Women's political participation across the Arab region:

Mapping of existing and new emerging forces in the region

CROSS-NATIONAL REPORT

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Contents

Executive summary

This report examines and maps women's activism during and in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab revolutions. Based on empirical field-based research in five Arab countries (i.e. Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Yemen and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, OPT) in 2013, this study locates Arab women's political participation and agency within this broader context of political mobilisation, contestation and growing polarisation.

Arab women's mass activism during these revolutions has been unprecedented. As a result of decades of authoritarian rule, the women's movements in the countries studied are unorganised and without a coherent feminist agenda (with the exception of the OPT). While some women's organisations managed to exist under the previous authoritarian regimes often due to their elite connections, many were unable to register with state authorities or operate. With the notable exception of Egypt, it has become easier for activists to establish, register and operate community-based organisations (CBOs). Many CBOs have since been established by women and youth activists to respond to community needs, alleviate poverty and address marginalisation.

With the post-revolutionary electoral victories of moderate Islamist parties, economic conditions have generally worsened and instability has increased (particularly in Egypt but also in Tunisia). Economic stagnation, corruption and insecurity continue to reign in Yemen and the OPT with the on-going conflicts in those countries. There have also been many claims made by media that women's rights, status and situation have worsened greatly since the Islamists' electoral victory. This research study has found, however, a somewhat different situation, namely: that the newly-elected governments have generally maintained the laws and policies regarding women and gender equality. Where there have been attacks on the gains made by women vis-a-vis rights and political participation, as in the Egyptian case, it is not only the Muslim Brotherhood, but also the military and security services which bear prime responsibility (i.e. rescindment of electoral quotas, the constitutions of November 2012 and July 2013). Women activists need to carefully watch the movements not only of Islamists but of the military and security establishments, formal religious institutions, Salafi parties and the key actors of the old regime.

Arab women's organisations and CBOs are generally fragmented along the Islamist-secular liberal identity divide. Nevertheless, there is an emerging trend towards a pragmatic feminist vision that is challenging the feminist-Islamist binary while also finding a way to reconcile universal feminist principles with local cultural values and practices. A new generation of youth activists has also emerged, and they have shown their ability, willingness and skill at working across the identity divide to seriously challenge authoritarianism and build consensus. A key challenge for women's organisations is whether they will be able to forge a broad-based movement and create a common ground and plan of action on key women's issues in their respective countries – without being coopted. External actors, their assistance and programmes should also engage carefully without at least further deepening these divisions and at best encouraging respectful dialogue and constructive exchange between different women's organisations – with the ultimate goal of creating an environment in which a truly-organic women's agenda can emerge in each country. International human rights principles (as with CEDAW) and Islamic values of social justice and solidarity can and arguably should inform these national women's agendas in ways which inspire and encourage activism and commitment. To develop such an agenda, women activists and organisations in each country will need to reach out to each other but also to engage in consultations and dialogues with women from diverse backgrounds and strata from across their respective countries. This report concludes with a series of recommendations for international agencies.

Introduction

Since the outset of the Arab Uprisings, Arab women have actively engaged in the changing politics of their countries. Women in Tunisia, Yemen, Morocco and Egypt, amongst others, have contributed significantly through protests and demonstrations, lobbying and advocacy. Yet, women actors, voices and networks remain fragile and divided due to identity-based and political polarisation and the mutual suspicions between the key political actors characterising post-revolutionary transitions. The rise of moderate Islamists (Wright, 2012)[i] to political power has been perceived by secular liberal, leftist and nationalist political parties as the major threat to the demands for shaping democratic civil states, as well as threatening women's rights. Secular forces have shaped their political opposition against Islamist-led governments based on the presumption that Islamists would impose their religious ideology (sharia) and a conservative gender interpretation to reshape political and social institutions and national constitutions, particularly the family laws that determine gendered power relations in private and public spheres (Cammett, 2011; Lynch, 2012; Al-Anani, 2012). However, to date, the actions of Islamist parties in power in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and the region have shown otherwise, namely their actions are not entirely driven by ideology but are very much a response to contextual factors which may even modify their ideology (Clark and Young, 2008, 335). Despite the interest and willingness of some of their political leaders to literally impose sharia (An-Naim, 2012) or to significantly alter the status quo to their benefit[ii], they have not done so[iii].

Ruling Islamist parties have also realised that they came to power with a heavy legacy and influence of the previous regimes: the remaining influence of the deep state, the security services and the supporters of Mubarak and Ben Ali in state institutions; the supremacy and the legitimacy of the Moroccan Monarchy; and the powerful influence of tribal forces co-opted by Ali Abdullah Saleh's party in Yemen. These remnants of the authoritarian regimes have prevented the Islamist parties from actually exercising complete authority and have forced them to rather bargain, build coalitions and make ideological and political concessions, including concessions regarding women's rights, to remain in power (Al-Anani, 2012; Tonnessen, 2013).

Despite the loud cries of radical Islamists within the Islamist ruling parties and within the Islamist opposition to apply more literal interpretations of sharia, the new Islamist governments have not made, or been able to make, any substantial sharia-influenced changes to the previous national constitutions (An-Naim, 2012; McLarney, 2013), nor to government socio-economic policies. Responding to pressure from international economic forces, the neoliberal socio-economic and security policies adopted by the previous regimes have remained intact; as a result, the negative socio-economic consequences of these policies (i.e. poverty and unemployment) have exacerbated under situations of insecurity and instability (Marshall and Stacher, 2011; Glain, 2012; Sayigh, 2012). Within this broader societal context, women's respondents in all countries studied, as well as

secondary sources, confirmed that their socio-economic conditions have also been worsening as a result – increasing poverty, vulnerability and personal and familial insecurity[iv]. Although the divide within the Arab women's movement, especially between Islamist women activists and their organisations and liberal feminists and their organisations, predated the Arab uprisings, that divide did not include any divisive encounters. Before the uprisings, Islamist women's activists chose to stay more or less independent of the state, seeing it as one of the main obstacles to the improvement of women's situation and empowerment and to political and economic development. They concentrated their work on religious education and socio-economic support to families in need, basically in local marginalised communities. Conversely many liberal feminist organisations worked from within state institutions focusing on changing personal status laws and pushing the state to respect and comply with national and international obligations towards legislative reform (Pruzan-Jørgensen, 2012, 31).

After the Arab uprisings, Arab women's movements have been sharply split into two blocks with two different conceptual frameworks for defending women's rights and their political participation: Islamist women's groups and activists struggle to achieve a social and moral reconstruction of gender relations and gender practice within the family and in the public domain based on Islamic interpretation and virtues; and liberal feminist organisations on the other hand referring to universal human rights conventions to advocate for gender equality in national constitutions and family laws. These two groups tend to be positioned in opposition to each other despite the fact that each has proven power and influence, albeit at various levels, in shaping both the macro and micro politics of their countries. Liberal feminist movements have succeeded on several occasions, particularly in Morocco and Tunisia, to lobby Islamist governments to respect the international treaties and make constitutional and legal gender reforms with regard to women's equal rights. Islamist women's groups, supported by the primary data collected in the five Arab countries studied, have also succeeded with their discourse to create a new legitimate female leadership in national and local government and in non-governmental organisations mobilising grassroots women to participate in public life and to provide poor women with the basic material facilities to improve their livelihoods.

The struggle of two groups for women's rights can be viewed as complementary. In the current context, Islamic women's activism in Arab countries may create a space within which Muslim women can develop a conceptual and activist framework informed by their faith and their feminism. Secondly, a wider convergence between their understanding of women's rights and international law can gradually be particularised and provide common ground on prioritised issues concerning women's civil and political rights to education, employment, reproductive health and a life without violence against women, for instance. Such priorities can be developed and collectively strategised in long-term programmes of women's empowerment.

After two and a half years of the Arab revolutions, the binary oppositions and polarised discourses used by both Islamist and feminist leaders, particularly amongst elites of the two groups, have been divisive, distracting and disadvantageous for the process of gender transformation. As a result, the women's movements' attention has been distracted from working with and for poor women in marginalised areas to prioritising their socio-economic needs and interests, for instance. A large segment of women's activists risks being excluded as well as their potential to contribute to gender transformation albeit from a different framework and with dynamics of feminist struggle. More importantly, the shaping institutional alliances with undemocratic, even authoritarian patriarchal forces for political, sectarian and territorial purposes, but not necessarily for feminist purposes, is particularly risky as with the cases of Egypt and Yemen (Al-Arasi, 2012; Hayden, 2013; Judis, 2013).

In analysing women's political participation and their different forms of activism in post-Arab Uprising countries, this report analyses and presents findings based on five country research studies conducted in Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Yemen and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). This report discusses and is informed by analyses of how the emergent political players and their agendas in these countries have had an impact on women, namely: what has changed and what remains unchanged? Hence, changes to constitutions, various legislation, government policies and the institutional dynamics of women's struggle for their rights all feature prominently. Emerging opportunities and risks related to enhancing women's political participation and empowerment will be examined particularly with a view to international agencies (IAs). A list of action-oriented recommendations appears at the end of this report and has been developed specifically for IAs to inform their strategic directions and programming in these countries.

Aims and objectives of the study

1. A rigorous analysis of the political agendas and policies of each government with regards to women's rights, particularly emphasis should be placed on the newly emerging governments of Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen.
2. A solid mapping of the diverse spectrum of newly emerging forms of women's activism and leadership and their effect on the process of gender transformation;
3. A better understanding of the opportunities and risks facing International Agencies (IAs) engaging in the area of women's rights in the Arab region.
4. Consolidated recommendations and best practices for international agencies, their partners and allies as to how to engage with women's rights groups and movements in light of the changing context.

Research methodology

This report draws on the analysis and findings of five empirical country-level reports conducted in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). The country reports adopted qualitative research methodology, generating in-depth diverse analysis using multiple qualitative methods, namely: workshops with policy and law makers; focus groups with women's and human rights CSOs, as well as poor women from urban and rural communities; individual key informant interviews with representatives of governmental and non-government feminist organisations to cross-check and triangulate some data and analysis; and semi-structured individual interviews with women and men representing the different political and women's actors who influence women's political participation and empowerment.

Jointly with women's NGOs working both at the national and local levels in each country, the research team conducted individual interviews with many women and men, as well as facilitated focus group discussions (FGs) with several women's CSOs and CBOs working in local communities. In each country surveyed, field work was conducted in two major sites, and in each major site, two local rural and urban communities were studied. Although the original field work plans were harmonised, some changes occurred during the implementation due to security constraints in conducting all planned research activities, especially in Yemen and Egypt. The research field work was conducted in the five countries between 1 April and 30 June 2013. The political changes in these countries following the completion of field work (i.e. the ouster of Egyptian President Morsi and the political crisis in Tunisia) have not been investigated in the field. The research team updated the data and analysis following these changes and their impact on women's rights and political participation by referring only to secondary resources.

In the five countries studied, the research team managed to conduct FGs with: 474 poor women in poor urban and rural communities; 203 CSOs and CBOs working on women's issues, development, human rights and youth matters – including CSOs working at either the national or local levels; and 117 individual interviews with government and civil society representatives (including men and women). These individual and group interviews are in addition to five workshops conducted with policy and law makers in the different countries.

Analytical framework

Based on reviewing mainstream media coverage, social media blogs and advocacy reports published internationally, as well as reflecting on field work interviews with feminist activists in the five Arab countries studied, most secular feminists, including liberal and radical feminists and to a lesser extent socialist feminists, in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Palestine and to a lesser extent in Yemen have

directed the bulk of their activism to lobbying for gender equality on the basis of international law. Arab liberal feminists, particularly those in Maghreb, understand Arab women as a cohesive socio-cultural group that necessarily shares the same interests. Similar to their western liberal counterparts (Okin 1994)[v], they claim that patriarchy is pervasive, universal and must be fought with universal liberal values. For them, women's oppression in Arab countries is grounded in a widespread cultural and religious logic of misogyny (Bona, 2013). Arab liberal and radical feminists, and a to lesser extent socialist feminists who give more emphasis to political economy and its structural constraints on women's liberation, view international law as the only reference for: protecting and safeguarding women's rights in the constitution and legislation; for ensuring gender equitable representation of women in formal politics through gender electoral quotas; and for countering the threat of Islamisation and its conservative cultural heritage.

Despite the importance of feminist organisations' work and the successful outcomes in Morocco and Tunisia, less emphasis was given to develop strategies of women's mobilisation at the local community level or to pressure new governments to make institutional, security and socio-economic reforms as the main priorities of poor women. Islamist women's organisations at the same time have remained active in local communities using Islamic virtues as a means of mobilisation of poor women and providing basic services and social support for poor women and families in need.

The identity-based division between Muslim women's organisations and liberal feminist organisations - mirroring the political polarisation among political parties - and the persistent tensions between the two camps regarding their different women's rights references has been associated with the emergence of a new trend in women's activism challenging the Islamist-secular binary and feminist elitism. After these revolutions, Arab women have become widely engaged in grassroots youth and women's activism advocating not only for their own civil and political rights but also for the civil rights of all marginalised groups. Large numbers of young moderately-politicised women have become conscious and enthusiastic about the meaning and the practice of democracy and citizenship; they have become involved in different civil society organisations, popular protests and demonstrations. Arguably, consciousness and agentive autonomous actions taken by those young women, regardless of their identity or conceptual approach, serve as a strong basis for citizenship and gender transformation. According to the field work data and analysis, both religious and non-religious young educated women have created a public space for communicating their ideas and beliefs with each other, and arguing and debating with other generations and older political and feminist leaders to prove their belonging to their community and nations.

While Arab women's and youth activism figured prominently during the initial media coverage of the Arab uprisings, this new phenomenon of mass women's activism and leadership has not been

adequately captured or appreciated by media and challenges many Western and national liberal feminist assumptions about Arab women and the uprisings themselves. Media reports have presented many different claims about Arab women, their rights and status - claims which are not always well substantiated. The media has also framed the situation of Arab women in ways which are sometimes unhelpful and reductionistic (i.e. who is "the biggest loser") and obscure some of the deeper institutional power relations. Any determination of improved or worsened gender status and rights by the new governments should be based on rigorous historical and contextual analyses and informed by an understanding of state structures, political economy and the history of the women's movement(s). First of all, the current states' institutional power structures have not substantially changed; in fact, they have failed to democratise their governance performance and to reform their structures and socio-economic and security policies to respond to the demands of masses (Joffé, 2013). As a result, the socio-economic status of both men and women has proportionately worsened within the dominant socio-economic gender hierarchal and patriarchal norms characterising the societies before the Arab uprisings. Within this broader context of unreformed state institutions, unchanged state policy and growing economic deterioration and instability, poor marginalised social groups - which include both men and women - are the most disadvantaged in the post-revolutionary era. In the country studies, poor women presented men as having lost their sources of economic power. Secondly, the history of Arab women's movements has been characterised as being co-opted by the state and as having yet to develop an independent feminist agenda and public constituency among women masses to promote political representation (Sika and Khodary, 2012; Al-Ali, 2002; Goulding, 2009; Liddell, 2009; Sjoberg 2011).

Despite the realisation of many academics and feminists in the Arab region and other parts of the world that women's political empowerment is not confined to their numeric representation in formal politics (Crook, 2009; Moghadam, 2009), the framing and assumption of women's status in post-Arab uprisings have remained constrained by the classical understanding of women's participation in formal politics. The empirical research in the five countries studied shows that most feminist organisations failed to appreciate the new trends in and extent of women's activism beyond more normative feminist politics. While gender quotas can serve as mechanisms facilitating women's political empowerment, quotas also entail the risk of serving masculinised patriarchal political agendas, as with the previous authoritarian regimes (Moghadam, 2009).

Focusing on the classical understanding of women's political participation has also distracted Arab women's movements' attention away from promoting organic independent feminist agenda/s. Regardless of their intentionality, this shortcoming has pushed women's leaders (both Islamist and liberal alike) to reproduce the previous dynamics of bargaining with the patriarchy (Kandiyoti, 1988; Krook, 2008) of Islamist and secular political parties. These women leaders have tended to prefer

following the line of their political parties to attain political power, as with: women representing Yemen's Islah party; Islamist women's leaders representing the PJD alliance with the Monarchy in Morocco; and the alliance which some liberal feminists made with the military in Egypt. These alliances have been enacted at the expense of consolidating an independent feminist agenda and voices based on building public constituency among women's masses. Women's popular constituency is the major source of legitimacy for women's political participation and representation both at national and local levels; it is this constituency that gives women the actual power for political manoeuvring with and within state institutions (Waylen, 2008). Otherwise, Arab women (whether Islamist or liberal) will remain hostage to the patriarchal political agendas and at risk of being instrumentalised to serve the interests of the State's political elites.

Thus, any assessment of Arab women's rights and status in the aftermath of the revolutions has to be determined not on the immediate outcome of their political and civil engagement during transitions, but more importantly on the basis of their exercise of agency and the process and dynamics they develop and redevelop through experiencing political engagement. Many young Muslim women activists in the countries studied have demonstrated a high capacity to create their own understanding and enactment, and to act autonomously and critically. Elizabeth Bucar (2010) describes this action by activists as creating their 'internal law'. They managed to change gender stereotypes without necessarily being equipped with feminist knowledge. This new generation of critical young women (both secular and religious) has emerged largely in informal politics and in non-women's organisations such as labour and student unions and environmental and development institutions. This new generation of activists and activism constitute the brightest achievement of the Arab revolutions. They have the potential to contribute to a genuine feminist leadership and gender transformation with time, particularly if their leadership skills are developed strategically over the long term and their conciliatory coalition-oriented politics is drawn on.

Given the complex divided context of women's political participation in post-revolutionary Arab countries, it is critical to examine how the process of situational women's political participation creates opportunities for women activists to challenge stereotypical gender performance (through which women learn and experience their gendered self differently). Secondly, how do women through their involvement in the process of social and political change engage with and negotiate the different intersectional factors (i.e. religious, sectarian, territorial, and socio-economic)? How do women learn and develop their leadership performance to be critical of the actuality of gender and gender relations in their own context? In the particular post-revolutionary context, future women's leaders may be those who learn feminism through their experience of political and social activism, involving: understanding the local context and its diversity; and reflecting on their actual exercise of political

agency, where they can meet their interest and desire for social and political recognition in the local community and/or at the national level.

Although defining gender-equitable social transformation as an ultimate goal of women's and men's activism is essential, strategising women's mobilisation to reach this goal needs to be contextualised in order for the process of change to be achieved. Srilatha Batliwala (2011) argues that building women's leadership capacity has to be framed within a common united goal of gender equitable social transformation. However, in the ideologically and politically divided context of post-uprising Arab countries, where rising Islamist women's activism is not located within a gender equality framework, I argue that to effectively recognise and build women's leadership capacity, one needs to move beyond the normative ideological framing of feminist leadership because of the large numbers of women activists who consciously and freely prefer to practice their leadership beyond liberal feminist modes (Bona, 2013).[vi] Within the political, religious, sectarian and/or territorial divisions in post-revolutionary Arab contexts, a process-centred approach of leadership capacitation would be a more effective way of strategising the ultimate goal of gender transformation. Women leaders would be free and could willingly shape the goals behind their activism and leadership, as well as discovering the gender goal of their political participation and leadership through their practice. This feminist leadership approach is more inclusive providing a wider space for women to become self-reflective, self-creative and critical of their individual gender histories and their ideological/political orientations through the actual practice of leadership in their multiple positions of power: in the household, in the local community and in formal society institutions.

While the various post-revolutionary Arab political contexts required women to change the reiterated performance of gender norms and to act differently (for specific contextual political reasons), the new performance of gender has the potential to transgress the gender social and cultural norms within political parties and other societal institutions through the repetition of the new gender practices and the knowledge and capacity women acquire throughout their new model of subjectivation (Butler, 1997).

1.0 KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: FIVE COUNTRY RESEARCH STUDIES

The Emerging Political Spectrum and its Key Players after the Arab Uprisings: Impact on Women's Rights and Status

This section sheds light on the different socio-economic, legal, political and policy changes which have occurred following the uprisings, as well as how these changes have affected the status of women in the five countries studied in terms of women's political representation, constitutionalising

women's equal rights, and gender mainstreaming in governmental plans and national policies. This section is divided into five sub-sections to provide a brief of each country situation.

Tunisia

Following the fall of former-Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, over 110 political parties were registered (Maqni, 2012), with some 80 competing in the first post-revolutionary elections of the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) in October 2011. The moderate Islamist party, Ennahda, previously banned under Ben Ali's dictatorship, won the largest number of seats (89 out of 217), but failed to secure a parliamentary majority (Ottaway, 2013). Ennahda opted to quickly form a coalition government (commonly referred to as the "troika") with two secular parties: the centre-left Congress for the Republic (CPR) with 29 seats, and Ettakatol, a left-leaning party with 20 seats. Another coalition of many small secular political parties which ran against Ennahda won 79 seats. Most secular liberal/neoliberal and leftist parties (including those belonging to the former Ben-Ali regime) were fragmented and less organised, but also failed to connect socially and culturally with the vast majority of Tunisians living in the interior (Gray, 2012).

