the system. Nouakchott seems to offer more visibility and opportunities to Mauritanian women, and the women there proudly perceive themselves as invested with a potential for power and opportunity, but it seems that the sensibilities and prerogatives of the chiefs of the interior of the country are consciously managed by the intricacies of the municipal quota law. Outside the capital, men remain at the well and women under the tent.

Making the Best of All Opportunities

Under the presidency of Colonel Taya (1984-2005), the necessary democratization of the 1990s and the use of clientelism by reactivating/reinventing identity affiliations, including tribal and regional[27] ones, launches an era during which the kleptocracy of public funding supporting (and even encouraging) legal, and especially illegal, enrichment, participates in building and retaining the politico-commercial clique of the leader. The man is deemed sober and unengaging with splendor, but it is in this court context, connected to all the possible captures of annuities (starting of course with that of the state) that the mode of sultanic government sarcastically reviewed by Abdel Wedoud Ould Cheikh (2003, 153) unfolds:

> The lightning ascension and brutal fall in the highest ranks of the members of the "court," the miraculous returns of the disgraced, the enormous weight of financial predation and the more or less hidden ramifications of the "Sultan's cash register" are reminiscent of some Babylonian lottery à la Borges, of a sort of a universal and compulsory game "legitimately" peppered for the benefit of the sultan and his satraps, where "negative items" (removal, expropriation, imprisonment, torture ...) would mix under the sardonic eye of the game masters, to risky profits.

[26] See http://www.agenceecofin.com/gouvernance/0805-19871-mint-moulaye-idriss-une-femme-candidate-a-l-election-presidentielle-du-21-juin-en-mauritanie.
[27] P. Marchesin (1992), M. Villasante de Beauvais (1998), De Chassey (1978), R. Ciavolella (2009, 2010).

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Money and the promise of access to resources somehow take over from the one-party system to become the preferred modes by which the powerful tighten their grip on citizens, to empower themselves in every sense of the term, and to influence action.

It was during this time, in this mode of specific governing, that the first major political operations advancing women took place, in a context of the revitalization of a clientelism necessary to maintain power. In this card game, the female element is not reduced to the single argument of "gender": women belong to a family, embody a tribe, reflect a region. To promote a woman is in this way to provide an opportunity to a group (Lesourd 2007b). Conversely, to nominate a woman, or make her a candidate for a party (within a quota system, for example), is a guarantee of the support of her clients. The "quotas" in the end reinforce this trend. Thus, in the legislative elections of November 2006, Ahmed Ould Daddah, leader of the opposition party named Rally of Democratic Forces (RFD), chose Lematt Mint Mogueya over a longtime activist to occupy the fourth position on his list. The membership of this tradeswoman to an opposition party that suddenly became one of the leaders in the race for power, lasting until the overthrow of President Ould Taya by the military (August 2005), indicates that Lematt featured clearly in the ranks of the presidential party. Businesswomen, like their male counterparts, will use the power available to them to maintain the health of their businesses during the transition to democracy.

The race to opportunism invites activists and candidates to choose, without a transition, an official camp. With the order of 2006, the parties are obligated to include more women and propel them to the front. They prefer to recruit women with financial and material resources that can be used for the campaign, but also women who are known and influential and capable of attracting public opinion.

Women are available for this system; the next thing they must do is position themselves in the game of mutual manipulation. For a woman, support is a quest to obtain a position, means, and prestige. For those in power, to be supported is crucial for the continuation of their power. In this way, men and women are in the same boat, each seeking to ensure their position and manage their opportunities. This individualism does not encourage women in positions of power to embrace wider causes, including the very cause of women.

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Part Two
Specific Country Experiences

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Chapter Seven

About North African Women's Rights After the Arab Spring

Moha Ennaji

Abstract This chapter highlights and documents the agency of women in North Africa in the light of the Arab Spring and its aftermath. It focuses on this agency as far as women's activism and their legal rights and political participation are concerned. Issues related to these domains are considered from a broad comparative perspective. The chapter reveals the positive role that North African women have been playing in the overall development and social change of their countries. It also shows that women's gains are irrevocable and that the future of North Africa is significantly linked to the fate of women's emancipation. The values of a comparative analysis in this article are critical: they enable the reader to appreciate women's agency in various political and socio-economic contexts and highlight the fact that agency can be appreciated only within a specific environment.

Introduction

Despite female participation in the recent revolutions in the region, it is feared that women's rights in North Africa are being left on the political margin. Across the region women activists are concerned about the intentions of Islamist parties and fear that they will implement reactionary policies discriminating against women. I argue that the overthrow of dictatorships is insufficient in itself. Only when repressive governments are replaced by democracies can we consider the popular uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa to be meaningfully progressive. Since women make up half of the region's population, any democratic development must improve the social and legal status of women in North Africa. It appears that Tunisian and Moroccan societies have strong civil institutions, and there is much hope that democracy can take hold in these two countries.

Women's activism in North Africa has played a major role in sensitizing women, families, and social actors to the importance of integrating women in economic, social, and cultural development. Further measures and policies in

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_7

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favor of protecting women's rights are badly needed to guarantee that these reforms are implemented and that women's empowerment and contribution to development and democratization are secured. However, there are hurdles blocking women's emancipation and legal rights in the region. For instance, most countries have not agreed to all the articles of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), and the quota system is not officially recognized in most constitutions, which implies that the representation of women depends on the political will and decision of political leaders. In addition, many governments in the region demonstrate only a weak commitment to protect women from violence, especially domestic violence, at the legal level, especially concerning police investigation, sanctions, and legal advice to women victims of violence.

To fathom out the forms of discrimination facing women in the region, it is useful to adopt the intersectionality theory, which was first proposed by black feminist scholars to understand the interconnection of various forms of oppression faced by black women in America (Crenshaw et al. 1996; Collins 2008). Intersectionality theory examines concurrent and intertwined types of oppression on the basis of variables such as gender, race, class, age, ethnicity, religion, citizenship, or appearance. These regular types of oppression may crisscross in individuals' lives, leading to complex instead of merely additive impacts. For example, being a Muslim woman and being poor may correspond to controlling and overlapping types of oppression that aggravate gender-based discrimination facing North African women in a male-dominated region (Mullings 1996; Collins 2008; Inhorn 2015).

This chapter is based on a larger research project on women's movements that I carried out between 2011 and 2014. The findings are derived from semi-structured interviews with women and feminist leaders in the region, as well as from my previous research and readings. The ethnographic interviews were conducted with 69 women from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt, most of whom were aged between 25 and 47. Interviews were conducted in either colloquial Arabic, French, English, or a mixture of French/English and Arabic, depending upon the principal language and first choice of the interviewee.

The major aim of this chapter is to highlight the agency of women in North Africa in the light of the Arab Spring. It focuses on this agency as far as women's activism, their legal rights, and political participation are concerned. Issues related to these domains are considered from a broad comparative perspective. The chapter reveals the positive role that North African women have been playing in the overall development and social change of their countries. The chapter also shows that women's gains are irrevocable and that the future of North Africa is significantly linked to the fate of women's emancipation. The values of a comparative analysis in this chapter are critical for enabling the reader to appreciate women's agency in various political and socio-economic contexts and for highlighting the fact that agency can be appreciated only within a specific environment.

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Women's Activism

North African feminists endeavor to promote women's empowerment through education, awareness, and knowledge of new legal rights; they also propagate information about family law and the labor code through their non-government organizations (NGOs) and community-based groups. Women's activism has considerably contributed to democracy in the region, particularly in Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria, due to its increasing involvement in social and political affairs, the proliferation of women's associations, and their access to the media. Women's activism is essential to modernization and democracy, for it has significantly contributed to the advance of civil society and democratic culture (Sadiqi and Ennaji 2006). One cannot imagine the success of democracy in this region of the world without the full emancipation of women. In this chapter, I deal with women's activism within a broader socio-political approach. The emergence of women's NGOs is an answer to the crisis of the nation-state model form of governance. Such grassroots movements are treated in this analysis as a way to ensure democracy and sustainable development. They create social dynamism through the mobilization and participation of the masses. They also decentralize governance in a rather globalized world. Their modes of action raise new challenges for government development policies and open up new ways of thinking about the issues of sustainability.

To understand the significance of women's activism in North Africa, it is essential to underscore the role of feminist NGOs, taking into account women's own interpretations, needs. and views of gender and development in order to fit local realities and satisfy these needs and demands. Women's NGOs play a major role in the struggle against gender inequalities, and they highlight gender equality as a factor that consolidates democracy and social justice while it challenges traditional thinking and practices of governance (Sadiqi and Ennaji 2010). Women's issues have recently become an important political topic in the region, attracting the attention of decision-makers, activists, researchers, and politicians.

Historically, both women and men were involved in the birth of modern feminism in North Africa. Together, they resisted the forces of patriarchy which deprived them of their civic rights. Women's movements in the region date back to the pre-colonization and colonization periods, during which male leaders of the Islah (reform) movement, such as Allal al-Fassi (Morocco), Ibn Badis (Algeria), and Tahar Haddad (Tunisia), argued for women's emancipation within the cultural value systems of these Muslim societies. These reformists linked development and modernization with women's emancipation (Sadiqi 2014). The nationalist movement prompted many women during the colonial period to start fighting for their rights through feminine civil society organizations, such as Akhawat Al-Safa (Sisters of Purity) in Morocco, Association Féminine Musulmane Algérienne (Algerian Muslim Women's Association) in

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Algeria, and Union Nationale de la Femmes Tunisienne (Tunisian Women's Union). These organizations were created by educated women who had close links with the national liberation movements. Malika Al-Fassi in Morocco, Djamila Debeche in Algeria, and Bchira Ben M'rad in Tunisia are good cases in point. The men who were involved were mostly highly educated with legal training and exposure to European thought, and the women belonged to a generation where educated daughters had illiterate mothers. This was also a time of enlightenment and awakening in the realms of philosophy and political thought. One of the major Egyptian male pioneers of women's rights is Gamal Eddine al-Afghany, who played a crucial political role in spreading progressive ideas on the emancipation of women. His work was continued by his disciples, namely Abdullah Nadeem and Muhammad Abdu. Historically, the most well-known feminist leader in the region is Huda Shaarawi in Egypt. In 1923 she became the first president of the Egyptian Feminist Union.

Despite unfair legal systems, the situation of North African women benefited from improved socio-economic conditions in the aftermath of the independence of these countries. Women took advantage of free education and health services, as well as the new opportunities for paid work, which were all necessary for the economic development of their countries (Sadiqi 2014; Arfaoui 2014). These gains allowed educated women to become aware of their legal rights. Several female voices rose in favor of women's empowerment and emancipation. One can cite in passing Nawal El Saadawi in Egypt, Fatima Mernissi in Morocco, Assia Djebar and Fadhma Amrouche in Algeria, and Souad Guellouz and Emna Belhaj Yahya in Tunisia. These female voices were particularly motivated by the unfair family laws in the region which relegated women to a secondary citizenship status and excluded them from public life. Women's struggle was focused on the amendment of the family law in these countries. Tunisia is the only country that has had a relatively reasonable family law since the 1950s.

Furthermore, many women activists started organizing themselves politically by creating their own organizations. Prominent names in this respect are Nouzha Skalli, Latifa Jbabdi (Morocco); Louisa Hanoun, Khalida Messaoudi (Algeria); and Bochra Belhaj Hamida, Sihem Ben Sidrine (Tunisia). In Egypt, one can mention Doria Shafik, whose efforts led to Egyptian women gaining the right to vote.

Women's movements in North Africa have similarities and differences. On the one hand, these movements take shape around incessant demands for the amendment of the family laws; they deplore the sexist behaviors of their strongly patriarchal systems and demand political and legal rights and improved educational quality to ensure women's empowerment. Furthermore, across the region, women play a crucial role in socio-economic development despite the fact that there exist large inequalities between men and women so far as access to resources is concerned. In the labor market, which is marked by labor and gender divisions between men and women, women have growing responsibilities in ensuring the survival and well-being of the family and

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in participating in their share of farming and of production, small trade, and services.

The countries of North Africa are also subject to state feminism. State feminism, which may be defined as an official government policy that seeks to achieve the emancipation of women, started to develop in the Middle East and North Africa at the time of the independences in the late 1950s and early 1960s. State feminism is considered a historical strategy that has been adopted in different parts of North Africa to improve women's conditions and to contribute to their well-being. Thus, the provision of education, healthcare, and work to women helped to brighten up the image of the state. In Egypt, state feminism started to develop during Nasser's regime (1960s and 1970s), promising equality of men and women and a better life quality. But in the long run, the main beneficiaries of state feminism were people from the aristocracy and the upper classes (Ennaji 2008). For example, with the application of economic reforms in the 1980s (the structural readjustment plan), the economic and social retreat of the state began, which weakened the prospects for a better future for working and middle-class women. Thus, although state feminism succeeded in giving women access to education, healthcare, and employment, it did not really challenge the negative social attitudes toward women, who are still regarded as dependent on men.

On the other hand, it is also true that women's movements in the region are intensely impacted by the political management in each country. For instance, even if the king in Morocco, the highest political and religious authority, is in favor of women's emancipation, little support exists among Algerian or Tunisian leadership. In Algeria, women count more on secular political parties, and in Tunisia, held rights may be endangered by the rise of Islamism and restrictions on human rights (Ait Hammou 2004).

It is important to note that the feminist views of Middle East and North African men are different from those of women. Women aim at improving their lives, whereas men's feminist views have more abstract goals in the sense that their attitude is part of their search for the causes of the backwardness of their countries and their actions to prove that they cannot progress without educating and training women. However, for both men and women, feminism in one way or another needs to be concerned with the revitalization and empowerment of women (Sadiqi 2003).

Notwithstanding their similarities and differences, the countries of North Africa have witnessed the emergence and sustenance of secular and Islamic feminisms. Secular feminism adopts Western feminist views while maintaining national and cultural identity. Its proponents think that although feminism can be easily rejected in the name of religious and ideological conservatism, it cannot be easily rejected in the name of cultural authenticity.

As for Islamic feminism, the Islamic revivalist movements, which have been flourishing throughout the region since the mid-1980s, have ignited debate over the role of women in contemporary societies. The social agendas of these revivalists propagate Islamic practices, although there has always been a lack

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of consensus on the content of those practices. Islamic modernists preach the improvement of women's lives within the precepts of Islam.

Some present-day feminists, on the other hand, emphasize the Islamic character of their feminist activities; in fact, some consider that that character is the only guarantee of women's liberation. They believe that the state should regulate the public life of people and agree [disagree] with Islam's regulation of family life when it is used to shore up family-based patriarchal control and prerogatives. By contrast, the radicals adhere to the view that Islam is incompatible with feminism. Their doctrines are often rooted in Western leftist political movements, which do not see any compatibility between the two concepts of Islam and feminism. For these radical feminists, women's liberation requires a thorough de-Islamization of all aspects of life. In fact, a number of radical scholars attribute the problems of contemporary Arab women to Islam.

While not rejecting the text, reconciliatory feminists adhere to the view that Islam as a cultural force is compatible with feminism. In a way, they seek a compromise between the views of both pro-Islamists and radicals. The Moroccan writer Fatima Mernissi and Tunisian Khedija Arfaoui are good cases in point. For some Egyptian feminists like Nawal El Saadawi (1997, 246), Islam is not the only culturally legitimate framework of reference. She argues that present-day feminists from the Arab-Islamic world need to reread their history and understand their culture.

One of the major challenges for women is the choice between modernity and tradition. In a country like Morocco, which has opted for multilingualism, a liberal economy, and political pluralism in a constitutional monarchy, the choice cannot be insensitive either to Islam or to the country's international image in policy-making (at the Islamic, Arab, African, and universal levels). The internal context is also important, as it is shaped by the struggle for economic and social development and the place of women in this development. In Morocco, for instance, women's organizations play a decisive role in the democratization and modernization of society. Since the 1970s, women NGOs have severely criticized the ways in which policy-makers have overlooked women's demands for emancipation and gender equality.

At the socio-political level, after the political reforms of the 1990s (re-amendment of the constitution and improved election laws), which led to more democratization, a large number of women's associations emerged and started to have considerable national and regional impact. For example, the following major associations may be cited: l'Union Féminine Marocaine (Moroccan Feminine Union) and l'Organisation Démocratique des Femmes (Women's Democratic Organization). These non-government organizations often interact and communicate through networks. However, despite the dynamism of their organizations, women are still disadvantaged at the judiciary level in legal matters (e.g., the existence of polygamy and discriminatory inheritance laws). Additionally, the conservative forces regard women's roles to be limited to home, reproduction, and child rearing.

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North African women's NGOs promote women's emancipation, participation in the democratization process, and social mobilization. They encourage women's empowerment and participation in decision-making and public affairs. They have enabled women to critically assess their own situation and shape a transformation of society (cf. Ennaji 2010).

Women's NGOs indulge in diverse activities, and as a result they have so far accumulated a great deal of experience in local development; their experience should be known, studied, and analyzed profoundly as evidence that Morocco's women are dynamic problem-solvers (Mernissi 1989). Unlike in many Arab countries, Moroccan women's NGOs are allowed by the government to receive financial aid from foreign organizations and donors. The challenge facing these NGOs is to elaborate autonomous strategies and to establish themselves as independent forces in their partnership with the state and with political parties.

Over the past two decades, many Moroccan women's advocacy organizations have emerged to combat violence against women, illiteracy and poverty among women, gender-based legal and cultural discrimination, and underrepresentation of women in policy-making. They have made important gains, namely the ratification of CEDAW by Morocco on June 21, 1993, elimination of the authorization of the husband for practicing a trade activity (1995) or for a signature on a work contract (1996), revision of the work code and penal code (2003), and reform of the nationality code (2008), which now allows a Moroccan woman married to a non-Moroccan to transmit her citizenship to her children. Yet, the most remarkable achievement is the reform of the 2004 family law. This accomplishment came after more than 20 years of struggle by feminists and women's NGOs.

The principal changes brought out under the revised code are as follows: (1) the family falls under the responsibility of both the husband and the wife (the previous personal status code treated the husband as the only head of the family), and in marriage and divorce matters, couples must appear before a judge and rather than the husband; (2) both men and women cannot marry until the age of 18 (in the previous code, girls could be married at the age of 16); (3) tutorship for women has been eliminated (women can now marry without the authorization or agreement of their father); (4) divorce is regulated by new laws, which are enforced by the Ministry of Justice, represented by a judge in the family court; (5) in case of divorce, the property and financial resources accumulated by the household during marriage are shared by the two spouses (in the previous family code, the wife had no right to claim a portion of the property and money of the husband); (6) women now have the right of custody over their children even if they remarry (in the old law, the mother lost custody over her children the moment she remarried) (Zoglin 2009).

However, the new family code has its own limitations and imperfections despite its advantages and its positive impact on women and families. For example, although polygamy is significantly controlled, it is still legally

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accepted, and inequality concerning inheritance is still maintained, whereby a woman inherits half the part of a man. When there are no males among the inheritors, the females inherit only part of the legacy and the rest goes to the family of the deceased male.

Over the last decade, Moroccan women's NGOs have intensified their efforts to improve women's living conditions. Thus, many associations fight gender-based violence and assist battered women by giving them shelter and legal advice. A network of several associations has been created, organizing numerous activities and campaigns to raise awareness about gender equality among the population and to promote women's rights, to promote women's tolerance, and citizenship. They have been successful in using the media, especially television, to make their voices heard and to contribute to the debate on equality between the sexes. In 1998, the first national campaign to fight violence against women was organized. This campaign mobilized many government administrations and ministries, as well as civil society. As an outcome of this campaign, the Ministry of Family adopted a national strategy to combat violence against women, and recently the government has initiated a phone line for women victims of violence who want to seek help or make a complaint about domestic violence.

Unfortunately Cultural hurdles and patriarchal traditions, illiteracy, and lack of information prevent women from invoking their rights or reporting crimes against them, such as rape, child abuse, sexual exploitation, and domestic violence. Concerning such cases, lawyers do not often base their arguments on international human rights treaties. Thus, women's organizations and civil society in general play a major role in sensitizing women, families, and social actors to the importance of integrating women in economic, social, and cultural development. Further steps in favor of protecting women's rights are greatly needed to ensure women's strong contribution to sustainable development. Likewise, education and training are important for women to enable them to meet the new challenges and help them safeguard their rights and interests.

Women's Rights in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring

The revolutions in North Africa may have failed to yield greater political power to women in the region or to offer them better security and protection from sexual harassment, but they have brought "female-friendly reforms."

Human rights activists had hoped that women's participation in the uprisings that toppled governments in the region and unseated Zine Al Abidine Benali in Tunisia and Husni Mubarak in Egypt would lead to more power for women in North Africa. The protests overthrew a number of dictators and prompted some change, including fairly free elections. But four years after the first uprisings exploded, women have seen few benefits, and the rise of Islamist governments is increasing conservatism in the region.

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For example, a quota for women's representation in the Egyptian Parliament has been discontinued, while in Tunisia, 30 % of assembly members are female due to the adopted quota system. While women benefited from the quota system in Tunisia they could not secure position in the cabinet.

Recent episodes of sexual harassment in Tunisia and Egypt and the handling of these incidents are also cause for concern. In Tunis in September 2012, hundreds took to the streets to protest when a woman was accused of "indecency" after purportedly being raped by police in a parking lot, while female demonstrators against sexual harassment were attacked in Cairo's Tahrir Square in June 2012. Thus, while women played a critical role in the Arab Spring, their rights in society have been limited. Women participated actively in the revolutions and protests, but as new conservative governments have taken power, we can see that as citizens, women remain firmly in the second class. Women in Egypt have faced discrimination and stronger pressure during and after the revolution. Moreover, during the protests, women faced heavy oppression, abuse and bullying; the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces tried to discredit women protestors by arresting them and subjecting them to forced virginity tests.

Around the region, women are harassed, arrested, tortured, and otherwise ill-treated in gender-specific ways because they took part in the pro-democratic demonstrations. In Egypt, some women have been arrested and tortured, while in Libya, the authorities have called male relatives to take "control over" the women of their families, and some women have reportedly been killed. In Tunisia, after the revolution, women have been attacked at universities and schools and have been forced to wear the veil (hijab).

Further, the Muslim Brotherhood, whose Freedom and Justice Party dominated parliament after the revolution, claims that a woman cannot become president of Egypt. In Morocco, while there were six women in the first post-Spring cabinet, the first Islamist-led government had only one veiled minister and three deputy ministers. Female representation in parliaments after the Arab Spring has been either absent or meager. In Algeria, the latest parliamentary elections have resulted in a male-dominated chamber. In Egypt, women make up only 2 % of the post-Spring parliament, while women had constituted 12 % of the parliament under the former regime. In Tunisia, the second dominating party in the post-Benali assembly, the moderate Islamist party al-Nahda, imposed the veil on its female members and threatened to consider the Islamic law (shari'a) as first source of law in the country, which some activists fear would oppress women's individual rights. In Libya, a first draft of the electoral law reserved 10 % of seats in the constituent assembly for women, but the proposal was later abandoned.

During the uprisings, women took to the streets to call for more personal rights. Women have been involved in protests in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Morocco, and Tunisia. But their efforts and momentum, like that of the liberal protestors who spent days in Tahrir Square bringing down a regime, have yet

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to be transferred into leadership roles that can direct the future of their countries. Although an internal barrier of fear was partly lifted during the revolutions, political roles have not kept pace. Many women I interviewed across the region spoke to me with some excitement about people finally having a voice. But many of them continue to fear that their individual rights will slowly vanish and economic disintegration will increase crime and chaos.

During the Doha Debates organized by the Qatar Foundation in 2012, Iman Bibars, an Egyptian working with non-profit organizations, argued that women were worse off after the revolutions: "Women are being harassed … and they're being asked to stay at home …"

Conclusion

This chapter shows that North African women's movements have been challenged by various social, economic, and political hurdles. Their successes and failures have accompanied the successes and failures of their countries. Today, conscious of their indispensable role in the development of their countries, these women demand more legal and political rights and more participation in public life. Four years after the Arab Spring, women's activism continues at a range of levels. As to the dissimilarities between the countries concerned, they are due to differences in political, economic, and legal systems, which affect the intensity of the struggles of women's movements.

Thus, whereas Tunisia is much ahead of Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria in terms of women's legal rights, Morocco is ahead of the other countries in terms of power negotiations and the scoring of benefits in the public sphere (Ennaji 2013). As North African women struggle to assert their rights and their gender identity, Islamism seems to be a barrier to their emancipation and empowerment. The issue is whether women will be able to move their struggles from the streets to the political spheres. This is the real challenge facing women in the whole region. North African women's political empowerment and meaningful change could take years.

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Chapter Eight

Women's Rights and Equality: Egyptian Constitutional Law

Ellen McLarney

Abstract This chapter charts the genealogy of the language of "women's equality" in successive Egyptian constitutions, culminating in the 2012 constitution in which the liberal language of women's rights and equality converged with Islamist political aims. In the aftermath of the 2011 revolution, the new Egypt converted the fervor of revolutionary change into the civil liberties of a new constitutionalism. This partly involved the re-institution, or re-constitution, of the existing power structure, even with the guarantee of new liberties for women. This sexual contract is the counterpart of citizenship's social contract in a liberal secular order. Its origins lie in secular state politics (both colonial and post-colonial) that depend heavily on religion for its legitimization, religion that is said to reside in the family, in women's bodies, in the sexual contract, and in the inviolability of private property.

Introduction

"Woman and the constitution: fear of woman's marginalization rules over all," blared an April 2012 headline in *al-Ahram,* joining the protests over women's rights in the 2012 constitution.[1] Web based news outlets like "EgyptSoft" sprang up protesting the constitution, accompanied by blog posts about how "the Egyptian woman screams in the face of the constitution of discrimination.[2] Fear reigned about how the government of Muhammad Morsi would approach the question of women's rights and equality, with many feminist organizations striking a defensive posture. In December 2012,

[1] Abd al-Rahman al-Shaykh, Muhammad Mustafa, and Nabil Badr, "al-Marʔa wa-l-Dustur: al-Khawf Yusaytir ʻala al-Jamiʻmin Tahmish Dawr al-Mar'a," *al-Ahram*, April 10, 2012.
[2] "Sarkha al-Marʔa al-Misriyya fi Wajh 'Dustur al-Fitna wa-l-Tamayiz,'" EgyptSoft, *al-Marʔa wa-l-Dustur*, accessed March 21, 2014, http://www.egyptsoft.org/new/.

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F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_8

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the post-revolutionary Morsi government pushed through a new constitution, despite protests all around.

Criticisms of the 2012 Egyptian constitution revolved around its presumed violations of women's rights. Media reports in the USA blamed the Islamism of the Morsi government for jeopardizing women's "personal liberty" and civil rights. Reports by *Time,* National Public Radio (NPR), Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Wilson Center, and the United Nations posed women's rights against the "Islamism" of the new Egyptian government and its constitution.[3] These reports stressed the dangers that an Islamic government, and "conservative Islam" in general, would pose to women's rights. Mainstream news outlets like *USA Today* and CBS News jumped to far-fetched conclusions about the implications for women's rights, claiming that the new constitution allowed fathers to marry off their daughters at the age of nine and that the new constitution told women what to wear. "And some," according to an article in *USA Today,* "are organizing to protect their rights."[4] For the most part, this criticism focused on how the 2012 constitution denied women equality. CBS News, for example, reported that "women's equality is absent from Egyptian constitution … the work of religiously conservative supporters of President Muhammad Morsi … and his Islamist allies."[5]

Yet the 2012 constitution was the first to explicitly establish—without qualification—"equality and equal opportunities for all citizens, men and women [*muwatinin wa muwatinat*], without distinction, favoritism, or partiality, in rights or duties."[6] The preamble asserted this equality as one of the founding principles of the new state, going to great lengths to pay tribute to democratic concepts like popular sovereignty, political pluralism, dignity, and freedom (of thought, expression, creativity, etc.). Gender equality was an

[3] Vivienne Walt, "Women's Rights at Odds in Egypt's Constitution Wars," *Time*, December 9, 2012; Merrit Kennedy, "Egyptian Women Worry Constitution Limits Rights," *NPR*, October 12, 2012; *Egypt's New Constitution Limits Fundamental Freedoms and Ignores the Rights of Women* (Amnesty International, November 30, 2012), http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/egypt-s-new-constitution-limits-fundamental-freedoms-and-ignores-rights-women-2012-11-30; *Egypt: New Constitution Mixed on Support of Rights* (Human Rights Watch, November 30, 2012); Moushira Khattab, *Women's Rights Under Egypt's Constitutional Disarray* (Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, January 17, 2013); United Nations News Service, *UN Experts Urge Review of Egypt's Draft Constitution to Ensure Equality and Women's Rights*, UN News Centre, December 14, 2012, http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43771.

[4] Alami, "Egypt Constitution Will Be Bad News for Women, Activists Say," *USA Today*, January 13, 2013.

[5] Holly Williams, "Women's Equality Absent from Egyptian Constitution," *CBS Evening News*, November 30, 2012.

[6] Jumhuriyyat Misr, "al-Dustur," December 26, 2012.

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integral element of this liberal vision of the new state, asserted in the preamble's fifth principle. Moreover, the equality of all citizens was reiterated as a general principle no fewer than five times in the main body of the 2012 constitution (in Articles 6, 8, 9, 33, and 63). Of course, whether social or political equality can be achieved by constitutional decrees or amendments is up for debate—and it is not a question that I can answer here. It was clear that equality in general, and gender equality in particular, had an important role in the 2012 constitution. In contrast, the US constitution has no mention of equality anywhere between anyone. Women did not gain equal protection under the law until the 1971 Supreme Court decision in *Reed v. Reed*. And despite (nearly constant) calls for an Equal Rights Amendment since 1923, such an amendment has never passed.

The 2012 constitution paved the way to a more extended assertion of equality in the subsequent 2014 constitution, which called (in Article 11) for appointing women to high political office, including the judiciary, "without discrimination," as well as calling for equal representation of women in parliament. The 2012 constitution raised the bar on women's equality in Egyptian constitutional history, so that the 2014 "secular" constitution was compelled to top the 2012 "Islamist" one with further provisions for women's rights. The language of gender equality in the 2014 constitution was almost identical to that of the 2012 constitution, calling for equality in rights and duties without any discrimination. The preamble of the 2014 constitution closes with echoes of the 2012 constitution, of its *muwatinin* and *muwatinat*. In the end, Islamic realpolitik with regard to women's rights and equality belied dark—and erroneous—assumptions about Islamist intentions.

The 2012 constitution's attitude toward women did not represent a radical departure from prior "secular" constitutions. On the contrary, the government of Muhammad Morsi adapted the liberal language of women's rights, drawing simultaneously on a long history of constitutional language as well as a long history of Islamist rhetoric about women's rights in Islam. This Islamist language has long been deployed in the service of Islamic mobilization, advocacy that has been essential to cultivating a broad appeal among the populace.[7]

This chapter charts the genealogy of the language of "women's equality" in successive Egyptian constitutions, culminating in the 2012 constitution in which the liberal language of women's rights and equality converged with Islamist political aims. In the aftermath of the 2011 revolution, the new Egypt converted the fervor of revolutionary change into the civil liberties of a new constitutionalism. This is what Hannah Arendt calls the "end of revolution"

[7] Mona El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37, no. 03 (2005): 373–95.

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in her classic book, *On Revolution*, where constitutions spell the end of revolutionary freedoms, replacing them with "civil liberties."[8] "The content of the Constitution," she remarks, "was by no means the safeguard of civil liberties but the establishment of an entirely new system of power."[9] In the case of the Arab Spring, this partly involved the reinstitution, or reconstitution, of the existing power structure, even with the guarantee of new liberties for women. Post-revolution constitution making reestablishes and re-entrenches what Arendt calls a *constitutio libertatis* of the *novus ordo saeclorum*, a secular liberal order that needs the grounding and legitimating "sanction of religion ever more urgently."[10] Feminists and activists critique these new constitutions' valorizations of complementarity and the family.[11] But as feminist thinkers like Mervat Hatem, Wendy Brown, Carole Pateman, and Joan Scott observe, this sexual contract is the counterpart of citizenship's social contract in a liberal secular order.[12] And its origins lie in a secular state politics (both colonial and post-colonial) that depends heavily on religion for its legitimization, religion that is said to reside in the family, in women's bodies, in the sexual contract, and in the inviolability of private property.[13]

Outcry over the 2012 constitution had a different tenor inside Egypt, directed less at its presumed Islamism than at the constitution's autocratizing elements. Most of these critiques were guided by a belief that the Muhammad Morsi government and the Muslim Brotherhood were engineering political institutions and state policy in ways that would preserve the authoritarian character of the Egyptian state, albeit concealed under a façade of democracy. Fears revolved around the use of democratic language as a fig leaf to cover the apparatus of an authoritarian "deep state," one whose structure and institutions might have been intractable or even useful to the Muslim Brotherhood. The use of democratic rhetoric to disguise other, less democratic, aims is a tactic familiar to the region, whether in its imperial, authoritarian, or neoliberal garb.

[8] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin): 133–35.

[9] Ibid., 147.

[10] Ibid., 161.

[11] Frances Hasso, "Alternative Worlds at the 2013 World Social Forum in Tunis," *Jadaliyya*, May 1, 2013, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/11396/alternative-worlds-at-the-2013-world-social-forum.

[12] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988); Mervat Hatem, "Egyptian Discourses on Gender and Political Liberalization: Do Secularist and Islamist Views Really Differ?," *Middle East Journal* 48, no. 4 (1994): 661–76; Wendy Brown, "Liberalism's Family Values," in *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[13] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

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Gender Equality: Public Rights and Private Duties

Gender equality first appears in the 1956 constitution promulgated under Gamal Abd al-Nasser: "All Egyptians are **equal** under the law in **public** rights and duties, without discrimination due to **sex**, origin, language, religion, or belief" (Article 31).[14] In contrast, the 1923 constitution (Article 3) called for equality for all Egyptians, without discrimination with respect to *origin, language, or religion* without mentioning sex. In addition to gender equality, the 1956 constitution also introduced the tension between a woman's public work and her duties to the family, asserting that "the state facilitates for women the agreement [*al-tawfiq*] between her work in society and her duties to the family" (Article 19). As in the United States constitution, the tension between women's "public work" and her "duties to the family" has been at the core of contestations around—and liberal assertions of—women's legal equality with men. The emphasis on safeguarding the family is one of the nostalgic aftereffects of the ruthless individualism of liberal citizenship, where duties, obligations, responsibilities, care, community, and communitarism are projected onto, and circumscribed within, a feminized realm of intimate relations, characterized in naturalistic and biological terms.

The dualism between public rights and private duties is what some, like Joan Scott, Carole Pateman, and Mervat Hatem, have critiqued as the gendered "paradox" inherent in liberal ideology. It is a sexual contract that mirrors the social, with duties shoring up rights, family shoring up the individual, religion shoring up the state, difference shoring up equality, and so forth. Yet these contradictions are also how secular liberalism produces its own (seeming) conceptual opposites, harmonizing them as "complementary" to liberalism's own political ends.

The language of *tawfiq* between women's public work and her duties in family life was reproduced verbatim in the 1971, 2012, and 2014 constitutions. The 1971 constitution states: "The state shall guarantee the agreement [tawfiq] between the duties of a woman toward her family and her work in society, considering her equal status with man in the fields of political, social, cultural, and economic life, without contravening the laws of Islamic shari'a" (Article 11).[15] This constitution introduced something new into the tension between public rights and private duties: religion as potentially opposed to women's equal rights with men. This clause thus set up a binary between equal work in (secular) society in contradistinction to (religious) hierarchies governing family life. The language of the clause connected equality to *public* rights, while suggesting a different set of gendered *private* duties.

The clause asserting women's equality to men—but only where this equality does not "violate the rules of Islamic jurisprudence"—found its way into

[14] Jumhuriyyat Misr, "al-Dustur," 1956.
[15] Jumhuriyyat Misr, "Al-Dustur," 1971.

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an earlier draft of the 2012 constitution. After public uproar, the drafters ultimately opted for broad, unqualified assertions of gender equality. The removal of the clause spoke volumes about the liberal ambitions of the Morsi government, ambitions that were both political and economic. The Morsi government clearly intended to show that women's equality was not antithetical to an Islamic society, to an Islamist president, to government by an Islamist party, or to an "Islamic democracy." Gender inequality remained encoded in the the personal status laws, understood as emblematic of the "rules of Islamic jurisprudence," especially with regards to court testimony, polygamy, and divorce. But the liberal language of the 2012 constitution sublimated these inequalities (in typical liberal fashion) underneath euphoric celebrations of newfound political liberties, pluralism, democracy, and freedom (mentioned no fewer than eight times in the preamble alone). The language clearly rankled activists, who, along with feminists, critiqued this liberalism's dissimulations and hypocrisies, along with its dualisms and paradoxes.

What purpose has the discursive ideology of equality served for the new Egyptian state? The authors of the 2012 constitution clearly aimed to thwart resilient assumptions about the incompatibility of Islam with gender equality. But they also wielded a long-developed discourse of gender equality in Islam as a political tool. This gender equality (and equal rights and duties) has been a pillar of contemporary Islamist ideology, developed in the writings of thinkers like Sayyid Qutb, Abd al-Wahid Wafi, and Muhammad al-Ghazali.[16] Each of them wrote extensively on Islamic notions of women and men's reciprocal rights and duties, on conceptions of Islamic freedom and equality, and on women. Each focused on gender equality as a pillar of social justice and human rights in Islam. It is a principle that Freedom and Justice Party spokeswoman Dina Zakaria reiterated in an interview about the constitution on NPR. Dr. Huda Ghaniyya, one of the drafters of the 2012 constitution and a member of the People's Assembly (the lower house of parliament), similarly defended the constitution's protections of "women's rights, dignity, and freedom" in a video on Ikhwan Tube, a Muslim Brotherhood version of YouTube.[17]

Family, Motherhood, and Childhood

The 2012 constitution called for providing free services for motherhood and childhood, a clause that has been interpreted as an Islamist bid to relegate women to the home and force them to be mothers (*USA Today,* CBS News,

[16] Sayyid Qutb, *al-'Adala al-Ijtima'iyya Fi al-Islam* (Cairo: Maktabat Misr, 1949); 'Ali Abd al-Wahid Wafi, *Huquq al-Insan fi al-Islam* (Cairo: Maktabat Nahdat Misr, 1957); Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Huquq al-Insan Bayna Ta'alim al-Islam wa-I'lan al-Umam al-Muttahida* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tijariyya, 1963).

[17] Kennedy, "Egyptian Women Worry Constitution Limits Rights." Huda Ghaniyya, *The Huda Ghaniyya*, *The Constitution Gives You Your Right* (Cairo, 2012), http://www.ikhwantube.com/video/1671232/.

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Egypt Independent, International Business Times, Ms. Magazine, etc.).[18] The provision caused an uproar in Arab and Egyptian activist circles, at the World Social Forum, in non-government organizations (NGOs) like the al-Majlis al-Qawmi li-l-Mar'a and the Women and Memory Forum, and in the media, including in *al-Ahram* and *Asharq Al-Awsat*.[19] The clause of "protection" for the family has been understood as emblematic of Islamist "focus on the family," as consigning women to domestic roles, and as opposed to women's rights.

Yet protection of the family, and especially of motherhood and childhood, is hardly unique to the 2012 constitution. It is a clause that made its way directly into Article 10 of the 2014 constitution as well. The clause is derived directly from the 1956 constitution (Article 18) and from the 1971 constitution (Article 10), which also call for supporting the family and protecting motherhood and childhood. These articles might be understood as an Islamist provision, but they are partly influenced and derived from Articles 16 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, promulgated in 1948 just before the Free Officers' Revolution in 1952. The language of protections for motherhood and childhood is not found in the 1923 constitution but is introduced in the later, post-UDHR constitutions. Article 18 of the 1956 constitution says: "The state protects and supports [*takfil al-da'm*] the family, in accordance with the law, and protects motherhood and childhood." Article 25 of the UDHR similarly declares that "motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance," just as Article 16 calls for protection of the family, by society and state, as a "natural and fundamental group unit of society." Not surprisingly, Article 5 of the 1956 constitution echoes this language, stating that "the family is the basis of society and her [family, *usra,* being feminine] support is religion, morals, and nationalism" (identically transposed into both the 2012 and 2014 constitutions). What we see here is a secularly inflected Islamist vision of the family (2012), as much as an Islamist-inflected secularism (2014), both of which derive from a liberalism that negotiates its own secular/religious divide through conceptions of women's rights and duties, in both public and in private.

The UDHR and its principles were "translated" into Islamic thought in Egypt in widely circulated texts like Muhammad al-Ghazali's *Human Rights Between the Teachings of Islam and the Declaration of the United Nations* (1963), Sayyid Qutb's *Social Justice in Islam* (1949), and Ali Abd al-Wahid Wafi's *Human Rights in Islam* (1957). These thinkers called for freedom, rights, and equality, first under the Egyptian monarchy and later under the

[18] Marwa Sharafeldin, "The 'Hareem' of the New Egyptian Constitution," *Egypt Independent*, March 15, 2012; Feminist Wire Newsbriefs, "Women's Right in Question in New Egyptian Constitution," *Ms. Magazine*, December 13, 2012.

[19] al-Majlis al-Qawmi li-l-Mar?a, "Huquq al-Mar?a al-Gha?iba Fi Mashru' al-Dustur," *La li-l-Dustur*, November 11, 2012; "al-Dustur al-Misri Yuhammish 'Nun al-Mar?a,'" *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 12, 2012; "Sarkhat al-Mar?a al-Misriyya fi Wajh 'Dustur al-Fitna wa-l-Tamayiz.'"

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dictatorship of Gamal Abd al-Nasser, as they strategically deployed "rights talk" as a political imaginary against repressive regimes. The family became a place for envisioning—and articulating—a system of reciprocal rights and duties in an Islamic society, symbolically standing in for an Islamic polity in a secular dictatorship that brokered no peace with political Islam. Both the state and opposition parties strategically deployed the language of rights and freedoms as ideological tools during this time.

The 2014 constitution promulgated under Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi reiterates, almost verbatim, the language of the 2012 "Islamist" constitution. It frames the question, though, as one of "social justice" (in Article 8) and "social solidarity" that entail a life of dignity for all citizens, "as outlined by the law." This qualification on equality has resonances and echoes of Article 11 under Sadat's 1971 constitution, where full equality for men and women was decreed, except where it contravened the shari'a. The 2014 constitution echoes the question of equality of opportunities found in these earlier constitutions (including the 2012 constitution), but now in a more gender-neutral tone of equal opportunities for all citizens. Article 10 reiterates that the family is the basis of society, but Article 11 goes further in talking about women's right to "public work," calling for women's representation in parliament and asserting a woman's "rights to take on public employment and high administrative positions in the state and to be appointed to judicial bodies without any discrimination against her." But then the article turns again at the end to protecting women from violence, as well as "protecting motherhood, childhood, pregnant women, aging women, and women in dire need." The clause on higher positions for women in the judiciary and administration is clearly a response to Islamist debates around the issue, even as the 2014 constitution continues to waver between women's right to high administrative positions and her duties and responsibilities in the household. This is clearly not an Islamist provision, but one that is deeply coded into the language of rights-speak included in these constitutions. It is a rights language that carries vestiges of its own moorings in the family, an essential counterweight to an individualistic, rights-based society.[20]

Personal Status Laws: A Secular Formula?

Criticisms of Egypt's 2012 ("Islamist") constitution have focused on Article 10: "The family is the basis of society, her support is religion, morality, and patriotism." This article has been generally interpreted as an Islamist provision, as flowing from an Islamist emphasis on family values and on women's roles as mothers. Yet Article 10 hardly has its origins in the Islamic ideology of the Freedom and Justice Party, as public commentaries have relentlessly

[20] Brown, "Liberalism's Family Values," 135–65.

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asserted. Article 10 is taken verbatim from Article 5 ("The family is the basis of society, founded on religion, morality, and patriotism") of the 1956 constitution under Nasser, who was, by that time, resolutely at war with the Muslim Brotherhood. This historical context, along with the looming moral presence of the UDHR, is utterly critical to understanding this particular formulation of a religious family as the basis of society (rather than politics). Through the constitution, Nasser sought to curb and control the powers of not just the Muslim Brotherhood, but also the influence of the Al-Azhar mosque and the religious courts.[21] In 1956, Nasser abolished the religious courts, bringing the (religious) laws of personal status under the jurisdiction of the (civil, secular) national courts, in addition to bringing the administration of Al-Azhar under government control. The personal status laws were, nonetheless, still governed by the religious laws of their respective religious communities. In his book *Formations of the Secular*, Talal Asad calls the personal status laws "the expression of a secular formula, defining a place in which 'religion' is allowed to make its public appearance through state law," and where religion is (publicly) relegated to private life.[22] Article 10 is a reflection of that "secular formula," growing out of the state's complex—and contested—relationship to the (religious) personal status laws. The personal status laws have historically functioned as a means of controlling religious law (partially) by consigning it to the family (and religious property), a tactic first used by colonial regimes in the region. Relegating shari'a to family law served to delimit its sphere of influence.

The role of Islamic law in state legislation has been one of the most contested questions in Egypt's constitutional history—one that has been manipulated for different political ends by different regimes. One of the biggest obsessions of the media was whether the Morsi government was going to impose religious law. But the personal status laws have come to stand in for (or even replace) religious law in general. Article 2 of *both* the 2012 *and* the 2014 constitution states that "Islam is the religion of the state and Arabic its official language. Principles of the Islamic shari'a are the main source of legislation." The 2012 and 2014 constitutions' assertion of Islamic law as "the source of legislation" is closely related to the role of the personal status laws as a repository for religious law in the Egyptian state. It is no accident that the next article, Article 3 (in both constitutions), goes on to define religious law of the respective religious minority communities as the basis for their own personal status laws, reiterating the centrality of religion (and religious law) in governing the personal affairs of the family. Most striking is the virtually identical approaches to hotly contested issues by both the "Islamist" govern-

[21] Nathalie Bernard-Maugiron, "Personal Status Laws in Egypt," Promotion of Women's Rights (Cairo: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, March 2010); Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 101–121.
[22] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 231.

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ment of Muhammad Morsi and the more "secular" government of al-Sisi in their imbricated visions of gender, religion, and rights in public and private.

Again, Article 2 stating that shari'a is *the* main source of legislation for the state is not unique to these newer constitutions but is tied to a complex history of negotiations over the role of religious law in state politics. The 1956 and 1971 constitutions declared Islam the religion of the state, but the 1971 constitution added an additional clause asserting that shari'a was *a* main source of legislation (even though the personal status codes were the only laws based on shari'a). In a later constitutional amendment in 1980, the Sadat government would change this to shari'a as *the* main source of legislation (identical to the clause in the new constitution). This clause was designed to counteract the uproar against "Jihan's law," a set of reforms to the personal status laws instituted by emergency decree in the wake of the 1978 Camp David[23] accords with Israel. Because of the long stalemate in Parliament around reforms to the personal status law, the Sadat government argued for an "emergency" type of situation mandating a decree law to effect the changes. The new laws were popularly attributed to Sadat's wife, Jihan, who had led the Egyptian delegation to the International Women's Year conference in Mexico City in 1975[24]. Reforms long and arduously debated throughout the 1960s were suddenly made into state law by presidential fiat. Needless to say, the Higher Constitutional Court overturned these reforms in 1985 precisely because of the tenuous legal nature of the "emergency." The declaration of shari'a as *the* source of legislation in 1980 was clearly an attempt to appease political unrest over both peace with Israel and "Jihan's law," radical changes enacted by executive power.

Shari'a as *the* source of legislation seemed designed to cushion the blow not only of peace with Israel, but also of the related structural adjustment policies of the late 1970s. The Sadat regime simultaneously issued new laws designed to facilitate women's work in public employment while simultaneously encouraging greater productivity (and economic management) of the household.[25] The courts did little to enforce shari'a as the basis of law (other than enforcing the personal status laws), despite a number of cases brought by Islamists in the 1980s to test its applicability.[26] Article 2 of the 2012 and 2014 constitutions adopted the language of the 1980 amendment, but without a clear blueprint of its applicability beyond the personal status laws. This legal

[23] Wael B. Hallaq, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 145–46.

[24] Jihan Sadat, *A Woman of Egypt* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002).

[25] Ministry of Information, *Al-Marʔa Al-Misriyya: Mishwar Tawil min al-Hijab ila Asr Al-Ubur* (Cairo: Public Information Council, 1976); Julinda Abu Nasr, Nabil F. Khoury, and Henry Azzam, eds., *Women, Employment, and Development in the Arab World* (Berlin: Mouton, 1985); Nadia Hijab, *Womanpower: The Arab Debate on Women at Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Azza M. Karam, *Women, Islamisms and State: Contemporary Feminisms in Egypt* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997).

[26] Hallaq, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, 145–46.

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language reinforces the family and gendered relationships as the sphere proper of religion, religious government, and religious law. Both a seemingly Islamist and a seemingly secular government understand religious law as relegated to private issues associated with the personal status laws.

Family: The Unit of the (Neo)liberal Polity

These legal provisions about the inviolability of the family instituted a political division of labor in the social life of the secular state. It is well known that Sadat's overtures to Islamist groups were aimed at harnessing their political power against the socialist left, which stood in the way of Sadat's goals of economic liberalization, privatization, and structural adjustment. These policies began in 1974 (around the time of Nixon's visit to Egypt) and were furthered with Egypt's 1977 agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF; on the eve of Sadat's "journey to Jerusalem"). This political and economic liberalization helped contribute to the rise of Islamic groups in Egypt, as they capitalized on newfound freedoms to spread their message.

Sadat's 1971 constitution reintroduced a concept absent from the 1956 constitution promulgated under Nasser: the family as the locus of private property (*amlak* in Article 10). This clause is grouped in a cluster of articles (9–11) that talk not just about family and private property, but also about motherhood and childhood, a gendered division of labor, and women's equality. The clause about the family as the locus of private property resuscitated elements from the earlier "liberal" constitution of 1923, one that declared "homes" and "property" sacrosanct and inviolable (*hurma*), a word connoting not just sacredness, but with feminine overtones of the *harim,* women. These legal provisions cultivated the family as the locus of property, as the sphere proper of women's labor, and as necessary to the proper management of national resources, whether human or material.

The gendered terms of the 1971 constitution set the legislative stage for a series of interrelated processes that included economic liberalization (the Open Door Economic Policy), rapprochement with the USA, peace with Israel, deals with the IMF, structural adjustment, international aid, and loosened restrictions on Islamist groups. Family and women became targeted as key sites of economic reform, especially through the United Nations women and development initiatives. International organizations swooped down on a newly "opened" Egypt. One of their more fervent aims was accomplishing the goals of the International Women's Year, including (economic) development and (economic) equality, in which Jihan Sadat played a key part. After she led a delegation to the International Women's Year conference in June 1975, she presided over a conference at Al-Azhar University on "Makanat al-Mar'a fi al-Usra al-Islamiyya" (The Place of Woman in the Islamic Family), with assistance from the United Nations Population Fund. The conference reiterated the family as a "fundamental unit for building society; a microcosmic image of society itself; society takes from the family its means of government,

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organization, and modes of nation building."[27] One of the most important products of this international aid was Al-Azhar's International Islamic Center for Population Studies and Research, with projects that continue to be jointly sponsored—and funded by—USAID, UNICEF, and the Ford Foundation.

Commitment to privatization and structural adjustment policies, and, accordingly, to peace with Israel, was born out under the Morsi government, as it sought out bigger and better agreements with the IMF (a $4.8 billion loan proposed in November 2012).[28] The Freedom and Justice Party's Al-Nahda Project, a document that served as a platform for the Morsi presidency and a blueprint for the constitution, could not be more explicit in its commitment to neoliberal expansion.[29] One of the first sections of the document (after "Building a Political System") is on "Transforming Into a Development Economy." Women's labor is absolutely essential to this neoliberal vision, as it was to aid projects of the 1980s and 1990s. The document ends with assertions of the importance of women's labor in the household economy and in "private enterprise," asserting that the vision of the Nahda Project "depends on respecting the dignity of the Egyptian citizen and his right to own property."

The Nahda Project speaks the (neo)liberal language of women's equality with men, of the complementarity of their labor, of the importance of finding a gendered balance between work in the family and outside the family, in the household economy and in "private enterprise," in private and in public. This contested—and gendered—territory has been an integral part not only of development projects and discourses in the region (the UN's Women and Development initiative, for example), but also in subsequent Egyptian constitutions that wrestle with the relationship between family duties, "work in society" (1956, 1971), and "public work" (2012, 2014). In *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, sociologist Maria Mies calls this a process of "housewifization" in "the new international division of labor," as capital "rediscovers third world women's importance to the global economy."[30] The 2012 constitution's call for an agreement between public work and private duties has also attracted criticism as an Islamist bid to impose Islamic family values on the Egyptian family. I would argue that these "family values" are an integral part of the liberal politics of the new constitution, family values that are not unique to an Islamic society nor to an Islamic polity.[31] These family

[27] International Islamic Center for Population Studies and Research, al-Azhar, *Makanat al-Marʔa fi al-Usra al-Islamiyya* (Cairo: International Islamic Center for Population Studies and Research, al-Azhar, 1975).

[28] Yasmine Saleh and Edmund Blair, "Egypt Agrees Deal for $4.8 Billion IMF Loan," *Reuters*, November 20, 2012.

[29] Hizb al-Adala wa-l-Hurriyya, "General Features of the Nahda (Renaissance) Project," IkhwanWeb (April 28, 2012), http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=29932.

[30] Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation On A World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labor* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 112.

[31] Brown, "Liberalism's Family Values," 135–65.

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values shore up a rights-based community, providing a source of communal cohesion in a polity calling for individual liberties. These family values emphasize the importance of private property in the family, managed as an economically productive household economy, as the political and economic unit of a neoliberal polity. The clause attracted little attention when it made its way into the 2014 constitution, which passed with ease under the new military government.

