

BODY AND GENDER POLITICS IN POST-UPRISING TUNISIA

(2010-2018)

by

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A THESIS

Presented to the Department of International Studies
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

March 2019

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Title: Body and Gender Politics in Post-Uprising Tunisia (2010-2018)

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Degree awarded March 2019.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Focusing on the context of post-uprising Tunisia and using a gender lens, I explore gender and body politics through embodied social protest. I examine the post-uprising constitutional and decision-making processes as well as discursive representations in the Constitution and the role of protesting and legitimacy in shaping institutional tools and mechanisms. I draw attention to the status of women and the LGBTQI++ community as well as vulnerable individuals and their role in social change during the country's democratic transition by analyzing narratives and discourses around protesting and bodily rights and themes such as legibility/illegibility. I complement my analysis with three qualitative, in-depth interviews with three Tunisian activists; I also reflect on my personal experience as a former reporter and student-activist during and post uprisings. I conclude that the emergence of new forms of mobilization and discourses create unique possibilities to negotiate power and gender norms.

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To my parents and friends who could not be here, and to Rick. Thank you for your unconditional love & support.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the popular uprisings of 2010 and 2011 in North Africa and the Middle East (MENA), geopolitical and socio-economic changes drew attention of scholars, journalists and human rights advocates in the region, and elsewhere. A series of peaceful protests, sit-ins and marches that started in Tunisia spread to neighboring countries such as Libya and Egypt, and to farther countries such as Syria and Yemen. The uprisings, also referred to as ‘the Revolution,’ resulted in drastic and sudden changes in political regimes as well as socio-economic and cultural shifts. In Tunisia, the birthplace of the uprisings, president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali was forced to flee the country with his family on January 14, 2011. Tens of thousands of Tunisians took to the streets, unprecedentedly, and shouted “dégage” (‘leave’ in French), “al-shaab yurid iskaat al-nidham” (‘the people want to topple the system’ in Arabic) and “shughl, hurriya and karamah watanya” (‘employment, freedom and national dignity’ in Arabic). The immediate spark that fueled the uprisings was the self-immolation of Tunisian street-vendor Mohamed Bouazizi on December 15, 2010. Scholars and researchers have since been investigating the deeper roots of and influential factors behind this abrupt social movement for the past seven years, but little has been written about body and gender politics during the transitional phase of Tunisia from an authoritarian state to a democratic one.

Using an interdisciplinary combination of biopower theories, feminist and gender theories, as well as political and social theory, I explore body and gender politics through analyzing embodied social protest and power dynamics between the state and society in

the democratic transition phase of Tunisia (2010-2018). Focusing on cultural symbols and ideational themes such as gender ideology, I question the rapport between the state on the one hand, and women and marginalized social groups on the other hand: How does protesting in the uprisings impact decision-making in legislative and constitutional processes during Tunisia's democratic transition? What is the role of popular demands and related themes in the uprisings such as legitimacy and legibility/illegibility of the body in this context? In doing so, I assess the gap between institutional rules and discourses, and the reality of vulnerable groups and individuals such as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (and ++ stands for other identities that are not as commonly used such as 'aromantic,' 'asexual,' etc, or (LGBTQ++) community. Additionally, I explore emerging discourses, novel narratives and public debates around the policing of the body and reactions of human rights' activists to such restraints. Relying on a gender lens, I focus on the unique context of post-uprising Tunisia. At the intersection of interdisciplinary and complex themes of gender and body politics, I study discursive representations and images in the state's legal framework and institutions to explore the gap between the institutional framework that is based on democratic values such as human rights and individual freedoms, and realities of women and minority groups. To narrow down my scope, I draw attention to individual and personal experiences of mobilization by women and the LGBTQ++ community, as well as vulnerable groups and marginalized individuals, and their role in social change.

