

Democratization and Women's Political Leadership in North Africa

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In the spring of 2011 citizens in one Arab country after another rose in defiance of authoritarian regimes to demand political change. It appeared that the region had caught up with the “third wave” of democratization – perhaps even ushering in a fourth one – and would embark on successful democratic transitions. After all, polls since 2000 had shown strong support for democracy in almost all Arab countries (Moaddel, 2007). The road since then, however, has been rocky with quite different trajectories that a burgeoning body of literature has analyzed.¹ Less researched has been the gendered nature of the uprisings, that is, how gender relations and women's mobilizations have shaped these trajectories, as well as how women and their rights have been affected.

The focus here is on North Africa – Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia – which experienced different protest dynamics and political outcomes subsequently. I offer three propositions: 1) women's preexisting legal status and social positions (including political participation and involvement in decision-making) – as well as the broader structural, institutional, and normative contexts – have helped to shape the course and immediate outcomes of the Arab Spring in Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia; 2) women's growing political leadership will influence the quality of ongoing democratizations in the Maghreb countries of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia; and 3) those countries that saw advances in women's participation and rights prior to the Arab Spring are the ones most likely to transition successfully beyond mere democracies to more women-friendly ones.

The literature on and historical record of women and third wave democratic transitions reveal that not all transitions have seen women mobilizing as women, and not all transitions to democracy have been accompanied by policies and programs in favor of women's full citizenship, gender equality, and leadership.² Indeed, democratic transitions present risks for women and minorities (and not just for national and regional economies) because outcomes are dependent on a number of salient endogenous and exogenous factors. The relevant endogenous factors are: preexisting gender roles, women's legal status and social positions prior to the revolutionary outbreak or democratic transition, and the institutional legacy of the authoritarian regime; the degree of women's mobilizations and the number and visibility of women's networks, organizations, and other institutions; the nature of the transition and the political parties and movements involved in the transition; and

the ideology, values, and norms of the new state and its capacity and will for rights-based development. The relevant exogenous factors, which may have either positive or adverse effects on gender dynamics and outcomes, are international linkages (for example, to transnational advocacy networks or multilateral organizations) and the global diffusion of the women's rights agenda, as well as wars, invasions, and occupations.³ In many cases, the imposition of forms of governance by outside actors or the presence of domestic resistance movements to foreign invasions and occupations has stalled or set back the advancement of women – as has occurred in Afghanistan and Iraq – and as was seen in Libya after 2011.⁴

In the prodigious mainstream literature on democratic transitions, scholars have identified cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional factors and forces as the major drivers of pro-democracy movements and consolidation.⁵ Questions that have been posed include: Is economic development a prerequisite/causal factor, or is it meant to make democracies endure once they have been established through other means? Or, do pro-democracy movements and their consolidations presuppose a democratic culture, with citizens demonstrating and practicing “emancipative” or “self-expression values?”⁶ For our purposes, the salient endogenous socio-economic and cultural factors and forces include the following: economic measures, such as level of economic development, national wealth, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, and income; human and social capital measures, such as the level of homogeneity in a given population, an educated population with a large middle class, and a civil society and civic culture demonstrating human empowerment and emancipative values; and the concept of the “modernizing bourgeoisie” as posited by sociologist Barrington Moore (1966). To this I have added the presence of “modernizing women” (Moghadam, 2013). Exogenous variables that influence democratization via forces working globally and within a region include diffusion processes via media and international linkages and hegemonic impositions.⁷ These factors generate or otherwise influence grievances, political opportunities, mobilizing capacities, and the ability of protesters or movement leaders to frame grievances and aspirations in a way that resonates with fellow citizens or a broader public. They shape the ability of movements to build and sustain new democratic institutions that are also women-friendly and enhance prospects for women's political leadership.

Gender and the Arab Spring

Applying the framework sketched above to elucidate the sociopolitical and cultural contexts that affected the women's rights agenda during and after the Arab Spring, I examine three sets of measures, beginning with the following composite measure: preexisting gender roles; women's legal status and social positions prior to the revolutionary outbreak/democratic transition; the institutional legacy of the authoritarian regime; the degree of women's mobilizations; and the number and visibility of women's networks, organizations, and other institutions.

Across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the 1990s saw the expansion of many types of women's organizations in a context of limited and managed political liberalization. In previous work, I have identified seven types of such organizations: service or charitable organizations; professional associations; women's auxiliaries of political parties; women's auxiliaries of trade unions; women-in-development