Women's equality with men—in the new Egyptian constitutions, in the Nahda Project, and in the USA's Equal Rights Amendment never passed—has hinged on issues of women's labor in the home and outside the home. Like the 2012 constitution, the Nahda Project also asserts women's equality with men, doing so in a framework that addresses the issue of the balance between women's work in the home and outside the home. This section of the document begins with verse 3:195 from the Qur'an: "I do not squander the work of any worker from among you, whether male or female; you are from one another." The document goes on to derive a principle of commensurability (*mukafa'a*) between men and women "in status and position." From the perspective of liberal feminism (and developmentalist logics), economic participation and economic independence fosters women's equality with men, concepts articulated in this section of the Nahda Project.[32] Drawing on the language of the earlier constitutions, the Nahda Project calls for "supporting and empowering the Egyptian woman and facilitating [*ifsah*] the path to her social and political participation in the priorities of national work and development, growing from our belief that women are equal to men in position and status, commensurate in work and importance." The first clause asserts, "We strive toward empowering the Egyptian woman in practice and not just in words, and toward eliminating the obstacles that block her from fruitful participation in all domains of life, particularly those domains that help women to realize a balance between her contributions to home and family and to society." Much like other development documents that talk about empowerment, the elements of economic participation, growth, and "fruits" are understood as fostering economic freedoms, independence, and equality.[33] The Nahda Project explicitly calls for fostering women's participation in small businesses and "private enterprise."

[32] Hizb al-Adala wa-l-Hurriyya, "Nahda Project"; Kathi Weeks, *The Problem With Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 64–7.

[33] United Nations Development Program, Regional Bureau for Arab States and Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, *The Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World* (New York: United Nations, 2005); Lila Abu-Lughod, Fida J Adely, and Frances S Hasso, "Overview: Engaging the Arab Human Development Report 2005 on Women," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 1 (February 2009): 59–60; Mark LeVine, "The UN Arab Human Development Report: A Critique," *Middle East Research and Information Project* (July 26, 2002).

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As with prior constitutions, and prior governments, the issue of women's rights and women's equality has been enmeshed in the question of women's labor, both inside and outside the home. Women represent a critical factor in the state's project of human development, of which women's (human) rights are understood as an essential element. Equality in this sense means two things: the right to economic equality (through formal labor) and reciprocal rights and duties in the family (informal labor). Women play a central role in cultivating the raw human material of the family but also in overseeing private property and private enterprise, the building blocks of the (neo)liberal state. Key articles of the 2012 and 2014 constitutions (Article 10 in both) address this issue, defining women's pivotal importance in mediating between the private and public sectors. Women play a key role in creating an "agreement" or a "balance" (*tawfiq*) between the two realms, one that synchronizes them toward (what the 1956 constitution calls) the "goals of the nation."

Women's Work

Finally, the 2012 and 2014 constitutions broach what has been a long-contested and debated topic in Islamic thought about the legitimacy of women's political participation. Drawing on Islamic writings about women's political participation and leadership, debates that erupted in the 1980s and 1990s, the Nahda Project calls for a campaign to overcome cultural biases about this political participation. The marks of a number of important Islamic feminists, especially thinkers like Ezzat Heba Raouf, can be seen in the document, marks that found their way into the new constitution. In her 1995 book *al-Mar'a wa-l-Amal al-Siyasi* (*Woman and Political Work*), Raouf developed a theory of women's political participation in the Islamic *umma (nation)* through "jihad" in the family.[34] Drawing on conceptions of the family as the first "cell" of society in modern Islamic thought, she reorients politics in the personal, in the sphere of family relations. This work in the family is what Raouf calls a "non-violent jihad," a "women's' jihad" that effects social change at the level of intimate relations.[35] Describing a kind of biopower from the ground up, her Islamic theory of women's political work in the 1990s gave way to a later understanding of the power of informal networks, of community institutions, of micro-politics, and of intimate relations in transforming the larger, seemingly indomitable forces of global politics. She developed this theory in the early 1990s, in the midst of—and in response to—a proliferation of development projects and reports focusing on women, work, and family in the Arab world. This "politics of informality" is what she also terms the "soft force" (*al-quwa al-na'ima*) of "gradual institutional change," a tactic that has long

[34] Heba Raouf Ezzat, *Al-Marʔa wa-l-Amal al-Siyasi: Ruʔya Islamiyya* (Herndon, VA: Institute of Islamic Thought, 1995), 156–58.
[35] Ibid., 34.

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been one of Islamic organizations' most powerful political tools in Egypt.[36] But "soft force" has also become one of the ways of interpreting the power of the new revolutions in the Arab world. Raouf, a political science professor at Cairo University and an Islamist public intellectual, draws on Joseph Nye's concept of "soft power,"[37] but she also deploys classical Islamic language of *ni'ma*, of a blessing or of smoothness that also has a feminine connotation of women's softness. The preamble of the 2012 constitution included a notion of "soft force" as its 11th and final principle.

The Egyptian constitution uses the master's tools to dismantle the master's house, to borrow Audre Lorde's famous metaphor in *Sister Outsider*. Lorde also argued that this made "genuine change" impossible. Her essay is a criticism of white feminism's notion of "marital slavery"; according to Lorde, "the need and desire to nurture is not pathological but redemptive" and is its own kind of "freedom" and "emancipation."[38] Lorde's ideas would influence feminist activists and theorists like Patricia Hill Collins, who wrote about the social and political value of "motherwork," and bell hooks, who wrote about "homeplace" as a site of resistance in a white world.[39] The new constitution clearly uses the language of liberalism—and the techniques of neoliberalism—to imagine a rights-based society, re-envisioning a capitalist democracy in Islamic terms. But the document also envisions a (neo)liberal family structured by notions of an equal—or reciprocal—division of labor between the formal and informal economies, between the private and public, between family and polity. A haven in a heartless world, family shores up community in an age of predatory capitalism and structural adjustment.[40]

Article 10's clause about balancing duties to the family and work outside the home—a concept rife in any mommy blogs in the blogosphere, or in the media storm over Anne-Marie Slaughter's article in *The Atlantic,*[41] or in any number of books and movies about the problem of "having it all"—has been read in the American media as symptomatic of the Islamic character of the new constitution. Rather than being interpreted as a gesture of

[36] Heba Raouf Ezzat, "Al-Quwa al-Na'ima" (Al-Jazeera Center for Studies, October 13, 2011), http://studies.aljazeera.net/files/2011/08/20118872345213170.htm.

[37] Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means To Success In World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005).

[38] Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (New York: Ten Speed Press, 1984), 111.

[39] bell hooks, "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance," in *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990); Patricia Hill Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminism Theorizing about Motherhood," in *Motherhood: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*, ed. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey (New York: Routledge, 1994).

[40] Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995).

[41] Anne-Marie Slaughter, "Why Women Still Can't Have It All," *The Atlantic*, August 2012.

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acknowledgement of the actual conditions created by a (neo)liberal vision of women's equality and liberation, the American (and leftist Egyptian) press has interpreted these references to the family as repressive. In the various iterations of the Egyptian constitution, it has been recognized that the family has a 'key role …'[42]

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Chapter Nine

The Struggle of Egyptian Women for Equal Rights Continues: Two Steps Forward, One Step Backward

Moushira Khattab

Abstract I often wonder what happened to the women of ancient Egypt who led armies and ruled vast empires as early as 7000 years ago. What was it that went wrong and caused them to have to start all over again in the nineteenth century? Why were they relegated to vulnerable roles so often in need of male protection? Was it the many invading armies with their diverse cultures, or the invading religions that treated women as inferior? What caused this steady decline in women's participation in decision-making processes over the years?

Introduction

I often wonder what happened to the women of ancient Egypt who led armies and ruled vast empires as early as 7000 years ago. What was it that went wrong and caused them to have to start all over again in the nineteenth century? Why were they relegated to vulnerable roles so often in need of male protection? Was it the many invading armies with their diverse cultures, or the invading religions that treated women as inferior? What caused this steady decline in women's participation in decision-making processes over the years?

The evolution of women's struggle for equal rights is an interactive process between women's insistence on acquiring these rights and the forces that deny them such rights on account of the myth that they violate tradition, belief, and culture. It is a fact that this strategy serves the political aspirations of those who hide behind these myths. While it is quite possible that those who repress women do so out of fear, given the prominence of Egyptian women throughout the country's long history, the fact remains that women acquiring their rights depends on the level of economic, social, and cultural development of the country. It also depends on men's awareness of the economic value of women practicing their rights. The articulation of an Egyptian feminist consciousness has been one of Egypt's evolutionary paths, allowing the country to

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_9

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achieve the status of a modern nation state at the start of the nineteenth century. The progress however, has not been linear. Even when women proved to be deserving political participants and catalysts for societal and political change, all they obtained was praise. Their heroic roles never culminated in stronger participation in the decision-making process. This phenomenon happened in 1919, and it was still happening in the first decade of the new millennium. Has this situation changed since the revolutions of January 25, 2011, and June 30, 2013?

At the time I initially finished writing this chapter, the picture was far from promising for Egyptian women. By the time the publisher asked for some final touch-ups, however, the situation seemed a good deal more promising than what I had anticipated 18 months earlier. After Egypt's most recent parliamentary elections ushered in an unprecedented 89 female members, I can say with some degree of contentment that Egypt's bumpy transition to democracy has not treated women as badly as I had thought and feared.

In this chapter I critically review highlights of Egyptian women's activism throughout modern history and link these to the so-called "Arab Spring." I examine the concrete gains of women as well as their frustrations over decades of struggle. I also review the evolution of Egyptian women's constitutional status and examine whether this reflects their actual level of participation and standing within society. I examine the Egyptian constitutions of 1923, 1958, 1971, 2012, 2014, and the constitutional declaration of March 2011. I also analyze constitutional articles dealing specifically with women's issues, as well as others that have a direct bearing on women, such as the articles on nondiscrimination, state identity, and the relation between the state and religion. The language and approach of the constitutions and their strategies will be considered. I will also evaluate the outcome for women with regard to three key issues: harmful practices, women in the judiciary, and their parliamentary representation.

The Evolution of Egyptian Feminist Activism

Egyptian women have led the battle of Arab women since the eighteenth century. They were the first to achieve the right to education in the second half of the nineteenth century, the first to achieve political rights and secure seats in the parliament in the 1950s, and the first to become ministers in the early 1960s. Regrettably, however, the constitutional status of Egyptian women has not always compared favorably to other countries that started much later than Egypt.

Egyptian women were the first in the Middle East and North Africa to fight for equal rights. These efforts triggered the writings of Kassem Amin and Mohamed Abdou at the tail of the nineteenth century. They made waves in a sea of traditional thinking that treated women as fragile dependents in need of protection. Egypt was under British occupation and was looking for

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a national project capable of improving the social wellbeing of the average Egyptian. Women had become visibly active even before the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Malak Hefny Nassef (1886–1918) was a feminist activist who wrote a book (*al Nesa'yaat*, or *Feminism*) about women's rights. Women published magazines and established a number of non-government organizations [NGOs]. Samira Moussa (1917–1952) was the first Egyptian female nuclear scientist; in 1948 she founded the Egyptian Atomic Energy Authority. Foad I University (now Cairo University) opened in 1908. The first and largest university in the Middle East, it was built by a female member of the royal family who sold her jewelry to fund its construction. Soheir El Kalamawi was the first woman to enroll at the university, the first to hold a PhD in literature and become a professor of modern Arabic literature in the Faculty of Arts, and the first head of the Book Authority. She wrote many books and was decorated in 1941 and again in 1977 and 1978, receiving two of the highest honors in Egypt. Activist Nabaweya Moussa (1886–1951) was among the main figures who advocated education for women. She became the first Egyptian female headmaster.

Hoda Shaarawy founded the Egyptian Feminist Union in 1923, which she chaired until 1947, and founded the Arab Women's Union. She also served as the deputy chair of the Committee of International Feminist Unions in 1935. Shaarawy attended a number of conferences in Europe after 1923 and started a number of magazines. In November 1947 she sent a letter to the United Nations protesting the UN resolution on the partition of Palestine. She also fought for women's education. Having been married at the age of 13 to a man who was 40 years her senior, she called for raising the minimum age of marriage for girls to 16 to allow time for girls to have some education. In 1908, she led women into Foad I University and had them occupy seats as students. She established an NGO to care for children. During the 1919 revolution, she led women in demonstrations and removed her veil in public.

Mofida Abdel Rahman (born in 1914–2002) was the first Egyptian and Arab woman to become a lawyer, graduating from the Faculty of Law at Foad I University in 1939. She fought for a waiver that would open the door for married women to join the university. She became a member of the Egyptian Parliament in 1960. Her defense of more than 400 court cases captured public attention. She was the first woman to defend cases before military courts, and she became the chair of the International Federation for Lawyers and Juries in Cairo. Rawya Attia became the first female Member of Parliament in 1956.

Amina El-Said graduated from Foad I University in 1935 and became the first female editor-in-chief of a number of magazines. She fought for the discriminatory personal status law and received several death threats because of her liberal views. Doreya Shafik played a pivotal role in pushing for women's political rights and was instrumental in achieving this goal in the early fifties. In 1954 she objected to the fact that women were not represented in the committee that wrote the constitution.

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Siza Al-Nabarawi was the first woman to remove the veil in public, along with Hoda Shaarawy. She was also instrumental in raising the minimum age of marriage for girls to 16. She chaired the International Democratic Feminist Federation, based in Berlin, and succeeded Hoda Sharawi in chairing Egypt's Feminist Federation. Hekmat Abou Zeid became the first female minister in 1962, crowning a long struggle as a student activist.

Today there are few positions that Egyptian women cannot occupy. In all the positions they have occupied, they have demonstrated a high level of proficiency and proved that women are capable of being leaders and decision makers. Though impressive and continuing, the progress achieved by Egyptian women has not been commensurate with their efforts. It has always been a case of two steps forward, one step back, and their efforts to consolidate and build on their gains have often been derailed. Various forms of trickery have been deployed to deviate women and the country from the feminist path and halt women's progress. During times of upheaval, opponents of Egyptian feminism have attempted to discredit women's gains by associating them with Gihan Sadat and Susan Mubarak. Because these women were the First Ladies of leaders who were assassinated (Sadat) or deposed (Mubarak), tying them to feminism is meant to cast doubt on the idea of women's rights.

I would like to refer next to the different constitutions and then illustrate women's current status with three examples.

The Evolution of Egyptian Women's Constitutional Status

Egypt and the Arab world have endured testing times for the past five years. The revolutions were the work of men and women equally. Women voiced their concerns and fought and slept on the streets alongside men, challenging traditional expectations of their behavior. They were present every step of the way. They stood in the longest queues to cast their votes every time citizens were called upon to voice their opinions. Three times since 2013, with their impressive political participation on behalf of the constitution, the new president, and the parliament, women came forth as a formidable voting bloc that brought down political Islam. They made up for youth boycotts of the elections, saving the country and giving it a second chance to be a civil state.

In return, women received a great deal of praise from the president and many observers. In what could be a precedent in its long history, the editorial of the semi-official *Al-Ahram* newspaper had the following title on its front page: "Egyptian women: a history of enlightenment and struggle not to be wasted" (June 16, 2014). Women were at the center of the uprisings that rocked Egypt and the entire Arab world, yet not even this earthquake could shake the foundations of the wall that stands between them and their rights. A closer look at Egyptian modern history tells us that most efforts to modernize Egypt have somehow bypassed women. References to religion or culture

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have traditionally been used to justify such a situation. I am not a fan of radical feminism, and I do not see gender relations as a zero-sum game. I believe, however, that the problem is ignorance rather than hate—ignorance of the benefits men stand to gain when women enjoy equal rights. A review of the constitutional status of Egyptian women illustrates this assumption.

1923 Constitution

Egypt became an independent state in 1922, and the first constitution was written in 1923 by a committee appointed by the king and representing political parties and national movements. Like all constitutions at that time, it was perceived as a grant from the king to his subjects. It reflected the spirit of the 1919 revolution, during which Egyptians had come together regardless of religion or gender. At the forefront of the constitution, Article 3 provided that "Egyptians are equal before the law, and equal in enjoying civil and political rights and in their takaleef (duties and public duties) without any discrimination based on origin, language, or religion." Toward the end of the document, Article 149, placed under "general provisions," stipulates that Islam is the religion of the state and Arabic its official language.

To its credit, the 1923 constitution reflected a similar approach to that of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The 1923 constitution was the first charter to be based on the principles of non-discrimination, and it explicitly highlighted this in its opening clauses. A similar outlook is found in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, although it is remarkable that the 1923 Egyptian constitution was drafted a good 20 years before these two charters. Non-discrimination became less of a core pillar in later Egyptian constitutions. This trend continued until it reached its lowest point under the Islamist constitution of 2012, which elevated religion over the principles of equality in the enjoyment of human rights, personal freedoms, and freedom of worship.

As indicated above, Egyptian women played a remarkable role in the 1919 revolution against the British. They took to the streets, calling for Egyptian independence and women's rights. Their role was publicly recognized. The notable nationalist and leader Saad Zaghloul expressed his gratitude for the role of women upon his return from political exile in 1923 with the dramatic statement: "Long live Egyptian women!" This supportive public discourse concealed a bitter reality, however. The constitution drafted and adopted at that time failed to reflect this appreciation for women by not explicitly prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of gender. Many laws were further promulgated to set the stage for the emerging modern nation state, but none of these laws catered for women. In fact, reference to women was altogether absent. For example, Law 11, issued on April 30, 1923, stipulated that "every Egyptian male adult over the age of 21 has the right to vote." The law ignited a wave of protest among the nascent feminist movement. Mounira Thabet

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(1906–1967) publicly criticized national leaders for excluding women from the right to vote. Thabet established a weekly magazine called *Al-Amal* (*Hope*), in which she advocated women's suffrage and spoke loudly for amending the personal status law and its restrictions on marriage and divorce. Prominent historian Abdel Rahman Al-Rafei's words in 1949 reflect the usual sentiment: he praised women for their participation in the protests of the 1919 revolution but then limited their role to easing the pain of the poor and the sick. His three detailed volumes about Egypt after the 1919 revolution strangely overlook the various demands of the rising feminist movement in the country.

Women throughout modern Egyptian history have been hailed and recognized when they joined men to raise one unified demand, be it for freedom or social justice or, later in 2011, to bring down the regime. Once they call for their own rights, however, the reaction is different. Up until World War II, only meager achievements were made in women's political rights.

1958 Constitution

Egypt's union with Syria in 1958 warranted the drafting of a new constitution. The president issued a decree establishing a "technical committee" to write an ad hoc constitution. The new law of the land contained a brief chapter composed of five articles on "rights and public duties." The first article of this chapter provided for equality between citizens. It clearly referred to sex, along with origin, language, religion, and belief, as prohibited grounds for discrimination. This article, however, appeared as number seven, compared to its position as number three in the 1923 constitution. The 1958 constitution did not refer to the religion of the state.

1971 Constitution

In 1971, the People's Assembly (parliament) formed a special committee to write Egypt's permanent constitution. It decided that the committee would be composed of people of opinion, experience, and religion. The inclusion of clerics in the writing of the constitution affected the document's philosophy and content by adding a religious tone to the identity of the state. Reference to Islam as the religion of the state was restored, and the position of the article was elevated from the tail end of the constitution to the forefront, in Article 2. The Islamic identity of the state was further consolidated by a stipulation making Islamic law (sharia) "a source" of legislation. In 1980 the constitution was amended to allow to serve for an unlimited number of terms. In parallel, it further consolidated the Islamic identity of the state by making sharia the principal source of legislation. The 1971 constitution broke the secular tradition of modern Egyptian constitutions that began in 1923. Ironically, however, the principle of non-discrimination based on ideology was added, albeit pushed back to Article 40. In most democratic constitutions and human rights

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conventions, the right to non-discrimination is always included at the forefront, generally in Article 2 of the document.

The 1971 constitution, for the first time, introduced an article devoted entirely to women. Article 11 provides that the state ensure reconciliation between the duties of a woman toward her family and her work in society (note the difference in language, that is, "duties" vs "work"). Women's equality with men in the political, economic, cultural, and economic fields of life is to be considered, provided that such equality does not violate the provisions of sharia. With such a stipulation, the constitution put a lower ceiling on women's rights than on any other group of the population. The principles of sharia are the source of legislation for all citizens, but in the case of women, an added caveat is that the provisions of sharia remain controversial and can vary among clerics. Article 11 appears at face value to be a step forward for women's rights, but it is actually a discriminatory clause that puts women at the mercy of clerics. The majority of clerics were known to have an issue with Article 11, just as most of them frowned at the very thought of women demanding equal rights. To make matters worse for women, Article 11 was placed within the chapter on social foundations of the state rather than within the chapter on rights and obligations. It therefore pitted religion against women's equality with men. It also defined women's domestic role as a duty, putting it at a different level than her role in society. I believe women were better off without this article.

In a progressive mood and in response to pressures from the National Council for Women, other women's organizations, and numerous actors in civil society, the 1971 constitution was amended in 2010 to guarantee women a quota of 64 seats in parliament, in addition to allowing them to compete for other seats with men.

The "Arab Spring" and Its Impact on the Constitutional Rights of Women

The Constitutional Declaration of March 2011

The constitutional declaration of March 18, 2011, was written at the height of national fervor and the quest for unity, a period when Egyptians felt as empowered and triumphant as ever. This was a time when women were hailed as heroes and acknowledged for the first time as equals to men. It was the ideal atmosphere in which to write a constitution to unite the nation and acknowledge the power of citizens as equals.

Unfortunately, the opposite happened. The rhetoric that accompanied the fall of Mubarak's regime portrayed women's gains as an unfortunate legacy of the Mubarak era. The same had happened after the assassination of President Sadat in 1981. In addition, the constitutional declaration fell victim to an ill-managed transition and was marred by irregularities. March 2011 saw the suspension of the 1971 constitution, and voters were invited to participate in a

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referendum on amending six of its articles, mostly articles dealing with the presidential mandate. The people accepted the amendments, and the logical sequence would have been to enact the 1971 constitution with the amended articles. Instead, a new constitution consisting of 62 articles was issued a few days later without putting it to a popular vote. The composition of the committee that wrote the declaration was heavily criticized for its dominance by Islamists and their supporters and the exclusion of women. This document nipped women's hopes in the bud by removing Article 11 altogether. The prohibition of gender-based discrimination was also removed from the article on non-discrimination. The classic closing phrase that prohibits discrimination on "any other ground" also disappeared from the same article. Together, these two changes completely closed the door on any hope for gender equality. To add insult to injury, the quota of parliamentary seats for women was also removed.

This set of amendments left little doubt as to the constitutional status of women or the direction the government was heading—the exclusion of the very same women who made the revolution possible. To celebrate International Women's Day in 8 March 2011, women took to Tahrir Square to raise their own banners for the first time since the January uprisings. This was when they discovered the bitter truth that women were denied their right to a peaceful march. Instead, they were harassed, their banners were torn apart, and they were chased away from Tahrir Square. This incident brought down the curtain on the final act of a masterfully directed show where women were used for the political gains of others and then discarded when they sought the tiniest bit of recognition.

The constitutional declaration of 2011 is often overlooked, although it made it easier for the Islamists to eventually take charge of the country and do away with women's rights. However, Islam is not an inherently discriminatory religion; rather, interpretations of Islam can be culturally biased. Most verses of the Quran address men and women equally. Enlightened clerics interpret Islam as a religion that does not discriminate against women and treats them as equals to men, citing one verse after the other as evidence. Notwithstanding, the charity approach often used still annoys me. However, even these clerics often take an attitude of charity toward women's roles outside the home, an approach that annoys me because it simply contradicts the right to equality.

Youssef Ziedan wrote an article on the feminization of the revolution. He cautioned that without women the gains of the revolution will be lost. He wrote this article on the eve of the 2011 referendum on the amendment of the six articles of the 1971 constitution. He hailed his daughter's activism in voting for the amendments. I am sure Zidan's view would have been different had he known that his daughter's vote would be used two weeks later to all but deny women's rights.

The 2012 Islamist Constitution

The process of writing the 2012 constitution was bogged down by political polarization and heightened tension. The composition of the committee that wrote the constitution was again criticized for its Islamist domination.

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Non-Islamist members of the committee complained of a flawed process, unprofessional drafting, information leakage, and text manipulation. Sidelined non-Islamists, women, an advisory group, and churches all later walked out in protest. The 2012 constitution introduced a theocracy in which religion plays a strong role in defining national identity. It gave clerics (a group of non-elected and often unqualified individuals) authority over the legislature. Although the constitution expanded the identification of rights, it lacked a human rights approach. More particularly, it avoided using the term "rights" when dealing with women as a distinct group.

The preamble of the 2012 constitution seemed gender sensitive, but the operative section positioned religion against gender equality. Women as a distinct group were recognized solely for their domestic role within a "family founded on religion, morality and patriotism." The state's commitment was to "preserve the genuine character of the Egyptian family, and to protect its moral values" and to provide services for childhood and motherhood free of charge. The constitution removed Article 11, allocated for women in the 1971 text. The 2012 constitution retained only one sentence on "the reconciliation between the duties of a woman toward her family and her public work."

The commitment to gender equality was removed altogether, as was the explicit prohibition of discrimination on the bases of sex, religion, language, origin, or any other grounds. Commitment to international conventions on human rights was also removed. It is worth mentioning that with these key omissions, the constitution not only made it virtually impossible for women to acquire new rights, but it also threatened previously acquired rights. The constitution did not prohibit human trafficking or slavery, and Islamists made no secret of their intentions to lower the minimum age of marriage for girls. The constitution gave a religious body the right to modify and interpret sharia as the source of legislation and jurisprudence. It allowed punishment based on a constitutional clause. This threatened women's achieved rights, such as unilateral divorce granted by Law 1/2000, protection from child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) (Law 126/2008), and custody of children. Women were given the right to custody of girls until they marry and boys until the age of 15. The 2012 constitution was designed to complete the unfinished agenda of the short-lived Islamist-controlled parliament, that is, to reverse women's gains.

The 2014 Constitution

With the ousting of the Islamists, a new political roadmap was announced in July 2013 that included suspending and amending the 2012 constitution. The process was influenced by a strong liberal mood. The representation of women in the committee that wrote the constitution was better than in its predecessor, and the final document was also better. The constitution restored Article 11 of the 1971 constitution with the following positive yet ambivalent modification of the state being "committed to ensure equal rights between men and women in accordance with provisions of the constitution." Women effectively remain

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the only group of citizens with restricted rights. This change is cosmetic because it continues to allude to tension between Islam and women's rights to equality. The constitution still maintains principles of sharia as the primary source of legislation. In other words, the limitations on women's equal rights have eased from the controversial provisions of sharia to its seemingly agreed upon "principles."

In addition, the constitution "works on" taking measures to guarantee women appropriate representation in elected councils; "ensures" women's right to hold public office, high-level management positions, and judiciary positions without discrimination; and "obliges" the state "to protect women against all forms of violence"—all of which indicate a step in the right direction as far as theoretical wording is concerned. Finally, the constitution leaves the law to establish an independent commission for the purposes of prohibiting and criminalizing discrimination and taking necessary measures to eliminate all its forms. The constitution, written under the leadership of self-proclaimed liberals, does not give women back their 1971 parliamentary quota of 64 seats in the lower house. The drafters even objected to "fair or just" representation and settled for "appropriate" representation in elected councils, with 25 percent representation mandated at the local level. Drafters of the constitution saw this as an entry point to future affirmative action. There is no guarantee, however, that such a provision will play out in women's favor at the polls. On the positive side, the constitution prohibits human trafficking, servitude, and slavery; criminalizes torture and bodily mutilation; and, in a step which promises to consolidate Law 126/2008, criminalizes FGM.

The Vulnerability of Women's Achievements

As one can tell from the evolution of constitutional rights, Egyptian women have succeeded in gaining considerable ground, albeit fragile and unconsolidated ground. I will use three examples to demonstrate the vulnerability of women's achievements: the fight against female genital mutilation, child marriage, and women as judges and parliamentarians.

The Fight Against FGM and Child Marriage

In 1904, a group of gynecologists began advocating for the abandonment of FGM. As early as the 1919 revolution, Hoda Shaarawi demanded the raising of the minimum age of marriage to 16 years. Almost a century of hard work by civil society and timid support by the state were not strong enough to trigger change. At the dawn of the new millennium, the author of this chapter took charge of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), the highest national entity for coordinating and monitoring national action for children and mothers. NCCM used its clout to coordinate, support,

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and boost the efforts of civil society. The council succeeded in soliciting public and grassroots support to build on previous attempts to criminalize FGM and prohibit child marriage.

Over the course of a decade, NCCM dealt with FGM in the context of a bottom-up, socio-cultural approach within a sensitive, innovative, and multi-disciplinary framework. Empowering grassroots NGOs helped increase opposition against harmful practices, eventually making it possible for the parliament to tackle what had historically been taboo topics. In an historic move, the Egyptian Parliament no longer recognized FGM as an accepted social tradition. Rather, it adopted a law criminalizing FGM and making it punishable by a fine and imprisonment. It also raised the minimum age of marriage to 18 years of age. These were the crowning achievements of our advocacy efforts. Prevalence rates of both practices declined in response to high-profile prosecution of perpetrators. With the eruption of the January 2011 revolution and the rise to power of political Islam, however, this momentum faded away as women's rights were clearly targeted. Repealing these gains became a top priority for Islamists, whether they were parliamentarians or presidential candidates. The first item on the agenda of the 2011 Islamist-led parliament was the repeal of Law 126/2008. They courted the dormant conservative value system that can still surface in the midst of political change.

The same approach was adopted by then presidential candidate (and later president) Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood. As part of his electoral campaign in 2012, he declared that FGM was a practice that should not be prohibited by law but rather left to the discretion of parents. His campaign also provided free FGM procedures throughout the country, a crime punishable by law that he got away with. His behavior sent a chilling message to the vulnerable grassroots, and cases of FGM have increased since then.

The fight against FGM and child marriage has suffered five years/severe body blow, and one year of Islamist rule in Egypt has dealt a crushing blow to previous achievements. By 2010, Egypt had established itself as a regional champion in the fight against FGM through the paradigm shift engineered by NCCM and early efforts to transfer its knowledge across the region. I rejoiced when an Egyptian court, in January 2015, found a doctor guilty of involuntary manslaughter after he performed FGM on 13-year-old Soheir El Batei, causing her death. He was fined and sentenced to two years in prison. I hailed the sentence as historic, and (perhaps naively) I anticipated national hype against FGM to return to its 2010 peak. After all, it was an implementation of Law 126/2008 criminalizing FGM. Little did I know, however, that the legal system in Egypt had reverted to post-2011 business as usual. The sentence was eventually suspended in January 2016, and this blatant violation of criminal law was swept under the carpet, like so many violations before it. Despite the massive popular support behind the June 30, 2013, revolution that removed Islamists from power, the full effect of rectifying the damage caused to society by Islamist politics has yet to reach FGM. While it is still true that June 30 turned many people against Islamist

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politicians, and in some cases even led many people to adopt a more libertarian lifestyle, Egypt has yet to return to the 2010 heights of the anti-FGM movement.

A new legal framework for children

In 1990, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force with overwhelming unanimity. All countries (barring two) ratified the convention, which sets the definition of the child as any human being below the age of 18 years. Egypt was among the first 20 countries to ratify the convention, and this initiative played a pivotal role in encouraging Arab and African countries to do the same.

The author was an expert on the Committee on the Rights of the Child for eight years starting in 2002, while at the same time leading NCCM, the national body in charge of children. It was therefore only natural that Egypt would set the example. The legal reform led by the author, Law 126/2008, was a leap forward. It commits the state to ensuring, as a minimum, that the rights guaranteed by international human rights treaties are enforced in Egypt. In collaboration with civil society and the grassroots, the author was able, in her capacity as Secretary General of NCCM, to encourage societal debate and solicit national consensus to support the reform. The criminalization of FGM and the raising of the minimum age of marriage to 18 years were both included in Law 126/2008.

Raising awareness about vulnerable segments of society went hand in hand with diligent prosecution in the application of the law. In one year, 9600 cases in violation of the new law resulted in punishing the civil registrars who performed underage marriage contracts. Law 126/2008 would not have been possible without five years of engaging with religious and community leaders, academics, parliamentarians, and civil society in continuous and responsible dialogue. The adoption of the law was followed and supported by advocacy, which focused on creating awareness of its provisions, enforcement, and monitoring mechanisms. Hard work followed the adoption of the law in June 2008. For the first time in Egypt, a work plan was designed to fully implement the law. Emphasis was laid on Capacity building of all cadres working with children and disseminating a culture of respect for human rights. Law 126/2008 earned the praise of the international human rights movement as a comprehensive legislative reform that met international human rights standards.

Unfortunately these efforts continued for only two years and were eventually stopped by the upheaval caused by the revolution of January 2011. The infant law needed to be complemented by educational reform, appropriate financial backing, and coordinated efforts by various state institutions. It also needed to be followed up by an assessment of the legislation's impact. Monitoring law enforcement was essential to assess impact, identify

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gaps, and enable potential Law enforcement professionals to encourage further change. All of this was halted and an opportunity was missed. After January 2011, political Islam used women as a distraction to disguise its lack of a reform agenda. Islamists were quick to stifle progress. Yasser Borhamy, the leader of the Salafi movement, was not ashamed to go on public television and advocate for lowering the age of marriage to nine years, according to claims that Prophet Mohammad married Aisha when she was nine years old. He bluntly called for bringing the age down to seven or even six years "so long as the girl can tolerate it." Borhamy did not sing alone. The lack of any organized opposition, including from the NCCM, to Borhamy's claims, reveals a public discourse characteristic of an Egypt of much earlier than 1921, when Hoda Sharawy called for raising the minimum age for marriage for girls to 16. The good news is that civil society organizations stood the test and defended Law 126/2008.

Women and the Judiciary

The story of women and the judiciary is another example of continuing battles needing to be fought when women thought they had already turned a page. One hundred years after the birth of the Egyptian feminist movement, this battle adds to Egyptian women's rich record of never-ending struggle and achievement. The Egyptian Higher Judicial Council (HJC) agreed to appoint female judges in 2002 in response to strong pressure from women's organizations. The decision was made with the participation of heads of all judiciary entities, including the Council of State. The implementation of this decision was left to the discretion of each judicial entity according to its internal system. In 2003 the first female judge was appointed as Deputy President of Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court. Egyptian women rejoiced for some time, only to realize five years later that the country still had only one token female judge. They increased pressure again. By 2006, 42 female judges had been appointed in the regular judiciary (civil, criminal, economic, and family courts). Seven years later and in 2010, the Council of State, an administrative judiciary body, appointed female judges through the decision of its highest body, "the Special Council." The decision somehow did not meet with the satisfaction of the General Assembly of the Council of State, which decided to reverse the decision of its Special Council. The justification the assembly gave was concerning: women were disqualified as judges because of their gender. This decision was unconstitutional, as the constitution stipulates that citizens are equal before the law and that discrimination is prohibited on the basis of religion, sex, or any other grounds.

As Minister of Family and Population at the time, the author was one of many who expressed anger at this setback. The timing was critical, as the decision coincided with the examination of Egypt's report before the UN Human Rights Council under the universal periodic review mechanism. I addressed a

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letter to the upper house of parliament in 2010 expressing my concern, giving two reasons. First, the decision infringed on the inalienable rights that women had fought for, such as the right to non-discrimination and the right to equal opportunities. The second reason for my concern was the entity that issued the objection: it was the same entity that had pushed for women's rights and issued the court sentence in the case of Aisha Rateb in 1951. Rateb had requested to be considered for the position of an administrative judge. The sentence of the court of the Council of State did not refer to any obstacle against her appointment. The court left it to the "appropriate moment as seen by authority of administration of justice." This verdict established a writ that cannot be repealed by any authority in the Council of State. The appropriate moment to appoint a female judge was established by the HJC as the entity "in charge of judicial appointments, according to Article 173 of the 1971 constitution. On this basis, the decision of the HJC prevents any judiciary entity that has not yet appointed female judges to question the validity of this decision.

The opposition by the Council of State brought back memories from more than a hundred years earlier, when women had taken to the streets to demand their rights in 1919. This nevertheless united all women who demonstrated in protest against the decision. The female deputy president of the Constitutional Court lost her position at the hands of the Islamist constitution of 2012. Nevertheless, the number of female judges has risen steadily to 68. Despite cumulative achievements, the Council of State still refuses to appoint female judges. In September 2015, Egypt's Supreme Judicial Council, at the request of the Minister of Justice, appointed the first female judge to take on the role of Assistant Minister of Justice. She leads the newly established sector of "The Rights of the Woman and Child." The mandate might seem stereotypical, but it actually hits the nail right on the head as the worst forms of discrimination against women remain within the personal status law.

Women in Parliament

Though Egypt took the lead in granting women their political rights, the two steps forward, one step back reality cost Egypt its leadership position. Representation of Egyptian women in parliament has remained dependent on the quota allocated for them. The parliamentary quota was abolished by both the constitutional declaration of March 2011 and the 2012 Islamist constitution. The 2014 constitution failed to renew the parliamentary almost 15%, but it installed one for local elections. The electoral law of 2015 tried to provide a quota on closed party lists and the 5 percent appointed by the president. Despite my skepticism, the representation of women in the parliament has reached the unprecedented number of 89, constituting 14 percent of the body, compared to less than 2 percent during the Islamist-led parliament of 2012.

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The three examples mentioned above demonstrate the diligence of Egyptian women, who eventually get what they fight for. But the examples also reveal the chronic problem of frustrated advancement that derails the progress of Egyptian women pioneers in the struggle for equal rights.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

Egyptian women still have a long way to go to translate their active informal political participation over the past five years into formal political participation in the decision-making process. They must be weary of the fact that political Islam has left the governing seat but not the minds of many people, but they need to ensure that their gains are not reversed.

After the adoption of the post-Islamist 2014 constitution, women were praised for their heroic activism that eventually gave Egypt its second chance to be a civil state. They were praised for their strong political participation and patriotism, which had made up for a boycott by the Islamists and some youth of the political processes of the roadmap announced in July 2013. Amidst these festivities, the president of the National Council for Women wrote a letter to the chair of the Council of State to inquire about the plans for implementing the new constitution. In reply, she was accused of interfering in the internal affairs of an independent judicial entity, and the Council of State demanded her interrogation regarding this offense. The contradiction between law and action is a replay of 1919 that indicates that history may be repeating itself. It also reflects the current dilemma facing women.

Religion remains a determining factor despite clerics having been stripped of the power to interpret sharia. The discretion of the judge becomes the critical factor. Will judges be forthcoming in implementing the letter and spirit of the constitution and supportive of women's rights, or will they succumb to cultural interpretations and the same narrow-minded dogma that continues to put women down and relegate them to an inferior place? I like to be optimistic and claim that the civic boom that transpired after the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood offers women an historic opportunity to establish themselves as a political force to be reckoned with. The challenge facing women is how to unite and transform their numerical advantage as a voting bloc into political power capable of influencing key decisions. Another challenge is to make the prevailing culture supportive of their rights. Such a culture will encourage or even force judges to do away with an outdated mentality and provide interpretations compatible with internationally agreed standards of human rights, as the constitution stipulates (Article 93).

A battalion of laws are needed to implement the new constitution. Women must ensure that the constitution is in fact implemented and does not remain an aspirational document. History has proven time and again that sympathy and empathy are not enough to force change. Women need to adopt the principle that if they want something done, they have to do it themselves. Women

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should not forget that the 2014 constitution raises the ceiling for human rights to international standards. As a tactic, women should consolidate their strength and focus on the price of their marginalization; they must highlight that women's rights is not a zero-sum game. Women have proven their ability to lead in key positions, and this record must be used to demonstrate to society as a whole that they are just as capable of influencing segments of society as men are—with men and not against men. Men and society stand to gain with women as equal citizens. Economists need to invest more of their energy into quantifying such benefits. Awareness is the strongest guarantee of human rights, including those specific to women. At a time when Egypt is at a crossroads in shaping its future, it is up to women to stand up and be counted. The past few years have shown that Egyptian politics is like a game of musical chairs; women must grab some of the empty seats now, before the music stops … once and for all.

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Chapter Ten

Women, Art, and Revolution in the Streets of Egypt

Névine El Nossery

Abstract This chapter focuses on women artists from Egypt who struggle to find means to access the public sphere through cultural forms while resisting being labeled as feminists or identified as "only women," seeking instead to be recognized as citizens struggling alongside men for their right to freedom, dignity, and fairness. Furthermore, the chapter argues that the world is witnessing the birth of what may be termed a "parallel revolution," unfolding underground and led by women. This revolution, what Hamid Dabashi calls a "delayed defiance," is gradually accelerating Egypt's transition to democracy and social justice through "a new imaginative geography of liberation in which ideas of freedom, social justice, and human dignity [are] brought forth to the collective imagination of the revolutionaries—an imagination already cultivated in literary and artistic forms."

Introduction

Perpetual confrontations with totalitarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa have prompted women to find new means to cope with political and social despair. The dynamics of this predicament are quite complex and sometimes inconsistent: while the revolutionary rhetoric praises women's agency, the post-revolutionary discourse often instrumentalizes women as icons of national identity. On the one hand, women are uncompromisingly seeking pathways to become subjects of their own history; on the other hand, they are still compelled to play specific roles within the nation, such as for reproduction and as guardians of traditional values and ethics. Since the beginning of the Egyptian revolution in 2011, representations of women through media and art, and even through laws and constitutional articles, illustrate a paradoxical standpoint. While women have been marginalized in many official and political institutions, images of women and women's bodies are abundant, multifaceted, and sometimes incongruous. This paradoxical position was accurately summarized by Loubna Skalli-Hanna: "[I]ts intensity and manifestation

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_10

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might vary with the changing politico-economic realities of the countries, but it remains a phenomenon that women activists have been working with, through, and against" (2006, 38).

This chapter focuses on women artists from Egypt who struggle to find means to access the public sphere through cultural forms, who resist being labeled as feminists or identified as "only women," and who seek instead to be recognized as citizens struggling alongside men for their right to freedom, dignity, and fairness. Furthermore, I argue that we are witnessing the birth of what I am tempted to call a "parallel revolution," unfolding underground and led by women. This revolution, what Hamid Dabashi calls a "delayed defiance" (Dabashi 2012, 2), is gradually accelerating Egypt's transition to democracy and social justice through "a new imaginative geography of liberation in which ideas of freedom, social justice, and human dignity [are] brought forth to the collective imagination of the revolutionaries—an imagination already cultivated in literary and artistic forms" (Dabashi, 226).

Graffiti and street performances, or Urban Art, are powerful means to strategically raise awareness, lobby for equity, and advocate women's empowerment, as they offer competitive alternatives to traditional artistic and media channels. I also contend that these inventive forms have played a major role in the rise of national and transnational visibility for women. All in all, art is an important tool for women to free themselves from social limitations that confine them to specific roles by allowing discursive interaction to reach hundreds of people within a democratic platform, thereby penetrating the public sphere.[1]

The concept of the "public sphere" was originally elaborated by Jurgen Habermas in his seminal 1962 book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, as "the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor" (1991, 27). If Habermas's concept of "public sphere" has been a productive premise for further debate, it has also undergone some critical interrogations due to its limitations. The subtitle of the book, *An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* limits the discursive practice to a certain societal group. In other words, Habermas's model maintains the stratification of society by excluding many minority groups—on the basis of gender, race, and class—from participating in the discursive arena. In this chapter, I will demonstrate—from a gendered perspective—how graffiti and street performances can be considered a platform for creative expression, refuting Habermas's specific bourgeois masculinist conception of

[1]While this chapter focuses mainly on graffiti, I will refer to street performances on a less extensive scale since the volatile and sometimes unpredictable nature of that form makes it very difficult to document.

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the public sphere. Urban Art thus eradicates societal hierarchy and disparity; it provides models of equality, diversity, and multiplicity that reach a wide community and blur the boundaries between civil society and the state. As Hoda Elsadda points out: "They are the 'true' or unmediated voices of the nation, voices that can potentially contest the hegemonic national narrative propagated by the cultural elite and ultimately redefine it to be more inclusive and diverse" (2010, 321).

Gendered art is in this sense a performative-contentious model of the public sphere, in which women are not only present but also defy the formulaic views that society and patriarchy impose on them. Skalli points out: "The paucity of democratic spaces and the fragility of democratic institutions makes women's voices all the more meaningful and oppositional" (2006, 53).

In the 30 years that preceded the revolution, Egypt was ruled by an autocratic, oppressive, and corrupt regime; torture of political detainees and abuses carried out by the violent Egyptian police and army were common practices enforced by state law. In 2010, two policemen viciously beat and murdered a young man, Khaled Said, who had filmed them allegedly sharing the spoils of a drug bust; this was the spark that triggered the revolution of January 25, 2011. On February 11, President Mubarak was forced to step down, entrusting the country to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) for more than a year before the first presidential election was held in June 2012. During the immense unrest that Egypt endured for almost 3 years, demonstrations, marches, riots, non-violent civil resistance, and labor strikes took place in most Egyptian cities.

Creative expressions were another means to promote struggle, denounce oppression, mobilize people, raise consciousness, and help bring about changes. As I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, women led a parallel artistic revolution that unfolded underground via a rhizomatic machinery—clandestine and often anonymous and yet everywhere—and created what Deleuze and Guattari have dubbed "strange new becomings, new polyvocalities" (1987, 191). During the revolution, the artistic fields where women intervened were many and varied, mirroring the revolutionary spirit and producing a never-ending network of creativity that I liken to rhizomes rather than to trees' roots because "[t]he tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb 'to be,' but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, 'and … and … and …' This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb 'to be'" (Deleuze and Guattari 24).[2]

[2] It is important to mention women's contributions in the field of movies and documentaries, which were quite impressive during the 3 years of the revolution. Amal Ramsis is a well-known revolutionary film director and activist. Her 2011 documentary *Forbidden* is a historic document of the months right before the uprising of January 25,

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Graffiti: The Art of the Revolution

"The Writing on the Wall"

At a banquet hosted by King Balthazar of Babylon (circa sixth century BC), a man's hand was seen writing mysterious words on the wall of the palace. None of the king's astrologers or philologists could decipher the enigmatic inscription. Only the visionary Daniel was able to interpret the writing, which predicted the end of the king's reign and his dynasty. One can discern from this legendary tale that writing secretive words on a wall can cause terror—it can be seen as incantatory, as having magic power. Indeed, the words engraved on the walls of Balthazar's palace predicted the collapse of his kingdom, which took place a few days later. It is also worth noting that the anonymity of the handwriting had the effect of intensifying panic, as the king and his entourage could not measure the extent or the number of dissidents who were behind this act of blasphemous vandalism. Anonymity is therefore a sign of menace, defiance, and potentially unquantifiable power. Moreover, the stability of those in power is jeopardized by the threat emanating from the anonymous entity that has the audacity to directly address such words to the king; the words are considered the voice of the ones who do not have a voice, the ones who are repressed and unable to speak publicly. Under authoritarian regimes, the masses always find means to express themselves and to incite people to action.

2011, in Egypt. In *The Point of Metamorphosis* (2013), Amal follows a young Egyptian woman devastated by her brother's murder when armored cars ran over protesters during the Egyptian revolution. *Raise Your Head, You Are an Egyptian* (2012) by Hala Jalal explores the extent of corruption and bureaucracy in Egypt's health care system. *The Square* is a 2013 Academy Award–nominated documentary by Jehane Noujaim that depicts the Egyptian revolution of 2011 from its roots in Tahrir Square. *Electro Chaabi* (2013) is a feature documentary by Hind Meddeb about the enormously popular world of Chaabi music parties and festivals that take place in many underprivileged neighborhoods in Cairo. *Words of Women from the Egyptian Revolution* is a web series documenting the participation of women in the Egyptian revolution. *Freedom Bus* is a documentary by Fatima Geza Abdollahyan that follows protagonist Ashraf El Sharkawy, an activist, as he embarks on a campaign to spread the concept of democracy in Egypt. Kamla Abou Zekry and Mariam Abou Auf produced the first collaborative feature on the revolution, *Tamantashar Yom/18 Days* (2011). *Khelket Rabena/God's Creation* (2011) by Kamla Abou Zekry follows the story of a girl who sells tea on the street and joins the revolution. *Tahrir 2/2* (2011) by Mariam Abou Auf is the story of two characters who meet on February 2, 2011, during the "Battle of the Camel," when Mubarak's thugs invaded Tahrir Square on camels and horses, killing 11 and injuring 600 protesters. Mai Iskander, in her award-winning documentary *Words of Witness*, tells the story of a young female journalist as she covers the demonstrations that spread under the SCAF's rule in 2011 and 2012.

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In its simplest definition as a form of unofficial, unsanctioned application of a medium onto a surface, graffiti and street art have always existed in the mainstream and on the periphery at the same time. If graffiti mainly describes the writing of words on walls using spray paint, street art refers to all types of expression on walls, including writing, pictorial devices using stencils or wheat pastes, or developed images and murals. Whether they have an aesthetic ambition to improve the look of ugly urban streets, a political agenda to contest injustice or defy power, or a more egocentric purpose to mark territories, graffiti and street art have always been considered vernacular languages and popular ways of speaking back to authority.

The 1970s was an important era for graffiti and street art, particularly in New York but also in other urban cities in the United States. It started with "tagging" the walls of the city by inscribing names using decorative forms involving serifs and curves. Because of rivalries between artists, urban graffiti developed in style and elaborateness and was installed in increasingly daring locations. Initially, the mainstream culture condemned graffiti and street art. It took almost 10 years for galleries and popular culture to accept this artistic form, an acceptance that was influenced by the success of hip-hop and rap music. The artists in the Unites States inspired others across the Atlantic and the movement quickly became universal, thanks to artists such a Keith Haring, Blek le Rat, and Banksy, among others. Nowadays the graffiti aesthetic in the West has become so subsumed by mass culture that its original countercultural appeal has arguably been lost.[3]

In the Arab world, graffiti and street art have always existed in various realms. Religious graffiti are inscribed on the walls of mosques and houses to celebrate the return of pilgrims from Mecca, and commercial slogans are often directly painted on walls. While graffiti is a new phenomenon in the Egyptian cityscape, especially in the political arena, one can see that the tradition has much older roots and can be connected to Arabic calligraphy art, which is ubiquitous in the Arab world.[4] If graffiti's origins in most countries in the West can be found in the hip-hop movement, the spark of the graffiti scene in Egypt is almost entirely linked to the January 25 revolution. Within a few days, the streets of many cities in Egypt became an open, living museum, and graffiti gained immense visibility and influence.

Although women's participation in the graffiti movement has not been massive, it is worth noting that their contribution to this artistic field remains

[3] For more details on the history of graffiti, see Cedar Lewisohn. 2009. *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*. Mustang: Tate Publishing; Anna Wacławek, 2011. *Graffiti and Street Art*. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd.

[4] Hassan Massoudy, an Iraqi calligrapher, describes the similarities between the arts of calligraphy and graffiti that led to the development of a neologism, calligraffiti, in Zoghbi, Pascal, Don Karl, and Joy Hawley. 2011. *Arabic Graffiti*. Berlin: From Here to Fame Pub., 45. For a more detailed study about calligraffiti, see http://www.calligraffiti.nl/what-is-calligraffiti.

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significant, inasmuch as the access of Egyptian women to the public sphere is relatively new and challenging. In addition, one needs to stress that shortly after the revolution when women went onto the streets to draw their protests, frustrations, dreams, and demands, they did it as Egyptians first, not as women, side by side with men amid often violent demonstrations at the front lines, braving tear gas and bullets. On the other hand, if women were defying the predominant patriarchal and essentialist images of Arab women, they were also contesting Western views, as Suha Sabbagh points out: "Through Western eyes, Arab women are perceived in popular culture as docile, male-dominated, speechless, veiled, secluded, subdued, and unidentifiable beings" (2003, xi). Leila Ahmed, a well-known intellectual who has written extensively on Arab women, argues that women represented as oppressed are "facts" manufactured in Western culture by the same men who have also littered the culture with "facts" about Western women and how inferior and irrational they are (1982, 527).

On many occasions, Egyptian women displayed their resentment about feminists and Western media who assumed that the January 25 revolution "liberated" women in Egypt. Such statements obliterated the long history of Egyptian women's defiance and protests, most recently in the decade prior to the 2011 revolution. The demands of female protesters were targeted toward justice and freedom for all Egyptians rather than solely focused on women's liberation or women's rights. However, within the realms of the revolution's progress, many women began to express concern that their involvement in the demonstrations was not being translated into a more participatory role in the political transition and that they were discriminatorily excluded from political institutions. The sit-ins in Tahrir Square were part of the revolution's unfolding of complex and sexual problems within the society.

In this section of the chapter, I will focus on some illustrations of women's graffiti to demonstrate that women's participation in the public sphere, though new, is not necessarily undertaken with a clear feminist agenda. Rather, female street artists are compelled to express their voices in ways similar to their male counterparts in the struggle for freedom, dignity, and social justice. Despite these common demands, one can say that female graffiti and street performances also contain signs of defiance against the stereotyped perceptions that the society has of women.

Alexandrian painter and street artist Aya Tarek is considered by many of her peers to be one of the pioneers of graffiti in Egypt. A founder of the Design Studio Art Establishment Collective (ARTest), she has been featured in and produced several independent films, including a film by Ahmad Abdallah called *Microphone* (2010), which explores Alexandria's underground art scene. Despite her young age (born in 1989), Aya designed publicity and advertising for a number of companies before joining the Faculty of Fine Arts (Alexandria University), specializing in oil painting. She started drawing graffiti with spray paint on the walls of a small shop owned by her grandfather, and later she decided to go out beyond the walls of the shop and explore Alexandria's open spaces. Aya painted everywhere, on walls and electricity booths. All her drawings have a political

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angle, like a drawing of Bruce Lee wearing the uniform of former president Anwar El Sadat as a commentary on that era.

Hend Kheera, a young artist (b. 19xx), is the first Egyptian graffiti artist to be profiled by *Rolling Stone* magazine. Hend, who also works as a structural engineer, made stencils around Tahrir Square during the sit-ins in 2011. She also launched a graffiti campaign against sexual harassment with a stencil that says “Don’t touch or castration awaits you!”[5] The inscription is shocking and provocative, compelling some passers-by to criticize Hend, a signal that her message was powerful and effective.