Based on Foucauldian perspectives about body, gender, discourse and power, and on political and feminist theory, I analyze the status of human rights and individual liber-

ties of the aforementioned social groups in Tunisia's transition (2010-2018). In grounding this work in diverse and complementary interdisciplinary theories of social science, I use qualitative methods of analysis and in-depth interviews to shed light on the complex relations between the state and society during a transition from an authoritarian regime to a civil and democratic one. Relying on positionality and a gender lens, I also reflect on my own experience as a Tunisian citizen and a former reporter and student-activist during the uprisings. To paint a holistic picture of power and gender dynamics between protesters and the state, I provide a discourse analysis of important legal articles, which examines discursive representations of gender and body concepts on one hand, and compare the institutional framework in place to realities of women and marginalized social groups. Moreover, I enhance my discourse analysis with qualitative, in-depth interviews of three Tunisian activists and supplement the conclusions drawn from the interviews with information about the LGBTQ++ community in Tunisia from the documentary "Beyond the Shadows," especially given that one of the interviewees is a central character in the documentary.

How did the outcomes of the uprisings impact body and gender politics in post-revolution Tunisia? What does the aftermath of the uprisings and the democratic transition show about power and gender dynamics between the state and society? What are the links between realities of women and marginalized social groups and the state's post-uprising transitional and political processes? How does embodied social protest reflect institutional gender and body agendas and what does it tell us about protesters relying on popular demands and legitimacy as a form of mobilization? What role does protesting, as

a form of political participation of civil society, play in Tunisia's post-uprising constitutional and legislative processes? Why does the concept of legibility apply to some bodies and not to others? What renders a body legible and another illegible in Tunisia's transition context? How does protesting shape the very institutional mechanisms and tools used to discipline and police the body (of protesters and citizens)?

Literature Review

To examine the complex and intricate themes of gender and body politics, I draw from a diverse and complementary pool of feminist and gender theory, sociology, anthropology and political theory. At the intersection of these axes, I attempt to apply interdisciplinary concepts and tools to explain gender and body politics through exploring social protest and how power is negotiated at a micro-level.

The "Arab Spring" social movement started in Tunisia before spreading to several countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. The Tunisian context is particularly significant given the country's transition from an authoritarian state to a civil one, following the popular uprisings of 2010 and 2011. This transition is both a state-building phase and a new space for social movements and embodied social protest. Hence my interest in exploring how gender politics and body concepts are central to and shaped by negotiations of power and gender between the state and society, in the specific context of a post-uprising, state-building Tunisia (2010-2018).

To start with, I draw from political theory of the state and social movement, as well as sociological and anthropological research of social movement, to explain the con-

text of post-authoritarian Tunisia. Then I use gender as a lens to connect these different levels of analyses, to Michel Foucault's body and biopower theories (Foucault, 1975, 1979, 1997, 1999) and to interpret the fundamental changes and the dynamics of power and gender in the aftermath of the "Arab Spring" in Tunisia. Along these lines, I also focus on narratives, discourses and public debates to investigate cultural elements and ideational factors, drawing from feminist and anthropological theory and concepts from what is known as the 'cultural turn' in post-structuralist and post-modernist views.

In the literature on political process and new social movement theory, scholars Jeff Goodwin and Jim Jasper criticize political opportunity models and address the oppositions between culture and structure.¹ While they argue that mis-identifying the cultural aspects of political institutions is problematic, Francesca Polletta builds on their critique and points out that "structures *are* cultural."² This further illustrates both the interconnectedness of culture and institutions of the state, as well as the complexity of relations between the state and individuals. By examining culture's role in mobilization, Polletta emphasizes the importance of observing symbols, discursive practices, identity concepts and institutional rules in understanding the enabling and constraining capacity of culture,

An alternative conception of culture views it as the symbolic dimension of all structures, institutions, and practices (political, economic, educational, etc). Symbols are signs that have meaning and significance through their interrelations. The pattern of those relations is culture. Culture is thus patterned and patterning; it is enabling as well as constraining; and it is observable in linguistic practices, institutional rules, and social rituals rather than existing only in people's minds. This understanding of culture puts us in a better position to grasp

¹ Poletta, Francesca, "Snarls, Quacks, and Querrels: Culture and Structure in Political Process Theory" *Sociological Forum* Vol. 14, No. 1 (1999).