NGOs; research, policy centers, and women's studies institutes; and women's rights or feminist organizations (Moghadam, 1998).⁸ There is scant information on women's rights organizations in Libya during the Gadhafi era, but in the Maghreb countries, they included the transnational Collectif 95 Maghreb Egalité formed in the run-up to the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women (which convened in Beijing in 1995); in Algeria, the state-affiliated l'Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes (UNFA), the feminist groups Triomphe, Défense et Promotion, Emancipation, SOS Femmes en Détresse, Centre d'Information et Documentation sur les Droits de l'Enfant et de la Femme (CIDDEF), and Réseau Wassila; in Morocco, l'Union de l'Action Féminine (UAF), Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM), Réseau Anaruz, and the Springtime of Dignity Coalition; in Tunisia, the feminist groups Association des Femmes Tunisiennes pour la Recherche sur le Développement (AFTURD) and Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates (ATFD), both formed in 1989, the women's policy agency Centre de Recherche, d'Etudes, de Documentation et d'Information sur la Femme (CREDIF), and Réseau Rihana. Tunis was also the headquarters of the Center of Arab Woman for Training and Research (CAWTAR), the region-wide women's research and policy agency. Egypt had the state-affiliated National Council for Women (NCW) along with smaller groups, such as the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, which had become a prominent voice for action against sexual harassment; the New Woman Foundation; and the Women and Memory Forum. These women's rights groups conducted research on and advocacy for the reform of patriarchal Muslim family laws, the criminalization of violence against women (honor killings, sexual harassment on the streets and in workplaces, and domestic violence), the right of women married to foreigners to obtain citizenship rights for their children, and the enhancement of women's participation in political bodies and in the workforce through appropriate institutions and policies.

These organizations all appeared in authoritarian contexts but became most prominent in the Maghreb. Casablanca, for example, was home to the woman-owned publishing house Editions Le Fennec, which produced a series of books in the 1990s on women and the law in the three Maghreb countries. The Collectif 95 Maghreb Egalité was able to draw on the emerging global women's rights agenda, as well as funding from German foundations, to advance its case for an egalitarian family code, holding meetings in the three countries, cooperating on seminars, books, and media activities, and producing an advocacy book in 2003 entitled, *Dalil pour l'Égalité dans la Famille au Maghreb* ("Guide to Equality in the Family in the Maghreb," also available in Arabic). Tunisia's "state feminism" included the government-funded CREDIF, which produced studies on problems of women's legal status and social positions. A statement issued by AFTURD in 2008 asserted: "Our work on behalf of women's empowerment is also aimed at political change and is part of the movement for democratization."⁹ Algerian women mobilized in the 1980s and 1990s to contest family law practices and the emergence of political Islam/intégrisme; in 2002 they were rewarded with cabinet positions; in 2003, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika referred to the problem of violence against women in his International Women's Day speech; and some amendments, albeit insufficient, were made to the country's family law in 2005. Morocco's UAF launched the One Million Signatures drive in 1992 for family law reform, and in alliance with a new progressive government in 1998, promoted the National Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development. Progress

came quickly: in 2002 the Electoral Code introduced a “national list” with thirty reserved seats, or a 10 percent parliamentary quota for women (subsequently raised); the family law was replaced in 2004 with a more egalitarian set of laws and norms for marital life and family affairs; the 2004 Labor Code established the equality and rights of working women; feminists began pressuring government agencies for the criminalization of domestic violence; and in 2007, the Nationality Code gave women and men equal rights to transmit nationality to their children.¹⁰

Table 1. Comparing Social/Gender Indicators 2010-2011

	Algeria	Morocco	Tunisia	Egypt	Libya
Female share, paid labor force	17 %	28 %	25 %	19 %	16 %
Female share, tertiary education enrollment	34 %	12 %	40 %	14 %	10 %
Female share, university teaching staff	38 %	17 %	42 %	n/a	n/a
Mean age at first marriage	29	26	27	23	29
Total fertility rate	2.4	2.4	1.9	2.9	2.5
Female share, seats in parliament (1995-2010)	8 %	11 % (after 2002 quota)	23-28 %	2-3 %	5-5 %
Female share, judiciary	37 %	610, or 19 % of total	Since 1965; 28 % share of total	Permitted since 2002; 30 in 2007	50 in 2009*
Status of family law	Reform 2005	Reform 2004	Liberal since 1956	Patriarchal, <i>khula</i> adopted in 2000	Conservative*
Status of women's movement	Visible, well-organized	Visible, well-organized	Visible, well-organized	Women's NGOs	Non-existent*
Type of government (2011)	Parliamentary	Constitutional monarchy	Civilian; transitional	Military	Militia; weak government

Sources: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report, various years; *Pargeter (2010) notes that the Charter on the Rights and Duties of Women in the Jamhuriya Society stipulated equality of women and men, but family law put women under supervision of male kin; polygamy was permitted but rare; see pp. 286-287 and 293.