Hanaa El Degham, an Egyptian expatriate living in Berlin, spent a few months in Cairo during the revolution.[6] Hanaa’s mixed-art mural on a French private school’s wall in one of the main arteries leading to Tahrir Square is still one of the most astounding street artworks to be seen in Egypt. On this large mural, Hanaa portrays women fully dressed in black niqab (full face veil) and carrying gas cylinders on their heads. The word “Change” is marked on the cylinders, symbolizing the burden that women and the poor are under to fulfill their most basic needs. Hanaa also worked for days with well-known graffiti artist Ammar Abo Bakr and other painters on the Muhammad Mahmoud martyrs’ mural commemorating the February 2012 football stampede that left at least 75 young men dead.[7]

Bahia Shehab, an artist, designer, and Islamic art historian behind the project *A Thousand Times No*[8] participated in the revolution by feminizing the act of rebellion with her art. She produced her work in reaction to the aggressive and organized sexual harassment campaigns that were employed by followers

[5] This stencil was inspired by the trial of Samira Ibrahim. On March 9, 2011, 16 women were arrested after the military attempted to disperse a sit-in in Tahrir Square. The women were taken to a military prosecution facility where they were tortured, hit, electrocuted, and subjected to virginity tests. Samira Ibrahim was the only one of the women to file a lawsuit against Egypt’s armed forces and ruling military council, but her case was dismissed after a military court exonerated the doctor involved of all charges in March 2012.

[6] http://hanaeldegham.com/graffiti.php.

[7] Hanaa worked on the painting for days, joining well-known small group of artists led by Ammar Abo Bakr began to paint the walls of Muhammad Mahmoud Street. After 51 days of painting, the 30-meter mural was completed. It depicts colorful images of martyrs in angel wings, peasant women carrying gas tanks on their heads, and pharaohs’ battle scenes.

[8] Bahia Shehab is an associate professor of professional practice at The American University in Cairo studying ancient Arabic script and visual heritage. She developed and launched the new graphic design program for the Department of the Arts, with courses focused mainly on the visual culture of the Arab world. She is currently a PhD candidate at Leiden University in Holland. Her research is on Fatimid Kufic inscriptions on portable items in the Mediterranean basin and beyond.

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of the Muslim Brotherhood[9] to intimidate women and prevent them from going down to protest in the squares: "'Tamaradi ya Outta' or 'Rebel Cat'" she says, "was a call to women to join the revolution." Shehab describes her project in these words:

> I feminized the verb 'to rebel,' so more women could relate to it, and added the word 'cat,' a howl that men sometimes call to women on the street. I painted the cat with a halo in many colors along with the slogan.[10]

On June 7, 2013, Shehab sprayed a big brain composed of naked female body parts and the message "Mokhak 'awra" (Your brain is shameful and it should be covered), sending a message to the men who want to silence and intimidate women, "[a] message to the men who claim that the voice, the hair, the body and the face of a woman is an 'awra,' a shameful thing that should be covered."[11]

It is also worth noting that many collectives and organizations have used graffiti to raise awareness about women's rights and to lobby for gender equality. Noon El Neswa is a collective of activists that organized street campaigns with stencils featuring notorious female icons of Egyptian culture, like singer Laila Mourad and actor Suad Hosny, among others. The stencils include film quotes, simple demands for equality, and slogans like "Don't Label Me"; they have been replicated by many artists in the world. Nooneswa is the first collective of its kind to focus solely on women's issues in an effort to change cultural attitudes toward women.

Women on Walls (WOW, or Sit El Heta in Arabic), a graffiti artists' movement, paints Cairo's walls in order to share women's stories and give them greater visibility.[12] When the January 25 revolution began, Swedish journalist Mia Grondahl was captivated by the graffiti scene in Egypt and spent more than a year and a half following graffiti artists around Egypt. When she found too few graffiti images drawn by women, she issued an open call inviting female artists to gather and make graffiti. Many women began drawing on walls to get their messages out, to address sexual harassment, and to promote better rights for women in Egypt's male-dominated society. Counting over 60 local female street graffiti artists, WOW's project rapidly expanded to a

[9] In 2010, Shehab was asked to create an artwork for an exhibition at the Haus Der Kunst, Munich, produced by the Khatt Foundation in Amsterdam. She compiled thousand different shapes of the word "No" in Islamic history and created a Plexiglass curtain. When the Egyptian Revolution began in 2011, Shehab took these same characters out of their historic context and designed new stencils (e.g. "No to military rule," "No for a newpharaoh," "No to beating women," and so on) and sprayed them in the streets of Cairo.

[10] For the whole interview, see http://blog.ted.com/2013/07/05/the-new-revolution-in-egypt-and-why-i-wanted-to-feminize-it-an-essay/.

[11] Ibid.

[12] WOW was launched in March 2012 by street art documentarian Mia Grondahl (author of *Revolution Graffiti: Street Art of the New Egypt*) and local cultural manager Angie Balata.

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nationwide campaign seeking to spark awareness of Egyptian women's daily struggles and to advocate for their better treatment. The collective touched upon many different issues, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, equal opportunities, and female genital mutilation.[13]

Concomitant with these vibrant artistic displays in various Egyptian cities and the collectives that collaborate in constructing public campaigns aimed at changing the images of women in Egypt, many art books have been published in Arabic and English on graffiti, reaching local and international readers.[14] *The Walls Talk. Egyptian Revolution Graffiti* (2012, Cairo: Zeitouna), the first printed collection of Egyptian revolutionary graffiti, documents 18 months of political turmoil. Over more than 680 pages, the book chronicles the revolution in Arabic and English, outlining all the major historical events that took place in Egypt from January 2011 to June 2012. Hundreds of graffiti images accompany the text.

Revolution Graffiti: *Street Art of the New Egypt* is another art book published by Mia Grondahl.[15] Her photo-rich book documents Egypt's rapidly changing graffiti art scene through more than 430 full-color images, ranging from simple handwritten messages, to stencils and portraits of martyrs, to elaborate murals decorating Muhammad Mahmoud Street. The book also features interviews with some of the artists, including Sad Panda, Hanaa El Degham, The Winged Elephant, Nazeer, Zeft, El Teneen, Alaa Awad, Ammar Abo Bakr, and Ganzeer. Helped by photographers, graphic designers, and graffiti artists, Heba Helmy published in 2013 *There Is a Martyr in Me: Egyptian Revolution's Street Art* (2013, Dar El Ein), an art book in which stories of the Egyptian revolution are accompanied by graffiti images.[16]

[13] The *Mona Lisa Brigade*, with 30 % female membership, is another collective through which artists are using graffiti for social initiatives.

[14] In June 2011, Soraya Morayef, a journalist and writer based in Cairo, launched a blog that has been closely documenting (through photographs, interviews, and textual analysis) how the Egyptian revolution has inspired a distinct proliferation in the production of street art. The same urgent questions—of gender, intimidation, and interpretation—resurface in her blog posts on the participation of women in making graffiti on the walls of Egyptian streets. She lists many female graffiti artists in her blog (available from: http://suzeeinthecity.wordpress.com/). Also see *Walls of Freedom: Street Art of the Egyptian Revolution*, by Basma Hamdy and Don Karl a.k.a. 2014. Stone (published by From Here to Fame).

[15] Her other books include *In Hope and Despair: Life in the Palestinian Refugee Camps* (2003), *Gaza Graffiti: Messages of Love and Politics* (2009), and *Tahrir Square: The Heart of the Egyptian Revolution* (2011), which were all published by The American University in Cairo Press.

[16] Other forums have featured female-created graffiti of the revolution, like *Muslima*, an online exhibition dedicated to showing how contemporary Muslim women use artistic practices and critical discourse to define themselves against limited and static stereotypes. For more details see http://muslima.imow.org/content/wipe-it-and-i-will-paint-again#sthash.RTqB85dW.dpuf.

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Female-created graffiti is thus a performative act through which women are able to inscribe their opinions, express their emotions, and force recognition of their agency. Women's graffiti is shaping a new wave of gender-sensitive street art and visual campaigns seeking to challenge ways of perceiving, representing, and understanding women in Egypt. In other words, a close examination of the images of women on the walls of Egypt reveals that they address not only mechanisms of government, but also women's agency and the importance of gender representations in the revolution. As I stated before in this chapter, female-centered graffiti, whether painted by male or female artists, has promoted its own counter-narratives on women in response to the violence constantly perpetrated against women and the efforts to exclude them from the public sphere. The example of Samira Ibrahim, who brought a court case against the military for subjecting her to a so-called virginity test, has been frequently celebrated through graffiti images, like the stencil by an unknown artist that says, "You can't break me." Another ubiquitous graffiti image is that of "Sitt al-Banat" (the best of the girls), representing the "Blue Bra Girl," which quickly became an emblem for Egyptian protesters trying to end the country's military ruling.[17] Many other graffiti display inscriptions such as "Circle of Hell" (by Mirah Shihadeh and Zeft, reflecting on the horror of mass sexual assault faced by female protesters in Egypt), "No to harassment" (by Shihadeh, depicting a woman blowing away street harassers with her can of spray paint), or the image of Nefertiti, wife of Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaton, wearing a gas mask as a symbol of women's involvement in the revolution (stenciled by Zeft).

Through these graffiti illustrations, one could conclude that during the revolution women artists were re-inscribing their victimization as a means of resistance against dictatorship, censorship, and gender coercion, thus offering their own redefinition of Egyptian womanhood. These illustrations also show how different representations of women and their bodies can become a (re) negotiation of their place in the public sphere.

Street Performances

Demonstrations, sit-ins, and rallies all over Egypt have prompted men and women to find artistic forms to reach the masses in the streets and raise awareness about human rights, justice, and democracy. Street performance is one of these compelling, creative tools that have had an impact on people because

[17] In a powerful, graphic video seen around the world, soldiers beat and drag a young woman along the street during a protest. Her clothing is ripped and her blue bra is clearly seen as a soldier stomps on her (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIFffdHWH-Y). In a reference to the Blue Bra Girl, a stenciled piece by Bahia Shehab reads, "No stripping of the people."

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> theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it. (Boal 1979, xxxi)

Alongside graffiti, street performances were another means to reflect the nation's anger, hopes, and dreams during the revolution. Female performances that brought theater artists into the streets drew on the arts of dance, music, poetry, storytelling, and sketches, and also introduced a new form of documentary theater to represent historical events as they happened through the testimonies of active participants. This kind of theater can illustrate what Augusto Boal coined the "Theater of the Oppressed," which aims to raise consciousness, train the audience in democratic practice, and motivate them to tackle their social and political problems in a peaceful but effective way.[18] On the other hand, and as I mentioned earlier in this chapter, street performances are generally put together through improvisation on the spur of the moment and are closely attached to the events that immediately inspired them. Many of them, therefore, have not survived the events that inspired them in terms of impact on the audience. It may be too early to see a tangible impact of those performances since the women-led ical scenery is still being unfolded in Egypt. And yet it is extremely significant to mention that street performance is a genre that was created, led, and developed by women.

Rania Refaat Shaheen, an artist and manager of El Sawy Culture Wheel Center in Cairo from 2006 to 2009, created El Pergola Puppet Theater in 2012. Performing their plays in the streets and at bus stops, Rania and her troupe believe that it is important to make theater accessible to those Egyptians who may not be able to attend theaters and plays. When Rania wrote her first play, *Fatah aynak tekol melban* (*Open your eyes, and you will eat sweets*) in 2012 to increase political awareness about the constitution, she decided to go to Tahrir Square to choose the actors. She selected 15 people and crafted ten-minute sketches about citizenship, the constitution, and human rights. The whole project can thus be considered a perfect counter-model to Habermas's public sphere, since it was a participatory initiative where all the members worked collectively: they wrote the plays, composed the songs, made the puppets, and acted together.

Dalia Bassiouny is the founder of Sabeel Group for the Arts, launched in 1997, which focuses on promoting women's rights and researches ways of integrating theater and video to create non-traditional plays and perform

[18] The "Theater of the Oppressed," established in the 1950s and 60s by Brazilian director and Workers' Party activist Augusto Boal, is a participatory theater that fosters democratic and cooperative forms of interaction among participants. Boal went beyond the stage and organized performances with the Arena Theater troupe in the streets and in factories, unions, and churches, where they could reach the people of the *favelas,* or slums, of Rio. Theater is not a spectacle in this process, but rather a vernacular language accessible to all.

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them in alternative spaces. Dalia is considered to be a leading practitioner within the "free theater" or independent theater movement. For her, theater provides a means of forging a collective identity mediated through image. Sabeel Group recently presented *Tahrir Stories*. This performance was the first to document the Egyptian revolution through testimonies of the demonstrators, and it honored in a ritualistic enactment the names of those who fell during the revolution.

In 2013, a giant, Islamic-patterned disco ball and an ice-cream-cart looka-like, the Wonder Box, or Sandook El Agab, visited many Egyptian cities to raise awareness and promote social justice and democracy through a storytelling genre that flourished many centuries ago in Egypt and the Middle East.[19] Mahatat, a collective that wanted to bring art to public spaces, along with curator Aida al-Kashef, conceived the idea to revive the medium of the old Sandook El Donya with new forms and techniques. After receiving a generous grant from the Swiss Cooperation Office in Cairo, Kashef invited nine artists from multiple disciplines, from architects to storytellers to musicians, to work collectively on the design, construction, and animation of two boxes, using contemporary forms and techniques. Their journeys across Cairo's neighborhoods occurred in early 2013.

Many other theatrical groups have been created since the beginning of the Egyptian revolution, such as El-Batt El-Eswed (The Odd Ducks), founded in 2013 as an independent group to develop feminist storytelling and produce creative stories. At the end of the 1990s, another group of academics, writers, and researchers interested in feminism began a storytelling project, Ana El Hekaya (I Am the Story). Now, more than 20 years later, these women continue to tell their stories, supplemented with musical accompaniment from the oud. The founders started a new group Qalat El Raweya (The Female Storyteller Said) where tales of The One Thousand and One Nights and Egyptian folklore are written and read from a gender-sensitive perspective. The group worked on Naguib Mahfouz's Palace Walk, Taha Hussein's Do'aa al-Karawan, Al Haraam by Yousef Idris and Ana Horra by Ihsan Abdel Qudous. They performed in many venues and conducted many workshops for young men and women.

Yasmine El Baramawy[20] is an oud musician. In March 2011, she played a solo oud piece in front of Beram El Tounsi Theater in Cairo. "People walking in the street stopped and started watching me with a lot of curiosity. A group of young veiled girls were watching me from a distance even if they were not

[19] For more details on the traditional Sandook El Donya, see Manar Moursi, "Cairo's Traveling Peep Show Boxes," http://cairobserver.com/post/87300883859/cairos-traveling-peep-show-boxes#.VpA7UsArL-.

[20] When acts of sexual harassment and mistreatment were perpetrated against women." Yasmine El Baramawy, the oud musician and singer mentioned in this chapter, was herself victim of a group rape in Tahrir Square in 2013. According to her, she was brutally raped and sexually assaulted by dozens of men for more than one hour.

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able to hear the music," Yasmine said in an interview that I had with her in March 2014. A few months later at Raml train station in Alexandria, Yasmine performed without any rehearsal with a friend who played some rhythms and tracks on his laptop. Again people questioned the appearance of the young oud player performing in front of one of the most crowded venues in Alexandria. By the end of the performance, people were clapping their hands and even singing. Yasmine said in the interview that she thought that the universal language of music would reach people more easily than speeches or even words. She believed her music and other women-led artistic initiatives would gradually change the way people look at women. A year later she played again in Raml station, this time after midnight in a public transportation facility. She started playing oud with Ayman Asfour, who used some kitchen utensils as percussion. Later on, a singer called Karim Abu Raida joined them. A few minutes after the concert started people began interacting, and after the show they asked Yasmine and her fellow artists about the purpose of their performance. The last time Yasmine performed on the street was in April 2013, when she played solo and had become the sort of street professional who could hold an audience's attention for more than an hour without percussion. In the interview that I conducted with her, she stressed the fact that she enjoys playing music in the street more than in theaters because it is spontaneous and the people don't have to stay unless they want to. It is a very interactive setting, where the noise of the street blends with the music, and this can have a direct impact on people's behaviors. This is what Yasmine believes to be the power of street music.[21]

Conclusion

The two artistic models I have sketched in this chapter are part of an increasing transformation of the public sphere prototype, which attests that Habermas's paradigm of the public sphere is no longer viable. The expansion of the public sphere by women's graffiti and street performances is offering

[21] Many other female singers have started to establish their reputations and visibility since the revolution. All of them perform mainly in concert halls and on television rather than taking to the streets of Egypt, yet their impact in the music arena is ubiquitous. Dina El Wedidi is a female singer who has gained popularity in Egypt since the uprisings of 2011, thanks to her thoughtful lyrics that pack a political punch and her call for self-realization. For her official site see http://dinaelwedidi.com. Fayrouz Karawya is a female singer who in 2006 initiated an ambitious musical project featuring a unique style with humanistic and engaged lyrics and covering issues such as love and personal dilemmas as well as social and economic constraints. Fayrouz is a master storyteller and a bold activist, and her music is a blend of Eastern tradition and various contemporary musical styles that tackle Egyptian, Arab, and women's issues. For more details see https://soundcloud.com/fayrouzkarawya.

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alternative models of democracy that are distinct from state apparatuses, economic markets, and democratic associations. The two models also illustrate that a plurality of competing publics is always possible and "better promote[s] the ideal of participatory parity than does a single, comprehensive, overarching public" (Fraser 1992, 66).

These artistic expressions, among many others, illustrate how women in Egypt are forcefully trying to diversify and strategize their creative use of art in their struggle to have a voice and to call for a revision of social, political, and cultural conditions. The Egyptian revolution re-energized women's agency, which was already active but just needed the spark for momentum, since all revolutions represent "[the] determination of act, [the] joy in action, [the] assurance of being able to change things by one's own efforts" (Arendt 2006, 206). In this sense, graffiti and street performances should not be considered outcomes of a particular predicament, but rather signifiers of cultural change as they reflect and construct new epistemologies.

The defiant representations of Egyptian femininity in the post-revolution period are undeniably challenging, rethinking and redefining notions of sexuality, gender, and nation. The unexpected positive synergy between men and women that was demonstrated and seen in Tahrir Square during the first few months of the revolution was replaced by disappointment when acts of sexual harassment and mistreatment were perpetrated against women. At this point, women felt that changing the confining views society has of them required working beneath the main revolution. First, they sought access to the public sphere. Second, they found new means outside of the political channel. And finally, in a manner sometimes less discernible and yet certainly more powerful for dismantling the overarching essentialist views on women, they used images and bodily representations employing stereotypical images of women and associated them with counter- or non-traditional messages. The messages disseminated by women artists from the beginning of Egypt's unrest are unquestionably connected by rhizome-like stems that will create new platforms for more revolutionary and egalitarian participation of women within an expanded public sphere.

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Chapter Eleven

Notes on Sudanese Women's Activism, Movements, and Leadership

Sondra Hale

Abstract This chapter analyzes Sudanese women's political organizations and mobilizations as well as leadership issues within a frame that interprets recent political strategies in the North African movements as creative and innovative. The chapter demonstrates the variety of women's mobilizations, the variety of their tools and strategies, as well as the nature, quality, and constraints on their leadership. These organizations represent the secular left, cultural nationalists/religionists (including the Islamist women of the National Islamic Front), non-governmental organizations, and the grassroots and anarchistic/collectivist activists of various ideologies and agendas. Among the last group, the chapter includes youth movements and organizations such as Girifna ("We are fed up") that bridge youth, collective, and grassroots movements.

Introduction

Over 25 years ago, two sociologists, Janet Chafetz and Anthony Gary Dworkin, generated typologies for theorizing what they referred to as *Female Revolts*, the title of their book (1986). It is not important here to delve into their theories of all of these types of revolts, but only to note that they distinguish between "movements for human equality and/or liberation" and what they call "women's movements." For years in my classrooms I used their typologies as my "straw man," demonstrating how messy these classifications can be, especially when one is observing Global South, youth, neighborhood, anarchist, and religious movements, all of which have increased in the last decade. I was justifiably skeptical about what I saw as a differentiation between a women's rights-based movement and a "women's movement," and I was even more dubious about the framework they set up for analyzing a women's movement. They theorized that a women's movement had to have the following qualities: attention must be focused on problems specific to women as women (i.e., gender is the primary variable); there must be a clear ideology in which a range of issues that point to "female disadvantage" are

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_11

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interrelated (i.e., feminism); the movement must be highly organized and sustained over a number of years (i.e., not a "sporadic outbreak" such as a food riot, for example); and the movement must consist of a broad network of organizations (1986, 49). What the authors do not note is that any one organization or movement may have any, none, or all of these qualities, depending on the time period, who the leaders are, and the relationship of the state and women's agendas.

Attempts to build theories on classifications such as the one above do not work when one is attempting to incorporate women's rights within a framework of plural types of movements and questions of different forms of leadership, while at the same time questioning the effectiveness of women's rights goals. By the early 2000s many scholars had begun to suggest "changing the terms" in discussions about transnational solidarity, organizing across borders, and localizing global politics (e.g., Naples and Desai 2002). The theoretical process of changing the terms began to proliferate even more with the emergence of the "Arab Spring" and "Occupy" manifestations. Many scholars and pundits began to write about not only anarchistic tendencies, but noted, in general, the newness of political strategies in the North African movements (see my two 2014 essays, for example). It is within this new, freer, and varied frame of thinking that I attempt an analysis of Sudanese women's political organizations and mobilizations, with a nod to leadership issues.

While eschewing classifications, I myself have plunged into presenting the various types of women's mobilizations in Sudan for the purpose of demonstrating their variety. On the ground we can observe at least four kinds of women's mobilizations or associations in Sudan: (1) one represented by the secular left of the Sudanese Women's Union or the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and its offshoots; (2) another represented by the cultural nationalists/religionists (including the Islamist women of the National Islamic Front [hereafter, NIF], the National Congress Party [NCP], and scattered Christian groups); (3) the non-governmental organizations (NGOs and International NGOs); and (4) grassroots as well as anarchistic/collectivist activists of various ideologies and agendas. I have included youth groups among this last type, but organizations such as Girifna ("We are fed up") bridge youth, collectives, and grassroots. Not all of the organizations and associations to which I am referring are made up entirely of women, or they might not even have a majority of women, but the preponderance of women's voices is now striking. Quite clearly, such a diverse array of activism would require an exciting variety of women leaders.

Before embarking on an analysis of women's political activity in the recent past and in the contemporary period, it may be useful to give some context for my research and for women's leadership and activism.[1]

[1] I carried out field research in Sudan in the years 1961–64; 1966; 1971–72, 1973–75; 1988; and then nearly yearly and sometimes twice yearly for brief visits from 2003 to 2015. The research, with the exception of that conducted in Nubia, has been carried

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Sudanese Women's Movements, Women's Rights, and Leadership Issues Under a Conventional Banner

In the recent past, and still in some anachronistic circles, Sudanese and Sudanists were/are inculcated with the idea that the expression "the Sudanese women's movement" is a code to refer to the Sudanese Women's Union (SWU), a wing of the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP; 'the Party'). Such a code also meant that talking about Sudanese women's "leadership" usually was in reference to the leaders of the SWU. So many scholars and others have conflated most of women's rights activism under the rubric of the SWU or its direct descendants (or even its government-appointed stand-ins, but the referent was still the SWU and, until recently, Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, the longtime head). I have spent considerable energy attempting to unsettle that notion.

This sole focus on the SWU was, arguably, inevitable for many years because women's organizing at a visible national level began to develop during the mid-1960s when the SWU had its heyday. To its credit, the organization spearheaded many projects within the frame of women's rights, including suffrage, equal pay for equal work, and various other protections under the law. In other words, the SWU was tightly associated with liberalism and modernity. Even when the rise of Islamism presented a challenge to the "secular" SWU in the form of powerful and well-organized Islamist women activists of the National Islamic Front (NIF), these groups were also, one way or another, part and parcel of national politics, party sectarianism, and modernism.

Blind spots about other types of women's activism and movements in the capital or riverain region or in other regions were a result of a number of factors, including a narrow definition of "politics," northern Sudanese ethnocentrism and chauvinism, and Sudanists' racism—a legacy of British colonialism and early scholarship and colonial discourse on Sudan. This colonial discourse deemed the "Arab," Muslim north superior in culture and political acumen to more marginalized areas. Northern "Arabs/Nubians" were not quite British, but they were deemed closer to the British than the people of southern and western Sudan, who were represented as "African," "Black," "pagan," and "backward."

As for the narrow concept of "politics," I am referring to the Sudanese emphasis on party and state politics only. To this day, neighborhood organizing, women's traditional cultural activities, self-help projects, and almost all extra-organizational activism are looked upon as somehow suspect—as not part of or even anathema to the development of modernity.

As a consequence of the above phenomena, when talking about women's activism or leadership, there was a focus until very recently on state politics

out in Greater Khartoum (Khartoum, Omdurman, and Khartoum North) and, to some extent, among diasporan Sudanese (in Cairo, Asmara, Addis Ababa, London, Oxford, and cities in the United States) during the period when it was deemed by my Sudanese colleagues that it was not safe for me to return to Sudan.

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and a concentration on gender mostly in its relationship to the state. Research on grassroots movements and civil society activism (primarily led by women) is poorly developed. Even when grassroots activism is researched, these manifestations are too often placed within the framework of "women and development" rather than within a framework of mobilization (for this critique, see Hale 1996; Kadoda and Hale 2015; and Hale and Kadoda 2013).

In this chapter I touch on internal, national, state, and party politics, but with the constant caveat that perhaps the most significant political organizing carried out by women on behalf of women and other human rights issues is taking place in civil society, within some youth groups, in local groups and neighborhoods, in small villages, and in war zones. These are extra-state functions, sometimes distant from the capital. They may be protective, survivalist activities, but they are often instrumental in holding together the social and economic fabric. In addition, some of the most effective women's organizing is happening outside Sudan among exiled women. For them, it is a grand opportunity to break away from the old power monopolies. Furthermore, being in exile and removed from the center of cultural hegemony has given Sudanese and South Sudanese women an opportunity to form some delicate alliances.

In unsettling the conventional approach to women's movements in Sudan, it is significant to note that these movements or projects organized by women, which oftentimes benefit mainly women, are not often thought of as "women's movements," or even women's projects on behalf of women, although we could say that a "female consciousness" is at work. Whatever their characteristics, they may be far from what would generally be considered "feminist movements" (Peteet, citing Kaplan 1981, pp. 55–76). Nonetheless, within this last decade or so we have seen the emergence of a number of clearly feminist organizations, even if that terminology is not used (Hale and Kadoda 2013).

Whatever terminology Sudanists or Sudanese activists might choose, it is clear that what we have been witnessing in Sudan at the turn of the century and into the twenty-first century is a proliferation of women's mobilization, a resurgence of debates about women's organizing, and the weakening of gatekeeping in terms of who "owns" the Sudanese women's movement(s) and who has the right to claim "authentic" leadership.

In examining women's rights agendas, I have constructed, primarily for the purpose of bringing some clarity to this chapter, an artificial dichotomy of Islamists/religionists and secularists, condensing their political ideologies, goals, and strategies to show the similarities in the cultural positioning of women to serve their respective movements.

Among the goals and strategies of the Islamists in Sudan are (1) to manipulate religious ideology toward a more "authentic" culture (Hasan el-Turabi, personal communication);[2] (2) to represent, reiterate, or reinforce the centrality

[2] By the mid-1980s Islamists I interviewed used the terms "authentic," "true," and "real" interchangeably. When asked for definitions, their responses varied and were vague. Hasan el-Turabi, de facto leader of the National Islamic Front, refers to a

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of women within that "authentic" culture; (3) to create a new trend in the gender division of labor or to stem recent changes within that labor system; and (4) to purge an "authentic" women's culture of particular non-Islamic customs that "weaken the morals" of women (e.g., the zar).[3]

The goals and strategies of many secularists (such as the SCP and its affiliate, the SWU), may look different, but there are underlying similarities to Islamist objectives. Members and cadres may often acknowledge Islamic culture as the authentic culture of northern Sudan's working class and peasantry. In the political oppositional work of the SCP and SWU, cadres often make attempts to coexist with Islam or to work within an Islamic framework, although Islam is relegated to the private spheres of Party members. The SCP's secularist view of women as future workers, mothers of workers, and half the population (and therefore a potential political force) necessitates the rhetoric of the centrality of women in the political process. Another similarity to the Islamists is SCP and SWU activism, also aimed at eradicating "negative customs" from women's culture, thereby often stifling nascent organic leadership.

Both secularists and religionists, therefore, have engaged in the politics of authenticity. The emergence of a quasi-secular and secular civil society is a break with this politics of authenticity. Nowhere was this new essentialism, which is also a part of state ideology, more apparent than in the attempts to generate icons of women and women's roles in Sudan's past, present, and future. These politics of authenticity focus on women more than on any other group. The identity politics that result from the search for authenticity are proactive: the male-controlled political institutions—religious and secular—manipulate women's participation in or disengagement from particular cultural practices or economic activities, all in the name of the ideal woman—an essentialized category (Hale 1996, 1997, pp. 117–142).

As for gender relations in the communist movement, a younger generation of Sudanese feminists is questioning (as I do) whether or not the "secular" Marxist movement in Sudan has addressed gender (women's) interests as distinct from the interests of the peasants or workers; whether or not women are creating their own movement through their own cultural institutions; and whether or not culture (including Islam) is being used as a powerful force for determining gender arrangements that serve male-controlled institutions, namely, the SCP and the progressive wing of the National Democratic Alliance.

"pure" Islam unfettered by ethnic (i.e., Arab) customs. The "authentic" culture is an Islamic one, based on sharia. Therefore, pre-Islamic customs are deemed not "authentic." Islamists began to delineate which aspects of culture are "legitimate," that is, able to be included within an Islamic framework.

[3]The zar is classified in any number of ways in the literature, including as a women's spirit possession cult and as a healing ritual, among others. I consider the zar as an example of a prefigurative political form.

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As I indicated above, the rise of Islamism in current Sudanese politics (especially 1971 to the present) has confounded our analyses of gender and the state. We have had to look at the ways in which the NIF and NCP use Muslim women as the centerpiece for rebuilding a "modernized" but nativistic culture and how much southern women (now South Sudanese) and women from other marginalized groups (such as the Nuba) were and are represented as "falling short" of that goal, whether Muslim or not.

The neglect by secular forces of an analysis of culture has been striking. One must turn to an examination of socialist stances toward aspects of culture as an explanation for that neglect, including a discussion of the paradoxical role of culture in the oppression and emancipation of women in general and Sudanese women in particular.

Women's Mobilization and Contemporary Politics

Arguably, one can say that in 1989, Sudanese Islamists and the military carried out one of the most successful contemporary Islamic revolutions. However, we might consider this to be a somewhat misleading statement because the reign of political Islam, even radical Islam, is more a continuity with Sudan's Islamic past than it is a divergence.

The nature of the debates that occurred during the brief (1985–1989) democratic era between the fall of military dictator Jaffar Nimieri in 1985 to the 1989 Islamist coup d'état remains of considerable significance, not just for Sudan, but for other settings where Islam is or may become a factor in the political process. Statements about the curtailment of democratic processes with the rise of political Islam may not have the same meaning to those who are not aware of Sudan's postcolonial record of democratic institutions and grassroots populism, even when the military was in control: it is a twentieth-century story of strong and independent trade unions and professional associations. Sudan had one of the largest and most revered communist parties in Africa or the Middle East, as well as a powerful SWU and other organizations. The progress of women's rights, though gradual, was seemingly upward.

But in 1989 the right-wing Islamist military government immediately dissolved parliament, suspended the constitution, and outlawed all political parties and their affiliated organizations, unions, and professional associations.

Women's freedom of movement and association were sharply curtailed and the agenda for women was co-opted by the Islamic revolution. If dress is a significant symbol, then a decree in November 1991 was foreboding: "The Islamic Fundamentalist military junta decreed … that henceforth all Sudanese women will wear long black dresses to their ankles and a black veil covering their head and face … those who disobey to be instantly punished by whipping" (*Sudan Democratic Gazette* no. 19, December 1991, p. 8). Although such extreme dress was not enforced after a while, women's behavior was nonetheless seriously curtailed by the Public Order Act, which is still in effect.

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Hasan al-Turabi, initially the leader of the Islamic revolution, has been viewed by many as one of the most important Islamic leaders in the world (Gallab 2014). His critics, however, are not limited to those opposed to Islamism but extend to those within Islamism who see Turabi as too liberal or "quasi-liberal." Turabi has spoken a great deal about "democracy," the emancipation of women, and human rights within Islam. About women, for example, Turabi has argued: "With respect to the status of women generally in society, we don't have any more problems … the issue of women in the Sudan is no longer a topical issue … In the Islamic movement, I would say that women have played a more important role of late than men" (ed. Lowrie 1993, pp. 46–47).

In contemporary Sudanese politics, the state used to be controlled fairly directly by the bourgeoisie, but recently that control has been eroded and the society has become increasingly militarized. The military and the militias it has spawned have taken on not only a "tribal" identity (e.g., the local militias), but a religious one as well (i.e., the military in support of the NIF and the NCP and the militias seen as mujahadeen). There has been a resurgence of the warrior tradition, both in the north and south, and a remasculinization of the society (Salih 1989, pp. 168–174). This remasculinization is parallel, but perhaps contradictory, to the (re)positioning of women as bulwarks for the (re)building of "authentic" culture.

Such are the tensions of gender politics in Sudan, a society where a weak state has been buffeted by competing oppositional groups and where the processes of state feminism have been discontinuous.

Whether or not there had always been a clearly defined gender ideology prior to the Islamist state, or any gender ideology emanating from the state, is arguable. Much of the ideology has been implicit (e.g., embedded in the religious framework of the sectarian parties). However, some aspects have been explicit, such as the spelled-out, singled-out rights of women in the various provisional constitutions; the gender rights-and-obligations provisions in the codified or uncodified personal status laws within *urf* (customary) and *sharia* (Islamic) law; and, in general, through various state- and/or party-sponsored feminisms (e.g., the Union of Sudanese Women and the Sudan Socialist Union's organization, an official, state-sanctioned women's association that functioned from 1972 to 1985, that is, during the Nimieri regime). Since 1983, gender ideology has been stated more explicitly through various political interest groups and parties, and now through the Islamic state (Fluehr-Lobban 1987).[4]

[4] Gender rights-and-obligations provisions in Islamic law include detailed instructions to Muslims regarding marriage, divorce, support and custody of children, transference of wealth and property, and other rites of passage and people's everyday lives. See Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, *Islamic Law and Society in the Sudan* (London: Frank Cass, 1987).

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The Crisis of Leadership

In many ways, and despite the adversity faced by many groups in exile and women in various marginalized areas (such as the Nuba area in the west-central part of the country), this has also been the most exciting time for debates about women's liberation in Sudan. We have seen pre-secession southern women challenge northern women for their racism and conservatism; younger women challenge the old leadership for their outdated ideas; secular and religious women's organizations observing the organizing strategies of the other; women protesting war and militarism as a solution or even as good politics; and a number of women theorists and activists unsettling the notion that all there is to politics is parties and the state.

Another significant factor in the contemporary dynamic of Sudanese women's politics and human rights struggles is the proliferation of secular liberal and leftist parties and fronts, a consequence of the large numbers of parties and politicians thrown into exile by the entrenched power of the Islamists. Simply, women now have more options for political expression. An example was the Sudan Alliance Forces (SAF), a dynamic political formation of the 1990s which was committed to a military option in the struggle against the Islamists. A number of women emerged as leaders from that group, namely Nada Mustafa Ali, scholar and activist, whose visibility in the National Democratic Alliance (an umbrella group for opposition parties) at the time rivaled Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim's.

Perhaps most importantly, we are seeing more unions among women than ever before. Azza Anis, a progressive northerner who has been in exile for many years, claimed as early as 2000 that the recent proliferation—both inside and outside Sudan—of women's coalitions, grassroots organizations, and networks is unprecedented. She mentions the collaborations in Beijing (1995, United Nations Conference on Women), the Nairobi-based Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace, the Sudanese Women's Association (Nairobi), MA'AN (Cairo), Women's Action Group for Peace and Development (Khartoum), and others. Anis argues that

> [...] a new generation of young, ethnically diverse and self-assertive Sudanese women has indeed come of age, whose education and professionalism (much to the dismay of the Islamists, the number of females graduates is on the rise) has given us more autonomy to operate and to question the material core of the patriarchal knowledge norms embedded in the Islamist's "Civilisation Project" (Anis 2000, pp. 3–6).

Since Anis wrote this, the proliferation of women's organizations has been astounding.

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Voices of the Secular Left

As I mentioned above, within the discourse about Sudanese women's rights, the SWU held center stage for a long time, dominating most issues related to women and dismissing and/or undermining other organizations. It is appropriate, then, to begin with this "voice."

The SWU, which began with 500 middle-class women, expanded into a large mass organization with branches throughout the country. It campaigned for equal pay for equal work and longer maternity leave and tried to resolve other problems faced by urban women workers. By 1955 the SWU was publishing *Sawt el-Mara* (*The Woman's Voice*), one of the most progressive publications of the twentieth century in Sudan. It was a relatively free forum for debating such issues as female circumcision and ethnic facial scarification. Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, one of the founders of the journal, estimated the circulation by the late 1950s at 17,000, a healthy figure for a political periodical anywhere. Ibrahim was always a regular contributor (Ibrahim 1994, p. 199). Although a communist with close ties to the SCP and its leadership, she also saw herself as an independent thinker and as having struggled for what little autonomy the SWU had (Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, Suad Ibrahim Ahmed, Nahid Toubia, personal communication, 1988). Such a visible international figure is Ibrahim—for example, she has received a United Nations Human Rights Award—that one is tempted to count only her voice when tracing the history of the SWU (a stance I critique in various publications). In truth, however, many other activists have indeed made major contributions to the existence and ideology of the SWU, but because the socially conservative Ibrahim headed the SWU intermittently for over five decades, her perspective is important. In a 1990s essay, she presented her 1952 and 1954 versions of the SWU agenda. In 1952, Ibrahim argued:

> [W]e do not consider men our enemies. *We do not consider Islam our opponent.* We refuse to accept the Western model of liberation as our blueprint, nor do we recommend copying men's behavior as a means of reaching emancipation and equality … *We conveyed our belief that women's rights must be seen within the context of the welfare of the family* and the community … (Ibrahim 1994, pp. 197–198, emphases mine).

Ibrahim outlined the agenda in 1954 and stated: "[…] our main concern was to achieve political participation in order to give women the power of their votes" (Ibrahim 1994, pp. 197–198, emphasis mine).

Therefore, according to Ibrahim, by 1954, SWU members began to reject confining themselves to reformist activities, such as charity work and literacy classes, and began to work for "substantial changes in the condition of

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women," that is, "to change the political infrastructure" (Ibrahim 1994, pp. 197–198). However, in my opinion this is a reconstruction of the past based on wishful hindsight. As late as 1988 Ibrahim was highlighting literacy classes and sewing cooperatives as the activities of the SWU, with political education presented in the margins (Ahmed Ibrahim, personal communication, July 12, 1988).

Although I have implied that the SWU is a front organization for the SCP, the relationship is far more complicated and dynamic. How independent we might consider the SWU depends on the source of our information and the time period involved. Not all of its members or even leaders were communists or members of the SCP, and there was much struggle between communists and non-communists over control of the SWU and over its relationship to the Party. The state has always managed to exert more control over the SWU than over the SCP and has more easily infiltrated the SWU with state supporters in attempts to influence or force the SWU away from the SCP. The closeness of SCP and SWU ties has changed historically, oftentimes depending on who was elected SWU president. In general, however, SWU leaders, even if closely tied to the SCP, have tried for a number of reasons, among them group survival, to discount notions that the SWU was an SCP "front" (Hale 1996, Chapter 5).

Ibrahim, claiming no differences between the SCP and the SWU on women's issues, told me, "The Communist Party gives us its full support in every detail of women's rights. This is why people think we are a part of them, and we are not" (Ahmed Ibrahim, personal communication, July 12, 1988).[5]

Membership numbers were so impressive, and during public demonstrations the cadres so robust, no one seemed to realize how vulnerable to state repression the SWU was or how easily the demise of the organization could occur. That vulnerability exemplifies the trouble any women's organization has surviving for very long in an androcentric society. Apart from these general problems, the SWU experienced difficulties particular to its relationship with the SCP, most importantly a gender ideology that did not spell out women's interests beyond calling for women's active workforce participation and "equal" this and "equal" that. Particularly troubling was the SCP's position on "traditional" culture.

The structure of the SCP and the connections between the SCP and SWU (a consequence of the Party's gender ideology) were problematic. Even though the SCP, unlike many Middle Eastern or North African communist parties, had a truly national character in its leadership, the Party and its auxiliary organizations followed the structural pattern of most Marxist-Leninist communist parties. The SWU was organized on the same general hierarchical

[5] Although I have quoted a 1988 interview with Ibrahim in parts of this chapter, I dialogued with her on a nearly weekly basis for a year while she visited my institution, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), as a guest in 1995.

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principles: a central committee, local and regional cells, and little autonomy. Initially, even the leadership of the SWU was chosen (either formally or informally) by the SCP central committee (Hale 1996, Chap. 5).

The SWU had always relied heavily on the SCP for recruitment, which meant that few non-orthodox socialist ideas about gender arrangements filtered in. Women remained tied to the class of their male associates, and their loyalty was as much to the SCP as to the SWU. The latter gained strength when, on its own, it began to recruit from the population at large, forming regional branches among fresh recruits. Membership, however, still reflected mainly low-level and some middle-level professional women (primarily elementary and intermediate school teachers) who had some ties to the mainly urban male membership. Among women members of the SCP and SWU there was very little consciousness-raising about their oppression as women, especially in the private arena, or even about their special problems as workers.

The issues SWU members were encouraged to confront were usually not strategic gender (i.e., feminist) interests. When the SWU did deal with what were viewed as women's "problems," the activities carried out often reinforced traditional roles instead of building onto extant formations within women's culture and communities that could be mobilized. The SCP and SWU leadership held conventional ideas about structures (for the most part limited to unions, student groups, and other formalized structures) that could be mobilized, totally overlooking or being disdainful of grassroots and neighborhood organizations.

Women of the SCP or SWU did address personal, private issues, such as the division of labor within the domestic unit or violence in the household, but they told me that when they did, for years they were either ignored or were accused of "bourgeois feminism" or "bourgeois individualism." There were always more "important" issues at hand, such as the goal of subverting or overthrowing the current regime, and women were sung the familiar refrain: wait until after the revolution.

This option to coexist with "traditional" culture was the basis of most of the critiques I heard from a new generation of Sudanese feminists. Yet Ibrahim is very clear on this point. From exile, Ibrahim critiqued international socialism: I have concluded for myself that socialism failed in many parts of the world because it was not interpreted and implemented correctly. Another *grave mistake was denial of God and religion*, which is the mainstay of many people's moral and spiritual existence (Ibrahim 1994, p. 206, italics mine).

A new, rising generation of Sudanese feminists began to see Ibrahim as too conservative to lead the SWU into the next century. Challenging her leadership, however, was difficult. Not only had she become an international human rights icon, but the weapons she used against her opponents were personal and often ruthless. Some members have been willing to criticize Ibrahim and

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the SWU, but only off the record. One Sudanese feminist, a communist but not a Party member, who asked not to be identified, remarked:

> We have begun to analyze our relationship to Islam, to *sharia*, to family conventions, and in general to the gender roles and ideology that the state and party expect of us—in fact, have constructed for us. We need to challenge domestic violence, the division of labor, and in general, as radicals, this role of "companion" we are expected to play—whether as companion political organization to the SCP—or as wives, girlfriends, and relatives of SCP members. The SCP and the SWU have been too conservative to undertake these tasks (name withheld, personal communication, 1988).

One of the open critics of the SWU was the late Suad Ibrahim Ahmed, long-time communist activist, feminist, and educated intellectual. In one of our dialogues she stated that there were two points of view on the subjects of moralism, religion, and Party/Union strategies:

> One point of view is that progressives should use Islam to defeat the fanatic Islamicists. This is Fatima's view. The other view is that we should face them with secular ideas. This is my view. I believe that working within an Islamic framework limits progressives to using the framework of their adversaries. Progressives should reject this approach (Suad Ibrahim Ahmed, personal communication, July 25, 1988).

Ahmed outlined a major split within the SWU. She argued that a "new generation" represented "a volatile and vocal group within the SWU that has priorities other than the ones that were set by the traditional leadership … including Fatima herself." Ahmed argued that these younger members did not want to break off from the SWU and were very respectful toward Ibrahim, but "there's no question that they have other interests. And they do not accept the idea [expressed by Ibrahim, in particular] that people in pants with short hair are not revolutionaries!" (Suad Ibrahim Ahmed, personal communication, July 26, 1988). The younger women were making reference to the SWU's puritanical attitudes toward personal choices in hair and dress styles.

Another leading voice of the Sudanese feminist left is Fatima Babiker Mahmoud. She self-identifies as a "womanist within the class struggle," but she adds, "I don't want the class struggle to deny me the right [to have] my feminism" (Mahmoud 1987, p. 85). Her position, maintained to this day (Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, personal communication, February 2014), is that the SCP cannot claim to be the ones to fight for women:

> Nobody [but women] can fight on behalf of women for women … We [women] cannot wait for the revolution to come and socialism to be established and then say, "Listen, now that the revolution has come let us stay on the bed and

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> look into the woman situation." That cannot be … We [men and women] have to go together (Mahmoud 1987, p. 85).

Fatima Babiker was in a leadership position among a group of London diasporan activists who were effective, even from abroad, in influencing some of the thinking of those secular and leftist feminists remaining in the country. One important leader in diaspora was Amal Gabralla, who has now returned to Khartoum and taken up a leadership position within the SCP. Her strong views on women's rights are already influential.

Perhaps no one feminist on the left has been as vocal or visible in her political and social opposition to the status quo as Nahid Toubia, medical doctor, human rights activist, and academic. In a number of publications, public lectures, and official symposia—in Sudan before she went into exile in 1988; then from her Euro-American vantage points in exile (New York and London); and now upon her return to live in Sudan again—she has criticized the puritanical nature of the society (including the SWU and SCP), the stifling nature of this moralism, and the lack of autonomy of women activists, and she has been open about her feminism. She, like a number of women inside and outside her circle, is working outside of a party structure and has been generating organizations, projects, and programs within civil society.

One would also be remiss if one did not mention that the leadership of the SWU has now changed. Ibrahim is too old and frail to lead the organization and has been promoted, informally, to the position of honorary elder. Elected to take her place is a Nuba woman of considerable leadership talent, Adila Alzaibak, who is also active in a women-run NGO, Asmaa. Although Adila has had to deal with competitors and splits within the organization, the organization is beginning to change. If the SCP also embraces new women's leadership, the situation on the secular left might change considerably. The SWU is not the only changing party-affiliated women's organization. For the last decade or more there has been a very vigorous women's wing of the Umma Party (Sufi-based Mahdist party). Furthermore, there are a number of quite radical women in the SPLM and the SPLM/North parties who are mainly working in rural areas in opposition to the government, sometimes in areas liberated from the government and its forces. Both Darfuri and Nuba women have shown a different style of organizing, quite separate from the urban elite women of the political parties and their affiliates.

It would also be remiss in a discussion of women's rights and associations not to mention Ahfad University for Women, which has been training young intellectuals and activists for decades and was one of the most visible presences during the most oppressive era of the Islamist regime. The Gender Studies Unit, in particular, has developed a curriculum that could only be called "feminist," and the NGO that is affiliated with Ahfad, the Babiker Badri Society, is active in promoting women's rights.

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The New Women Leaders in Civil Society

In terms of feminism and the mobilization of women for women's right, the new women leaders I mentioned in the last section were affiliated with parties, but the most prominent women leaders of the last two decades have emerged in civil society, specifically in the women's NGOs but also among grassroots and youth movements. However, in this brief section I will deal only with the women of Khartoum's NGOs, certainly among the women leaders of Sudan.

When political parties were banned by the Islamists, women began to drift into civil society organizations. This was a better leadership situation for them because they did not have to deal with the strong presence of men who had dominated them in the parties. Soon civil society began to be dominated by women. One could at first see fairly safe, low-visibility organizations that dealt with mutual aid, literacy, charity, and the like. Meanwhile, the *nashitaat* (activists) went about their partially clandestine activist work on behalf of women. Currently, these women-headed or women-oriented NGOs make up the bulk of civil society. More so than political parties and their affiliated women's wings, these organizations are the most active on behalf of women and a number of broader issues.

Among the most prominent women and feminist organizations in Greater Khartoum (and in some cases, with branches outside of Khartoum and with continuing efforts to maintain contact with South Sudanese women) have been the Salmmah Women's Resource Center, Khartoum Gender Centre, Nuba Women's Education and Development Association (NuWEDA), Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), Mutawenat (women's legal rights center), Asmaa Society for Development, Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (SuWEP), No to Women's Oppression, and the Sudanese Organization for Research and Development (SORD), to name but a few.

Analyzing NGOs presents many contradictions. On the one hand, NGOs serve the government by tending to the underserved; they actually lift some of the burdens off the state. On the other hand, the government is highly suspicious of NGOs, sees them as a potential threat, and tries to keep them under tight control. For example, registration is difficult and is not just a bureaucratic formality. With impunity the government can either refuse a registration or drop an NGO from the rolls, and many NGOs are constantly harassed. Recently a number of NGOs were closed, and some were raided and all of their computers and materials confiscated and not returned (as in the case of Salmmah in 2014). The situation for women leaders in Khartoum is highly unstable at the moment of my writing.

What is encouraging is that after the Sudan uprising of 2013 (almost invisible in the international press), many more women became activists, and a number, although chastened by the brutality of the regime in stopping the demonstrations, did not cease their activism. A number reinvented themselves, formed new associations and projects, and are carrying on (see Hale 2014b).

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Conclusion

Some of the problematics of talking about a unified women's movement or a mono-agenda for seeking women's rights are clear from the evidence above. All of the four types of women's organizations or activism that I listed above are extant, making for a very diverse activist scene. What has been accomplished has occurred, as one might expect, under fairly extreme conditions, not only as a consequence of state oppression but also because of entrenched traditional leadership both in the political parties and in their women's affiliates. For decades, these processes have stifled the emergence of women leaders, and coalition-building between northern and southern women was made very difficult. That same entrenched leadership has hindered the crossing of various racial, ethnic, regional, and generational barriers, as well as the ability to open up ideologically and be more receptive to new ideas. Such intransigence has made for generational conflict, most probably a positive process in the rebuilding of a dynamic force working for women's rights.

As one might expect in such a large country, with regional fragmentation and conflict and with a large oppositional movement in exile, the groups from which women leaders might emerge are highly varied. Groups are organized to work for peace; for development; to end violence against women in war, in their homes, and in the streets; to teach literacy; to offer training in women's rights and the law; to help refugees inside and outside Sudan; to engage in religious indoctrination (while offering social services such as nursery schools); to encourage self-help (such as the Blessed Bakhita Society in Cairo, an arts-and-crafts collective that raises money and consciousness and engages in group healing among Sudanese refugees); to raise the quality of life for women and families through neighborhood and village collectives; to support political parties by forming auxiliaries, but also by filling their ranks with activist women; and to seek political power or power-sharing on an organizational/party, local, or national level. We are even beginning to see the emergence of transnational linkages.

In general in the past and present, the women's groups that are not directly attached to a party or political organization have more autonomy and are able to be more creative in their strategies. It is especially true—in the recent civil-war past and in the present conflict situations—that women are not as bound to "tradition," convention, and culture and are thus better able to innovate and negotiate changes.

On the basis of my decades of observing the endurance and effectiveness of indigenous women's cultural and grassroots activism not only in Sudan, but elsewhere, I opt for using an emancipatory theory of culture that centers women and gives them agency to generate a culture-of-resistance. Sudanese women have the potential for a mass movement based on the principles and organizational characteristics implicit in some traditional forms. Yet there are limitations. In most Global South and Western leftist parties and movements and in most Islamic movements, women have been primarily the nurturers, the substitute soldiers, or the choruses of the revolution. It is dubious whether

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such a strategy of substitution and traditionalism would ever lead to a totally transformed society.

I have argued elsewhere that Sudanese women's organizations that have *not* been established as helpmate organizations or "wings" might be more effective than the addendums and auxiliaries that have been produced for decades. A mobilization of women, not necessarily unified but aimed at radically transforming indigenous formations (prefigurative political forms), negotiating conflicts (e.g., in women's popular culture and networks and in their struggles as workers in the home and neighborhood), and combining a concern for both strategic and practical gender interests might be very effective (Hale 1996, last chapter). Such a union of theories and praxis could enable Sudanese women to invent their own forms of resistance. This is starting to happen, and it is exciting to watch.

The exercising of leadership that is developing out of grassroots, NGO, and youth movements has potential for a union of theories and praxis. These organizations have within them organic intellectuals who are developing guidelines for learning how to share leadership, how to train each other for the future, how to work out succession so that no one dominates an organization for decades, and how to form coalitions and work across borders. The new women leaders of Sudan are also working against racism and attempting to envelop the women leaders of marginalized areas. Furthermore, they are mitigating against their ingrained fear of embracing ideas from the outside lest they be accused of lacking in "authenticity" and not being "real Sudanese."

Although I have used the term "activist" throughout this chapter, it is a relatively new term of self-identification in political circles in Sudan. In a recent work, Gada Kadoda and I illustrate why this term of self-identification has supplanted the more conventional ideological or organizational terminology of the past (such as "socialist" or naming one's party membership or the political wing of one's religious brotherhood, such as "Ansari") and how it foreshadows a more liberating period for a new generation of human rights activists (Hale and Kadoda 2013, pp. 65–79).

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Chapter Twelve

Revolutionary Nuns or Totalitarian Pawns: Evaluating Libyan State Feminism After Mu'ammar al-Gaddafi

Amanda Rogers

Abstract This chapter centers women's issues to situate post-revolutionary Libya as emblematic of a "decolonization" period rather than as representing the aftermath of a conventional civil war, because the previous politicized regime operated according to a zero-sum dynamic. The chapter uses a critical analysis that contextualizes gendered realities in Libya prior to, during, and after Gaddafi's governance, and contends with the particularities of Libyan colonization and independence, forces that directly shaped the nation's subsequent political trajectory: nearly a century of totalitarian, personalized rule. Hence, the challenges that face contemporary Libyan women directly reflect the accumulated specificities of personalized control, ideology, and historical inheritance that not only isolated Libya, but that differentiate it and Gaddafi from other totalitarian nations and leaders.