Since the 2011 elections, the formal political spectrum in Tunisia has been divided into three key conflicting coalitions, each with considerable influence on politics and particularly on women's rights[vii]. The first coalition consists of the Troika government and the NCA led by Ennahda and supported by a large number of newly emergent moderate CSOs. The second coalition includes most secular opposition forces (i.e. the secular liberal and centre-left political parties) which have joined a new political coalition called Nedaa Tunis, as well as members of Ben Ali's RCD.[viii] This coalition also includes the main labour organisation, the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) and the national employer's union (UTICA). This coalition also enjoys the support of both older and newly-emergent liberal feminist and human rights CSOs which have strong networks and links to the international community and to the international media. The more radical leftist parties have joined the Popular Front coalition which consists of 11 political parties. However, leaders in the Popular Front and *Nedaa Tounes* are working to solidify the union between the two groups (Kerrou, 2013). Thirdly, the Salafis are a loose coalition representing both registered and banned extremist Islamist groups such as Hizb Etahrir and Ansar el-Shari'a and their charity CBOs. The heightened political polarisation between secular-Islamist and Islamist-Salafi forces in Tunisia has recently lead to a political crisis. Secular opposition forces led by the UGTT accuse Ennahda of creating insecurity and socio-economic deterioration in Tunisia and demand the dissolution of the government while calling for a government of technocrats to rule until the next election in late 2013 (Byrne, 2013).

From the outset of the transition, Ennahda conveyed reassuring messages to secular parties that rather than dominating the country's politics, as well as seeking to establish a power-sharing arrangement with secular parties and subsequently acted so accordingly (Ottaway, 2011). Following the 2011

elections, and in sharp contrast to Egypt, Ennahda has led by adopting a conciliatory and inclusive political governance strategy which has involved a strategy of accommodation of various political parties and organisations, as well as a commitment to liberal democracy and pluralism (Carey, 2013: 3). Ennahda sought a power-sharing arrangement in the NCA with the two largest secular parties, the CPR and Ettakatol. Despite the political contestations during the Troika's two years governing, Tunisia has provided a relatively bright example of gender inclusion (Ottaway, 2011; Vishwanath, 2012; Rau, 2012) into the process of democratic transition. Examples of gender inclusivity in practice include:

- adopting a "zipper" list electoral system[ix] to support equal representation of women and men candidates in electoral lists (described below);
- awarding the position of Minister of Women and Family Affairs to the secular coalition party CPR (to assuage fears that Ennahda would limit women's rights)(Ottaway, 2011);
- making substantial concessions regarding the Constitution (i.e. maintaining language from the 1959 Constitution which establishes Islam as the state religion but does not refer to sharia as the source of legislation, dropping references to the 'complementarity' of gender roles and inserting explicit language regarding the state's obligation to 'guarantee the protection of women's rights and supporting their gains', the state's guarantee of eliminating all forms of violence against women)[x]
- submitting to the UN the withdrawal of Tunisia's remaining reservations to CEDAW (although these changes had not yet been officially withdrawn at the time this report was being written).

Arguably, the changes underway in post-Uprising Tunisia vis-à-vis women's rights in the new constitution, political representation and government policies and programming, appear promising in terms of further improvements to women's rights provided political and economic stability are re-established.

As a result of the "zipper" list electoral system, women won 65 out of 217 seats (27%) in the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) with: 42 seats for Ennahda women and 23 for women from other secular parties where a disappointing 94% of the electoral lists were headed by men. The electoral result is also close to the results of the 2009 parliamentary election where women won 27.6% of seats. Nevertheless, the percentage of Tunisian women's representation in the NCA remains the highest in the Arab region (Kassem, 2012).

The formation of the cabinet of ministers was however disappointing, as only one woman from the CPR was appointed to a cabinet position, compared to three women ministers before the revolution[xi]. According to both secondary sources (Ottaway, 2011; Carey, 2013) and research participants, the

process of redrafting the constitution in Tunisia was generally quite inclusive. The Constituent Assembly was elected and organised itself into six commissions; each commission had representatives from all parties and both genders proportional to the number of votes they had received. The six commissions also consulted with civil society organisations beyond the assembly to solicit comments on each draft of the constitution, particularly from feminist, human rights and civil society organisations (CSOs) (Joyce, 2013). The advocacy and lobbying done by Tunisian feminist and human rights organisations prevented the newly emergent voices of conservative Islamists within Ennahda and other radical Salafi groups from amending the Constitution using ambiguous wording that might later be used to justify discrimination based on gender by future legislators.

Ennahda's moderate wing was pragmatic enough to allow the process of drafting the constitution to be reflective of the nationwide ideological and political views. This is reflected in two examples: first, Ennahda initially conceded and opted to include sharia as a constitutional source. Secondly, Ennahda accepted the CSOs proposal of defining the relationship between men and women as one of equals, rather than as "complementary", as in the earlier draft. In the May 2013 draft constitution, Articles 6 and 42 deal with gender. Article 6 of the draft constitution states that, "All citizens, males and females alike, shall have equal rights and obligations and shall be equal before the law, without discrimination." However, the protection of rights is limited to citizens (rather than all people located inside the state territory). Secondly, Article 42 of the draft constitution indicates that "The State guarantees the protection of women's rights and supports their gains." This same article also states that "The State guarantees equal opportunity between men and women to assume responsibilities. The State guarantees the elimination of all forms of violence against women." Relative to previous constitutions (i.e. which referred to the complementarity of gender roles and weakening provisions for gender equality), these additional provisions are viewed as gains although the "equal opportunity to assume responsibilities" falls short of full rights to equal opportunities in all spheres[xii].

In May 2013, the latest draft of the constitution was submitted with the above provisions. Ennahda also tried to allay the fears of secular political parties and feminist and human rights CSOs regarding the threat of the Islamist political project through several statements articulated by women Ennahda MPs. The head of the NCA's Human rights and liberty commission, Farida Abeidi stated that "Ennahda is committed to the gains of the modern state and the domestic rules established by the Personal Status Code". Ennahda leaders stated several times to international media that the PSC introduced by Bourguiba in 1956 abolishing polygamy and granting equal social and economic rights for women will remain intact.

Mutual anxieties have abounded amongst both the liberal-leftist and Islamist camps toward one another, namely: liberal-leftist groups feared the rescindment of rights and the introduction of strict

interpretations of sharia; and Ennahda feared that secular parties were attempting to demonise, undermine and isolate Islamists (Ottaway, 2011). While the Tunisian secular parties have largely accepted their relatively poor showing in elections, "the most extreme anti-Islamist statements came not from political parties but from secular women's organisations that accused Ennahda of intending to abrogate Tunisia's liberal personal-status laws, although no evidence suggested that this was the case" (Ottaway, 2011). Leaving aside the various allegations (i.e. that Ennahda covertly supports Salafi groups) and calls by some conservative Islamist women to keep Tunisia's CEDAW reservations, the Tunisian government has not officially retracted any of the previously-ratified laws or regulations with regard to women's rights. In keeping with its conciliatory governance strategy, the Ennahda-led government and its legislators have largely maintained legislation and policies relating to gender equality, as well as submitting to the UN Tunisia's request to remove its CEDAW reservations.

The structural gender changes resulting from the implementation of the 1959 post-Independence Tunisian PSC are claimed by current government officials, as well as by some other Islamist and non-Islamist research participants to be irreversible. For example, the number of female students registered in higher education exceeded that of male students in 2008, and the rate is still the same after the uprising. Regarding the government's family planning policy which has remained in place for many years now, the fertility rate has fallen from 7.2 children per family in 1965 to 2.06 in 2008 (Arfaoui, 2007).[xiii] In terms of women's inclusion in senior professional positions, the official statistics prior to the Uprising indicate that: 30% of judges are women; 70% pharmacists, 40% doctors, and 40% of university teachers. However, several women MPs representing Ennahda and other secular parties within the NCA claim that the socio-economic and political gains achieved by urban Tunisian women living in socially and economically advantaged coastal regions need to be extended to reach the marginalised masses of women in the interior regions (Labidi, 2012).

Tunisian women's remarkable progress in education and access to healthcare has not yet been translated into women's participation in the labour market, similar to their counterparts in other Arab countries. Tunisian women's labour force participation rates were only 25% compared to 65% of men in 2010 (World Bank, 2011). Tunisia also has a significant number of migrant workers abroad contributing to its GDP. The rentier nature of the authoritarian state and economy, combined with high levels of jobless growth, impeded the development of various businesses and widespread economic development. From an economic policy perspective, the Ennahda government has pursued the same neoliberal economic policies as the previous regime and has advocated for encouraging foreign investment. Yet, the new government has so far failed to stabilise the economy due partly to the growing polarisation and insecurity caused by armed attacks by extremist Salafi groups in different parts of Tunisia. As a result, the unemployment rate increased from 12.4% in May 2007 to

18.1% in Feb 2012 and decreased slightly to 16.5% in early 2013: 13.9% among men and 23.3% among women with a persistent gender gap although this has also dropped from 11.4% to 9.4%. During the first quarter of 2013, the number of jobs provided to men increased by 15.0 thousand against 10.4 thousand new jobs for women.[xiv] These slight improvements were confirmed by the research participants from the new Tunisian government. Nevertheless, the general mood of the Tunisian population remains unsatisfied with the government and opposition parties' performance because the two sides have equally overridden the economic and security problems with the narrow interests of their political parties[xv].

Regarding women in decision-making processes, research participants confirmed that although the new decision makers in ministries are politically biased, they are not gender discriminatory. The number of women in decision-making positions remains considerable, especially in the Ministries of health and education. One interesting and important policy change following the revolution is that most ministries providing social services have come to prioritise the interior regions by improving women's access to education, health services and economic opportunities. The Ministry of women and family affairs (MWFA), the only ministry led by a woman, acts as the government driver of women's advancement. The MWFA has promoted its influence by developing a network with other service ministries to improve women's living conditions and to ensure that gender equality is incorporated in the different ministries' master plans. Iman Hwaimel, a MWFA representative, emphasised that the Ministry has recently adopted a policy promoting the socio-economic integration of poor women through women's self-employment and women's entrepreneurship development, particularly in interior regions.

Many research participants were dissatisfied with the government's performance, especially in creating or providing job opportunities for the unemployed. Interviews with Tunisian government representatives indicate that the new government has not made substantial changes to gender policies and programming. In contrast, women's economic development and empowerment in the interior regions has been emphasised. The rhythm of discussion with old and new senior staff of ministries, representing Ennahda, other secular parties and independent professional women, reflects a realisation that the ministries must change their modus operandi and avoid the centralised top-down approach of bureaucratic development used by the previous regime and replace it with an approach in which marginalised women and groups become the priority of government intervention and programmes. These gender modifications and trends towards greater decentralised development planning and practice could not have been achieved without the long-term strategy adopted by women's CSOs and CBOs advocating for government transparency and accountability towards equitable gender policies and implementation.

Morocco

Since the new King's succession to the throne in 1999, the pre-Arab spring era in Morocco might be characterised as undergoing slow, relatively-steady reforms generally and for women's rights in particular. Women's political participation has also generally been rising. These reforms have included the revision of: the Law on guardianship (2002), the Law on civil status (2002), the Labour code (2003), the Family code (2004)[xvi], the Moroccan nationality code (2007), and the Communal Charter (2008). Secondly, a reconciliation process was undertaken under the new King to address human rights violations which occurred under the previous King during the 'years of lead' (from the mid-1950s to 1991) in which tens of thousands of socialists, communists and left-leaning citizens were imprisoned, tortured and/or disappeared. This process and the engagement of civil society prior to and during reconciliation have resulted in a situation in which human rights have become engrained in Moroccan society and particularly amongst the Moroccan left (Clark and Young, 2008)[xvii]. As a result of this long experience of struggle, the commitment to human rights and women's rights is deeply rooted, and few respondents were fearful of a backlash against women's rights.

Given the considerable trajectory of legal reform undertaken in the decade leading up to the Arab uprisings (Hibou, 2011), Morocco's experience during the uprisings has been calmer albeit some processes were speeded up, sparked or prompted by the February 20th movement's 2011 mobilisation[xviii]. Just over two weeks later, the King announced on national television important constitutional reforms designed purportedly to strengthen the role of the prime minister and Parliament, as well as calling for early elections for the same year. In November 2011, the Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) won the largest number of the parliamentary seats (26%). Since then, the PJD has lead the government for the first time in a coalition with the nationalist, conservative Istiqlal party (IP), the centrist Popular Movement (MP), and the smaller leftist Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS).

A main critique of the emergent political context is that the King and his entourage (*makhzen)* have managed to steer Moroccans clearly away from debates on radically reforming the political system and addressing corruption by narrowing the focus to constitutional reform (Assid, 2012). These proposed changes are lacking in substance because the King remains the key driver of Moroccan politics, players, and the governance model with the support of the *makhzen*. The King also holds an important and unique office as the 'Commander of the Faithful' making his person also sacred and the ultimate religious arbiter[xix]. This determinant of his political legitimacy has been hardly challenged by either Islamist or secular political parties. While the King continues to make alliances with opposition parties[xx], the PJD is also keen to gain the King's support to enable itself to stay in power. This positioning is reflected in a moderate Islamist discourse adopted by the PJD in order to reassure secularists that Islamists will not impose a strict Islamic code of behaviour (Entelis, 2011; Senigeur,

2011). This rigid historical monarchy structure and political culture constitute amongst the most important structural constraints undermining gender equity and the feminist movement.[xxi]

Over the past decade, Moroccan women's representation has increased in several political institutions. Following the 2008 reform of the Communal Charter, women's local-level representation reached 12.4% (up from 0.56% in 2003). In 2011, Organic Law no. 27-11 introduced a 15% quota for women in the House of Representatives. The 15% target was however exceeded in the 2011 elections when 17% of MPs elected were women (up from 10.5% in 2007).

Women have also been allowed to enter and be represented in religious institutions as religious guides (*murshidat)* and on national and local religious councils (*ulema*). In terms of setbacks, following the 2011 elections, the number of women ministers dropped from seven to just one. The only remaining woman in the cabinet heads the Ministry of solidarity, women, family and social development, and her appointment is highly controversial. Moroccan liberal and socialist feminists view Bassima el Hakkoui as a powerful opponent to women's rights. Many of them question her suitability to lead the Ministry and view her appointment as a reflection of the PJD's commitment to women's rights and gender equality (Guessous, 2012)[xxii].

Morocco has also achieved unprecedented changes in terms of women's participation in the national religious authority and with relatively little resistance thus far from religious authorities. Following the 2003 Casablanca bombings and concerns about growing violent extremist Islamist youth in poor neighbourhoods, the King decided to integrate women into religious guidance structures in poor communities as a means of countering radical and extremist elements[xxiii]. In 2008, 13 central services and five external services in the Ministry of endowment and Islamic affairs were led by women. Likewise, in 2004 and for the first time in Morocco during the complete overhaul of the national and provincial ulema councils, one woman was appointed to the Higher ulema council, while another 35 women were appointed to the local ulema councils[xxiv]. This gender structural change in Morocco's religious authority has contributed to the inclusion of some Muslim women in religious institutions. However, new *fatwas* (religious orders) that reflect gender equity have yet to be issued. In fact, in April 2013, the Higher ulema council issued a fatwa limiting women's roles and clearly prohibiting them from serving as an imam or from leading prayer services (regardless of whether for men or women) (Sfali, 2013). What is distinctive in the case of Morocco is that the King holds ultimate religious power and authority, as well as the power to issue religious orders (*dahirs*) and change religious laws.

Regarding legislative reform, the King called for a review and subsequent amendment of the Penal Code in 1999 to change gender-based discriminatory articles although controversial laws related to unequal inheritance rights and male guardianship in the family remain intact in the Family code.

The current government has expressed its official commitment to translating national gender legislative reforms into actual policies and programmes aimed at empowering women and achieving greater gender equality. As stated in the Morocco country report, the current government's plan (*al-Barnamaj al-Hukumi*) incorporates several gender equality measures, namely: combatting gender-based violence, mainstreaming gender analysis in public budgets, facilitating women's access to public services, and promoting their participation in the management of public affairs. In its Report on gender equality, the government presented its gender equality policy in Morocco until 2020[xxv].

In addition, with UNDP and Spanish cooperation support, the government launched the Tamkine (or 'empowerment') programme (June 2008 – June 2011). This multi-sectoral programme, involving 13 governmental departments, aimed at countering all forms of violence against women and girls, by institutionalising gender and women's human rights into national government policies and development programmes, and supporting greater autonomy for women in Morocco[xxvi]. With joint support from UNIFEM, UNICEF and UNDP, the Ministry of justice also established a programme to calculate and institute alimony in family courts, as well as finalising the financial, organisational and legal aspects of the Family aid fund intended to assist poor women. Following this experiment, the Ministry of justice is currently integrating social workers in family courts and thereby also the social role of the judiciary.

Beyond these pre- and post-Arab Uprising reforms, the Government of Morocco has also invested considerable resources over the past decade in developing the education and healthcare systems leading to important improvements in women's socio-economic and health status. While adult women's illiteracy rates remain high, amongst youth aged 15 to 24 years old, these rates have improved significantly with 74% of young women and 88.8% of young men being literate. In terms of women's access to health services, considerable efforts have been invested in upgrading maternity and birthing houses, institutionalising free delivery in public hospitals, strengthening the monitoring of pregnancy and childbirth, as well as setting measures to improve the management of emergency obstetrics care. These investments are also linked to Morocco's 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which have focused on reducing maternal and child mortality. According to the National Population Survey of 2009-2010, maternal mortality rates were halved between 2003/4 and 2009/10 to 112 per 100,000 live births.

Despite women's improved access to education and health services and the various government programmes aiming to empower women in partnership with private industry and civil society, women remain underrepresented in formal employment. Men's labour force participation rates outnumber women's by three times. Indeed, women's labour force participation rate in Morocco was 26.7% in 2011[xxvii], which is one of the lowest levels in the MENA region. According to several research

participants, these figures suggest that some programmes are either ineffective in addressing women's needs and/or are not reaching those most in need.

As Morocco has already established key gender policies and programmes for women's empowerment, the new government needs to ensure that it has the institutional capacity, resources and willingness to implement these policies and programs efficiently and effectively to respond to women's actual needs, especially the most socially and economically marginalised. The government also needs to develop certain gender measures and monitor the effects of gender policies and programmes on women's empowerment. Policy- and decision-makers need to develop their gender analytical skills and insight, as well as invest in translating existing gender policies into affirmative action and other relevant programmes.

Egypt

While the spaces of protest during the early days of the Uprising were generally calm and safe for women, over the past year, Egyptians have been exposed to an increasingly volatile, polarised and violent environment, in which sexual assaults on women or near sites of protest have also increased dramatically and with impunity for the aggressors.

In November 2012, Egypt's first democratically-elected president, Mohammad Morsi, passed a constitutional declaration granting himself unlimited powers and subsequently pushed through the constitution by a public referendum despite objections by the opposition. The move provoked tremendous uproar, opposition and fears that the MB-affiliated President and Freedom and justice party (FJP) had begun consolidating power and majoritarian rule. Opposition forces accused Morsi of Islamising the constitution, concentrating power in the hands of the MB, in addition to failing to address the socio-economic problems which frustrated and infuriated the Egyptian masses[xxviii]. Since that time, opposition to then-President Mohammad Morsi, the FJP and the entire Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood has increased significantly.

In April 2013, the Tamarod (or 'Rebel') campaign was started by liberal and leftist activists from the Kefaya and April 6th youth movements and the National Salvation Front amongst others with the purpose of gathering 15 million signatures as a 'non-confidence' petition to prompt Morsi to call early elections. In a nutshell, the Tamarod campaign mobilised millions of disgruntled Egyptians on 30 June, and on 3 July, the military ousted and arrested Mohammad Morsi – moves which sparked reactions and demonstrations from Morsi supporters all over the country.

The escalating conflict between the MB and the secular forces - including deep state institutions and figures supportive of the Mubarak regime - created a political vacuum. The army reached out to various opposition and youth groups in an effort to gain popular legitimacy in the street to support

their decision to remove Morsi, dissolve the country's constitution and parliament and call for new elections after a few days of mass protests organised by liberal and leftist forces on 30 June 2013[xxix].

