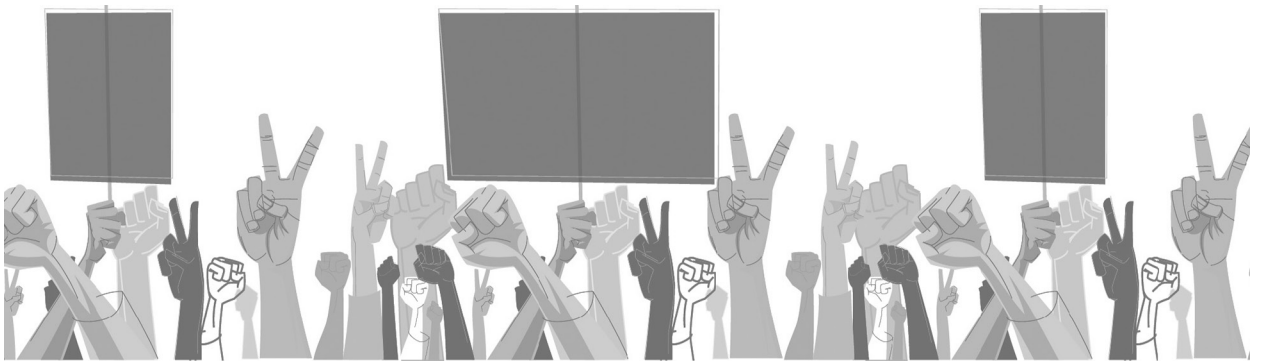


The SAGE Handbook of Resistance



Edited by
David Courpasson
and Steven Vallas

 **SAGE** reference

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi | Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne



Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

SAGE Publications Ltd
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP

SAGE Publications Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320

SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd
B 1/I 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area
Mathura Road
New Delhi 110 044

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd
3 Church Street
#10-04 Samsung Hub
Singapore 049483

Editor: Judi Burger
Editorial Assistant: Matthew Oldfield
Production Editor: Sushant Nailwal
Copyeditor: David Hemsley
Proofreader: Sunrise Setting Ltd.
Indexer: Avril Ehrlich
Marketing Manager: Sally Ransom
Cover Design: Wendy Scott
Typeset by Cenveo Publisher Services
Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd,
Croydon, CR0 4YY

At SAGE we take sustainability seriously. Most of our products are printed in the UK using FSC papers and boards. When we print overseas we ensure sustainable papers are used as measured by the PREPS grading system. We undertake an annual audit to monitor our sustainability.

Introduction and editorial arrangement © David Courpasson & Steven Vallas 2016

Chapter 1 © Jeffrey Juris and Marina Sitrin 2016	Chapter 14 © Marianne Maeckelbergh 2016
Chapter 2 © Bob Kurik 2016	Chapter 15 © Daniel Hjorth 2016
Chapter 3 © Valentine M. Moghadam 2016	Chapter 16 © Ryan Moore 2016
Chapter 4 © David Knights 2016	Chapter 17 © Guillaume Marche 2016
Chapter 5 © André Spicer and Peter Fleming 2016	Chapter 18 © Gay Seidman 2016
Chapter 6 © Erynn Masi de Casanova and Afshan Jafar 2016	Chapter 19 © Adam Reich 2016
Chapter 7 © Amanda M. Gengler 2016	Chapter 20 © Sierk Ybema, Robyn Thomas and Cynthia Hardy 2016
Chapter 8 © Jillian Crocker 2016	Chapter 21 © Giuseppe Caruso 2016
Chapter 9 © Linda Blum and Shelley Kimelberg 2016	Chapter 22 © Pablo Fernández 2016
Chapter 10 © Anniina Rantakari and Eero Vaara 2016	Chapter 23 © Xueguang Zhou and Yun Ai 2016
Chapter 11 © Tammi Arford 2016	Chapter 24 © Lamia Karim 2016
Chapter 12 © Felipe G. Massa 2016	Chapter 25 © Sandrine Baudry and Emeline Eudes 2016
Chapter 13 © Edward T. Walker 2016	

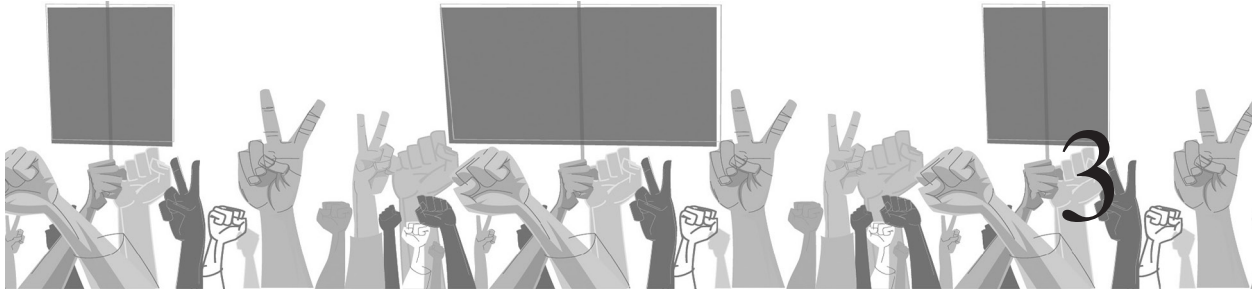
Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, or by any means, only with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction, in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the publishers.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016933075

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-4739-0643-3



Islamism, Feminism, and Resistance: Rethinking the Arab Spring

Valentine M. Moghadam

INTRODUCTION

Resistance to domination or illegitimate authority takes many forms and it may be individual or collective. Over the course of modern history, there has been resistance to political, economic, or cultural change; to dictatorial states; to military attacks, invasions, and occupations; and to policies or laws deemed coercive or alien. Tactics may be militant, as in individual or organized use of violence; these may be justifiable and legitimate or deemed acts of terrorism. Other tactics of resistance are non-violent, as in research, lobbying, and advocacy; strikes, sit-ins, civil disobedience, and rallies; and subcultures, alternative communities, and non-conforming comportment or other quotidian forms of resistance. James Scott (1987) famously described the everyday 'weapons of the weak' in his study of Southeast Asian peasants; in their separate writings, Diane Singerman

(1996) and Asef Bayat (1999) discuss how individuals and small communities in Egypt and Iran might resist domination or deprivation through various survival strategies or 'quiet encroachments'. The literatures on revolutions, anti-systemic movements, new social movements, and democratic transitions have sought to capture the dynamics of more organized resistance movements: their origins and antecedents; ideologies, actors, and strategies; strengths and weaknesses; achievements and longer-term outcomes. In our post-9/11 world, resistance has been used widely in association with armed movements, as in the Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the bombing of Gaza, and the Iraqi armed resistance to the 2003 US invasion and occupation. Islamist movements, in particular, are considered to be a prominent form of resistance – to military incursions and occupation; to

Western cultural incursions; and to policies and practices deemed inimical to Islam.

The feminist movement has not typically been cast as a resistance movement, although various scholars and activists have debated its revolutionary or reformist character and accomplishments. And yet across time and space, feminist movements have emerged to resist male domination and women's subordination, patriarchal states and non-state actors, and oppressive market processes. They have done so in a number of ways: creating feminist organizations with a collective identity and common purpose; engaging in research to document injustices and demand change; lobbying like-minded elite allies; through advocacy via their own publications and websites as well as through the mainstream media; organizing seminars, meetings, and press conferences; and organizing public rallies and demonstrations around specific grievances or campaigns. Unlike other organized resistance movements, feminist movements have been famously non-violent although they have been known to be confrontational. From time to time, feminist groups might clash with other civil society or social movement actors, but around the world, they work in coalition with like-minded partners toward longer-term socio-political change and an end to patriarchy, violence against women, and repression.¹

In this paper, I put the spotlight on Islamist and feminist movements, with a focus on contentious politics involving these two sets of actors in the years leading up to the 2011 Arab Spring and in its aftermath. Indeed, the Arab Spring constitutes an appropriate and instructive case study that enables the examination of Islamism and feminism as two opposing forms of resistance in the context of socio-political change. Although multiple countries were involved in or affected by the Arab Spring, here I focus on Tunisia, for three reasons. First, although a small country situated in the Arab North Africa subregion (the Maghreb), Tunisia is known for its liberal family law, or *Code du Statut Personnel* (CSP), adopted by the postcolonial state under President Habib

Bourguiba in 1956. Second, Tunisia has long been home to several vibrant feminist organizations (discussed more fully below) that have historically worked in coalition with progressives in the country's large trade union movement and with left-wing political parties to challenge authoritarian rule and advance a socialist, democratic, or secular alternative. Third, Tunisia is the birthplace of the Arab Spring, and has the distinction of being the positive example and outcome of the Arab Spring, with successful democratic procedures and an egalitarian constitution, in part because of its influential women's rights movement, even though its fledgling democracy is being sorely tested by Islamist extremists. Although Tunisia is not the only country in the region to have experienced a feminist-Islamist contention, the ideological gap between the two movements and their respective political-cultural projects was especially visible during the early years of the country's democratic transition (2011–2014), when the new constitution was being forged and intensely debated.