Introduction

October 23, 2011, marks a watershed moment in contemporary Libyan history. After the 42-year period of iron-fisted rule by Mu'ammar al-Gaddafi's regime, a new era finally seemed possible.[1] In Benghazi, revolutionary leaders issued the official declaration of national liberation. Mustafa Abd al-Jalil, Chairman of the National Transitional Council, spoke of the difficult recovery process ahead, underscoring the necessity of patience to endure the profound transformations to be expected after 9 months of vicious internecine bloodshed and nearly half a century of personalized totalitarianism. Al-Jalil's remarks

[1] Numerous transliterations of the Libyan leader's surname exist; I defer to its most common English usage. Selection of the most accurate terminology by which to designate Gaddafi's national role proves fraught, with unofficial nicknames and titles almost as numerous as potential transliterations for his name. To avoid repetition, I alternatively identify Gaddafi as Libya's Leader, the Colonel, or simply, its Guide.

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_12

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proved controversial, particularly given his announcement that Libya's new constitution would include shari'a as a basic source of legislation.

Some political analysts interpreted al-Jalil's rhetoric as an attempt to appease the country's Islamists, while alternate corners of the media sphere focused on traditional culture to criticize practices of gender segregation and conservative dress. To other pundits, the speech's message forecast looming dystopia and fit neatly into pessimistic narratives of post-Arab Spring theocracy. Questions lingered: Would the revolution, started on February 17, 2011, hurt Libyan women, and could feminist advancements, ostensibly enabled by the deposed regime, survive under new leadership? If—as the self-titled "Emancipator of Women" claimed—Mu'ammar al-Gaddafi owed political longevity to the loyal adoration of citizen-subscribers to his ideological visions, one would expect to find widespread adoption of his feminist program.

Upon review, evidentiary support for radical gender emancipation proves conspicuously underwhelming. Libya's society and cultural mores place it among North Africa's most conservative nations. Gender segregation predominates across religious, political, and civic space; women in public leadership roles remain rare. Female dress codes associated with the visible display of normative, pious modesty persist, alongside strong taboos that preclude open discussion of gendered violence. This raises another critical inquiry: What practical measures of gender reform did Gaddafi's regime achieve?

Evaluating women's rights in Libya proves challenging. Although the 2011 rebellion definitively toppled the "fear barrier," political instability continues to hinder in-depth research. Further obstacles include academics and the media were focused on the wrong story given to geopolitical strategic imperatives vis-à-vis the regime, Gaddafi's purposeful isolation policies, and fascination with the Leader's biography, as well as the state's prolific propaganda machinery. After Gaddafi's image change "US-led war on terror rehabilitation," media attention centered primarily on the Leader's political theater, stagecraft, and performance of Arab nationalist, pan-African, and progressive feminist claims.

I argue that the most pressing concerns for Libya's female citizens do not arise from a gendered arena but instead arise—overwhelmingly—from a politicized climate of instability. Assessments of women's rights in the post-revolution future necessitate grounded understanding of gender's practical operation under the previous government. Given the previous regime's purposeful isolation, however, quantitative information and reliable source material is sporadic (at best). As such, the present chapter relies on non-government organizations [NGO] reports, Gaddafi's own writings, oral interviews, and historiographies. Women's issues in Libya, (then and now) are superseded by the immediacy of political division and conflict.[2] The Gaddafi regime's claims of

[2] By no means do I suggest that gendered forms of oppression are inexistent or of marginal importance. Rather, the present chapter reconstructs women's rights in practice prior to 2011 through the most illuminating framework: the historical specificities of

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gendered advancements must be compared to the sporadic results; even exceptional successes operated according to broader political logics of authoritarian rule, not feminism.

The challenges that face contemporary Libyan women directly reflect the accumulated specificities of personalized control, ideology, and historical inheritance that differentiate Libya, and Gaddafi, from other totalitarian leaders and nations. This chapter situates post-revolutionary Libya as emblematic of a "decolonization" period rather than representing the aftermath of a conventional civil war—because the previous politicized regime operated according to a zero-sum dynamic. Contextualization of gendered realities prior to, during, and after Gaddafi's governance must first contend with the particularities of Libyan colonization and independence. These forces directly shaped the nation's subsequent political trajectory: nearly a century of totalitarian, personalized rule.

Politicized Gender Reform and the Jamahiriya's Militarized Feminism

The present section recounts reforms undertaken over the course of the Gaddafi regime that framed gender as an explicit motivation behind social transformation measures. Rather than evaluate the comparative successes or failures of ostensibly feminist-inspired programs, I focus on the relative prominence of "women's equality" rhetoric that accompanied official government discourse, novel legislative campaigns, and the creation of new institutional centers. Gaddafi routinely cited female emancipation as a key motivation that drove him to topple King Idris, whose monarchy failed to adequately throw off imperial shackles. From the onset of modern anti-colonial sentiment across the Middle East and North Africa, a variety of reformers—of both secular and Islamist orientation—argued that social escape from foreign subordination demanded the liberation of local women. In this respect, therefore, Gaddafi's declared intention is far from unique.

At the time of Gaddafi's initial rise to power in 1969, the influence of Nasserist pan-Arabism had already reached younger generations of Libyan women.[3] Female citizens of university age had already begun to eschew the

Libya's modern foundation and, in turn, the impact such inheritance had on regime orientation and authoritarian power dynamics under Gaddafi. I utilize such an analytical approach to provide future researchers with a more accurate portrait of gender's complexity in the aftermath of revolution.

[3]The Nasserist model that Libya's leader emulated before an early and receptive domestic audience advanced a similar logic: the need to rectify female citizens' inferior social status. However, one must guard against the temptation to impose an anachronistic interpretation onto the often lofty rhetoric of such leaders. State feminism in the era of Arab nationalism, in particular, often grounded the impetus for women's rights firmly within a patriarchal model of the nuclear, nationalist family. Advocates of

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practice of traveling only under the protection of an accompanying male relative, and many had discarded Islamic dress in favor of Western fashion—a trend that began to reverse, region-wide, from the time of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and has not yet recovered. Although legal provisions afforded Libyan women rights of electoral participation under the monarchy, and indeed, some 30 years prior to its creation, this political inclusivity remained largely theoretical. Similarly, Islamic jurisprudence guaranteed female control over financial assets and the right to own private property independent of a husband's control. These civic opportunities also failed to translate into widespread practice.

Gaddafi's vision of radical transformation, in keeping with Nasserist articulations of an egalitarian social order, drove the new regime to prioritize women's issues almost immediately. Some three months after the Libyan Arab Republic's official declaration, early indications of state feminism appeared in the form of a constitutional clause that mandated female and male equality before the law. (Revolutionary Command Council) RCC initiatives also took measures necessary to rectify pronounced levels of illiteracy that the monarchy had failed to tackle; women's low rates of literacy proved even more dramatic in comparison to those of their countrymen. The Libyan Arabic Republic's foundational constitution, issued in 1969, ensured equal access to education, provided by the state, for both boys and girls.

Within the first 5 years, numerous such measures followed. Legal provisions stipulated equal pay without discrimination and ensured that the same set of qualifications applied to employed women as to their male colleagues. Further, the RCC state offered women regulated working conditions and birth bonuses, as well as maternity leave and retirement pensions. But, as before with voting and property rights, the government's encouragement of professional women did not result in high rates of female participation in the sector of employed labor. Perhaps on account of the conservative cultural norms that continue in contemporary Libya, women's presence in the work force has remained concentrated in such fields as nursing.

Such efforts couched gender equity within pan-Arab conceptions of the marital unit as a productive agent for the inculcation of adherence to the nation-state. Libya's leadership actively extended governmental jurisdiction over cultural practices that formerly claimed predominantly religious consecration, such as Islamic family law. The Libyan Arab Republic regulated marriage as a civil institution and an arm of normative nationalist citizenship. The state set in place minimum age requirements for brides and grooms in an effort to curb practices of underage and coerced marriage. In 1972, new

women's advancement, more often than not, championed the cultural primacy of motherhood in a child's early pedagogical development and, by extension, argued on such grounds for equal access to education. Whether articulated according to Qur'anic or constitutional ideals, such discourses ultimately aimed at the transference of patriarchal authority, not its eradication; the transition was to be from patriarchal fatherly guardianship to the paternalistic governance of a modern nation-state bureaucracy.

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statutes specifically enshrined female consent as a precondition for valid union and granted minors (a woman's guardianship at the time ended at the age of 21) permission to petition the court system in the event that a woman's choice of husband met with her father's refusal. The following year of legal reforms included measures to close the gender gap in access to divorce and initiatives implemented to allow women's instigation of separation proceedings.

Never one to shy away from romanticized autobiography, Mu'ammar al-Gaddafi proudly touted his love for women and commitment to gender equality in discussions with foreign journalists. The Leader often reminded members of the international press corps that "Emancipator of Women" was counted among his unofficial titles. Media interviews provided Gaddafi the opportunity to enumerate the direct impact of his guidance on Libyan women's advancement, and he nostalgically cited his own mother as inspiration. According to the Colonel, his childhood experience of dire poverty in the aftermath of Italian imperialism influenced his political commitments from an early age. According to these musings, the harsh desert geography not only birthed attributes necessary for immediate survival, but also midwifed prerequisite values for Libya's socialist utopia: ascetic piety, self-sufficiency, and the critical importance of communal loyalty. The difficult life of his mother, in such retellings, provided a deeply personal impetus for gender reform: Gaddafi's promise to the woman who gave him life.

Many of the successful reforms spoken about in Gaddafi's interviews and nostalgic recollections, however, either failed to transpire in practice or were never fully implemented. Certain facets of Libya's cultural makeup perhaps explain the lack of materialized, radical reforms. From the origin of the Libyan Arab Republic through the fall of Gaddafi in 2011, fears of fragile national unity plagued the leadership, and dissent remained an ever-present, if coercively muted, threat from factions that spanned traditional tribal institutions to society's more religiously conservative elements. The gap between women's rights championed at a theoretical level and their practical implementation finds further explanation against the backdrop of post-monarchical principles of state formation and political participation.

A review of gender reform at the level of institutional creation is instructive. Rather than looking for signs of emancipated participation in all civic arenas, ... I suggest that Gaddafi's gendered interventions are better understood within the framework of "militarized feminism," enacted to deepen the domestic constituency's fanatical loyalty to the Colonel and his ongoing political experimentation. Three institutions in particular provide suggestive evidence for such a thesis: the government-run Women's General Union (founded in 1970), the 1979 creation of a woman-oriented military academy, and Gaddafi's adoption in the early 1980s of an elite, personalized bodyguard corps composed of the academy's graduates.

Tentative moves toward women's greater inclusion in civil society began shortly after independence. Three years into the Idrisid monarchy, Benghazi boasted the first precursor to a Libyan feminist organization in the form of a

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1955 women's association. Sporadic attempts followed throughout the monarchical period; in 1970, RCC leadership announced the formation of the Women's General Union (WGU), an umbrella organization into which multiple associations merged. Parallel in purpose to the associations system, the WGU funneled female activism into the purview of the state and helped to solidify civil society's total oversight and surveillance by the regime. Affiliated organizations later included a national GPD dedicated specifically to women's affairs.

A decade after he came to power, Gaddafi's frustration with an inadequately radicalized society extended to the issue of women. Despite official encouragement of active female participation in the affairs of populist governance, the Colonel remained unsatisfied with inadequate female involvement, which was, to his mind, an indication of apathy. With the republic's dissolution and replacement by the new system erected in 1977, Gaddafi changed the name of the WGU to reflect the novel state formation; the Women's General Union thus became the Jamahiriya[4] Women's Federation. Subsequently, the Guide announced that female citizens remained oppressed by reactionary elements lingering from imperialism, monarchy, and patriarchy. This situation necessitated a new institution: the Revolutionary Women's Formation (RWF). According to its foundational vision, RWF members would lead by example and encourage female mobilization in support of the Jamahiriya system.

Such measures of state feminism sought increased opportunities for women's political participation, but only within the parameters erected by Gaddafi's vision of the proper socialist, Arab-Islamic order. Once again, the Jamahiriya's operational logic of gender intervention prioritized regime loyalty as the paramount objective of female empowerment initiatives. One may also argue that concern with the participatory integration of women was strategically aimed at solidifying the national body in accordance with the animating precepts of anti-imperialist ideology. In 1978, Libya's military academies began issuing training invitations to female recruits, and further measures to arm devoted women followed. The nation's first all-woman military training center was established in 1979. In tandem, secondary education in the Jamahiriya adopted physical and ideological training programs for male and female students, articulated in the language of defensive sovereignty and state loyalty.

Ultimately, Gaddafi's high expectations would meet with disappointment over apathetic responses and persistent traditionalism, and enrollment at the women's academy remained low. The Guide's hoped-for international makeover of Libya's image through its female citizens, however, did achieve relative success through the visibility of his elite unit of exclusively female armed protection: the so-called "Amazonian Guards."[5] One can only speculate about the underlying motivation behind the Leader's creation of a woman-only corps,

[4] "Jamhiriyya" is derived from "jumhur" (people) and refers to Gaddafi's vision of "rule by the people", meaning "rule without state institutions". This is opposed to "jumhuriyya" (republic) which is based on state institutions.

[5] For a detailed inquiry—albeit sensationalistic in tone—into the inner workings of Gaddafi's female guard, see Cojean, A. 2014. *Gaddafi's Harem*. New York: Grove Press.

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whether an eccentric penchant for stagecraft, bizarre sexual proclivities, or sincere devotion to gender emancipation in all areas of life.

The existence of this exclusive, armed cadre exemplifies militarized feminism in the Jamahiriya: women's rights initiatives underwent periodic state radicalization reforms in tandem with broader, society-wide attempts to improve ideological adherence. Scant documentation exists surrounding the origins of the "Revolutionary Nuns" (ar-rahibat al-thawriyat), alternatively nicknamed "Gaddafi's Angels," the "Amazons," or the "Green Nuns." What can be definitively established, however, is that the creation of women's training academies and the armed guard coincided with an uptick in opposition campaigns against the regime. Within the regime, ever-present paranoia worsened and provoked tighter restrictions on civil liberties, dissent, and potential activist elements, even among diaspora residents.

From the early 1980s, the Nuns of the Revolution began to form a prominent core of Gaddafi's entourage, appearing alongside him at all kinds of domestic ceremonies and international diplomatic gatherings. The Jamahiriya's Guide allegedly oversaw every stage of the appointment process for members of this elite cadre, drawing potential recruits from the military academy's distinguished graduates. Presumably, the hiring process prioritized demonstrable knowledge of firearms, martial training, and combat prowess, yet many an observer noted that the chosen women also proved strikingly attractive. This latter attribute adds a layer of complexity to the functional roles which Amazonian Guards played in the Colonel's inner circle. According to regime insiders, the Nuns' job description included housekeeping in addition to security, and post-2011 testimonies from ex-members allege forced sexual relations with Gaddafi himself and favored men in his entourage as an extension of their prerequisite oath to avoid marriage.

Legends abound concerning the creation, recruitment process, and employment conditions under which the Revolutionary Nuns labored; these sensational stories, however, prove extremely difficult to confirm for several reasons. The zero-sum stakes of loyalty under Jamahiriya rule—and, indeed, under the previous Libyan Arab Republic—engendered considerable fear of punitive consequences, forestalling complaints. Further, the all-or-nothing affiliations inculcated by Gaddafi continue to punctuate the aftermath of Libya's February 17, 2011, uprising. In addition to the strong cultural taboos that surround even consensual female sexual conduct outside the bonds of marriage, many ex-Nuns have fled into silent hiding rather than divulge the details of their service, fearing backlash from the new regime.

These claims of forced rape in service to the state deserve serious consideration and must be subjected to critical, independent verification whenever possible. However, for the purposes of the present chapter, authentication of the Revolutionary Nuns' sexual experiences is not only beyond the scope of analysis but also not of immediate relevance. Rather, the large body of folklore devoted to Gaddafi's alleged perversions is significant by virtue of its very existence. During the 2011 uprising, the footage of many pro-regime rallies

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maximized the presence of green-clad, armed female loyalists as a focal point, spliced with scenes of the Revolutionary Nuns, as examples of the Leader's domestic popularity and progressive rule. The competing narratives, however, reveal crucial details about normative constructions of gender throughout modern Libya's conservative culture, as well as widespread distrust among the domestic population for the Guide's "feminist" motivations. I turn now to a discussion of these latent contradictions and provide further support for the notion that the patriarchal, sex-based discrimination struggles faced by Libyan women under Gaddafi ultimately proved subsidiary to an urgent negotiation of political fault lines.

Gendered Contradiction: Cracks Beneath the Surface of Feminist Rhetoric

Earlier anecdotes presented here touch on issues of ideological motivation for state feminist initiatives; subsequent discussion, however, will focus on sharp contradictions at the heart of Jamahiriya gender philosophy. Such an analytical trajectory must foreground the actions and ideology articulated by Gaddafi himself as a point of entry, due to the highly personalized nature of systemic totalitarianism.[6] In the Jamahiriya era, state foundational legitimacy rested on the concept of "direct democracy" elaborated throughout the *Green Book*'s volumes,[7] in which the Guide outlined his concepts of a just political and social order and mandated study of his philosophy as foundational curriculum at all levels of the education system.

Study of this key philosophical treatise reveals stark gaps in the rhetoric of state feminism. The final installment, in particular, *The Social Basis of the Third Universal Theory*, discusses all manner of cultural institutions, including the rights of minorities and women and the right to engage in sport.[8] Rather than feminism as an avenue to gender equality, the *Green Book* positions women as naturally subsidiary to stronger males who are tasked with protection, albeit the relationship is couched in the language of complementarity. Gaddafi writes:

> We must understand the difference in the created nature of man and woman, that is, the natural difference between the two. Women are females and men are males. According to gynecologists, women menstruate every month or so, while men, being male, do not menstruate or suffer during the monthly period.

[6] BBC news. 2011. *What Now For Colonel Gaddafi's Green Book?* Available from: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13235981. [Accessed: July 12, 2014].
[7] Al-Gaddafi, M. 1975. *The Green Book*. Available from: http://www.mathaba.net/gci/theory/gb.htm. [Accessed: July 19, 2014].
[8] Al-Gaddafi, M. 1975. *The Green Book*. Volume Three. *The Social Basis of the Third Universal Theory*. Available from: http://www.mathaba.net/gci/theory/gb3.htm. [Accessed: July 19, 2014].

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> A woman, being a female, is naturally subject to monthly bleeding. When a woman does not menstruate, she is pregnant […] She becomes directly responsible for another person whom she assists in his or her biological functions; without this assistance that person would die. The man, on the other hand, neither conceives nor breast-feeds. End of gynecological statement![9]

This statement draws upon biological difference to argue for the existence of natural law, a code by which the Jamahiriya was intended to function. One might argue, despite the language of female biology as burdensome and a paralyzing disease, that gender complementarity as articulated in the *Green Book* arises from an attempt at respectful consideration rather than from pejorative views of women's fragility. However, closer scrutiny of the Leader's thoughts reveals a governing philosophy quite at odds with several of the policies he publicly advocated, including protection of working mothers and women's education and military participation.

Although Gaddafi's tenure as RCC Chairman during the Libyan Arab Republic included the rapid passage of legislation offering working women state-provided childcare services, the Leader's written philosophy includes strongly worded arguments *against* such institutions as being inherently coercive. In one particularly memorable passage, the Guide warns that childhood experience of nursery care inevitably risks deviance in adult life. He offers as a metaphor a striking comparison between the quality of meat from wild birds and the meat from birds raised in a poultry farm:

> To dispense with the natural role of woman in maternity—nurseries replacing mothers—is a start in dispensing with the human society and transforming it into a merely biological society with an artificial way of life. To separate children from their mothers and to cram them into nurseries is a process by which they are transformed into something very close to chicks, for nurseries are similar to poultry farms into which chicks are crammed after they are hatched […] Meat from mechanized poultry farms is not tasty and may not be nourishing because the chicks are not naturally bred and are not raised in the protective shade of natural motherhood.[10]

Similarly, the legislative prohibitions enacted to increase women's presence in the Libyan labor sector appear out of sync with Gaddafi's understanding of female work as a potential obstacle to be avoided. This is particularly the case with regard to women who desire children: "A woman who needs work that renders her unable to perform her natural function is not free and is compelled to work by need."[11] He continues to place blame on female workers

[9] Al-Gaddafi, M. 1975. *The Green Book*, Volume Three. *The Social Basis of the Third Universal Theory*. Available from: http://www.mathaba.net/gci/theory/gb3.htm#WOMAN. [Accessed: July 19, 2014].

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

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who engage in difficult labor after conception, stating: "For pregnant women to perform such physical work is tantamount to punishment for their betrayal of their maternal role; it is the tax they pay for entering the realm of men, which is naturally alien to their own."[12] Should a woman feel compelled to seek employment out of dire financial circumstances, the Guide asserts that this is not true necessity, but false consciousness:

> The belief, even if it is held by a woman, that she carries out physical labor of her own accord, is not, in fact, true. She performs the physical work only because a harsh materialistic society has placed her (without her being directly aware of it) into coercive circumstances.[13]

In Gaddafi's conception of a just social order, women and men must follow the dictates of complementary work and biology; this natural law also requires that a woman refrain from acts that mar her beauty, a critical purpose of her creation. Something in society that led women to make such demands (as with education in the next part of the quotation) that was unjust and cruel? Education that leads to work unsuitable for her nature is unjust and cruel as well."[14] To Gaddafi, woman's physical appearance must be preserved, as it is the very essence of her purpose: "Man's work obscures woman's beautiful features, which are created for female roles. They are like blossoms, which are created to attract pollen and to produce seeds."[15]

In stark contrast to a belief in egalitarian capabilities, the Leader espouses pejorative assessments cloaked in the language of paternalistic protection. For a woman to shirk her natural duties, for any reason, promised dire consequences: "The woman who rejects marriage, pregnancy or maternity without any concrete cause abandons her natural role as a result of coercive and morally deviant circumstances."[16] One wonders, then, what rationale existed within Jamahiriya gender theory for the Guide's Amazonian Guard.

Further indications of gender equity's subordination to Gaddafi's vision of natural law and the production of a just Jamahiriya can be found in his abhorrence of birth control: "Deliberate interventions against conception form an alternative to human life. In addition to that, there exists partial deliberate intervention against conception, as well as against breastfeeding [...] They differ only in degree."[17] To the Leader, birth control and abortion violate natural law, but so does the avoidance of breastfeeding. In his estimation, any interference with maternity's biological processes is tantamount to murder. Needless to say, unlike the Tunisia of Habib Bourguiba, North Africa's other

[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

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proclaimed champion of Arab feminism, abortion remained completely illegal in the Libya of Mu'ammar al-Gaddafi.

Ultimately, the totality of Gaddafi's vision for complete social transformation finds fruition in the *Green Book's* final volume. The sum of the Third Universal Theory's components not only subordinates female emancipation to motherhood's cultural primacy but also constructs the importance of women as predominantly necessary for the maintenance and defense of utopian society. Throughout his 42-year rule over Libya, Gaddafi exhibited a variety of bizarre, ever-changing policy shifts—from nationalizing the economy to later privatization to dissimulated "media reform" and beyond. From the very beginning, the Guide touted women's issues as critical to his vision of a Libya that would stand as an example to the Arab world. His personal philosophy, relationships with women, and prioritization of loyalty above all other criteria, however, testify to a vastly different attitude.

Outside Libya, the Colonel captured headlines with erratic stagecraft that often exemplified his approach to gender. In 2009, for example, the Libyan leader paid an Italian modeling agency to furnish attractive young women (he even specified their preferred height) for an official "cultural tour."[18] Libyan state television crews followed Gaddafi as he led the models on a theatrical tour of sites destroyed by Ronald Reagan's 1986 bombing campaign and "populist" monuments to his own leadership. In a typically idiosyncratic flourish, Gaddafi supplemented his sermons on the dangers of imperialism with an invitation for the models to convert to Islam and closed the cultural program with a ceremonial presentation of the *Green Book*. Hiring beautiful Italian models for televised proselytization was, in fact, a theme the Guide repeated on numerous occasions.[19]

Although the Libyan leader's intimate life remains shrouded in secrecy and not much is known concerning his marital relationship, Gaddafi has long been accused of sexist behavior. In addition to his Revolutionary Nuns, speculation has raged about the possible role of his Russian and Ukrainian women nurses, upon whom he constantly showered showy and intimate gifts. Regional analyst Mona Al-Tahawy once accused the Guide of ordering his guards to silence her through sexual violence. In her memoir, former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recounts a visit to Libya, in which the Leader gifted her with a homemade scrapbook that hinted at an inappropriate obsession.[20] As former *Le Monde* journalist Annick Cojean reports (2014), neither foreign

[18] Al-Jazeera. 2011. "Profile: Muammar Gaddafi." Available from: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/2011/02/201122117565923629.html. [Accessed: July 12, 2014].

[19] Kelleher, K. 2010. "Gaddafi's Girl for Hire." In *Jezebel*. Available from: http://jezebel.com/5625285/gaddafis-girl-for-hire. [Accessed: July 19, 2014].

[20] O'keefe, E. 2011. "When Condoleeza Rice Met Moammar Gaddafi." In *Washington Post*. Available from: http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/post/when-condoleezza-rice-met-moammar-gaddafi/2011/10/25/gIQAtdFsGM_blog.html. [Accessed: August 6, 2014].

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journalists nor the wives of regional dignitaries were immune from his advances.

With the death of Mu'ammar al-Gaddafi and the exile, death, and silence of many key members from his inner circle, the legends of Libya's former leader remain cloaked in the fog of dictatorship, war, and revolution. The North African nation is still reeling from instability in the wake of massive political upheaval and is mired in the long, fraught process of rebuilding. Libyan women prove no exception.

Post-revolutionary Challenges for February 17 Revolutionary Women

If Huda Bin Amer exemplifies the Gaddafi regime's approach to political loyalty, the women of Abu Salim Prison provide a revolutionary corollary: full-throttle opposition. Located just outside of Tripoli, Abu Salim Prison was a notorious incarceration facility Under the Gaddafi regime. The complex housed not only criminal offenders but also political prisoners, more than 1200 of whom died on a June day in 1996.[21] A prisoner revolt against poor conditions, including lack of access to medical care and overcrowding, led to a stand-off between inmates and authorities. The Gaddafi regime agreed to meet with prisoners and discuss their demands. Instead of negotiations, however, Libya's leadership dispatched security forces that fired into locked cells, slaughtering more than one thousand men in fewer than 4 h.

News of the killing was slow to spread under the closed regime, and family members continued to await justice even after the declaration of national liberation in 2011. Not until well after the fall of Tripoli did the families of many Abu Salim victims finally obtain the closure that Gaddafi's security state had deliberately withheld.[22] In many ways, the Abu Salim Prison Massacre symbolizes Gaddafi's approach to governance as well as the steadfast resolve of Libya's steadily growing climate of dissent. Female relatives of those imprisoned, slaughtered, and missing from the prison, in fact, played a crucial—if ignored—role in bringing the February 17 revolution to fruition.[23]

[21] Human Rights Watch. 2006. "Libya: June 1996 Killings at Abu Salim Prison." Available from: http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2006/06/27/libya-June-1996-killings-abu-salim-prison. [Accessed: 9 August 2014].

[22] Franklin, S. 2011. "Abu Salim: Walls that Talk." In *The Guardian*. Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/30/mass-grave-libya-prison-abu-salim. [Accessed: August 6, 2014].

[23] Elliot, S. 2013. "The Widows of Abu Salim Prison." In *Reportage Getty*. Available from: http://www.reportagebygettyimages.com/features/the-widows-of-abu-salim-prison/. [Accessed: August 6, 2014].

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Taking full advantage of the conservative cultural norms that govern gender in Libya and hoping that security forces would not fire upon elderly widows, female relatives of the Abu Salim victims regularly gathered in a public show of protest, primarily in Benghazi, where many of the prisoners had roots. The families of the disappeared organized a weekly protest in a municipal square to demand answers about the whereabouts of their sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers. For years, these women tirelessly kept up the perilous and seemingly fruitless campaign. By February 15, 2011, however, their presence finally sparked a wildfire.

The iron fist of Gaddafi rendered human rights law dangerous terrain, yet the reforms promised by Saif al-Gaddafi, the Leader's charismatic, Western-educated son and heir apparent, provided campaigners room for negotiation—or so they thought. Courageous activists took up the case of the Abu Salim families and regularly petitioned the government for an independent investigation of the 1996 massacre. Fathi Terbil, a Benghazi-based attorney, was the most prominent face of the Abu Salim families and a perpetual thorn in the side of the Gaddafi government. Once the regional dominos of Tunisia's Zine al-Abidine Benali and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak began to waver, Terbil faced increasing surveillance from a nervous regime. Although activists had set a so-called Day of Rage for February 17, 2011, news of Terbil's arrest catalyzed an early arrival of rebellion.

On the evening of February 15, regime forces apprehended the Abu Salim families' representatives, an arrested that definitively shattered the barrier of fear: displays of anger erupted across the tightly policed streets of Gaddafi's Libya. Lawyers, academics, and activists quickly gathered in protest before the steps of the municipal courthouse in Benghazi, joined by fellow citizens from all walks of life. Small-scale demonstrations emerged throughout the nation and were met with harsh crackdowns by security forces. The rebellion had begun. The long-suffering women of Abu Salim were finally joined by society at large. Libya's female citizens had exhibited more than a decade of patient refusal to relinquish demands for justice. Gaddafi's clock was ticking.

Protests by widows or rare public leadership roles were far from the only manner in which Libyan women actively took part in the ouster of their unelected leader. The nation's female citizens contributed immensely to the revolution's success, even though they weren't among the armed soldiers of the front lines. Libya's female nurses and doctors treated the wounded. Anonymous mothers, sisters, cousins, and daughters regularly took charge of feeding, clothing, and nursing the rebels as the country awaited assistance, in addition to providing logistical, translation, and technical assistance to foreign reporters throughout the course of the revolution. Women also "manned" media centers throughout the eastern region in the rebellion's earliest days, facilitating the spread of information beyond Libya's borders. The sheer numbers of women in the streets, moreover, encouraged morale among Libya's male fighters and amply testified to the mass character of the 2011 uprising. Women took advantage of the opportunity to collect and spread information about the rebellion's

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progress, and they organized ongoing protests and media efforts and instituted the beginnings of civil society initiatives that continue to grow during the post-revolutionary aftermath.

One of the women who gathered in front of the Benghazi courthouse in protest against Terbil's arrest on the fateful day of February 15, 2011, was Salwa Bughaighis. Her participation throughout the anti-Gaddafi uprising and her assassination in the wake of political transition exemplify the challenges faced by Libyan women in the current era. Bughaighis was not a mother of the disappeared, but rather a human rights activist even during the days of Gaddafi. As soon as the first burst of rebellion appeared, Bughaighis sprang into action, helping to organize further demonstrations and providing administrative advice to the inchoate rebel government of which she was a founding member. Her orthodontist sister, Iman Bughaighis, served as a spokeswoman for the National Transitional Council (NTC), presenting its "friendliest" face to the West.

In addition to her founding role in the NTC's formation, Salwa Bughaighis served on the NTC amid ideological clashes among members whose only point of unity was their opposition to the Gaddafi regime. Bughaighis never wavered in her commitment to the fight for political freedoms across the gender divide, but she also remained dedicated to preserving the status of women in the post-revolutionary social and political order. After three months of service to the NTC, she resigned in protest of the membership's failure to ensure equal representation for Libya's female citizens. According to Bughaighis, "They knew that women were very effective and very strong in this revolution, but they think that now, the role is for the man."[24] Following her resignation, the activist and lawyer continued to campaign for women's equality, emphasizing the urgent need for an egalitarian constitutional drafting process and final result.

Indeed, the NTC was plagued by accusations that the new government's male members had little to no demonstrable commitment to women's rights. None of the municipal leaders were women, and in a reflection of the underwhelming concern shown for female citizens, the NTC reportedly lacked gender-equal restroom facilities.[25] Nonetheless, women continue to agitate for their rights in the post-Gaddafi era and have witnessed the possibility of success—at least in a few areas. Notably, NGO organizations aimed at women's rights have exploded in number since the fall of the Gaddafi regime, and Libya's new government has taken some steps to combat stigmas related to gender, including social disdain directed at victims of rape. As Libyans voted for members of the constitutional drafting assembly, Justice Minister Salah

[24] Vital Voices. (Undated). "Interview with Salwa Bughaighis." Available from: http://www.vitalvoices.org/node/2680. [Accessed: August 15, 2014].

[25] Stephen, C. et al. (2011) Libyan Women: It's our Revolution too. *Guardian*. Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/16/libyan-women-our-revolution-too. [Accessed: August 6, 2014].

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al-Marghani announced legislative measures that aimed to "elevate" the status of women raped during the anti-Gaddafi revolution.[26] Such a move is unprecedented in offering such women the same benefits as war veterans and in breaking the taboo typically attached to sexual violence in the conservative nation.

Just as the life, career, and activism of Salwa Bughaighis provides an example of the struggles endured by Libyan women prior to February 17, 2011, so too does her assassination serve as a shocking reminder of the simultaneously political and gendered threats in the wake of uprising.[27] After her pivotal and public role as an early face of the revolution in Benghazi, Bughaighis continued in the aftermath of February 17 to struggle against lingering elements of Gaddafi rule and remaining militias and Islamist opponents. Shortly after returning to Libya from a brief trip abroad, well aware of the multiple threats against her life, Bughaighis voted in the nation's general election and was cut down the same day. Her husband was abducted, apparently in the same incident, and the assassination appears to have been primarily political rather than gendered, yet it represents a deep loss for the nation's female citizens in particular. The unrest that claimed Bughaighis's life in Libya's notoriously restive eastern region continues to plague the rest of the country and presents a microcosm of the perilous situation for the contemporary nation as a whole.

As Libya struggles to move forward after the Gaddafi era and draft a progressive and representative constitution, problems remain, particularly for female citizens. According to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) 2013 report on Libya, urgent challenges threaten the status of women's rights, including access to education; increasing attempts to produce hard-line, conservative legislation; and the need to ensure civic participation and women's familiarity with their social and judicial rights.[28] Human Rights Watch issued a 2013 study, *Revolution for All: Women's Rights in the New Libya,* that concurs with IFES and remains relevant at the time of this writing. Numerous human rights associations have joined in demands that post-Gaddafi Libya make it an urgent priority to improve the lives of female citizens in the long transitional period.

Nonetheless, Gaddafi's fall midwifed a flowering of civil society initiatives, with many organizations among these new institutions aimed at improving women's rights and combating domestic violence. Despite catastrophic

[26] Jawad, R. 2014. "Libya: Gaddafi Rape Victims to be Compensated." *BBC*. Available from: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-26270890. [Accessed: July 20, 2014].
[27] Bouckaert, P. 2014. "HRW's Tribute to Salwa Bughaighis." In *Human Rights Watch*. Available from:http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/26/libya-tribute-salwa-bughaighis. [Accessed: August 6, 2014].
[28] Abdul Latif, R. 2014. *Libya: Status of Women Survey 2013*. Available from: http://www.ifes.org/~/media/Files/Publications/Survey/2013/Libya%20Status%20of%20Women%20Survey%20Report_final2.pdf. [Accessed: August 9, 2014].

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setbacks, NGO efforts dedicated to women's issues carry on, tackling everything from legal representation, childcare, rape victims, and education to environmental preservation and street cleaning programs. Diaspora women are also active, taking the lead in maximizing transnational networks previously inaccessible due to regime attempts at national isolation. Cairo, Egypt, hosts several Libya-focused women's organizations, including associations affiliated with the Friends of Free Libya. Tunisia-based groups exist as well, including Relief and Aspirations in Libya, aimed at vulnerable refugee communities. In the UK, the Libyan Women's Union is joined by other groups founded by female civil society activists, such as the founding members of the Lawyers for Justice in Libya. Qatar-based Libyan Women Alliance focuses on a host of generalized issues relevant to female citizens, including counseling, education, and improved medical care.

Conclusion

As demonstrated throughout this chapter, decolonization—from 42 years of Gaddafi and beyond—remains a pressing challenge. Particularly in the West, observers must guard against ethnocentric standards for women's advancement. Aside from security concerns, many Libyans cite traditional culture as the central impediment to gender equity and note that only time will usher in definitive changes. In the short term, it remains "too soon to tell." As a young woman tellingly responded to a reporter from the British *Guardian* newspaper who asked about the viability of a female president: "I don't think so. Men will be president. But have you ever heard of an American woman president?"[29]

Going forward, policy makers and researchers must carefully analyze the internal workings of the Gaddafi regime to better strategize a path toward gender equity in the new Libya. The fight for post-revolutionary justice, much like the legacy of regime oppression, remains an intersectional concern: domestic security and political stabilization will ultimately rely on the national resource of female citizens. Libyan women face a host of challenges from diverse quarters, including traditionally conservative society and its cultural taboos concerning gender. Political representation and knowledge of religious rights accorded to women are also key problems with which post-Gaddafi Libya must wrestle, likely for years to come. However, the participation of female citizens in the February 17 uprising against decades of stale dictatorship will not soon be forgotten; as the women of Abu Salim and other women activists amply demonstrate, the determination of Libya's women is far from a passing phase of revolutionary euphoria.

[29] Stephen, C. et al. 2011. "Libyan Women: It's our Revolution too." In *Guardian*. Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/16/libyan-women-our-revolution-too [Accessed: August 6, 2014].

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Chapter Thirteen

Tunisian Women's Literature and the Critique of Authority: Sources, Contexts, and the Tunisian "Arab Spring"

Lilia Labidi

Abstract Using life stories, this chapter highlights Tunisian women's agency before and after the revolution. Given the lack of written documents—memoirs, autobiographies, and so on—related to the early history of women's movements in Tunisia, the experiences of the first Tunisian women to go to school at the beginning of the twentieth century and those women who were the first to practice professions that had been dominated by men are important for understanding when, how, and why they were active—or were not active—in political struggles. The chapter demonstrates that following the so-called Arab Spring, a new online literature became accessible to a broad public, including the new phenomenon of political cartoons produced by women and a renewed interest in zajal—poetry and oral jousting in the everyday language of the people—where women zajal poets speak their verses in public.

Introduction

By the middle of the nineteenth century reformers, writers, and poets in Tunisia were trying to understand the situation of women and were looking for new models, following closely, for example, the suffragette movement in Europe and women's movements in the Mashriq (Middle East). The French colonization of Tunisia in 1881 constitutes a rupture in the domain of literature; when families adopted the education of girls and their access to schools and to public space as inevitable developments, the role of women storytellers and oral poets, who were known for the vivacity and strength of their opinions, receded and was then marginalized. Later efforts to recover this heritage were rare, although among feminists since the 1980s there has been a growing interest in the life histories of Tunisian women political figures who were active during the 1930s and whose testimonies preserved the poetry of the

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_13

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spoken language.[1] And following the so-called Arab Spring, a new online literature has become accessible to a broad public, including the new phenomenon of political cartoons produced by women. Also evident has been a renewed interest in zajal—poetry and oral jousting in the everyday language of the people—where women zajal poets speak their verses in public.[2]

Between 1881 and 1956, the rare women who had access to education and who then had professional careers tended to go into journalism. Later, a bilingual literary movement, in Arabic and French and involving women writers and poets, was important in Tunisian cultural life from 1956 through 2010. During this period a literature critical of authority appeared, with the supporters and producers of this literature coming from feminist groups and from among women who, benefitting from access to the universities, specialized in the social and human sciences. Concerning the education of girls, the academic literature on this subject tended to study the discourse of institutions and of political or reformist figures, the demographics of girls' schooling, and so forth, but rarely did it examine the experiences of girls who went to school in the colonial context. I will bring forward, in my discussion here, material I collected on the life stories of two women who were among the earliest to be educated in the first half of the twentieth century in Tunisia. Through this material, we can hear them speak of this crucial stage in the formation of their thinking. I will also bring forward a woman political cartoonist—something not seen until the "Arab Spring" and who I have interviewed several times—in order to discuss how earlier and more recent women have constructed their relationship to politics.

What are the reasons for choosing an oral history approach to write about the history of Tunisia's female elite, when oral history has usually been associated with groups that had little or no access to writing? A lack of written documents by these women—memoirs, autobiographies, and so on—related to the early history of women's movements in Tunisia led me to meet the first Tunisian women who went to school at the beginning of the twentieth century. I also met women who were the first to practice professions that had been dominated by men. It was my belief that it was necessary to speak with them in order to understand when, how, and why they were active—or were not active—in the political struggles. As with many historians and anthropologists, I was conscious of "bias and discrimination against women" (Gundersen 1986, 52), and I believed that listening to women "talk about their feelings as well as their activities" (Patai & Gluck 1991, 1) was important.

[1] Labidi, L. 1987. *Joudhour al-harakat al-nisa'iyya: riwayaat li-shakhsiyyaat tarikhiyya* [Origins of Feminist Movements in Tunisia: Personal History Narratives]. Tunis: Imprimerie Tunis Carthage. See also Labidi, L. & Zghal, A. 1985. *Génération des années 30: la mémoire vivante des sujets de l'histoire*. Tunis: CERES.

[2] Zajal is a poetic form that uses colloquial Arabic to express a poetic vision of the self and the world. Several women poets participated in public recitations of this sort in Sbeitla, Hammamet, Ain Draham, Tunis, and other locations during 2011 and later.

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Including women's experiences and perspectives in the historical record would "fulfill feminist criteria for a non-objectifying, nonexploitative research methodology" (Osterud & Jones 1989, 2).

But was this sufficient? Having used this approach over more than three decades, I share Archie Mafeje's view that a "random collection of biographies and oral testimonies or histories does not constitute history" (Mafeje 1997).[3] Oral documents, like all other documents, need to be questioned and put into perspective by other testimonies, for, as Joan Scott points out, "Experience is at once always already an interpretation and is in need of interpretation" (Scott 1992, 37).

The First Tunisian Women to Study Abroad

Discussion on the condition of women and on the veil expanded in the 1920s after Manoubia Ouertani, an unmarried sewing teacher at the nuns' school "Les Vicaires," publicly removed her veil in 1924 during a speech she was giving on the condition of women at an event organized by French socialists in Tunisia. In 1929, Habiba Menchari, a secretary of Algerian origin, did the same in similar circumstances. Articles were published in the press in both Arabic and French, some favorable to these acts, others not. Among the stronger reactions, we find an article by lawyer and journalist Habib Bourguiba entitled "Le voile" (The veil), in which he sharply criticized the French socialist organizers of these events, for at the time he saw the veil as an organic part of Tunisian identity.

Among the first women to obtain their secondary school baccalaureate was Tawhida Ben Cheikh in 1928.[4] Born in 1909 to a well-off family with its origins in Bizerte, she had two sisters and a brother who was born after the death of their father. Her abilities were such that one of her secondary school teachers brought her to the attention of Lydia Burnet, wife of Dr. Etienne Burnet, then Deputy Director of the Institut Pasteur in Tunis.[5] Lydia Burnet,

[3] Mafeje, A. 1997, cited in Hale (2014, 150).

[4] The information that follows is taken from her life story and was collected in interviews I had with her during the 1980s.

[5] Etienne Burnet (1873–1960) was the son of an education inspector who introduced him to observing nature. He earned his university diploma in letters at the Sorbonne, an agrégation in philosophy, and a doctorate in medicine (the agrégation is a competitive civil service exam for certain positions in the educational system). Between 1896 and 1897 he gave private lessons to the son of a rich Parisian family, who introduced him to the cultural elite, including Dr. Georges-Fernand Widal, who was decisive in orienting him toward a scientific career. Tawhida Ben Cheikh's relationship with Dr. Burnet is in this way similar to the latter's encounter with Dr. Widal. Information concerning Etienne Burnet is available from: http://www.pasteur.fr/infosci/archives/bur0.html.

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of Russian origin and herself an ambulance driver, invited Tawhida to her home for tea, and Tawhida spoke to the Burnet couple of her desire for further study and how she wanted to become a nurse in order to help Tunisian women. Dr. Burnet suggested that she study medicine in Paris so that she could become a doctor for women. Tawhida had a brother who had studied law in France and had succeeded in going abroad only after much discussion and dispute within the family, mainly because his mother feared he would marry a French woman. Was it possible she would let her daughter travel to France to study? Lydia Burnet met with Halouma Ben Cheikh, Tawhida's mother,[6] to persuade her to allow Tawhida to go to Paris to study medicine. Lydia promised that she would take care of Tawhida in Paris. In the face of opposition from men in her family—and these included religious figures and other notables—Halouma agreed that Tawhida would not go to Paris alone, but with her "Aunt" Lydia. Tawhida Ben Cheikh thus went to Paris with the Burnet couple.

Tawhida won a French fellowship to study medicine, 5000 francs for the first year. She did not mention the fellowship either in her testimony to me or to Leila Blili, perhaps because this fellowship was not given to all Tunisian youth wishing to study abroad.[7] She spent four years at the "international residence for women students" founded by Ms. Anderson, an American. Young women of 25 different nationalities lived at this residence, and Tawhida Ben Cheikh retained fond memories of this period and kept up ties with a number of her fellow students. Tawhida later spent three years in the Burnet household, where she met a number of important doctors and French avant-garde intellectuals. When she talked about this period she did so with enthusiasm, saying, "La France est un pays paradisiaque où j'ai énormément appris" (France was a paradise-like country where I learned an enormous amount). Tawhida earned her doctorate in medicine in 1936 and returned to Tunisia. Dr. Burnet was chosen in the same year to become head of the Institut Pasteur in Tunis. Speaking of her experience with the Burnet couple, who were childless, Tawhida Ben Cheikh told me how the couple had "adopted" her as their daughter.

The Muslim Union of Women of Tunisia celebrated the country's first woman doctor upon Tawhida Ben Cheikh's return to Tunisia in 1936. Her return was also highlighted in the March 1937 issue of *Leila* in an article devoted to her and promoting her as a symbol for Muslim women. Back in Tunisia, Tawhida set up a private general medical practice, working from 1939 to 1953 out of an office at 42 Rue Bab Ménara in Tunis, where she was

[6] The life story I collected has similar elements to the one collected by Leila Blili (see Blili, L. 1993. "La médecine au feminine." In *Mémoire de femmes. Tunisiennes dans la vie publique 1920–1960*. Tunis: CREDIF-ISHMN and MediaCom).

[7] Leila Blili found the information regarding Ben Cheikh's winning a French fellowship in *Archives du Mouvement National*, Series *Tunisie 1917–1940*. She did not mention the fellowship either in her testimony to me or to Leila Blili, perhaps because this fellowship was a privilege offered by the French to some and not to others. Leila Blili found the information regarding Ben Cheikh's winning a French fellowship, Reel 89.

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aided by Ms. Boukhriss, her nurse. Although she was a general practitioner her patients were mostly women, and she came to specialize in gynecology. In 1942 Tawhida married a friend of her brother, a dental surgeon named Ben Zineb, with whom she had three children. She married at the age of 33, rather late for that period; she explained the delay by citing the fear men had of marrying an educated woman. Tawhida became a widow in 1963.

The Feminist Press

Between 1936 and 1955, five women's magazines were published in Tunisia and one in Algeria, and they circulated in the three French colonies of the Maghrib: Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. These publications were Leila, Chams al-Islam, Renaître, As-Salam (from Algeria), and al-Ilhem.

Leila, a social, literary, and artistic magazine, was founded in 1936 by Mahmoud Zarouk and is considered the first Tunisian feminist magazine (it was issued monthly until 1940 and then weekly until it ceased publication in 1942). Tawhida was named director of *Leila* at the magazine's inception. Editorials were signed "Leila" and were written by Tawhida Ben Cheikh, who also wrote articles devoted to health issues. Articles in *Leila* addressed cultural issues, Islam, feminism, women's condition in the pre-Islamic period, the role of Aziza Othmana,[8] and comments on the Congrès Musulman des femmes d'Orient (Muslim Congress on Women from the Orient). From 1939 on, the magazine took on a more overt political character, with articles such as "Leila, your Muslim sisters are in prison," "The Tunisian woman and public life," and "Women in the arts and politics."[9]

Some articles signed only with first names led to rumors that they were written by men in the nationalist Neo-Destour[10] movement. Another rumor circulated that without enough women to write articles, some were written by feminist men

[8] Aziza Othmana, who died in 1669 (her precise date of birth is not known), was the wife of Hammouda Pacha Bey of the Mouradite dynasty which ruled Tunisia for much of the 17th century. She was known for her compassion for those who suffered, for her virtue, and for her generosity. At the end of her life she freed her slaves and created a religious endowment (*waqf*) to aid in freeing slaves, buying the freedom of prisoners, constituting the trousseau of poor girls, and financing the hospital that today bears her name. She also performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, bringing with her servants and slaves. See Sadok Zmerli and Hamadi Sahili. *Figures tunisiennes*. Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1993, p. 49.

[9] *Leila*, no. 1 (March 1939), pp. 2–4.

[10] The nationalist Neo-Destour movement in Tunisia was founded in 1934 after a split in the Destour movement composed mainly of landowners and notables. It was the Neo-Destour that led the struggle for independence from French colonial rule and among its leaders was Habib Bourguiba, the first president of the Tunisian republic, who headed the country from 1956-1987. See Lilia Labidi and Abdelkader Zghal. Génération des années 30. La mémoire vivante des sujets de l'histoire. Tunis: Université de Tunis, Centre d'Etudes et de recherches économiques et sociales, 198.

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and signed with women's names or were written by more prolific women using pseudonyms. More questions were raised when members of the Catholic church wrote articles appearing in the journal, which led to suspicions that the church was trying to influence Tunisian Muslim women.[11] In January 1938, these rumors led the magazine to publish an editorial devoted to the question of articles signed with feminine first names. The title of the editorial made the magazine's position clear: "Des noms ou des idées …?" (Names or ideas …?). The editorial attacked those who said that this practice belittled the magazine's function: "Qu'importe aux lectrices et lecteurs si l'article est signé d'y … ou z…? Une seule chose doit compter, une seule chose doit être prise en considération, c'est l'idée contenue dans l'article et seule cette idée doit être mise en discussion" (What does it matter to the readers if the article is signed by y … or z …? One thing alone should count, one thing alone should be considered, and that is the idea contained in the article and only this idea should be the subject of discussion).[12]

Another magazine, *Chams al-Islam,* was founded in 1937 by Cheikh Mohamed Salah Ben Mrad to enable his daughter, Bchira Ben Mrad, and other leaders of the Union Musulmane des Femmes de Tunisie (Muslim Union of Women of Tunisia) to publish their ideas. The bimonthly magazine *Renaître*, headed by Hédi Fayache, published literary, artistic, feminine, and sports articles. This magazine appeared between April and July 1939 and promoted the education of men and women in order to hasten women's emancipation. Among the 26 articles of this magazine's three issues that are available at the Tunisian National Library, eight are devoted to women and eight to culture. One article signed by "Mo. Ka." encourages women to create defense organizations—an idea that had been circulating for several years—because Tunisian women had shown their desire, like the women of Ankara and Cairo, to break with "the past and to adapt their mores to modern life."[13] In another article, an author called Rafika points out how doctors treat men before women and justify this by the fact that women "have more time at their disposal" ("disposent de plus de temps").[14] The magazine *As-Salam,* founded in 1946, was headed by a Tunisian woman, Princess Zakia Bey, daughter of the then head of state Lamine Bey. In 1955, a monthly women's cultural magazine, *al-Ilhem*, appeared, headed by Fatma Ben Ali and run by students in the women's section of al-Zaytouna University. The magazine discussed questions related to women's emancipation.

[11] This reading is based on a review of 18 issues of *Leila* available at the *Bibliothèque Nationale de Tunis* (2 issues appeared in 1936, 3 in 1937, 4 in 1938, 6 in 1939, and 3 in 1940), carried out in August 2013. Here we find a number of articles signed with women's names—in order of appearance, Meriem, Kalsoum, Zeineb, Frida, Wassila, Jamila, Nour el Houda, Yasmina, Beya, Assia, Aida, Sophya, and Malika. Instances of first and family names include Y. Larab, Aicha Ghomry (a student in London), Souhayr Kalmaoui (an Egyptian), Zeynouba Tahar, Saida Sahly, Jamila Malki, Jamila Alaily, Essaida Foudhayli, and Amina Ben Hassine.

[12] *Leila*, January 1938.

[13] Mo. Ka. [sic] 1939. "La femme tunisienne, evolution." In *Renaître*, no. 1, pp. 4–5.

[14] Rafika, 1939. "Propos de Femmes." In *Renaître*, no. 4, p. 15.

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In addition to Tawhida Ben Cheikh, two midwives, Badra Ben Moustapha Ouertani and her cousin, Frida Agrebi, earned their diplomas in 1934 from the University of Algiers Medical School. Yet none of these three women were able to practice in public hospitals, since such functions in state institutions were forbidden to Tunisians, both men and women, as was also the case for Tunisian engineers. Nevertheless, such careers were highly regarded, and many families began sending their daughters to school and later to foreign universities during the 1940s, well before independence.[15]

Social Action or Political Action?

At Tunisia's independence in 1956, Tawhida Ben Cheikh was head of the gynecological and obstetric services at Charles Nicolle (1955–1964) and later at Aziza Othmana (1964–1967) Hospitals and participated in founding the first state school for midwives. In 1963 she started a family planning service at Charles Nicolle Hospital as part of Tunisia's program to limit the number of births. In 1970 she set up the first clinic of the Tunisian Association for Family Planning. Although appointed to the national position of Director of Family Planning, she resigned from this position soon afterwards.

Tawhida was on the executive committee of several associations, among them La Goutte de Lait (The Drop of Milk), La Maison de l'Orphelin (The Orphan's Home), and La Layette Tunisienne (Tunisian Children's Clothes). The latter association used to provide 150–200 women with children's clothes on the last Friday of every month, along with a kilogram of sugar and another of grain on holidays.[16] Tawhida was also part of the Union of Muslim Women since her return from France in 1936, and later, in the 1950s, of the Tunisian Young Women's Club. As director of the the Aziza Othmana Hospital's maternity services, she also helped protect unmarried pregnant women against violence by offering them a bed and food. In return, these women performed tasks in the maternity ward, such as assisting caregivers and patients.