A tremendous wave of violence was eventually unleashed against men, women and children MB supporters and demonstrators at *Raba'a al-Adawiyya* mosque and Nahda Square. In September 2013, the MB was banned by the courts making it illegal to be a member. While never entirely dislodged from control of key state institutions (like the security apparatus), the 'deep state' has returned with vengeance. The Egyptian economy is in tatters, and everyday Egyptian women and men struggle hard for their households and families to make ends meet.

While the army has been the key political player since 2011 (Marshall and Stacher, 2011), new political actors have emerged after the decisive military action following the events of June 30th and July 3rd 2013. These actors may be grouped in the following three blocks:

1) the Interim Government led by the head of Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC), who is considered by the MB as loyal to the former Mubarak regime and Tamarod, the new grassroots coalition that called for the mass protests against Morsi on 30 June.

2) the Muslim Brotherhood in its new position outside the current formal politics and the National Coalition for the Support of Legitimacy (NCSL) (Salem, 2013).

3) **the Third square** is a small current of liberal, leftist and moderate Islamist forces that had been silenced before 30th June due to the sharp polarisation in the Egyptian political sphere. This third cluster includes new grassroots labour, youth and women's groups and coalitions; Third square supporters are mistrustful of either MB or military rule and reject the political polarisation and aim to bring Egyptians together.[xxx]

But what has happened to women's rights and gender equality in Egypt? Despite frequent tropes in mainstream media in Europe and North America that Arab women's rights and status have worsened tremendously under the Islamist-led regimes, the first institutions to violate Egyptian women's rights were actually the military and the police – a point to which we will return during the discussion of the 3 July 2013 events and the 'Morsi' constitution. During the May 2005 Kifaya (or 'Enough!') demonstrations, the police merely looked on as women protestors were subjected to sexual harassment and assault by thugs and former NDP adherents, while the aggressors benefitted from a climate of impunity (Sika & Khodary, 2012, 96). Early in the 2011 protests, the Egyptian military forcibly subjected Egyptian women to "virginity tests", sexual harassment and abuse. As already mentioned, sexual assault on women (and often group or gang assaults on a woman) near protest areas increased significantly over the last year. While it is difficult to access reliable national data on these assaults and the perpetrators (particularly given the lack of prosecutions), these incidents do appear

designed to stop and/or prevent women from participating in protests. Secondly, the police and security services have also failed to protect women from sexual assault and violent attacks, as well as failing to investigate, prosecute and charge aggressors. As a result, a culture of impunity has re-emerged although a number of women's organisations and activists have taken on active roles in supporting and helping women who have been assaulted, as well as working on awareness raising and prevention.

Following Mubarak's fall, the military also rescinded the 30% gender quota stipulated in the Sept. 2010 Egyptian electoral law and replaced it with the requirement that parties nominate a single woman per list but without specifying a ranking on the lists. As a result, women's representation in the Egyptian parliament dropped to just under two per cent.

Following the Egyptian Uprising, the law on political parties was amended to allow new parties to be formed and become active[xxxi]. Some forty new political parties participated in the first post-revolutionary parliamentary elections held between November 2011 and January 2012[xxxii]. The MB-affiliated FJP and other Islamist parties won 72% of parliamentary seats in Egypt, with a majority of seats for the FJP. Presidential elections were held in May 2012, and Mohammad Morsi, the MB's candidate became the President of Egypt.

In terms of women's representation in formal politics, as already stated, the number of women in elected office which was already low (representing 12.7%) during the Mubarak regime dropped even further to less than 2%. Egyptian women have been extremely active in the protests, in various organisations and in their communities. Moreover, four of the nine elected women MPs are members of the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). In terms of women's representation in local councils, 2011 gender statistics indicate that women's representation in local councils increased from 1.8% in 2002 to 5% in 2008, but no subsequent data is available to confirm whether this has changed after the uprising.

Regarding women MPs and individual country reservations on CEDAW, although some Islamist women MPs in Morocco and Tunisia were critical of a full withdrawal of the CEDAW reservations, Egyptian women MPs adopted a more conservative Islamist discourse. Some of them, like Azza Al-Garaf, an FJP representative, not only criticised CEDAW as a universal framework for protecting women's equal rights, but called for rescinding some national legislation passed during the Mubarak era such as criminalising female genital mutilation (FGM) and reinstituting parents' rights to decide whether their daughters undergo FGM or not.

Concerning women's participation in redrafting the Egyptian constitution, the membership of the constitutional committee responsible for drafting and amending the 1971 constitution did not include a single woman despite the fact that 34 judges, including a very able Deputy President of the Supreme

Constitutional Court, were women[xxxiii]. Opposition party critics, civil society, feminist and human rights organisations all confirmed that the draft constitution approved by Morsi does not guarantee equal citizenship rights. Many ambiguous articles justify discrimination against women following a more socially-conservative Islamist line. Article 10, for instance, states that there must be agreement or a balancing between women's duties toward their families and their work in society, considering their equal status with men in the fields of political, social, cultural, and economic life, without contravening Islamic law. Despite the rejection of the draft constitution by opposition parties and civil society organisations, Morsi put it to a referendum on December 15th 2012 and won by a majority of 63%. For Egyptian feminists and human rights activists, this move constituted a huge setback for Egyptian women's rights.

Many secular women's organisations and coalitions have since claimed that the 2012 constitution is worse than previous Egyptian constitutions[xxxiv]. However, Ellen McLarney's (2013) comparative study of Egypt's constitutions of 1956, 1971 and 2012 demonstrates that the new 'Islamist' constitution does not differ substantially from the previous ones and that religion remains present in the new constitution in a way that does not contradict the neoliberal economic policies adopted by MB[xxxv]. Yet Morsi's constitution, as with the previous 1971 version, did not recognise equality between men and women, and most of its articles had an ambiguous wording that can be used against women by conservative legislators.

Apart from SCAF-led transitional government's rescindment of the 2010 electoral quota for women, the empirical research in Egypt was unable to find any evidence that pre-existing laws and legislation advantageous to women (where they existed) had been revisited or rescinded by Morsi's administration. These include: nationality law no. 154 issued in 2004, along with articles 10 and 40 issued in 2000 that offer women the right to transfer nationality to her husband and children if they marry a non-Egyptian national, and women's right to divorce and the acceptance of divorce request in cases of customary marriage[xxxvi].

Similarly, Morsi's government did not adopt any new gender policies or programming and continued working on the same policies and programmes of the Mubarak regime. According to political analyst, Ibrahim el-Houdaiby, the MB and particularly Morsi and his close associates rose to power wishing to inherit the Mubarak state albeit with a few changes in mechanisms[xxxvii]. This analysis seems fitting based on the lack of changes introduced by the Morsi regime and the MB's cozying up to the military. According to government officials, the old policies and programmes adopted by the previous regime continued to be implemented while this research was conducted despite some changes at the highest level of office in most ministries. As one Egyptian commentator[xxxviii] intimated the MB's FJP rose to power but the actual authority remained in the hands of the bureaucracy and the deep state. For

example, the National Council for Women (NCW), sponsored by Suzanne Mubarak, remained in power and continued with its old programmes aiming to eliminate violence against women and to achieve economic, social and political empowerment of women[xxxix].

While the constitution and gender policies remain largely unchanged, this does not mean that women's socio-economic conditions have improved, or have even remained the same. As the Egyptian economy has continued to flounder for nearly three years, the situation of women, men and many Egyptians has been deteriorating since the uprising started. Despite the lack of recent gender-segregated data on women's socio-economic status, national-level data indicates some clear gender implications. For example, the state has continued to allocate inadequate resources to key social sectors such as health, education and housing. The total population falling below the national poverty line has increased by nearly 50% in the last 15 years, from 16.7% (9.9 million people) in 1996 to 25.2% (21 million) in 2011. Unemployment and underemployment, particularly among young men and women, is growing, as is the informal sector, which is the economic field where poor women are concentrated and economically unprotected. The unemployment rate has escalated in the wake of recent economic instability: climbing from 11.9% in the first quarter of 2011 to 13.2% in the first quarter of 2013 (CAPMAS, 2013). Furthermore, the rising cost of food and other basic commodities means that the majority of vulnerable households are unable to cover their monthly food expenditures. In such deteriorating economic situations, poor women are usually the ones who take on the responsibility of household economic survival, as many men often withdraw, become more passive and in some instances, even act violently against women and children[xl].

In post-30th of June Egypt, the Salafi Al-Nour party has become the main voice of Islamists in Egypt's final constitution-drafting process - strongly rejecting the secular parties' proposal to remove Article 219 providing for sharia interpretation from the new constitution. This debate ended with an agreement between Al-Nour and secular parties (Al-Wafd party) stating that "the new constitution must retain Article 219."[xli]

Despite the rejection of the new post-30 June constitution by many women's and human rights groups, political forces supporting the military have supported and approved the new constitution, including: Al-Nour, Tamarod, and the National Council for Women (NCW) and many church representatives. Despite concerns by other women's organisations, NCW chief, Mervat al-Tallawi, declared that the parties to the constitutional committee have done their best, and Egyptians must vote in favour of the new constitution "so the roadmap can go on."[xlii]

Many Egyptian men and women activists participated actively in Tamarod and the fall of the Morsi-led government triggered in many ways by Morsi's constitution which they viewed as illegitimate and as promoting Islamicisation. Despite these widely-held views and the role of these activists in ousting the MB government, the July 3 interim government suspended and modified that constitution but without removing the unacceptable clauses vis-à-vis women's rights. Nathan Brown, a prominent political scientist and specialist on Egypt, characterised the situation as an unspoken secret where

> the military, al-Azhar, and the Salafis got exactly what they wanted in the 2012 constitution. There are provisions on the military (no real civilian oversight), al-Azhar (a muscular supervisory role over Islamic legal issues), and the Islamic sharia that each of these actors want to protect. The Brotherhood had allowed these clauses in order to get necessary support for a constitution that other political forces had bitterly come to oppose (Brown, 2013, 2).

Such behind-the-scene deals between powerful elite actors suggest a return to old authoritarian politics and where democratic, transparent or accountable governance in which human rights and women's rights in particular feature prominently on the political agenda of the military, religious institutions and/or Islamist and Salafi parties is highly unlikely.[xliii]

Yemen

Misrule, prolonged military sectarian and territorial conflicts have eroded the Yemeni state and many of its institutions and were exacerbated by the presidency. During his 30 years of rule initially of North Yemen in 1978 and subsequently in the 1990 unified Yemen, former-President Ali Abdullah Saleh "deliberately prevented the emergence of institutionalised forms of governance, effectively undermining all government and civil institutions" (Haykel, 2013, 1). Saleh's legacy resulted in many political actors and constituencies becoming fiercely opposed Saleh's legacy. Secondly, the Yemeni state is weak in many areas of the country and unable to ensure security for its citizens (who are heavily armed) or provide much in the way of services. There are also considerable regional tensions and conflict: with the Hirak coalition in southern Yemen, including outright calls by some actors for secession; and with northern Yemen with the Houthis[xliv]. These internal tensions between different regions of Yemen have the potential to reignite a civil war.

The Yemeni popular uprising does not appear to have changed or affected the country's power structure – although women's mass participation in public protests never been witnessed at such a scale. Yemen is the only country undergoing a pacted transition (Waylen, 2010)[xlv] through an internationally-sponsored national dialogue process. Political and economic power remain largely concentrated in the hands of the two major traditional tribes and their associated political parties: the General People's Congress Party (GPC) which former-President Ali Abdullah Saleh belongs to; and Islah which is an Islamist party made up of tribal, moderate and more extreme Islamists.

As part of the pacted transition process, a roadmap and dialogue process for Yemen's political transition was developed based on an agreement initiated by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in November 2011[xlvi] under the supervision of the United Nations and with active Yemeni participation. The National reconciliation government is comprised of 50% of GPC members and 50% of the various opposition parties from the coalition led by Islah party (Joint Meeting Parties, JMP[xlvii]). The national dialogue process involves rather extensive consultations and several working groups. To ensure women's and youth's participation in the dialogue processes, a 30% women's representation quota and a 20% youth quota have also been instituted. Despite the impressive efforts which have been invested in this process, the dialogue process has been stalled with dim indications for the future.

Yet, since the establishment of the transitional government, insecurity and conflict between the different political forces in and outside the government has been escalating. The transitional government has been unable to stabilise the various political conflicts: especially the conflict between Islah and the opposition Houthis in the north;[xlviii] and the conflict between the southern Hirak movement and the transitional government. The transitional government also has the continued presence of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in southern Yemen. That being said, the main two political players in Yemen remained unchanged, namely: the GPC and Islah party supported by the major Yemeni tribes and security forces. However, the country report found that most Yemeni people consider the tribal power structures and security forces to be major sources of corruption and insecurity.

Despite generally reproducing traditional tribal political players, Yemen has through the uprising witnessed ground-breaking gender changes with the active participation of women and youth. These changes are particularly notable given that the previous regime's disinterest in political representation generally and women's participation in particular.

As part of the national dialogue process, quotas have been set for the inclusion of women and youth representatives by the Security Council. These and other changes have been encouraged by the UN-supported national dialogue and transitional process and in keeping with UN SC's resolutions on women, peace and security (i.e. UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent resolutions). However, these steps towards greater inclusivity in the peace talks are also shared by many Yemeni women and youth, who have advocated for a civil state and gender equality. Most of these advocates are independent youth activists, as well as supporters of the two less powerful secular progressive political parties, namely the socialist and Nasserist parties.

As part of the internationally-mediated dialogue process, the GCC Initiative and implementation mechanism under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2014 (UNSCR 2014)[xlix] adopted a

30% quota for women's representation and a 20% quota for youth in the transitional government and for the National dialogue committee (NDC). Due to the pressure and influence of the ruling political parties, this decision was not included in the final communique. In the final agreement, the term, "gender quota," was replaced with the reference to the "appropriate representation of women"[1]. The gender quota has however been instituted by the transitional government.

Concerning the dialogue process itself, women's political representation then came under the two dominant parties to the conflict (who controlled those each side invited to represent themselves at the talks). In November 2011, only three women were nominated in the consensus government composed of 32 ministers. No women were represented on the Military Affairs Committee for Achieving Security and Stability, nor on the President's Advisory Committee.

Interviews with women NDC members indicated that the political parties resisted implementing the gender quota until the women's national conference held in March 2012 where the 30% quota for women's representation was confirmed in the conference statement. During the national dialogue process, to uphold the 30% quota of women NDC members, political parties had to nominate women for the first time in Yemen's history. This quota includes 40 seats allocated to independent women, and 20 seats for women youth, raising the absolute number of women in the NDC to 152 out of 565. This figure also outnumbers the list of any other political actor. Furthermore, women have assumed chairpersonship of two NDC working groups, on Freedoms and rights and on the Sa'ada issue in the north, as well as co-chairing other working groups. With this leadership and participation, women have started to gain more visibility and attention in politics, media and the community at large.

Nevertheless, some women's activists shared that women's representation during the transitional period still fails to reflect a coherent political commitment to women's rights among political parties and is merely instrumentalised to serve certain factional political purposes. Some research participants also stated that women activists advocating for gender equality had been verbally and physically attacked by clergymen and their supporters representing the ruling parties. Some political parties and actors have also actively countered women's participation; for instance, former-President Ali Abdullah Saleh warned against the inappropriate mixing of the sexes in rallies and protest squares during his Friday speech on 14 April 2012.

Former-President Saleh has tactically allied himself with fundamentalists, including some from Islah party, to challenge political opponents like the socialists and moderate Islah members, as well as the Houthis. In return for their support, Saleh granted them power in parliament. For example, in 2009, a bill aimed at establishing a minimum age for marriage stalled because of the influence of Islamist extremists allied with President Saleh. Saleh continued using the hardliners in confrontations with his

opponents: the southerners, especially the Socialist Party, as well as against the Houthi movement in Sa'ada. This strategy of political alliances has continued even after the Uprising and undermines women's struggle for greater political participation and legislative change, particularly the Family Code, which discriminate against women. Recently, the woman Minister of human rights, Hurya Mashhour, stated that she had developed a new bill to prohibit the marriage of girls before the age of 18[li]. However, it is hard to predict whether the new representation of women on the transitional bodies will translate into power to influence legislative and constitutional change to the advantage of women and girls, while powerful actors and elite politics continue to dominate.

Generally-speaking, gender inclusion in Yemeni politics is considered by political leaders and many Yemenis to be an alien approach for two main reasons: because it has recently been introduced to formal politics; and secondly, because Yemen has not experienced a strong feminist movement before the Uprising (unlike Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt). When Yemeni women's activists engaged in the public space in the past, they usually represented their tribal political parties and alliances. These engagements have predominantly been authorised by fundamentalist religious leaders, as well as military and tribal leaders (who otherwise deny women's specific demands for gender equality).

The post-Uprising Yemeni political and economic scene has been associated with increasing poverty and vulnerability, where women are among the most disadvantaged. According to a Joint Socio-Economic Assessment (JSEA)[lii], poverty in Yemen increased from 42% in 2009 to 54.5 per cent by the end of 2011. Female-headed households were most affected by this increase. Meanwhile, the World Food Program (WFP) reported that the proportion of food-insecure people increased from 32% in 2009 to 45 per cent in 2012. Despite its responsibility for the well-being of its citizens, the government is itself involved in several military conflicts within Yemen's territory. Socio-economic development policies are ignored by all ruling political parties, and the resources allocated are usurped by corruption. As a young educated woman from Aden explained, "The main player is the government which consisted of the same militants, sheikhs and political elites who were ruling us before." Indeed one of the major problems women faced after the uprising is insecurity that deters the work of international humanitarian relief agencies involved in providing for the basic needs for poor and vulnerable households.

The Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT)

The major structural difference with the OPT case compared with the other four countries is that its key political players (government, political parties and civil society organisations) do not act in a sovereign political climate. Both the Israeli occupation and international donor community play a central role in shaping Palestinian politics and policies, including gender policies and women's

political participation. The division in domestic Palestinian politics and government has added to the complexity of the Palestinian political scene and its effects on women's political participation.

After Hamas's 2006 Gaza Strip victory in the Palestinian Authority (PA)'s legislative elections (Erlanger, 2006), military conflicts between the two main political parties, Fatah and Hamas,[liii] escalated to unprecedented levels and ended in a full-scale military assault by Hamas against Fatah security forces in Gaza on 11 June 2007. Since then Palestinians have been administered by two de-facto governments: the Hamas government in Gaza and the Fatah government in the West Bank.

The political transition resulting from the Israeli-Palestinian 1993 Oslo peace agreement and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994 were critical moments in shifting the agenda of the Palestinian women's movement from the national resistance-centred approaches to a gender institutionalisation approach. As a result, many women's NGOs were established in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. During this phase, the performance and demands of Palestinian women's NGOs did not differ significantly from their counterparts in other Arab countries, in terms of the focus on the equal representation of women in formal politics and women's empowerment in local communities.

In the region, Palestinian women's NGOs have achieved a number of successes through their advocacy and lobbying[liv], namely:

- in 2004, the Palestinian Legislative Council ratified a gender quota of minimum 20% representation of women in local councils[lv];
- women's NGOs adopted the CEDAW and UN resolution 1325[lvi] to defend their equal rights in political decision-making processes;
- on 15 May 2011, women's NGOs campaigned against honour killings and pressured the Palestinian Presidential to issue legal amendments including cancelling Article 340 (of 1960 Penal Code) and changing Article 18 (Mandate penal code number 74 of 1936)[lvii]. The Presidential decree came as a result of Criminal Law Coalition efforts, which included more than six women's, human rights and academic institutions[lviii] defending equal rights for Palestinian women.

Yet, despite the growing feminist vision of women's NGOs in Palestine since 1994, the continuity of the Israeli occupation, the deterioration of livelihoods and socio-economic development and the division between the *de-facto* two governments and their different gender discourses have all intertwined to undermine the gender transformative outcome of women's NGOs struggle for women's equal representation and empowerment.

With regard to the gender policies of the two *de facto* governments in Gaza and West Bank, a prominent Palestinian feminist leader described the difference between the two governments' policies as follows. The West Bank *de facto* government adopts a secular liberal vision focusing on women's strategic needs (legislative and political change) based on the 2008 Palestinian Women's Charter and international instruments such as CEDAW and UNSCR 1325[lix], while the Hamas *de facto* government focuses more on the women's practical needs and on a charity-based development approach following its 1988 Charter. Nevertheless, neither *de facto* government has succeeded in achieving concrete measures of transformative change in terms of women's rights and representation in policy- and decision-making processes, or in improving women's socio-economic status. That being said, the situation of women and marginalised groups in the Gaza Strip is much more dire due to the prolonged siege imposed on the Gaza Strip and the resulting humanitarian crisis in which 80% of the population now depends on humanitarian aid (OXFAM-International, 2013).