Questions addressed in this paper are: what were the goals of the Islamist and feminist movements during the period of protest and transition? How and why did the goals clash, and with what effects? What were feminists resisting, and what have they been building? To address the questions and provide context, I begin with an overview of the movement known as 'political Islam', showing its varied forms as well as its links to Western foreign policy.² I then turn to the global feminist movement, its presence in Arab countries, and the struggle around Muslim family law. The case study of Tunisia highlights the divergent agendas, forms, and methods of resistance of the two movements.³

ISLAMISM: IDEOLOGY, MASCULINITY, AND POLITICAL POWER

The Islamist movements that burst onto the international scene in the late 1970s and spread

in the 1980s were rooted in eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early-twentieth-century revival movements, which in turn claimed to be following the path taken by the prophet Muhammad in the seventh century AD.

Islamic intellectuals such as the Egyptians Rashid Rida, Sayyid Qutb, and Hassan al-Banna (who founded the Muslim Brotherhood in 1929), and Abdul Ala Mawdudi (who founded the Jamiat-e Islami in India in 1941) all took issue with modernity as it was proceeding in their countries and called for a return to strict implementation of Sharia law. Qutb's 1948–1950 stay in the United States convinced him that the *jahiliyya*, the so-called age of darkness in pre-Islamic Arabia, had returned and needed to be combated. His book *Jahiliyyat al-Qarn al-Ishrin* ('The jahiliyya of the twentieth century') suggested that Muslims should lead humanity once more out of the *jahiliyya* created and defended by the West. Today's militant Islamists use his arguments to describe the state of the world and justify their aggressive tactics.

Militant Islamists also are inspired by the rigid legacies of Ibn Taymiyyah, a medieval Hanbali jurist, and Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab, an eighteenth-century theologian who formed an alliance with Muhammad Ibn Saud and built a religio-political movement that was defeated by the Ottomans but in the twentieth century formed the foundation of the new state of Saudi Arabia. Salafists and jihadists emphasize the doctrinal obligation of Muslims to defend the faith when Islam is deemed to be under threat. They point out that Muhammad and his companions engaged in battle to defend themselves and spread the faith, and they interpret Quranic verses in particular ways to justify attacks on 'apostates' and 'infidels'. Some fundamentalists may prefer to separate themselves from secularists and non-believers, but jihadists such as al-Qaeda, Al-Shabab, the Taliban, Boko Haram, Hizab-e Tahrir, and ISIS/ISIL have the wider ambition of fighting the 'near enemy' (the local state authorities) and the 'far enemy' (the US and other Western powers) in order

to spread their own version of Islam. Hugh Roberts (2003) has shown how Algeria's Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) was part of the legacy of orthodox, urban-based Islamic revivalists associated with the Salafists of the early decades of the twentieth century against the more traditional, rural-based *maraboutic* Islam. FIS and its more extremist offshoot, le Group Islamique Armée, fought the Algerian state in the 1990s and called feminist organizations the derogatory term 'hizb al-Fransa', or the French party.

If in the Christian world, processes such as the Reformation, Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution helped to undermine religious authority and usher in secularization, such processes have not run their course in the Muslim world. Sociologist Mansoor Moaddel (2005) has traced the evolution of Islamic modernism, liberal nationalism, and Islamic fundamentalism, arguing that the movements arose in the context of different global developments, resources, cultural capital, and institutional ties. He adds, 'Yet Muslims reached no lasting agreement on the form government should take, the appropriate economic model, the relationship of Muslim nations with the outside world, the status of women, their national identities, and the relation of Islam to rational analysis and rule making' (p. 1). Secularization has been resisted by fundamentalists of various religions, but in the Islamic world the relationship with modernity and its secular accoutrements in the political and cultural spheres has been especially vexed. Separation of 'mosque and state', women's legal equality, and equality of Muslim and non-Muslim citizens have been consistently contested. Thus ideologies such as liberalism and communism – both of which advance such principles and values – also have been resisted, whether by states or non-state actors.

During the Cold War, the struggle against communism made Islamists occasional allies of repressive regimes as well as the US, whether in Indonesia, Iran, Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, or

Yemen. Throughout this period, the United States was in close alliance with oil-rich Saudi Arabia, which participated in the fight against communism. It used its wealth to build mosques and other institutions and networks across the globe (while not permitting any churches on its soil), influence the change of women's dress across the Muslim world, and finance jihadists. The 'arms pipeline' to the Afghan mujahideen and other militant Islamist groups during the 1980s was made possible by Saudi and Kuwaiti money as well as the CIA and the Pakistani secret service. In 1992, the US-supported Afghan mujahideen toppled the modernizing, left-wing government of President Najibullah. By this time, Islamist networks existed across the globe and proliferated steadily. By turning a blind eye to its ally's role in the expansion of a virulent form of Wahhabism across the globe, the US helped foster the growth of Islamist groups.⁴

The attack on the World Trade Center and other sites in the US on September 11, 2001 has been called 'blowback', the unintended consequence of the misguided policies listed above.⁵ Yet the policies continued; thus, Afghanistan was invaded to dislodge the ruling Taliban in October 2001 and Iraq was invaded and occupied in 2003 to dislodge Saddam Hussein. In both cases, Islamist resistance movements grew. The US, UK, France, and NATO responded to the 2011 Arab Spring protests by deciding on more 'regime change', this time in Libya and Syria. Once again, the moves against nominally secular rulers motivated Islamist fighters, who felt they could recreate the caliphate of the past. Arms, funds, and logistical support from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Turkey, along with the collapse of once-strong states in Iraq, Libya, and Syria, helped to expand al-Qaeda and to create the so-called Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL). Among other outcomes, such external interventions and regime destabilizations have complicated internal dynamics in Tunisia, which has seen jihadist activity on its soil in part emanating

from groups in Libya, and has experienced a large number of young men leaving for the so-called jihad in Syria.

What are Islamist grievances? At one time, parliamentary and militant Islamists alike objected to Western support for Israel and dismissals of Palestinian claims for statehood. This was a key grievance of locally based resistance movements and networks such as Palestine's Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah, and the Palestinian question also featured in the grievances of the transnational al-Qaeda. For the most part, however, Islamists tend to blame the spread of Western values and practices for a wide variety of social and economic ills, including rising unemployment, stagnant economic development, soaring debt, housing shortages, dwindling public social and welfare expenditures, and the breakdown of the traditional Muslim family. Blaming Western influence for such developments, notes Wiktorowicz, is 'an important component of most Islamic movement diagnostic frames'. It follows that the solution is the return to or strengthening of Islamic values, norms, and laws. Thus, 'Islamists are Muslims who feel compelled to act on the belief that Islam demands social and political activism, either to establish an Islamic state, to proselytize to reinvigorate the faithful, or to create a separate union for Muslim communities' (Wiktorowicz 2001: xx). Some argue that the turn to violence occurs when the state forecloses opportunities for participation and inclusion in the public sphere and resorts to repression (Hafez 2003). Yet the violence perpetrated over Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in 1989 and the Danish cartoons caricaturing the Prophet Muhammad in 2006, along with the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris in early 2014, were not related to state repression. Grievances against Western intrusions or the lack of opportunity may be a motivating factor, but given that power and ideology are gendered, hegemonic or hypermasculinity should be considered as well.

Hegemonic masculinity has become a key concept in gender analysis since R. W. Connell (1998) identified it as a particular culture's standards and ideal of real manhood, at a particular time in history. In countries such as the US and Australia, hegemonic masculinity is defined by physical strength and bravado, exclusive heterosexuality, suppression of 'vulnerable' emotions such as remorse and uncertainty, economic independence, authority over women and other men, and intense interest in 'sexual conquest'. What Connell has defined as 'emphasized femininity' is constructed around adaptation to male power. Its central feature is attractiveness to men, which includes physical appearance, ego massaging, suppression of 'power' emotions such as anger, nurturance of children, exclusive heterosexuality, sexual availability without sexual assertiveness, and sociability. Both standards and ideals may be observed in many cultures, albeit with variations in the sexual element. For example, in Muslim cultures, female modesty is valued far more than sexual availability. And rather than intense interest in sexual conquest, hegemonic masculinity in a typical Middle Eastern context might lie in the capacity to protect family or personal honor by controlling the comportment of the women in the family, the community, or the nation.