Samia Ben Kheliffa, a fashion designer of traditional dress, speaking to me at the end of the first decade of the 2000s, said:

> In 1957 Tawhida Ben Cheikh contacted me to tell me of her weariness of all the charity fairs where tea and cake were served to collect funds and which only brought together women of the bourgeoisie. She asked me to join her in thinking about what women could undertake that would be radically new. A few days later I suggested organizing a fashion show that would display women's

[15] Labidi, L. 1987, *Qabla, médecin des femmes*. Tunis: UPPS.

[16] Among the members of La Layette Tunisienne, Tahar Ben Ammar was prominent. Financed mainly by middle-class women, this association also received contributions from Jewish and European women, as well as support from the Tunis municipality and the Ministry of Health. An event such as the one mentioned in the text could collect as much as 400,000 francs.

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> dress in Tunisia over the past 2000 years, and this became a project on which Jalel Ben Abdallah and his wife Latifa Ben Abdallah collaborated. Together they threw themselves into historical and artistic research at the National Library and the Bardo Museum, and they discovered Egyptian influences on a variety of outfits. Forty models were signed by Ben Abdallah, and a study of materials was also undertaken. Dr. Salah El-Mehdi and the White Fathers missionary Demerssman also supported this project. It was the first time families agreed to allow some 40 girls to display themselves in a fashion show before a mixed audience. Some families lent the show a number of outfits in their original version and others were made for the occasion. The show was to take place on the 27th day of Ramadan. This was a difficult time because we felt that there were overt class distinctions and in order not to have problems we included the daughter of Saida Sassi, Habib Bourguiba's niece, who practiced classical ballet. On the 24th day of Ramadan the women were working with Rosie Aissa, who owned the store Jeune et Belle (Young and Beautiful), when Tawhida Ben Cheikh was summoned by the Minister of the Interior Taieb Mhiri, who informed her that the authorization to produce the fashion show in the theater had been withdrawn. This caused a great shock because the public had bought tickets and had even donated important sums of money […] Later we learned that someone had gone abroad to inform Habib Bourguiba of the planned show, and he immediately opposed it.

The women were criticized for a patronizing approach, for "continuing a mentality where the high class woman takes care of the poor."[17] Following this, La Layette stopped its work and Tawhida Ben Cheikh was replaced by Dr. Ali Fourati as head of La Goutte de Lait.

Tawhida Ben Cheikh chose social action, expressing her decision in the following way:

> What I wanted, above all, was to practice my profession and to help others through medicine […] I don't engage in politics. I pursue only one goal, the one I wanted to accomplish when I began my study of medicine: to ease, as much as I could and for as long as I could, the misery of our women and our children.

This explains why, during her years of study in Paris, she was never politically involved alongside other Tunisian students in France who were struggling against French colonial practices in Tunisia and in France's other colonies. That she kept her distance from political action is surprising in view of Dr. Burnet's involvement in a number of causes. In 1901 he published, with François Simiand and Mario Roques, a polemical brochure in support of Captain Alfred Dreyfus; in 1904 he wrote an obituary in the Communist Party newspaper *L'Humanité*, referring to Émile Duclaux's support of Dreyfus.[18] In 1953, he took Tunisia's

[17] *Leila*. 1957. "'La Layette': Oh! les femmes." In *L'Action*, April 4, p. 15.

[18] Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935), a French Jew, was accused of giving military information to the German Embassy and was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1894. After serving almost five years in prison in French Guyana, he was tried and convicted again

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side in the struggle for independence, and in 1957 he wrote an article for the newspaper *Le Petit Matin* on Djamila Bouhired, a young activist for the Algerian National Liberation Front, seeking a rescinding of the death penalty for her pronounced by a military tribunal in Algiers. In 1939, his wife Lydia published a book titled *Etienne Burnet, un humaniste français de ce temps*.

Evidence of Tawhida Ben Cheikh's political commitment, however, can be found in other documents—in images, for example, and in medical reports. Among the public photographs from the local press, most showing her in her doctor's role, there is one picture of a political nature. This photograph shows her participating in a demonstration organized in solidarity with exiled head of state Moncef Bey, where she is next to the veiled activist Mongia Ben Ezzeddine, who is holding up a portrait of Moncef Bey. They are surrounded by youths, some dressed traditionally in long gowns (*jebbas*) and the so-called trade union headwear (*chechias*), with others wearing political chechias and still others wearing nothing on their heads.

Another document concerns events in Tazarka in 1952, where qualified health care personnel like Dr. Tawhida Ben Cheikh, certified midwife Badra Ben Mustafa Ouertani, and Dr. Hassiba Ghilleb testified about the violence committed against women by the French general Pierre Garbay.[19] The general, in his attempt to humiliate and break the morale of activists, brought young girls and their mothers together on a terrace, had their clothes stripped off and had the girls raped by French gendarmes. Other women were brought nude into the streets by force, and the village men were put up against the wall and forced to watch the women. Hassiba Ghilleb wrote a report about these events, defending the Tunisian cause before the United Nations. Tawhida Ben Cheikh, as vice president of the Tunisian Red Crescent, also wrote a report that was submitted to the French authorities.[20]

Tawhida Ben Cheikh died on December 10, 2010, just a few days before Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation, an event that provided the spark for the "Arab Spring."

in 1899 but, amid much controversy, he was pardoned and freed as it became clear, largely through an open letter, entitled *J'accuse*, published by Émile Zola in 1898, that the case against him was based on false and fabricated evidence and was a gross miscarriage of justice. In 1906 Dreyfus was declared innocent of all charges and the Dreyfus affair echoed globally, including in Tunisia, where it was seen as a universal symbol of injustice.

[19] Several days before this incident, Emna Bent Hadj Ali Ibrahim was killed in Taboulba, in the Sahel region of Tunisia, in military actions led by General Garbay. See Labidi, L. 2009, *Qamus as-siyar li-lmunadhilaat at-tunisiyaat, 1881–1956*. [*Biographical Dictionary of Tunisian Women Militants*]. Tunis: Imprimerie Tunis Carthage, p. 117.

[20] This information was related by Adel Ben Youssef in an oral presentation given at the colloquium on the "Role de la femme Maghrébine dans le Mouvement de libération et l'édification de l'Etat National," organized by the Témimi and the Konrad Adenauer Foundations and held in Tunis on June 23, 2005.

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Girls' Political Resistance to Colonial Power

Of course, all the girls who went to school during the first decades of the twentieth century did not have the same experiences. The question that calls for an answer here is how pupils reacted to education under occupation. The life histories that I collected of Nebiha Ben Abdallah Ben Miled, Souad Bakhta Katteche Ennaifer, Radhia Haddad, Fatma al-Bachali al-Abed, Nefissa Amira Ayari, Zohra Chenik Mestiri, among those of many other women who lived through this period, show how young girls were affected by the colonial context, how they reacted to the colonial educational system, and how they became involved in political struggle. I will discuss here in detail the case of Zohra Chenik (b.1923) because it teaches us much about the experience of young girls whose families were in favor of education and opposed to colonialism yet sent their daughters to colonial Catholic schools.[21]

Zohra Chenik was the oldest of seven children and the daughter of Essia Chelbi (1906–1970) and M'Hamed Chenik (1889–1976, president of the Chamber of Commerce, vice president of the Higher Council created by the French in 1922 to approve a budget and perform other important functions, and Prime Minister of Tunisia in 1943 and again from 1950 to 1952). It is interesting to see that Zohra Chenik kept, in a small box in a corner of her sitting room, a large number of class photographs from her time in the French missionary schools (which she began to attend at the age of four) les Soeurs Blanches de Carthage (the White Sisters of Carthage) and St. Joseph's, with her maternal aunt Nefissa, who was the same age as Zohra. Listening to her describe these photos, I noticed that she still remembered the names of all the girls and, especially, that she still remembered how affected she was by the institution's silence and the classrooms being as cold as cemeteries, as she described it. Later, when she boarded at the secondary schools Jules Ferry and Armand Fallieres (now called the Rue de Russie), starting at the age of nine, she was shocked that the head supervisor did not defend her in a conflict with a French girl from Algeria who said, "Chenik, if your father touches one of the hairs on my head, I'll break your neck." Affected by all these factors, she lost her sense of security, felt herself in danger, and had no confidence in the colonial system. Even when her teachers encouraged her to repeat exams that she had failed, she refused, expressing in this way her rejection of the colonial educational institutions.

Unlike Tawhida Ben Cheikh, who during her time in Paris had been introduced by the Burnets to various groups of Parisian intellectuals but who had no contact with other Tunisian or Maghribi students, Zohra Chenik had a close relationship with her sister and friends like Frida and Leila Menchari, Essia Ben Brahim, Jamila Melki, Lilia Abdelmoula, Mounira Kbaili, Lilia and Safia Boujemaa, Jalila and Alya Bahri, Rafia Annabi, Hayet Tlatli, Mongia Amira, Mongia Sahab-Ettabaa, and Dalila Daly, who supported her in her hatred for the colonial system. The Ramadan fasting, the political discussions,

[21] I collected this life story in 2009.

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and the successes of the students from modest backgrounds welded them together. They all admired the perseverance of Mongia Amira, who had succeeded in becoming a professor of Arabic in Tunis after taking evening courses at the Atarine School, which was Tunisian and not a part of the French educational system. Mongia Amira, Fatma Chamekh Haddad, and Fatma Moalla were the first women to achieve the agrégation in France in Arabic language, philosophy, and mathematics, respectively.

Was Zohra Chenik being equipped for the struggle against colonialism by attending foreign schools where the dominant ideology aimed to control society? As an adolescent, she described herself as often depressed (as Habib Bourguiba had been at the same age), and the only means she possessed to oppose this domination were on the subjective level. She refused to retake her exams for the first part of the baccalaureate despite the insistence of her mostly European teachers. This was her way of expressing rejection of an education that she associated with the silence of the space, the coldness of the rooms, the impressions she had of the Western religious schools she had been attending since her very early years. And yet she opposed traditional Tunisian marriage and engagement ceremonies, which required a high payment from the groom's family to the bride (*mahr*), a costly trousseau for the bride, elaborate engagement and marriage celebrations – all of which were the subjects of widespread debate starting in the 1930s. She knew that such practices were not her father's preferred choice, he being a pragmatic person, although he also needed to take into account the dominant socio-cultural environment of the day. And it is likely that one of the reasons she broke off marriage engagements was that her suitors did not fit her image of what was appropriate for a modern marriage.

The rejection of the colonial educational system may take different forms among students. In the case of Zohra Chenik, it took the form of a rejection of all forms of domination, including schooling in a missionary context and engagement practices according to custom. The internal tensions she experienced surpassed her capacity to confront them and depression became, in her case, an honorable way to cope with the colonial ideology. Her marriage to Said Mestiri, a surgeon, took place in 1950, the same year her father was again chosen as prime minister by the ruler, Lamine Bey, events which her family saw as portending happiness. Alongside her husband she took part in socio-political activities. When she and her husband were asked to work for the creation of Secours National (National Assistance) with Lamine Bey's daughter, Zakia, and her husband, Dr. Mohamed Ben Salem, to provide assistance for political prisoners, she agreed. As the organization's secretary-general, she became its linchpin, setting up events to collect contributions, sending packages to prisoners, visiting the wounded, and so on. These activities lasted only several months into 1952, ending when French forces attacked Tazarka and the area of Cap Bon (where they arrested many people and committed rapes and other violence) and when her father and his ministers Mzali, Materi, and Ben Salem were deported.

While Zohra Chenik's resistance testifies to a solitary struggle against becoming a "captive mind," against letting herself be controlled by a colonial

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educational system that did not seek the people's liberation, and while she had no organic ties to the new intellectuals, she nonetheless typifies the spirit that permeated the intellectuals and the members of the group Taht Essour (Against the Wall, as in the expression "seated against the wall"[22]). These intellectuals were active in the period between the two world wars, and the group included poets, writers, and journalists like Aboul Kacem Chebbi, Tahar Haddad, Bechir Khraief, Hedi Labidi, Zine el-Abidine Snoussi, Jalaleddine Naccache, Mahmoud Bourguiba, Bayram Tounsi, and Ali Douagi. They were part of a renewal in literature and poetry, and they also published essays on the social conditions of women and workers, which increasingly filled the columns of the Arabic and French-language press.

The "Arab Spring" and Criticism of Authority

With the, "Arab Spring", public humor with the aim of criticizing authority, a form up until now dominated by men, is being employed more and more by women. I have selected cartoonist Lilia Halloul as a representative case. Born in 1970 to a middle-class family, she received her diploma in 1994 from l'École des Beaux Arts (School of Fine Arts) of Tunis but was at the time unable to express her social and political views in her vocation as a cartoonist. As the first Tunisian woman cartoonist, she collaborated from 1996 to 2011 on the children's magazine *Irfan* as an illustrator, cartoonist, and editor. She participated in the first national exhibition of Tunisian cartoonists of the twentieth century, held in 1997, and she has worked freelance since 1996 for a variety of Tunisian newspapers, such as *El Akhbar*, *Tunis Hebdo*, *Le Renouveau* (the newspaper of the Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique, the political party founded by Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali in 1988 and that remained in power until Ben Ali fled Tunisia in January 2011), *Assarih*, *Akhbar el Joumhouria*, and, currently, the online journal Hakaek. Only since the revolution of January 14, 2011, has she joined the gatherings resulting from the revolution's gains in freedom of expression. Cartoonists founded the Union des artistes caricaturistes et dessinateurs de bandes dessinées (Union of Cartoon and Comic Strip Artists). She also participated in the workshop organized in Sousse in 2012 by the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) and Cartoonists Rights Network International to discuss problems encountered by Arab cartoonists, and she led a workshop on children's cartoons at the World Social Forum in Tunisia in 2013.

[22]The group took its name from a cafe that brought together individuals characterized by the poet Tahar Bekri as "singers, journalists, free-thinkers, anti-conformists, penniless persons, pessimists, and in despair at their state but who took revenge on adversity through irony and black humor[...], nothing escaped their satirical gaze, as they used laughter to foil social degradation and the injustice of history."("Chansonniers, journalistes, libres-penseurs, anticonformistes, désargentés, pessimistes et désespérés de leur état mais qui se vengeaient de l'adversité par l'ironie et l'humour noir [...], rien n'échappait à leur regard satirique, déjouant par le rire la déchéance sociale et l'injustice de l'histoire." (Philippe Di Folco. *Le goût de Tunis*. Paris: Mercure de France, 2007. p. 90).

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Halloul explains her working life in the following way:

> Cartoonists are poorly paid and have to have other jobs in order to make ends meet. Since the revolution, even though journalists continue to be subject to constraints, Tunisians will not retreat on their freedom of expression. Since then, I have been using this technique to communicate ideas and messages to readers, and my cartoons relate to Tunisia's political and social problems. I sign with my name, but I know cartoonists who are obliged to use pen names because their rights are not protected and they aren't considered journalists, even though they work for newspapers and magazines.

I discuss two of Halloul's cartoons, completed in 2012 and 2013, that would have been impossible to imagine before January 14, 2011. The images reveal the new tone adopted by journalists and artists since the start of the Arab revolution. Both cartoons deal with freedom of expression and power relationships and the relationship between authorities and the press. They bear witness to a hybrid culture open to global influences and where cultural references are borrowed from a variety of civilizations. The first cartoon, *Freedom of Speech,* shows, from behind, a president or monarch on his throne, his right thumb pointing down, ordering the execution of a journalist. Behind the throne we see the journalist's head being cut off by a guillotine attached to the throne, but the journalist's pen has not fallen from his hand. This cartoon was submitted to the 2012 IFEX "Draw Attention to Impunity" editorial cartoon contest and was selected as one of the 40 finalists.

The second cartoon, *The Blackest Book in Tunisian History,* published in Hakaek Online,[23] shows Tunisian former President Moncef Marzouki standing, holding a book entitled *Aswad kitab fi tarikh Tunis* (*The Blackest Book in Tunisian History*). The leader is wearing a cape on his shoulders, representing the *burnous* that he typically wore to show his close relationship to the people.

In the second cartoon, the cape and the *Z* on Marzouki's chest recall the *Z* that Zorro inscribed whenever he rendered justice to the poor. In front of Marzouki, toward the bottom of the cartoon, we see a donkey labeled "national." The donkey here reminds the viewer of a slip of the tongue by Abdessatar Ben Moussa (former head of the Tunisian Bar Association and president of the Tunisian Human Rights League), who, at the first session of the so-called Hiwar al-Watani (National Dialogue) held before a vast public on October 3, 2013, referred to the event by the term Himar al-Watani (National Donkey). The cartoon shows a question mark over the donkey's head as though the donkey/nation is wondering what is going on. The book Marzouki holds represents the *Black Book,* a book that was actually published by the president in 2013. It was paid for by the state's budget and provided a list of names of journalists who were considered by Marzouki to have relayed the propaganda of the old regime. In the cartoon, Marzouki is saying, "This is a gift to the thinkers, to the journalists, and to the Tunisian people, on the occasion of the

[23] http://www.hakaekonline.com/?p=53374. Published December 13, 2013.

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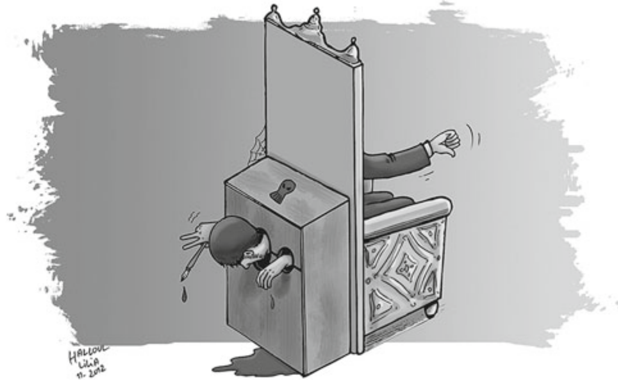

Figure 13.1 Freedom of Speech. Cartoon provided by the courtesy of the artist Lilia Halloul

Figure 13.2 The Blackest Book in Tunisian History. Cartoon provided by the courtesy of the artist Lilia Halloul

end of the year 2013." In fact, the *Black Book* was criticized for violating laws concerning national archives and for exposing journalists to broad popular attack without any prior investigation into whether they were strong supporters of the regime or merely doing their job as journalists. In the same book, Marzouki devotes a substantial section to his own history, emphasizing his personal sacrifices for Tunisia. Lilia Halloul's public criticism, mixed with humor, of a presidential action would have been impossible to imagine before

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January 14, 2011. Her cartoons testify to the freedom of expression and criticism of public figures that became possible with the fall of the Benali regime.

Conclusion

The paths of the three individuals discussed in this chapter reveal important differences even when, as with Tawhida Ben Cheikh and Zohra Chenik, the women came from the same social class and lived through the same political circumstances. Tawhida Ben Cheikh and Lilia Halloul, of different social milieux and different generations, were the first women to enter what had been exclusively male professions. In the first stages of their lives, both lived under authoritarian power yet did not challenge it. They later diverged in their political positions, with Tawhida Ben Cheikh deciding not to challenge authority and Lilia Halloul becoming a critical political actor. To confront these experiences with one another helps us understand difference without naturalizing it and helps us see how difference is related to context and history as well as to individual characteristics (Hyndman 2001).

This reading has shown us that Tawhida Ben Cheikh and Zohra Chenik, both from bourgeoisie families that did not object to their schooling outside the home (something that many families did reject out of a fear of proselytizing) did not react in the same way to their education. When Tawhida Ben Cheikh says, "I don't engage in politics. I pursue only one goal, the one I wanted to accomplish when I began my study of medicine: to ease, as much as I could and for as long as I could, the misery of our women and our children," she is eliding her role as a contributor with editorial responsibility at the magazine *Leila*, her solidarity with Moncef Bey, and the report she wrote on the violence committed against the women of Tazarka. All of these actions are eminently political. With Zohra Chenik, we see resistance to missionary education and a commitment to be alongside political prisoners and those wounded in 1952 in the struggle for independence through her work with the Secours National, where she had the responsibility for writing the minutes of meetings and overseeing finances. In the post-independence years, she helped the handicapped, showing her desire for a solidarity that would enable the construction of an independent and creative Tunisian identity in a context where, throughout the colonial and post-colonial independence periods, the authoritarian state powers discouraged the development of a Self of this sort.

Finally, the forms of political critique appearing after the "Arab Spring" in Tunisia, as in the works of Lilia Halloul and others, show the importance of legally mandating girls' access to education between 1956 and 2010. With the fall of the authoritarian Benali regime, we see, in addition to the return of poetical forms that had been popular in the past, new creative works produced by women who write and draw without complexes, demonstrating their participation in a culture that is local and global, contributing to exchange across boundaries, and working toward the construction of a humanist and transnational culture.

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Chapter Fourteen

Engendering Tunisia's Democratic Transition: What Challenges Face Women?

Nabila Hamza

Abstract Tunisia is considered to be one of the more successful cases for women's rights since the revolutions began. Centering on the October 26, 2014 elections as a significant step in Tunisia's transition to democracy, this chapter documents the recent transformations and argues that the forthcoming period will be a barometer of the fundamental changes induced in the status of Tunisian women in terms of gender equality. The chapter predicts that women will encounter new opportunities but also important risks, one of them being the rise of religious parties that promote openly or in a hidden way conservative agendas and represent a threat to women's rights and social status. The chapter hints that if new decisions are not made to protect and promote women's rights and allow women to be part of the solution, there could be stagnation, if not regression.

Introduction

Tunisia's first legislative elections, which took place on October 26, 2014, constituted a significant step in the country's transition to democracy. These elections followed the difficult birth of democratic constitutional institutions that resulted from the 2011 revolution. Five years after its first free elections to select a National Constituent Assembly in charge of drafting a new constitution, Tunisia has consolidated gender equality and the promotion of women's rights in important ways. At first sight, the country appears to be one of the more successful cases for women since the revolutions in the region began.

On January 27, 2014, Tunisia adopted a new constitution that strongly protects women's rights, as seen for example in Article 46, which provides that "the state commits to protect women's established rights and works to strengthen and develop those rights" and guarantees "equality of opportunities between women and men to have access to all levels of responsibility and in all domains." Tunisia is now one of the few countries in the Middle East

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F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_14

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and North Africa region with a constitutional obligation to work toward gender parity in elected assemblies. In addition, the constitution contains a new obligation for the state to take all necessary measures in order to eradicate violence against women.

Over 5 years after the overthrow of former president Zine al-Abidine Benali, the elected legislative assembly and the very active Tunisian women's organizations played a crucial role in consolidating the gains of the transition by, among other things, modifying the laws to harmonize them with the new constitution and with the requirements of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), after the government lifted key reservations against it.

In spite of all this, vigilance and more reforms are still needed. This chapter argues that the forthcoming period will be a barometer of the fundamental changes induced in the status of Tunisian women in terms of gender equality after the revolution. The period will of course bring new opportunities for women, but also important risks; the rise of religious parties that promote openly or in a hidden way conservative agendas represents a threat to women's rights and social status. Trends seem to indicate that if new steps are not taken to protect and promote women's rights, there could be stagnation, if not regression.

In a recent report entitled "Tunisia's 2014 Parliamentary Elections: A Human Rights Agenda" (September 30, 2014), Human Rights Watch outlines three areas where progress is needed for women's rights protection and seeks pledges from electoral candidates to uphold these key areas:

- First, the amendment of the Personal Status Code to ensure equality in all aspects of family and private life.
- Second, ensuring that Tunisia signs and ratifies the Maputo Protocol[1] as soon as possible.
- Third, devising a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of the provisions of the new constitution and ensuring that the state takes all necessary measures to eradicate violence against women.

But in order to contextualize all these issues and understand their meaning today, a historical background of the Tunisian women's rights movement is needed. In other words, before we proceed to examine the role of women in the Tunisian transitional process, it is useful to place this country in the context of the Arab world and remember its historical heritage regarding gender legislation.

[1] Maputo is also known as "Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa". Its goal is to guarantee political and social rights to women in the African continent.

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Historical Background of Women's Rights Promotion: State Feminism

Tunisia is widely considered to be one of the most progressive Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa. This perception owes much to the country's relatively advanced state of women's rights, which have been guaranteed by law since 1956 (Charrad 2012). Tunisian women were among the first in the Arab world to be able to vote, file for divorce, and pass down Tunisian citizenship to children born abroad or born to a foreign father. Polygamy has officially been banned since the era of Tunisia's first president, Habib Bourguiba, back in 1956. Further, both contraception and abortion are legal and accessible and have been for decades.

The promulgation of the Tunisian Personal Status Code in 1956 constituted a radical shift in the interpretation of Islamic laws with regard to the family. By regulating marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance, the code profoundly changed the legal status of women. It represented a pioneering body of legislation that reduced gender inequality, expanded women's rights, and set the stage for further women-friendly developments. It granted women considerable autonomy from husbands and male kin, but at the same time the code maintained gender inequality in the family by leaving a woman's share of inheritance as half that of a man's, granting fathers greater rights regarding guardianship of children, and requiring that a wife should obey her husband. Subsequent amendments increased women's guardianship rights and dropped the clause according to which wives should obey husbands.

The second major wave of reforms occurred in 1993, under the government of President Benali, who succeeded President Bourguiba in 1987. One of the greatest changes of 1993 concerns women's citizenship rights, defined as the transmission of nationality to their children, as embodied in the Tunisian Code of Nationality.

Both waves of reform in favor of women's rights were formulated in a top-down approach, confirming the long Tunisian tradition of "state feminism" or "institutional feminism." In Bourguiba's time, these reforms were employed as a governmental tool for use in promoting gender equality and women's rights (Daniele 2014). In the Benali government, whose violations of human rights were pointed out and criticized by much of the world, these reforms were used as a strategy to become internationally accepted by Western countries and to silence and repress the independent women's and feminist movement, which was advocating for women's empowerment and gender equality.

However, we have to admit that despite the authoritarian character of both post-colonial regimes, what has been defined as "Tunisian state feminism" has achieved wide improvement in women's rights and greater equality between women and men. As a result, women in Tunisia enjoy a relatively

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advanced status; they are more represented in the public sphere than elsewhere in the Arab world, constituting 26.6 % of the labor force and 27.6 % (59 out of 214) of the members of parliament under President Benali. Legislative changes over half a century have indeed empowered women. At a time when issues of women's rights are not only highly debated but also sometimes violently contested in Muslim countries, the Tunisian case requires examination.

Tunisian Women's Activism During and After the Revolution of January 14, 2011

Women have played a central role in the events that have shaken Tunisian politics since the Arab Spring in 2010–11. They were at the heart of the nation's demand for change and at the forefront of the uprisings that led to the ousting of President Benali. Women were on the streets of Tunisia, standing shoulder to shoulder with men, struggling for a better future (Hamza 2011). Poor or privileged, veiled or unveiled, women from every social class and generation not only participated in nationwide protests, but they were also present on blogs and in social media networks. Women activists did not mobilize in the streets of Tunis only to ask for the toppling of Benali and ending decades of dictatorship; they had other aspirations and expectations related to their own rights and status in society. They were continuing a struggle that had started in the colonial era.

"No democracy without equality" was the slogan launched by Tunisian women during the revolution. They kept in mind that throughout history, women have been the forgotten actors of past revolutions. Whenever it was necessary, women took part in fights for freedom and political struggles, but once the goal was achieved, women were sent back to their homes.

In 1789, French women marched in protest against increased bread prices and to denounce the overtaking of the Versailles royal court, contributing to the toppling of the French monarchy. Yet despite women's wide mobilization, the revolutionary council quickly banned political parties and associations managed by women.

The same phenomenon happened in Algeria after its independence, where the participation of Algerian women in the armed struggle for independence had little impact on their inferior legal status or the infamous Algerian familial code. Later on, political parties praised the role played by women during the bloody period to better stifle their claims for equality.

The same phenomenon has occurred in many countries after the Iranian revolution in 1979 with the takeover of Khomeini. In order to appear as an open and moderate movement, revolutionary political leaders are temporarily favorable to women's causes. However, once the revolution was over, the range of women's freedom was systematically reduced in order to satisfy

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conservatives. Tunisian women (and men) were aware of this history when they hurried to highlight their claims as an integral part of the democratic process and not let them be postponed.

Turning Parity into Practice

As in many other Arab countries, the post-revolutionary euphoria in Tunisia quickly turned to dismay in response to violent episodes of (sexual) harassment and intimidation directed against women's initiatives calling for gender justice and equal rights (Ben Othman, 2011). The majority of women's rights acquired throughout the long history of struggle for emancipation were put in danger. At many levels, women's rights were questioned by both legislative tools and political practices. As a matter of fact, only two out of the 31 ministries of the provisional government were allocated to women, and less than half of the members of the transitional body, the High Authority Council for the Achievement of the Revolution's Objectives, Political Reform, and Democratic Transition, were women.

Women were particularly concerned with the rise of Islamist parties, such as al-Nahda, in public and political life. This party did make some progressive statements about women's equality and showed some support for women's rights, such as its opposition to legalizing polygamy, but some of its statements and behavior led women's rights activists to question its motives and suspect a hidden, more conservative, agenda.

In this regard, the proactive role played by the women's movement and particularly by well-rooted feminists groups, such as the Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates and the Association des Femmes Tunisiennes pour la Recherche et le Développement, and newly established civil society organizations during this period was remarkable (Daniele 2014). While participating in demonstrations and advocating for equal opportunities, Tunisian women's and feminist organizations had to be vigilant and adjust their agenda to cope with the new challenges facing women's rights and participation in socio-political transformations.

Women turned out in large numbers as voters, and many were candidates, in the National Constituent Assembly elections, encouraged by the new electoral laws that required a nomination quota to ensure gender parity on candidate lists and an alternation between men and women throughout the lists. Women also took an active and visible role in administering the October elections; many of the polling station workers were women, and some were station chiefs.

The requirement for parity between males and females on electoral lists caused prolonged public dispute and controversy in the National Constituent Assembly and the parliament. Resistance to gender parity came from both conservative and some progressive political parties. These parties expressed

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resistance to mobilizing women and formulating the lists in line with the principle of parity. Progressive opponents of this positive discrimination law considered this to be an "infantilization" of women contrary to the principle of equal opportunities for all.

After long and hot debates and under pressure from women's groups and women parliamentarians who played a key role in advocating for women's political empowerment, the transitional authorities passed the gender law on April 11, 2011. This decision was the first of its kind in the Arab world, marking a regional breakthrough and progress for women's rights in Tunisia.

Many Tunisian and foreign observers applauded the initiative and expected a high number of women to be members of the Constituent Assembly. However, the parity law did not mandate that women candidates be placed on the top of the list, and to most Tunisians' surprise, only 128 out of 1518 lists were headed by female candidates. The sole exception came from the Democratic Modernist Coalition, an alliance of small leftist and independent candidates, which decided to voluntarily apply vertical and horizontal parity, with 16 women and 17 men as heads of the lists for the 33 constituencies. The disproportionate candidate lists seriously reduced the chances of electing a respectable number of women to the constituent parliament and could even decrease the chances of writing a new, gender-sensitive constitution (Hamza 2014).

In the end, only 49 women received seats in the Constituent Assembly out of a total of 217 seats, making their representation in the assembly approximately 22.6 % of the body. The Islamist al-Nahda Party had the largest percentage of successful female candidates, winning 42 out of 49 seats held by women.

Close scrutiny of the numbers indicates that no real improvement in women's political participation has been achieved in comparison with the period before 2011. For example, under Benali, elected women represented 27 % of parliamentarians in 2009. At the governmental level and within the 41 current ministries, only three are held by women, while four were women-led under the former regime.

For the feminist activists of Tunisia, who have long distinguished themselves from the rest of the Arab world, the relatively weak women's proportion in the 2011 Constituent Assembly was both expected and very disappointing. Women should have received the same number of seats as men, in congruence with their massive and active role in the revolution. Moreover, the women who won the seats were not considered by feminist activists to have the needed profile and gender-oriented background to allow them to defend and advocate for women's rights (Daniele 2014). Their presence in the assembly was seen as a political tool used mainly to convince people of the sensitivity of political parties, particularly al-Nahda, to gendered issues.

However, the context in which the drafting of the new constitution generated a participatory debate on gender issues in which female parliamentarians, both Islamist and secular, played a vital role in mainstreaming a gender perspective into constitution.

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Engendering the Constitution

Women's rights and gender equality became a central part of the heated debates that took place in the drafting process of the new constitution. The focus on women's rights in these debates showed a Tunisian transition demarcated by ideological struggles and fierce discussion between secular and religious forces (International Crisis Group 2013). It was a battle between, on the one hand, secular groups who wished to maintain and even promote the advanced status of women and, on the other hand, Islamist and Salafist forces, who wished to break with the past, which they perceived as too Westernized, corrupting of Tunisia's Arab-Islamic background, authoritarian, and undemocratic. This unfolding confrontation formed the backdrop of the process of drafting a constitution, amid anxiety surrounding the place of Islam in the new political system.

Adopted on January 27, 2014, Tunisia's new constitution, which took two years to complete, captured international headlines for its very progressive content that enshrines freedom of conscience and women's rights. The question to ask at this juncture is, What are the main points of this founding text on which all laws and legislation, directly impacting men's and women's lives, depend?

Tunisian lawyer Yadh Ben Achour, Chair of the High Authority for the Objectives of the Revolution, a committee of experts that oversaw every step of the new constitution, describes the new Tunisian Constitution as "revolutionary" for many reasons (Mandraud 2014). The first reason is the assertion of a civil state based on citizenship and the will and the rule of law, without any mention of Islamic law as a source of legislation. The second reason, freedom of conscience, gives each citizen the right to change his or her religion and hence banishes the crime of apostasy, an unprecedented event in the Arab and Muslim world. The third reason concerns the rights of women: citizens are equal before the law. Tunisia's new constitution strongly protects women's rights; In other words, the Personal Status Code adopted in 1956, which gave Tunisian women the most advanced rights in the Arab world, becomes the minimum level required. In addition, the state pledges to take all measures to eradicate violence against women. Finally, the goal of taking gender into consideration is now registered for future elected assemblies. All these points reinforce a key element of democracy: the gender aspect.

These achievements were the results of many months of hard vigilance, mobilization, and sustained advocacy led by the women's movement and civil society organizations at large. In 2012 the working group on rights and liberties within the assembly proposed the insertion of an article stating that "women's roles are complementary to men's roles" within the family. This caused enormous upheaval and was a blow to the very legitimacy of the assembly because "complementarity" in effect means that women's rights exist only in relation to men's rights. Under such wording, women would lose their status as full citizens. This would have been a backward step compared to the various expressions of commitment to women's rights in the Tunisian political

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narrative. Over many days, women's groups organized demonstrations and sit-ins in front of the Constituent Assembly to protest against the suggested article on complementarity in the constitution. Under this pressure, the assembly decided to remove the article and replace it with Article 46, which ensures full equality between men and women.

In February 2014, the final draft constitution was voted in. The great paradox, however, is that this very progressive and gender-sensitive constitution was approved while Islamists were the majority in the government and the assembly. For Yadh Ben Achour, a secular government would never have been able to produce such a constitution because it would have immediately been suspected as un-Islamic and against shari'a law. Only a party such as al-Nahda could "legitimize" such a constitution. This is a party that, deep down, opposes freedom of conscience, but it had to compromise to show its commitment to democracy, freedom, and rule of law in order to retain power in a country as progressive as Tunisia (Mandraud 2014).

Another step toward gender equality was taken by the Tunisian government on April 23, 2014, when it decided to officially lift key reservations on CEDAW, making Tunisia the first country in the region to do so. However, Tunisia maintained a general declaration stating that the country "shall not take any organizational or legislative decision in conformity with the requirements of this Convention where such a decision would conflict with the provisions of Chapter I of the Tunisian Constitution", which states that the religion of the country is Islam.

The question is whether future legislators and practitioners will interpret the constitution's articles and the country's international commitments in a positive way, particularly in relation to inheritance law, and how these articles and international ratifications will be translated in the field of proper national law and legal practice (Hamza 2014).

Gender Trends in the New Tunisia's Political Map and Challenges Ahead

The electoral law adopted at the beginning of 2014 states that electoral lists for all 33 constituencies must have an equal number of male and female candidates. It forces political parties to reach out to women and engage them more actively. It is a law that positively discriminates in favor of women, but it does not automatically mean that an equal number of women and men will be elected to parliament.

However, in the weeks leading up to the 2014 legislative elections, several changes in gender issues could be observed, such as the large number of women candidates and the increase in the percentage of registered women voters. A high proportion of registered voters (63 %) were in the 18-to-40 age bracket, while the percentage of women registered was about 51 %, up from about 45 % in 2011. These are indicators that Tunisian women are keen to

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participate in public affairs after long decades of instrumentalization of their rights by the former regime. However, the fact that the targeted 10 % threshold for women was not met indicates that the major political parties have marginalized Tunisian women, although the proportion of female heads of electoral lists rose from less than 3 % in 2011 to nearly 8 % in 2014. While most Tunisian political parties like to claim that they support gender equality and women's rights in order to secure votes, no political party seems to be prepared to move beyond the slogans.

The other new phenomenon in the political landscape was the prominent presence of women candidates in the presidential elections (Cordes 2015). Two women submitted their candidacy for the 2014 presidential poll: Amina Mansour al-Karoui, Chair of the Democratic Movement for Reform and Construction Party, and Judge Kalthoum Kennou, former president of the Association of Tunisian Judges. However, only Kennou's candidacy met all the requirements and conditions set by Tunisia's electoral commission, and she was one of 27 approved candidates for November's presidential elections. A serving judge since 1989 and a former president of the Association of Tunisian Judges, a civil society group striving to reform the courts, 55-year-old Kalthoum Kennou is known as a fervent defender of the independence of the judiciary, a branch of government that was used by the Benali government to serve its interests. It is worth noting that the new Tunisian Constitution allows Tunisian women to run for all positions in the state.

Kalthoum Kennou was the first woman in the history of Tunisia to compete in the presidential race, with many women and men showing support for her. She felt that being a woman was an advantage in the race for Carthage Palace, the presidential residence. "Contrary to what many people think, Tunisians are willing to give their vote to a woman," she asserted.

The 2014 elections came with new provisions. Unlike the 2011 elections, they stipulated a five-year presidential term. Although Kennou was not elected to run the country in the upcoming years, her candidacy definitely contributed to promoting female leadership at the highest levels and changing the image of power toward strengthening the presence of women in decision-making circles and positions of responsibilities.

So, no final victory has been won, but all ingredients are there for social and civil equality between the sexes in Tunisia, and above all, for women's voices to be heard in their determination to build a better future for Tunisian women and the country in general.

Conclusion

Women's participation in public life and decision-making are key ingredients to building democracy. It is a fact that no country can progress or prosper if half of its citizens are left behind. Progress for women and progress for democracy go hand in hand.

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Tunisian women overcame numerous barriers and obstacles during the turmoil of the country's democratic transition and succeeded in engendering several constitutional institutions, thanks to the activism and mobilization demonstrated by their organizations and other democratic forces. They were able to impact the drafting of the constitution, with a gender content comparable to the constitutions of well-established democracies. The Constituent Assembly also issued a fundamental parity law governing elections. Three of the nine newly elected members of the Higher Independent Electoral and Referendum Commission, entrusted with the responsibility of organizing the country's elections and referendums, are women.

Even though women have secured immense gains through various reforms, important dimensions of gender inequality remain to be addressed. Tunisia still has relatively low female participation in the labor force, and there are few women in leadership positions despite their presence in most sectors of the economy. In addition, women continue to face challenges and barriers to productive participation in political engagement and government. They are still advocating for equality between men and women in inheritance laws, and issues of domestic violence remain insufficiently addressed in legislation. Therefore, the upcoming challenge for women is to make sure that national legislation, particularly inheritance law, accords with international law, particularly CEDAW, and to ensure women's full political inclusion in Tunisia's future democratic order. This is particularly important as the country is transitioning from decades of dictatorship to a new world of democratic possibility.

The 2014 elections were crucial for the country as citizens chose their new representatives and a president. These elections were an opportunity to gauge the progress made in the sphere of women's rights since the last elections held in 2011, and they provided a significant opportunity for women in Tunisia to participate in the political structures that will shape future economic and social reforms. The important presence of women on party lists and the increase in the percentage of registered women as voters, polling officials, and candidates are all promising signs. They are very clear indicators that Tunisian women are keen to strengthen their nascent democratic rights and to create a more vibrant and equitable society after long decades of marginalization. Politics in Tunisia has become accessible to women, and they are finally finding their voice.

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Chapter Fifteen

Women and Leadership in the Post-Arab Spring: The Case of Tunisia

Khadija Arfaoui

Abstract This chapter analyzes Tunisian women's struggle to meet the unexpected threats to their rights that came about with the advent of the Arab Spring and an unprecedented wave of violence that hit the country. The lack of a solid, unified front allowed al-Nahda (the Islamist party whose leaders had returned from jail or exile) to take over, establish shari'a (Islamic law), and eradicate women's rights, except those of reproduction and housework. Women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and a strong civil society were fortunately there to counter the Islamist trend and act as watchdogs in the process of transitional justice. Successful legislative and presidential elections and a constitution granting parity, equality, and the respect of most international rights are the outcome of women's vigilance. This proves the need to have women in leadership positions to defend the values of justice, equality, liberty, and democracy.

Introduction

This chapter aims at analyzing the expectations of Tunisian women since the outbreak of the so-called Arab Spring and the unexpected events that came not only to counter these expectations but, even worse, to threaten to take women's rights back to a status of the Middle Ages. As a result, women's struggle has had two chief aims: to resist threats to the gains made since 1956 with the advent of the Code of Personal Status and to continue the march toward full equality with men. A beautiful name was given to the revolution ignited by the self-immolation of a young fruit and vegetable peddler on December 17, 2010, in Sidi Bouzid, a small town south of Tunis: the Arab Spring. Why "Spring" when the time was plain winter? Others call it "the Jasmine Revolution." Is it because Tunisia is a country where jasmine is the people's favorite flower? What do flowers have to do with revolution? Both names have positive connotations of joy and festivities. This revolution had

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_15

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no leader, and no political party backed it. It was a spontaneous movement of youth and women, and it gave rise to high expectations for a newly democratic Tunisia.

It did not take long for everyone, in and out of the country, to realize that the revolution that freed the Tunisian people from a vile dictator also resulted in unprecedented violence and threats to the gains that had been made and all forms of freedoms, in particular women's rights. Tunisian women were an example for the entire Arab world because of the rights they had gained since independence in 1956. Prior to the revolution, their focus had been on eradicating the last obstacles to full equality with men by lobbying for the lifting of the reservations Tunisia had made to CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women). But they have had to do more during the three years since the revolution. They achieved a considerable gain when they obtained a parity law, the first ever in the Arab world that makes it obligatory to have an equal number of men and women in electoral lists for parliamentary elections (the first post-revolution elections took place on October 23, 2011). The parity decree should have made for equal representation of males and females in the Constituent Assembly. However, only 49 women were elected, representing 23 % of the 217 parliamentarians, and 42 of these women belonged to al-Nahda, the country's Islamist party, which obtained a total of 89 seats (Leaders 2011). Al-Nahda obtained the biggest number of seats because there were too many parties, independent groups, and coalitions, meaning that important voices were unheard.

In spite of recommendations, the Tunisian people refused to join forces and form a solid, strong bloc against al-Nahda. A temporary coalition government, formed according to the scores obtained by the parties in the election, included three parties known as the Troika: al-Nahda (Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali, followed by Ali Laaraieth), Congress for the Republic (President Moncef Marzouki), and Ettakatol (President of the National Constituent Assembly, Mustapha Ben Jaafar). The Troika proved unable to govern and bring order to the country. There were too many strikes and too much violence, with assassinations that shocked a Tunisian people not at all used to such practices. Lack of security and a troubled economy caused al-Nahda to quit the government and allow the country to be run by technocrats until new legislative and presidential elections could take place. In the meantime, the Tunisian people had found a new leader in Beji Caied Essebsi, who founded a secularist political party, Nidaa Tunis (The Call of Tunisia). The party's credo was "vote useful," calling on people not to blindly trust al-Nahda as in the 2011 elections. The elections of January 26, 2014, gave only 69 seats to al-Nahda and as many as 85 seats to the newly formed Please Nidaa Tunis party.

Under al-Nahda, the new constitution was written by a majority of Islamist constituents, whose program was part of a huge plot meant to create an Islamist state crossing frontiers and nations. Women were not part of this program. It took 2 years for the new constitution to be adopted; 200 constituents voted for it, 12 voted against, and 4 abstained. In spite of a few flaws, the new

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constitution that was finally drafted mirrored women's and democrats' expectations and is considered an achievement that keeps Tunisia at the forefront of all the other Arab nations in terms of human and women's rights. However, the struggle is continuing. Indeed, there is a difference between theory and practice: women in leadership positions remain a minority at all levels in spite of all the achievements they have made since 1956. Yet, the victory of modernist Nidaa Tunis against Islamist al-Nahda in the legislative elections of October 26, 2014, is genuine plus for the country and for women.

Tunisia had been known for ages for being the most developed and open-minded country in the Maghrib and the Arab world. Its women are admired because they have been offered rights that are unique in the Arab world. Its recent achievements will maintain the country as an example of a democracy. It is hoped that similar successes will follow in neighboring countries.

Women and Leadership in the Post-Arab Spring Era

> History shows that countries are more prosperous and more peaceful when women are empowered (Barack Obama, May 19, 2011).

President Obama added that the Arab world "must insist that universal rights apply to women as well as men [...] by standing up for the rights of women to have their voices heard, and to run for office." Habib Bourguiba (1903–2000), the first president of the republic that Tunisia had become after the departure of the colonizers in 1956, had the same view, and the emancipation of women was his revolutionary achievement through the promulgation of the Code of Personal Status (CPS). The CPS was his gift to women and to the nation as a whole. It was a gift because it came from him and not as an answer to any claims made by women. In fact, Bourguiba even said that by so doing, he had spared Tunisian women the efforts made by women elsewhere in the world to demand equal rights. Habib Bourguiba stated:

> The emancipating laws promulgated in their favor have spared Tunisian women the task of exhausting themselves in claiming struggles in which women in most countries find themselves compelled and allowed them to buckle down straightaway to the apprenticeship of freedom and responsibility (Bourguiba, 15-8-76).

Thanks to the CPS, Tunisian women have come a long way. In the pre-independence era, some had been able to leave the secluded world of the home sphere to join the world of politics by helping male relatives in their struggle to oust the French colonizers from Tunisia. As they progressed and became bolder in their activism, some of these women started to attend political meetings without wearing a veil, and they demanded that schools for girls be created and collected money to that end. To ensure that they obtained what they wanted, they stressed that good morals would be taught so that the

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schools would turn out good Muslim girls. Were they thinking about leadership positions then? Probably not. Indeed, leadership was not anything women sought then, or if some did, none would have dared to say so because it would have put a halt to their march for involvement in the affairs of the country and in their coming out from seclusion. The 1956 CPS established a fundamental principle, namely that of equality between men and women. It abolished polygamy and repudiation of wives, giving women rights that are still the envy of many of their sisters in the Arab world. It established judicial divorce, allowing both spouses to file for divorce (Arfaoui 2007). Tunisian women were to make many more gains, in particular when Tunisia signed CEDAW (1980) and ratified it (1985) with some reservations,[1] Tunisian feminists struggled for the next few decades to have their government lift these reservations.

Tunisian women have met with obstacles since the start of the revolution on January 14, 2011, in their march toward full equality with men. The role played by women members of parliament, the National Constituent Assembly (NCA), and civil society in addressing these obstacles or countering them is important. In particular, radical Islamists have tried on several occasions to deprive women of their rights, going as far as to encourage women—young girls in particular—to join jihad al-niqah,[2] to be used as mere sexual objects in Syria and elsewhere. Since the revolution, Tunisia has become a laboratory for democracy. If democracy succeeds in Tunisia, then it is bound to have a positive impact on the rest of the Arab world; if it fails, it is likely that it will succeed nowhere else.

Much has been going on since the 1930s, when the quiet women's movement started. Illiteracy was high then, in particular among women. This is one of the major differences between Tunisia then and now. Indeed, as Beji Caied Essebsi, the leader of Nidaa Tunis, said in a televised interview on Nessma TV on October 24, 2014, Tunisian girls attending educational institutions in "the Tunisian Spring" have nothing in common with their elders for the simple reason that, today, there is not a single family that does not include its children's education in its priorities—although girls remain the ones that are for financial reasons rather than boys. Most girls go to school with one objective, that of securing a paid job and, whether they are aware of it or not, ensuring economic security, as Simone de Beauvoir had pointed out in 1949 in *The Second Sex*.

The laws enacted in the CPS benefited not only women but also the entire family, for educating women means educating the entire society. Women have

[1] In addition to signing (1980) and ratifying (1985) CEDAW, Tunisia is one of the few countries to adopt the Optional Protocol that entitles women to address complaints to the UN if there are any infringements of CEDAW.

[2] Jihad al-niqah is sexual jihad. As they encouraged young men to become jihadists in Syria, radical Islamists encouraged young women to join the jihad by offering sex in support of the jihadists. The targeted youth are made to believe that such actions are key to reaching Paradise after death.

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proved to be good scholars, and they have achieved successes in science, medicine, law, politics—there is not a single sector where they have not proved their competence. And yet, very few have been able to obtain leadership positions.

We may wonder at the reasons for this resistance, one that is unique neither to Tunisia nor the rest of the Muslim world. It is interesting to note that Habib Bourguiba, the man who freed Tunisian women, showed that the discrimination that impeded women's progress was embedded in his mind too. Indeed, how else can we interpret the fact that while encouraging the insertion of women into the workforce, he also said it had to be done according to women's "natural predispositions," that women should work only as nurses, secretaries, seamstresses, kindergarten teachers, and social assistants (Marzouki, 160)? The "leap backwards" that Bourguiba made in his speeches on two Women's National Days (August 13, 1966 and 1973) shows that the cultural discrimination against women was fixed in his mind in spite of his sincere sympathy for women's plight. In 1981, Bourguiba energetically declared that he had never meant to disrupt the harmony of the family, adding that women did not need to have a paid job and ending by advising women to take only part-time jobs (Cited by Marzouki, pp. 160–161). For example, he reminded women that although work was essential for their emancipation, it "should not lead to extremes in the Western way," for that would lead to the overturning of the "natural order" of things (Marzouki 1993, 160[3]). Maintaining men as the head of the family was his way of protecting the family.[4] He went still further by declaring that he had never encouraged women to turn against their husbands or allowed any transgression of moral norms. Campaigns followed, orchestrated by the National Union of Tunisian Women (UNFT), to help women "stay on the right path" and live according to Muslim standards and to mostly leave leadership of the family to their husbands. Zine al-Abidine Benali became president in 1987. Although he continued his predecessor's feminist policies, he also recommended only part-time jobs for women for three-quarters of the salary made by men, although with the promise of full retirement benefits, a proposition that Tunisian feminists did not agree with because part-time work means no promotion. For Benali and other narrow-minded people, the solution for reducing men's unemployment was limiting the employment of women. Housewives, they claimed, needed facilities like nursery schools and kindergartens, not work outside the home.

If these two heads of state who promoted women's rights also recommended that women should be treated differently from men and that their roles as housewives and mothers provided them with sufficient responsibility (ignoring the fact that family responsibilities should be shared by both the

[3] Cited by Marzouki. Tunis: December 26–29, 1962. Habib Bourguiba's speech, Reports of the Third Congress of the National Union of Tunisian Women. Tunis.
[4] Cited by Marzouki (1993, 161). Habib Bourguiba's speech. Monastir, August 10–13, 1981. Report of the 7th Congress of the National Union of Tunisian Women.

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wife and the husband), what can one expect from other rulers? The Islamists that appeared after January 14, 2011, have not hidden their belief that women are merely complementary to men and consequently must be submissive to them. In August 2012, the radical Islamist members of the NCA in charge of drafting the new constitution insisted on the inclusion of a clause stating that women were "complementary" to men, a proposition strongly supported by the female parliamentarians of the al-Nahda Party, who even demanded that Tunisia withdraw its ratification of CEDAW. The series of propositions made by radical Islamists was meant to curtail women's rights, to not only prevent any leadership roles for women but also to make sure that they were submissive to men, who are still considered the heads of their families.

Recently, in October 2014, Beji Caied Essebsi, during his campaign for president, let slip a misogynous remark when he said about al-Nahda member Maherzia Labidi, vice president of the NCA: "She is but a woman." He explained later that he certainly did not mean the remark as a criticism but rather as a form of gallantry, adding that he considered Tunisian women "to be the guarantors of the democratic process" and that he was "one of those who participated in the liberation of women by Bourguiba" (Bel Aiba 2014). Indeed, Essebsi is for gender equality, once saying:

> […] equality between men and women, and women and men (in alternation), is a key gain and banishes the so far patent discrimination in a fallacious official discourse on equality between the sexes. (Khalsi 2011)

Still, it is believed that Essebsi made the misogynist remark because the idea is so ingrained in Tunisian culture. Of course, the remark infuriated many women, who are among his strongest supporters. The persistence of such a view shows the continuing necessity of working to break this old-fashioned view of women's inferiority. This view has started to come back with greater force with the return to the veil; after disappearing almost totally from the Tunisian landscape, the veil started to reappear in the 1980s (Belhassen 1989), probably because of the influence of the Iranian Revolution of 1979. How would this phenomenon affect the women's movement for equality and leadership positions?

Tunisia Veiling Itself

Even as women's presence in educational institutions and in the workplace continued to increase in Tunisia, exceeding 60 %, a huge conservative movement materialized with the return of the veil. It is interesting that wearing an Islamic outfit no longer means staying at home. To the surprise and bewilderment of their modernist sisters, these women generally choose to wear the headscarf of their own free will, but they are also keen on having their place

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in every sector: in the streets, schools and universities, in politics, in the army, police, and in the NCA and other areas of government. After being harassed under the secular dictatorship of Benali, they have been given, since the Jasmine Revolution, the freedom to wear the hijab (although the niqab, which covers the face as well as the head, remains abhorred and rejected by the majority of women).