Another key actor which both facilitates, as well as constrains, the process of women's political participation in the OPT is the donor agencies. The specific political context of the OPT has made all societal institutions (government and NGOs) reliant mainly on donor funding, As a result, these institutions are greatly affected by donors' political and socio-economic agendas and interests. According to women NGO representatives, to ensure their financial sustainability, they accept donors' agendas and priorities which are rarely in line with grassroots' needs and priorities. According to UN Women (2012), between 2006 and 2011, only 1.3% of international aid to the OPT was allocated to women's organisations to enhance women's empowerment. Donors and the aid structure in the OPT are enmeshed with the politics surrounding the peace talks between OPT and Israel. Thus, some scholars argue that donors in the OPT have contributed: to the demobilisation and NGOisation[lx] of women's mass movements; to the creation of elites far removed from the grassroots; and to enhancing the occupation by freeing Israel of its obligations towards Palestinians in the OPT as stated in the International Human Rights Declaration and the Fourth Geneva Convention.[lxi]

To conclude, nearly three years into the Arab Uprisings, the political scene in the five countries studied might be best characterised by polarisation, insecurity, socio-economic deterioration and growing despair. The Morsi government has been overthrown by a civilian-military coalition. In Tunisia, parliament has been suspended; two leftist politicians were killed, and there is a growing campaign calling for the ouster of the Islamist-led coalition government. In Yemen, the national dialogue process is seriously stalled and the outlook appears grim. In most of the countries surveyed, the discourses and population have become increasingly polarised as conditions worsen. There is also a crisis of representation in which political parties – be they those in power or in the opposition – have failed to develop constituencies, political and economic platforms and generally fail to represent different social groups within the population.

A range of different factors and reasons is often cited to explain the poor performance and even failure of the Islamist-led governments (i.e. economic, ideological, Islamist ideology). McLarney (2013) and El-Mahdi (2013), however, posit that the actual cause of the new governments' failure is not their ideological or identity orientation, but their inability and unwillingness to replace authoritarian models of governance with new governance models centred on the demands of social movements and citizens. The continued adherence to authoritarian governance models and to the neoliberal economic policies embraced by the previous regimes, combined with the persistence of the deep state, makes the various revolutions' perspectives look extremely grim with little opportunity for greater representation of citizens. Notably, in post-revolutionary countries, domestic governance and politics have never operated independently of the key international and regional political players (especially the US, EU, France, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar). These powerful international and regional players have ensured that security and stability policies, combined with trade liberalisation and neoliberal economic policies in these Arab countries remain intact, regardless of whether the rulers are Islamist or secular (Sayigh, 2012; Hansen, 2012; Glain, 2012). Thus, I argue that most of the gender reforms occurring after the Arab uprisings will be unsubstantial and/or a reproduction of the previous regimes' gender dynamics. Only if women manage to gain seats in state institutions independently and in their own right will they gain the power to dismantle the masculinised power structure of the bureaucratic, clientelist and corrupted deep state institutions.[lxii]

2.0 MAPPING THE FORMS OF WOMEN'S ACTIVISM AND LEADERSHIP IN POST-UPRISING ARAB COUNTRIES

Multiple forms of women's activism and leadership have emerged during the Arab uprisings; some forms are new, while others are older and more established. As a result of these engagements, many Arab women played a key role in the different political, youth, labour, development and religious societal entities that all struggled against authoritarian regimes and their oppressive economic policies and security systems. For scholar and activist Rabab El-Mahdi, the diversity of women's activism in post-uprising Arab countries challenges the hegemonic understanding of liberal feminism that sees itself as "the one way to women's progress and betterment". For El-Mahdi, a women's movement "is not only determined as such through the sex of its constituency and participants, but also through its goals and declared consciousness" (El-Mahdi, 2011, 380).

Based on this understanding, this section will shed a light on the map of women's activism emerging in the five Arab countries studied, specifying the most influential forms of activism that women have undertaken through: individual actions; unregistered youth, women's, organised labour or professional initiatives; feminist and human rights institutions; political parties; and community-based organisations. Regardless of the nature of the different politics driving women's activism, this

difference arguably provides a fertile ground for various groups of women to create a wider space for civic engagement: by influencing, complementing and strengthening each other to achieve their specific goals and interests.

2.1 New young women's leaders have emerged from leaderless ordinary women's activism

After the Arab revolutions, Arab women have become widely engaged in grassroots youth and women's activism advocating not only for their civil and political rights but also for the civil rights of all marginalised groups. Large numbers of young moderately ideologised ordinary women have become conscious and enthusiastic about the meaning and the practice of democracy and citizenship; they became involved in different civil society organisations, popular protests and demonstrations. Arguably, consciousness and agentive autonomous actions taken by those young women, regardless of their feminist ideological orientation, are a strong basis for citizenship and for gender transformation. Both religious and non-religious young educated women have created a public space for communicating their ideas and beliefs with others, and arguing and debating with other generations and older political and feminist leadership to prove their belonging to their community and nation (Habermas 2006: 17).

From the early days of the Arab Uprisings, particularly in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Yemen, "ordinary" women – that is, women who had no knowledge or institutional experience of feminism and had also not been involved in politics prior to the Arab Uprisings, acted as political agents aiming at changing the politics of their countries. Ordinary women are those who worked in the informal sector, and other citizens across generations and employment sectors who had suffered daily from their state's neoliberal economic policies and oppressive police and security sectors. They were all brought together demanding the overthrow of the old regimes with their dominant features of clientelism, patronage and corruption. According to Diane Singerman (2013), ordinary people, particularly young women and men, revolted against neoliberalism "that transcends national boundaries and links young people and other activists, cross-nationally".

The Arab uprisings created public spaces where those ordinary women had access to newer and wider audiences who welcomed their voices. In a traditional tribal society like Yemen, "one of the biggest surprises of the peaceful protests that swept Yemen in 2011 has been the visibility and participation of women in the calls for change"[lxiii]. As the Yemeni country report indicated, women see their participation as part of a wider struggle against broader systems of oppression and in support of justice and equality for all Yemeni citizens. Issues of livelihood and insecurity emerged at the top of their agendas, along with the poor state of the economy, unemployment, inflation and the lack of basic social services, such as health care and education.

Aziz Othan, a 49-year-old woman protester, was shot in the head by snipers while trying to protect younger protesters in Taiz, Yemen in 2011. A few minutes before she died, she said: "Young men, march after me. I will clear the path for you." Wardah Al-Hashidi is another strong example of how the Yemeni uprising has come up with new women's leaders. Al-Hashidi is from a tribal family and participated in the uprising by providing first aid to bleeding and injured people. Al-Hashidi said: "I was a housewife before but I had to go out and help injured youth because it is safer for me as a woman, in Yemeni culture that respects the presence of women in the conflict areas." Today she is one of the leaders of the Raqeeb organisation for human rights, and her life has completely changed. A reflection of the new model of women's activism and leadership was illustrated in Hajja Governorate, a northern mountainous area near Sana'a. For the first time in Yemen's history, a group of rural uneducated women decided to block the main road to protest against frequent fighting and the widespread availability of guns amongst Houthis and Islah groups.

Neither the frequent violent sexual assaults on Egypt's Tahrir Square, nor the slander by Yemeni religious and/or pro-regime forces as a result of their participation[lxiv], stopped these ordinary women. They remained steadfast and present in the popular protests, challenging the patriarchal social and cultural norms, without labelling their political activism as feminist. As stated by the focus group participants, on International Women's Day on March 8th 2011 and 2012, masses of ordinary women participated in women's marches in Egypt and Tunisia with banners with modest slogans and demands: for a fair constitution, an end to sexual harassment, women's inclusion in decision-making structures, and for equity, dignity and respect.

The informal networks between traditional women leaders and/or feminist leaders and the leaderless "ordinary" women invoked the agency of the latter to institutionalise and publicly recognise and value the political voices of the former. In Egypt, the blogger Asmaa Mahfouz became a key figure in the 6 April Youth Movement, which has played a leading role in shaping Egyptian politics. Sally Toma and Mahfouz were also founders and active members of Egypt's Coalition of the Youth of the Revolution established in June 2012[lxv]. This is just one of a large number of coalitions that were initiated and led by Islamist and non-Islamist women who were not publically recognised before the uprisings, such as "*Shoft Taharosh*", which organised several sit-ins protesting against sexual assault in Tahrir Square.

Other examples of women's activism from Tunisia should also be cited here. Five ordinary women participated in women's focus groups in Douar Heisher in Tunis, the capital. These women indicated that they used to be inactive members of the main Tunisian labour union, UGTT. Since the Tunisian revolution, these women assert that they have become widely engaged in the organised protests and demonstrations led by the UGTT, as well as being involved in organising and mobilising for political and human rights campaigns led by the UGTT. Their engagement in the protests allowed them to

realise their influential role which invoked their critical gender agency. They also shared that women in the UGTT started to advocate for gender quotas within the union hierarchy. A woman teacher from Tunis and active union member for years shared that: "the Tunisian uprising has woken us up to our leadership position within the union. We are the ones who mobilise the workers and do everything on the ground, but when it comes to political decisions, we are ignored". An unemployed woman from Douar Heisher, who became an active member of the union after the uprising, said: "I was only registered in the union to find a job. Now I have become so active. So, the union opened a door for me to be involved in other organisations and to create a very good network with other activists in youth and women's groups."

According to literature on citizenship, David Chidester argues that "citizenship is actualised in and through public participation", through which individuals (men and women) are able to …construct their identity (2002:17-18). Citizenship is not fulfilled without realising gender as both "a status – or an identity – and a practice or process of relating to the social world through the exercise of rights/protections and the fulfilment of obligations. Gender identity is an integral element for understanding citizenship" (Meer and Sever, 2004), which entails attention to both public and private sphere matters ranging from the right of women to confer citizenship on their children to sexuality, reproduction and the family issues like welfare and support for childcare.

This exercise of citizenship by women was illustrated during the early intensive protests and demonstrations undertaken by Arab women. Women protesters explored, discovered and experienced the power of their new voices and influence in their countries' politics. They enjoyed their influential role in their everyday life encounters. According to the many young women we interviewed, through their participation in protests, they gained greater moral and social respect from their male partners, colleagues and family members. This constituted a critical historical moment - when large numbers of ordinary women who had never questioned their gender considering it as a matter of nature - have awakened through the collective efforts of Arab revolution to their specific gender identity beside other identities based on their class, religion and ethnicity. Women's awakening to their gender identity as part of their public participation has been illustrated in their increased engagement in the newly-emerged women's coalitions and campaigns for protecting women's rights and fighting against sexual harassment in the protest squares. They have also activated their role in non-feminist organisations such as political parties, development, environment and health organisations, and labour and students unions.

2.2 Women's leadership in political parties and the dynamics of power maneuvering

Regardless of their political orientation, political parties and their male leadership have been urged by the Arab uprisings to invest in women's political participation and particularly to serve the political

parties' partisan power interests. With the acknowledgment that women were instrumentalised by the political parties in general and by Islamist parties in particular (Kassem, 2012), this instrumental dynamic of women's engagements in political parties has opened an opportunity for some individual women's activists to be critical of the conservatism of their political parties, especially with regard to women's rights. Nawal al-Kebsi, a Houthi affiliate, noted that most of the Houthi leaders are socially conservative towards women's political participation and activism. A similar situation applies to Islah women representatives who also affirmed that conservative views against women are due to certain religious leaders who affect the institutional decisions of the party.

In the different post-revolutionary Arab countries, the field research shows nonetheless that both moderate and radical Islamist parties have efficiently facilitated the political participation of their female members, especially in rural and poor communities, and for several reasons. First of all, not unlike the previous secular ruling parties, moderate Islamist parties such as Tunisia's Ennahda, the Moroccan PJD, and to a lesser extent, Islah party in Yemen, Hamas in the OPT and MB in Egypt were keen to gain international legitimacy for their moderate Islamist agendas and calls for citizenship (Mustafa and Yousef, 2013)[lxvi]. Second, these parties have historically relied on women to mobilise local communities, to generate a public constituency and more recently, to mobilise voters during elections – all of which enabled them to come into political power (Pruzan-Jørgensen, 2012). Third, the ruling Islamist parties in Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen have encouraged women's political participation as a means to strategise their disputes with both secular and radical Salafi opponents. As stated in the Yemeni country report, the conservative opposition Shi'i Houthi movement appears more active in instrumentalising their women's participation in public protests and demonstrations supporting the Houthi's cause than the leftist Yemen Socialist Party (YSP). That being said, this strategy used by both the Houthis and the Islah party in Yemen does not necessarily mean that they support equal rights for women. Rather, the two conflicting Islamist groups recruited women to publicly advocate for their political agendas. In Tunisia, Ennahda has also encouraged many women members to work in local communities to teach people about moderate interpretations of Islam and undermine the political power of radical Islamists.

However, the effect and reaction of women to their involvement in Islamist political parties varies from critical to favorable, depending on the experiences of Islamist women activists in politics and their position of power within the Islamist parties, and also due to the level of conservatism or pragmatism adopted by the political party. Throughout the interviews with women members of the ruling Islamist parties, two lines of reaction emerged: those who were fully supportive of the more conservative line that characterises the party's ideological and political agenda such as in MB in Egypt and in Yemen; and others who supported the moderate pragmatic line themselves being critical of their own role and position within parties such as Ennahda and the PJD. The first group has more influence in the case of FJP in Egypt, while the second group appears more influential in the Islamist

parties of Tunisia and Morocco and to a lesser extent in Yemen's Islah party and Hamas in the OPT. The power of the first group of women is exemplified in the leading position they attained within the party and the limited influence they made on the parties' gender agenda (Jad, 2010; Yadav, 2010). Hamas, for example, has several influential women leaders who are of equal standing with male conservative leaders. Although they advocate for women's participation in the Hamas movement and its government, they are against the demands for gender equality discourse. One of them said: "We don't agree with absolute equality between men and women, and we refuse gender. Gender is against our religion".

In Egypt, women FJP representatives expressed even more conservative views. As mentioned earlier, FJP representative, Azza Al-Garaf, not only criticised CEDAW as a universal framework for protecting equal rights for women, but called for reviewing and possibly rescinding some national legislation criminalising female genital mutilation (FGM). The more socially-conservative Islamist women's voices have however had to confront an increasing number of moderate Islamist women and voices. Secular and Islamist women activists have come into contact at popular protests and through national coalitions and committees established by government and civil society organisations. The gender debates which ensued have often become heated not only between Islamist and secular women, but also between conservative and moderate Islamist women who belong to the same political parties. This debate has not yet occurred in Yemen because, again based on the Yemen country report, the majority of women's organisations opt to work within an Islamist framework. During the field research, Islamist women leaders representing Ennahda in Tunisia, and the PJD in Morocco displayed more moderate positions on women's rights, namely: accepting women's rights (incl. public statements that they will not oppose or rescind CEDAW), accepting women and girls' right to education, to public political participation[lxvii]. Most indicated that they do not oppose CEDAW as an international framework to protect equal rights for women.

Mirroring their party's official statements, Ennahda women assert that the PSC established by Bourguiba and amended to women's advantage by Ben-Ali will remain intact. In Morocco, the PJD had developed its strategy to become politically legitimised by the King through accepting to govern in accordance with the progressive gender reforms initiated by the Monarch before and after the uprisings in accordance to CEDAW. According to PJD officials, the King's legal reforms are consistent with Islam, and the female members of the Justice and Welfare Party advocate for a more moderate gender interpretation. The latter emphasises that the message of Islam has been somewhat distorted and misunderstood as a result of social conditions and rigid patriarchal cultural traditions. These members thus call for the initiation of *ijtihad* (involving re-examining and re-contextualising religious texts). However women's relative positions of power within the different Islamist political parties vary. Interviews with Islamist women's leaders in Ennahda and the PJD, and to a lesser extent in Hamas reveal that they are invested in their political leadership to maneuver for power and to

negotiate on gender- and non-gender-related issues. A woman PJD MP said, "We avoid conflicts by initiating dialogue. We agree on common things. We fight for women's rights and dignity. We call for their equal access to decision-making positions, and we combat all forms of violence and discrimination against women."

While most schools in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are single-sex schools and have been for decades, Hamas intends to introduce legislation to be effective in 2014 to fully segregate all schools[lxviii]. During the debate about Hamas's proposed law, a Hamas representative emphasised her moderate position on women's rights while defending her party's agenda. "There is no such policy of sex segregation in schools. At least I didn't receive any official letter on this issue. However, I think we have the right to Islamise society." Supporting this statement, a human rights activist from Gaza said: "people say Hamas wants to impose the veil on women and sex segregation! I am not saying that Hamas doesn't want to do that. Hamas is a political party at the end, they play politics... the veil and sex segregation are already there, no need for Hamas to impose it."

Yemen's case differs slightly. Women Islah members have prioritised their loyalty to Islah party over any other institution they are involved in. Nabila Saeed, Islah's media officer and president of a well-established emergent NGO called Fikrah (thought), defends the importance of her party for achieving her political goals. She views her political party as being the only institution within the Yemeni political and tribal context that provides her with social security and also encourages her to have access to power dynamics and political leadership. Saeed gave an example of how her involvement in Islah helped her to generate the support of the tribal sheikhs, who invited her to organise activities in local communities and to mobilise rural women. Islamist women's leaders such as Saeed living in a predominantly tribal and patriarchal society and culture describe the ways in which they bargain with patriarchal structures' to achieve their goal of generating their public constituency and representation in local communities. This characterization is reminiscent of Deniz Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of 'bargaining with patriarchy', which is mentioned above in this report.

Despite the moderate gender vision of some Islamist party members in the post-revolutionary Arab countries, their vision has remained confined by the Islamist parties' wider ideological and political agendas, which do not challenge the structural causes of women's subordination. Any moderation of the Islamist parties' gender agenda still stiuates women's rights within the rights of family, where women's economic rights are based on a gendered division of labour (given the importance of women's labour in the household economy and in household caring work like childcare and eldercare). As McLarney (2013) also points out, this view of women's work also includes "private enterprise, which clearly speaks the neoliberal language of women's equality with men, of the complementarity of their labour, of the importance of finding a gendered balance between work in the family and outside the family, in the household economy and in "private enterprise".

On the other hand, secular liberal feminists have also used the term 'patriarchal bargain' to achieve some sort of power within a masculinised power system. In Egypt, some secular liberal feminists representing secular liberal political parties have also proclaimed their support for the Egyptian military with the purpose of unseating and removing the MB. Over the past few months, the feminist leaders of liberal political parties and representatives of the National Council of Egyptian women who largely represent Mubarak's political party have avoided mentioning the military forces violations of human rights against the MB and their supporters, including those who are not Islamists, based on their assumption that MB are posing a major threat to the future of the country (Abdel Kouddous, 2013; Traub, 2013). This example of Egyptian liberal feminists' alliances with the former regime and the military raises a fundamental and critical question: on what political, economic and social basis should women shape their political alliances to legitimise their struggle for women's equal rights, regardless of differences in religion and political affiliation? Bargaining with patriarchy may be a necessary strategy during the process of women's empowerment in a certain context. However, the legitimacy of this strategy is only proven when women leaders, whether secular liberal or Islamist, demonstrate their political willingness and capacity for power manoeuvring to dismantle such tribal and patriarchal structures, and to act as representative of the masses of women rather than the political masculinised elites.

2.3 Established liberal feminist activism: macro-level political influence

Arab liberal feminist organisations have generally focused their advocacy efforts on changing discriminatory legislation and specifically on the personal status or family codes. Throughout most of the Arab region, constitutions guarantee women's equality. However, these codes subvert women's citizenship and equality by making women subservient to their male guardians and male kin. Liberal feminists have worked to influence and introduce gender equality into this legislation – but with varying degrees of success in each country. At the same time, however, based on both the literature and empirical evidence, many Arab liberal feminist organisations shared three major characteristic shortcomings, namely: elitism and failure to develop a public constituency; being misled by state feminism[lxix]; and driven by donor agencies' policies and agendas (Jad, 2004).

These critiques are also supported during the field work by some feminists who were involved in those organisations before the revolutions. A lecturer in Gender and women's studies from SFAX University in Tunisia criticised liberal feminism by saying: "We [Tunisian liberal feminists] have to admit that we did not actually struggle to gain our rights. All our rights that we have been enjoying were granted to us by the state. This is the time that we have to assess our feminist discourse and to develop a new collective feminist approach that attracts women in interior regions".