² Poletta, Francesca, "Snarls, Quacks, and Querrels" (1999:64).

conceptually and empirically the generation of cultural but ‘objective’ opportunities — objectives in the sense of prior to insurgents’ interpretative activities; to grasp culture’s durable character; and to identify political institutions’ and processes’ role in constituting grievances, identities, and goals.³

When researching the literature of revolutions and social movements, I found that there is less scholarly work about Third World countries and mobilization during a state’s transition from authoritarianism to democracy than I expected. Understanding the Tunisian context — as an example associating social revolution to state-building— entails analyzing these themes. Covering women’s mobilization against the state during Chile’s democratic transition, Rita Noonan leads an in-depth case study and focuses on cultural elements such as gender ideology in an authoritarian, Third World context. She criticizes theories of political opportunity structures for overlooking ideational and cultural themes, and argues that framing ideological and cultural issues may lead to creating protest opportunities. Some of the significant questions addressed by Noonan (and others like Snow and Benford, 1988, 1992) touch on how culture impacts women’s collective action.

Noonan additionally expands on the work of scholars Charles Tilly (1989) and Sidney Tarrow (1988) on models of political opportunity to demonstrate how collective action shapes political structures and processes. She highlights the limitations of these models which include their exclusive use in the context of Western democracies, and their overlooking of women’s “informal and nontraditional⁴” political power. In her 1979 definitive work, *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, Theda Skocpol fills that gap in

³ Poletta, Francesca, “Snarls, Quacks, and Querrels” (1999:67).

⁴ Noonan, Rita. 2013. “Women Against the State: Political Opportunities and Collective Action Frames in Chile’s Transition to Democracy” *Sociological Forum* 10, no. 1. (2013:84).

the literature on states and social revolutions as she examines the relevance and shifting patterns of social revolutions in Third World dictatorships using narrative history and cultural interpretation of particular revolutions.⁵ She defines social revolutions “as rapid, basic transformations of a society’s state and class structures, accompanied and in part accomplished through popular revolts from below.”⁶ Examples of social revolutions include the 1789 French Revolution, the 1911-1960s Chinese Revolution and the 1917-1930s Russian Revolution. Furthermore, as Skocpol investigates the conducive conditions of social revolutions, she highlights how the breakdown of old regimes is connected to both the institutional structures and revolutionary changes in the social structures in place — among other factors that are less relevant to this section but are important nonetheless (like the impact of socio-economic grievances for example.) Using a combination of analytical and historically-grounded comparisons of several case studies, she emphasizes the complexity of social revolutions and pays attention to the reconstitution of new structures embodying crucial ideological, political and social shifts. Similarly, I attempt to examine the outcomes of the revolution in Tunisia, as well as the role of state power and coercive organizations, while focusing on the institutional legacy from old regimes or what Skocpol refers to as the “full trajectories of revolutionary transformation,”

Social revolutions, I stressed, could not happen without a breakdown of the administrative and coercive powers of an old regime; and their transformations were accompanied and in large part accomplished through conflicts over the re-

⁵ Skocpol, Theda. 1994. *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (1994:4).

⁶ Skocpol, Theda. 1994. *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*. (1979:5).

constitution of coercive and administrative state organizations.⁷

Skocpol draws ideas from Weberian traditions of historical political sociology, arguing for the explanatory relevance of bureaucratization, state centralization and relationships with the dominant elites.⁸ In addition to her historical comparisons, she follows a social-structural style of explanation and a conflict-centered approach to interpret the role of culture and ideology in the Iranian Revolution.⁹ She affirms the existence of multiple “cultural idioms” in revolutionary contexts, and defines popular revolts as social protests by masses of ordinary individuals who used to be marginalized and oppressed by the former authoritarian regime.¹⁰ In the example of Tunisia, both presidents Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali and the earlier Habib Bourguiba maintained a dictatorship for over half of a century, following Tunisia’s independence from French colonization in 1956. Socio-political conflicts take place in parallel with “class upheavals from below” which result in brisk and fundamental domestic shifts in societal values and myths, and in political institutions.¹¹

Herein I draw from the work of prominent French philosopher and sociologist Michel Foucault to examine ideational and cultural concepts around body and gender politics and consider them in the context of Tunisia. In Foucault’s (1979a) analysis of the explosion of sexuality in public discourse during the past two hundred years in the West,

⁷ Skocpol, Theda. 1994. *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (1979: 6-8).

