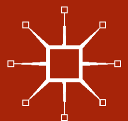
Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa

Edited by Fatima Sadiqi



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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."

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.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty
Ithaca, NY

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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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.

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.

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.

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-

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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.

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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.

(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

'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.

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