In Egypt, there were some fundamental changes or splits which began with the involvement of young Egyptian women activists in the early 2000s demonstrations and subsequent 2004 Kifaya movement which were arguably the first open street protests against the Mubarak regime. As already mentioned, in a small 2005 Cairo Kifaya demonstration, women protesters endured sexual harassment at the hands of NDP supporters and thugs, while the police looked on (Sika & Khodary, 2012, 96-7). This experience triggered a web- and cell-phone based mobilization of some 500 women from across the political spectrum. These women activists were able to generate consensus for action against the regime and called for the resignation of the Minister of the interior. Sika and Khodary (2012) view these developments as being the signs and/or seeds of a new feminist movement involving a critical shift from the previous "Women and development" approach which failed to challenge the structural dimensions of women's subordination to a women's rights framework informed by feminism but located within an anti-authoritarian struggle (96-97).

The Islamist parties' rise to formal political power appears to have prompted an awakening of old feminist organisations prompting them to rethink their discourses and practices of feminism. Many have a wealth of feminist knowledge, networks and institutional experiences related to how to consolidate their influence on policy- and law-makers and on constitutional amendment. These groups have established a considerable number of women's coalitions incorporating large numbers of women's and human rights organisations, as well as developing connections with regional and international women's forums, committees and organisations. They have also invested in and developed solid relations with donors to secure financial and technical resources for emerging women's and youth initiatives.

As revealed during the field work particularly in Tunisia and Morocco, the shifting of some feminist organisations to work in local communities and to prioritise women's socio-economic empowerment has contributed to increase their popularity in local communities. In an interview conducted[lxx] with three women representing AFTURD[lxxi] in Tunisia, they emphasised that the Tunisian feminist movement was misled by Ben-Ali's regime, which left it characterised as elitist and secular (*laïque)*. They asserted that their organization established several women's organisations in the interior regions aiming to empower poor and rural women.

In Morocco, 20 leading women's rights associations collaborated through the coalition of "the Feminist Spring for Equality and Democracy". Following the uprising, this coalition began building new networks and alliances with local NGOs across Morocco contributing to widen their representation in remote areas. On International Women's Day 2013, women and human rights associations, development and cultural organisations and others representing the Amazigh movement convened a rally in Rabat. The main slogans chanted included: "I want all my rights", "Equality today

before tomorrow", and "My body belongs to me". The demonstrators proclaimed their wish for a modern and democratic state and society, based on gender equality and the promotion of women's rights. On July 6th, 2013, the ADFM, the leading Moroccan liberal feminist organisation, convened a national meeting of feminist associations to discuss the implementation of the constitution through an Organic Law on appointments to high public office[lxxii]. These are all examples of the active role liberal feminist activists and their organisations have played at the macro-political level.

In Tunisia, similar to their Moroccan counterparts, secular feminist and human rights organisations initially established the 'Coalition for women of Tunisia' in September 2012 and then, later the coalition of *Harayer* Tunis (the Free Women of Tunisia). Through these coalitions, large numbers of liberal feminist and human rights organisations and political party activists and unions got involved in collective action and attracted large numbers of non-feminist women protesters. In both Morocco and Tunisia, leading feminist and human rights organisations have played a seminal role during the redrafting of the constitution. Tunisian respondents confirmed that feminist and human rights organisations and coalitions were consulted in the constitutional reform process by the NCA, and their recommendations were welcomed[lxxiii].

The Arab uprisings have also encouraged some Tunisian feminist figures and organisations, previously accused by local people of being radical secular and/or elitists opposed to religion, to rethink their feminist discourse, practices and strategy for pursuing women's empowerment. They do not appear homogeneous in terms of their feminist discourse and strategies of women's political mobilisation. The field work in Tunisia and Morocco, and to a lesser extent in Egypt and the OPT shows that feminist organisations are divided into two groups: radical and pragmatic feminists. The first group tend to focus on women's individual liberties and seeking full gender equality. These feminists make an appeal for a cultural revolution, explicitly identifying Arab and Islamic culture as the source of misogyny in the region. The latter group has developed its pragmatic feminist vision reflecting on the historical expansion of Islamic women's activism and they are more concerned about reconciling universal feminist principles with local cultural values and practices.[lxxiv]

The well-established feminist organisations in Morocco include: the UAF (the Union of Women's Action), the AMDF (Moroccan Association of Women's Rights) and the ADFM (Democratic Association of Women of Morocco). While the UAF expressed its allegiance to Islamic principles in its social change efforts, the AMDF and the ADFM were more explicit in expressing their reliance on international norms. The later feminist organisations tend to view patriarchy and Islam as being responsible for women's subjugation and inferior status. Leila Majdouli[lxxv] stressed that the fact that the PJD does not believe in women's equal rights in the public space would have a direct negative impact on gender equality. She said: "There isn't fear just about the development of rights but there is

fear about development itself because if these people (Islamists) don't believe in equality and say that equality is at home, what can you expect from them?"

In contrast pragmatic liberal feminists are quite convinced that the path of gender equality and women's rights in Morocco will continue progressing. When asked about the future of women's rights in Morocco, Oum Lbanin Lahlou, a liberal women deputy of UC, replied assertively[lxxvi] that there is no risk of regressing in women's rights, especially after the constitutional reform. She said:

> we can only be hopeful and optimistic about the future. The struggle for Women's right is a slow and painful process. It takes a long time to achieve full gender equality rights but in Morocco we have got what it takes to achieve our goals, namely the constitution. The only problem though is at the implementation level; it takes also a political will and a strong civic society.

Similarly in Tunisia, an increasing number of feminist activists and scholars have taken on board these critiques about their previous practice. Some have adopted a more pragmatic approach vis-à-vis religion and are willing to work with Islamist women activists, for instance. Other feminist organisations, like AFTURD, have also begun engaging at the local community level with poor women in marginalized areas to combat poverty and marginalisation.

Despite the disappointing constitutional reform process regarding women's rights in Egypt, feminist organisations' activism flourished following the Uprising. During the drafting of the new constitution, a coalition of more than 70 secular and liberal organisations working on gender issues convened to struggle against the President's constitution[lxxvii]. These organisations called for increased women's representation on both the National Council of Women and the constitution drafting committee. The coalition incorporated old and new women's rights groups, such as the Women and memory forum[lxxviii], Nazra association, Fouada watch, the National front for Egypt's women, and Baheya ya Masr. These coalitions have managed to attract large number of ordinary women who participated in protests against the Morsi government for failing to protect women's rights. Baheya Ya Misr coalition for instance encompasses youth (men and women) from different backgrounds willing and capable of reaching out to various segments of society. Recognising the increasing importance of Islamist groups in power, Baheya members adopted a pragmatic feminist approach by showing interest in listening and debating with religious scholars about sharia and women's status and rights.

Palestinian liberal feminist organisations also established number of women's and human rights coalitions aimed at harmonising Palestinian laws and regulations with international conventions and resolutions such as CEDAW and UNSCR 1325[lxxix]. The coalitions and forums include: the NGO forum on violence against women (*Al Muntada*), the Criminal law coalition, the Personal status law coalition, the Palestinian forum for safe abortion, and the National Committee to support women in the workforce.

Despite the efficacy of advocacy and lobbying strategies by well-established women and human rights organisations and coalitions, these organisations need to continue to work and build up popular constituencies amongst the masses of poor and rural women, particularly in remote regions. A key part of this constituency-building or movement-building process involves a dialogic iterative process over time in which these feminist activists develop their language, discourse and agenda in conversation with women from these segments of society. This challenge and opportunity is not however exclusive to feminist organisations but to many social movement actors.

While principles, values and norms can and arguably should inform the agendas and platforms of social movements like the women's movements in each Arab country, values, principles and universal human rights norms are not and cannot substitute for the development of a women's or a feminist agenda. To be successful, such agendas need to address issues of local/national concern and resonate with local people (as the Arab uprisings initially demonstrated so well). Many leading feminist organisations in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt having pursued alliances with secular liberal and leftist parties (Gray, 2012; Storm, 2010), but have failed to develop and adapt universalist liberal feminist human rights principles into a relevant local discourse that resonates with the socio-economic and political context of masses of women – be they in urban, rural or remote areas. None of the interviewed women's NGOs mentioned that they have developed long term programs aiming for socio-economic empowerment of poor women, or increasing employability for young educated women. Most of the projects and activities that feminist organisations were involved in during the period of field research are related to short term projects aiming to raise women's awareness about their international human rights and advocacy for legal reform and political participation in formal politics. As commented by number of women's community based activists interviewed in local communities, the language used in such activities is better suited to professional and middle-class women, but not poor uneducated women. Some respondents critical of feminist organisations in Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and the OPT, claimed that the challenge facing liberal feminist organisations is their lack of human capacity to work directly with poor and rural women and build up their constituencies with women. These organisations are subsequently seen by local people in almost all countries studied as alien, representing Western culture, and driven by donor agendas. Dr. Ibtihaj al-Khiba, a Yemeni development activist, criticised the relationship between women's CBOs and donors by saying: "donor policies are imposed top-down, and local CSOs compete to get more funding rather than to fulfil the needs of women and communities".

The Secular-Islamic binary and the question of feminist legitimacy

Discussions and interviews with liberal feminists reveal that many still perceive themselves as the sole legitimate feminist group, genuinely defending women's equal rights based on the universal

concept of gender equality. Some radical feminists have refused to integrate religion and cultural specificity into their analysis of women's subordination and power relations narrowing and reducing their feminist understanding to a singular notion of women's rights (Bona, 2013). This is illustrated in the narrative of number of liberal feminists interviewed who advocate for full gender equality regardless of cultural specificity in Arab societies. For example, Saïda Bajjou, a feminist and social assistant in charge of legal issues at the Ytto Foundation in Morocco, explained that "today, the Constitution does not really guarantee women's full equality with men as it places the Shari'a above international conventions"(Sefrioui, 2012). This conceptualisation progresses accordingly along a linear pathway of women's empowerment based on individual freedom and autonomy within the international universal framework.

Before and after the uprisings, Islamist women managed to expand their political engagement in formal and informal politics; some have succeeded in articulating a moderate gender agenda and discourse that is complementary to the liberal feminist discourse, which has become commonly called Islamic feminism[lxxx]. Most importantly, they succeeded in generating a solid constituency in poor local communities. Islamic women's activism and community-based engagement can be an important complement to liberal feminism's legislative reform project; in many cases, Islamic women's activism operates at a popular level and enjoys wider local legitimacy although both forms of activism are necessary for securing and protecting women's rights. Accordingly, Islamic women activists constitute key women players in enhancing women's political participation and empowerment. Except the case of Yemen which has not experienced secular-Islamist binary within women's organisations, this binary exists and is reiterated discursively by and among radical liberal feminists and Islamist feminists in Morocco, Tunisian, Egypt and the OPT, and in the process, each group homogenises the other. The field work for this study demonstrated that Islamist women leaders are more tolerant and subtle than radical feminists when it comes to discuss the possibilities of dialogue and negotiation, and to reconcile on common women's issues such as education, employment, child care and reproductive health[lxxxi].

The difference between the various Islamist-secular feminist approaches is concentrated in framing the understanding of women's rights, development and empowerment. Women Islamist leaders in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and the OPT emphasise the legitimacy of the women's empowerment approach comes out of a respect for the socio-cultural specificity of their countries, and by questioning and challenging the constructed socio-cultural specificities; secular liberal feminists generally consider universal human rights conventions and norms such as CEDAW as their source of legitimacy. Yet, there is no homogeneity among these two broad clusters, as each has a spectrum of positions within them – ranging from radical to more pragmatic interpretations of women's rights. Islamist women's leadership adopts a holistic approach to promoting women's rights within the

family unit. They do not treat women's rights in isolation or irrespective of the family context. In their assessment, they establish a close link between women and family; when these links are weakened or eroded, women, family and society may be threatened and moral depravity may develop.

Throughout discussions with Islamist women in the five countries, they clearly downplay the ideological debate on women's issues and prefer instead to be involved in more concrete action and voluntary work on the ground. Despite the limitation of the Islamist family-centred approach in relation to controversial issues such as inheritance laws, public-domestic work, sexuality and family planning, the trend of pragmatism among moderate Islamic women towards encouraging the interpretation of Islam gives a space for developing their approach to be more compatible to the universal women's rights. For example, with regard to one of the controversial issue of equal rights for women, a female representative of Ennahda expressed a flexible view towards single mothers by saying:

> Secular women think that we are against the protection of the rights of single mothers. This is not true. Our approach towards single mothers is that this social phenomenon is not a free choice taken by women...We need to work together to reduce this social problem by providing poor women with the material and technical resources they need to avoid them being vulnerable.

The feminist reactions to the Islamist women's discourse are obvious in Tunisia and Morocco more than in Egypt, Yemen and OPT. However, more conciliatory feminist voices that encourage dialogue and cooperation between Islamist and liberal feminists are often faced with considerable ostracism by radical feminist actors who do not trust the Islamist political project. Nadia Abu-Nahla, a prominent liberal feminist leader in the OPT shared the same view with her counterpart liberal feminists in Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt that: "There is no way to work together, we don't agree on the basics." Moderate or pragmatic feminists on the other hand encourage dialogue with moderate Islamist women considering religion as an important element for strategizing women's struggle for their rights. Radia Belhaj Zekri, former president of AFTURD in Tunisia, for instance stated: "Tunisian progressive feminists should deal with religion in a resilient and tactical way, as a sign of respect to Tunisian society. We need to encourage the reinterpretation of religion, to avoid leaving the Islamists to manipulate the field of religious interpretation". Islamist women's leaders in Morocco and Tunisia consider the lack of dialogue between Islamist and secular liberal women, coupled with the unfamiliarity of secular liberal feminists with Islamist women's perspectives and actions on women's rights and empowerment, as the only reason for such disparity.

The analysis of the various narratives of both Islamist women and liberal feminists provokes a middle ground understanding based on the experiences of Islamic and non-Islamic women's activism for their rights. Following the concept of 'plural autonomy' used by Monica Mookherjee (2009), Arab women may autonomously utilize diverse forms of agency (including non-liberal ones) based on their position

vis-à-vis cultural structures. Individual women do not only act their agency according to liberal standards of self-interest and reason, but they are also motivated by the desire to attain certain cultural identity that enhances their agency and positionality within their cultural context. Within this understanding of how the agency of women is multiply constitutionalised (Ahmed, 2012; Kareem, 2012) , both Islamist and liberal feminists can find a way to avoid Islamic-feminist binary and find a common ground to reconcile between universal rights and cultural specificity.

2.4 Newly-emerged women's and youth community-based activism

While well-institutionalised old and new feminist organisations and coalitions embrace and articulate liberal feminist discourse, they have played a seminal role nationally in advocating and lobbying for women's equal rights and representation in formal politics. Grassroots women – women's activists based in their local communities in poor rural and urban areas - and their organisations have also been invaluable in community service provision and mobilisation of poor and rural women. They have also acknowledged and even represented the actual needs and problems faced by the most marginalised social groups. The country empirical studies have found that the Islamist-secular binary that surfaces in debates between feminist and Islamist women's organisations at the national level has failed to acknowledge the contributions of women community activists. The case in Yemen is different because most women's community based organisations work within the tribal and Islamic framework, and mostly affiliated to Islamist political parties.

As the political spaces opened up for civil society (Khatib, 2013), middle-aged educated women and educated youth were among the first social groups to establish community based organisations (CBOs) aimed at providing material services, as well as awareness raising for poor women and unemployed youth living in marginalised slums, neighbourhoods and rural areas. In contrast to some feminist organisations working at the national level, their major concern is to focus on and represent the socio-economic problems and needs of poor women and families and to build up the capacity of marginalised groups to manage their livelihood. Issues of legal reform and representation in macro-politics are rarely mentioned as a priority among women and youth community-based activists.

Another interesting finding related to recently-emerged CBOs is that few of them are registered as women's organisations. Yet, most CBOs interviewed were not women's rights organisations. They were headed by educated middle-aged women, young women and men; their major focus of work is poor families and unemployed youth. There are two justifications for these findings. First of all, middle-aged religious educated women have often been involved in charity-based activities before the uprisings. They have invested in the civic freedom emerged by the uprisings to establish their charity-based organisations as the case in Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen. New youth leaders embrace the first form of young women's activism mentioned earlier - that is, transferring the collective sense of

activism from the protests to local communities, where concrete forms of activism can be more visible and recognised. Many youth in Tunisia and Yemen have managed to move beyond ideological, political and gender disparities to focus on issues of unemployment, poverty and insecurity and social disintegration. A young female representative of CBO from the West Bank, the OPT, emphasised that women's CBOs are more cooperating with each other and they are less influenced by political and ideological division between Hamas and Fatah like big women's NGOs working at national level. CBOs work for her requires field activities and daily interaction with poor women and their actual needs.

The majority of the newly emerged CBOs lack institutional and human capacity and work on *ad hoc* basis reflecting the desire and willingness to voluntarily serve their local people and community. Nevertheless, CBOs have not escaped from the influence of key political players whether discursively or on their work. Therefore, CBOs are also polarised reflecting the broader national political and ideological polarisation. They may be grouped into two major clusters: the majority are charitable, faith-based associations affiliated to Islamist political parties and/or movements; and development and youth CBOs that adopt moderate ideological and political views: some are affiliated to political parties and some are not.

Despite their different political affiliations, the two groups of CBOs work in multiple development sectors such as education, environment, health, cultural activities, vocational training and job creation in addition to humanitarian assistance to needy families. Currently, few work on advocacy, lobbying or awareness-raising on women's rights. The newly-emerged CBOs in the five countries surveyed are all led by local women and men, who draw on their familial, tribal and political networks in local communities to generate resources to operate their CBOs. Despite their large number, recently-emerged registered CBOs were excluded from participating in local governance and development planning in all five countries surveyed with little regard for their substantial role in service provision to poor people. Due to the persistence of centralised models of local governance, CBOs and particularly their youth leaders are excluded from decision- and policy-making processes and positions by both national and local governance institutions and political parties, and are rarely consulted in policy development or planning processes either at national and local levels. Some Yemeni and Tunisian women community activists intimated that CBOs lack of financial and institutional capacity has forced some community leaders to jeopardise their institutional autonomy by linking up with certain political or tribal community leaders to gain material support for the continued operation of their associations. One woman who chaired a newly emerged CBO in Tunis said: "all these CBOs that you found operating properly and they provide services to poor people, they are supported by political parties in order to be their mobilising arm in local communities."

Within the prolonged context of insecurity in the OPT and Yemen, for young women's activists working in CBOs, being affiliated to political parties provides them a source of legitimacy and security, although it undermines their effective participation, autonomy and empowerment. A female community activist from Gaza said: "We can't avoid political party frameworks – anything we do should be done within a certain political framework. If we start any initiative as non-partisan, it will end up under a political party in one way or another". In Yemen, lack of access to influential tools, social insecurity, political conflict, and the exclusive culture in political parties have all had a devastating effect on women-focused CSOs. Because of this, these organisations have failed to remain independent and establish their own civil institutional performance and professional careers.

The changing political scene in post-uprising countries has been advantageous to Islamist parties in making the work of Islamist-based CBOs more visible in sharp contrast to the pre-revolutionary period. Islamist-affiliated CBOs of both moderate and radical Islamist orientations are central in local women's mobilisation – acting at times as the mobilising arm of Islamist political parties in remote rural areas. Very few names of leading national feminist organisations were raised during fieldwork in local communities. Despite the critique of some Islamist women's community activists of their political parties, they favour to keep their CBOs connected to the Islamist parties in order to legitimise their social interventions in local communities. Abeer Abdulrahman, member of Islah Shura council in Aden claimed that: "women's CBOs are affected by the agendas of various political forces, either Islamist of secular". Najla Al Houthi, a leading member of the Houthi group, admitted that Houthi CBOs are established to serve the political agenda of the Houthi movement. Nevertheless, these women argue that for women community activists to be affiliated to political parties provide them with greater space to work in local communities generating social recognition for women's work. This is however a subtle strategy used by Islamist women to mobilise for the political agendas of their political parties. This strategy may give these women a wider space to challenge the societal patriarchal and tribal gender norms, and open an opportunity to get involved in supporting women to improve women's education, work and reproductive health, and to fight against domestic violence and early marriage – issues that are officially stated as part of Islah party social agenda[lxxxii]. One example of the influence is mentioned during the field work: Nabila Saeed of the Islah Party declared that after the 2011 revolution tribal sheikhs started calling her and other women leaders or asking for meetings to discuss political issues or exchange views.

The distinctions between women's CBOs related to their political affiliation impede networking, collective efforts and the institutionalisation of CBOs because any strategy for institutional and human capacity building will remain constrained by the agendas of political parties and their hierarchal and patriarchal structures. Most CBOs in the studied countries are still dependent on political parties or on the few leading feminist organisations that instrumentalise women's CBOs to implement projects in rural and poor communities. Some respondents in the OPT, Tunisia and Yemen, indicated that their

CBOs act merely as implementers of development projects and programs for big women's NGOs that are neither designed by them, nor represent the prioritised needs and issues of their local communities. However, these larger national organisations are often the only material and funding sources available to CBOs to operate in the local communities.