In Egypt, some changes did occur as a result of women's advocacy: Initiatives to prohibit and combat female genital mutilation (FGM) were implemented, courts issued the first convictions against sexual harassment, and a gender quota was implemented in time for the November 2010 elections (later overturned by the government of Mohamed Morsi). But women's organizations remained relatively weak because of state restrictions on civil society organizing. Libya is in many respects a case apart, as the country was largely isolated in spite of Gadhafi's efforts to cultivate strong ties with African states. Notwithstanding Gadhafi's quixotic behaviour and the odd political climate of Libya during that time period, advances were made in literacy and educational attainment, healthcare, and infrastructural development, and there were several impressive pieces of legislation for women's rights. However, the lack of political will to ensure full implementation and the absence of even quasi-independent women's groups that could monitor and lobby for the enforcement of the laws and policies ultimately undermined women's participation and rights. Combined with traditional social norms and the persistence of tribalism in Libya, the sociopolitical context dictated that women would not enjoy equal rights of citizenship – which in any event were circumscribed for all Libyans.¹¹

Table 1 summarizes the differences in women's legal status and social positions across the five North African countries on the eve of the Arab Spring and in 2011. Tunisia does best on nearly all indicators, while Algeria has the highest proportion of women judges.¹² What the table does not show is that on the eve of the Arab Spring, only Algeria and Tunisia had political parties headed by women – Louisa Hanoune of the Workers Party and Maya Jribi of the Progressive Democratic Party, respectively. Morocco had a number of well-known women's rights advocates associated with the Collective and family law reform (e.g., Latifa Jbabdi, Rabéa Naciri, Amina Lemrini) and several associated with political parties (e.g., Aicha Belarbi and Nouzha Skalli).¹³ In 2001, women politicians from the main political parties – Istiqlal, Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires, the leftist Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme, and the Mouvement Populaire, among others – created a network for the establishment of a women's quota system. The quota was established in 2002, and female members of parliament played an important role in pushing reform of the family and nationality laws.¹⁴ A new cabinet, formed in Morocco in October 2007, included seven women – the highest female representation in the cabinet since the country gained independence. Thus, we find Maghreb women active in both civil and political society.

The conclusion here is that on the measure of women's legal status and the strength, visibility, and influence of women's organizations, the three Maghreb countries had an advantage over Egypt and especially over Libya.¹⁵ Next I consider a second set of explanatory factors for women-friendly democratic outcomes.

Socioeconomic and Cultural Changes as Necessary Conditions for Democracy Movements, Transitions, and Women's Rights

Prior to the Arab Spring, many of the countries involved were experiencing respectable economic growth rates and much improved social development, although in recent years there had been signs of stress. Economic development had produced a modern physical and social infrastructure, higher literacy and educational attainment, and better health outcomes, with such progress leading to

rising expectations. However, the neoliberal economic policy turn of the 1990s – entailing denationalization, privatization, and liberalization – resulted in growing unemployment among the large population of educated young people; later, the Great Recession increased the cost of living. A deterioration in the quality of public services and stagnation in wages adversely affected the middle and working classes alike and were a key motivation behind the grievances that led to the 2011 protests. Cross-class in nature, the protests involved not just educated young people and dissident intellectuals but also large sections of the working class, especially in Tunisia, where the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) organized strikes. Protesters demanded political change and economic security, but most significant was the unprecedented participation of women – though not in Libya, at least in part because of the opposition’s turn to armed violence.¹⁶

The use of social networking media and the extent of connectivity, especially among the youth, could be seen in two ways: first, as a reflection and expression of democratic attitudes, values, and aspirations; and second, as a means of mobilizing and organizing during the anti-government protests. In this regard, both women and men were active. In Egypt, Asma Mahfouz, part of the 6 April youth movement, famously appeared in a YouTube video urging fellow citizens to join the planned mass protests in Cairo’s Tahrir Square. Tunisian bloggers also were very active, and young female bloggers such as Lina Ben Mhenni (of “A Tunisian Girl” blog) took part in the May 2010 anti-censorship protest. Social media were used extensively by NGOs. In addition, there had been the formation, over time, of a civil society – in varying stages of development across countries – with a rights-based agenda. Pro-democracy sentiments, therefore, resulted from the growth of the middle class and its attendant value orientation and aspirations, with the global diffusion effects of democracy promotion since at least the early 1990s also shaping the conditions for the flourishing of such sentiments.

Surveys carried out in nine Arab countries in the new century showed very high support for democracy, especially in terms of opportunity “to change the government through elections” and “freedom to criticize the government,” but also in terms of democracy’s presumed ability to “provide basic necessities like food, clothing, and shelter for everyone” and “decrease the income gap between rich and poor” (Jamal & Tessler, 2008, pp. 98-109). On gender equality, the results from various waves of the World Values Survey (WVS) are less promising, though they reveal variations across the Arab region and show that normative changes in a liberal direction were strongest in Tunisia.