⁸ Skocpol, Theda. 1994. *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*. (1994:11).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹ Skocpol, Theda. 1994. *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*. (1979:17,98).

the theme of sexuality is explored through cultural forms and patterns.¹² He addresses the themes of sexuality and gender as social concepts which are “constructed in language and in social interaction” and are “the subject of power negotiations.”¹³ In my scope of research, I focus on marginalized social groups and individuals (for example, the LGBTQ+ community) — a similar focus in Foucault’s work which addressed the inhumane situation of prisoners and homosexual individuals among others in France, in his groundbreaking book *Discipline and Punish*. In his work, he introduces innovative concepts around power and ‘punishment-body’ relations within society and highlights the capillary and diffuse nature of power. On a micro-level, this entails that the body is entangled in an intricate web of constraints and obligations. Breaking away from Weberian approaches — which address the state’s use of laws as a ‘legitimate violence’ mechanism— Foucault’s post-structuralist perspective unveils how bodies are disciplined and regulated through laws and processes of the state and its institutions,

The body serves as an instrument or intermediary: If one intervenes upon it, to imprison it or to make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty, that is regarded both as right and as property.¹⁴

Based on his study of the metamorphosis of punitive systems in France, Foucault explains the political technology of the body and illustrates punishment as both a complex social function and a political tactic.¹⁵ Moreover, he links the power to punish to social

¹² Järviluoma, Helmi, Pirkko Moisala, and Anni Vilkkö. 2003. *Gender and Qualitative Methods*. London: Sage. (2003).

¹³ Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. (1975:13).

¹⁴ Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. (1975:11).

¹⁵ Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. (1975: 24).

structures and stresses the importance of situating these structures in the “field of operations” to understand punishment systems as social phenomena. Reflecting on the history of the body showcases how relations of power and domination in a political field invest the body, “mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs.”¹⁶ In other words, the power exercised over the body is transmitted by and through people which adds to the political contentions arising from resisting the state’s grip on the body,

in our societies, the systems of punishment are to be situated in a certain political economy of the body; even if they do not make use of violent or bloody punishment, even when they use lenient methods involving confinement, or correction, it is always the body that is at issue. The body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission.¹⁷

By investigating the domains and forms of knowledge in body politics, Foucault theorizes about discipline and “power-knowledge” relations. He defines body politics as the set of mechanisms and tools serving the power and knowledge relations through turning bodies into subjects of knowledge.¹⁸ Discipline refers to the detailed and calculated control of the operations of the body through a “docility-utility relation” targeting the body as an object of power and coercion; the “manipulated, shaped, trained” body “which obeys” and “responds.”¹⁹ The Foucauldian conceptualization of discipline portrays it as both the anatomy (or “physics”) of power and as a modality for the ways and procedures in which power is exercised. Through its institutions and apparatuses, the state disciplines

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 24, 25, 26.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁸ Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. (1975:28).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 136-8.

society to increase the “docility and utility” of bodies as a part of an efficient system.²⁰ By analyzing the history of disciplinary institutions, Foucault illustrates the instrumental coding of the body in individual and collective coercion; discipline produces individualized, distributed and circulated bodies “in a network of relations.”²¹ He also addresses the homogenizing and exclusive nature of disciplinary power, in addition to the normalization of judgement in the mechanisms used by disciplinary institutions.²² These mechanisms of power create and shape a binary division which labels individuals as sane or insane, normal or abnormal to eliminate counter-power efforts, attempts or any similar forms of resistance against the dominating powers,

The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an ‘ideological’ representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called ‘discipline.’²³

Foucault’s theories about body politics and power negotiations between the state and society is rooted in feminist theory, especially after the rise of feminist studies in the 1960s.²⁴ In this work, I focus on feminist and gender theory to understand and explain gender politics during the transitional phase of state-building in the context of post-uprising Tunisia. Additionally, I link gender politics to the Foucauldian concepts of body and power to explore how gender and body politics shape social protest and vice-versa.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 215.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 146.

²² *Ibid.*, 171,183.

²³ *Ibid.*, 194.

²⁴ Järviluoma, Helmi, Pirkko Moisala, and Anni Vilkkö. 2003. *Gender and Qualitative Methods*. London: Sage. (2003).