The widespread existence and the power of women's Islamic-based CBOs in local communities, in almost all the studied Arab countries, do not leave a space for women's rights organisations to intervene in these communities. This situation is a great challenge for women's rights organisations to reshape their strategies of women's political participation to focus on concrete issues related to the socio-economic priorities of poor women, in order to generate public constituency among the masses of poor women, who would be the strong base for legalising women's equal rights against conservative radical Islamists at the macro political level..

Unregistered politically independent youth and women's community initiatives

Beyond the two major categories of formally-registered Islamist and non-Islamist CBOs affiliated to various national parties and institutions, a marginal number of youth and women's groups and initiatives emerged which are opposed to the widespread political polarisation of society institutions. These groups and initiatives focus on the actual socio-economic problems of their local communities. These initiatives have attracted many young women and men, who stated during the field work that they are fed up with the Islamist-secular binary and its fragmenting, polarising effects.

This form of activism relies on the individual capacities, commitments and contributions of group members, as well as some donations by local people. This form of activism purposely avoids relying on actors and resources from beyond the community, and hence, the activists think that this form of activism is the most sustainable because it relies on the community's existing financial, human and institutional capacities to organize collective actions. However, in really poor, isolated neighbourhoods and communities, the resources which can be mobilized may be quite scarce – so, the capacity to provide large-scale services to many people is severely limited.

These community-based initiatives or associations tend to be grounded in moderate secular mindset because they avoid factional politics and religion in their civic institutional work. Youth initiatives such as "Young leadership entrepreneurs" in Tunisia and the "15 March: Youth against division" movement in the OPT are important examples of young men and women exercising their agency in a critical and constructive manner by resisting fragmentation, polarisation and elitism fuelled by the traditional political parties and feminist organisations.

These youth activists are critical of sex-segregated forms of women's activism and they asserted during the field work that they prefer working with youth and development organisations than in separate women's organisations, where they have common issues of concern. Young men and women

are also critical of the generational gap between older political and women's organisations and youth and the centralised form of leadership. Ahlam of the "Young Leadership Entrepreneurs" in Tunisia intimated that:

> Old feminist organisations do not create a new generation of leaders who may threaten their power. These organisations are led by old feminists who have a strong network with the international world, but they still do not know how to give us, young men and women, a space to learn and to develop our skills of leadership.'

A women member of the 15 March initiative said: "we should have a youth quota…to guarantee our right to political participation." Another Palestinian woman activist criticised political parties by saying: "old political leaders are the ones who taught youth intolerance…in order for them to remain in power at the expense of our actual needs and problems".

Another unregistered community initiative led by middle-aged women comes from Egypt. Um Zeyad belongs to a group of middle aged religious women activists who initiated a community-based project in Saft a community in the Giza Governorate[lxxxiii]. She was motivated by her religiosity to serve her local community. She had suggested collecting an Egyptian pound each day from small shops for repainting the school walls. Men were responsible for distributing plastic bags to households and gathering cans and plastics for recycling; the money generated from the sale of the recycled materials was used to rebuild local community infrastructure. Also, sexual harassment of women has become increasingly worrying and disturbing in Egypt. In the same area of Saft, an initiative was developed by local women to fight against sexual harassment through religious education. Middle-aged religious women talked to teenagers and educated them about how to use the moral virtues of Islam to confront such disrespectful practices against women.

As the field research in these five countries indicates, the traditional political parties and the large organisations, whether Islamist and secular, fail to provide a constructive, conducive atmosphere or leadership for aspiring men, women and youth who are interested in becoming more politically engaged and often tired of divisive identity politics. As a result, these activists seek out and create other more politically-constructive spaces and initiatives in their own communities where their efforts can counter polarisation, fragmentation and exclusion. In so doing, they learn to mobilise local resources, work with others, develop, practice and shape more accountable and representative forms of leadership while contributing to their own community's development. This is the form of women's leadership that need to be encouraged and supported by well-established women's rights and development organisations and also by the international community, through which the meaning and the practise of women's citizenship (status, rights and obligations) and leadership turns into a communal culture and practise.

2.5 Poor and rural women's dynamics of struggle and their attitudes to women's organisations

The extensive field work and interviews with poor women of different socio-economic, age, geographic, and political backgrounds enabled the generation of in-depth analysis about poor women's attitudes and dynamics of struggle to meet their household's needs while maintaining their dignity. In all countries surveyed, the major issue concerning poor women in rural and urban areas was the poverty of their families. Without exception, poor women asserted that in their experience their actual socio-economic problems are not of major concern to the different political and development players, whether they be governments, political parties or civil society organisations.

Poor women's major issues of concern

One quarter of Yemeni women between the ages of 15 and 49 are acutely malnourished and are therefore at increased risk of giving birth to malnourished babies[lxxxiv]. Corruption in the Yemeni government[lxxxv] is considered a major cause of poverty in Yemen. At the community level, women generally attribute the deterioration of livelihoods to increases in food prices in particular (as Yemen relies on food imports), but also to inadequate health and education services and to the corrupt network of political players and officials from various political parties. Yemen also suffers from resource depletion, namely of water and oil reserves. As a result, many households must pay for water to be trucked in.

Poor women in Tunisia are also concerned about the poverty of their families, although they emphasise to a greater extent the poor quality of government health services. Poverty, as described by Tunisian poor women, is passed from one generation to the next in a cyclical manner because no one cares about poor families, and women are responsible for the survival of the family and the education of children. In Morocco, poor women expressed dissatisfaction with government services and disappointment at how little had changed for them and their families despite the elections of the moderate Islamist Party for Justice and Development (PJD). In Palestine, the uncertainty and insecurity caused by the Israeli occupation further complicates and worsens the situation of poor Palestinian households.

In Palestine and other Arab countries, poor Arab women put the needs of their family ahead of their own and are primarily concerned about economic situation of the household and family and their children's security. In situations of rising male unemployment, poor women call for jobs first and foremost for their unemployed husbands or sons. A Palestinian woman from Gaza said: "We need work for our husbands; our men are jobless. My heart cried when I see my husband without even a shekel[lxxxvi] to give to our daughter to go to school." Another Palestinian woman from the West Bank said: "I don't want my son to be addicted to drugs. Offering him a job would make us live in dignity and protect the family".

Despite the numerous CBOs that emerged after the uprisings and their active role in local communities, poor women's attitudes towards these associations varied considerably due to women's political loyalties and familial networks, as well as their individual experiences of engagement in CBO activities.

Poor women who approach CBOs with the sole purpose of receiving material support tend to have less positive attitudes than those who are voluntarily engaged in CBO activism. While this former group claims the CBO affiliations of certain political parties is of little concern to them, poor women respondents, when probed, were quite critical of Yemeni CBOs representing political parties. Poor women viewed these parties as causing the armed conflict and creating day-to-day insecurity. The political parties have also instrumentalised women's CBOs for their own ends. A major priority for poor Yemeni women involves ending the military conflict, and in this regard, CBOs are not seen as peace-makers, but quite the opposite. An uneducated young woman from Aden said: "women's CBOs are only seen during elections." A housewife from Sana'a stated that: "only words, only talk is all we have ever heard from women's associations."

Poor Tunisian women are also critical of the development priorities of CBOs and of the competition between secular and Islamist affiliated CBOs. CBOs priorities seem to override the priorities of poor women and their families. As one poor woman expressed it, "women's organisations have to give priority to issues related to youth, such as unemployment, drug addiction among young men, educational and behavioural problems among children and youth, rather than competing with each other". This same woman went on to comment on the role of feminist organisations advocating for women's equal rights and political participation: "We, Tunisian women, do not have problems with our rights because we are offered equal rights by law. We are more concerned with changing people's culture, which laws failed to change." Urban-based feminist and other equity-seeking organisations need to reach out and engage in broader discussions with a variety of women from diverse socio-economic backgrounds to learn what the cultural and other constraints are on women's lives, livelihoods and fuller participation in society.

In Egypt, Yemen, and Tunisia, the attitudes of poor women participating in the focus groups were more positive and receptive towards Islamist-based organisations than secular ones that focus on women's rights. The perception is that Islamist CBOs provide more charitable services and enhance the Islam's virtues of social justice and solidarity through the giving of alms (zakat) and family social connection. Interestingly, for poor Egyptian women, the state does not appear to mean anything to them. Poor women only really trust CBOs to provide them with their basic needs and religious education. For example, poor women in Assiut, in southern Egypt, deal with the female representative

of Sanabel Elkheir, a Muslim community association, as a representative of the government because she helps poor women access financial aid, healthcare services, education programmes, and Quran study sessions for children and women. These CBOs are successful because their programmes respond to the needs of marginalised people and assist them with accessing other services and assistance when needed.

When they think about government, poor Egyptian women tend to view it exclusively in relation to the security apparatus and police that used to humiliate them. However, there appears to be no understanding of the state's obligation to provide basic services for all Egyptians, including those in vulnerable families. Poor women in all countries viewed the new governments as corrupt. Thus, poor women prefer to deal with CBOs because they better understand their problems and needs, despite the limited services they provide.

Regarding poor women's views on women's political representation in local and national government, this issue did not appear relevant to the poor women interviewed. Although there was a cultural perspective expressed by poor women, particularly in Egypt, which suggested that women are less capable of leading politics than men, objective reasons related to the socio-economic priorities of poor women were their major concern. One middle-aged woman from Assiut said: "I don't care what happens in Cairo; I care about my daily problems, but I don't know who is responsible for solving them'. A divorced Tunisian woman from Kasserine (in the interior region of Tunisia) also said: "I don't care who represents me in the government: women or men. Those politicians only care about themselves, not about us. Look they are fighting each other instead of looking at our miserable lives". Poor women's lack of interest in having women in formal politics may not only reflect patriarchal culture, but may also reflect their experiences of having women in policy making positions in previous governments. For example, one poor Tunisian woman did not differentiate between men and women in formal politics based on her experience with women who were appointed by Ben Ali to be in senior positions in his government and his party. She saw these women as merely a decoration for Ben Ali's regime.

Poor women's dynamics of resistance
Despite the lack of support poor women receive from government and non-government institutions, they developed their own dynamics to resist poverty and social isolation. Discussions with poor women in poor communities in all five countries studied confirmed that poor women were well aware of the structural causes of their marginalisation. They developed their own dynamics of power to raise their voices in order to be heard by policy and decision makers. A poor woman from Jenin in the northern West Bank exercised her agency in resist against the shortage of basic health services saying:

> I was in the hospital when my sister was pregnant, and there was a shortage
> of important medicine. So, I wrote a letter and put it in the complaints box.
> When I put the letter in the box, I sat on a nearby chair waiting for my sister
> when I saw an employee open the box and then threw the letter in the dust
> bin. When I saw him doing that, I got very mad at him and shouted at him
> and talked with one of the managers there. The manager apologised and
> promised to follow up on my request.

In Egypt, poor women also appear as the core decision-makers managing family affairs. Egyptian women have, for example, certain socially-proscribed roles and duties, such as managing marriage expenses – household and wedding expenses. As poor Egyptian women pointed out, Egyptian men have become less creative and resourceful when it comes to dealing with daily problems and challenges. They are less patient with their jobs and easily quit, and many would not mind staying at home unemployed.

Women, on the contrary, would agree to take on any kind of job simply because the way a woman looks at a job is less egocentric than men. The main aim for women is to meet the basic needs of their children including their education no matter how. For both Egyptian and Tunisian poor women, men have lost the economic ability to be in control of their family's financial situation as in the past. Thus any interventions for women's economic and political empowerment have to consider men's fulfilment of their gender roles in order for economic development interventions not to cause an additional economic burden on women while men are economically vulnerable and unable to fulfil their economic gender roles and obligations towards the household. Thus, to avoid reversal attitudes towards women's socio-economic rights, the economic vulnerability of men and its effect on gender re/configuration has to be equally considered in designing women's economic empowerment programs.[lxxxvii]

Furthermore, the poor women interviewed did not share the same understanding of their rights that feminists do. Poor women's analyses of their life problems shows that they are capable of contextualising their individual rights based on their personal and cross-generational experiences of managing day-to-day problems and needs. A 30-year-old housekeeper from Tunisia said: "I learnt freedom not from the laws women's organisations fight for now. I learnt it from my mother and from the harshness of the life I have lived".

Poor women in different Arab countries subtly become engaged in different CBOs at the same time representing different political parties to both gain more material assistance wider social and political recognition from the leaders of their local communities. However, they appeared disinterested in participating in formal politics apart from exercising their right to vote in the elections.

Some poor women in Tunisia and Morocco were also aware that previous and current governments provided them with equal rights with men in marriage, divorce and household economic

responsibilities. However, many women view these rights as a burden on poor and rural women, as long as governments do not provide sufficient social services for poor families and for children or proper jobs for unemployed men.

In all five Arab countries, poor women understood their equal rights as inseparable from the socio-economic context and in connection to their socio-economic well-being, as stated by poor women is 'to live in dignity and earn enough money for decent living'. In fact, they actually linked their rights to rights available to men and other members of the family. As confirmed by Tunisian poor women, the well-being of women is inseparable from the well-being of their families, including their men. These gender relational dynamics that poor women prioritise should also be of major concern to all women's organisations – provided that their feminist discourse and strategies of women's empowerment be responsive to poor women's preferences and gender dynamics in their day-to-day life.

3.0 DONOR POLICIES, FUNDING AND WOMEN'S CSOS AND CBOS

Leading up to the Arab uprisings, the policies of bilateral and multilateral donors and their partners of INGOs were criticised for funding human rights councils, commissions and various other institutions, programmes and projects controlled by authoritarian Arab regimes. Another critique of international donors is that they do not partner with Islamist organisations, but have sometimes supported repressive and corrupt regimes and elites (including in some instances, regime-affiliated civil society organisations). In terms of the time and resources required to administer grants to local organisations, donor agencies often prefer to fund a few larger, well-established organisations rather than hundreds or even thousands of small CBOs (Youngs, 2006; Malmvig and Lassen, 2013) (involving significant investments of staff time to manage so many grants).

Despite the tremendous shift and opportunities brought about by the Arab uprisings, the EU, European and G-8 countries, for instance, continue to uphold the main pillar of foreign policy vis-à-vis North Africa – security and strategic considerations[lxxxviii] and historically, this heavy emphasis on security is recognised as contributing to the authoritarianism in the Arab World (Wouters and Duquet, 2013). There has been formal acknowledgement of the predominance of Europe's security interests in the foreign policy mix contributing to the Arab authoritarian regimes (Hollis, 2012), and even these donors continue to embrace the same securitised foreign policy agendas of neoliberal economics and trade liberalisation – albeit with some 'soft' funding for civic engagement, human rights and good governance. However, even these 'soft' donor-supported initiatives with civil society have been called into question.

Following the Arab uprisings, many donors have continued to support civil society actors working on democracy promotion, human rights and community economic development. However, there are concerns regarding the insufficient levels of funding[lxxxix] which has been pledged and delivered, as well as credible claims that key donor countries have merely repackaged existing funding programmes and in some cases, increased the levels of funding slightly (Malmvig and Lassen, 2013; Alcaro and Haubrich-Seco, 2012).

According to the field research in the five Arab countries, donors' concerns to support women's political participation and economic empowerment vary due to the security and socio-economic priorities in each country and it still has limited impact on gender policies and women's political participation. For example in Yemen, a senior USAID officer for the Good Governance Programme stated that funding policies and partnership criteria will be revised based on two current USAID assessments in Yemen: one on conflict mapping and the other on gender, conflict and development. A senior German official on political affairs also stated that partnerships with CSOs must be reviewed. Meanwhile UK DFID officials stated that they have no intention of working on gender and political issues, but will focus on good governance and poverty alleviation with some targeting of poor and rural women. UN agencies have continued working with on-going programmes for women's empowerment and for eliminating violence against women although they have recently begun reorienting their programming towards women's economic development and empowerment in remote rural and interior regions of Tunisia.

In May 2011, the G-8 announced the Deauville Partnership. The Partnership has a Transition Fund which countries in transition can apply to although the Fund's portfolio is miniscule compared to the needs in the region and amounted to just 101.2 million USD for six countries (Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen)[xc]. The Fund is supported by G-8 countries, Gulf and regional countries and international and regional financial institutions. According to the initiative's webpage, the "Transition Fund provides grant funding and fosters partnerships for technical cooperation projects to address a broad range of inter-related thematic areas covering all three pillars of the Deauville Partnership (Finance, Trade, and Governance)"[xci]. Some CSOs have been quite critical of the partnership claiming that it is overly focused on public-private partnerships but ultimately promotes privatisation efforts of key state assets (Lustgarten, 2013). Promoting gender equality is an integral component of these programmes aiming to promote women's economic participation; to provide legal frameworks that facilitate women's economic activities; and to identify measures to promote women's economic integration (OECD 2013)[xcii].

CBOs attitudes towards donor policies

CBOs relations with international donors also emerged through the field work in all countries studied. In Egypt, for example, government media campaigns warned of the hidden political agendas of international donors. Many small CBOs became hesitant, sometimes even suspicious of international agencies and ultimately often reluctant to apply for funding.

As stated earlier in this report, many newly-emerged CBOs and especially the Islamist CBOs have limited institutional capacities as they have yet to develop them. Newer CBOs have little or no experience of working with foreign donors and have felt quite excluded by these agencies. Emerging CBOs need to learn and gain more experience regarding donor funding and reporting procedures (since the professional capacity of many CBO activists is currently overwhelmed). Donors also need to reach out to, train and assist these new entities to become more familiar with funding mechanisms and procedures.

In the OPT and Tunisia, Islamist women's CBOs, both independent and those affiliated to Islamist parties, considered some donors to be biased against them[xciii]. Apparently, claims have been made that the work of Islamist women's CBOs is inconsistent with the gender commitments and framework adopted by international agencies (i.e. international norms and human rights conventions such as CEDAW). In Yemen, many critique donors' lack of transparency and failure to consult with local CBOs when elaborating funding policies and priorities. Ibtihaj Al-Khiba, a Yemeni activist and development consultant is critical of donors' funding policies and mechanisms citing their top-down nature, unfriendly and time-consuming funding procedures which result in local CBOs spending more time securing funding than fulfilling the needs of women and communities.

In all five Arab countries surveyed, the relationship between donors and CBOs was characterized by mistrust, ineffective coordination and poor communication. While donors are concerned about financial transparency, the newly-emerged CBOs have not yet developed the institutional, technical or professional capacity to meet the complicated financial and institutional requirements of donors and grant mechanisms. Rather than investing time, training and resources into assisting new CBOs with developing their programming, many donors opt for the easy path by partnering with well-institutionalised women's organisations and leaving young CBOs to their own devices to mobilise much-needed resources. These donor policies and practices risk further widening the divide between feminist organisations and the CBOs and arguably send a clear message that more elitist feminist work and organisations are supported at the expense of grassroots and community-level initiatives with the poor.

4.0 OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND RISKS FOR INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES WORKING ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

4.1 Fertile socio-political environment for reconceptualising women's empowerment and leadership

The diverse forms of feminist and non-feminist women's activism and leadership which emerged during the Arab Uprisings challenge essentialist arguments of feminists such as Srilatha Batliwala (2011). Batliwala, for instance, claims that women's leadership capacity is only constituted within the feminist goal of resistance against patriarchal and tribal gender norms; otherwise it becomes like "walking down a blind alley"[xciv]. Batliwala's argument represents the concepts, discourse and strategies used by international agencies to enhance women's empowerment, with insufficient consideration of non-feminist forms of women's leadership.

The Arab Uprisings have taught us that non-feminist women's leaders in different institutions have the potential to transform their political leadership into a feminist leadership. This transformation process can also be supported by encouraging women leaders to convene to reflect on through their discursive habituation of non-stereotypical gender roles and relations regardless of their ideological framework or references (Butler, 1997). Feminist consciousness and goals can be the by-product of women's practice of power manoeuvring. This approach to feminist leadership is more inclusive providing a broader space for women to become self-reflexive and creative in their understanding and practice of gender analysis and gender equality. Such an approach should ensure that sufficient attention be invested in women leaders in various non-feminist organisations, such as political parties, labour and student unions that position women in power. By focusing exclusively on women's and feminist organisations, one risks missing the opportunity of working and building relations with these equally important women leaders and potentially fostering greater feminist leadership. Such an approach is also built on an implicit understanding that failing to involve and reach out to these women leaders may leave them isolated and vulnerable to co-optation by men leaders in their organisations.