Tunisia in Transition to Democracy

Radical Islamists have used violence to impose their whims, and their unsettling and threatening presence has spread throughout the country. But the Tunisian people deserve better. Wasn't Tunisia founded by a woman, Elyssa, Queen of Carthage? Another powerful and strong woman revered by Tunisians is Kahina, the Berber queen of the Aures in today's Algeria who in the seventh century defeated the Arab army (Julien, II: 24 and Melammed 2011). A country that boasts over 3000 years of history of powerful women cannot fall into the hands of the terrorists that have been steadfastly trying to disrupt the social fabric of life in Tunisia. After almost 4 years of transitional government, after assassinations and violent acts of terror, in particular against members of the NCA, the police, and the army, Tunisia held its second historic democratic legislative elections on October 26, 2014, followed by presidential elections on November 23, 2014. The parity law used in the legislative lists for the legislative elections has even been reinforced. According to Article 16 of Decree 35, "Candidates shall file their candidacy applications on the basis of parity between men and women." "Lists that do not follow the principle of gender parity will only be admitted when the number of seats, in the relevant constituency, is odd" (Article 16). "Lists shall be established in such a way as to alternate between men and women" (Article 16). The 1,500 lists containing 15,652 candidates accordingly had more women heads of lists (representing 12 %) than during the 2011 elections.

For the first time ever, the candidacy of a woman for the presidency has been accepted: 55-year-old Kalthoum Kennou is a well-known judge and former president of the Association of Tunisian Magistrates. She has ceaselessly struggled for the independence of the judiciary and was harassed by Benali's police for her activism (Ghribi 2014). There were other women candidates, but she was the only one to meet the requirements set by the electoral commission. Ms. Kennou said she had not intended to present her candidacy, but the threat facing the country, its people, and particularly its women led her to do so. She believes that although it is necessary to use military force to combat terrorism, more is needed: "We should combat religious extremism intellectually and socially. When Tunisians elect a woman president, they will tell the world that they are attached to modernism, progress and gender equality" (Ghribi 2014). It does not really matter that Kennou was not elected.

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What does matter is that Tunisian legislation allows a woman to present her candidacy for such a high position. It shows that some people are open to having a woman assume the highest leadership position in the country, and that is extremely important.

In the midst of all of this turmoil, the feminist movement that had been struggling to eradicate the last hurdles to full equality with men[5] has had to face an unexpected obstacle presented by the rising Islamist movement and its demands for a return to Islamic law. Such a change would mean the loss of all the gains women have made over more than half a century. Since the Arab Spring, Islamists have attempted to curtail women's legal rights, but women's organizations and civil society have successfully pushed back these forces and managed to achieve groundbreaking gender equality laws for women in several important areas. At a time when fighting was fierce between hard-line Salafis, who wanted a radical societal change, and feminists, feminist activism succeeded in enacting the parity law. This law, the first in the Arab world, was a victory for women and for all democrats. It was accepted and implemented by all parties, even by Islamists. This meant that the number of Islamist women elected to the NCA was higher than it would otherwise have been because they had more women heading lists than the other parties.

In the October 26, 2014, elections, there were more women heads of lists than in the 2011 elections, but the fact that the percentage was so low (12 %) shows a clear weakness. In theory, Tunisian women have obtained equality, but reality on the ground is conditioned by a mentality that has remained chauvinistic and is dominated by a solidly ingrained patriarchal mentality, a mentality that is shared by both men and women who cite the Qur'an's teachings of men's superiority over women. In spite of the modernity of Tunisia, in spite of its openness to the West, there is clear opposition from Islamists when the way of life does not conform to shari'a law. The confrontation is thus clearly between two ways of life that are absolutely opposite: one way aiming at continuing the march forward for a more advanced society where women have equal rights that allow them to obtain leadership positions according to their competences, and a second way that certainly does not want women to be equal to men or have leadership positions. How can Tunisia possibly emerge from this backward trend and move forward in its quest for democracy and equal rights for men and women?

Education Is the Key to Changing Mentalities

It was through widespread education that Bourguiba was able to bring about the social changes that made Tunisia the most progressive country in the Arab world. Throughout this chapter, I have considered how the country

[5]Their activism consisted mainly in seeking to have the government lift the reservations it had to CEDAW.

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was able to develop progressive ideals in the midst of discriminatory concepts consciously or unconsciously ingrained in the population, not only among men but also among women. Women such as the female al-Nahda members of the Constituent Assembly who support polygamy and demand that Tunisia lift its ratification of CEDAW do not seem to mind that this attitude impedes social, economic, and political promotion of women, paralyzing them by limiting their sphere of influence to the family. The same observation was made in 1990 by a group of women lawyers, researchers, doctors, and professors who declared: Women are often believed to be largely responsible for the sexist reproduction of discrimination from which they are still suffering in their daily life. To this point of view, even Neziha Mezhoud, then UNFT's president, added that this attitude was caused by women's inertia, which unconsciously reproduces schemas of thought and behavior (Ben Romdhane, 1990). Indeed, I have shown how biases dig their roots into men's and women's minds. If women involved in politics demand that women wear the niqab; if they support the marriage and genital mutilation of little girls; if they deny rights to children born out of wedlock, as urged by al-Nahda parliamentarian Souad Abderrahim; if they condemn adoption as *haram* (forbidden by Allah), it is not good for women's progress. But such attitudes only show that patriarchal values are deeply ingrained. And the revolution has clearly shown that despite their high literacy, Tunisian people are profoundly religious; hence the impact of Islam on their values. Those values were shared by Bourguiba and Benali, but although both clearly supported women's emancipation and rights, they both put forward as women's major responsibility the socialization of children. Whenever Habib Bourguiba encountered resistance to the changes he was bringing about, he would retreat.

It is not enough for Tunisia to be the first country in the Arab world in terms of women's emancipation and family laws. Much more must be done so that the principles outlined in the new constitution of January 2014 do not remain mere theory, as they still are today. It is for this reason that women are needed in leadership positions. Bochra Bel Hadj H'mida, a feminist activist lawyer, was second on a list of Nidaa Tunis, the party that won the legislative elections. She was elected, but more women like her are needed. She said: "I feel I am bearing values of justice, equality, liberty and democracy that I am sharing with many men, women and youth and that I insist on defending in the context of an elected assembly, whereas so far I had been defending these values in associations" (Dami, 2014). Maya Jribi, Another strong political activist and the only female secretary general of any party this far unfortunately lost in the elections (Ben Said 2014). Nevertheless, the victory of Nidaa Tunis—85 seats over 69 seats for al-Nahda—is also a victory for women, although the victory was not as strong as expected. For 217 seats in the NCA, the milestone elections gave women 67 seats, representing 31 % (higher than 28 % in 2011) (Table 1).

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Table 1 Number of seats (out of 217) won by women in 2014 Tunisian legislative elections

Total number of women	*Nidaa Tunis*	*al-Nahda*	*Popular Front*	*Free Patriotic Union*	*Democratic trend*	*The people want*
67	33	27	3	2	1	1

(Table made from figures found in Baya. tn)

However, in spite of this overwhelming success, Nidaa Tunis will have to share their authority with al-Nahda and at least two other parties (the Popular Front and the Free Patriotic Union). Saida Ounissi, an al-Nahda candidate for the legislative elections, said: "It is important to replace the traditional image of feminism with a true model for feminism—one that suits the reality of Tunisian society." After all that Islamists, men and women, have done to weaken the image and status of women, it is difficult to agree with what she called "a true model for feminism" (Anadolu Agency, 2014); such a model cannot correspond to the one advocated by democratic feminists demanding nothing less than full equality.

Article 21 of the 2014 constitution stipulates:

> All citizens, male and female alike, have equal rights and duties, and are equal before the law without any discrimination. The state guarantees to citizens individual and collective rights, and provides them with the conditions to lead a dignified life.

These rights have yet to be implemented.

Conclusion

Tunisia has been a frontrunner in women's rights since 1956 and has step by step become a leader in democracy in the aftermath of the Tunisian Spring. Indeed, since the revolution, Tunisia has adopted a parity law for electoral processes and, in January 2014, a constitution that protects human rights. It lifted all its reservations to CEDAW in August 2014. It held successful democratic legislative elections on October 24, 2014, and elected a democratic president, Essebsi, on November 23, 2014. These democratic events have taken place under the most stressful situations and activists have not been able to overcome all obstacles. And yet, a better future is still to be hoped for. In fact, the country has become a laboratory for democracy. Small as it is, Tunisia remains unique in the Muslim/Arab world. Tunisian women have not given an inch of what they have achieved so far, but their rights are still less than those of men, who remain the heads of their families. This in itself is a major obstacle to women's equality with men. The parity decree could have given women fifty–fifty

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representation in parliament: it has not. It is for this reason that Myriam, a Tunisian journalist, said that "settling gender injustices through legislation alone is not enough [...] True women's emancipation can be achieved only if awareness campaigns are intensified to include all women from all walks of life in both cities and rural areas" (El Amraoui & Kalboussi, 2014). Indeed, nothing much has been done to improve the hard life of rural women, who work long hours and are paid less than men for the same work. Even if these rural women know their rights, what could they do to bring about changes in their lives?

The new parliament that was elected on October 26, 2014, at the end of the third phase of the country's democratic transition will achieve the goals of the Tunisian Spring only when it includes the status of women in its vast offensives against poverty, radical Islam, unemployment, and terrorism. When all women know their rights, when the equality granted to them in the constitution becomes a fact, they will become stronger; as a result, they will act differently and will no long allow their rights to be trampled upon. They will assume more leadership roles in the country. The fact that there has been a woman candidate for the presidency is encouraging, even if she was not elected. In 2014, Sophie Claudet reported: "Female political participation is best exemplified in Tunisia, where women represent more than 31 % of members of parliament, up from 28 % in 2011. By way of comparison, a mere 18 % of national legislature seats are held by women in the United States and 27 % in France." In spite of all the violence it has faced on several fronts, in spite of serious fears for the future of the country in the midst of such turmoil, Tunisia has maintained its position of leadership on women's rights in the North African region and in the Middle East. It can rightfully boast of having succeeded in eliminating most of the hurdles placed by political Islam. Tunisia can boast of having ignited the Arab Spring, of having drafted a constitution that is the pride of all Tunisians, and of having democratically elected a new and more representative parliament of democrats and Islamists and a democratic president. More needs to be done, however, for Tunisia to have full leadership on gender equality. By way of conclusion I include the following quote:

> The status of Arab women is evolving but it will require the commitment of governments, rights organizations and women alongside men to speed up the pace and make sure that economic participation and higher school enrollment rates also translate into political empowerment. (Claudet 2014)

Tunisia needs all the support it can get through collective action by the European Union and the USA. It had been Habib Bourguiba's strong belief that there could be only incomplete development without the full emancipation of women. He succeeded in making of Tunisia a success story. Part of this success is due to women's emancipation and education. These must be maintained and strengthened for that success to continue and spread to the rest of the Arab world.

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Chapter Sixteen

The Algerian Woman Issue: Struggles, Islamic Violence, and Co-optation

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Abstract This chapter examines the Algerian women's movement within a holistic and global approach to the process of political transformation and state-building, wherein the woman question is systematically manipulated to ultimately consolidate the legitimacy of the Islamo-conservative rule dominated by the military, to the detriment of accountability before the law and wide democratic participation in the management of politics. The chapter examines the relationship between Islam as a state religion and domestic violence against women, and it considers the manifold resistance of women against this Islamic violence during the post-colonial period. Feminist activists have used the political opening of autocratic rule to set up NGOs and employ political activism to wage struggles against gender discrimination.

Introduction

Algerian women have always been visible and strong in national crises. Their military and political participation in the revolution (1954–1962) and the gender equality roles they experienced during that period characterized the Algerian liberation movement. The world-famous movie *The Battle of Algiers*[1] meticulously depicts women's participation in the armed revolution. Indeed, women's struggles are not recent in Algeria and North Africa; they are old and secular. Kahina, the war leader of the Berber tribes that opposed the Arab Muslim armies of the Umayyad Dynasty, is a name to invoke at this juncture. In 680, Kahina defeated the Arab Muslim army under its leader, Hasan Ibn al-Nu'man, who marched from Egypt and captured the major Byzantine city of Carthage. Another example worth citing is that of the great freedom fighter Lalla Fatma N'Soumer (1830–1863), an important figure of the Algerian resistance movement during the first years of the French colonial conquest (July 18, 1854). Lalla Fatma succeeded against all odds in defeating Marshal

[1] This movie was produced and directed by Italian Gillo Pontecorvo.

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_16

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Randon at Tachkirt, in the Great Kabylia. Marshal Randon finally took over the Great Kabylia and dubbed Lalla Fatma "the Jeanne d'Arc of Djurdjura."[2] Another female icon is Assia Djebar, a novelist and filmmaker who passed away in 2015. She wrote more than a dozen books many of which won international literary prizes. Her novels focus on the creation of a genealogy of Algerian women, and her political stance is resiliently anti-patriarchal as much as it is anti-colonial. In 2005 she was elected to the Académie française, a prestigious institution tasked with guarding the heritage of the French language. She was the first writer from the Maghrib to achieve such acknowledgment; she was also rumored several times to be in contention for the Nobel Prize in Literature. It is very strange that Djebar is not read in the Arab world because her work is not translated into Arabic. The politics of authoritarianism and misogyny did not leave any space for her, and she left Algeria for France in the early 1960s.

Despite their involvement in times of crisis, Algerian women are systematically denied public recognition in times of peace. They are instrumentalized in political rhetoric but not empowered as women. In this chapter I use the Algerian case to address the issue of how a peculiar form of women's representation has always been used to consolidate populist ideology and authoritarian politics to the detriment of rule of law and how this precludes woman's participation in decision-making. I use the gender quota to show that religion is systematically used to support the state's instrumentalization of women.

In the post-colonial era officials have always used local ceremonies and international fora to pay tribute to women's participation in public affairs. The Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes (National Union of Algerian Women [UNFA]) was set up in 1963 mainly for this specific ideological mission. For more than 50 years after independence and national sovereignty, officials have not missed a single opportunity to highlight women's participation in the construction of this sovereignty, especially in front of foreign delegations. Women's participation in public life is still incorporated in state discourse as a structural element of foreign policy, even with the decline of Algeria as a leader in the Third World Movement. In the 2000s, women are instrumentalized in political discourse as an icon of the nation.[3] The government has always proudly reiterated its commitment to empowering women in the post-colonial era, and the state discourse has always advocated women's equality in the constitution and other official texts. For example, the first constitution (1963) and the subsequent ones have established numerous

[2] Djurdjura is a region in Kabylia, Algeria. On March 8, 1995, the bones of Lalla Fatma N'Soumer were finally repatriated to the national martyrs square in El Alia, Algiers. It took 132 years to consecrate this great revolutionary as a national heroine.

[3] Joseph, S. "Gender and Citizenship in Middle Eastern States." In *MERIP*, N° 1998 Available from: http://www.merip.org/mer/mer198/gender-citizenship-middle-eastern-states.

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liberties, including the right of women to vote in local and national elections and the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of birth, race, sex, and belief.

However, in reality these texts and the state rhetoric that accompanies them do not echo the daily praxis that regulates women's lives. In modern Algeria, women are expected to return to the traditional roles of wife and mother; they are seen as the guardians of Islamic and traditional values, as the family code, based on the shari'a (Islamic law), clearly stipulates. This law emphasizes patriarchal gender relations and women's subordinate position within the family. For example, shari'a considers the family, kin ties, and women's reproductive capacities as fundamental natural and sacred elements of society.

The Algerian women's movement became vocal on the public scene in the 1980s. The battle for gender equality and against political violence, although overshadowed by the pressing economic question, has been the central issue of the Algerian women's movement, which became vocal and very active in the 1980s and early 1990s. These efforts were "co-opted" by the state. In the 2000s, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika formally included women in the political process, a process that nevertheless aims at the consolidation of a populist ideology and the re-traditionalization of the society.[4] The question of women's rights has been manipulated to legitimize the Islamo-conservative rule dominated by the military to the detriment of accountability before the law and wide democratic participation in the management of politics.

Against this general background, I will examine the Algerian women's movement within a holistic and global approach to the process of political transformation and state-building, which significantly characterized women's struggles. This chapter is, thus, an empirical study and is organized as follows. Section "Islam and Domestic Violence Against Women" examines the relationship between Islam and domestic violence against women. This very sensitive topic is rarely investigated in a thorough way in women studies. Section "Islamism and Violence Against Women in the 1990s" sheds some light on the manifold resistance of women against Islamic violence during the postcolonial period. Because of the complexity of the issue, I will provide an analytical overview of the major events that have shaped these women's struggles. Section "Women's Struggle Against Gender Discrimination" examines how feminist activists within the political opening of autocratic rule could set up non-government organizations (NGOs) to wage struggles against gender discrimination. Section "Women's Political Participation and Representation: Bouteflika's Policy of Inclusion" considers how Abdelaziz Bouteflika's "policy of inclusion" has increased the numbers of women in government offices, after this number had declined in response to radical Islamism. But first, what are the religious sources that make women so vulnerable that rulers can easily use them?

[4]Tlemçani, R. 2009. "Femmes et politique en Algérie." In *Maghreb-Machrek*, *L'Algérie face aux crises*, N° 200, Eté 2009, p. 24.

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Islam and Domestic Violence Against Women

All three main religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) have discriminated against women in the domestic realm up until a given period. A careful study of sacred texts reveals rationalization of abuse of persons in the family. In the West, the twin processes of modernization and modernity[5] have been followed without interruption, leading to societal censure of domestic violence. But in Muslim countries, this process has been interrupted and perverted by a set of indigenous and external factors that are beyond the scope of this chapter. What can be learned from these factors is that modernization has been stronger than modernity in Muslim countries, and as a result women have been marginalized in modern state-building. Although violence against women in general has begun to receive more attention globally over the last three decades, this issue has taken on a new dimension with the rise of Islamism. It has extended to the public sphere where women have paradoxically gained more economic empowerment and political representation.

The relationship between Islam and domestic violence against women is a very controversial issue in women studies. According to religious scholars and leaders, there are explicit verses in the Qur'an, Hadith (Prophet Muhammad's tradition) and sira (the Prophet's biographical material) which authorize husbands to beat disobedient wives. This authorization is explicit in verse 34 of Surat An-Nisa (abbreviated 34:4). One of the English versions of this controversial verse states:

> Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them. Good women are obedient. They guard their unseen parts because God has guarded them. As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them. Surely God is high, supreme.[6]

There is a unanimous agreement among Islamic scholars and leaders that this verse is not meant to allow men to harm or humiliate wives. On the other hand, Muslim women's groups argue that Muslim men use this verse as an excuse for domestic violence. For Islamic scholars, the word "beat" as used in the verse does not mean "physical abuse." For them, the Prophet meant "a light tap that leaves no mark," and beating should not result in physical injury. Prophet Muhammad further said that the face must be avoided. The issue thus seems to lie in the form of beating, soft or hard, but

[5] While modernity generally refers to progressive social development, modernization is more linked with technological advancement.
[6] http://islamawakened.com/quran/4/34/.

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also in the circumstances under which beating is appropriate: beating/hitting should only be done with good reason. Wives are to be treated gently and kindly but are still under the man's authority. If the wife persists in disobedience to her husband's wishes, the latter has the right, and the responsibility, to beat her and bring her back into submission. Beating should ultimately re-establish, as goes the argument, a happy marriage. Critically, this interpretation is taken for granted and deeply grounded in the Algerian anthropological and cultural makeup.

Furthermore, women are "wards" under men's control because they cannot control themselves. The Islamic definition of "ward" means a person who has been legally placed under the care of a guardian or court. Muslim wives are placed under their husband's protection and control. As a fundamental fact, Islam views the woman as inferior to the man and, as such, places her in a subordinate position in the marriage relationship, which is seen as a primary religious obligation.

As for men, they are de facto given the leadership role, with the responsibility of providing financially for their families. According to the Qur'an, men must provide for all the material needs of their wives because it is generally believed that "Allah made men to be better than women." To consolidate and reinforce this idea, other verses clearly stipulate that working women are not allowed to keep their income for their own uses.[7] Likewise, the Prophet's sayings repeatedly call for happy marriages and kind treatment of women without mitigating the authority given to men over women or the position ascribed to women. During the 1990s civil war in Algeria, Islamist groups could easily find several verses to justify domestic violence against women and extend it to the public sphere.

As this background shows, Islamic groups do not see any problem with beating women in the private sphere and assaulting and hassling them in the public sphere. Recently, Islamic and other conservative groups in the parliament have stubbornly attempted to withdraw the March 2015 bill criminalizing violence against women.[8] Although the law makes room for the concept of "forgiveness" in the sense that legal proceedings may not go forward if the wife forgives her husband, and hence does not aim at radically transforming the prevailing relationship in the family, both "inclusive/moderate" and "exclusive/Salafi" Islamists see the law as intruding on intimacy, legalizing Western sexual behaviors, and breaking up the family unit. Indeed, when religion is used as a political device, we have crossed the Rubicon to an uncertain future.

[7]These verses have been used as grounds for divorce when women refused to contribute financially to household expenses.

[8]Tlemçani, R. "La violence contre les femmes et la Montée des groupes islamiques en Algérie," International Forum, *The Escalation of Violence against Women the Mena Region*, May 29–31, 2015, Fez, Morocco.

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Islamism and Violence Against Women in the 1990s

Nowadays Islam is the only religion with which women are "assaulted" in the public sphere. This violence may be justified by the Qur'an itself, although the above-mentioned verse was revolutionary at the Prophet's time because girls used to be buried alive before the coming of Islam. But more than 14 centuries later, the world has been profoundly transformed. Muslim women's groups do not examine this verse and similar ones in the light of the ongoing transformations. To encourage this to happen, the door of *Ijtihad* should be opened.[9] The 1988 October riots[10] set in motion overnight an opening of the autocratic regime, and a new constitution allowed pluralism of political parties and NGOs. The late 1980s, retrospectively called the "Algerian Spring," NGOs and political parties, including Islamic groups, mushroomed in a spectacular way. The Islamic Salvation Front, known by its French acronym, the FIS, started during this time and is today one of the most notorious Islamist parties in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Several women's organizations were also set up, namely, l'association Egalité des hommes et des femmes devant la loi (Association for Equality Between Men and Women Before the Law), l'Association Indépendante pour le Triomphe des Droits des Femmes (The Independent Association for the Triumph of Women's Rights), l'Association pour la defense et la promotion des droits de la femme (Association for the Defense and Promotion of Women's Rights), and SOS femmes en détresse (SOS Women in Distress).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, verbal and physical attacks on women activists, whose conduct was deemed non-Islamic, were but a few examples of such violence. It was often reported that when women complained to the police about the assaults, they were told that they "brought it upon themselves." During that period, it was the silence, and sometimes the complicity, of the neo-patriarchal state that encouraged Islamist assaults on women in the public sphere.

[9] Ijtihad is an Islamic legal concept allowing trained jurists or scholars to put forth independent interpretations in instances where the Qur'an and Hadith/Sunnah do not provide clear direction for specific decisions. During the early years of Islam, when the shari'a was first being formulated, Ijtihad was a common practice. It was a religious duty for a *mujtahid* (renewer) to conduct legal rulings using Ijtihad. In the fourth century of Hijrah, a person called al-Qaffal (closer) issued a fatwa "closing the door of Ijtihad." Since then, governments and religious establishments have kept the doors of Ijtihad closed. This decision has resulted in chronic intellectual stagnation and has had a negative impact on modernity and secularization.

[10] On October 5, 1988, Algerians took to the streets across the country, ransacked stores, and tore down symbols of the then prevailing single-party system. A new constitution was drafted which legalized political pluralism. More critically, Islamist groups managed to set up political parties which clearly preached violence against working women.

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In the 1990s Algeria witnessed the birth of a plethora of jihadist groups, the most prominent being the Islamic Armed Group that targeted "Western women and girls," who were seen as mouthpieces of the "impious state." Women's NGOs rapidly came under attack from Islamists, who accused them of propagating behaviors and ideas that were against Islamic ethics and Algerian cultural values. According to Islamists, women were easy targets for neo-cultural colonialism, and Islamists felt they had the legitimate power and authority to protect, through violence if necessary, Algeria's Islamic identity, customs, and values. The emerging civil society was the privileged target of emerging Islamists, who perceived it as the vehicle of "feared" women's liberation and emancipation.

When they set up the FIS, Islamists groups set up women as the center of their enterprise; Islamic violence targeted women's bodies as a battlefield.[11] Algerians were alarmed by the rapid rise in the use of punitive raids against "Westernized" women, women who did not wear Islamic clothing (headscarf, veil, hidjab, niqab, tchador, burqa, etc.) and who wore clothes deemed alien to Algerian customs.[12] There are at least eight forms of Islamic garb, according to Lilia Labidi.[13] The hallmark of religiosity for a woman became this singular clothing. Islamic groups, whatever the ideological dose of Islamism they incorporated or school of thought they adopted (moderate, salafist, wahabist, djihadist, messianic, secular), concurred on the obligation of hidjab-wearing in the public sphere, and even at home for some groups. The social pressure reached such a point that some activists and feminists did not mind wearing Islamic clothing. Some professional women, including medical doctors, journalists, and teachers, found in the veil a sort of freedom in the public space. Islamic clothing had been virtually unseen in the 1960s and 1970s, but by the end of the civil war it had invaded the public sphere in Algeria, whether in "deep Algeria" or urban areas.

Furthermore, militant Islamists in some municipalities forced segregation between boys and girls in schools and deprived girls from playing sports.[14] Working women of all social categories were targeted during the civil war,

[11] Zahia Smail Salhi, *Gender and Violence in Algeria Women's Resistance against the Islamist Femicide*. Available from: http://www.lse.ac.uk/middleEastCentre/events/2011/Zahia%20Smail%20Salhi.aspx. [Accessed on November 11, 2011].

[12] The argument was that the veil protects women from the predation of men; specifically, from sexual harassment and or rape. According to Marnia Lazreg, while the veil is supposedly a requirement for pious women, it is really an expression of men's feelings and identities. She argues that the veil in fact protects a man's own sexual identity "by signaling to other men that one's wife, sister, or sometimes daughter is off limits to them." Lazreg, Marnia, 1994, *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question*. Routledge, New York, p. 219.

[13] Labidi, Lilia *Islam and Women's Rights in Tunisia*. Available from: http://www.orient-gesellschaft.at/ipw2005/ipw-lapidi.pdf.

[14] Today, schoolgirls wear pink blazers and schoolboys blue ones.

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including cleaners, students, medical doctors, journalists, teachers, and the mothers and wives of security forces. Intimidation was used as a weapon, and mail threats were sent to "rebels." The FIS also used Friday sermons in mosques to demonize "dissident" women. Names of "wanted" women were listed and pinned on mosque doors and shouted over loudspeakers.

Militant Islamists succeeded without difficulty to rally the "precarious society," the people excluded from the bazaar as well as other parts of the economy,[15] to their "cause." Increasing numbers of unemployed youth, particularly those living in shantytowns, joined the FIS or the FIS's military branch. Brainwashed at school, this vulnerable social category was easily persuaded that women should stay at home to fulfill the role of homemaker. It did not matter if they were educated or even university graduates; women had to leave their jobs to unemployed males who needed them more, especially because the Islamic state promised women a fair income if they stayed at home (the so-called 'Islamic income').

Although it began as verbal attacks, threats, and intimidation, this hostility toward women soon became a huge wave of extreme violence. During the decade of "dirty war," working women and activists became a privileged target. For instance, several French teachers were murdered for daring to teach the "language of the crusaders." Women married to foreign men were also assaulted. As a result, many women put on the veil out of fear and many others abandoned their jobs with the promise of receiving an Islamic income. Often, the perpetrators remained strangely unidentified and unpunished. The main issue for NGO activists shifted from demanding gender equality to securing physical survival. Their own survival, even as an already "second sex," as Simone de Beauvoir put it, was dangerously at stake.

A Few Significant Cases of Violence

Disobedient women were assassinated, raped, or subjected to extreme torture in the 1990s. One of the first women to be gunned down on April 7, 1993 was 21-year-old Karima Belhadj, who worked as a clerk in a youth and sports office. In 1991 a single woman and her two children died in Ouargla in a fire set by Islamists; they were killed on the assumption that the woman was a prostitute. On January 23, 1994, Mimouna Derouche, a 28-year-old mother of five was decapitated in front of her children. On February 25, 1994, two sisters aged 12 and 15 were kidnapped and gang raped. On March 3, 1994, Samia Hadjou, aged 69, had her throat cut. On March 15, 1994, two students were shot down at a bus stop in Algiers because they did not wear the hidjab. On February 15, 1995, Nabila Djahnine, president of a women's group, was gunned down in Tizi-Ouzou. In July 2001, in Hassi Messaoud (southern Algeria), a group of young men set fire to the homes of women, all mothers,

[15] Tlemçani, R. 1999. *Etat, bazar et globalisation: L'aventure de l'infitah*. Alger: Editions El Hikma.

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accused of being prostitutes. These women migrated to Algiers, Oran and other cities and villages to work as cooks, secretaries, and maids. According to the Swiss daily *Le Matin,* 211 women were assassinated in 1994.[16] In 1998, Human Rights Watch reported that more than 2,000 women were raped in 5 years of conflict. According to an official partial survey, about 7000 women were kidnapped or given away for temporary/pleasure marriages.[17]

In February 2006, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, in order to secure a third term of office, adopted an amnesty law without organizing a public debate, in contradistinction to what occurred in several countries such as South Africa, Morocco and Chili, to name a few. In these latter countries national debates on state violence such torture and killings were instigated on TV and other public channels. The full text of the law was not disclosed before its adoption. In direct opposition to women's struggles against political violence and terrorism, the bill consecrated impunity for crimes under international law and other human rights provisions. The military-led power had manipulated women's struggles to obtain legitimacy in the world of politics. This legitimacy reached its heyday when the USA and the West adopted the Algerian method[18] in the world campaign against terror and terrorism.

Women's Struggle Against Gender Discrimination

In Algeria, the legal system is basically founded on French legislation, while nationality, citizenship, and the family code are based on the country's interpretation of shari'a. Given this state of affairs, women started immediately after independence to organize themselves within the official women's organization UNFA, an extension of the ruling single party, the Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front). According to this organization, the revolution had liberated women once and for ever, and therefore women did not have specific problems in independent Algeria. According to the state discourse, gender was no more than a petit bourgeois concern in free and

[16] Bouatta, C. "Evolution of the women's movement in contemporary Algeria: Organization, Objectives and Prospects." In *United Nations University Working Paper* N° 124, February 1997.

[17] Temporary/pleasure marriages are different names for the Arabic word *mut'a*, which is a sexual contract between a man and woman, much in the same way the conventional marriage is. The main difference is that the temporary marriage lasts only for a specified period of time. The first one to legislate mut'a and all the rules pertaining to it was the Prophet. All schools of Islamic thought agree that the Prophet legislated mut'a and made it legal after his migration to Medina, and people practiced it during his lifetime. However, there is a disagreement between the Shi'a and Sunni as to whether the Prophet later banned it or not. Most Sunnis assert that although the Prophet legislated it, he later forbade it. This type of marriage has re-emerged recently.

[18] For example, the US government used the women's rights issue in its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

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socialist Algeria. Economics was deemed the real issue, a much more pressing issue than gender and citizenship.

In the 1960s and 1970s, women's groups that propped up state policy clashed over personal status issues. These groups failed to reach a consensus, a failure which thwarted various attempts to codify the family law.[19] In 1979, when the Ministry of Justice announced that it was about to set up an ad hoc committee on the family code, women started to organize themselves, and by so doing they challenged the single-party authority. Women demanded to know the identities of the committee members and to participate in the committee's decision-making. In 1980, when the government of Chadli Bendjedid prohibited women from traveling alone without permission from a male guardian, women staged demonstrations in Algiers to repeal the extremely conservative law. The government order was rapidly canceled as pressure from international media mounted almost overnight. However, in 1984, the government finally succeeded in passing the shari'a-based family code without any public debate.[20]

The Revised Family Law

When radical Islamism was defeated militarily in 2000, Islamic groups were no longer a serious threat to Algerians and national security, and political violence decreased considerably across the country. The new political and ideological context was favorable to secular civil laws, but President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who rose to prominence with the assistance of women's NGOs and activists, made only minor changes to the family code in 2005. The amended clauses granted women more rights in terms of divorce and housing, reduced the role of a woman's male guardian to largely symbolic status, and ensured Algerian women's right to transmit citizenship to their children. Still, the 2005 law lags behind Morocco's 2004 Mudawwana, (Moroccan family law) which was developed after completely repealing the country's 1957 family code.[21]

On March 8, 2015, President Bouteflika made a call to re-edit the 2005 family code. The most crucial issue was to abolish once and for all this bill [meaning the family code] that does not support equality between men and women. This legal inequality is in contradistinction with the new reality in which women have secured a growing and active role in the public sphere. It is no longer possible to argue that women do not participate actively and positively in the national income increase. More than 60 % of students are girls in 2015, and

[19] Lalami, F. 2012, *Les Algériennes contre le code de la famille. La lutte pour l'égalité*. Paris: Les Presses de Sciences Politiques.

[20] The world-famous conservative Egyptian Cheikh, Mohammed Al-Qaradawi, who regularly preached on national TV in the 1980s, is widely credited for having impacted the drafting of this bill.

[21] http://www.hrea.org/programs/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment/moudawana/.

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women's participation is more significant than men's in the crucial sectors of health and education. Other sectors, such as the judicial apparatus are also becoming increasingly feminized (38 % of attorneys are women).

Women's Political Participation and Representation: Bouteflika's Policy of Inclusion

The Arab region was ranked by the Inter-Parliamentary Union as the region with the lowest percentage of women in parliament.[22] The political participation of Arab women is therefore a critical issue. The Arab Spring created or consolidated new challenges for Algerian women.

Women have been excluded from the decision-making process from the very start of Algerian nation-building. For example, no woman was granted a high position in the national liberation movement although women waged armed struggles alongside men. No woman was a member of the first nine Algerian governments. It was only in 1984 that Algeria witnessed the first appointment of a woman minister. Between 1987 and 2002, two women were included in executive government agencies. Algerians had to wait until June 2002 to see five women appointed as members of the government. Only one of these was a minister; the other four were delegates.[23] This number dropped in April 2006, when only three women were members of the government (one minister and two delegates). As an immediate impact of the Arab Spring, Bouteflika appointed seven women in his April 2014 cabinet. Significantly, the co-opted women in the cabinet and parliament do not have histories of being radical or feminist; these women have failed to raise social issues in support of the growing grassroots movement, support that would have most likely profoundly destabilized the regime. For example, the appointed women have not demanded a repeal of the family code as female Moroccan politicians did. Their activism can be seen as part of the politics of extremism, which is mainly aimed at ultimately putting pressure on decision-makers, particularly the president. For extremists, public opinion is not yet ripe for radical change. In office, their political behavior has been no different from that of other office holders,[24] even the Islamists. When the elites are shaped by patriarchal culture and ties, one should not be surprised to see the consolidation of status quo politics to the detriment of a democratic transition agenda.

[22] Sabbagh, A. "The Arab States: Enhancing Women's Political Participation." Available from: http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/upload/Arab_World.pdf.
[23] Tlemçani, R. 2009. "Femmes et politique en Algérie." In *Maghreb-Machrek, L'Algérie face aux crises*, N° 200, Summer 2009, pp. 21–27.
[24] When Louisa Hanoune, head of the Workers' Party, a Trotskyist group, adopted radical discourse, she was very popular, particularly among women. Her popularity drastically declined when she started to promote a discourse in favor of the dominant ruling clan. She was a candidate in the 2014 presidential election, the results of which clearly disclose that her popularity has faded away.

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The System of Gender Quota

The number of elected women has been very low in Algeria. Because of the misogyny and bigotry that characterize the political elite, women are rarely promoted as candidates in elections, whether local or national. To address the loss of its popularity on the eve of the election for a fourth mandate, the head of state[25] decided to enact a bill introducing a gender quota system. The system of quota has in reality consolidated the politics of authoritarism, populism, and electoral fraud.[26] As argued above, Algerian politics excludes women from political participation and the decision-making process. However, several feminist groups, secular as well as Islamic, have a different perspective. They feel that deputation could be a learning experience in the process of liberation and emancipation. The political landscape changed overnight with the January 2012 electoral law[27] which established a system of gender quota for political representation. The new law stipulates that Algerian women must be represented politically at all levels—local, regional, and national. According to Article 5 of the law, any list of candidates violating the quota requirements will be rejected.

The May 2012 legislative elections were a great victory for women, although women did not wage a particular electoral campaign.[28] Women took 146 seats out of 462, a representation rate of 32 %, while the rate was only 8 % in 2007. The current rate is higher than the rates in many Western countries, including Switzerland, Canada, France, Britain, and the USA. Does this result in and of itself suggest that Algerian women are among the most advanced and liberated in the MENA region? Why did women not form a group to stand up in parliament for the 2015 bill criminalizing violence against women?

[25] The President of Algeria is elected for a term of five years and this process is renewable. The present Algerian president was elected for the fourth time although he has been incapacitated since 2012.

[26] Massive electoral fraud, or political corruption, is not an element of dysfunction in the Algerian political system; rather, it is a structural element of it, as I have argued in most of my work.

[27] This bill requires variable quotas from 20 % to 50 % of the candidates for parliament to be women, depending on the number of seats in each district. The law prescribes the following quotas in relation to the magnitude of the electoral constituencies: 20 % for constituencies with 4 seats; 30 % for those with 5–14 seats; 35 % for those with 15–31 seats; 40 % for those with 32 or more seats, and 50 % for constituencies abroad.

[28] It is opportune to contextualize this electoral victory. The elections themselves were characterized by massive fraud, acknowledged today by officials themselves and, paradoxically, even by President Bouteflika. Consequently, Algerians are no longer interested in elections, which they perceive as not open and free. Unsurprisingly, the real rate of participation was very low, not exceeding 30 %. (Tlemçani Rachid. 2001, Algérie, *Dictionnaire du Vote*, Pascal Perrineau et Dominique Reynié (Editors), PUF, 2001, Paris, and Algérie: un autoritarisme électoral, *Tumultes*, N° 38–39, 2012).

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Does this high rate of representation empower women in the decision-making process when President Bouteflika, sick since 2005 and ill-elected, has full power over the parliament and other state institutions?

Conclusion

To consolidate neo-authoritarianism, religion is manipulated as a political instrument by groups from different political stripes. Violence against women has always been a divisive issue. In Egypt, both the army and Islamists put forth shari'a as the source of law in a society where more than 7 % of the population are not Muslims. In Turkey, the most democratic country in the region, most of the population guide their lives by Islamic law. While the state is secularized in the sense that religion is a question of private life, Islamists, under Recep Tayyip Erdogan, have consolidated state power and populism and have started to obstruct and corrupt the historic process of secularization and modernity. In 2008 the parliament passed an amendment to lift the longstanding ban on headscarves in public institutions. Most recently, the newly elected president Erdogan said to a summit in Istanbul on justice for women that treating men and women equally

> goes against the laws of nature. Our religion [Islam] has defined a position for women: motherhood. Some people can understand this, while others can't. You cannot explain this to feminists because they don't accept the concept of motherhood. Their characters, habits and physiques are different […] You cannot place a mother breastfeeding her baby on an equal footing with men. You cannot make women work in the same jobs as men do, as in communist regimes. You cannot give them a shovel and tell them to do their work. This is against their delicate nature.[29]

In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood under Muhammad Morsi has also attempted to set back women's rights and halt secularization. As a symbolic measure, President Morsi removed the unveiled historical feminist figure Doriya Shafiq from school textbooks. Tunisia, under the Islamist-led government, pressured young women to wear the hidjab in a country with the most vibrant civil society in the MENA region. More critically, an article in the draft constitution stipulated that the roles of men and women "should complement each other within the household." The moderate Islamists urged the population to return to polygamy and urged girls as young as three years old to wear the hidjab because a girl at this age is said to be sexually attractive.[30]

[29] Flood Alison, Turkish novelists Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak accused of being Western stooges by pro-government press. Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/dec/12/pamuk-shafak-turkish-press-campaign [December 12, 2014].
[30] Arfaoui, K. "Radical Islam and the Weakening Status of Women," International Forum, "The Escalation of Violence against Women the Mena Region," May 29–31, 2015, Fez, Morocco.

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This attempt to change the most liberal Personal Status Code constitution in the region is seen as a threat to women's rights and emancipation. Another warning sign is the flow of young women leaving their homes to provide sexual services to Islamist militants in Syria.[31] In today's Algeria, young people can be jailed for not observing the fast during Ramadan. In short, Islamists, whenever they rise to prominence, do not hesitate to obstruct women's rights and frustrate modernity and secularization.[32]

The withdrawal of the reference to Islam from the constitution and other fundamental texts in Algeria should be the immediate aim in the struggle for gender equality, citizenship, and human dignity. The most crucial issue is not the interpretation of religion but religion per se, as the controversial argument goes. Freedom of conscience should be seen as the heart of modernity and citizenship, as Abdellatif Laabi strongly argues.[33] Believers, atheists, agnostics, and others should strive to reach for such freedom. The Arab Spring has brutally brought to the forefront this very sensitive issue.

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[31] Maher A. "Tunisia's 'sexual jihad'-extremist fetwa or propaganda?" Available from: www.BBC.bloc/news/world-africa-24448933 [October 26, 2013].

[32] Islamist groups' ultimate goal is to set up a caliphate, an Islamic state, in the Muslim world. The basic disagreement among them lies in the methods to be used for reaching this chief goal: moderate Islamists privilege peaceful means whereas radical ones privilege violence.

[33] Laabi, A. 2013. *Un autre Maroc*. Paris: La Découverte.

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Chapter Seventeen

Moroccan Women in Limbo: On Liminal Citizenship and the Quest for Equality

Soumia Boutkhil

Abstract This chapter addresses how two contradictory official discourses—one legal/modernist and the other religious/traditional—continue to undermine Moroccan women's quest for equality and participatory citizenship. It looks at what makes the discourse of the modern democratic state easily yield to social and political conservatism, how the ambiguity of the official discourse nullifies the advances made in the law in the last decade, and how this ambiguity hinders the implementation of societal change. The chapter also ventures an idea on how patriarchy and conservatism feed on global conflicts and tensions to create the conditions of what the chapter refers to as women's liminal citizenship (the status of women whereby their full citizenship is not attained or sometimes denied despite its being fully recognized in the new constitution adopted in July 2011).

Introduction

In anthropology, liminality (from the Latin word *limen*, meaning "a threshold") is the quality of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs in the middle stage of rituals, when participants no longer hold their pre-ritual status but have not yet begun the transition to the status they will hold when the ritual is completed. During a ritual's liminal stage, participants "stand at the threshold" between their previous way of structuring their identity, time, or community and a new way, which the ritual establishes. The conceptualization of exclusion and inclusion in such cases is very interesting since it embodies a whole process of powerful categorization upon which the filtering of sameness and otherness occurs. By feminine liminal citizenship I mean the status of women in Morocco whereby their full citizenship is not attained or sometimes

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F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_17

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denied despite its being fully recognized in the new constitution adopted in July 2011.[1]

However, accompanying certain publicized texts such as the 2004 Family Code and the 2011 constitution is a counter-discourse that governs which conception of femininity is accepted and which one is rejected, and therefore what form of citizenship is granted to women. In this chapter I address how two contradictory official discourses—one legal/modernist and the other religious/traditional—continue to undermine Moroccan women's quest for equality and participatory citizenship. I will look at what makes the discourse of the modern democratic state easily yield to social and political conservatism, and how the ambiguity of the official discourse nullifies the advances made in the law in the last decade and hinders the implementation of societal change. Finally, I will put forth an idea of how patriarchy and conservatism feed on global conflicts and tensions to create the conditions of what I refer to as women's liminal citizenship.

Modernity, Human Rights: The Emerging Paradigms?

A brief overview of the history of the feminist movement in Morocco can help remind us how difficult it has been for women to gain the rights that are now guaranteed by the constitution of 2011. Feminist scholarship's critique of male privilege in citizenship rights is not specific to Morocco; many studies across the world have already pointed out the masculine articulation of citizenship rights. The feminist movement in Morocco started in the 1940s with Akhawat al-Safa, which joined the nationalist movement to fight colonialism. The movement was born in the urban bourgeoisie of the Shura and Istiqlal Party. Akhawat al-Safa were the first to formulate a clear opposition to the inferior status imposed on Moroccan women; they called for the education of women and the abolition of polygamy and challenged inheritance laws. These demands were proposed as part of a reformed and enlightened Malekite interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Akhawat al-Safa's ideas remained on the feminists' agenda for over 50 years. It was not until 1993 that a few changes were made to the family law, but they were cautious to the point of being almost insignificant in terms of impacting women's lives.

Anyone following the societal debates in Morocco since the 1990s has repeatedly come across this conservative mantra: "Why do some people bring up the issue of women's rights (or citizenship) *now*?" The successive global political crises and conflicts that have brought into focus the decrepit state of Arab-Islamic societies, especially in terms of the treatment of women, were and still continue to be perceived as Western conspiracies against Islam.

[1] In a landslide vote, Morocco adopted the constitution. Results showed a 98.94 % approval rating and 72.65 % turnout, according to the Minister of Interior Taib Cherkaoui.

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And so any attempt on the part of activists and scholars to question the status quo faces the same reaction.

To give an answer to what seems to be an eternally returning question, it suffices to say that the popular uprisings in the Arab world in 2011 have ushered in a period of transition. This was the first time that popular discontent with authoritarian systems of power exploded into large-scale protest. Just as the "Arab Spring," as it came to be known, brought promises of freedom and democracy, it also showed that a leap forward is as possible as a leap backward in terms of women's rights and equality with men. Morocco was not immune to this experience. Indeed, a new beginning seemed to have been triggered by the waves of protest led by the "20 February Movement." Significant constitutional reforms and legislative elections propelled the Islamist Parti de Justice et Devéloppement (Justice and Development Party [PJD]) to power, for the first time since the country's independence.

The state's quick response to the demands of the street helped contain febrile demonstrations and stave off much of the violence that characterized the protests in neighboring countries. Five months after the first demonstrations held by the 20 February Movement in 2011, a new constitution was approved by a large majority in a national referendum. It brought salient changes in as far as it officially recognized the diversity of the Moroccan culture, called for respect of human rights, introduced personal freedoms and freedom of expression and of worship, and reinforced equality between men and women.

However, many human rights activists continue to express their disappointment, arguing that the state has failed to seize the opportunity to effectively institutionalize equality between the sexes. Instead, it yielded to conservative forces through certain phrasing, the purpose of which is to maintain the status quo. Consider Article 19 of the new constitution:

> The man and the woman enjoy, in equality, the rights and freedoms of civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental character, enounced in this Title and in the other provisions of the Constitution, as well as in the international conventions and pacts duly ratified by Morocco and this, with respect for the provisions of the Constitution, of the constants [*constantes*] and of the laws of the Kingdom. The State works for the realization of parity between men and women. An Authority for parity and the struggle against all forms of discrimination is created, to this effect. (Ruchti 2011, p. 9)

Article 19 is generally hailed as very progressive because Morocco seems to have done away with what have been considered the tenets of Arab and Islamic cultural identity, choosing instead to give pre-eminence to the international conventions ratified by the country in matters pertaining to human rights and, more significantly, women's rights. These include all UN conventions from CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) to the provisions of the 57th session of the

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Commission on the Status of Women of March 2013 on the elimination of violence against women, which most Arab states criticized on the basis of cultural specificity.[2]

However, this major reform is deliberately checked and/or conditioned by the inclusion of the phrase "with [the] respect for […] the constants [*thawabit*] and of the laws of the Kingdom." The ambiguity of the wording itself comes from the word "constants," for which there is no specific meaning. What are these constants? Are they traditions? The political system? Or is it the hegemony of the religious order on public life? If so, the constitution will be subjected to the same religious-based interpretation as the Mudawwana, in which case any hope of ever attaining significant citizenship for women under the new supreme law is forever banned.

In trying to reconcile the legalist approach to women's rights with the religious-based interpretation of those same rights, the state is in fact catering simultaneously to the secularist and religious movements: on the one hand it tries to please progressive forces by promoting the culture of human rights and the supremacy of international laws, but on the other it flirts with conservative forces by subjecting the universal conceptions of equality, democracy, and meaningful citizenship to the traditionalist strand of society. This has a name: "Tradition and Modernity." It is a social and political narrative that tries to sell the country's image as one that has achieved a certain balance between these two antinomic positions. In this narrative, "tradition and modernity" has become a leitmotiv that most Moroccans accept and claim with little or no understanding of the challenges and limitations it actually poses to their everyday lives.

This discourse of modernity balanced by tradition has always constituted a goal, if not an ideal, in Morocco: from fashion and cuisine to music and arts, even a political party has named itself after the phrase! While it sounds quite exotic in fashion, cuisine, and other common matters, this discourse does however address the serious issue of how even a constitution can be impacted by internal as well as external factors when it comes to politics and societal projects that have women's citizenship as a focal point. It is a fact that women's conditions in Morocco have undergone rapid changes in the last decade.[3] However, these changes are held hostage to a patriarchal ideology

[2] Pakinam al-Sharkawi, Deputy Prime Minister and Social Assistant to the President for Political Affairs Arab Republic of Egypt states: "The formulation of international policies to combat this phenomenon must be based on the balance between the values shared by humanity, and the cultural and social particularities of countries and peoples."

[3] The major reforms enacted to promote women's conditions in Morocco are the labor law (Bulletin Officiel nb 5210, May 2004), the new Family Code (Bulletin Officiel nb 53586, October 2005), the Nationality Code (Bulletin Officiel nb 5514, April 2007), and the electoral law (2011) that faced overwhelming resistance from the majority of political parties; the adoption of the new constitution in July 2011 that institutes

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disguised under the gown of cultural specificity. Therefore, the impact of the new laws and constitutional provisions on women's everyday lives is rendered insignificant by a conservative reading of the laws that finds justification in a strong sense of resistance to what is perceived as a "Westernization" of society.

In the same vein, even though the constitution's preamble asserts the country's choice of modernity, liberty, and pluralism, the reforms addressing freedom of conscience, individual freedoms, and other issues in the Penal Code faced fierce resistance.

The Spring of Discontent

The global context, with its conflicts and tensions, has triggered a deep suspicion of what are thought to be repeated attacks from the West on Islam. This suspicion renders secular feminists' approach to equal rights and equal citizenship difficult to sustain. In contrast, it gives Islamic feminist NGOs more impetus to position themselves as the legitimate answer to women's needs. Their emotional discourse about an ancient ideal Muslim age where violence, injustice, and poverty did not exist under the guidance of enlightened leaders has drawn many adherents. These NGOs formed within the Islamist political parties, borrowed the methods used for decades by secular feminist associations in the country, and networked with similar associations in the region in which Turkey and the Gulf states played a prominent role. They also looked for sources of funding other than the conventional UN organizations since their agenda is, in fact, to subvert UN-affiliated organizations' discourse on equality and freedom for women and counter their efforts to implement changes globally.[4]

The emergence of an international Islamist network in the post-Arab Spring era increased feminists' concern that the changes in the political regimes would not necessarily benefit women. Feminists had every reason to fear the future, as conservative Islamists had always deliberately maintained confusion in the minds of the people by linking state feminism, the corrupt regimes,

equality between men and women; and finally, the amendment of Article 475 of the Penal Code in January 2014.

[4]The International Forum for Family Protection, a branch of the International Union for Muslim Scholars, organized a conference titled "Abuses and Violations of the Document on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls and Preventing It" (meaning how to prevent it) on their website on May 11 and 12, 2013; they provided the list of their grievances against the CEDAW and warned against the adoption of the report of the 57th session of the UN's Commission on the Status of Women (held in New York, March 4–15, 2013). Over 20 international associations from different parts of the world, from the MENA region but also from Switzerland and Nigeria, took part in the event.

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and independent feminist associations on the basis of their shared reference to UN conventions on women's rights. In fact, in many countries across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the state initiated, and sometimes even imposed, changes in the family law. Often unpopular, those changes were considered to be biased and to have the potential of stripping men of what they believed to be their God-given rights. While First Ladies chaperoned the movements and symbolically led campaigns for women's access to education, health, and opportunity, radicals warned against the Westernization of their societies under the guise of equality and human rights as part of what they considered the war against Islam led by the West.

At the institutional level, the Arab Women's Organization (AWO), the feminine branch of the Arab League, symbolically positioned itself as the official version of state feminism across the Arab world. Although the AWO had no real power to implement any of the recommendations it issued, it created a space of debate and exchange between state-supported NGOs, academics, and governments during their biannual conferences.

Ironically, while the First Ladies of the Arab states played an important role in these summits, their governments were reluctant to move forward with legislation in favor of women's rights. Being totally out of touch with the realities faced by women in their countries, these First Ladies and their formal organizations rarely identified with the struggle for equality as it is predicated on democracy. For ordinary women struggling to make a living, the First Ladies were part of the problem, not part of the solution, and this discredit was also made to include secular independent feminist movements regionally. To illustrate this, Tunisia's former First Lady Leila Trabelsi and Egypt's Suzanne Mubarak, the prominent figures of Arab state feminism, were severely criticized for their lavish Western lifestyles. They were demonized after the Arab Spring uprisings and so were the NGOs[5] they founded or headed, and their legacy in terms of women's rights was wiped out after 2011.

The discourse of equality between men and women thus became equated with corrupt Westernized regimes and a very privileged elite who had nothing in common with the population. Indeed, where youth unemployment soared in the MENA region in 2013 to among the highest in the world (27.3 % in the Middle East and 29 % in North Africa according to the International Labor Organization),[6] the debate over women's rights was overshadowed by years

[5] In Egypt, the National Council for Women (NCW) was founded by a presidential decree in 2000; it was headed by Suzanne Mubarak, who equally founded and presided over the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement (SMWIPM) in 2007.

[6] The International Labor Organization Report "Global Employment Trends: A Recovery in Activity, not in Jobs. Global Employment Trends 2014: The Risk of a Jobless Recovery 21 January 2014": "[…] unemployment among young people has reached around 19 % in Morocco, over 22 % in Lebanon and Algeria, 25 % in Egypt, closer to 30 % in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, around 40 % in the Palestinian Authority

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of tyranny and social injustice in the region. It was a challenge to bring to the forefront the question of equality between men and women while men and women alike were plunged in despair and lack of opportunity.