In her book *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (2004), feminist author Silvia Federici criticizes Foucault's theory of the body, as she argues that he ignored the disciplining of women in the example of witch-hunting in Europe. Federici collaborated with Italian feminist Leopoldina Fortunati in 1975 on a research project about women in the transition from feudalism to capitalism and published *The Great Caliban: History of the Rebel Body in the First Phase of Capitalism* in 1984. They focused on the struggle of women's liberation and the roots of oppression and social and economic exploitation in Europe, during its transitions and political transformations. They argue that the exploitation of women directly contributed to the process of capitalist accumulation and that women's unpaid labor in the home was the basis of wage slavery. In Federici's criticism of Foucault's theory of the body, she argues that he ignored the disciplining of women in the example of witch-hunting in Europe. She explains that Foucault's "bio-power" regime ignored the punishing of women "guilty of reproductive crimes" as France and England adopted pro-natalist, capitalist reproductive state policies.²⁵

She addresses the state's mechanisms of controlling bodies through institutional tools such as demographic recordings, emerging surveillance strategies and "the intervention of the state in the supervision of sexuality, procreation and family life."²⁶ She explains that the state started a war against women's bodies to control reproduction and restore the desired population ratio in Europe,

²⁵ Federici, Silvia. 2004. *The Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. (2004: 87).

²⁶ Federici, Silvia. 2004. *Caliban and the Witch*. New York: Autonomedia. (2004:87).

this war was waged primarily through the witch-hunt that literally demonized any form of birth-control and non-procreative sexuality, while charging women with sacrificing children to the devil.²⁷

European states used new forms of surveillance to ensure pregnant women did not terminate their pregnancies, and women who had abortions were executed for infanticide. In this society, women were perceived as “rebellious”, “lusty”, “savage” and “weak,”

the female body was turned into an instrument for the reproduction of labor and the expansion of the work-force, treated as a natural breeding-machine, functioning according to rhythms outside of women’s control.²⁸

Federici builds on Foucault’s biopower theory to echo the involvement of European states in establishing the “sanitary, sexual and penal control of individual bodies” during transition from an authoritarian regime to a more decentralized government.²⁹

While scholars of gender address the systems, roles and ideologies of gender in addition to patterns of behavior, sexuality and cultural elements, feminist studies provide the theoretical foundations for gender studies generally.³⁰ The early feminist literature was inspired by the work of feminist French writers of the 20th century such as Simone de Beauvoir’s 1949 *The Second Sex*. This pivotal work addresses the concept of otherness of women in a male-dominated culture through examining how the female image is constructed by men.³¹ De Beauvoir’s analysis of female images and constructed societal norms and values showcases how societal expectations and gender roles are shaped by

²⁷ Federici, Silvia. 2014. *Caliban and the Witch* (2004:88).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 91.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 128.

³⁰ Järviluoma, Helmi, Pirkko Moisala, and Anni Vilkkö. 2003. *Gender and Qualitative Methods*. London: Sage. (2003).

³¹ Järviluoma et al. 2003. *Gender and Qualitative Methods*. London: Sage. (2003).

and understood through a male's gaze, "Thus, the woman is always the Other in relation to a man."³² Scholar Kate Millet built on de Beauvoir's legacy to make a valuable addition to gender studies. In her 1977 *Sexual Politics* book, Millet argues that gender is defined by culture and addresses male construction of women by examining literary images of women in texts written by men. Such work became the basis of a strong connection between gender studies and qualitative methods; it also paved the way for analysis of discursive constructions "within particular socio-cultural and historical contexts."³³ In their focus, feminist scholars move away from the biological and natural differences between genders towards deconstructing and reconstructing mechanisms and systems that maintain an asymmetry between genders. Moreover, positive aspects about gender differences have been highlighted by second-wave feminists through focusing on women's bodies and the different life experiences of women and female power,

The social construction of woman and femininity takes place in the frame of gender order, thus within the gender system in which different genders negotiate and struggle for power.³⁴

The post-uprising legal framework for human rights and freedoms consists of new, elaborate laws and other official documentation, forming an outstanding platform to guarantee individual rights and liberties. The emergence of new discourses around women's rights and mobilization during and in post-uprising Tunisia, in addition to the legacy of decades of authoritarianism, fueled public debates and political participation. But there seems to be a paradoxical gap between the rhetoric of promoting women's

³² *Ibid.*, 10.

³³ *Ibid.*, 10-1.

³⁴ Jarviluoma et al. (2003:11).

rights and the reality of these rights in Tunisia. The interconnectedness of these complex themes inspired my focus on how gender and body politics are impacted and shaped by political transformations and the subsequent social change that comes with it. It also urges questions such as: how is hegemonic masculinity created? How does the mass media influence the creation of these societal constructions of masculinity and femininity? These questions have been addressed in gender studies broadly; I attempt to bring these concepts and theoretical foundations to the specific context of Tunisia.