Lauren Langman and Douglas Morris (2004) have added another dimension, pointing out that civilizations and cultures based on conquest or expansion, societies where politics and militarism are fused, and countries where the military is a central and valorized institution all exhibit discourses, images, and practices of 'heroic masculinity'. In considering American society and the role of its military in both economic growth and empire building, and in considering the foundational narratives of heroic masculinity in Islam, one can imagine a 'clash of heroic masculinities' between the American security state and transnational Islamist networks; Palestine's Hamas and the Israeli military; President Bashar al-Assad's forces in Syria

and the armed rebels; the two competing governments of a disintegrating Libya and the various militia; and Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran vying for regional power.⁶ That ISIS in Iraq and northern Syria has been fought by Kurdish women fighters is an interesting twist on such gendered clashes involving hyper masculinity. From a feminist perspective, hegemonic, heroic, or hypermasculinity is a causal factor in war, as well as in women's oppression. In Western countries, feminists might resist hegemonic standards by asserting their intellectual abilities rather than sexual appeal to men; in Muslim countries feminists might assert their right to be accepted as citizens, workers, and professionals rather than exclusively as wives and mothers. And across the world, many feminists join or lead peace, anti-militarist, and other non-violent movements.

What of Islamic Moderates and Democrats?

In contrast to militants, moderate Islamic movements, networks, or groups generally engage in non-violent organizing and advocacy in civil society. Moderate Islamists generally eschew violence as a tactic to gain political or state power; they take part in electoral politics and field candidates, sometimes openly through their own political parties and other times through independents; and they take an active part in civil society associations or build new ones. Political parties that have been said to be moderate and even democratic include the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and Jordan, Islah of Yemen, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Turkey, and the Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD) of Morocco.⁷ In Turkey, the AK Party claims to accept the secular and republican ideals of modern Turkey's founder Kemal Ataturk. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood – which won many parliamentary seats and the presidency in the first post-Arab Spring elections – insisted

that it favored democracy and civil rights for all citizens. After Tunisia's January 2011 political revolution, al-Nahda (Ennahda in the Tunisian spelling) took part in the country's first democratic elections for a Constituent Assembly, held in October 2011. Rachid Ghannouchi, head of Ennahda and its spiritual guide was quoted as saying that he saw his party as 'an open space: open to religious people, non-religious, male, female, open to all Tunisians'.⁸ Such statements seemed to refute earlier warnings about Islamist 'gray zones': positions on the application of Islamic law; the use of violence; political pluralism; civil and political rights; equality and rights of women; and equality and rights of religious minorities (Brown et al. 2006). However, with the Arab Spring and the electoral successes of Islamic parties in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, inconsistencies were observed, whether because of internal divisions that might be behind some more extremist politics, or because of 'double talk', that is, the difference between what is outwardly expressed and what is internally affirmed.

For example, in the new century, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) distanced itself from some of the more rigid doctrines of its founder. Yet it continued to proffer its slogan 'Islam Is the Solution' and to call for adherence to the Sharia. Shrewd political maneuvers, including extensive participation in local councils, grassroots associations, and syndicates, assured electoral gains by moderate Islamists associated with the MB. The Brotherhood's first political platform advocated banning Coptic Egyptians (who make up one-tenth of Egypt's population) and women from becoming president, and it raised the specter of an Iran-style religious council. The MB leadership viewed globalization as naked US ambition, and regarded Western democracy as 'subservient to whims of the masses, without moral absolutes'.⁹ In August 2010, the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR) issued a statement criticizing the MB's Youth Forum

for denying, during its mock presidential elections, a request by the forum's Muslim Sisters' Group to be included as potential nominees. That November, the ECWR issued another press release protesting the parliament's overwhelming vote against the appointment of women judges.¹⁰ In March 2011, after the Arab Spring protests that brought down the Mubarak government, the ECWR decried the absence of women from the committee drafting Egypt's new constitution, dominated by MB members. Apart from vague references to social justice, the MB never demonstrated any particular interest or expertise in economic issues and did not develop a coherent critique of, or alternative to, Egypt's neoliberal economic strategy. Whatever popular support the MB had at the start of the Egyptian political revolution was squandered on its emphasis of religion, culture, and identity rather than the tackling of the country's poverty and high unemployment, and on the increasing authoritarian tendencies of President Mohammad Morsi, leading to renewed protests that only ended with a military coup in July 2013. Although much controversy continues to surround the military's coup, its removal of Morsi, and the banning of the MB, what some scholars had argued earlier about the MB seemed true. According to Mona El-Ghobashy (2005: 391), 'They still grant culture and identity issues pride of place in their platform'. For Alison Pargeter (2010), the Muslim Brotherhood is in essence a reactionary movement, unable to break from its past.

The record of Islamist parties thus far also suggests that social and economic justice is not part of their mission or political agenda. Turkish sociologist Haldun Gulalp (2001) has noted that the rise of Islamism coincided with the decline of the Keynesian economic project, Fordist industrialization, and the welfare state, with its attendant focus on the working class. Islamism gained prominence concurrently with the economic trends of privatization, subcontracting, and entrepreneurship, which favor property owners and

small businesspeople. In contrast to Latin American-style liberation theology, with its focus on the poor and its demand for redistribution, Turkey's Islamist Welfare Party created a new capitalist culture, prioritizing both business and Islamic lifestyle norms such as the wearing of the veil, religious schooling, and the prohibition of alcohol. Although the Islamist party's discourse of 'justice' appealed to working-class voters, the party was in reality an extension of the neoliberal project. The Welfare Party was succeeded by the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which has deepened the neoliberal project even further while its president also exhorts Turkish women to have at least three children.

Networks of Muslim liberals and democrats emphasize the 'inner struggle' that Muslims are called on to perform in order to strengthen their faith and live peaceably, and they apply *ijtihad*, or reinterpretation of texts and the law to account for changed socio-political conditions. The Gulen movement, founded by a Turkish religious scholar now living in the US, promotes peaceful spirituality. Minority Islamic sects such as Turkey's Alevi and the worldwide communities of Ahmadiyya and Ismaili are not only peaceful and often liberal but also frequently under attack by the dominant Sunni communities. Various academics in Iran, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, are associated with a liberal or modern interpretation of Islam, although they may come into conflict with hardliners in government or among Islamist groups. Islamic feminists – not to be confused with Islamist women – have taken issue with patriarchal and violent interpretations of Islam, seek legal reforms, and call for women's rights through their own re-readings of the Qur'an and early Islamic history. Among the most organized, vocal, and visible are Malaysia's Sisters in Islam (SIS), who work with feminist groups across the globe and are associated with the transnational feminist network Women Living under Muslim Laws and with Musawah, dedicated to equality and justice in the Muslim family.¹¹ Many of the

Muslim groups or scholars with liberal views on cultural and social issues should not be deemed 'Islamist', but they also may not be highly representative of populations in the Muslim world, especially on such issues as homosexuality, gender equality in religious and family matters, and the equal legal status of all citizens.

FEMINISM: RESISTANCE AND CHANGE

The women's rights movement has been the subject of considerable scholarly analysis (Beckwith 2007; Chafetz and Dworkin 1986; Margolis 1993; Moghadam 2005; Molyneux 2001). Feminist theorizing has focused on national-level factors such as the growth of the population of educated women with grievances about their second-class citizenship; varieties of feminism; the evolution of women's movements and campaigns; and cross-regional similarities and differences in mobilizing structures and strategies. Research also distinguishes *feminist movement* as a social movement guided by feminist ideas and *women's movement* as defined by a demographic group or constituency, with the former being a subset of the latter.

Contemporary feminist movements in the Middle East and North Africa have their own histories, but what is arguably a *global* women's rights movement has its roots in first-wave feminism, with its focus on suffrage and justice for women, and in second-wave feminism, with its demands for equality and cultural change. As a new resistance movement, first-wave feminism brought about international women's organizations around abolition, women's suffrage, opposition to trafficking in women, anti-militarism, and labor legislation for working women and mothers. The early twentieth century also saw the emergence of an international socialist women's movement. In 1900 the Socialist International passed its first resolution in

favor of women's suffrage, and suffrage became a demand of socialist parties in 1907. Within the Second International, the women's organizations of France, Germany, and Russia mobilized thousands of working-class as well as middle-class women for socialism and women's emancipation. In Asian countries, as Kumari Jayawardena (1985) showed, many of the women's movements and organizations that emerged were associated with socialist or nationalist movements. Examples of early international women's organizations are the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the International Council of Women, the International Alliance of Women, the Women's International Democratic Federation (associated with socialist and communist movements), and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). In promoting women's rights, maternity legislation, and an end to child labor, they engaged with inter-governmental bodies such as the League of Nations and the International Labor Organization (Berkovitch 1999).