In Morocco, a good example of how these years of alienation demobilized both men and women, perhaps especially women, is the trajectory of the Plan National d'Intégration de la Femme au Développement (National Plan for Integrating Women in Development [PANIFD]) presented by Said Saadi, Secretary of State for Social Protection, Family and Children (March 1998–September 2000). The project was vilified in the press and came under attack from almost every single entity in the country. Both the government and the opposition forces stood against it and pledged to fight it if it were ever to reach the parliament. The PANIFD adopted an entirely new approach for the first time in the history of reforms in women and family issues; it explicitly used a narrative based on human rights devoted to the emancipation of women and the solemn commitment to their rehabilitation in the economic, political, legal, and social spheres. While it is still incomprehensible today why the plan did not rally support from progressive political parties, it remains nonetheless the most extensive reform project presented in the modern era.

While the action plan laid out some 214 measures aimed at full empowerment of women, the points of contention with the Islamists centered around the proposed raising of the age of marriage for girls to 18, the substitution of judicial divorce for repudiation, and the limitation of polygamy. Conservatives mobilized hundreds of millions of women under the slogans "No to the Westernization of our society" and "Islam is in danger." The minister came under all forms of attacks, and the project was abandoned after a march in Casablanca led by the PJD conservative party in March 2000.

Masculinities and Resistance

The disturbing opposition of thousands of women in Morocco to reforms that would guarantee them access to education and better health services, expand opportunities, prevent violence, and promote their empowerment at all levels (social and political) remains incomprehensible. It is true, however, that patriarchy has delicately woven a myth that the family is the only sphere that is essentially and solely ordained for women. Traditionally, the Arab/Islamic state is characterized by various overprotective patriarchal structures, and society clings to a patriarchal system in which women's position within and duties toward the family are perceived as prior to their rights as individuals. This is even more the case today, as we see multiple examples of how the public educational system in Morocco continues to promote conventional

and over 42 % in Tunisia." Available from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/africa/documents/publication/wcms_234191.pdf. June 16, 2014. While Leila Trabelsi presided the AWO between 2009 and 2011.

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gender roles in textbooks and curricula. On June 14, 2013, a survey of 18,000 males and females 15–29 years of age conducted by Muhammad Seghir Jenjar revealed that over 45 % of respondents viewed teaching and medical professions as the best career choices for women because of what they believed to be the nature of woman herself as caregiver, patient, and educator. Furthermore, only 6 % of respondents believed that women should choose traditionally male-dominated careers. This is even more shocking if we know that the same study revealed that over 56 % of university students are females who have "invaded," as he puts it, higher education in the last ten years (2002–2012).[7] Interestingly, these numbers challenge the belief that women's growing access to education in general will gradually contribute to a mentality change favorable to equality between the sexes. This process is only possible when the state has a clear strategy based on intensive training programs on gender and a qualitative review of the curriculum, in addition to more presence of female leadership figures in decision-making positions. Unfortunately, this is not the case; the entrenched patriarchal values continue to be harbored in the absence of courageous attempts to adopt a gender-friendly interpretation of Article 19 of the constitution. The educational system is a good example of the cultural confinement of active women in positions where they cannot bring diversity to the professional world. Women make up 33 % of the formal sector workforce, while in the informal sector, they provide for over 70 % of Moroccan households. Meanwhile, the number of women in decision-making positions is below 13 %.[8]

Why is it that women's massive presence in the public sphere today fails to produce the long-sought changes? In an article on women and empowerment in the Arab world, Sherifa Zuhur (2003) argues that a sort of compromise has long existed between elite women and the state:

> Within this arrangement, elite women acquired more power so long as they did not challenge the basic patriarchal structures of state and society. Cultural authenticity was important to relatively young modern states and often relied heavily on Muslim mores that discouraged any attacks on the patriarchal family structure. (Zuhur 2003, 3).

The daunting task of empowering women is always equated in the Arab psyche with males' perception and with the social construction of masculinity.

[7] Fouzia El Assouli, President of the Democratic League for Women's Rights. Opening speech at the conference on "The Family Code + 10: Experiences and Ways Forward Conference," organized by the Danish Center for Research and Information on Gender, Equality and Diversity (KVINFO), November 21–22, 2013, Rabat, Morocco. Fatima Yassin. "International Symposium on the Political Movements and Equality in North Africa." Available from: http://www.almaghribia.ma/Paper/printArticle.asp?id=165666. (Accessed on June 27, 2014).

[8] Radio Interview with Fouzia El Assouli on April 12, 2014, Médi 1 Radio.

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There are multiple patterns of masculinity, different ways of "being a man" depending on origins, social class, education, and so on. These multiple identities fuse in a cultural system of hierarchy and exclusion that structures an archetypal social conduct. R. W. Connell (1995) argues that in most communities, there is a specific pattern of masculinity which is more respected than others, although this group is in most cases a minority (*Masculinities* 1995). In Morocco that archetypal pattern would be authoritative, educated, middle class, extroverted, brave, physically fit, heterosexual, pious, proud, and non-emotional—much like the mythical portrayal of the Arab conqueror or warrior. Those who do not belong to this category can coexist with those who do, but they have to show a low profile; any sign of resistance on their part will result in exclusion and may trigger stigmatization or other more pronounced forms of violence. About this perspective, Lahoucine Ouzgane (2011) argues that

> the homosocial competition and the violent hierarchies structuring the relationships between men themselves constitute the core of what it means to be a man in the Middle East and North Africa. (Ouzgane 2011, p. 69)

In the same vein, Valentine Moghadam (2003) rightly argues that family law is the site of all forms of conflicting ideologies:

> Family law is the battleground upon which women's organizations, Islamists and neopatriarchal states vie for influence. (Moghadam 2003, p. 2)

The discourse of rights is caught in the dichotomy of man/woman, identity/globalization, nation state/neoliberal threats dilemmas. These dichotomies exacerbate emotions, and the fight for social justice and human rights becomes fraught with ideologies and power struggle. This is even more relevant today as we witness the game of checks and balances between different forces in the MENA region over questions related to women's rights. In Morocco, the Ministry of Family and Solidarity led by the Islamist PJD party rejected the project launched by the previous government called the Government Agenda for Equality 2011–2015. The project came about after long consultations with women's NGOs and aimed to involve 25 public sector organizations to fight discrimination and violence against women. Overtly, the newly appointed conservative minister opposed the project on the ground that the term "agenda" was incompatible with the provisions of the new constitution. Covertly, however, the Islamist government would have opposed the reforms on ideological grounds, even though the reforms aligned with the 2011 constitution. The project was put on hold for 1 year (from May 2012–May 2013), and so was the very meager budget allocated to support shelters for women victims of violence, leaving hundreds of women and children unattended due to budget cuts. This happened in a context where gender-based violence has

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reached a pandemic level, affecting more than 62 % of the female population aged 18–64.[9]

Liminal Citizenship

If citizenship refers to a set of formal processes by which subjects of a state are defined, then Moroccan women are citizens. However, if citizenship is defined in terms of practice (Turner 1993, p. 2), there are still important things left to be desired in Moroccan women's citizenship. The current discourse of female citizenship is a "myth" for determining who is eligible and who is not (Smith 1997, p. 33); it conceals blatant inequalities often justified by cultural notions of family, religion, and history.

Over 98 % of Moroccans voted yes in 2011 in the referendum for the new constitution, a supreme law that promises and guarantees equal rights for men and women. In practice, however, women are more vulnerable than they were a decade ago. Despite the protocols put in place by the government to provide women with protection[10] from violence and to promote their participation as active citizens, Morocco lags far behind neighboring countries in human development indicators. In 2013 it ranked 128th out of 135 countries worldwide in the Gender Inequality Index.[11]

Walking down the streets of Morocco's big cities, one would be impressed by the modernization of the urban spaces and the large number of women occupying the public sphere. However, a shocking study conducted by the government agency Haut Commissariat au Plan showed that 52.6 % of working-age women in urban areas are still illiterate—that is one woman out of two.[12] Equally, there has been a decrease in the participation of women in the labor market of 5 % between 1999 and 2012.[13]

Many would like to explain the phenomenon of female illiteracy in Morocco and the disparities in women's access to education by the slow pace of cultural change; indeed, many families continue to raise their daughters in

[9] Survey of Haut Commissariat au Plan, available from: http://www.hcp.ma/Etude-sur-la-violence-a-l-egard-des-femmes_a784.html.2009. (Accessed on June 27, 2014).

[10] A special unit was created called "la chaine multi service de lutte contre la violence à l'égard des femmes," composed of the police force, the medical services, and the courts.

[11] http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries. (Accessed on June 30, 2014.).

[12] Press conference by Ahmed Lahlimi on March 12, 2014, presenting the October 2013 study of the Haut Commissariat au Plan, "La femme marocaine en chiffres: tendances d'évolution des caractéristiques démographiques et socioprofessioonnelles."

[13] "Women's participation in the labor market constituted 30 % in 1999 and dropped to 25 % in 2012. By comparison, the median worldwide percentage of female participation in economic activities was 51 %, while female participation in sub-Saharan African countries reached 60 %." El Hassan Achy. 2013. "Economic equality between woman and man Morocco." In *al-Hayat Tajribi*, Available from: http://alhayat.com/OpinionsDetails/498782.

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the same way their forebears did. What is less understandable however is the state's double discourse in matters pertaining to women. While it acknowledges the legal equality between man and woman and has taken considerable steps to promote women's conditions,[14] it has at the same time left loopholes in the laws and left a number of laws unchanged, rendering the reforms ineffective. Women's subordination to men is no longer in the text, but it is still reinforced and maintained by the conservative interpretation of laws in courts and in public administrations.

Loopholes in the Family Law

One of the many examples of these loopholes is the 5-year grace period granted to previously married but unregistered couples to register their marriages at the family court, following the provisions of the new Family Code of 2004.[15] The power to contract marriages was removed from the hands of the clerics (*adul*). Not only was the 5-year grace period (2004–2009) extended for another 5 years (February 2010–February 2014) due to huge demand and a lack of human resources to process all the applications nationwide. However, the legislator did not foresee that the grace period would put in place a whole system of malpractice very common among men who want to circumvent the law for underage marriage or polygamy. Thus, a man who did not meet the requirements for contracting marriage according to the provisions of Articles 20, 40, and 41 of the family law[16] (either because the first wife refused to grant

[14] Steps include family law reform in 2004, labor law reform in 2007, and changes to the Nationality Code in 2008 allowing Moroccan women to pass their nationality to their children born to foreign fathers. In addition, women are better represented in public life because of a revision of the electoral law reserving 60 seats to women in the House of Representatives. Because of this reform, 66 women were elected in the last general elections in November 2011 (16.7 % of MPs) compared to 34 (10.5 %) in 2007. Moreover, a constitution was produced in 2011, and Article 475 of the Penal Code was amended in 2014.

[15] Article 16 of the family law states that "a marriage contract is the accepted legal proof of marriage. If for reasons of force majeure the marriage contract was not officially registered in due time, the court may take into consideration all legal evidence and expertise; during its enquiry the court shall take into consideration the existence of children or a pregnancy from the conjugal relationship, and whether the petition was brought during the couple's lifetimes; petitions for recognition of a marriage are admissible within an interim period not to exceed 5 years from the date this law goes into effect."

[16] According to Article 20, the Family Affairs Judge in charge of marriage may authorize the marriage of a girl or boy below the legal age of marriage as stipulated in the preceding article (Article 19), in a well-substantiated decision explaining the interest and reasons justifying the marriage, after having heard the parents or legal tutor of the minor who has not yet reached the age of capacity, with the assistance of medical

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him the right to take a second wife or because he could not provide financial support for the two households in the case of polygamy) would simply resort to the traditional *zawaj al-fatiha* (religious custom marriage) and later file for a registration of that marriage at the family law court as a fait accompli. This way of circumventing the law also concerns underage marriage in cases where the judge rules out the ineligibility of the minor to marry.

In a study presented by Anaruz, a network of support and resource centers across the country, Noureddine al-Bahri, the legal adviser of Anaruz, stated on the tenth anniversary of the family law reform that the margins of Article 16 are exploited arbitrarily. A study carried out by the association Mubadarat in the cities of Fez, Meknes, and Khenifra shows that 25.5 % of women whose requests for underage marriage were approved were aged between 10 and 15 years at the beginning of the marital relationship. The study also indicates that 61 % of the positive decisions in requests for marriage registrations involved minors at the start of the marital relationship, noting that "the age of minors, at the beginning of the marital relationship was 10 years old in Fez and 11 years old in Khenifra." Article 16, initially meant to register marriages contracted prior to 2004 under clear and strict conditions, is obviously abused by people and judges as a way out of the limits to underage marriage. The judges who have the option and authority to refuse to legalize those marriages and put an end to these practices have overwhelmingly turned a blind eye on visible cases of fraud. It is interesting to note that while Article 16 was considered a transitional measure to end the practice of unregistered marriages, it had the opposite effect of generating more unregistered marriages in rural as well as in urban areas. The same study revealed that while the courts processed 9000 such requests in 2004, that number rose alarmingly to over 45,122 in 2011.[17]

Another instance of the shortcomings of the application of the family law reforms in Morocco is that underage marriage is not clearly prohibited; the decision to authorize underage marriage is left to the discretion of the judge. Article 20 of the family law allows the judge to exceptionally authorize a minor to get married after a "social" investigation and input from a medical expert. Putting the decision in the hands of judges was meant to help eradicate

expertise or after having conducted a social enquiry. According to Article 40, polygamy is forbidden when there is a risk of inequity between the wives. It is also forbidden when the wife stipulates in the marriage contract that her husband will not take another wife. Article 41 stipulates that the court will not authorize polygamy in the following contexts: (1) if an exceptional and objective justification is not provided, and (2) if the husband does not have sufficient resources to support the two families and guarantee all maintenance rights, accommodation, and equality in all aspects of life.

[17] See Hajar al-Maghli. 2014. "Thoubout Azzawjiya wassila litazwij al qasirat wa taadoud azzawjat." In *Assabah*, February 5, 2014. Available from: http://www.assabah.press.ma/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51494:2014-02-05-09-37-00&catid=67:cat-nationale&Itemid=600. (Accessed on May 20, 2014.)

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the practice of underage marriages, align with the international community, and respect the conventions on child protection ratified by Morocco. Unfortunately, a huge discrepancy exists between the intent and application of the law. The absence of control mechanisms over the judicial branch and the great resistance to the family law, seen by many as biased toward women, has favored the conservative reading of the text. In 2011, for instance, over 42,820 underage marriage requests were filed; 99.31 % of these were for young girls, while barely 0.69 % were for young boys.[18]

The Nationality Code

While Moroccan women's right to equal citizenship is guaranteed by the constitution, this right is mediated through and limited by other forms of identity claims (religion, class, ethnicity). Accordingly, each right is either incomplete, as is the case of the nationality law, or put at the discretion of another authority, with the judge or the state making the right hard to obtain. These hurdles reflect the resistance to recognize, in practice, the status of women as citizens with rights and responsibilities. This half-recognition undoubtedly affects women's role in society as the image they have of themselves is related to the rights they are entitled to as citizens. Citizenship as participation can be seen as "representing an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents" (Lister 1998, p. 228). Therefore, political marginalization and the exclusion of women from rights that are given to men, whether on the basis of religion as in the case of inheritance law or on the basis of kinship and sex as in the case of the Nationality Code, will slow progress toward the democratic structure the state claims to be building.

Morocco is among very few MENA countries allowing women to pass their citizenship to their children; the revision of the Nationality Code in 2007 gives the right, under Article 6, to Moroccan women to automatically transmit their nationality to their children with a retroactive effect but not their spouses. Despite the ongoing criticism from women's NGOs, the text retained a discriminatory measure that excludes women from having the same rights given to men. Indeed, unlike married men, Moroccan married women do not have the right to transmit their nationality by marriage. Consequently, families in which the husband is a foreign national face great uncertainty because the husband's temporary residence permit is at the mercy of authorities that can revoke it at any time.

[18] See Khadija Rougani. 2014. "Millaf li Niqach" Show. Médi 1 TV, February 4, 2014.

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The Absence of a Law to Protect Women from Violence

The right of every citizen to protection is considered a fundamental right; it is the duty and the responsibility of the state to guarantee that its citizens are legally protected from violence. Therefore, the state should put in place a system of protection of victims of violence and a procedure to bring perpetrators to justice, and this system should benefit all citizens without any discrimination. In Morocco, there are, broadly speaking, two types of violence that target women. The first type is domestic violence, against which the government has failed, for the third time in a row, to pass a law. The second form of violence, which is even more harmful, is the institutional violence before which women remain defenseless. According to a study by the Haut Commissariat au Plan on the prevalence of violence against women, 63 % of women 18–64 years of age have experienced some form of violence.[19] Perpetrators of violence against women are very rarely brought to justice because there is no law to protect the victims. When the Minister of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development, Bassima Hakkaoui, presented a law before the government in November 2013, the Head of the Government decided to "review" the proposal before it was submitted to the parliament. The law was deemed "too harsh on men" because it intervened in what is believed to be the private sphere. In fact, in Moroccan culture, violence against women is not seen as a crime; it is believed to be isolated to cases for which there is some sort of justification that absolves the aggressor and instead puts the blame on the victim.

The absence of a law that protects women from all forms of violence is an instance of institutional violence that relegates women to a state of second-class citizenship not worthy of protection. Indeed, the goal of ending violence against women is on no party's agenda; all major political parties have had the opportunity to make relevant changes while in power but they have chosen not to. While the current conservative party uses a populist rhetoric that warns its large voting base against following the West in family matters,[20] liberals blame them for a lack of political will to make a change. However, after more than a decade in control, left-wing parties have shown themselves unwilling to solve this problem.

[19] "Enquête nationale sur la prévalence de la violence à l'égard des femmes au Maroc." Rapport final du Haut Commissariat au Plan. 2011. Rabat, p. 5.

[20] On Tuesday, June 17, 2014, the sexist comments of Head of Government Abdelilah Benkirane alarmed women's NGOs. He openly attacked women's access to work and defended a discriminatory division of family tasks that was described as "divine and religious."

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Conclusion

In Morocco, the issue of women's rights is caught between the anvil of culture/religion and the hammer of globalization. Over the last 20 years, the Islamists' social and political agendas have developed faster than women's NGOs' ability to promote women's causes. Recently, however, women's rights advocates have developed a legalist approach based on universal human rights, seeking thus to depoliticize the issue. But the opponents to this project are still intent on ascribing the claim for women's empowerment to the West's desire for global hegemony, and so the crucial issue now is whether the process of democratization that Morocco seems to be undergoing can have any success when half of the population is de facto deprived of their rights as citizens. What needs to be done is to lift the religious veil that has come to be accepted over time as a natural envelope for anything related to women and to work toward an implementation of the constitution's pledge to respect the universality of human (including women's) rights. Politically, even so-called progressive regimes will support conservative, sometimes radical, religious views when it comes to women's issues because the ambiguity or double discourse (modernity and tradition) pays off in terms of legitimacy. Patriarchy in Morocco is intricately woven into the fabric of society and culture and is nourished by a religious narrative that functions at all levels, including in the highest political spheres. Checking women's aspirations to full citizenship is part of the state's structure and constitutes a political model that needs to be dismantled before change can begin.

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Chapter Eighteen

Moroccan Women's Cultural Rights: A Psycho-social Perspective on Cultural Paradoxes

Rachida Kerkech

Abstract This chapter uses psycho-social theorization to explain and assess Moroccan women's difficult accommodation of modernity and tradition in a heavily patriarchal society. In such a context, progressive legal action is important but constantly resisted. The chapter explains this state of affairs by demonstrating ways in which the interaction between conscious and unconscious socio-cultural attitudes and reactions govern the daily lives of Moroccan men and women and how these affect their interpretation of and reaction to institutional regulations. The chapter also highlights the negative effect of biased interpretations of the legal system in Morocco (and other Arab-Islamic countries) and the need to understand the cultural patterns of thought behind them, a challenging enterprise because of the unconscious character of these patterns.

Introduction

Moroccan women have always insisted on having access to modernity, but they also generally see themselves as the guardians of Moroccan culture and traditions. As for Moroccan men, they have always seen themselves as the custodians of religious and "moral" norms, especially those pertaining to patriarchy. However, most educated men insist on being regarded as modern men who are actively contributing to their society's development and progress. The attitudes and behaviors of both men and women in Morocco can, as a consequence, become perplexing sometimes. Indeed, psycho-social paradoxes and contradictions are inevitable in a society like Morocco's, where tradition and modernity coexist but also compete.

The issue of consistency or inconsistency in attitudes is not only a matter of cultural awareness, but also a matter of psychological, social, and intellectual development. It is against this complex reality that Moroccans'

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_18

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reactions to women's roles and status in the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring events should be examined. In Morocco, like in other North African and Middle East countries, people's demands focused on the urgent need for economic and political reform; the socio-cultural realities, however, were more difficult to elucidate or reconsider. This is the main challenge that NGOs and women's movements have had to face up to during and after the 2011 political reform in Morocco. The rise of an Islamic political party, the Justice and Development Party (PJD), and its tendency to endorse Islamic-oriented political views and promote Islamic cultural identity have rendered the debate about gender relations and cultural identity more challenging than ever.

Cultural rights may be regulated and guaranteed—or not—by legal rights, but generally speaking, cultural, social, and psychological factors significantly impact women's life and status even more than, or regardless of, legal factors. Contradictory attitudes and behaviors, observed at both the individual and institutional levels in Morocco, are at the center of the intricate interplay between conservative and liberal socio-cultural and political tendencies. No real understanding of family dynamics or educational and political choices in Morocco is possible without a consideration of the paradoxes inherent in a Moroccan society torn between tradition and modernity, especially as "modernization" was initiated by colonial powers.

This chapter addresses gender issues in Morocco and their impact on women's cultural awareness and rights from a psycho-social perspective. The psycho-social approach considers the individual's mind, feelings, and behavior within the social context, taking into account the strong and continuous—albeit unconscious—interplay between psychological and social factors. The individual develops and reacts within a social context. In its editorial article, the *Journal of Psycho-Social Studies* states:

> The heart of psycho-social studies is invariably the idea of relation. We, as individuals, groups and organizations are always, at all times and everywhere, in relation [… and dependent] on our parents, our partners, our employers, our children, our friends, our pets, our stable, our paternal environment and so on (Becker & Weyemann 2006).

Erik Erikson, in his major works, but especially in his eight stages of psycho-social development (1994, 1998), uses the psycho-social crisis life cycle model to stress the crucial role of the social environment in shaping the personality of individuals and how they perceive themselves and others, a point that will be addressed in the last part of this chapter.

While espousing this overarching theoretical stance, I position myself as both an insider and an outsider whose approach, views, and ideas on how men and women react and deal with the tradition/modernity aspect of their lives are shaped by her educational psychology background, as well as by reflection and observation. Beyond political considerations related to both

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the geopolitical and the socio-economic reasons behind the uprisings, and beyond the exclusively legal aspect of the issue of women's status and condition in Morocco, I think that a psycho-social outlook brings some elements of answer to complex and contradictory attitudes related to gender in general and women's condition in particular. Gender issues are a matter of relations within a social context because roles are all too often socially constructed. It is for these reasons that cultural aspects related to family dynamics, legal rights, religion, language, education, and politics are important to consider.

It is against this overall background that this chapter seeks to demonstrate that the interaction between conscious and unconscious socio-cultural attitudes and reactions govern the daily lives of Moroccans as well as their interpretation of and reaction to institutional regulations. There is a consensus of thought among gender issues specialists regarding the direct impact of political, economic, educational, and cultural factors on the condition of women in most developing countries. The lack of efficiency of the legal systems in these countries is also held responsible for the deplorable situation women find themselves in. It is, accordingly, as important to consider the inefficient and biased legal systems in such countries as to analyze and question the cultural patterns of thought behind them. This is rather a difficult enterprise because of the unconscious character of most cultural patterns. Both men and women in developing countries like Morocco are therefore likely to fail to question or change their attitudes, more particularly when they lack the adequate education that would enable them to do so. Furthermore, many women, especially illiterate ones, are conditioned to comply with their traditional culture and social norms without questioning the validity or soundness of some aspects of that culture. So, how could these women become fully aware of their rights, including cultural ones?

Cultural rights are not given the importance they deserve, according to Symonides (1998). Even at the level of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, cultural rights are considered "underdeveloped" or "the least developed" of human rights by both Symonides (1998) and Ayton-Shenker (1995). Food, health, and education rights are, and this makes sense, emphasized by most international human development conventions. Cultural rights, however, are no less important; they are expected to enable individuals to enjoy psychological and social wellbeing as well as to develop their cultural identity, provided the national socio-political context is favorable. Human development in its general sense is a prerequisite for intellectual and socio-economic development. Culture cannot, thus, be neglected; it affects and is affected by all the other aspects of social life.

Simple but inclusive definitions of culture and cultural rights will be taken into consideration in this paper. Culture is defined as the sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. Culture is transmitted, through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art, from one generation to the next (Dictionary.com).

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As for cultural rights, they are summed up by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948, Article 27) in two points phrased as follows:

1. Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Gender and Socio-cultural Paradoxes in Morocco

Focusing on socio-cultural paradoxes and contradictions to address gender issues in Morocco enables us, first, to reveal the possible lack of discernment of human beings when dealing with personal and sensitive issues; second, to draw attention to the complexity of everyday life realities and human relations; and third, to demonstrate the momentous effect of human perception, on the one hand, and of ideological and political objectives, on the other, on state institutions and important political reforms. Socio-cultural paradoxes and contradictions are, certainly, a powerful stimulus for reflection; they often shake deep-seated convictions. The concept of paradox is used here in its simplest sense and not in its classical (philosophical/mathematical) sense. It is related to a statement or a reaction which appears to contain a contradiction or an absurdity. It can also refer to some kind of reasoning with no apparent flaw but which nevertheless leads to an absurdity because of lack of objectivity and sense (*Merriam-Webster& Oxford Dictionaries*).

The following authentic Moroccan anecdotes are examples of the strong impact cultural patterns and inner convictions may have on people's perceptions and reactions. In Example 1 (which I personally witnessed), a father is approached to help resolve an issue between his daughter and her husband. Because her father is present, the young woman argues with more self-assurance than usual. The young husband, however, keeps a low profile and doesn't really speak his mind, which is rather unusual considering his psychorigidity and apparent self-confidence. The father, failing to detect his son-in-law's smart strategy, finds himself spontaneously reacting to his daughter's heated argument by saying, "Well, who is the MAN around here?!" His paternal role and feelings give way to an almost instinctive masculine and patriarchal outburst. No need to wonder about the daughter's bewilderment and frustration.

Example 2 is about a recurrent pattern observed in public discourses. A Moroccan Minister of National Education, addressing an audience composed of male and female teachers, "naturally" talked about "men of education" (literally translated from Arabic). This is an expression used by some officials to refer to teachers and education professionals in general. Needless to say, the number of female teachers present at the meeting visibly exceeded the number

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of male teachers. What is striking is that women, being victims of subtle social and intellectual conditioning, have started using the same expression, thereby excluding themselves verbally, culturally, and politically from the public sphere.

Both examples, the first from the private sphere and the second from the public sphere, illustrate the often amazing inability of some Moroccan men, including politicians, to be aware of their gender-bias blunders. Abdessamad Dialmy (*Vers une nouvelle masculinité au Maroc*, 2009) provides a very interesting, albeit challenging, study of Moroccan men's problematic views of themselves now that women have somehow gained more recognition and access to different social and professional roles. Dialmy's writings and ideas, however, are considered by many as a little bit ahead of their time.

Socio-cultural paradoxes in Morocco as far as gender issues are concerned reflect, as mentioned above, the complex interplay between conservative and modern socio-cultural trends within the same society. Deep-rooted traditions and a secular kind of modern culture govern social life in Morocco. Simultaneously, modernization is being intently sought by both the government and the civil society via education, modern communication systems, and urbanization. What needs to be emphasized, however, is that the process of modernization according to Western standards started in Morocco under French rule (1912–1956); it was not initiated by the Moroccan people at their own normal historical and psycho-social pace. Processes of modernization which are more or less imposed by colonial powers create a breach in the cultural identity of the natives and are not lived nor perceived as a positive experience. Consequently, the natives may stick to some aspects of their customs which would otherwise have been naturally abandoned over time as no longer appropriate. One of the problems of traditional societies is the inability to cope with the consequences of the rapid and destabilizing changes brought about by both colonial and post-independence processes of modernization. The latter process is often introduced haphazardly by the ex-colonial powers according to Western economic, political, and cultural standards and awkwardly pursued after independence by local governments who often lack the means and the required expertise to meet the expectations of the people. In the case of most non-Western countries, including Islamic and Arab ones, the significant social changes brought about by colonial education, law, and ways of life are such that psycho-social adjustment and normal development become a real challenge. In patriarchal societies, the challenge is bigger for men because they not only have to endure the humiliation of having been "defeated" and colonized, but they also find themselves directly or indirectly obliged to relinquish what they have always considered their religious, social, and historical prerogatives. The fight for political and economic independence is often equated with the fight for identity. This fact is frequently exploited by fundamentalists who rely on the notion of religious and cultural identity to try to abort any attempts made by male and female intellectuals in general and women activists in particular to change both the law system and people's mentalities.

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Women living in ex-colonies, on the other hand, experience the struggle for national independence differently. An analysis of Moroccan literature from the 1960s through the 1980s shows that women's consciousness was really triggered by the fight for independence. If men need and want freedom and dignity, women have the right to ask for just as much, especially because they actively contributed to the struggle for national sovereignty, even though they were abandoned to "their" house chores after independence (Abouzeid 1989; Chraibi 1972). Modernization and what it implies in terms of education, health, and equal opportunity is inevitably equated with human development and dignity by Moroccan women. Men, more than women, on the other hand, feel that the changes which are taking place in their traditional societies have been instigated by "hostile" Western regimes who are trying to "finish up" the job started by their ancestors. Feeling threatened, conservative men develop systematic resistance to projects aiming at sustainable development, more particularly when these projects are supported by international organizations or by developed—usually Western—countries. The vehement reaction of the conservative movement against the "Plan d'action national pour l'intégration de la femme au développement" initiated by the liberal Muhammad Said Saadi in 1999, then Moroccan Secretary of State for the Family, is revealing. Liberal civil society reacted by organizing a demonstration in Rabat in support of the plan on March 12, 2000. On the same day, another big demonstration against the plan was organized in Casablanca by the conservative movement. The simultaneous demonstrations for and against the plan are, once again, striking evidence of the cultural and political dichotomy behind the psycho-social paradoxes under study.

This kind of socio-political situation has significant implications in terms of personal perception of things and also in terms of political decision making and organization of social life. Coming to an agreement by mutual concession on the best way to organize life in the family and in the country becomes a real challenge to both men and women. The lack of clear educational and socio-political vision seems to be a major hurdle. Illiteracy is of course a major obstacle, too, but it could have been eradicated were the educational vision in the country more coherent. To push the reasoning a little further, the need to fight Islamist extremism and protect their interests has prompted developed countries to find ways to be involved in other countries' development programs. Furthermore, developed countries believe it is their mission to assist developing countries in their efforts to evolve and install genuine democracies. Unfortunately, this course of action is often tarnished, first, by a lack of transparency as to the real agendas of the supportive countries and organizations and, second, by the inappropriate strategies they adopt. Their apparent obstinate emphasis on gender equality, for example, as a sine qua non of development, logical as this may be, inflames the suspicions of fundamentalists. The latter choose to ignore the initiative, the role, and the efforts deployed by Moroccan men and women to improve social life in the country and focus

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only on a probable wish of Western countries to "destroy" the culture and identity of Islamic and Arab countries in order to "weaken" them. Thus, strategies which are instigated by industrialized countries and which do not take into consideration local historical and cultural contexts may backfire, and some of them would not serve women's causes for that matter. Another reason why some of the external help projects fail is, of course, the inability of the assisted countries to efficiently implement the agreed-upon development programs.

Beyond political and strategic considerations, the cultural rights of women also need to be pondered: Who decides about culture? What culture? Whose culture is to be opted for, that of the traditionalists or that of the liberals; that of the government or that proposed by civil society; men's or women's? Actually, like women in other Islamic and Arab countries, Moroccan women are caught between apparently irreconcilable situations: faithfulness to "authentic" but sometimes restrictive traditions or adherence to modern, often liberating ways of living, some of which might be alien to Moroccan culture. What kind of educational and socio-political environment is most conducive to awareness of culture and cultural rights? What kind of education and social context would enable all women and men to realize that some aspects of their own culture need to be questioned if they become irrelevant? Moreover, what kind of education enables individuals to acquire the emotional maturity and the intellectual skills to take responsibility for their cultural and intellectual choices? Human history has taught us that it is usually those who need to improve their life conditions who seek change, while those who are in a position of power and enjoy greater advantages try to maintain the status quo. When we observe Moroccan social dynamics, especially those relating to gender, we notice that a great number of men are reluctant to contribute to real social change. Despite the huge efforts of women's organizations and intellectuals to put pressure on successive governments to make significant changes in education, the law system, and governmental policies, no real opportunities to exercise genuine political authority and administrative responsibility have been given to qualified women. There is constantly a kind of reticence to accept women in the public spheres, and they are frequently excluded. The situation is worse after the Arab uprisings, especially with the advent of conservative governments. The public sphere, whether political or spatial, is the prerogative of men in Moroccan culture. Men seem to stick to the same mottoes: "Don't touch my prerogatives" (social and political aspects), and "Don't touch my subconscious" (psychological aspect). Constructive social change requires a balance between psychological awareness and political efficiency, a balance between what is private and what is public. The two mottoes mentioned above are not at all conducive to genuine social change; on the contrary, they would hinder any attempt to reconsider existing situations which are no longer appropriate considering human evolution and social change.

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Regulation of Gender Relations: The Weight of Culture

Law systems regulate, among other things, family and social life. When individuals or groups fail to reach a satisfactory compromise, they naturally turn to the legal system for assistance. The judicial system, however, often reflects the state's broader socio-political orientations as well as society's cultural features. Once societies evolve and change, the law system, as we may expect, becomes obsolete. Urgent reforms, in this case, impose themselves. Adjusting to new social requirements, however, can be a real challenge for decision makers. Conservatives within decision-making bodies and society can show vigorous resistance to change. If the psycho-social challenge is not overcome and the outdated law system is maintained, the whole society is dragged downward since law will not only fail to resolve conflicts but will also inspire and reinforce prejudiced behavior within the judiciary as well as within society.

Reconsidering women's status, role, and rights within a given society unavoidably entails reconsidering men's status, role, and rights. Hence the complexity of the socio-political change Morocco and similar countries had to go through during the Arab Spring. Change is rarely a deliberate and unproblematic choice; often, it is a shift imposed by inexorable social transformations. In some cases, reform can also be mandatory due to international conjunctures and pressure. This kind of structural change is not always easily endorsed by the population. First of all, ordinary people often fail to relate theory to practice, particularly when the projects of the government or opponents are not well explained and promoted. Second, they may fail to see the rationale behind any change when they have not been well prepared for it. Moroccan women's status and legal rights are inextricably linked to Morocco's economic and socio-political development scheme, whether before or after the Arab Spring revolution. The decision to embark on such a crucial and symbolically loaded project like reforming the Moroccan family code (Mudawwana), which was finally approved in 2004, was essentially a political move. However, the profile and objectives of the team of experts who worked on the new family code, the nature of the changes which were introduced, the ability of the judicial system to implement them, and the reaction of the population remain factors which have to be analyzed for a better understanding of the impact culture can have on institutions and vice versa. Actually, Moroccan women's legal rights have theoretically been improved due to the significant changes made in the 2004 Mudawwana. For example, marriage, divorce, women's legal autonomy, and child custody procedures are comparatively less discriminatory toward women than those of the 1957–1958 Personal Status Code. More importantly, the reformed Mudawwana has considerably contributed to the enhancement of women's self-esteem and self-confidence in spite of all the problems effective implementation of the new law encountered. It is this tremendously positive psychological effect on

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women which seems to be the utmost achievement of the reformed Mudawwana. The interaction between the perspectives of the judiciary and citizens, however, is not as simple as one may think. Each action, reaction, word, or attitude is culturally loaded, whatever the level of education of those involved. In courts, for instance, puzzling comments can pop up anytime, leaving both plaintiff and defendant astounded. Consider the following examples reported in a study entitled "Le Code de la Famille: Perceptions et Pratique Judiciaire" (Alami M'chichi, H. et al. 2007). A judge says to a woman who filed for a divorce: "Crains Dieu, tu demandes le divorce alors que tu as quatre enfants, il ne faut pas que tu sois injuste envers ton mari …" [Fear God, you request divorce while you have four children; don't be so unfair to your husband] (translation mine; Alami M'chichi et al., 285). This statement will certainly appear outrageously unprofessional to law specialists and to psychologists; to ordinary people, however, especially illiterate ones, it may go unnoticed except for an eventual feeling of mortification. In addition to its being so intimidating, the judge's statement is loaded with cultural and religious connotations. First of all, the judge invokes the fear of God as if the woman has committed blasphemy by "daring" to apply for a divorce. Second, he implies that she is not expected to seek divorce because she has four children. Whatever reasons would make the mother of four kids decide to apply for a divorce does not seem to be worth investigating by the judge. He also signifies that whatever the nature of the problem the couple may be facing, it is up to the wife to capitulate for the sake of children. Finally, the judge incriminates the wife ("don't be so unfair") and considers the husband the victim in this case. The judge's attitude betrays blatant discrimination and gender bias. The spirit of the new Mudawwana, the preamble of which stipulates that the reformed text will "adopt a modern form of wording and remove degrading and debasing terms for women" (The Moroccan Family Code, Preamble, Item One) does not seem to have been captured by the judge in this case. Indeed, the wife is denied her right to justice, respect, and dignity. What is imposed on her, finally, is an outrageously narrow-minded kind of culture, that of utter surrender to man's supremacy.

According to the same report, "le respect de la morale, entendue dans son sens traditionaliste, ainsi que de l'état des moeurs et de l'opinion publique semble dominer dans les jugements" [Respect for morality, in its most traditional and conservative meaning, as well as the religious reference seem to prevail in judgments] (translation mine; Alami M'chichi, 286). Indeed, religion seems to be men's first and last resort to subdue women whenever tangible arguments are lacking. Sarcasm can be resorted to as well. In another divorce case, for example, a judge says to a husband: "accompagne ton épouse chez le bijoutier et tout se réglera …" [Take your wife to the jeweler's and everything will be resolved …] (translation mine; Alami M'chichi, 284). Here, the judge thinks he can allow himself to be sarcastic not only toward the woman who is in conflict with her husband, but also toward women in general for buying and wearing jewelry. What is implied by the judge's statement,

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in fact, is that any woman would accept reconciliation if she is offered jewelry, which would mean that women lack sense and dignity. Buying gold jewelry for one's wife to further reconciliation attempts is an aspect of Moroccan traditional culture which is rather fading away nowadays, due to changing mentalities and the new socio-economic conditions. Moroccan women, as a matter of fact, used to invest in gold jewelry because it was their best guarantee against sickness and poverty. Husbands, on the other hand, often relied on their wives' savings and gold jewelry to solve their own financial problems. The point, nevertheless, is that members of the judiciary should, in principle, be able to preserve their professional objectivity and avoid ethical pitfalls. This is practically impossible unless they become fully aware of the psycho-social and cultural dimensions of family and social conflicts. In principle, their knowledge and training should enable them to see the implication behind every single change in the family code and act accordingly. Apparently, the judiciary had neither the opportunity nor the time for in-service training before the implementation of the new family law. Consequently, the attitudes and decisions of some judges and court personnel have been dictated more by personal and cultural readings of the new Mudawwana than by a rational and scholarly interpretation.

Inheritance law as well as polygamy regulation seem to be the most knotty issues dealt with in the Mudawwana. The two issues are exceedingly culturally loaded, although most legislators claim that both inheritance and polygamy belong exclusively in the religious sphere because they are clearly regulated by the Qur'an. Regarding the issue of inheritance, lawmakers find it too thorny an area to be amended for the simple reason that it is unequivocally fixed in the Qur'an: *one* share for a female against *two* shares for a male. There is no equality in terms of heritage between brothers and sisters in Islamic law. This seems to be in perfect accordance with the different patriarchal cultures and social orders which instigated such laws in different societies. The most conspicuous of paradoxes seems to be the inability of Moroccan legislators to reconsider the inheritance law by relying on the Ijtihad principle in Islam, even at a time when Morocco is claiming and defending its "revolution" in terms of gender equality compared to other countries. Some Moroccan parents who are not convinced of the soundness of what they consider an unfair heritage law try to circumvent the issue by passing on (e.g., "selling") their property to their daughters during their lifetime.

Psycho-social paradoxes related to the issue of polygamy are more striking, particularly when they are detected in the reasoning of educated men. While single mothers and their children are not protected by law even in the case of rape, this same law allows men to enjoy multiple sex relations via "legal" polygamy in marriage. Aicha Chenna, a famous Moroccan activist who founded a self-help organization, Solidarité Féminine (Feminine Solidarity), to assist single mothers, is vehemently criticized by extremists for "encouraging immorality" in society. Aicha Chenna, who was awarded the Elisabeth Norgall Award by the International Women's Club in 2005 for her contributions to

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single mothers' wellbeing in Morocco, is still fighting for the recognition of the legal rights of single mothers and their children. Apparently, law is meant to serve men more than women. Islamic law allows a man to take up to four wives under the condition that he is just and provides equally for each of them. This complies with the patriarchal tradition, which stipulates that men provide for the family, and does not take into consideration the fact that gender roles have considerably changed. Providing for women also implies women's unconditional obedience and subjection in return for men's "care." The only restriction the new Mudawwana has tried to impose on men is for the husband to get his first wife's "consent," or at least to inform her about his intention to take another wife. She can then choose either to stay with him as a co-spouse or ask for a divorce. In either case, women feel betrayed and humiliated, especially when they have children and are not financially autonomous. This is another blatant paradox. It is assumed that the two alternatives given to wives represent justice while, in fact, they reinforce women's subordination. References to "natural law" and biological differences between males and females are often used to legitimize all forms of psychological and physical gender violence. Culture, with all its gender biases, is transformed over and over again into legal structures; the legal system's spirit and unfair principles become, afterwards, *the* culture to be defended in the name of religious and cultural identity.

Politics, Religion, and Culture

What is noteworthy about some Arab and Muslim countries—and this was noticed during the Arab Spring—is that these countries systematically turn against their women whenever there is a major political or social crisis and accuse them of being the source of the problems their society is facing. They particularly turn against women's progress, which makes it clear that men (rulers) in these countries do not conceive of their own wellbeing as a corollary of women's wellbeing. On the contrary and based on their reactions, nonliberal and narrow-minded men think that their strength is contingent on women's subjection and fragility. Paradoxically, even the Arab and Muslim countries which have opted for progress and development, like Morocco, may react in the same self-defensive way against women when they realize that a shift in balance of power is taking place. Women's development might be accepted, but only as long as it does not impinge on men's absolute power. The concept of balance of power in its democratic sense is in total opposition to the Arab and oriental "frame of mind," particularly as it relates to power. More than once, Moroccan political men have rallied women to their political cause and accepted their assistance to win elections. Women, however, are rarely accepted as equal partners or elected to their party's national board in spite of their high qualifications and their commitment to the party (Sadiqi 2006, Dinia 2002).

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In order to stop women's progress and regain absolute power, conservative men usually turn to religion as a back-up. The reasoning they follow and which one often hears in their speeches is this: we are losing power while women are gaining strength and self-confidence; they are able to achieve this because we, men, have been too "permissive" and did not stick to our religious principles. The idea that women develop owing to their ability to benefit from their educational experiences is not considered. If anything, this confirms the difficulty conservatives have in considering issues outside of the framework of their religious principles. Self-analysis and self-criticism are seldom resorted to; they seem alien to conservatives and to individuals who have not been given opportunities to develop their analytical and critical-thinking skills. It certainly has to do with education, a point that will be developed in the last part of this chapter. The reasons Arab and Muslim men almost instinctively turn against women in moments of crisis may well be either lack of self-confidence vis-à-vis women or their cultural sense of superiority. The first idea seems more probable, though. A number of men do not seem to be convinced of and satisfied with the power they are endlessly trying to maintain over women. They have to continually make sure women are still under their control in order to feel secure.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, when Muhammad Said Saadi presented the Plan for Integrating Women in Development, two parallel demonstrations, one for and one against, took place in 2000 in Rabat and Casablanca, respectively. The diametrically opposite views of the two marches represent two conflicting social and political visions which cannot be comprehended unless we take into consideration the bipolar cultural and historical context discussed above and which shapes Moroccans' understanding of gender dynamics and social life in general. When we consider Saadi's plan, we can hardly fail to see the reason why it was so vehemently rejected by conservatives, particularly men. In general, the plan is meant to promote women's development and empowerment, without which the country cannot move forward. It is divided into four major areas dealing with education (illiteracy eradication and girls schooling), health (motherhood issues), work conditions, and the Mudawwana reform (Saadi 1999). This last point seems to be the main reason behind the protest launched by religious and conservative groups in Casablanca. The proposal was aimed at introducing significant changes in the Mudawwana and therefore brought into question what men take to be their religious and social prerogative: superiority in decision making. What must have irritated the conservatives most is the egalitarian tone and spirit of the plan, which clearly refers to the need for more democratic laws and practices regarding women. That was a completely new socio-political culture.

Another cultural right worth considering is the right to preserve and develop one's own language. In the new 2011 Moroccan constitution, Amazigh (Berber) is recognized as an official language alongside Standard Arabic. Amazigh-speaking people had been fighting for this cultural and political

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recognition for decades, but political conjunctures were not yet favorable for that to happen. Standard Arabic, which had been the only official language until 2011, was the language of official communication, education, and media. This fact prevented Amazigh-speaking people, especially women, from enjoying their cultural and socio-political right to have direct access to first-hand information, arts, and education in the language they understand best and use at home on a daily basis. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 27 (op.cit.), stipulates that "everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community." Furthermore, making sure people are enjoying and developing their culture in conditions of equality and dignity is one of the responsibilities of modern states. Unfortunately, and considering the relatively high rate of illiteracy among women, whether they speak Amazigh or Moroccan Arabic (Darija), cultural rights do not seem to be counted as a priority. Most of the national TV channels are in Arabic; women have either to make do with what is broadcast or abstain from watching. Being somehow "forced" to "consume" a different language and culture, Amazigh-speaking people inevitably witness the marginalization if not the depredation of their own language and culture. It is true that governments often have to make choices, but these are seldom fortuitous (Zaki 2004, 111). For example, illiteracy eradication programs are organized by the government, but they are implemented exclusively in Standard Arabic. Often, women constitute the target population of such programs. Whose language and culture is being enhanced? Classical Arabic, being the language of the Qur'an, has always been presented as a "sacred" language that should not only be learnt but also revered to the detriment of native languages. Again, religion is resorted to not only to justify men's supremacy over women, but also to justify the "superiority" of one language over another.

In light of the above, it is clear that Moroccan women's cultural rights are not well defined in the sense that only those aspects which conform to the prevailing patriarchal social norms are put forward and enhanced. Moreover, there are aspects of Moroccan culture women identify with and cherish because they have been developed and maintained over time by women themselves, including clothes, jewelry, make-up, and maternal roles in the family. Other aspects, however, are imposed on women, who have to comply with them, especially aspects which consolidate men's symbolic and effective dominance. Also, culture in its anthropological sense is not as highly valued as the more striking and superficial features of culture. For example, secular Moroccan popular culture is relentlessly reduced to touristic "folkloric" festivals which are inexorably obliterating the intimacy of authentic village celebrations. As for women who are educated and live in urban areas, they generally do not identify with the outrageously patriarchal and conservative culture which is being promoted by conservatives. Women in Morocco have always been nourished by a secular and typically North African free and liberal kind of culture; they would not submit to the pressures of narrow-mindedness.

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Education and Gender Issues in Morocco

Culture and gender cannot be dissociated from educational issues; similarly, genuine and sustainable socio-political reforms are not possible without improvement of the national educational system. A consideration of the educational systems in Morocco and other Arab and Muslim countries in terms of content, methods of teaching, teacher/student rapport, and school environment shows that these systems do not adequately form individuals who are able to face up to the modern world's major challenges, like rapid technological and socio-cultural changes. Some basic cognitive and social skills as well as ego strength are necessary in today's global world, whatever the culture. People with low or even average levels of education often lack effective analytical and critical-thinking skills. This is due to inappropriate syllabi choices and obsolete teaching methods. Apart from foreign language and science classes, almost all the other subjects, like the humanities and law—often taught in Arabic—rely on rote learning of content. Students are not often given the opportunity to discuss, analyze, or criticize content. On the other hand, teacher/student rapport is not always productive; often, students lack support and consideration, a situation which does not enhance their self-esteem. Obviously, low levels of self-esteem may be one of the psychological reasons behind some men's inability to remain confident in relation to women's development and progress. Young men and women who lack self-confidence, high self-esteem, and critical-thinking skills are likely to fail to confront problematic situations effectively, whether these concern personal issues or socio-political ones. Moroccan students, for example, often complain about the disobliging way they are treated by some of their teachers in the classroom. Their main grievance is their teachers' lack of support and encouragement, which can lead to reduced self-confidence and self-esteem (Kerkech 2014). Useful psychology theories related to human development and personality, like Abraham Maslow's pyramid of needs (Williams and Burden 1997) and Erik Erikson's stages of psycho-social development (Slavin 1988), are not easily accessible to the majority of teachers and educators in Morocco. The importance of self-esteem and of human needs in shaping personalities is often overlooked due to inadequacies in the educational system and in the socio-political organization. People are often so entangled in their own social and psychological frustrations that they cannot attend to other people's needs and frustrations. The Arab Spring revealed political, socio-economic, and educational flaws which were so deep-seated that hasty and superficial political or economic reorganization is not enough to remedy them. Fundamental and well-considered reforms are crucial to significant change, prosperity, and stability. Beside political reforms, basic transformation and restructuring have to be undertaken to improve the quality of education. Defective education cannot produce alert and reliable citizens who are aware of their rights and obligations.

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Conclusion

In spite of issues related to resistance to cultural change, Moroccan society is willing to make an effort to realize social and economic equilibrium and preserve political stability, especially after the tragic political cataclysm some countries went or are going through during and after the Arab Spring. But without political will to reform and sanitize the educational, economic, and political systems, some golden opportunities will be missed. Socio-political and educational stagnation maintains the cultural status quo, whatever its defects. Tribute should actually be paid to a number of Moroccan men, whether educated or not, who have supported Moroccan women in their quest for dignity. The strength of educated men who are not gender biased, on the other hand, lies in their ability to go beyond their immediate personal perceptions and needs and in their awareness that men's happiness cannot be dissociated from that of women. Social wellbeing depends heavily on this vital male–female interaction and acceptance.

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Chapter Nineteen

Women's Economic Empowerment in Morocco: The Case of Social Entrepreneurship

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Abstract This chapter focuses on the economic aspect of women's empowerment in Morocco in the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring. The chapter presents a critical review of the main existing state strategies for women's economic empowerment and underlines their shortcomings, mainly their short-term perspectives. As an alternative, the chapter introduces Anaruz as a unique social enterprise that adopts an innovative approach that targets sustainability and self-independence, marking a shift from traditional approaches to women's economic empowerment where the empowerment often ends when the project does. The chapter provides testimonies from real actors in the field who attest how Anaruz empowered them not only individually but also collectively to act as agents for change in their families and in their communities.

Introduction

The so-called Arab Spring[1] reached Morocco in February 2011, drawing thousands of youth and protest groups to the streets with demands for more freedom, social justice, and democratic reforms. A few weeks later, King Mohammed VI announced a series of reforms, the most important of which was the drafting of a new constitution. Women played a key role in the protest and reform processes. In order to channel their demands and recommendations to the policy and decision-making bodies and authorities in Morocco, more than 30 leading women's rights groups launched a network, The Feminist

[1]The expression "Arab Spring" is problematized by a large number of researchers for its exclusion of other groups present in the region, such as Amazigh, Copts, and so on. Some other terms have been proposed instead such as "MENA uprisings" and "Democratic Protests." The authors of this chapter favor the expression "MENA uprisings" as it is neutral and more revealing.

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_19

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Spring for Equality and Democracy. A detailed document outlining their demands was collectively produced and submitted to the constitutional drafting committee. The success of the alliance is clear in that many of the recommendations found their way into the new constitution. Although this might appear to be evidence of great progress toward women's rights and empowerment, it is judged by many to be a mere advancement in legislation without corresponding changes on the ground.

The situation of women is still troubling, especially in rural areas. In the 2012 Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum (WEF), Morocco was ranked among the ten countries with the worst gender inequality. This assessment was based on four main areas that WEF used as a basis for its assessment: economic participation and opportunities, education, politics, and health (Hausmann et al. 2012). In addition, the High Commission for Planning in Morocco issued updated statistics on the status of women in the country as of 2013, and concluded that one of the toughest hurdles hindering women's empowerment was illiteracy; 41 % of Moroccan women are illiterate, and the rate rises to 58 % in rural areas. Violence is also a noted area of concern as women in Morocco are still exposed to different forms of violence on a regular basis (Hajji 2013).

Morocco is in need of new, effective strategies toward women's rights. This chapter will look into the strategy of economic empowerment, which is essential for realizing both women's rights and broader development goals, especially in remote and rural communities where more than half of the population of Morocco lives. International organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs), and the government have acknowledged this fact and invested in different projects and approaches to support women's economic empowerment in these communities. The question lies, however, in the way these investments are conducted and the impact they create. Most of the investments are translated into creating a multitude of cooperatives and income generating activities across Morocco, organizing local fairs, and facilitating access to microfinance. Though they are well-intentioned initiatives, these actions usually miss two key elements during the phase of investment implementation: *authenticity* and *sustainability*. Despite the quantitatively appealing results announced in progress and evaluation reports, little if any real impact is apparent on the ground, for as soon as a project is over, everything stops and women find themselves worse off than they were prior to the project. The key issue in women's economic empowerment is enabling women to continue to create sustainable income for themselves once a project is over or the funding ceases. This would in turn empower more women in their communities and transform their economic power into a catalyzer of effective advocacy for the provision, fulfillment, and protection of their rights.