It is necessary to understand the definitions of intricate themes surrounding gender, body and sexuality given the complexity of these ideas. I am using the term ‘gender’ as a fluid social category that is relational and structural rather than essential and individual. Tony Whitehead and Mary Conaway (1986) define sexuality as the sphere of interpersonal behavior associated with genital union. Sexual identity, like sexuality, is situational and performative.³⁵ According to Judith Butler (1990;1997), gender is a symbolic form of public action and an identity deriving from recurrences of these actions. She also stresses the performativity of gender and argues that “identity is constituted by the repetition of performative expressions.”³⁶ The link that Foucault and other feminist scholars draw between gender and culture is the body: how it is materialized by institutions to create constructions and gender categories like ‘man’ and ‘woman.’ In this context, gender performance is affected by the prevailing gender system and the negotiations of power between individuals and their societal norms. Their cultural conventions are viewed, in

³⁵ Jarviluoma et al. 2003. (2003:13).

³⁶ Jarviluoma et al. 2003. (2003:13).

Butler's terms, as 'repeated performances' of the gender system. Gender performance is a performance of the human body, hence the link between gender and body politics. Butler uses the examples of drag queens in the 1990s in New York City who deliberately sent a political message about deconstructing societal norms of masculinity and femininity through a unique gender performance that directly challenges conventional definitions of what being a 'man' and a 'woman' means and what masculinities and femininities are. One is not born with a gender identity. Gender identity is developed in parallel with individual experiences of social interaction,

Even though femininities and masculinities are created and sustained as ideational representations, they are always linked in systematic ways to institutionalized forms of power (Oakley, 1998:134-5).³⁷

In the literature on gender definitions, Whitehead and Conaway treat 'gender identity' as a static concept. Stuart Hall (1996), however, argues that gender identity is a process that does not end. Accordingly, he considers gender identity is positional (or situational) and strategic; it is constantly in the process of transformation. Gender identities are negotiated in relation to broader societal gender conventions and structures in the surroundings of an individual (i.e., culture and society). Feminist scholar Rosi Braidotti (1994) introduced gender subjectivity as a conscious political position that is "discursively constructed in three connected domains: differences between men and women, differences among women and differences within oneself."³⁸ Based on these definitions of gender performance and gender identity, gender roles are the social roles adapted by humans. Examin-

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁸ Jarviluoma et al. 2003. (2003:18).

ing how genders are negotiated and performed entails studying how gender nuances are maintained and produced in social interactions, as well as how gender impacts relations of power,

Gender should be approached as a construction and a performance. Gender should not only be used as a noun, but adjectivally, or as a verb, to gender, gendering, gendered.³⁹

Given its discursive and ideological nature, gender is performed, regularized, institutionalized and negotiated in society. Gender constructions tend to produce practical results and palpable consequences for all individuals of a given society, regardless of their gender. This is one of the reasons why I attempt to compare between the institutional rights and freedoms of individuals and the realities of women, LGBTQ++ community and other marginalized groups. Moreover, it is important to contextualize gender for it is both relational and constructed through human interaction and social process.

I now turn to link the above theoretical work to the context of the Arab Spring, the time when a social movement was born in Tunisia in 2011 and spread to Libya, Egypt, Syria, and other countries in North Africa and the Middle East. I focus on the post-colonial North African context more specifically to explain the historical context and roots of the Arab Spring. Tunisia, as well as Algeria, Morocco and Egypt, were colonized by France in the late 1800s. Tunisian scholar Amel Mili (2013) argues that top-down, progressive gender policies in post-colonial North African countries were imposed by politicians and elites, rather than decided by individuals and their representatives. This implies a link between gender policies in independent Tunisia (after 1956) and its colonial history

³⁹ (Marshall, 2000: 161-2) as cited by Jarviluoma et al. 2003. (2003: 24).