For example, a 2013 survey of values and perceptions of Tunisian, Egyptian, Iraqi, Lebanese, Pakistani, Saudi, and Turkish publics found that Tunisians exhibit the least amount of religious intolerance; they were also liberal on the issue of women’s dress. Comparing Egyptian and Tunisian attitudes, just 17 percent of Egyptians disagreed with the statement, “men make better political leaders than women”, while 45 percent of Tunisians disagreed (and 44 percent of Lebanese and 46 percent of Turks). On the statement, “it is up to a woman to dress as she wishes,” just 14 percent of Egyptians agreed, compared with 56 percent of Tunisians. A majority, 51 percent, of Egyptians did agree that their “country would be a better place if religion and politics were separated,” but in Tunisia the figure was as high as 72 percent of respondents. When

given a choice to evaluate the idea of an Islamic government for their respective countries, fully 59 percent of Egyptians felt that it was a very or fairly good idea, compared with just 38 percent of Tunisians; 56 percent of Egyptians, compared to 27 percent of Tunisians, felt that it was “important for a good government to implement only the laws of the *Shari’a*.” The survey also found that among respondents in the seven countries surveyed, support for a military regime was low every where but Egypt (Moaddel, et al., 2013).

In Libya, interviews carried out by Andrea Khalil revealed that the Libyan population favors traditional religious and cultural values and advocates gender segregation in the public and, to some extent, private spheres. She cites an opinion poll showing that 35 percent of Libyans agreed that *shari’a* should be the only source of legislation, while 37 percent believed that *shari’a* should be the main source of legislation in the constitution – an astonishing proportion. A 2013 survey by the National Democratic Institute found that public opinion is very conservative on the *hijab*: Fully 81 percent of Libyans surveyed believe that women should wear the *hijab*, and 78 percent believe that the state should encourage women to wear it. The proportion was even higher among women respondents: 86 percent favored the *hijab* (Khalil, 2013).

During and after Tunisia’s “Dignity Revolution,” Tunisians were able to express themselves openly and often audaciously. In March 2013, Tunis was host to the World Social Forum, which convened at the University of Tunis El Manar. The atmosphere at the university and indeed throughout the city, where marches and rallies took place, was one of remarkable openness, with the participation of feminists, secularists, communists, anarchists, and many foreigners of various persuasions. At one point, I approached a group of young Tunisian anarchists and asked one of the women if the law allowed them to display their anarchist symbols and publications. The young woman smiled and replied, “Even if it did not, we still would be out here”.¹⁷ When Omezzine Khelifa, a rising star in Tunisia’s Ettakatol party, stated that “women’s empowerment is deeply ingrained in our culture”, informed observers did not consider this an overstatement (Khelifa, 2012, p. 34-35).

In contrast, Egyptian women protesters were subjected to humiliating sexual abuse by marauding gangs of men in Tahrir Square, by the police, and by the military. The sexual harassment and violence visited on women during and after the Tahrir Square protests suggest that cultural changes were less profound in Egypt than in the Maghreb. Not surprisingly, in 2012, the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report ranked Egypt 126th out of 135 countries in terms of progress in closing the gap.

The Nature of the Transition, Political Parties, and Movements Involved; The Ideology, Values, and Norms of the New State and its Capacity and Will for Rights-Based Development

Finally, the third measure examined here pertains to the nature of the transition, and two points should be noted. First, the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya and the 20 February movement in Morocco were largely populist, cross-class phenomena without hierarchy, leadership, or ideology. There has been much discussion of the horizontal and non-hierarchical features of contemporary mass movements, including the Arab Spring, and this feature has been regarded as both a strength and

weakness.¹⁸ And yet, progressive parties were in place in Tunisia and Morocco (and to a lesser extent in Egypt, but not in Libya) and were thus able to help shape the new constitutions. Second, whereas movements in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia did not have to endure external intervention (although Egypt's military continued to receive U.S. largesse) and thus proceeded organically, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervention in Libya, coupled with the country's internal rifts, dictated a more troubled outcome. We now consider each of the North African country cases.

Libya

The dearth of well-established modern institutions or civil society, or an organized democratic protest movement, enabled regional factions in Libya to form their own militias and challenge a weak new government that was, in any event, uninterested in women's rights. It is telling, if not disturbing, that in a speech in Tripoli celebrating Libya's "liberation" in October 2011, National Transitional Council (NTC) chairman Mustafa Abdul Jalil declared that *shari'a* would be "the basic source of legislation, and so any law which contradicts Islamic principles is void", specifically mentioning that polygamy would be made legal (Madi, 2014). He was later encouraged by his backers in Washington – who had led the NATO intervention that helped topple the Gadhafi regime and bring the rebels to power – to clarify his statement and emphasize the "moderate" nature of Islam under the new regime.¹⁹ But for the new Western-backed leader to have prioritized *shari'a* and a rollback on women's rights at a time when the armed uprising had all but destroyed Libya's major cities was perhaps a harbinger of the problems to come: The attack on the U.S. embassy that claimed the lives of four Americans, including the ambassador who had ironically supported the anti-Gadhafi rebels; and the country's subsequent descent into chaos, prompted by a weak government, lack of security, and an armed militia. Although a parliamentary gender quota was instituted under international pressure, resulting in a 16.5 percent female share of parliamentary seats (thirty-three out of 200 seats) in the country's first free elections in July 2012, there has been no evidence of women's political leadership or influence.²⁰ One analyst concludes that "political power after the revolution remains in the hands of men in the form of tribal coalitions, militias, and political institutions" (Khalil, 2013, p.105).