Second-wave feminism called for cultural change to accommodate demands for women's equality and autonomy. Having emerged from other social movements while also rooted in the first wave, second-wave feminism had socialist, liberal, and radical strands. Starting largely within national borders in the 1970s, it began to take on a global, transnational form in the mid-1980s, the result of both the opportunities and challenges of globalization and the spread of the United Nations' global women's rights agenda. Feminism in Arab countries, including Tunisia, is intimately connected to these processes and is a strong advocate of the international standards and norms that have come to comprise the global women's rights agenda.

These include the 1952 UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women, followed by the 1957 convention on the nationality of married women; the 1960 UNESCO convention against discrimination in education;

and the 1962 UN convention on consent to marriage, minimum age for marriage, and registration of marriage. In 1979, and in the aftermath of the first UN world conference on women and during the Decade for Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination was adopted. Known as the international bill of women's rights and usually referred to by its acronym, CEDAW, it became controversial and contested in many countries but especially in Muslim-majority countries. CEDAW is very clear that its provisions obtain across cultures and religions, stating in Article 2 that 'States Parties ... undertake ... to take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women'.¹² After CEDAW went into force in 1981, countries chose to ratify completely, or to ratify the convention with reservations (as with many Muslim-majority countries that claimed that where a CEDAW provision contradicted Sharia law, the latter would take precedence), or to remain outside the convention (as with the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran). By 2012, nearly all countries around the world had ratified the Convention, and a number of Arab countries, notably Morocco and Tunisia, had removed the reservations they had earlier inserted.

Feminism and Islamism came into conflict in the late 1980s, when Islamist movements demanded the reinforcement and strengthening of existing Islamic laws and norms, or their introduction and strict application. In addition to the prohibition of alcohol and usury, and the insistence that women veil in public, Islamists demanded on orthodox interpretation and implementation of Muslim family laws, which regulate marriage, divorce, child custody, inheritance, and other aspects of family relations. Muslim family laws – which date from the Middle Ages and reflect one or another of the four Sunni schools and the Shia school of jurisprudence, and were codified in the modern period of state-building – place females under the authority of male

kin and wives under the control of husbands, thus conferring on them second-class citizenship. Although notions of Islamic ‘complementarity’ of sex roles may once have been considered equitable and natural, the rise of second-wave feminism and subsequently of global feminism put feminism and fundamentalism on a collision course.

The Problem of Muslim Family Law

Muslim family law is predicated on the principle of patrilineality, which confers privileges and authority to male kin. Brothers inherit more than sisters do, and a deceased man’s brothers or uncles have a greater claim on his property than does his widow. The groom offers a monetary gift (*mahr*) to the prospective bride and must provide for her; in turn, he expects obedience. Provisions regarding obedience, maintenance, and (unequal) family inheritance presume that wives are economic dependents, thus perpetuating what I have termed the patriarchal gender contract (Moghadam 1998: ch. 1; 2013b: ch. 3). In the modern or postcolonial era, as Muslim family law became codified, only Tunisia and Turkey adopted European-style civil codes or family laws. Tunisia modernized its family law immediately after independence, allowing women rights to divorce and child custody, and banning polygamy, although unequal inheritance was left intact. Turkey’s family law was not based on Islam but was quite conservative nonetheless, until the women’s movement forced changes in 2001.

Social changes have rendered Muslim family law (MFL) an outdated institution and social policy. MFL is at odds with long-standing discourses about the need to integrate women in development. It also contravenes the equality provisions of national constitutions and those articles in the labor laws that describe an array of rights and benefits to women workers. The growth

of a population of educated and employed women with aspirations to full social participation and equal rights of citizenship has led to dynamic women’s movements and campaigns for repeal of discriminatory laws, and specifically for reform of family laws. In the 1990s, as women’s rights groups expanded throughout the Arab world, a primary goal was the modernization of family laws, the removal of articles placing women under the supervision of male kin, and the adoption of laws banning discrimination and ensuring women’s legal equality. Other demands came to be criminalization of all forms of violence against women, including ‘honor crimes’; equal nationality laws so that a woman married to a foreign-born man could confer her nationality on her children; and enhanced economic and political participation. A key campaign was spearheaded by the Collectif 95 Maghreb-Egalité, a network formed by Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisia feminists in the early 1990s. In a 2003 book that was subsequently translated into English, the authors point out that among the many reasons why MFL is in need of reform is its divergence from the social realities and actual family dynamics of many countries, where women must seek work to augment the family budget and where women are increasingly looking after their elderly parents.¹³ In other words, where MFL does not directly stand in the way of women’s economic participation and rights, it is an anachronism in light of contemporary family needs and women’s aspirations. Although Arab women’s collective action for full and equal citizenship has resulted in a number of important legal and policy reforms, feminists and Islamists remain on opposite sides of the question of family law and the legal equality of women.

Across the region, women’s organizations self-identify as *democratic* as well as feminist, often issuing statements in favor of equality, participation, rights, and real democracy, frequently referring to themselves as part of the ‘democratic’ or ‘modernist’ forces of society. Examples of such women’s

rights organizations are Algeria's Centre d'Information et de Documentation sur les Droits de l'Enfant et de la Femme (CIDDEF) and 20 Ans Barakat; Tunisia's l'Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates (ATFD) and l'Association des femmes Tunisiennes pour la recherche et le développement (AFTURD); and Morocco's l'Union d'action féminine (UAF) and l'Association démocratique des femmes du Maroc (ADFM). In their stated objectives and in their practices, the region's feminists are vocal advocates of democracy, and women's rights groups are agents and allies of democratization. A Tunisian feminist lawyer associated with the ATFD told me in 2004: 'We recognize that, in comparison with other Arab countries, our situation is better, but still we have common problems, such as an authoritarian state. Our work on behalf of women's empowerment is also aimed at political change and is part of the movement for democratization'. On the 50th anniversary of Tunisia's landmark *Code du Statut Personnel*, women's groups joined with human rights groups and the country's main trade union to celebrate women's rights. A 2008 press release issued by the ADFT declared that 'no development, no democracy can be built without women's true participation and the respect of fundamental liberties for all, men and women'.¹⁴

In the wake of the Arab Spring, there were fears that newly empowered Islamists would seek to undo the gains made by women's rights advocates and their allies, including repeal of family law reforms. Egypt's Salafists, for example, had called for the repeal of women's rights to divorce, lowering the age of marriage from eighteen to fourteen, decriminalizing female circumcision, and enforcing Sharia law. In Libya, among the first statements issued by the head of the National Transitional Council was that polygamy would be restored. Morocco's Islamist Prime Minister Benkirane argued that families suffered when women left the home for employment, saying that it was akin to the lights going out in the home. Feminists

protested with placards that read, 'I am not a chandelier' and castigated Benkirane for other comments deemed insulting to women.¹⁵ Tunisian feminists welcomed democracy but feared that it would open political and physical space to Islamists intent on ending liberal legislation and resisting any further moves toward women's emancipation.

CASE STUDY: ISLAMISM VS FEMINISM IN TUNISIA

Postcolonial Tunisia was built on the pillar of modernity and a moderate Arab-Muslim identity, with the rights of women firmly enshrined in the family law and personal status code, known in French as le *Code du Statut Personnel* (CPS) and in Arabic as the Medjella.¹⁶ Adopted in August 1956, the CPS was the most liberal in the Arab region, as it raised the age of marriage for girls to 17, banned polygamy outright, and gave women the right to divorce and child custody. Tunisia also gained the distinction of producing many women lawyers and jurists, who were probably inspired by the French-educated lawyer-president Habib Bourguiba. Tunisia's 'state feminist' regime was reflected in Bourguiba's measures to improve the legal status of women, encourage schooling and higher education, and incorporate women in public administration; medical abortions were legalized in 1973. Under these conditions, the feminist movement grew. In a special issue of a Lebanese women's studies magazine, scholar Evelyne Accad (1985: 1) wrote:

Having lived and worked, read and met most of these women during the six months I spent in Tunisia as a researcher, I can only conclude that Tunisia is indeed a vital and dynamic place for women. Despite political upheavals in the Arab world the achievements of Tunisian women are a leading force not only for Tunisia; but for their sisters in other parts of the world.