4.2 Supporting women leaders in power

Despite the inequitable representation of women in formal political office in many post-Uprising countries, the challenge remains how to best support firstly forms of women leaders who are accountable, representative and well organised through leadership development programmes, and secondly, networks between women leaders with a view to enhancing the development of campaigns and possibly women's caucuses in the different countries. In terms of leadership development programmes, such work should begin by consulting with and assessing the specific leadership-related skills needs of current women's leaders (i.e. debating, reviewing and drafting proposed legislation and policies, power manoeuvring, financial analysis and other technical skills) and developing seminars to

further enhance those skills while simultaneously encouraging networking between participating women leaders. Also exchanges and visits with women parliamentarians in other countries and mentorship programmes can be particularly important for women leaders and parliamentarians to build and strengthen their ties and understandings with each other. Part of the legacy of decades of authoritarian rule means that politicians and their parties have weak relations with their local constituencies.

So, the proposed leadership skills training should also include sessions on developing relations with local constituencies, following key trends and so on. Such support should be designed with a view to helping these women leaders to more independently develop and shape their political alliances based on strategic gender goals. By focusing exclusively on women's representation in political office and gender quotas, one risks reproducing state feminism and enhancing the masculinised agendas led by neoliberal economic and political elites in state institutions.

4.3 Investing in collective women's coalitions to establish an Arab women's movement with common goals

The Arab Uprisings in the five studied countries created a great opportunity to convene a wide ideological and political range of feminist, human rights and other organisations under unified voices and banners. In the process, many women's and youth coalitions have advocated for gender equality and ensured that women's equal rights are embedded in the new constitutions.

Fostering the work of these coalitions in the same collective feminist spirit is a key challenge for international and regional actors intent on the continued success of these achievements: ranging from bringing different national women's coalitions together to reflect and learn from each other's experiences and perspectives while also analysing the 'local', strategising and working for the future; and developing and shaping new alliances at the national, regional and international levels. The work of these coalitions needs to remain decentralised and spread across different Arab countries. Greater attention needs to be focused on analysing the local – that is, analysing how patriarchal systems operate - and on building up an organic, locally-driven women's movement which responds to Arab women's needs in their respective countries while gaining increased legitimacy. Such national women's movement can then serve as a solid base for establishing a regional Arab women's movement with a common agenda. Should the work of consolidating the collective work of these feminist coalitions not proceed, there is a risk of returning to the modus operandi of the pre-Uprising era, where feminist institutions' work was fragmented, elitist and failed to develop constituencies or represent the collective spirit of women's activism.

4.4 Removing obstacles to cooperation and coalitional politics: opportunities for diminishing the Islamist-secular divide

The rise of Islamist parties to power can facilitate a long-awaited dialogue and discussion with Islamist women leading to more liberal thoughts, views and agendas on women's issues and gender. Despite the remaining suspicions of liberal feminists towards the Islamist project, the post-Uprisings Islamist-secular political encounter has opened up important opportunities[xcv] at all levels - albeit sometimes still limited and vague - for these various groups to convene, discuss and negotiate conflicting issues related to women's rights, as well as learn from each other's historical experiences (Salime, 2011)[xcvi] with the ultimate goal of reaching greater understanding and common ground. The failure to convene secular-Islamist and Islamist-Islamist women will lead to a situation similar to the pre-Uprising period or even worse for women's rights – in which both secular feminist and moderate Islamist women leaders are held hostage to masculinised Islamist, liberal and neoliberal political agendas and alliances. Such a scenario would be highly unlikely to be favourable to women. Attempts to exclude or ignore Islamist women activists risks pushing moderate Islamist women voices and actors back to alliances with more conservative and even extremist Islamists and Salafists (as is now expected in Egypt following the overthrow and now persecution of MB from formal politics).

4.5 Enhancing a holistic localised approach of women's empowerment

The broad spectrum of women's organisations (Islamist and secular) shares consensus regarding the priority of working with and for poor, illiterate and rural women to end poverty and socio-economic marginalisation. This consensus provides an important opportunity for re-framing the approach to women's empowerment. While liberal feminist organisations need to develop their own analysis of the local conditions of gender subjugation (beyond simply invoking CEDAW), Islamist women also need to politicise their moral family-centered approach and to consider the effect of power relations on women's individual capacities to exercise their agency in public and private spheres. The full spectrum of women's organisations need to develop a holistic approach where women's individual socio-economic, civil and political rights are not perceived as separate from the rights of men, children and the elderly within households, local communities or at the national level. Focusing exclusively on women's rights in an isolated manner leads to decontextualising the process of women's empowerment and failing to shape interventions that are responsive to local women's preferences and dynamics of action in their day-to-day lives.

5.0 CONCLUSION

While the Arab Uprisings are still in their infancy in many ways, they have opened up important political space and debates long denied Arab citizens during decades of authoritarian rule. Democratic transitions from authoritarian and military rule are inevitably lengthy and sensitive processes often involving decades to reform state security and military apparatus and the judiciary amongst others[xcvii]. While women's mobilisation during transitions is important, mobilisation does not guarantee women's rights and achievements will be respected (Waylen, 2009). In her seminal work on gendering in transitions, Georgina Waylen (2007) finds that the relations and positioning of women's and feminist organisations vis-à-vis the new political actors very much influences the gender outcomes of transition[xcviii], amongst other factors.

That being said, processes of gender transformation in post-Arab Uprising countries still face a multitude of structural constraints at every level, as well as between women activists. It remains to be seen whether the new generation of youth and women activists will manage to overcome the secular-Islamist identity divide and continue their organising and mobilisation efforts and build a genuine, organic feminist or women's movement which better responds to women's lived realities. However, the real danger is that women activists and their politics are coopted and instrumentalised by the larger political actors and debates - as has already happened to some degree in Yemen. Will women activists managed to develop their analyses, positions, discourses and platforms so as to build up a broad women's agenda and coalitions (as with the Egyptian example of a new feminist anti-authoritarian struggle cited earlier)? Becoming absorbed by and caught up in the polarising discourses which set Islamists and secular liberals into oppositional positions in a state of perpetual suspicion and fear is very real. This identity struggle between Islamists and secular liberals detracts dangerously from political debates of key issues, such as: economic recovery, women's and human rights, the nature of the new state, the rebuilding of state institutions which protect all citizens without discrimination, and the urgent need to bring the military and security sector under civilian control. Women leaders need to be actively involved in this new state-building project.

To build a broad-reaching feminist agenda and promote women's rights across the political spectrum, Islamist and feminist activists need to work together in coalitions. As this report has shown, these different women activists make different albeit often complementary contributions to women's rights and status. However, these women also have relationships and access to different political leaders which they will very likely need to leverage in the future.

Despite decades of rhetoric, promises and even glossy brochures highlighting the primary importance of gender equality in international development and cooperation, the lack of serious, genuine commitment to gender equality and women's rights is best reflected in the very limited resources

allocated[xcix] (be they human, financial, technical or other) to these ends by national, regional and international actors.

More equitable partnership and collective efforts must be developed and fostered between the different actors - donors, IAs, governments, legislators, politicians, and civil society organisations – to invest in the emergent opportunities in the five Arab countries studied; challenge the structural and cultural factors constraining women's empowerment; and mitigate the risks of reproducing the previous regimes and their gender dynamics. This report concludes with a list of proposed recommendations.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 International agencies' programming for women's socio-economic empowerment

- Socio-economic empowerment programs targeting poor and rural women in remote areas should be a high priority. Development interventions must be designed, planned and implemented based on regular consultation with poor men and women and their representative associations in local communities, and with agreed short- and long-term indicators for the well-being of poor households and women's empowerment at the household, community and national levels;

- More attention needs to be given to the process of developing women's capacity and skills reflecting the dynamics of empowerment and disempowerment women use in their daily life, at the expense of focusing on specific numeric gender indicators and outcomes. This of course requires a shift from short-term project funding to more substantial and long-term programmatic funding to allow for the generation of gender accumulative and transformative change;

- International donors need to work on two parallel tracks: building the capacity of genuine women's leaders at the national political level and/or in local community and civil society organisations; and advocating for women's representation in national politics, where the outcome of the first track legitimises the outcome of the second one (and not vice versa).

- Supporting women's coalitions and women's civil society organisations to mobilise for the implementation of constitutional and legal changes, as was the case in Morocco. Support the implementation of the 30% representation quota for women in the NDC in Yemen and the continuous implementation of gender parity electoral law in Tunisia in next election. Women's leaders need support in developing their abilities to use multiple strategies and to approach different state institutions and political leaders to pressure them to meet their promises;

- Supporting joint cross-sectoral national women's empowerment programs implemented by multi-sectoral women and development NGOs. This support programme should lead to increased understanding and analysis of the intersectional factors restraining women's development and empowerment (i.e., the relationship between education and employment services for both young unemployed men and women. Civil society organisations also need to be supported to advocate for cross-sectoral national policies and plans, and to pressure governments to more equitably allocate budgets provided to women's integration in different development sectors;

- Partnering with different institutions where women play a leadership position, such as parliament, government ministries, district and municipal councils, unions and political parties. Women leaders within these institutions need support in developing their capacity to use gender analysis in power manoeuvring, negotiation and shaping political alliances;

- Prioritising support to women representatives in local governance and supporting the development of their conceptual knowledge, understanding and skills vis-à-vis transparent and accountable governance, as well as how to generate and build up a public constituency;

- Supporting/ OR establishing gender research institutes at national and regional level, such as CAWTAR research and training centre based in Tunis, aiming to build the capacity of Arab women to research gender issues at national and regional levels and to generate up-to-date gender knowledge and analysis to feed into gender policy formation and advocacy for women's rights. For example, the Gender Studies Institute in Birzeit University in the OPT can be a good example to follow;

- Assessing and considering support for a strengthening regional feminist network. This may be a longer term recommendation that should not distract the key tasks of socio-economic development and building national women's movements and coalitions. The need and interest in regional networks should be developed and ideally come out of the national women's movements and coalitions;

- Urging key Arab funders to ensure that their funds supporting private sector and infrastructure development complements international funds for women's empowerment, prioritising the actual needs and priorities of local communities (i.e. women and youth needs for employment, education and health services in rural and remote communities);

- Encouraging coordination between bilateral, multilateral and international funding agencies and NGOs to ensure that the different scales of development interventions are committed to gender mainstreaming and to the inclusion of gender indicators into national programs implemented by government institutions. International donors need to develop their transparency through committing to regular gender impact assessments, disseminating their findings publicly and publicising their gender budgets.

6.2 Challenging the Islamist-secular binary amongst women's organisations nationally and regionally

- Partnering with both Islamist and liberal feminist organisations at the local, national and regional levels and supporting network initiatives between the diverse women's groups. An effective strategy for affecting change through diversity is to establish networks between Islamist and secular women's organisations working at both the local and national levels. This tactic is essential in ensuring that women activists and organisations remain grounded and focused on the socio-economic priorities of poor, rural and marginalised women, rather than getting caught up in fruitless rhetoric debates around identity;

- Supporting dialogue between Islamist and secular leaders in order to know each other and working together around common issues such as the quality of municipal and government services, community safety for children and women;

- Building alliances with national and regional religious institutions, such as Al Azhar and El-Zaitouna Universities in Egypt and Tunisia, as well as with regional and international Muslim women's networks such as Musawah, which encourages the reinterpretation of gender in Islam. Such networks can also contribute to developing a more holistic regional approach for the empowerment of Arab women that combines the moral Islamic virtues of family protection and connection with the international individual rights of women.

- Convening forums and conferences, where different issues of Islamist-secular debate are discussed and negotiated. The outcomes of these meetings should be disseminated publicly to Arab women and men through virtual and actual media. These efforts can also include regional campaigns led jointly by moderate Islamist and liberal feminists about women's rights in sharia. Mainstream regional media, such as Al-Jazeera-Arabic and Al-Arabia, has to be invested by developing a weekly program to discuss the relationship between sharia-based family laws and the lived realities of Arab women's lives – producing documentary films focusing on Arab women's life stories.

6.3 Capacity building with women's CSOs and CBOs

- Treating CSOs as equal partners and supporting their institutional and human capacity based on participatory development, bottom-up approaches and transparent and accountable models of governance in which no actor is excluded due to either ideological or political orientation or religious conviction;

- Prioritising action-based training and human capacity building on such topics as leadership, advocacy, and gender and stakeholders analysis for women and men leaders and particularly with young activists working in different institutions: political parties, unions, and development and feminist organisations at national and local levels. These trainings should be seen as a form of affirmative action adopted by community activists working on social

cohesion and community mobilisation related to transparent and accountable local governance;

- Facilitate women's access to a range of local and municipal services (including healthcare, education, the provision of potable water, electricity, garbage collection, community security), as well as the labour market. Also support CBOs to get involved in income generating activities through provision of micro-credit services and technical training for young unemployed men and women in how to start micro/small businesses;

- Developing local and national measures to mitigate the risk of NGOising CBOs (i.e. the tendency to institutionalise and professionalise CBOs work in such a way that they are distracted from the priorities of local people and their constituencies to technical and financial institutional aspects. CBOs should also be encouraged to invest in local communities' social capital for managing and operating their collective community actions and service provision, rather than becoming fully reliant on international funds. The example of unregistered women's and youth initiatives mentioned in the report need to be promoted and replicated in local communities;

- Encouraging regular meetings between older feminist and human rights organisations, political parties, and young men and women activists working in various sectors and from diverse socio-economic and geographical backgrounds. These meetings should aim at bridging the generational gap between them and providing more space for youth to discover and enhance their agency, and strengthen their self-confidence and assertiveness;

- Funding agencies should develop flexible and accessible funding procedures to enable newly-emergent CBOs and unregistered youth and women's initiatives to access those funding sources. Also, encourage youth to be represented and incorporated in civil society institutions' programs. Donors also need to be more transparent vis-à-vis their funding policies to build trust between themselves and local CBOs.

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Endnotes :

[i] "Moderate Islamists" or "neo-Islamists" according to Robin Wright, author of *The Islamists are coming: who they really are* (2012b), refer to moderate members of the MB and its affiliates (such as Tunisia's Ennahda Party or Morocco's Freedom and Justice Party) reputed to be progressive, pragmatic and striving for sharia's values rather than its literal implementation. In this regard, moderate Islamists can be described as: flexible, informed, and mature in their political outlook. For them, sharia is about values, civilisation and political context. Moderate Islamists seek the ultimate objectives of sharia but without bonding each situation to a certain religious text. They believe that Islam is dynamic and not a set of fixed rules and tenets, but rather an organic belief system that can adapt to or live with the times. See details in Wright, Robin (2012b) " Don't fear all Islamists, fear Salafis" (2012a). Also see Olivier Roy (1994) or Francesco Cavatorta (2012a).

[ii] See endnote no. i

[iii] See Marina Ottaway's 2013 analysis of the tension between the ideology of Islamist parties and the principles of civil and political rights from a secular point of view. Ottaway used Ennahda in her analysis, but her analysis could be equally applied to the MB in Egypt and the PJD in Morocco. Ottaway asked the question: "how far is Ennahda willing to embrace principles of civil and political rights derived from Western traditions and now deemed to be universal, and how much will it insist that Islamic principles be respected?" The tension between the ideological purity and politics has characterised different Islamist parties which have assumed power in the Arab region and led to a division within these political parties.

[iv] See the findings of a summer 2012 GALLUP study, entitled "After the Arab uprisings: women on rights, religion and rebuilding". All GALLUP reports on the effect of Arab uprisings on women are available online http://www.genderconcerns.org/article.php?id_nr=3305&id=Gallup%20Examines%20Post-Revolutionary%20Factors%20Limiting%20Women's%20Empowerment, accessed 9/12/2013

[v] See Susan Moller Okin's 1994 article, "Gender Inequality and Cultural Differences". She argues that liberal values are universalisable to all women and people regardless of their culture, historical situations and situated positions. She also argues that women experience a similar subjugation that is universalisable to all women regardless of race, culture or socioeconomic status. She also believes that women in the "First World" can legitimately speak for all women and especially for the women in the Third World.

[vi] Bona argues that Arab liberal feminists appeal for a cultural revolution, explicitly identifying Arab and Muslim culture as the source of misogyny in the region. This discourse puts Arab women under pressure to choose between their cultural interests and their feminist ones, with no possibility of combining the two discourses.

[vii] As Marina Ottaway (2011) explains in her article, "the most extreme anti-Islamist statements came not from political parties but from secular women's organisations that accused Ennahda of intending to abrogate Tunisia's liberal personal-status laws, although no evidence suggested that this was the case."

[viii] Established in June 2012, Nedaa Tounis has recently emerged as the main secular opposition party to Ennahda. Its members come from diverse political and ideological backgrounds ranging from conservatives to liberals to former members of Ben Ali's RCD.

[ix] Tunisia applied a "zipper" list electoral system alternating equally between female and male candidates in the 2011 parliamentary elections.

[x] "Revise Tunisia's draft Constitution", Human Rights Watch, 13 May 2013, available at http://www.-hrw.org/news/2013/05/13/tunisia-revise-draft-constitution, accessed 15 Nov 2013

[xi] See "Women and the Arab spring: taking their place?" International Federation for Human Rights, March 2012, available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201206/201-20608ATT46510/20120608ATT46510EN.pdf

[xii] "Revise Tunisia's draft Constitution", Human Rights Watch, 13 May 2013, available at http://www.-hrw.org/news/2013/05/13/tunisia-revise-draft-constitution, accessed 15 Nov 2013

xiii Also see Robert Johnston (2010), "Historical abortion statistics – Tunisia", Johnston's Archives, available at http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/ab-tunisia.html, accessed 02 Aug 2013and UNESCO Institute of Statistics, available at http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/-default.aspx, accessed 02 Aug 2013; also see "Statistics and indicators of women and men", (Online Database), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development, available at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/-demographic/products/indwm/tab4d.htm, accessed 02 Aug 2013

xiv See Statistical Issue no. P 0201 for the first quarter 2013, Statistics "Work and unemployment", Tunisian Institute of National Statistics, Statistical Issue no. P 0201 for the first quarter of 2013, available at www.ins.tn, accessed 15 Nov 2013

xv According to the International Republican Institute (IRI) opinion poll of August 2013 in Tunisia, 40% of population were not at all satisfied with the current government, while 29% was somewhat satisfied. Regarding opinions of political parties and their actions in addressing people's needs, 42% of the population said they do nothing. In terms of the major problems facing Tunisia, of those polled, 68% considered unemployment (68%), 55% indicated economy and the financial crisis and 44% viewed insecurity as the major problems. Available at http://www.iri.org/sites-/default/-files/Tunisia%202-2012.pdf, accessed 15 Nov 2013

xvi Following some two years of extensive consultations, the Family Code or *Moudawana* was revised and presented to Parliament by the King in late 2003 and unanimously ratified in January 2004. The substantive changes introduced include: making equality between the sexes the basis of the Code and abolishing male guardianship over women family members; granting women the right to seek divorce (and dropping previous requirements that women provide evidence and proof to support their request); raising the legal age for marriage to 18 years (from 15); granting women the liberty to marry without seeking parental or familial permission.

xvii For a historical overview of leftist parties and associations and their inter-relationships, see Clark and Young (2008: 341-342).

xviii With the beginning of the Arab Uprisings, youth bloggers in Morocco organised mass demonstrations for 20 February 2011 and became known as the February 20th movement. Initially, protesters demanded a true constitutional monarchy but within a few weeks, they focused increasingly openly on the circles close to the Palace and the King himself. For more details, see Lamia Zaki (2013)

xix According to Article 19 of the constitution, the monarch is the "Commander of the believers", and according to Article 23, his person is "sacred". Art. 29 gives him the right to govern by producing *dahirs* which are royal decrees carry the force of law and are not subject to appeal. For further details see Lise Storm (2010) and Ahmed Benchemsi (2011).

xx Opposition parties include: the leftist Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), which was the main opposition force under King Hassan II; the centrist National Rally of Independents (RNI), and the Party for Authenticity and Modernity (PAM). Both the RNI and PAM are close to the monarchy. The 2011 legislative elections demonstrated the weakening of electoral influence of PAM, founded in 2008 by Fouad Ali al-Himma whom the king would later appoint as a royal advisor, signalling the latter's apparent withdrawal from electoral politics.

xxi The historic relationships between the monarchy and the leftist parties and associations over the past few decades have been complex. For an overview and discussion of these relationships and how they have changed and developed over time, see: Clark and Young (2008); Béatrice Hibou (2011); Ahmed Benchemsi (2012).

xxii Nezha Guessous (2012) argues that the responsibility for the setback in women's representation in the Moroccan government lies with all parties of the coalition and extends beyond the makeup of the Islamist government led by the PJD. In her opinion, all political parties (and not just the PJD) need to take a serious look at their gender politics rather than conceal their own sexism by pointing accusatory fingers towards the so-called conservatism of Islamists.

xxiii See Stéphanie Latte Abdallah's 2010 discussion of the promotion of a moderate State Islam rooted in a reform of the Personal Status Code and through the instrumentalisation of women guides (*murshidat*) and specialists in religious studies (2010: 19-20).