For the June 2014 parliamentary elections, fewer than half the registered Libyan voters took to the polls (Jawad, 2014). Without a functioning government and parliament, Libya has struggled to impose authority over the heavily armed former rebels, militias, and tribes that helped oust Gadhafi but who now defy state authority and carve out their own fiefdoms. The country slid deeper into chaos after a renegade army general, Khalifa Haftar, said to have been financed by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, opened a campaign against Islamists in the east.²¹ Libya's security problem spilled across borders into Mali, Tunisia, and Egypt where refugees, arms traders, and jihadists have been proliferating. Inside the country, the absence of security and the risks to outspoken women were starkly revealed when Salwa Bughaighis, a human and women's rights lawyer from a prominent Benghazi family in conflict with the Islamists, was shot on the day of the general election (Stephen, 2014). One can only conclude that Libya was ill-prepared for democracy, much less a women-friendly democratic transition, and the nature of the international intervention only exacerbated existing fault lines.

Egypt

The absence of an organized democratic protest movement and the weakness of the secular political parties allowed the Muslim Brotherhood and military to assume control in Egypt. Following Hosni Mubarak's downfall, many of the institutions associated with his rule – though not the military – lost legitimacy. The Coalition of Women's NGOs, composed of about ten women's groups, tried to advance a women's rights agenda but failed to mobilize sufficient popular support or support among the new political elites.²² The draft constitution approved by Egypt's first Constituent Assembly (CA) fell short of adequately protecting human rights, women's rights, and the rights of religious minorities, as it restricted freedom of expression in the name of protecting religion; it allowed for the military trial of civilians; it failed to protect the rights of children, especially those of young girls, by not defining a child as any person under age eighteen (as per the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child) to protect girls from early marriage.

At least in legal terms, women have fared somewhat better following the new CA which was established after the July 2013 military intervention that brought down the Morsi government. The CA included five women members – three of whom were feminist professor Hoda Elsadda of the Women and Memory Forum, former diplomat Mervat Tellawy, and lawyer Mona Zulficar. The fifty-member CA was broadly representative of various sectors of society: professions, occupations, the National Women's Council, the Christian Coptic Church, youth, and about ten political parties. It excluded the Muslim Brotherhood but included one member of the Nour party. Special committees charged with specific themes were set up, and Elsadda noted that “there was quite a struggle” to include women's rights as a theme. “Ours is a patriarchal society,” she stated, by way of explaining the refusal of the CA to consider a parliamentary quota for women. By contrast, two achievements were the inclusion of a constitutional prohibition of violence against women and a reference to women's right of access to judicial positions (Elsadda, 2014). Nonetheless, the National Women's Council criticized the appointment of just four women—out of thirty-one ministers – to President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's cabinet.²³ At least the liberal Dostour party elected Hala Shukrallah, a Christian woman, as its head (She resigned in August 2015, citing internal divisions). A new political initiative, Women for Women – launched in Cairo in November 2013 and led by Hoda Badran (chairwoman of the Egyptian Feminist Union) – aims to raise funds for women's political leadership.

Morocco

The 20 February Movement in Morocco had the backing of progressive political parties, which, along with the strategic decisionmaking on the part of King Mohammed VI, resulted in the subsequent constitutional amendments to restrict the king's vast powers as well as to institutionalize the rights of women, the Amazigh, and cultural rights—even if dissident Moroccans feel that the amendments fell short of codifying genuinely democratic and egalitarian principles.²⁴ Following the referendum to endorse the constitutional amendments, elections took place and the Islamic Party of Justice and Development (PJD) won 27 percent of the seats, also winning the right to name a prime minister. Although the chosen prime minister, Abdelilah Benkirane, appointed just one woman to his cabinet, the female share of total seats in parliament rose to 17 percent – up from 11 percent – because the reserved seat system had

evolved to an expanded and eventually legally codified system.²⁵ Reservations to the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) were removed (2011) as part of measures to harmonize domestic laws with each other and with the international women's rights agenda. Nabila Mounib became the first woman elected to lead a major political party, the Unified Socialist Party (PSU). A critic of the Islamist agenda and of the power of the *makhzen* (royal palace), she has said that the PSU respects Moroccan women and places their rights at the center of the struggle for democracy, and that "my election is a victory for all women struggling for equality and dignity" (Belamri, 2013).