Accad also described her interview with a leading Tunisian feminist, legal scholar

Hafidha Chékir. She explained that Chékir saw three kinds of feminist movements: the reformist, which seeks to improve women's condition; the radical, which goes beyond mere reforms and attacks the foundation of patriarchal society; and the ideological, which combines class struggle and women's equality. Chékir argued that Tunisia needed to integrate all three types for a more 'militant' triple action: a feminist struggle for the acquisition of full citizenship in a democracy and for a change of the socio-economic structures. Accad further reported that according to Chékir, Tunisia's feminist movements had the necessary components for the transformation of the entire society, because their struggle combined the fight against social exploitation, political imperialism, and the specific oppression of women. At the same time, Chékir (1985: 6) saw the misogynous attitudes and, above all, the Islamic revival movement, as the most serious threats to women wanting to achieve equality and obtain their rights. These ideas were rooted in Tunisia's own political history as well as in connections with France, where many Tunisian feminists spent some time studying. In addition, socialist and communist ideas were present in Tunisia (as they were in many Third World countries) and were especially strong among students, women's rights activists, and intellectuals, even though the communist party had been banned in 1963.

Shortly thereafter, Tunisia, like other countries in the Arab region and elsewhere in the Muslim world, began to experience pressure from Islamists, specifically in the form of the *mouvement de la tendance Islamique* (MTI), which later was renamed Ennahda (or Al-Nahda). According to one activist, the emergence of Islamists in the late 1970s was in part a move to counter the growth of the radical student movement.¹⁷ Inspired by the Islamic revolution in Iran and by Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, the MTI was founded by Rachid Ghannouchi in 1981 but was banned in 1989 when members were charged with inciting violence. The ban was

welcomed by Tunisian feminists and secularists, although a number of secular human rights lawyers were appalled when the new president, Zein El-Abidine Ben Ali, ordered the jailing of many Islamists, whom they subsequently came to represent in court. Various forms of resistance were thus presenting themselves in Tunisia: feminists resisting Islamist pressures; Islamists resisting Western values, including secularism and feminism; feminists, progressives, and Islamists resisting state authoritarianism.

In the 1990s, social and economic development, a well-organized social provisioning system, and friendly ties with Europe as well as the Arab world and Africa ensured Tunisia's stability. While ruling in an authoritarian manner despite regular elections, Ben Ali continued the secular republican legacy of his predecessor and explicitly presented himself as a champion of women's rights. The end of the Cold War and democracy-promotion activities by the European Union and the US created some room for maneuver for Tunisia's burgeoning civil society, with its occasional manifestations of opposition by the trade union, feminist associations, human rights groups, and dissidents associated with left-wing political parties. (The former communist party, now renamed Tajdid, or Renewal, was legalized in 1993.) Trade unionists occasionally protested structural adjustments and neoliberalism; human rights activists decried the arrest of Islamists and political repression generally; and women's rights groups became especially active. In addition to helping form the Collectif 95 Maghreb-Egalité, Tunisian women's groups worked together and with other civil society associations on human rights, social welfare, and fair elections. In the new century, the ATFD and AFTURD also turned their attention to the gaps in family law that still permitted unequal inheritance, to domestic violence, and to sexual harassment.

Policies of economic liberalization, coupled with the expansion of the population of educated youth who could not find gainful

employment, generated societal dissatisfaction and other conditions conducive to the outbreak of mass social protests. Privatization, the rising cost of living, and high unemployment – all of which were exacerbated by the global recession of 2008 – triggered a number of labor protest actions. The 2010 WikiLeaks revelations of the corruption and self-enrichment of the president's wife's family enraged Tunisians. When a street vendor who was ordered to stop his trade resorted to self-immolation in December 2010 after being denied justice, his act seemed to symbolize a protest against the collective loss of dignity. The tragedy led to massive street protests the following January with slogans such as 'Ben Ali, d'égage' (Ben Ali, get out) and 'emploi, notre droit' (employment is our right).¹⁸ Leftists, secularists, feminists, trade unionists, and supporters of Ennahda all took to the streets, while young people kept up the momentum through social networking media.

At the time of its political revolution, Tunisia had several preconditions conducive to a more women-friendly outcome of its democratic transition: a respectable female share of employment; a female share of parliamentary seats that was larger than the global average; a relatively strong tradition of secular republicanism; and its liberal family law, along with well-established feminist organizations and policy institutes with transnational links. Relatively small but very well-organized with deeply committed activists, the Tunisian feminist movement had developed a sophisticated critique of the state and patriarchy, was an active member of the Collectif Maghreb, and helped produce a number of important documents and reports on women's conditions in Tunisia. The country's ties to the European Union, the country's strong trade union, and the human rights organizations were other advantages. Given these preconditions, it was perhaps no surprise that Tunisia's transitional governing body in 2011 endorsed gender parity in political representation (Khalil 2014).

Because Ennahda won a plurality of votes in the October 2011 elections rather than an outright majority, it formed a coalition government with two secular political parties. President Ghannouchi presented himself as a moderate and democrat, but Tunisian feminists and many secularists felt that Ennahda was coddling the bands of bearded Salafist men bent on disrupting artistic gatherings deemed un-Islamic, attacking cafés and shops that sold alcohol, and trying to change the university dress codes so that heavily veiled women, wearing the Saudi-style *niqab*, could attend classes. The emergence of Islamism following the Revolution raised a dilemma for feminist activists. On the one hand, they were committed to the democratic process, which had brought Ennahda to power. On the other hand, the fact that Ennahda women wore modest Islamic dress and a headscarf seemed to suggest that unveiled Tunisian women deserved moral opprobrium, and certainly the Salafists took advantage of the new political environment to express their hypermasculinity and harass unveiled women as well as public figures known to be staunch secularists. Tunisian feminists were furious when Islamists spoke of overturning the ban on polygamy or tolerating 'religious marriages' that would enable a man to have more than one wife simultaneously or to 'marry' one 'temporarily'. And they were appalled when Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali, an Ennahda member and former political prisoner, hosted a high-ranking Palestinian Hamas official in November 2011 at which he said: 'The conquest of Jerusalem will set out from here. You are witnessing a divine, historic moment – a new era in civilization, God willing: the sixth caliphate'.¹⁹ Such a declaration seemed to violate the country's tradition of secular republicanism and moderate Muslim identity. In December 2011, an Ennahda member of the Constituent Assembly, Souad Abderrahim, argued against single mothers, asserting that they 'do not deserve any governmental help' because they are a 'disgrace' to the country 'and have no right to exist'.²⁰

Such statements created a polarizing situation in the country, with secularists, feminists, and leftists on one side, and Islamists of varying hues on the other. Indeed, Nadia Chaabane, a French Tunisian who returned to the country to take part in the revolution, told me that she had decided to run in the elections for the Constituent Assembly under the El Massar party (formerly Tajdid) as a form of ‘personal defiance’ of the Islamists.²¹ She won a seat and – with allies in the Constituent Assembly and in civil society – spent two years opposing efforts to mention Sharia in the draft constitution and to call women and men ‘complementary’ rather than equal.

Resistance to Islamism

Dr Amel Grami, a scholar and women’s rights activist who is a professor of Islamic studies at Manouba University outside Tunis, described how life had changed since Ennahda had come to power in the October 2011 election:

The main subject is civil liberties and how to survive the current wave of violence against women. There is tension vis-à-vis women in terms of their clothes, their life-style, etc. For example, swimming in Ramadan causes problems now for some women. It is a new phenomenon in Tunisia There are others who are using violence in order to ‘correct’ the behavior of women. It is not possible any more for women activists to travel around the country on their own at night or to go to rural areas, especially to some areas where fundamentalists impose their rule, such as rural areas near Bizerte where there is reported to be Salafist controlled territory or ‘Imara Salafya’. Tunisia is not the same as it was two years ago. (We do not have the same freedom of movement. (Grami and Bennoune 2013)²²

Grami also said that CEDAW was being attacked by Islamists (the Minister of Religious Affairs opposed the lifting of the reservations) and that the women from the Ennahda party had organized a demonstration in front of the Ministry of Women under the slogan: ‘If you commit adultery, you should be punished’ (Grami and Bennoune 2013). Although Ennahda was frequently portrayed

in the international media as moderate, Nadia Chaabane said: ‘We did not believe a single word of the many declarations uttered by Ennahda which sought to reassure and affirm the sanctity of women’s achieved rights’.²³

Tunisia’s feminist movement fought to be part in the agenda-setting process during the transitional period and the deliberations of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), charged with drafting a new constitution. Feminist organizations remained mobilized, insisting that women’s presence in political bodies increase and that there be no changes to the country’s fairly egalitarian family law, which, they pointed out, reflected the prevailing reality of family relations.²⁴ When Islamists in the NCA proposed constitutional language referring to women and men as ‘complementary’, feminists posted an online petition on 2 August 2012 entitled ‘Protégez les droits de citoyenneté de la femme en Tunisie!’, which acquired over 30,000 signatures.²⁵ A coalition of ATFD, AFTURD, the Human Rights League, the UGTT Women’s Commission, the Tunisian section of Amnesty International, and the National Council for Freedom in Tunisia called for full and equal citizenship.²⁶ Eventually Ennahda backed down and agreed to retain the constitutional reference to women’s equality.