xxiv In 2004, the King restructured both the national or Higher Ulema council and the provincial ulema councils. For more information on the composition of these councils, see Chafiq Laabi's « Etat et religion, comment lire les changements annoncés » *La Vie éco.* 2004 05 07. http://www.lavieeco.com/news/politique/etat-et-religion-comment-lire-les-changements-annonces-5330.html

xxv See the 8th edition of Gender Report which provides a gender evaluation of the public policies of 27 ministerial departments, through the prism of human rights and the coherence with the new constitutional dispositions: « Rapport sur le Budget Genre - Loi de finance pour l'année budgétaire 2013 », Ministry of Economy and Finance, France, available at http://www.finances.gov.ma/depf/dpeg_action/genre/rapports/2013-/genre_13_fr.pdf, accessed 15 Nov 2013)

xxvi For more on the TAMKINE programme, see the programme's mid-term evaluation: « Maroc: Évaluation à Mi-parcours », MDGIF, available at http://www.mdgfund.org/sites/default/files/-Morocco%20-%20Gender%20-%20Mid-term%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf, accessed 15 Nov 2013. See also p. 16 of « Rapport sur le Budget Genre - Loi de finance pour l'année budgétaire 2013 », Ministry of Economy and Finance, France, available at http://www.finances.gov.ma/depf/dpeg_action/genre/rapports/2013-/genre_13_fr.pdf, accessed 15 Nov 2013

xxvii For the labour force participation rate of Moroccan women (aged 15 to 64) in 2011, see "Morocco – Labour force participation rate" in *Index mundi*, available at http://www.indexmundi.com/-facts/morocco/labor-participation-rate, accessed 15 Nov 2013.

xxviii See "Egypt crisis: Who are the key players?" (2013), *BBC*, 25 July, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/-news/world-middle-east-23186408, accessed 15 Nov 2013

xxx See "Naffiz ya nezam" (2013), *Al-Jazeera Arabic*, 14 September, available at http://www.aljazeera.net/news/-pages/8f302bb7-c1ae-43cf-a7d4-b96af4ffaeab, accessed 15 Oct 2013, a new campaign led by labour activists and leaders who ask the new government in Egypt to meet the demands of workers and farmers. Also see an article by Shimaa Helmy (2013) about newly emerged movement called the "Ahrar movement" http://bayareaintifada.wordpress.com/2013/07/29/unheard-third-current-revolutionaries-egypt/, and this is the facebook page for the Ahrar Movement, where many secular and Islamist activists are involved: https://www.facebook.com/AhrarMov.

xxxi Law No. 40 of 1977 (Law on Political Parties, as amended 28 Mar. 2011), *Al-Jarida Al-Rasmiyya*, art. 1 (Egypt)

xxxii For details on the more than forty political parties and more than ten thousand election candidates, see "Big turnout in Egypt post-Mubarak election" (2011), *BBC*, 29 November, available at http://www-.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15932733, accessed 15 Oct 2013

xxxiii See Moushira Khattab (2012) "Egyptian women after the revolution: lost in translation?", *Occasional Paper Series,* Wilson Centre, Middle East Program.

xxxiv See the website that represents the views of women's groups and initiatives that struggled against the gender biased constitution proved by president Morsi, *Nazra for Feminist Studies,* available at http://nazra.org/en **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

xxxv Ellen McLarney emphasises that critiques of Egypt's new ("Islamist") constitution have focused on the Islamists language of balance between women's work at home and in public, which reflects the (neo)liberal language of women's equality with men, through which the reduction in the public sector spending on social security is replaced by the complementarity of labour between men and women in household.

xxxvi For detailed gender statistics, "Women and men in Egypt 2011", Egyptian Central Bureau of Statistics, available at http://capmas.-gov.eg/pdf/2011%20woman%20and%20man.pdf, accessed 15 Sep

xxxvii See Ibrahim el-Houdaiby's "Egypt: nothing was inevitable", *AhramOnline.* 13 Sept. 2013. http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentPrint/4/0/81424/Opinion/0/Egypt--Nothing-was-inevitable.aspx

xxxviii An informal conversation conducted with Ahmad Tohamy, a political scientist from Cairo University in August 2013

xxxix See the website of the National Council for Women – Egypt, available at http://www.ncwegypt.com/index.php/ar/, accessed 15 Oct 2013

xl See "Egypt Fact Sheet", *Fact Sheet* No. 13. Cairo: Centre for Economic and Social Rights, available online at http://www.cesr.org/downloads/Egypt.Factsheet.web.pdf?preview=1, accessed 9/12/2013

xli See "Al-Nour to represent Islamists in Egypt's final constitution-drafting committee" *AhramOnline*, 31 August 2013. http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/80418/Egypt/Politics-/AlNour-to-represent-Islamists-in-Egypts-final-cons.aspx, accessed 9/12/2013

xlii See "Nour Party calls for 'yes' vote to draft constitution", in *Egypt Independent* (5/12/2013), http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/nour-party-calls-%E2%80%98yes-vote-draft-constitution, accessed 10/12/2013

xliii It is worth noting here that following Mohammad el-Baradei's resignation from the post-July 3rd interim government, Adli Mansur was appointed to replace el-Baradei as the President of the Interim Government. Mansur's appointment constitutes another ominous development for women's and human rights. The women who were assaulted during the small 2005 Kifaya protest in Cairo subsequently formed a broad-based women's coalition against sexual harassment, calling for the removal from office of the then-Minister of the interior, Adli Mansur.

xliv For a more detailed presentation of the different political actors, see Haykel (2013) "Yemen's domestic and regional politics". May 2013, NOREF. http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/cc3eaca55f58f892d4bfc93abc8aa8b2.pdf

xlv According to gender transitions expert, Georgina Waylen, pacted transitions "typically occur after a gradual opening/liberalisation when elites from the non-democratic regime make a pact with the moderate civilian elite population. Together they negotiate the nature of the transition and the new system, deciding for example who is allowed to participate and the fate of the old non-democratic regime."

xlvi The Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative mechanism was signed by former President Saleh, head of the GPC party, and its partners and by the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) and its coalition. Other actors such as the Houthis, al-Hirak, the youth, CSOs and women were not part of the signing but were included as active participants in the national dialogue process which started later after the signing.

[xlvii] The Joint Meeting Party (JMP) was officially formed in 2003 by six opposition parties, namely: the Islamist-oriented Yemeni Congregation for Reform (Islah); the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) which represents some remnants of the former South Yemeni leadership; Hizb Al-Haq which is a semi-religious party; the Nasserite (Unionist) party; the Popular Forces Union party; and Al-Ba'ath party.

[xlviii] The group's name comes from Hussain Badrdeen al-Houthi, a Zaidi/Shia leader, whose regenerative reading of the Zaidi doctrine set him apart from the traditional Zaidi ulama and some of the Believing Youth (Ashabab al-Mu'min). The expansion of his thought and followers were marked by what was named as The Scream (as-sarkha) after each Friday prayer in the great mosques of Sa'ada and Sana'a. The screams constituted Hussain al-Houthi's protest against American world polarisation and dominance influenced by Israel's policies. The Yemeni Authority, which could neither contain nor control this movement, soon waged six consecutive wars against the rebellious Houthis in Sa'ada governorate

[xlix] UN SC Resolution 2014 was adopted at the Council's 6634th meeting in 21/10/2011. It established a road map for a political settlement and a peaceful transition of power.

[l] The two signing parties (the GPC and the JMP) refused the proposed 30% women quota and requested Jamal Benomar, the UN envoy to use the term "appropriate representation" instead. Article (26) in the GCC agreement states: "Women shall be **appropriately** represented in all of the institutions…."

[li] See "Yemen bill to prevent girl's marriage before the age of 18" (2013), *Al-Jazeera Arabic*, 14 September, available at http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/67d88ef4-8dfa-4014-b808-c6c2265d5bd7, accessed 15 Oct 2013.

[lii] This assessment of Yemen's social and economic situation was conducted in response to a request received

 by the World Bank from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) on December 20,

2011. The request involved conducting a social and economic assessment of the situation in Yemen after the signing of the Transition Agreement on November 23, 2011. See *Joint Social and Economic Assessment for the Republic of Yemen*, World Bank, EU, UN, Islamic Development Bank and Government of Yemen, available at http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Joint%20Social%20and%20Economic%20Assessment%20for%20the%20Republic%20of%20Yemen.pdf, accessed 17 Sep 2013

[liii] See "Inside Gaza: The Challenge of Clans and Families - Gaza/Jerusalem/Brussels" (2007), International Crisis Group, 20 December, available at http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/media-releases/2007/mena/Inside%20Gaza%20The%20Challenge%20of%20Clans%20and-%20Families.aspx, accessed 15 Oct 2013, and see the annual reports of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (2007-2008), available at http://www.pchrgaza.-org/portal/en/, accessed 20 Oct 2013

[liv] In the 2000s, many new women's NGOs and women's coalitions were established to defend equal rights for Palestinian women. They include: the NGO forum on violence against women (al-Muntada), the Criminal Law Coalition, the Personal Status Law Coalition, the Palestinian forum for safe abortion, and the National Committee to support women in the workforce.

[lv] In 2005, Article 5 of the Election law no. 9 for local governments and councils ratified "women's representation" stating that each list of candidates on a majority basis should include at least one woman among the first three candidates, and among the four that follow, and among each five that follow. When calculated, the women's quota would reach to at least 20% of a total of 66 candidates for a full list. See Abu Nahleh et al (2006).

[lvi] A resolution issued by the United Nations Security Council, requires the parties to a conflict to respect women's rights and to support their participation in decision-making through all of the phases in the transition out of armed conflict, from peace negotiations through to post-conflict reconstruction, and calls for increasing women's representation at all levels (decision making, peace process, etc). Full resolution: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/Strategic_Framework_2011-2020.pdf, accessed 06 Dec 2013

[lvii] These articles stipulate that perpetrators of murder in the name of "honour" can obtain a reduced sentence based on a set of mitigating circumstances.

[lviii] Includes WAC, WATC, WCLAC, Institute of Women's Studies – BZU, PWWSD, Al Haq and others.

[lix] For more information or details, see the UNDP report (September 2011) "A Review of Palestinian Legislation from a Women's Rights Perspective", available at http://www.undp.ps/en/newsroom/publications/pdf/other/womenrreview.pdf, accessed 06 Dec 2013.

[lx] NGOisation in the Palestinian context refers to focusing on professionalising women's institutions to meet the institutional requirements of donors, which limits the influence of women's institutions at the local level. Islah Jad (2009) argues that NGOisation limits the struggle for national causes to projects geared to priorities established by international actors and fragments the accumulation of forces for social change.

[lxi] For further information and analysis, see Linda Tabar and Sari Hanafi (2003); also see Khalil Nakhleh (2012).

[lxii] See all articles included in *Al-Raida* special issue, entitled "Gender Quotas and Parliamentary Representation" (2009), available at http://inhouse.lau.edu.lb/iwsaw/raida126-127/EN/p001-105.pdf. All articles of this issue critically discuss the

system of gender quotas in Arab countries before the uprisings and how it was used by political leaders to serve the political interests of the states' elites. See also Laura Sjoberg (2011).

lxiii "Strong Voices: Yemeni women's political participation from protest to transition" (2012), SAFERWORLD, May, available online http://www.gaps-uk.org/docs/Strong-Voices-Yemen.pdf, accessed 17 Nov 2013. Estimates suggest that of the protestors in Yemen, 30% were women. See Hakim Almasmari and Mohammed Jamjoom (2011).

lxiv On the 15th of April, President Saleh, who was aggravated and outraged by women's pivotal and vigorous role in the protests, warned against having women inappropriately mixing with men in the demonstrations and in the squares.

lxv To read further about the Coalition of the Youth of the Revolution, see Salma Shukrallah (2011).

lxvi See the article of Mohanad Mustafa and Ayman Talal Yousef (2013) entitled, "The Interaction of Political Islam with Democracy: The Political Platform of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as a Case Study". The authors analyse the changes occurred in the MB discourse with regard to the concepts of democracy, freedom and citizenship before and after the uprising.

lxvii See the discussion of Islamists' views on women and their role in society (pp. 58-59) in Olivier Roy's seminal 1994 work, *The Failure of political Islam*. London: I.B. Tauris.

lxviii See Nidal Almughrabi. "Hamas mandates gender segregation in Gaza schools for students 9 and older". *Huffington Post.* 1 April 2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/01/hamas-gender-segregation-schools_n_2992180.html

lxix See a critical article about liberal feminism in Arab countries and the debate between individual women's rights and cultural interests, written by Mhabeni Bona (2013). See also the articles in *Al-Raida*, Issue 126-127 (2009), available at http://inhouse.lau.edu.lb/-iwsaw/raida126-127/EN/p001-105.pdf. See also Nadine Sika and Yasmin Khodary's (2012) article or Nadje Al-Ali's (2002) publication.

lxx The interview was conducted with three Board members of AFTURD in the office on 22 April 2013.

lxxi AFTURD is the Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development. It is one of the older leading liberal feminist organisations that was established in 1998 and was involved in research and training activities, and advocacy and lobbying for legal reform on women's rights under Ben Ali's regime.

lxxii "Les nominations aux hautes fonctions entre la législation et la réalité quelle place pour les femmes?" (2013), Association Démocratique des Femme du Maroc, National Meeting, available at http://www.-adfm.ma/spip.php?article4358, accessed 15 Oct 2013; Yassine Benargane (2013).

lxxiii See "Tunisia Holds National Consultation Ahead of Drafting of Constitution" (2012), UNHCR, 02 August, available at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ NewsEvents/Pages/TunisiaNationalConsultation.aspx, accessed 15 Oct 2013 (reporting on consultation meetings regarding human rights and the Constitution initiated by Tunisian civil society members with the facilitation of the U.N. Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights). Following release of the draft constitution on December 14 2012, Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly continued to invite civil society participation: "Draft Constitution of the Republic of Tunisia" (2012), Non-official English Translation, UNDP, 14 December, available at http://www.constitutionnet.org/files/tunistian_consititution14_dec_2012-english-undp.pdf, accessed 04 Oct 2013. See also Amira Masrour (2012).

lxxiv For more on the debate between liberal feminist discourse and the cultural discourse in Mhabeni Bona (2013).

lxxv An individual interview with Leila Majdouli, Secretary General of Association of Feminine Solidarity (ASF), conducted in 6 June 2013.

lxxvi Individual interview with MP, member of the political office of the UC, was conducted in 22 April 2013.

lxxvii The coalition was formed in the early days of the revolution and worked to formulate a united stand representing predominantly-secular feminist organisations in Egypt regarding various political developments. See, for example, the press release issued by the coalition against the National council of women and their call for its dissolution: "Coalition of Women's NGOs in Egypt: National Council of Women Doesn't Represent Egyptian Women... Call for Rapid Dissolution" (2011), Nazra for Feminist Studies, available at http://nazra.org/en/2013/07/exclusion-women-political-process-and-constitutional-declaration-should-be-treated, accessed 15 Sep 2013.

lxxviii Established in 1995, the Women and memory forum is a leading women's NGO. The Forum convened women's activists representing different women's groups, institutions and initiatives to discuss the draft constitution and to propose a new draft more consistent with international law. The working group included women's rights groups such as "Come to write our Constitution"; and the "Popular committee for writing the Constitution".

lxxix A resolution issued by the United Nations Security Council, requires parties in a conflict to respect women's rights and to support their participation in peace negotiations, post-conflict reconstruction, and calls for increasing women's representation at all levels (decision making, peace process, etc). Full resolution: "Women Preventing War, Promoting Peace –1325 The Way Forward" (2010), Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organisations, 4 November, Briefing, available at:
http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/dpingorelations/shared/Documents/PDF%20Documents/Final%20Programme%20Women%20Peace%20and%20Security%20edited%20gbts.pdf, accessed 01 December 2013

[lxxx] Moderate Islamist women follow the discourse of Islamic feminism. This discourse pursues the liberation of Muslim women from the traditional patriarchal interpretation of the Qur'an. Islamic feminists believe that the women are an equal partner of men in society through a gender sensitive re-reading of the Quranic text. See more details in Salwa Ismail (2001); Margot Badran (2005); and Emma Murphy (2003); and Cretois's (2013) article in *Al-Monitor*, arguing that Muslim women realise that their subordination is a human conduct reflecting the culture of patriarchy rather than Islam.

[lxxxi] Evidence of liberal feminists' intolerance is the unwillingness of radical feminists in parts of North Africa to even meet and be interviewed with Islamic feminists during the research process.

[lxxxii] In its party constitution, Islah calls for measures to "rectify the inferior image of women" and to reform the "traditional" role of women, making them partners in all societal roles. In practice, however, its progressive-sounding policies have not been internalised by the grassroots. Many, if not most, male Islah members support a traditional housebound role for women. Women's leadership within the party is also strong. Dr. Amat Al Salam Raja, who won more votes than Zindani when she ran for Islah's Shura Council. See more details in Campbell (2013).

[lxxxiii] Saft el-Laban is one of the local communities in which this research was conducted. It is part of Giza governorate, yet part of greater Cairo-Egypt.

[lxxxiv] "Still Waiting for Change: Making the political transition work for women in Yemen" (2012), *Oxfam Briefing Note*, September, http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/20120924-still-waiting-change-yemen-en.pdf, accessed 15 Oct 2013.

[lxxxv] See "Corruption Perceptions Index 2012", Transparency International, available at http://www.-transparency.org/cpi2012/results, accessed 15 Oct 2013.

[lxxxvi] Shekel is the Israeli currency used by Palestinians, and 1 shekel is not enough for a child to buy the cheapest sandwich.

[lxxxvii] See "Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities" (2010), Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute (DEDI), Summary of Cairo Workshop, June 2010, available at http://dedi.org.eg/wp-content/uploads/-Masculinities-e-publication-7.8-MB.pdf, accessed 19 Nov 2013. See also Muhanna (2013).

[lxxxviii] Sally Khalifa Isaac (2012) reviews the EUs response to the Arab uprisings and reviews the European Neighbourhood Policy, and characterises it as hollow.

[lxxxix] According to Isaac (2012: 12), "the EU is offering in total less than 7billion Euros in aid to the entire Southern Neighbourhood from 2010 to 2013, while Egypt alone has an estimated debt of $184 billion in June 2010 (equivalent to 89.5 percent of the country's GDP). … The Egyptian government is spending around $18 billion – only in 2011 – on total internal and external debt services."

[xc] See the Transition Fund's "Portfolio" statement of 24 July 2013: "Middle East and North Africa Transition Fund – Overview", available at http://www.menatransition-fund.org/content/overview, accessed 25 Nov 2013

[xci] "Middle East and North Africa Transition Fund – Overview", available at http://www.menatransition-fund.org/content/overview, accessed 25 Nov

[xcii] "Women's entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa", OECD, available at http://www.oecd.org/mena/investment/womensbusinessforum.htm, accessed 15 Oct; and also 'The Deauville Partnership and the MENA-OECD Initiative', OECD, available at http://www.oecd.org/mena/investment/thedeauvillepartnership.htm, accessed 10 Oct 2013

[xciii] Some of this bias may stem from Islamist parties and movements like Hamas being listed on the US and EU lists of terrorist organisations, and the strict policing of those lists.

[xciv] Also see Peggy Antrobus (2000) and Antrobus (2002).

[xcv] For instance, issues of concern to women in a particular community can range from access to potable water in their part of the city, to better municipal services (i.e. garbage collection and electricity) to their children's safety on the way to school in rural area. There are a host of issues which women can come together around to improve their quality of life while also working together.

[xcvi] Zakia Salime shows how the Islamist and feminist movements in Morocco have transformed each other through decades of activism, debate and engagement.

[xcvii] For instance, the transitions in South America have frequently taken decades to dismantle and reform military and security institutions. Calls for newly-elected governments in the Arab world to restructure these powerful state institutions and actors in a few years are naïve and poorly informed.

[xcviii] In Latin America, women activists and organisations had been active in the demonstrations against authoritarian rule, and therefore, had also developed relations with the rising new leadership. In Central Europe, however, opposition movements had very few women leaders. Also, women's organising was intimately associated with state socialism making it difficult to integrate gender into the transitional political agenda – leading ultimately to setbacks and losses for women (Waylen, 2007: 66).

[xcix] See, for instance, a 2013 Wilton Park conference report highlighting in several places the serious underfunding and lack of adequate resources by donors as a structural barrier to implementing the 2001 Security Council Resolution 1325 (which is also legally binding) 'Women in Peacebuilding' (2013), *Wilton Park*, 18-20 March, Conference Report, available at https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP1191-Report-100713.pdf, accessed 02 Dec 2.