Meanwhile, activists of the 20 February movement continue to speak out, to join the almost frequent demonstrations of young people for jobs, and to decry what they deem to be continued repression.²⁶ Since 2011, women's rights groups in the Springtime of Dignity Coalition have continued their advocacy on women's reproductive rights and freedom from violence. Success came in early 2014, when the Moroccan parliament voted unanimously to repeal the penal code's rape marriage loophole, although feminists continue to rally behind a strong bill to criminalize domestic violence. In June 2014, women's rights groups held a press conference and rally to protest the prime minister's comments that a "women's role" is to be focused on the family.²⁷

Tunisia

Tunisian women were present in the four High Commissions established to run the country during the 2011 transitional period (Khalil, 2014). The transitional government declared a *parité* law (equal numbers of men and women) and removed CEDAW reservations (2011). In the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) that was elected later that year, women constituted 27 percent of the members; forty of the sixty-three women in the NCA were from the Islamist Ennahda party, but the others were very active.²⁸ Unlike Egypt, where the Muslim Brotherhood thought it could monopolize power, Ennahda formed a three-party coalition government. Still, the feminist groups remained mobilized, holding many rallies in 2011 and 2012. Of the 107 parties legalized on 30 August 2011, three were led by women: the Party of Social Center, directed by Salma Ammar; Afek Tunis, codirected by Emna Menif (with Mohamed Louzir); and the Movement of Democratic Edification and Reform, directed by Emna Mansour Karoui. The Modern Democratic Pole, a political coalition party, featured a significant number of women at the head of their electoral lists in 2011.²⁹ The left-wing Al Massar had a policy of *parité* and sent outspoken women to the NCA.

When the Ennahda members of the NCA sought to replace the term "equality" with words akin to "complementarity" or "partnership" in the new constitution, women's rights activists and their male supporters in the secular and left-wing parties took to the streets in protest, forcing Ennahda to retreat. When a political crisis emerged following the assassination of two secular political figures and renewed protests over not only women's rights but also continued socioeconomic problems, civil society groups led by the UGTT (Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail) stepped in to mediate between Ennahda and its main secular opposition. The result was that the government agreed in early October 2013 to resign and make way for a caretaker government and new elections, demonstrating Tunisia's political maturity. In early January 2014, the

new constitution was adopted to both domestic and international acclaim. The open political environment and balance of political forces has enabled ATFD and AFTURD to establish sections outside Tunis, in Sfax, Sousse, Bizerte, and Kairouan, and to work in coalition with the UGTT, the Human Rights League, and figures from the progressive political parties toward the formation of an electoral bloc to try to prevent another Islamist victory in the next elections.³⁰ They supported the women's rights advocates among the many female candidates in the fall 2014 legislative elections; fully 47 percent of all parliamentary candidates were female, and women constituted 12 percent of those who led the political party lists (Chaabane, 2014). The liberal and secular party Nidaa Tounes won the most seats (followed by Ennahda), and women acquired a 31 percent share of all seats.

Algeria

Algeria did not experience the mass protests of the Arab Spring, and although there have been signs of great dissatisfaction, citizens appear reluctant to risk anything like the violence of the 1990s, which was similar to the current Syrian conflict but without the waves of refugees. Algeria's multiparty republic ensures regular elections, and among the countries that held elections in 2011–2012, it alone did not elect an Islamic government (The Islamic Green Alliance, which was expected to win the elections, called them fraudulent). One effect of the Arab Spring was the adoption of a parliamentary quota for women, resulting in a 31.6 percent female share in the May 2012 elections, giving Algeria the distinction of being part of an elite group of thirty-five countries with female representation of 30 percent and above: Indeed, Algeria ranked twenty-nine of the 142 countries listed.³¹ In May 2014, the reelection of Abdelaziz Bouteflika to the presidency saw the appointment of seven women to the cabinet, with portfolios in education; land-use planning and environment; culture; family and women; post, information technology, and communication; tourism; and handicrafts. This 20 percent female share of cabinet seats is high not only by Arab but also by international standards. In June 2014, three additional women were promoted to the rank of general in the Algerian military to join Fatima Arjoun, who was promoted to the rank of general in the Armée Nationale Populaire in 2010. This is now the largest number of high-ranking women army commanders in the Arab world, and a news report called the appointment “a sign of the liberalization of Algeria's closed military organization” (Al-Arabiya News, 2012).

There are many Algerians who view these developments as window dressing, or the women who have assumed political leadership positions as simply pro-regime politicians. In addition, the Algerian Family Code requires more amendments to become a truly egalitarian family code. What is more, although Islamist parties are in decline in Algeria, society remains deeply conservative and religious, and the state has been seeking to expand its base of support by building more mosques. It remains to be seen if Algeria's critical mass of women in political leadership, as well as the large proportion of women teaching in schools and at the country's universities, has the potential both to change images of and cultural attitudes toward women in what is a male-dominated society, and to enhance the quality of decisionmaking.

Structural, institutional, and cultural changes alike created conditions propitious for the formation of pro-democracy movements across the countries affected by the Arab

Spring. In North Africa, those changes were least extensive in Libya, which is why, in the post-Gadhafi era, the country descended into a weakened and fragmented state with no female leadership. Women's organizations in Egypt, which for decades were denied the kind of state support for women's rights that was enjoyed in the Maghreb, were unable to significantly affect policymaking. In Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, social changes and changes in the characteristics of the female population, were arguably more conducive to democratization and to agenda-setting by women's rights groups. The diffusion effects of the Tunisian uprising and the absence of foreign intervention would seem to increase the likelihood of democratization in the Maghreb.