The years 2012 and 2013 were turbulent and risky for Tunisia’s fledgling democracy, and gave rise to questions about the moderate and democratic nature of the Islamists in power and their social base of support. The nearly year-long clash at Manouba University between Islamists and secularists, along with the assassinations of key left-wing political figures, revealed the dangers of militant Islamists while also undermining the government’s legitimacy.

Contention at Manouba University

Manouba University, located on the outskirts of Tunis, is known for its modernist Islamic studies and for reinterpreting the Qur’an. Amel Grami herself wrote about apostasy and mixed marriage in Islam, and her

conclusion that the marriage of a Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man was not forbidden under Islam and Sharia ‘disturbed the fundamentalists’. Following the elections, some mosques now run by Salafists called for a takeover of Manouba University to ‘oppose the work done there by secular intellectuals’. As Grami explained, she arrived on campus one day in November 2011 to find someone giving a sermon and calling on the students to throw her out of the university. ‘Luckily, they did not recognize me, but they denounced me because I am supposedly against Islam, because I teach comparative religion, and according to them I stand with the Jews and Christians, so I am against Islam. And that year I was teaching another course about feminism, so I am the “bad girl of Islam”’ (Grami and Bennoune 2013).

In spring of 2012, Manouba’s dean of the Faculty of Letters, Arts and Humanities, Habib Kazdaghi, an expert on minorities, especially Tunisia’s Jewish minority, was harassed by Salafists, angered that he would not permit a classroom to be converted to a prayer room (in part because of the shortage of classroom space, and in part because of the presence of mosques nearby) and would not allow female students in Saudi-style *niqab* to attend classes. The Salafists’ sit-ins and lock-downs prevented thousands of students from taking exams.²⁷ During this period, the university received hardly any assistance from the police or the Ministry of the Interior, leading many feminists and secularists to suspect a collusion between the Ennahda government and the violent Salafists.²⁸ Grami explains:

I myself was surrounded by a group of students and their supporters and told to ‘dégage’. It hurts, these groups of students considering that you are evil, you are ‘Aytem França’ – the orphans of France, that you are representing the West. ... I spent my life teaching values, and I am a member of many groups for interfaith dialogue. My whole project is the right to be different and the philosophy of differences in terms of race, class, gender, religion. Then, finally, I found myself the other.

And this, after the revolution no less. (Grami and Bennoune 2013)

On March 7, 2012, when the Salafists lowered the Tunisian flag over the university and raised their own black flag, the Tunisian population seemed to turn against the Salafist occupiers. In what became an iconic image, an athletic female student, Khaoula Rachidi, defied the Salafists, climbed on the roof and put the national flag back up.²⁹ Still, the Salafists continued to believe that they were above the law and could operate with impunity. This self-perception was strengthened by the fact that those who attacked the US embassy in September 2012, during the furor over the US-made film ‘The Innocence of Muslims’, received only a six-month suspended sentence.

The Assassinations of Front Populaire Political Figures

The situation came to a head in 2013, when in February the human rights lawyer and secularist, Chokri Belaïd, was assassinated, presumably by extremists. Then in July, Mohamed Brahmi, a member of the Constituent Assembly, was assassinated. Both Belaïd and Brahmi were members of the left-wing Front Populaire. The democratic opposition galvanized itself and began protesting the government and especially Ennahda for creating an enabling environment for the Salafists and extremists. In organized protests in front of the Constituent Assembly building, angry citizens blamed Ennahda for not having cracked down on hardline extremists when they first appeared. As Amel Grami explained in 2013, some hardliners were Ennahda members:

In the West, they often talk about Ennahda as homogeneous, but what we witnessed this year was fragmentation inside the party. Even inside Ennahda we find a radical grouping. This includes, for example, Sadok Chourou, a member of the Constituent Assembly, and Habib Ellouze. ... [Ellouze] appeared in some Ennahda gatherings, meetings and videos calling for ‘purification’ of the

media, and purification of intellectuals, and inviting preachers from Egypt and the Gulf to promote female genital mutilation and the veil. Sadok Chourou also called for the application of *hudud* punishments [corporal punishments like flogging and stoning derived from Sharia law], and for dealing with demonstrators by cutting off their hands and their legs according to Islamic law. So, who exactly is moderate? A woman member of the Constituent Assembly from the Ennahda party called for segregation of beaches and of public transportation. The radical wing inside the 'Shura Council' [which leads Ennahda] is quite influential. (Grami and Bennoune 2013)

Mbarka Brahmi, widow of the slain Mohamed Brahmi, openly blamed Ennahda for the assassinations and violence, called for an investigation into the 'political money' that Ennahda was receiving from external sources such as Qatar and Turkey, demanded the resignation of the Tunisian government and the Constituent Assembly, and appealed for 'real change' in Tunisia (Bennoune and Brahmi 2015).³⁰ With daily strikes, sit-ins, and rallies organized by the democratic opposition demanding *erhal* and *d'égage*, the Ennahda-led government faced a mounting political crisis. The government's legitimacy was badly hurt by the assassinations, the brazen nature of the Islamist extremists, the casualties within the Tunisian army when attacked by jihadists near the Algerian border, and the continued socio-economic problems and demands. The UGTT, League of Human Rights, and two other civil society organizations mediated between the opposition and the government, orchestrating an agreement whereby the government would step down in favor of a non-partisan and technocratic interim government, the Constituent Assembly would complete its task of drafting the new constitution, and elections would be held in Fall 2014.

As Mbarka Brahmi explained in an interview:

My husband's assassination was a wake-up call. The struggle is not between Muslims and non-Muslims, nor is it between believer and non-believer. Islam is our religion, our culture. However,

our Islam is a moderate and a particular Islam. In Tunisia we do not accept that the Islam of other societies be applied here because we have our own Islam which is consistent with the specificity of our society. For example, in Tunisia, you cannot tell a man without a beard that he is a *kafir* [non-believer]. Islam does not mean that a woman must wear a *niqab*. We in Tunisia are not used to these things. Our society will not get used to them. (Bennoune and Brahmi 2015)

Both Grami and Brahmi are very suspicious of a presumably moderate Islamist party with members who oppose women's equal rights, take a traditionalist view of Islam, and support violence to achieve their aims. Amel Grami has said that 'Tunisians must resist and fight for a better future for their children. ... All Tunisians – intellectuals, artists, journalists – should assume their responsibility to spread awareness, to promote a culture of peace, and advance a moderate interpretation of religious texts and modern education' (Grami and Bennoune 2013). Mbarka Brahmi similarly has said:

I wish for peace and security for Tunisia, because it is our only shelter. We are not used to hearing fundamentalist speeches, or to witnessing extremist practices like assassinations and terrorism. So, I hope Tunisia can be healed. The terrorists need to be prosecuted, but at the same time we need to give voice to a peaceful discourse, not one full of hate and revenge. We need a brilliant future for our kids – mine and those of all Tunisians. (Bennoune and Brahmi 2015)

Tunisian Feminist Activism Today

At the opening assembly of the World Social Forum of March 2013, held in Tunis, Ahlem Belhaj, president of *Femmes Démocrates*, speaking in both Arabic and French, cited the feminization of poverty, violence against women, and 'an economic system that exploits women and men' as the main challenges facing the world's women, and she called for international solidarity to end these realities.³¹ Over the years, Tunisia's feminist organizations have established hotlines for women victims of violence, conducted

research on the plight of women in factories, informal labor, and rural sectors, and called for decent work and wages as well as more generous maternity leave. As a feminist trade unionist told me, 'Women's economic independence and control over income is very important. We want to have women's economic security, we are always mindful that *la citoyenneté complète* has to include the economic'.³²

In 2014 and 2015 the ATFD and its partners began to push conceptual and political boundaries by adopting 'gender-based violence' and extending it to include acts of violence against women and men accused of 'immoral' acts, whether premarital sex or adultery or homosexuality. Some daring proposals were made, not only to criminalize all forms of rape, but also to call for acceptance and non-penalization of cohabitation of consenting adults, and for 'la liberté de choix du partenaire et de l'orientation sexuelle'.³³ In late Fall 2014, a document drafted by legal experts from ATFD and another feminist group, Beity, was presented for the Ministry for Women's Affairs for comments, but after it was forwarded by the ministry to other agencies, it was rejected by the government and triggered a backlash from conservatives against ATFD for its presumed libertinism and promotion of immorality. One opinion piece in particular accused the feminist organizations of supporting abortion as a 'solution' to premarital and extramarital sex.³⁴ As noted, abortion has been legal in Tunisia since 1973 and the service has been provided in public hospitals and clinics, but in post-authoritarian Tunisia, there has been open criticism of the law from within conservative circles. In the article, the author claims that Tunisia has the highest rate of abortion in Africa and that the feminist proposal to end penalization of premarital sex, adultery, and cohabitation would result in even more abortions. The very harsh article adds the following: 'Au regard d'un féminisme dénué de toute morale, l'avortement est donc présenté comme une "solution" à un évènement assez

courant de la vie sexuelle qu'on mène en dehors des relations de mariage'.³⁵ This line of thinking is typical of many Ennahda supporters, for whom issues of morality and the traditional family are paramount.