The study on which this chapter is based was undertaken by two academic researchers and a practitioner, and it thus brings together theoretical frameworks and tests them against factual data. The approach adopted has proven effective in verifying the extent to which normative theory on

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entrepreneurship and social enterprise mirrors market realities, especially for women with little if any education. The aim of the chapter is to introduce a unique initiative undertaken by the social enterprise[2] Anaruz.[3] Anaruz has adopted an innovative approach which differs from the traditional approaches to women's economic empowerment. This chapter presents the life story of Anaruz and the steps it has gone through, from the first stages of its creation to its present-day adoption of a scientific approach. The chapter also provides testimonies from real actors in the field who explain how Anaruz empowered them both individually and collectively to act as agents of change not only in their families but also in their communities.

Against this background, this chapter addresses several questions. How can organizations build trust in the communities with which they work? How can women continue to create sustainable income for themselves? How can women embrace leadership and mobilize other women in their communities to enhance community development? The authors argue that the answers lie in a series of shifts that need to happen: a shift in mindset, a shift in approach, and a shift in the way women's organizations work with each other. To properly convey all of this, the chapter draws from a case study of Anaruz. But first we need to contextualize women's empowerment in Morocco.

Women's Empowerment in Morocco: An Overview

The focus of this section is primarily on what the government of Morocco has done to empower women legally, politically, and economically. The choice of focusing attention on the government is motivated by the fact that economic development is the responsibility of the government toward its constituents. To understand the status of economic empowerment in Morocco, however, we need to include other factors that lead to empowerment, namely educational, political, and legal factors. Other elements, such as international organizations, civil society, and the media, also have a role in women's empowerment in Morocco.

In addition to royal zeal and constitutional jargon, various initiatives have contributed to relieving the multifaceted stagnation of Moroccan women's

[2] Social enterprise often starts with identifying a problem or noticing a need in the community. It is a business model that brings an innovative solution to a social or environmental issue. Its success is measured by positive changes to an issue in society together with profit generation to sustain the business. In this way, a social entrepreneur is an agent of change in society, a creator of innovations that alter situations and transform our world.

[3] Anaruz, also spelled Anarouz, is an Amazigh term which means "hope." The choice of the term is very significant, for social enterprise is a means to give hope to poor, marginalized, rural Moroccan women and empower them economically so that they are able to improve their conditions and protect their rights. See www.anarouz.org.

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social, political, and economic status. Some of these initiatives are the product of national thinking, whereas others stem from regional and international experiences. At the national level, the government of Morocco (GOM) launched the 2012–2016 Plan for Equality (IKRAM), in order to further institutionalize the concept of parity and advance the situation of women in the country.

Morocco's alignment with international development agendas has been beneficial in this context. The 2014 report by the Moroccan Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development, entitled "Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls: Post-2015 Gains and Challenges," outlines the different measures that have been put in place to ensure this multifaceted empowerment for women.

On the legal front, the Mudawwana (Family Law) has been modified and amended twice since its establishment in the period November 1957–January 1958; it was modified first in 1993 and again in 2004. Of these two reforms, the most culturally courageous, substantively comprehensive, and linguistically bold was the second one. However, although the new Family Code is regarded as a victory of the women's movement in Morocco, different evaluations of the law have revealed obstacles hindering its implementation by both the population and institutions (Bordat et al. 2011).

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Uprisings and the 2011 Constitution

Even though Morocco began a process of reform regarding social and political issues in the country in the 1990s, this process was immensely accelerated by what the Arab Spring (hereafter referred to as the MENA uprisings). Only 3 months after the uprisings erupted in Tunisia and spread to Egypt, King Mohammed VI delivered a mediatized speech whereby he set the agenda for more substantive reforms that, among other things, gave the government more responsibilities. This unprecedented speech also put a particular focus on the role of women in society at the political, social, and economic levels. These reforms necessitated a new constitution.

The July 2011 constitution gives priority to the human or citizen by ensuring equal opportunities for individuals, groups, generations, and regions. Article 31 instructs all levels of the government and public services to mobilize all available means to facilitate access for men and women citizens, on an equal footing, to health care, social protection, education, housing, employment, and so forth (Ruchti 2011).

Empowering Women Through Law

Law is believed to be above all, but in Morocco, women were until recently at the very bottom of whoever is under the law. The debate over and revision

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and reconfiguration of many legal instruments have partially resulted in the boldest constitutional reform in Morocco's modern political and legal history. The reform of laws such as the Family Code, the Criminal Code, the Labor Code, the Nationality Code, the Election Code, and the Collective Charter has given a voice to women and strengthened their position in the public sphere. The 2013 National Charter to Reform the Justice System crowned this victory by making the provision, fulfillment, and protection of women's rights a top priority. As a logical follow-up, the GOM launched the National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women. The strategy sets out to

1. Create adequate structures for reception and orientation, including listening and orientation centers, consultations centers, hospitals, and police stations.
2. Launch a national research campaign on violence against women in order to provide viable and verifiable quantitative and qualitative data on the issue.
3. Institutionalize the created structures (as in point 1), coupled with scientific study of the phenomenon (as in point 2) in order to establish an updated and responsive monitoring mechanism. This is expected to result in the creation of a multi-stakeholder observatory on violence against women, including representatives of government agencies, academe, and civil society organizations (NGOs).

Furthermore, the Government Council of 2013 put forth a bill on violence against women, defying some of the most deeply rooted patriarchal dogmas in the Moroccan psyche, some of which have been tolerated for as long as any legal system has existed in the country. The bill demands the criminalization of and stiff punishments against all forms of sexual harassment, whether at work, in public, or within the family.

The GOM launched a four-year program to accompany these demands and better inform the consultative process around this issue. The program targets various components of the issue, namely those of awareness raising, education on women's rights, and direct counseling to victims and to women at risk. At the same time, the judicial system has been working toward mainstreaming available legal provisions to match women's rights provisions as stipulated in Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and other women's rights instruments.

Moreover, the GOM has realized that alone it can only touch the shallow surface of women's issues. This is why numerous partnerships have been established in order to provide women at risk and women victims of violence with appropriate support and mentoring mechanisms. Approximately four million dirhams have been deployed to support the work of 50 listening and counseling centers. The Family Solidarity Fund has also been providing support for divorced and single mothers, totaling over 550 women in 2012 alone.

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Women's Economic Empowerment

Article 19 of the 2011 constitution highlights equality between women and men, but in practice the situation is far from ideal. Such a goal is only possible to achieve if accompanied by serious and practical instruments that would guarantee women's access to both the private and public sectors, as well as the market at large.

In Morocco, the conditions for women accessing the job market have not seen significant changes; most women's work is unaccounted for in both household economics and national the Gross Domestic Product figures. In comparison to men, women are more likely to work longer hours, complain less, and represent a much slimmer risk of volatility. For example, 41 % of working women earn less than the already mediocre minimum wage, whereas the rate for men is 31 %—not much of an advantage but the disparity is worth pointing out. In addition, women's participation in paid economic activity was a mere 24.7 % in 2012, and this number has not improved significantly since then. Social pressures to maintain a flawless work-life balance and meet all family responsibilities limit the time, energy, and opportunities women have to advance in their careers. This is best seen in the fact that only 10 % of companies in Morocco are owned or managed at the senior level by women.

To lessen this disparity, the GOM has put forth programs such as the Ilayki Fund in 2012. The program is aimed at encouraging women to establish their own enterprises. It helps mentor and monitor them and provides consultations, strategic and operational advising, and access to finance. The government has also initiated various actions as part of its efforts to promote social solidarity, stimulate the economy, and instigate women's interest in taking part in the formal economy at the local level.

In rural areas, where there are very few, if any, possibilities for economic empowerment, the GOM began a pilot initiative to support income generating activities (IGAs) in the agricultural sector. It reserved an amount of around 1 million dirhams in 2012 to launch micro projects by women in rural areas, with close attention to and consideration of women's capacities. This pilot experience encouraged the founding of a similar program to finance 70 small projects per year for 10 years, targeting a strict minimum of 1400 women beneficiaries.

Such initiatives will be effective only if other stakeholders are also supported and encouraged. A case in point is the support for existing cooperatives in various aspects of their work, including access to finance, financial literacy, access to markets, and training in design, marketing, and scaling up. The state has financed and supported the participation of numerous cooperatives and professional associations through different international and national programs such as the Date Festival in Erfoud, the International Agricultural Fair of Meknes, and the Berlin International Agricultural Fair and Agriculture and Food Industry Fair.

Supporting Moroccan cooperatives through these and other initiatives has helped the number of these enterprises grow to over 1800 by December 2013.

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The total number of women working in these cooperatives exceeds 32,000, and their total capital is estimated at an encouraging 16 million dirhams. To further enhance this momentum, other programs have specifically targeted the capacity building and skill reinforcement of women's projects, small businesses, cooperatives, and other small initiatives/programs, such as the following:

1. Baynahun (Between Them), which has benefited more than 550 women entrepreneurs and trained them in management skills and other related areas.
2. Infitah (Opening), which presents the benefits of using information technology in small businesses, with the aim of obtaining a government issued Digital License. This license opens up the possibility for small businesses to benefit from government funding and support programs. Of the 3786 licenses delivered, 253 were delivered to women (about 7 %).
3. Imtiyaz (Excellence), which targets small and medium-sized businesses with a proven track record of growth. It provides technical support for investment and encouraged banks as incentive to support and fund women's projects.

Another major initiative by the GOM is the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) launched in 2005. In 2011–2012 alone, INDH delivered over 10,567 projects and benefited, to varying levels of measurability and effectiveness, over 2.42 million people. Of these initiatives, over 3.5 million dirhams went to 31,984 IGAs. Another set of 2010 development projects was initiated to target approximately 400,000 people at a cost exceeding 2 billion dirhams. Much is to be hoped from this financially very well-equipped mega-program, but the debate is ongoing as to whether INDH has been the best model for the country, and particularly for empowering women.

Despite all the efforts undertaken, the field reports indicate some flaws and reveal that economic empowerment of the people in general and women in particular tends to be only temporary and not sustainable; as soon as a project ends, the source of revenue stops and women find themselves in the same situation they were in initially. The section below introduces a new initiative that tries to overcome these limitations, or at least to minimize their after-affects.

Anaruz: The Birth of a Social Enterprise

Regardless of the efforts deployed by government institutions and bilateral and international cooperation agencies, the question always comes back to whether and to what extent women's economic empowerment has been achieved. In simpler terms, are women able to make a sustainable income for themselves?

The answer to this question lies in a series of shifts that need to happen in order to bring women one step closer to not only achieving an income but

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also ensuring its sustainability. Concern about these shifts is what led to the foundation of Anaruz, one of the first for-profit social enterprises in Morocco aiming to achieve women's economic empowerment in some of the most impoverished regions of the country. Using a market-based approach and a unique empowerment platform, Anaruz partners with women-led cooperatives and businesses to boost their profitability, bring sustainable incomes to their families, and unleash these women's leadership in driving social and economic change in their communities.

The process by which Anaruz came into being reflects the necessity that was felt regarding women's economic status in general, but more particularly the status of women in rural areas. The MENA uprisings and their effects were most felt in urban and para-urban areas, whereas rural areas remained considerably distant from the uprising and its intricacies. Therefore if any real positive changes were to take place, they would be disproportionately beneficial to urban rather than rural areas. In order to diminish these disparities, the strategic orientation Anaruz adopted targeted women in rural areas, thus facilitating their access to both the economic and political opportunities the reform was expected to produce.

Shift from "Beneficiaries" to "Partners"

The shifts that have been mentioned represent the building blocks of Anaruz. One of the main shifts is a shift in lenses; thus, Anaruz perceives the women it works with not as mere inconsequential "beneficiaries" or "helpless victims" but as imperatively essential "partners" in the process and outcome. This involves altering the perception of how to fight poverty by regarding these women as a "creative resource" capable of instigating progress for both themselves and their local communities through work and initiatives. This shift carries with it the application of very strong values, such as *trust*; values that Manal Elattir, the founder of Anaruz and one of the authors of this chapter, has found missing in her years of working in this field with both international organizations and local NGOs. In many of these organizations, there has been more of an emphasis on innovative approaches, measurable results, and appropriate strategies. Although these elements remain of paramount importance to any organization's success, as focus areas they remain superficial. Evaluation of results is limited to quantitative measurement, and the orientation toward innovation fails to meet the real needs of targeted communities. Often the focus of these organizations seems to be on landing the next grant.

This seemingly dark assessment of the situation does not exclude the fact that many of these organizations have the best of intentions toward their women beneficiaries. However, a closer look at the term "beneficiaries" leads to the conclusion that such organizations "benefit" the women, making the process a one-way street. This type of relationship has at least two interrelated

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yet distinct consequences that can eventually hinder both appropriateness and sustainability:

Dependency: The organization comes into a community and provides massively for the women. The organization holds training sessions, builds multi-sectorial centers, and carries out a myriad of other related activities. However, once the project is completed and closed, the organization leaves with no reassurance it will come back to the community. With raised hopes and expectations, the women generally keep waiting for these organizations to return; they wait for help. In most cases, the women's expectations are lifted so high that, upon project closure, there is more disappointment and despair than optimism, leading the women to lose trust in similar or future initiatives.

Disempowerment: Ultimately, this trend of dependency kills any sense of creativity or leadership in the community. As they are waiting for help, the women overlook many opportunities, undermine their own resources, and lose their self-confidence.

Anaruz is in many ways a practical reaction to these destructive and disempowering tendencies. This social enterprise believes in the power of taking women on as true partners not only in rhetoric but in action. Partnership must be a two-way street; it must be a win–win situation where each party gives and takes. From the first encounter with the women, their opinions are taken into consideration: no program or project is put into place without their full involvement, from the rural appraisal phase, throughout implementation, and up until the evaluation phase. This makes perfect sense since, ultimately, no one is a better judge of their own needs that the women themselves.

This partnership starts with an unusual trip (the "caravan") that covers different regions of Morocco. For many of the women participants, the caravan is a revealing and life-changing experience. For many, it is the first time traveling out of their villages. Therefore, for each caravan, Anaruz has to first negotiate with husbands, families, and communities. The negotiations usually start with an explanation that Anaruz means business; that it wants to partner with the women and the community and help them learn how to turn their skills into sustainable income. The fact that Anaruz is not a not-for-profit entity, not a charity, but a full-fledged business is not hidden. A business-oriented perspective is adopted since the conversation would shut down if a women's rights perspective were unveiled. There is a great deal of hostility toward women's rights organizations in many communities and people fear that the women will be "brainwashed." Once this first important step is cleared, the women embark on and take part in a series of diverse activities through which they meet women leaders from small businesses, cooperatives, and NGOs. They go on site visits to other villages with successful market experiences; discover different shopping sites; meet with high officials,

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including ministers; and participate in various types of training. Most importantly, they talk, share their experiences, and express themselves freely.

The caravans set out to achieve four complementary goals: develop genuine *trust* between Anaruz and the women; strengthen the women's *self-confidence* and leadership, making them stronger partners; create *solidarity* among the women; and build their *credibility*, influence, and visibility within their communities. Anaruz invests in building the self-confidence of the women to make them better leaders and stronger partners. A unique approach called Afus is utilized to empower the women to lead their businesses and bring about change in their community. Each letter in Afus[4] represents one of the five pillars of this approach:

A—Authenticity: The women repeatedly communicate that they have been disappointed too many times by politicians, international organizations, and local NGOs, making it hard for them to trust or to open up to partners from outside the community. Anaruz believes that authenticity naturally manifests itself through, and truly starts with, active listening.

F—Fun: When the women are having fun, communication is easier, defenses are lowered, and solidarity and friendship develop. Fun activities, such as painting or cooking competitions, unleash women's imagination and positive energy.

U—All About Us: In general, Moroccan culture rarely allows a woman to celebrate herself or other women. Doing so might be seen as cockiness. Furthermore, women in villages are not raised to be ambitious or told that they are or could become "someone." Anaruz turns this around: every day during the caravan and for the rest of the partnership, the focus is on the women.

S—See to Believe: There is a major difference between teaching women how to implement a successful production chain and having them actually witness a successful project firsthand, touching its products, observing its machines, exploring the production site, and conversing with the women implementers of the chain. Such interactions make learning more effective, but, more importantly, these exchanges with women leaders positively change the attitudes of participants, inspire them to do more, and give them hope.

I—Information is Gold: During the caravan, Anaruz facilitates women's access to all relevant information and useful resources regarding their respective areas of work. During the trip, they meet high officials from governmental organizations, NGOs, and the private sector. This is the most important step for building the women's credibility in their local communities, and it facilitates their access to local officials. This access

[4]The acronym "Afus," representing the five pillars Anaruz has adopted in its innovative approach, happens to be the Amazigh equivalent of "hand." Our aim in choosing this word is to convey that Anaruz is working hand in hand with these marginalized rural women.

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helps them get things done faster at the local level; the need for the approval of "higher authorities" is a mentality still prevalent in most rural areas in Morocco.

Finally, and as advanced earlier, Anaruz avoids creating any dependency by or among the women. On the contrary, it enables the women to feel and practice autonomous attitudes and behaviors, thus paving the way for self-empowerment beyond Anaruz's input or presence. Time spent during the caravan is further devoted to the women's *access* to information and *credibility* upon returning home.

The Afus approach ignites the power within these women, awakens their creative energy, and unites them. This solidarity is particularly important because it has a direct effect on production, quality, and sales, especially on big orders. In March 2014, Anaruz landed an opportunity to make 4500 bags. The client expected all the bags to use the same fabric and the same design. Anaruz reached out to two of its partners in the region of Youssoufia, Hayat Sdy and Fouzia Guenouni, two women leaders of handicrafts cooperatives. They had been fierce competitors because they were making the same handicrafts for the local market. After participating in the caravan, everything changed. Hayat states:

> I got to know Fouzia at such a personal level in the caravan, and I found out that we shared the same struggles, the same challenges and yet we are fighting and competing. We were both passionate to advance women in our region and we both wanted to make money and grow our businesses. The caravan has truly brought us together and enabled us to see how we could work together and collaborate. Today she is a friend and a business partner.

Anaruz believes that earning the genuine trust of these women, having them as strong partners, and empowering them to be leaders within their communities are the first and perhaps the most important elements needed to achieve sustainability.

Shift from "Aid" to "Trade"

The second shift needing to happen to achieve women's sustainable economic empowerment is a shift from "aid" to "trade". This shift represents the cornerstone of the work that Anaruz does. Traditional aid is a great asset to these women, but is it enough? Will the women be making a sustainable income once that aid ceases due to budget limitations or political changes? What is the use of a new production site or new equipment when products are not properly made, much less sold? When Anaruz engages in conversations with women, the statement that repeats itself over and over is, "We just want to sell, we need markets." The market is where Anaruz starts.

Anaruz uses its business and marketing expertise to develop a market-driven approach to ensuring sustainable sales for the products that the women

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make. At the end of the day, the only way the women will generate income is by selling their handicrafts, but the question remains unanswered regarding access to markets. Traditionally, the women's products are sold by their husbands, brothers, or cousins, or they are sold to a middleman/woman who comes into their village every now and then. They may also try to sell their products at occasional nearby fairs. This way of doing business yields unreliable profits and reveals the difficulties that arise from inadequate market strategies, incapacity to respond to the local market, lack of access to global sales opportunities, and lack of managerial and organizational attitudes and attributes among the women.

Access to Markets as a Catalyzer

Anaruz believes that a successful business starts with an understanding of the market. This conviction stems from answering a number of basic but crucial questions: Who are the women making these products for? What is the target market, its characteristics and specificities, and how big is it? What strategies should be used to tackle it? All of these are questions that any business would naturally ask to move ahead with marketing, and they are exactly the questions that need to be asked by the women in order to ensure sustainable sales. This is another area where Anaruz intervenes. After identifying the target market, Anaruz builds the foundation to respond to it by helping to develop a well-functioning value chain. As their business partner, Anaruz works very closely with the women to build this chain from the moment raw materials are bought to the moment the final product reaches the client.

Anaruz started its work with women artisans. Seven women-led handicrafts cooperatives and small businesses across three different regions in Morocco have partnered with Anaruz to create a working value chain producing high-quality handicrafts for global markets. The products range from accessories and clothing items to home design and conference bags. Today, more than 200 women artisans involved in these businesses have increased their income by 23 %, two of the seven organizations have moved to bigger production sites, five have acquired new machines and equipment to grow their production, and all of the partner organizations have independently launched literacy and leadership workshops for their women members. Three key actions are implemented in order to generate and sustain global sales: maintain consistent quality in raw materials and handicrafts, ensure higher production, and innovate in design. A strong partnership and collaboration between Anaruz and the women artisans is reflected in every part of the chain:

Raw Materials: The women Anaruz works with are based mostly in rural areas and do not have access to quality raw materials, which are usually found in Casablanca, the economic capital of Morocco. The Anaruz team helps these women identify the raw materials needed for their handicrafts by searching the best quality. Anaruz searches for the best-quality materials, orders, buys and brings them to the village.

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Design: Design is considered a crucial component of production because it greatly affects sales. Anaruz believes in mixing traditional crafts with trending designs. Handicrafts should not be bought solely because they are "fair trade" or made by women in some remote village; they should be bought because they are appealing and effective. Anaruz partners with international designers and upcoming student designers to work in collaboration with the women artisans to create marketable, fashionable handicrafts with a touch of traditional Morocco.

Production: As mentioned before, Anaruz has connected women artisans to many organizations, facilitated their access to information, and increased their credibility and visibility in their communities. This has enabled the women to be bold in pursuing and eventually acquiring funds, equipment, and training opportunities. This in turn increases the capacity of their organizations and boosts production, thus strengthening the value chain.

Market: Through various marketing techniques and media outreach tactics, Anaruz makes connections to national and international buyers to sell the handicrafts and conference bags. It also oversees all the packaging, shipping, and delivery of the products. Finally, it works closely with clients to ensure their satisfaction before and after the sale. Now that Anaruz has established, in partnership with women producers, a strong value chain, it is moving toward a new way of marketing. In the fall of 2014, Anaruz began work on an e-commerce platform that will display the handicrafts and make it easier for interested clients to visualize and acquire them. This is expected to further boost sales and provide an even more sustainable income for the women.

Conclusion

The value-based experiences of the young and innovative Anaruz enterprise show that aspects of social interaction that have been overlooked can make a measurable difference in women's attitudes and behaviors toward household and community economics. Entrepreneurship with a social twist is able to bring about real changes in women's self-perception and the way they carry themselves in society at large. This model of social enterprise is worth replicating across Morocco and beyond.

Anaruz is a for-profit social enterprise. What this means first and foremost is that it has built its business model to be sustainable and it has committed itself to achieving one ultimate vision: *economic empowerment for women.* Empowerment has been shown again and again to bring radical change to the status and wellbeing of women as well as to the socio-economic progress of their communities. The Anaruz business model enables it to generate sustainable income for itself and its business partners without depending on grants, outside funding, or being pressured by outside forces to alter its values or vision.

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Anaruz does this primarily by investing a large portion of its profits in the following ways: (1) bringing in more women cooperatives as partners to enhance and diversify production through its caravan and its capacity-building program, (2) implementing innovative and diversified marketing tactics to reach diverse clientele, and (3) giving grants to selected women cooperatives to implement educational programming for their members as they see fit.

In this sense, Anaruz is an example of what social entrepreneurship could look like in Morocco. It is worth mentioning that this is still a nascent field and not much has been done to bring our social entrepreneurship theory into practice. What Anaruz has done is deliver concrete, quantifiable, and reliable results. For this momentum to continue, a number of measures should be implemented:

At the research and academic levels: Continue to fund and carry out research on the various aspects of social entrepreneurship and their impacts in order to reaffirm the profitability of the approach as well as the undisputed positive impact it has on women, particularly, and society at large.

At the economic and corporate levels: Large and financially well-equipped corporations can afford to introduce more and better social dimensions into their working systems. This approach has been lucrative in other corners of the globe and has helped corporations improve their reputations in their communities.

At the political level: In facing the issue of unemployment or underemployment, politicians now have another path to follow. They should invest more in propagating the concept of social enterprise and touting its benefits both economically and socially.

At the legal level: No clear legal instrument currently exists in Morocco for laying out the different aspects of social enterprise, for defining the scope of responsibilities, or for enforcing negative consequences of exploiting women economically. Appropriate measures could be introduced by the legal system in Morocco to encourage investors, large and small, to inject further resources into this field. These measures could vary from direct subsidies to mentoring programs to partial tax relief.

At the civil society level: Coalitions among the different organizations that work in the field of economic empowerment are imperative for accelerating sustainable development. This means that civil society organizations need to improve their synergy in order to strengthen their advocacy efforts on the issue vis-à-vis government officials and the business sector.

These and similar additional measures will assist in the transformation of markets and socio-economic structures that are hostile to women-owned businesses. This is not expected to be a pain-free or easy road to travel, but as experience has shown, it is absolutely worth trying.

It is true that the MENA uprisings have not directly or greatly influenced rural women. Similarly, the changes in laws have not necessarily helped

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empower them economically. However, the uprisings have made people more aware of rural women's issues and of the need to take action so as to improve their conditions. Anaruz is a concrete example of such action.

The MENA uprisings have brought hope for women's progress across the region. In the case of Morocco, a considerable amount of constitutional reform targeted women. While the uprising was taking place in Morocco, a new wave of proactive and vibrant energy was apparent, placing pressure on high officials and causing government organizations to be in "action mode" more than usual. The problem, however, is that as soon as the uprising began to wind down, the action also started to wind down, leaving behind a constitution that is supposed to be enacted, monitored, and evaluated by the people.

This begs the question of whether all of this was enough to bring about real and measurable change for women in Morocco, especially underserved women in rural areas. The same constructive momentum that was built by the people to demand reforms has to continue in order to ensure the active enactment of these reforms as guaranteed in the country's most supreme law, the constitution.

Anaruz is attempting to do just that. When rural women are empowered economically, they acquire leadership, credibility, and strength, which in turn enable them to act on their rights, mobilize their communities, and bring change to their villages and local communities. The effects of the MENA uprisings were definitely felt, but what was the use if the changes are not sustainable? These uprisings need to inspire hundreds of mini-uprisings in each village, each city, and each community, led by the people within those areas.

The women Anaruz works with no longer think only about making money. As they became more empowered and respected in their communities, they are thinking about bringing more women to the table, advancing their communities, and demanding their rights.

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Chapter Twenty

Reflections on the 20-February Movement: Hope Renewed, Hope Frustrated for Women

Abdellatif Zaki

Abstract This chapter uses a personal approach to dissect the ideologies behind the 20-February Movement, the Moroccan version of the Arab Spring revolutions. Women's role in the movement, its trajectory, and its outcomes are examined. More specifically, the chapter contextualizes Moroccan female youths' participation in the movement, the hopes that this participation generated, and the subsequent establishment backlash against rights that had been gained. These dynamics are approached through a combination of theoretical assumptions, interviews, and observations in an attempt to build up a theoretical framework within which the actions of the men and women who participated in the 20-February Movement can be understood and made sense of. The chapter also contextualizes and explains the stronger and weaker moments of the revolution and their repercussions on women in Morocco.

Introduction

The 20-February Movement is the Moroccan version of the so-called Arab Spring. Uncertainty was inherent in the discourse of this movement, due essentially to the multiplicity of socioeconomic categories involved in it, the complex plurality of the ideological underpinnings that motivated it, the diverging expectations it gave rise to, the ambiguous fluidity of its leadership, and the quasi-strategic divide that set it away from the leading political parties in the country. Despite these causes of uncertainty, independent women's organizations as well as those more closely associated to human rights movements saw in the swaying protests an opportunity to take advantage of the militant action. This chapter has two major aims: first, to identify and discuss the major elements dominating the political and human rights discourse of women of the 20-February Movement and, second, to investigate a theoretical framework within which this discourse may be analyzed and made sense of.

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016
F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7_20

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But prior to this I present a couple of cautionary statements about the overall approach I adopt.

Conceptual and Methodological Cautionary Statements

For reasons pertinent to the nature and complexity of the subject and to its critical impact on everyday life, including my own, and because of the relatively short hindsight, I have to admit that it has been difficult for me to maintain the required methodological distance from the topic under investigation and to observe traditional analytical objectivity as I address the various aspects of the topic. This is to say that as an individual citizen with specific involvement in civil society, I was, and fear I still am, unable to address the issue without a biased point of view, a vested interest, an idea of an alternative future, and very probably also with a much looser terminology than I would otherwise require.

Another cautionary note I need to make relates to the risk of overgeneralization that may transpire from the chapter. I use the term "women" to refer to Moroccan female citizens of all social, economic, regional, cultural, linguistic, educational, religious, and ideological backgrounds. In the interest of coherence, I do not address issues relating to the extreme diversity and plurality of women in Morocco. Actually, this necessary methodological blindness is of less consequence than it was for the movement itself when its leadership failed to develop discourses, communication approaches, differential solutions, adjusted response velocities, and appropriate resources to cater to the needs, aspirations, expectations, and desires of each different category of Moroccan women. As a matter of fact, sociology and anthropology, as well as economics and political science, would constrain a discussion of the sort I am suggesting by the further characterization of women in terms of the nature of the relationships they have with other members of their community, as well as with the community's various economic, financial, political, legal, and cultural institutions.

Preliminary Epistemological Observations

For the set of events that have been referred to as the 20-February Movement in Morocco to be a social movement, or loosely and by extension the seeds of a possible revolution, they would have to comply with a number of criteria:

1. The events must lead to the development of a coherent discourse supported by a comprehensive analysis of the power structure of the society; the discourse, in turn, would have been rooted in a theory and fleshed out by a terminology invented specifically to render its analytical concepts. In fact, using terminology borrowed from other "movements" or "revolutions," even if defined anew for the occasion, would just increase ambiguity and

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conceptual corruption and, thus, not account accurately for what was underway or has taken place.

2. Such events must criticize systematically the status of women and integrate an alternative intellectual setup that would not only ensure the correction of the injustices, discriminations, and exclusions women are subjected to, but also dismantle the various political, economic, cultural, and ideological mechanisms that have made them possible.
3. The set of events must critically assess and interpret the history of the struggles of women in Morocco with the aim of achieving a clear formulations of the rights that must be guaranteed and of the power distribution among various components of the envisioned alternative society.
4. The events should target the transferring of power from a socioeconomic structure to an alternative structure which, among other things, would equalize the capacity of women to take initiative in the decision-making process and the opportunities available to their communities at large.
5. The events must produce sound evidence that the alternative world envisioned can be better and more just for all, and specifically that the envisioned world would be better for women.
6. Such events must create changes in the laws and law enforcement culture and in practices involving women and their public and private behavior.

Applying these criteria to the 20-February Movement reveals that this movement did not meet the political and ideological requirements that would upgrade the status of women, nor did it meet the minimal provisions for transforming the fundamental economic relations among the various components of Moroccan society that have, throughout history, subjected women to a patriarchy that denies them individuality or any significant role in the public sphere. As a matter of fact, it was given to observers to learn, relatively early, that the agenda of the movement included dispraising women's through activism, downscaling their current status, and denying them the scarce rights they had started enjoying under the challenged regimes.

Having made these preliminary observations, I suggest framing the issue within the wider question of whether the movement provided for the individual as a possible entity in the alternative society it envisioned; that is, was the individual envisioned clearly at all, or was it necessary for men and women to be collapsed into an abstract notion of a congealed force to fuel the engines for reversing a history which the ultra-conservative factions had been designing and testing for several decades?

Trying to Set Concepts Right

The first concern I had to settle when my friend Professor Fatima Sadiqi asked me to address this issue was therefore epistemological. I had to categorize the movement and decide what it was constituted of. Was it a social movement? A multifaceted crisis? A series of regional conjuncture-related riots? Was it a

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protestation or a contestation? An expression of some sort of rising political awareness? The claim of a voice? A struggle for recognition? A generational conflict? A demand for political reform? A revolution? A reaction to events taking place in neighboring countries? The consequence of the manipulation of some media? Or was it something else yet to be characterized?

In the interest of coherence, I will not embark on a detailed epistemological discussion of the differences underlying each of these concepts, although I admit that such a discussion is necessary for sense-making in any analysis of phenomena such as the 20-February Movement. Actually, not only is a thorough review of the literature on the concept of social movements imperative for the researcher on such a topic, but no such review would have meaning without reference to the work of Moroccan scholars who have observed the evolution of Moroccan society and analyzed it from economic, sociological, and historical perspectives, scholars such as Mohamed Lahbabi, Abdellah Laroui, Abdelkebir Khatibi, Paul Pascon and Mekki Bentahar, Hassan Rachik, Muhammad Tozi, Abderrahmane Rachiq.[1]

The other major factor which seems to have influenced the discourse of the women of the 20-February Movement and which has not been integrated in the analyses of the movement is the uncertainty of the movement's interpretation of the history of women's struggles. In fact, without a clear interpretation of this history, the prospects for improvement in the position of women and their roles which the movement worked for will also remain uncertain. A clear understanding of women's history is necessary for promising qualitative change.

The Configuration of the 20-February Movement

An important feature of the configuration of the 20-February Movement was that it did not coincide with the configuration of political parties or of labor unions, tribal structures, social classes, or socioeconomic categories. It was a new type of configuration with mobile frontier lines, multiple discourses, multiple centers, multiple heads, and hardly any identifiable ideology. Nor did the movement have a clearly formulated agenda or social or political alternative despite the political signals it initially emitted and the relatively high number of criticisms, demands, and claims expressed on banners and in posts in social media. In fact, despite heavy use of the Internet and various social networks and of outbreaks of actions throughout the country, the 20-February Movement could not be coordinated nationally and remained essentially local in nature. This may have been due to the absence of strong and charismatic political leadership to steer it forward. The situation could, however, have been different if some of the rare organizations with nationwide structures had not withdrawn their support halfway through.

[1] A comprehensive discussion of the question is to be found in the forthcoming proceedings of a conference the Faculté des Sciences de l'Éducation held recently on the issue in Rabat (Mohamed V University).

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It would be unfair to associate the achievements of women's movements in Morocco with the 20-February Movement. However, women's social and political action was at the forefront of this movement. In fact, women understood that any significant qualitative change in their status would have to occur within the conditions that allowed continuing despotism and impunity and the maintenance of mechanisms that reproduced social and economic injustice and unequal distribution of wealth, knowledge, and power. They also understood that no change in their status would be possible unless it was comprehensive and included the women of all socio-professional and cultural categories: peasants and farmers, workers in various industries, the self-employed in the liberal professions, and civil servants. In addition, it was necessary to aim at eradicating all forms of illiteracy and vulnerability. They also understood that strategies like those targeting women through microfinance were having more adverse effects on women's actual empowerment than claimed by their promoters; such strategies failed to enable the "beneficiaries" socially, economically, and politically, essentially because the outreach efforts were not integrated within comprehensive sustainable solutions.

This is perhaps why the 20-February Movement and its slogans fell short of the social and political maturity of the women's emancipation discourse and was less structured than prior women's actions had been. For instance, while the dominant political discourse of the 20-February Movement remained confined within the rudimentary and simplistic attitudes that reduced all of the country's problems to the hegemony of the palace and the prominent figures surrounding the monarch, the discourse of women's movements had been proposing finer-grained analyses that involved cultural systems, mental structures, economic mechanisms, social relations, values, and historical forces. The lack of economic and contextual analyses in the 20-February Movements has been denounced. Likewise, a few militant women have protested the male reductionist perception of women by displaying in public parts of the body which the dominant culture requires to be concealed. Many consider the method extreme, but women judge that the political, cultural, and ideological situation and the legal provisions of its legislation have become obsolete and anachronistic and must therefore be challenged through civil disobedience. The traditional social and mental structures that seek to maintain the status quo in matters relating to women are judged irrelevant pursuant to the collapse of traditional economic, political, and cultural foundations and the new ways that women relate with their environments as a result of the new functions they are increasingly assuming in society.

On the other side of the spectrum, some women have found in various forms of radical Islamism a way to protest against injustice and discrimination. For these women, the scarf, the veil, and adherence to extreme interpretations of Islamic family tradition have become symbols of self-affirmation and rejection of what they see as a loss of authenticity and inherited identity, the recovery of which they claim can be achieved only by going back to fundamental Islam.

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Society and the structures that make it, including mentalities, cultures, and behavioral models, are changing so rapidly that legislation will find it difficult not only to reflect these changes but also to protect people's right to adhere to, espouse, and claim the benefits of new ways of thinking.

The Necessity of an Analytical Framework

At minimum, therefore, we need an analytical framework that operationalizes in a coherent manner all the instruments that have been validated in historical investigation, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, and communication studies and that would allow for (1) a pertinent contextualization of the 20-February Movement, (2) accurate synchronic and diachronic accounts of the events, (3) the generation of powerful hypotheses, (4) the elaboration of robust theories for the description and explanation of the whole process, and (5) distinguishing the profiles of contemporary youth from those of previous generations. Such a framework would be weak, however, unless it integrated insights from established Moroccan scholarship.

Internal Contradictions: Contradictory Experiences and Expectations Breed Frustrations

Due to the variety of its sociopolitical composition, the 20-February Movement suffered from severe internal contradictions that resulted in conflicts that were stronger than the movement's opposition to the establishment it rose against. In fact, it was clear from the beginning that the movement was operating according to diverging frames dominated by two irreconcilable essential factors. The first of these frames was rationalized, organized, and prescheduled in compliance with the provisions of a constitution and specific protocols; it operated according to a public agenda in which actors and actions were identified and stood for clearly formulated options. As for the second frame, it did not have an unambiguously stated agenda, its actors were not known, its agenda was not public, and it did not hesitate to place its actions outside the legitimacy of established institutions, the constitution, the laws of the country, and the political consensus of the time.

The former frame is of the kind that mobilizes efforts for reforms on the basis of criticism of given programs whose relevance for the achievement of a set of consensual objectives is contested, while the latter frame mobilizes for the change of a political system whose legitimacy is contested or that is judged anachronous. In the former case, reform is sought through peaceful consensual protocols—usually through democratic procedures—while in the latter case, change is sought through the violent removal of a government and its legitimating institutions.

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More specifically, the 20-February Movement seems to have been composed of a condensed mix of both frames whereby its explosive nature, its precocious loss of breath, and the difficulty of identifying a discourse characterizing it can be explained. Taking into account these conflicting frameworks and the inherent and fundamental complexity of the status of women in Moroccan society, the contributions, impact, possible benefits, and losses of the representation of any woman in the process of the movement makes analysis a more intricate and challenging enterprise.

It would be interesting, if only for contextualization purposes, to investigate the similarities and differences between the youth of the 20-February Movement in Morocco and the youth of 1968, the 1970s, and 1980s. To what extent can we hypothesize that the youth of the 20-February Movement have integrated (been integrated into) the culture of the digital age just because they happened to have grown up in the digital age and use the various gadgets of information technology? Could they have developed the same learning approaches, cognitive attitudes, communication practices, evaluation reflexes, and decision-making procedures as youth who grew up in Western societies and Japan and who have been found to be different from and completely alien to pre-digital era natives?

In fact, research has established that radical technological changes have consequences on the attitudes, values, priorities, behaviors, and notions of time and space of "digital natives" in Western societies and Japan and how they relate to technology. It has been observed that the attention span of digital natives is much too short to allow for the accomplishment of traditional educational tasks. Their minds work too fast to dwell on text in the way traditional teachers would usually expect. They work with as many windows open as their browser will allow and as their smart phones, laptops, and iPads can handle. They approach and solve problems not through the classical academic linear procedures and algorithms but through hit-and-run trials and by compiling random samples of images, sounds, and symbols which unzip and are deployed automatically every time they have to make sense of the uncertainties of the environment and to untangle the increasingly changing interactions among its various components, which they perceive as unnecessarily complex. It has thus been concluded that today's youth react in leaps paced by sudden releases of the energy they store from intensive and extensive exposure to screens of varying sizes and by short exchanges on social networks with individuals with strange names and identities.

Furthermore, it has been shown that the youth of the new digital age do not generally read newspapers or lengthy in-depth analyses. Rather, they form their opinions from images and bits and pieces of news, tend to take isolated shots of an event for the whole event, and evaluate the reliability and validity of news and information according to accounts by anonymous individuals and short Twitter threads transcribed in a code that has ingeniously broken up conventional language and writing systems. Finally, these youth seem to have created virtual worlds and communities in which they can assume personalities

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and attitudes with which they can control their perceived uncertainties of the world by modifying their environment at will and by including and excluding members from their communities at leisure. How does this characterization of Western youth compare with the effects of digital technology on Moroccan youth in general, and in particular, on the young female militants of the 20-February Movement?[2]

In Morocco, as well as in the other countries of the region which experienced movements of protestation or contestation, it is not clear how much influence information technology and social networks had in the inception of the upheavals. In fact, while this technology may very probably have had a role in maintaining contact among active virtual militant communities, there is no doubt that it was conventional media such as Al Jazeera and France 24 that first spread the word and shaped opinions and attitudes through highly manipulative techniques.[3]

Moreover, the 20-February Movement generation perceives their era as a time in which many of the ladders for climbing the social pyramid have been removed and elevators to reach the top of political and economic hierarchies have been privatized and monopolized by the privileged few. Their feelings of frustration and exclusion from significant mainstream life processes are experienced as failures of history, inadequacies of political systems, injustices of the dominant economic paradigms, a conspiracy of cultural heritage, flaws of the whole social system, and abusive behavior of a minority of profiteers enjoying at the expense of others all the advantages the country has to offer.

Because they feel that they did not participate in the making of a history their society glorifies and that they are denied the opportunity of enjoying their present and shaping their future, youth have difficulty relating to the values of preceding generations, abiding by the moral principles that structure relations with them, and adhering to what their forebears take to be meaningful. They then adopt either one of the following two attitudes: reject the past and the present by imagining a future severed from both, or reject the present and revisit the past in search of an ideal era they can inhabit and in which they can freeze time.

As for young Moroccan women specifically, unless they have strong family networks supporting them, they find it difficult to compete fairly with their male peers with equal competencies for socio-professional functions and responsibilities. In fact, according to academic performance records and recruitment and internal promotion records (of public institutions and private businesses), it would seem that women are discriminated against and are excluded from jobs, responsibilities, and promotions for which they are more competent and sometimes better trained than male peers. Furthermore, CEOs and top executives who hire women, especially younger ones, are often stigmatized both among their own peers and by clients and partners. The

[2] Thorough and systematic research is still needed in this domain.
[3] Going into details on this particular theme is beyond the scope of this chapter.

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culture may be changing, but the pace and scope of change has fallen short of the expectations of young women. They saw in the 20-February Movement the ideal opportunity to promote their cause and confirm their competence and their commitment to the enhancement of the ideals of democracy, equity, equal opportunity, and meritocracy.

Not taking these changes into account while analyzing the 20-February Movement, which started as a "youth" movement, would be to squeeze the whole issue into a framework that is not only inappropriate but also irrelevant.

Survey of 20-February Women's Input

Amnesty International describes the Moroccan Penal Code as "an instrument of discrimination against women." Leila Ghandi, a TV journalist stated: "J'assume mon décolleté et ma laicité" (I take responsibility for both my décolleté and my laicité[4]) in *Telquel* magazine. This statement sums up both the stakes and women's expression. The debate has been about individual freedoms and political options. Further, the Mouvement Alternatif pour les Libertés Individuelles (Alternative Movement for Individual Freedoms) states that individuality is denied and social and political hypocrisy prevail.

On the other hand, when applied to women, religion is not exclusively religion, but rather the removal of all possible religious freedoms: the individual is doomed to remain Muslim because he or she cannot change his or her religion. In the case of women, wearing the veil can be an expression of submission, a social compromise, or a political statement. A woman cannot marry out of her religion; she is constantly being watched and judged, and when punishment falls, it is atrocious, degrading, and denies her dignity.

The Islamist alternative is opposed to democratic options. The agenda it promotes is to substitute Islamic law for all other forms and aspects of the modern state, including its laws and secular traditions, particularly those promoting freedom, equality, parity, and equity to women. As a way of, women express concern: Who owns whose body? Why should I hide my body or be ashamed of it? Why should I be made to bear a child when I can interrupt a pregnancy I do not need or approve?

Society limits women's mobility, shrinks the public space they can inhabit, and reduces them to a status of juvenility and dependence on men. Likewise, their political freedom is curtailed. The pressure of the community denies them (more often than it denies men) the right of having different political opinions; they cannot, for example, hold a different opinion concerning the Sahara, the state of Israel, monarchy, or show sympathy to any individual or group who happens to have fallen into disgrace in the country. The 20-February Movement is a rare and unhoped-for opportunity for further emancipation

[4] "decolte" means lownecked and laicite means strict separation of religion and politics in the public sphere.

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and meaningful participation; for being useful to the country and for proving that women are at least as capable as men in everything.

What Did the Women of the 20-February Movement Need?

The women of the 20-February Movement wanted immediate change, a complete revision of their status that would give them a role in the transformation process as well as the authority to control and steer it. All of a sudden, the word "participation" was not sufficient anymore and gave way to other words like "act," "do," "parity," and "initiate," words that are preferred by female (and male) youth.

Change, however, has its own requirements. To be able to manage the kind of change they wanted in society, the 20-February women needed to change themselves first. The transformation had to occur across all socioeconomic layers of society, including urban and rural populations, in order for it to create the necessary sense of sharing the same stakes and therefore the commitment to efforts to achieve common objectives. No strategy to perform this transformation accompanied the 20-February Movement, although a few organizations seized the opportunity to increase their attempts to reach out to women in rural and suburban areas, providing literacy programs and training in empowering competencies, facilitating integration in the productive sector, and so forth. However, because these actions were not supported by a comprehensive discourse and were very limited in scope, their impact was far below the critical levels needed for the kind of transformations that could have created the qualitative leap which makes of a protest action a revolution. The project remained thus impaired and unable to trigger the comprehensive mutations in society and in mental structures which women hoped would accompany the movement.

In their involvement in the movement, women were stuck struggling with the secondary contradictions inherited from the male–female tradition of competition-driven instincts of exclusion and discrimination. In other words, the movement failed to reschedule priorities and focus on the major contradictions of the historical moment. In fact, the more women were involved in the movement, the more aware they became of the limitations of the scope of the discourse on issues related to their status and rights and the more prominent the contrast became between ideals and reality, between the beauty of the project's vision and the distortion it went through in the various stages of the implementation process a distortion that served to perpetuate established statuses. The movement, having failed to propose a break in the dominant cultural and social paradigms, was unable to generate alternatives that fit the claims, expectations, and hopes of women in general and of young women in particular. The result was bitter disappointment for women that translated into a dramatic decrease of their presence in the movement and a

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stepping down from the highest levels of its hierarchy as the movement gained momentum.

As a matter of fact, conflicts developed, on the one hand, between men and women, and on the other hand, among various groups of women involved in the movement. These conflicts came about as women became aware of the differences between the priorities of their own expectations and those of their male comrades and between the images they wanted to have of themselves and those which their male comrades held of them. It is worth noting that the conflict also reflected the types of relationships women could have with other women, with men, and with various institutions, including political, religious, and educational institutions and the family. The heterogeneity of the ideological motivations of women ended up opposing them to each other; a more effective approach would have been for all of them to reschedule their priorities independent of their personal political orientations.

The more women were involved in the movement, the more they confirmed that the feminine category was not coherent enough to be a truly influential force because they failed to distance themselves from political parties and individual affiliations. Furthermore, as the socioeconomic and political composition of the women involved in the movement was heterogeneous, their expectations, claims, and demands were also heterogeneous and their commitment and mobilization were consequently multiple.

A Case: The Learning Experience of a Young Woman

One girl told me that when they—young men and women—met in an apartment for coordination purposes, the guys took it for granted that the girls would fix the tea and prepare the meals. She was confronted by the old idea that society assigned certain functions to women and by the realization that her male militant comrades perpetuated these biases in a matter-of-fact manner.

What this young woman had found out was that concepts and notions did not mean the same thing to all stakeholders and that the manifestation of the militant attitudes and goodwill which dominated the movement were not always driven by the same motivations. This made it difficult for her to tell who was really who in the process and increased the uncertainty and ambiguity of external indicators and hence the possibility of accurately assessing the various discourses associated with the movement.

What she also found out was that while change is a must and that the time might have been ripe for it, change could not occur in conformance with a vision unless that vision was clear to all and shared by all and unless a strategy was designed for it and adequate resources gathered to implement it. This was obviously not the case for the movement as a whole, and even less for sectorial issues such as the woman question. It was realized later that what should have

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been a vision turned out to be a nightmare and a sickly illusion, an hallucination.

This young woman also learned that the emancipating and liberating effects of the 20-February Movement demonstrations and protests were fraught with threats to personal freedoms and risks of revenge and retaliation from the security institution, which is still as powerful as in the past. It is possible that all the political formations were aware of the influence of the movement, one of them being women and their issues; that is very probably why they did not hesitate to reduce the number of women in the post-20-February government and pay less attention to women's issues. Indeed, no clear vision or program targeting women's issues was put forward; maybe the government did not have any programs to advance or it did not consider these issues a priority.

The Current Situation in Morocco: Facts

The current apparent political stability in Morocco has been achieved because of the 20-February Movement. The head of state and political parties are aware of this fact; the government has been indebted to the movement despite the agitation of some listless partners who want a bigger share of the cake; and the militants of the movement do everything they can to maintain or increase their influence, notwithstanding the occasional falterings and moral scandals that have caught up with some of them. The party leading the government is, however, the most critically dependent on the movement for its current position. It would perhaps never have had a chance had it not been for the 20-February Movement.

What Do Today's Women Say They Need and Do Not Need?

The following section addresses "What women need" and "What women do not need" and is a synthesis of actual expressions of women, mostly young ones, who took part in the movement or were close to it. I have collected these expressions either directly from the women or from various publications.

What women need is no more discourse on how able women are to perform in all fields, how much more morally upright and honest they are compared to men, and how many women have made great achievements in the arts, literature, science, management, politics, civil society, and business, both in Morocco "marvelous" past and our "exciting" present. In fact, such a laudatory discourse is but a confirmation that women are still considered objects of curiosity who can rise to human status when allowed to do so by men for purposes that serve men's own agendas. It is exactly like defending oneself

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from being racist by saying "I used to have a black friend" when you are, in fact, racist, or by saying "I used to play soccer with a Jewish neighbor" when you are Tunisian or Moroccan!

The other thing women do not need is to be turned into fools by the manipulations of the media. Many media outlets have proved to be mere liars who present stories they make up and create attitudes and convictions by fabricating events. The media have created ideas and images, manipulated and lied. Muhammad Bouazizi, for example, was never slapped by a policewoman; he had hardly completed the ninth grade at school and was not an unemployed university graduate. The media, especially TV stations with political and ideological agendas, such as Al Jazeera, create information through processes I cannot go into in detail here.

What women need is comprehensive action to gain access to the political, economic, and social decision-making systems of the country. As long as the rates of illiteracy are dramatically high among women, especially in rural and economically and socially disadvantaged areas, women will remain at the margins of society. Likewise, as long as women are not integrated in the mainstream economic system, they will remain illiterate and excluded from the decision-making setups. Consequently, as long as this vicious circle prevails, no universal concept of human rights, local value of solidarity, or principle of democratic participation will have any meaning to women or to the discourse about their status.

On the other hand, what women need is the translation of concepts, values, ideals, and expressed convictions into actual behavior and commitment to raising awareness as to this necessity. This translation process can, however, occur only in a society in which human dignity, equity, equality, and freedom are not situated only at the tops of hierarchies. These ideals must be formulated into mechanisms and instruments that ensure their implementation, are submitted to systematic monitoring, and are enforced by institutional and legislative measures and initiatives. These mechanisms include education and training in competencies that enhance full economic integration and raise the level of expertise of income generating activities. Education should also address knowledge of digital and business literacy, appropriate legislation, and law enforcement agencies. An independent judiciary must be enabled to fight impunity, corruption, nepotism, and all forms of abuse of human rights. Also to be sought are equal opportunity, economic equity, bold criticism of the dominant culture, and true integration of women in the decision-making processes through which the community manages itself, establishes its priorities, allocates resources, and monitors of the consensual codes of conduct. Access to health care must be improved, especially in conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, and child-raising. Finally, better instruments for networking, communication, and political empowerment need to be developed. The instruments should also include financial mechanisms to support the socio-professional enterprises undertaken by women within the framework of a new economic system that enhances the sensitivity and commitment of

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individual professionals and groups of professionals in the sectors of education, health, civil engineering, and law enforcement.

Conclusion

The 20-February Movement could have been a season of hopes, aspirations, and promises—hope for emancipation; access to all rights, equalizing opportunities, social and economic justice, full employment, and individual freedoms; the end of nepotism and corruption, the recovery of dignity, and the prevalence of the values and practices of democracy and true citizenship. For many, however, the 20-February Movement was but another season of disappointments—the victory of fundamentalism; the narrowing of women's rights and the regression of their status, attested in the symbolic drop in the number of women in the post-20-February government to a single minister; the return of censorship; the tightening of individual freedoms; the rise of poverty; the depreciation of living standards; the soaring of the prices of essential commodities, including fuel and food; the degradation of social indicators; the drop in educational levels; the increase in unemployment; and the loss of the hope born with the 20-February Movement.

For Moroccan women, the 20-February Movement was born into a long historical process of contestation, protest, demonstrations, tough repression, and intermittent times of apparent social recess that marked stages of maturation which many had mistaken for episodes of retrogression and resignation. The movement will continue. Women seem to have entered a period of intensive reflection in the process of adjusting to the new environment established by the new constitution and its immediate and long-term consequences. The new laws will have to be enforced to be tested and assessed, and new ways of resistance under the rising Islamist state need to be invented.

The problem that will remain, however, is that without an appropriate theory of change to which all protesters adhere and a specific program for implementing the provisions of that theory, the consequences of women's activism and of the 20-February Movement will be very short lived or nonexistent. Likewise, without the rise of charismatic leadership, neither this adherence nor this commitment will be possible. The hope for now is that a new generation of women will be able to formulate the expectations of all Moroccans, men and women, in ways that will be heard, understood, trusted, and effective enough to mobilize the entire society.

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F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7

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F. Sadiqi (ed.), *Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-50675-7

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