Conclusion

Surveys show that, in most Arab countries, publics strongly believe that men make better political leaders than women, and many studies have emphasized the strong patriarchal values that persist (Alexander & Welzel, 2011). And yet, we see a sustained level of women's political participation in the Maghreb. Support for women in politics extends to the Islamist parties, no doubt in recognition of the need to attract women voters in general elections. An inevitable result is that the women in the parliaments can be divided over sensitive issues such as family law reform and women's reproductive rights. Still, a large section from within the Maghreb's population of educated and employed women ("modernizing women") seems to have developed the political awareness and civic skills necessary to negotiate a democratic transition and have acquired the democratic values necessary to cultivate a sustainable or more effective democracy. This is a product of the strength of the women's rights movement, as well as the socioeconomic and cultural changes that took place in previous decades. Across North Africa, variations in gender relations, women's legal status, and their collective action prior to the Arab Spring, as well as the nature of the transitions and the political forces involved, help to explain the divergent outcomes.

All countries face risks to the democratization processes underway. Religious freedom is inscribed in the Tunisian and Moroccan constitutions, but further steps will need to be taken there – and most certainly in Egypt and Algeria – to ensure that non-Muslims will be accorded the same rights and obligations of citizenship and that non-observant Muslims will face neither discrimination nor harm. Another risk is that Islamist forces – both moderate and militant – remain strong and represent a challenge to the objectives of progressive and feminist forces. In Tunisia, jihadists have launched a number of terrorist attacks, and militant young men need to be re-socialized so as to reduce the likelihood of their joining the current fight in Syria. Efforts are needed to create more trust and confidence in the political parties on the part of young people and feminist groups. Socioeconomic difficulties – low growth, high youth unemployment, rising costs of living, poor public services – constitute a major challenge.

Will the activist women in civil society, political parties, and government be able to help enact the sort of broad socioeconomic changes and political rights that were called for by the Arab Spring protests? Certainly there remains some unfinished business with respect to the women's rights agenda in the region; reforming family law and combating violence against women is of greater benefit to working-class and poor women than to the elite women who advocate for these changes. Women's high

unemployment rates and low labor force participation are also issues to be addressed. I fully expect the women in political leadership to take on these issues and to set the agenda on others. What I have argued here is that their capacity to successfully do so is the result of long-term, structural, and normative changes, as well as of strategic campaigns and alliances.

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ENDNOTES

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1. See Achcar (2013); Hanieh (2013); Khosrokhavar (2012); Lynch (2012); and Singerman (2013).
2. See Waylen (2007); Paxton Hughes (2007); Viterna and Fallon (2008). Waylen showed that women's mobilizations during a transition were no guarantee of post-transition gains, but that the wider political context is key. Viterna and Fallon identified the following factors: history of women's mobilization, the reason for the transition, the political parties involved, and the role of international actors.
3. On endogenous and exogenous factors in democratization, see Wejnert (2005).
4. See Moghadam (2013), especially chapter 5, where I discuss conflict, occupations, and gender in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine. The framework sketched above is discussed in more depth in chapter 7; see especially pp. 213-223.
5. For a useful overview, see Hadenius and Teorell (2005). Cultural and economic prerequisites of democracy: Reassessing recent evidence, *Studies in Comparative International Development* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2005), 87-106.
6. See Przeworski et al. (2000). Also, Inglehart, Klingemann, and Welzel (2003); Inglehart and Welzel (2008); and Welzel (2006).
7. See Wejnert; Paxton and Hughes, 177; Moghadam, (2013) 215. Broader macrosociological perspectives on international influences – though not necessarily pertaining to democratization – are offered by “world polity” and “world-system” theorists. See, for example, Meyer, Boli, Thomas, and Ramirez (1997); and Chase-Dunn (1998). In political science, “realist” and “ideational” perspectives similarly emphasize international influences.
8. For more information see, Moghadam (1998), chapter 9, especially pp. 204–213.
9. “AFTURD’s Declaration: Fighting Against Attempts of Regression.” Press release issued on 26 September 2008, made available to the author by AFTURD founding member Dr. Khédija Arfaoui.
10. See Moghadam, (2013), especially p.258; on Morocco’s electoral law and quota for women see Darhour and Dahlerup (2013); on working women’s rights see Code du Travail du Royaume du Maroc, especially Articles 9 and pp. 152-162, available at <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/SERIAL/67319/64073/F518847737/MAR67319.pdf>; on family law reform see Charrad available at www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/docs/egm12/PAPER-CHARRAD.pdf; and Sadiqi, (2010).
11. For more information about Lybia see Pargeter (2010) and the doctoral dissertation of Faraj Abdulatif (2012).
12. The figures on women judges are from papers written by Boutheina Cheriet (Algeria), Fouzia Rhissassi and Khalid Berjaoui (Morocco), and Monia Ammar (Tunisia) in UNESCO-Rabat, Femmes, Droit de la Famille et Système Judiciaire en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie (“Women, Family Law and Judicial Systems in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia”) (Rabat, Morocco: Lawne Printers, 2010).
13. Aicha Belarbi was state secretary for foreign affairs in the Abdelrahman Yousefi government of 1998 to 2002 and later served as ambassador to the European Union; she is also a founder of the Moroccan Organization of Human Rights. See <http://www.learningpartnership.org/node/1798>. Nouzha Skalli of the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS) was elected to parliament in 2002 and, from 2007 to 2011, was Minister of Solidarity, Women, Family, and Social Development.
14. See Sater (2007) and Darhour and Dahlerup (2013). Between 2002 and 2007, the number of women representatives in the major political parties had no more than six women each, though given the total seats won by the parties, the Justice and Development Party (PJD) had the highest proportion, with a 14 percent female share.
15. On the importance of women’s civil society organizing, see Htun and Weldon, (2012). Their global comparative analysis demonstrates that women’s autonomous organizing in civil society accounts for progressive social policies, including policies on violence against women; the relationship is both substantively and statistically significant. On institutionalization, see Andrew (2010); and Banaszak (2009).
16. While women in Benghazi first took to the streets to demand the whereabouts of loved ones in prison, the power of Libyan patriarchy resulted in men’s dominance and segregated protest crowds. See Khalil (2014) p. 95.
17. Author’s observations; see also Moghadam, V.M. (2013).
18. See, for example a special issue from Benski, Langman, Peruggoria, and Tejerina (2013); see also Moghadam (2013), p.2.