In the parliamentary elections of late Fall 2014, the secular political party Nidaa Tounes won the most seats, and its leader, Beji Caid Essebsi, was elected president. As in 2011, however, it was compelled to form a coalition government, and Ennahda joined with two secular parties.³⁶ The proportion of women winning parliamentary seats was not as high as expected, but at 31% it was higher than previous years, and in the world's top 35 countries with a 30% female share or more, according to the Interparliamentary Union's database. In early January 2014, the new constitution was adopted to much acclaim domestically and internationally. It now allowed for freedom of conscience, banned *takfir* (the issuance of charge of apostasy), established the state as custodian and as protector of religion, established employment and healthcare as citizen rights, and made the state responsible for ending violence against women.

CONCLUSION: ISLAMIST VS FEMINIST RESISTANCE

For millions of Muslims worldwide, such as Mbarka Brahmi and Amel Grami, Islam is practiced in peace and with quiet dignity. *Islamism* as politicized movement and ideology is based on selective Islamic theology and history but motivated by contemporary developments. I have argued that certain Western countries and their regional allies are responsible for the expansion of Islamism, but it is also true that Muslim concerns about cultural invasion, or the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, or the presence of 'infidel' soldiers and 'crusaders' in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, or even relatively minor events such as satirical cartoons about the Prophet Muhammad in a Danish newspaper or the

awarding of a British medal of honor to the writer Salman Rushdie – these can trigger intense emotions and strong beliefs about insults to Islam, a war against Islam, and the religiously mandated imperative to defend the faith in a militant fashion. Islamist methods thus range from participation in electoral politics to spectacular acts of violence, including suicide attacks and the atrocities committed in Syria and Iraq. Radicals and those who turn to violent contention justify their actions by selective recourse to Islamic scriptures regarding the imperative to defend Islam against its enemies, and by a virulent form of hegemonic masculinity and male privilege. As for moderate Islamists, they find themselves in contention with feminists around family law reform as well as the goals of tolerance, equality, human rights, and women's full citizenship – values that should be acknowledged.

In juxtaposing two forms of resistance movements, Islamism and feminism, this paper has sought to highlight their divergent goals and methods and to show that not all resistance movements are to be celebrated. The Tunisian case in particular exemplifies the distance between the two movements. At the same time, Tunisia is the only instance – apart from Morocco – where the emancipatory hopes of the Arab Spring were at least partially fulfilled. Elsewhere, the aspirations for greater political participation, rights, and dignity that erupted in the public squares of Cairo and other Arab cities in 2011 were crushed. What explains Tunisia's relative success? In my judgment, the ability of Tunisia's women's rights organizations to lead or join coalitions resisting the excesses of Islamist rule and insisting on a progressive democratic transition was central to that country's more positive outcome. Whereas Tunisia's Islamists sought to resist so-called Western values and solidify their version of an Islamic state, feminists resisted that particular agenda in favor of a civil state respectful of religion but premised on gender justice and social justice. The challenge that remains pertains to the revolution's socio-economic grievances

and demands. Islamist resistance in Tunisia (and elsewhere) has been directed not at capitalism but at undesired cultural values, hence the inability or unwillingness of the governing coalition to craft a coherent and alternative socio-economic program. Feminists and their allies, therefore, need to ensure not only that Islamists do not dominate the culture war but that progressives develop a coherent plan for economic development and for social and gender justice that would bring dignity and wellbeing to all Tunisian citizens.

Notes

- 1 Elsewhere I have compared and contrasted the three transnational social movements of Islamism, feminism, and global justice in terms of their historical roots, their relationship to neoliberal capitalist globalization, and their divergent agendas. See Moghadam (2013a).
- 2 The terms *fundamentalism*, *political Islam*, and *Islamism* are sometimes used interchangeably. Although *fundamentalism* does not always have an explicit political agenda, its emphasis on public observance of Sharia does have legal and policy implications. *Islamist* is the shorthand for mobilizations of Muslims calling for the introduction, observance, or strengthening of Islamic law; as such, it is both ideology and movement. The literature distinguishes moderate, radical, and extremist Islamists. See Marty and Appleby (1991, 1992, 1993), and Kepel (2002).
- 3 This paper draws on my previous and ongoing research (Moghadam 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2014), as well as on the relevant secondary sources. I have visited Tunisia on many occasions; since its 2011 political revolution I have conducted interviews with various political actors.
- 4 For more details on Western and Saudi support for Islamism, and full references, see Moghadam (2013a), ch. 3. For details on Islam in Indonesia, including the 1965 coup, see Hefner (2000) and <http://www.johngittings.com/id58.html>. A discussion of the murderous coup, and the complicity of the US, Britain, and Australia may be found at <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/hindsight/accomplices-in-atrocity-the-indonesian-killings-of/3182630#transcript>
- 5 See especially Chalmers Johnson, 'Blowback', *The Nation*, October 15, 2001. <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20011015/Johnson>

- 6 Saudi Arabia's military spending for years has been considerably higher than Iran's; recently its defense budget has been five times higher. See *The Economist*, 'After the Nuclear Deal', May 16, 2015, p. 42.
- 7 See, e.g., Rosefsky Wickham (2002) and Schwedler (2006).
- 8 Ghannouchi, cited in Leila Fadel, 'Islamists' Win Tests Tunisia Democracy', *Guardian Weekly*, (November 4, 2011), pp. 4–5.
- 9 David Wroe, 'Divisions in the Muslim Brotherhood', *The Age*, (November 16, 2007), <http://www.theage.com.au/news/world/divisions-in-muslim-brotherhood/2007/11/16/1194766965617.html>
- 10 Nehad Komsan, 'The Muslim Brotherhood ... Returning Egypt to an Age without Law', press release issued by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, Cairo (August 25, 2010); 'Who Judges the Judges? A Black Day in the History of Justice in Egypt', press release issued by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, Cairo (November 16, 2010), available at <http://www.ecwronline.org>
- 11 See <http://www.musawah.org/>. The transnational organization was founded in Malaysia and plans to shift its secretariat to Rabat, Morocco.
- 12 CEDAW <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention>
- 13 Collectif 95 Maghreb-Egalité (2003). The authorized English translation by Chari Voss is *Guide to Equality in the Family in the Maghreb* (Bethesda, MD: Women's Learning Partnership, 2005).
- 14 The quote is from Bochra Belhaj Hamida of AFTD, in a conversation with the author, Helsinki, Finland, September 9, 2004. Mme. Belhaj Hamida was elected to the Tunisian parliament in late Fall 2014, as a member of the Nidaa Tounes party. The 2008 press release, 'AFTURD's Declaration: Fighting Against Attempts of Regression' (Tunis: Association des Femmes Tunisienne pour le Recherche et Développement, September 26, 2008), was made available to me by Khedija Arfaoui at the time.
- 15 Personal communication from Professor Fatima Sadiqi, Washington, DC, November 2014. See also 'Moroccan Women Demand Apology from Benkirane over Disparaging Statement on Al Jazeera', *Morocco World News*, (August 7, 2012), <http://www.morocoworldnews.com/2012/08/50927/moroccan-women-demandapology-from-benkirane-over-disparaging-statement-on-al-jazeera>
- 16 For details, see Arfaoui (2007, 2011); Chékir and Arfaoui (2011); Charrad (2001).
- 17 Nadia Chaabane, personal communication, June 2015.
- 18 From my notes at a seminar on the Arab Spring organized by UNESCO, Paris, June 21, 2011. On Tunisia's political economy in the new century, see Ben Romdhane (2006).
- 19 Personal communication from Khedija Arfaoui; see also <http://blogs.mediapart.fr/blog/salah-horchani/020815/hamadi-jebali-archetype-de-l-islamiste-se-disant-modere-qui-feint-d-ignorer-l-islam-politique-et>
- 20 Cited in Anna Mahiar Barducci, 'Single Mothers Have No Right to Exist' (December 2011) Available at <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/2650/tunisia-single-mothers>
- 21 Personal communication from Nadia Chaabane, June 2015.
- 22 Karima Bennouna is herself a celebrated Algerian-American legal scholar and human rights activist opposed to Islamism.
- 23 Personal communication from Nadia Chaabane, June 2015.
- 24 Personal communication from Khédija Arfaoui, Bellagio, September 14, 2011 and various e-mail exchanges. Over the years I have collected many documents and reports issued by Tunisian women's organizations. See also Tchaicha and Arfaoui (2012).
- 25 'Protégez les droits de citoyenneté de la femme en Tunisie!', *Avaaz.org: Petitions Citoyennes* (August 2, 2012). http://www.avaaz.org/fr/petition/Protegez_les_droits_de_citoyennete_de_la_femme_en_Tunisie/
- 26 See <http://www.babnet.net/cadredetail-53060.asp>
- 27 <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/12/world/africa/tensions-at-manouba-university-mirror-turbulence-in-tunisia.html?pagewanted=all&r=2>
- 28 Grami notes that the son of Ali Larayedh (the then Minister of the Interior from Ennahda) was with the Salafist militants at Manouba.
- 29 See Lakhdar Souid, 'Le Coeur palpitant des Tunisiens', in *Femmes et Réalités*, no. 16, March 2012 – March 8, special issue 'Quelle printemps pour les femmes?' (pp. 28–30). He writes: 'Dans un autre temps et un autre pays, la geste de Khaoula vous fait penser à l'américaine Rosa Parks, ...'. From a lower-income family in Gafsa, Khaoula is tall with short hair and seemingly sweet while assertive. She is quoted as saying: 'Je n'ai aucune couleur politique, mais je suis Tunisienne et fière de l'être' (p. 30). For more on the aggressive behavior of Salafists, see 'Tunisia: Violence and the Salafi Challenge', International Crisis Group, Report no. 137, February 13, 2013, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/tunisia/137-tunisia-violence-and-the-salafi-challenge.aspx>
- 30 Mohamed Brahmi's widow pointed out that her husband was a devout Muslim 'but not an Islamist'.
- 31 Author notes, WSF, University of Tunis, El-Manar campus, Tunis, March 25, 2013.
- 32 Samia Letaief, interview with the author, AFTURD office, Tunis, March 5, 2014.
- 33 'Le Droit à l'Avortement en Tunisie – 1973 à 2013'. Tunis: AFTD, Oxfam, and World Social Forum (March 2013).
- 34 See Mona Ben Gamra, 'Libertinage au nom du féminisme', *Le Temps* (December 5, 2014)