19. See Gamel (2011). Under Gadhafi, polygamy had not been outlawed but rather subjected to controls and restrictions, as in several other Muslim-majority countries.
20. At the fourth annual conference of Stanford University's Center on Democracy, Diplomacy, and the Rule of Law, held in Tunis, 28-29 March 2013, I asked the Egyptian and Libyan speakers about the masculine nature of political participation and the labor force – compared with Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe – and what strategies were in place to change this. The Libyan speaker responded that there was no strategy to increase women's employment and claimed that: "Women don't want to work because their husbands do". The Egyptian speaker conceded that in Egypt, some 75 percent of university-educated women were not employed: "This is a terrible waste of human capital, but we don't have a strategy" (from author's personal notes).
21. On Haftar, see Mohamed Madi, "Profile: Libyan ex-General Khalifa Hafta," BBC News 16 October 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27492354>.
22. The Coalition consisted of the following: the New Woman Foundation, Women and Memory Forum, Center of Egyptian Women Legal Aid, El Nadeen Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, Women's Forum for Development, Alliance of Arab Women, Egyptian Association for Family Development, Nazra Association for Feminist Studies, Ommi Association for Rights and Development, and Heya Foundation. See also Morsi (2014).
23. The women are Minister of Social Solidarity Ghada Waly, Minister of Urban Development Laila Iskandar, Minister of International Cooperation Naglaa El-Ahwany, and Minister of Manpower Nahed El-Ashri.
24. Criticisms of the limitations of the Moroccan constitutional amendments were raised in conversations author had during a visit to Rabat, 27–30 May 2014.
25. See Darhour and Dahlerup (2013), pp.132-142. The political uprising in the neighboring countries during late 2010–11 created a political transitional atmosphere for the reform of the Moroccan constitution, and provided an opportunity for institutionalizing the principle of gender equality in the 2011 constitution.
26. In Rabat on 27 May 2014, I witnessed a demonstration of young people in front of the Justice Ministry. A group of young people with whom I spoke on 29 May told me of the arrest of a friend charged with insulting the *makhzen* in a song he had written.
27. On calls for legislation on violence against women see the article published by the UNRIC (2013); on the repeal of the rape marriage loophole see the article published on BBC News (2014) and Hayoun (2014); See also Women's Learning Partnership Press Release (2014).
28. Here I use the Tunisian spelling, also transcribed as An-Nahda or Al-Nahda.
29. See Khalil (2014), "Tunisia's Women," p.194. Afek Tounes later joined the PDP (co-led by Maya Jribi) and several smaller parties to form the Tunisian Republican Party.
30. Based on personal communications and interviews during research in Tunis, March 2014.
31. Algeria's general elections took place in early May 2012. There was a small turnout, but the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) won 220 of 462 seats. Islamists came in third. Nearly 7,700 women ran, winning 146 seats in the national assembly. In terms of the breakdown in Algeria: sixty-eight women were from the ruling FLN; twenty-three from the RND; fifteen from the Islamic Green Alliance; seven from the Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS); ten from the Partie du Travail (PT); and the remaining twelve spread across five other parties. "Algerian Legislative Action 2012 (APN), Seats by Party and Gender, 14 May 2012, <http://themoornextdoor.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/screen-shot-2012-05-14-at-7-28-14-pm.png>.

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