- <http://www.letemps.com.tn/article/88052/libertinage-au-nom-du-f%C3%A9minisme>
- 35 'From the vantage point of a feminism devoid of any morality, abortion is thus presented as a "solution" to an inevitable outcome of a sexual life outside of marriage.'
- 36 The Front Populaire refused to join the coalition government or even to accept a cabinet post because of the participation of Ennahda.

REFERENCES

- Accad, Evelyne. 1985. 'Women in Contemporary Tunisia'. *Al-Raida*, vol. VIII, no. 33 (1 August).
- Arfaoui, Khedija. 2007. 'The Development of the Feminist Movement in Tunisia 1920s–2000s'. *International Journal of Humanities*, vol. 4, no. 8: 53–60.
- Arfaoui, Khedija. 2011. 'Women on the Move for Gender Equality in the Maghreb', pp. 101–138 in Graciela Di Marco and Costanza Tabush (eds), *Feminisms, Democratization and Radical Democracy*. Buenos Aires: UNSAM.
- Bayat, Asef. 1999. *Street Politics: Poor People's Movements in Iran*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Beckwith, Karen. 2007. 'Mapping Strategic Engagements: Women's Movements and the State'. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 9, no. 3: 312–38.
- Ben Romdhane, Mahmoud. 2006. 'Social Policy and Development in Tunisia since Independence: A Political Perspective', pp. 31–77 in Massoud Karshenas and Valentine M. Moghadam (eds), *Social Policy in the Middle East: Economic, Political, and Gender Dynamics*. New York and Geneva: Palgrave Macmillan and UNRISD.
- Bennoune, Karima and Mbarka Brahmi. 2015. 'Opposing political Islam in Tunisia: Mohamed Brahmi's widow speaks out'. *OpenDemocracy* (March 19). <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/karima-bennoune-mbarka-brahmi/opposing-political-islam-mohamed-brahmi-widow-speaks-out>
- Berkovitch, Nitza. 1999. *From Motherhood to Citizenship: Women's Rights and International Organizations*. Baltimore, OH: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Brown, Nathan, Amr Hamzawy, and Marina S. Ottaway. 2006. *Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring Gray Zones*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Paper No. 67 (March). http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cp_67_grayzones_final.pdf
- Chafetz, Janet S. and Gary Dworkin. 1986. *Female Revolt: Women's Movements in World and Historical Perspective*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld.
- Charrad, Mounira, 2001. *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial: Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Chékir, Hafidha. 1985. 'What Feminism for Tunisia?'. *Al-Raida* (Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut), vol. VIII, no. 33 (1 August).
- Chékir, Hafidha and Khedija Arfaoui. 2011. 'Tunisia: Women's Economic Citizenship and Trade Union Participation', pp. 71–92 in Valentine M. Moghadam, Suzanne Franzway, and Mary Margaret Fonow (eds), *Making Globalization Work for Women: The Role of Trade Unions and Women's Social Rights*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Collectif 95 Maghreb-Egalité. 2003. *Dalil pour l'égalité dans la famille au Maghreb*. Casablanca: Collectif 95 Maghreb-Egalité.
- Connell, R. W. 1998. 'Masculinities and Globalization'. *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 1, no. 1: 1–20.
- El-Ghobashy, Mona. 2005. 'The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers'. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 37: 373–95.
- Grami, Amel and Karima Bennoune. 2013. 'Tunisia's fight against fundamentalism: an interview with Amel Grami'. *OpenDemocracy* (October 7). Available at <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/amel-grami-karima-bennoune/tunisia-s-fight-against-fundamentalism-interview-with-amel-grami>.
- Gulalp, Haldun. 2001. 'Globalization and Political Islam: The Social Bases of Turkey's Welfare Party'. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 33: 433–48.
- Hafez, Mohammed. 2003. *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic*

- World*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Hefner, Robert. 2000. *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jayawardena, Kumari. 1985. *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*. London: Zed Books.
- Kepel, Gilles. 2002. *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Khalil, Andrea. 2014. 'Tunisia's Women: Partners in Revolution'. *Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2: 186–99.
- Langman, Lauren and Douglas Morris. 2004. 'Hegemony Lost: Understanding Contemporary Islam', pp. 182–206 in Thomas Reifer (ed.), *Globalization, Hegemony and Power: Antisystemic Movements and the Global System*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Margolis, Diane. 1993. 'Women's Movements around the World: Cross-Cultural Comparisons'. *Gender & Society*, vol. 7, no. 3 (September): 379–99.
- Marty, Martin E. and R. Scott Appleby (eds). 1991, 1992, 1993. *The Fundamentalism Project*, vols. 1–3. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Moaddel, Mansoor. 2005. *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. 1998. *Women, Work, and Economic Reform in the Middle East and North Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. 2005. *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks*. Baltimore, OH: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. 2013a. *Globalization and Social Movements: Islamism, Feminism, and the Global Justice Movement*, 2nd edn. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. 2013b. *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. 2013c. 'What is Democracy? Promises and Perils of the Arab Spring'. *Current Sociology*, vol. 61, no. 4 (June): 393–408.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. 2014. 'Democratization and Women's Political Leadership in North Africa'. *[Columbia] Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 68, No. 1 (Fall/Winter): 35–53.
- Molyneux, Maxine. 2001. *Women's Movements in International Perspective: Latin America and Beyond*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pargeter, Alison. 2010. *The Muslim Brotherhood: The Burden of Tradition*. London: Saqi Books.
- Roberts, Hugh. 2003. *The Battlefield: Algeria 1988–2002, Studies in a Broken Polity*. London: Verso.
- Rosefsky Wickham, Carrie. 2002. *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Schwedler, Jillian. 2006. *Faith in Moderation: Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Scott, James. 1987. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Singerman, Diane. 1996. *Avenues of Participation: Family, Politics, and Networks in Urban Quarters of Cairo*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tchaicha, Jane D. and Khedija Arfaoui. 2012. 'Tunisian Women in the Twenty-first Century: Past Achievements and Present Uncertainties in the Wake of the Jasmine Revolution.' *Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 17, no. 2 (March): 215–38.
- Wiktorowicz, Quintan. 2001. *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State Power in Jordan*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.