and legacy. Feminist anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod agrees, as one of the earliest feminist voices addressing cultural relativism. Reflecting on cross-cultural differences and experiences of different women, Abu-Lughod raises several significant questions including “Do Muslim women really need saving?” (2002). She argues that explaining different histories is necessary to appreciate differences among women in the world. Additionally, she criticizes Western feminists who address women from different, non-Western cultures with a tone of superiority or what she describes as their “obsession with the plight of Muslim women.”⁴⁰ In her reflections on feminist discourses and rhetoric on a global level, she grounds her criticism in the significance of considering historical factors such as colonialism in the production of a particular culture or society. She uses the example of British colonialism in South Asia to illustrate how the woman question was appropriated by colonial powers in colonial gender policies (such as *satti* and other related policies like child marriage) to justify their intervention and colonization. In her analysis of this example, she also refers to what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) describes as “white men saving brown women from brown men.”⁴¹ This is also true for the post-colonial North African context. Abu-Lughod draws a connection between structural violence of global inequalities and the absence of rights and freedoms in post-colonial contexts,

a universal human right — the right to freedom from the structural violence of global inequality and from the ravages of war, the everyday rights of having enough to eat, having home and families in which to live and thrive, having ways to make decent livings so their children can grow, and having the strength and security to work out, within their communities and with whatever alliances they

⁴⁰ Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. “Do Muslim women really need saving?” *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3. (2002:783).

⁴¹ Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. “Do Muslim women really need saving?” *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3. (2002:784).

want, how to live a good life, which might very well include changing the ways those communities are organized.⁴²

Furthermore, Abu-Lughod stresses the dangers of dichotomizing rhetorics that aim at highlighting the opposition between Islam and the West on the one hand and between conservative forces and feminism on the other. Abu-Lughod refers to Algerian sociologist Marnia Lazreg who argues that colonial powers appropriated women's voices in Algeria. In her book *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question* (1994), Lazreg addresses historical injustices through examining the impact of both colonization and decolonization processes on the lives of Algerian women. She criticizes the literary and artistic works of colonial writers and artists about Algerian women and extends her criticism to include contemporary authors who claim feminism but do not recognize the impacts of the "colonial mythification" of women. In her ethnographic work, Lazreg highlights the complex dialectic of colonialism, revolution and gender. She rejects colonial representations and images of Algerian women as oppressed and silenced and calls for avoiding assumptions of an "oppressed" or "passive" subject. She also emphasizes the need to examine the intersections between historical events and structures with gender policies. Lazreg deconstructs the patriarchal system in place and argues that colonization introduced the interference of religion in the political arena. Like Abu-Lughod, Lazreg stresses the complexity of women's lives and the dangers of assumptions of oppression that are not historically grounded. Relying on anthropological tools and feminist theory, she focuses on women's lives as "expressions of meaningful projects of coping and tran-

⁴² Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. "Do Muslim women really need saving?" *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3. (2002:787).

scending personal and social vicissitudes.”⁴³ Consequences of the French colonial system on realities of Algerian women included changing names and transcribing them into Latin alphabet, establishing French as an official language, and transforming the political system into a pseudo-French one:

The French venture radically changed women’s (as well as men’s) lives. It meant a change in name, as people’s names had to be transcribed into Latin script; in identity, as individuals were given a new religious status as “Muslim natives” and women as “Fatmas”; in language, land tenure system, and political system. To this historical injustice was added the discursive injustice of fictionalizing women’s lives.⁴⁴

These changes took place across all colonized French territory in North Africa, including Tunisia. Identities of the colonized were no longer unmarked. Another significant argument that Lazreg makes is that decolonization processes, such as nationalism, were “the other side of the colonial coin” and that women’s experiences were shaped by the complex relationship between nationalism, colonialism and gender⁴⁵. She additionally criticizes native male nationalists and French colonists for disregarding the gendered nature of colonialism and decolonization. She describes women as “ideological pawns in the power politics” during these political transitions of Algeria. Moreover, Lazreg calls for addressing the particularities of women’s lives in different contexts instead of categorizing all North African women as “Arab” or “Muslim.” It is crucial to take into consideration historical conditions that allowed religion to become central in a society as well as in

⁴³ Lazreg, Marnia. 1994. *The Eloquence of Silence*. (1994:2).

⁴⁴ Lazreg, Marnia. 1994. *The Eloquence of Silence*. (1994:2-3).

⁴⁵ Lazreg, Marnia. 1994. *The Eloquence of Silence*. (1994:3).

producing gender assumptions and inequalities,

In the Algerian case, to place religion within a historical framework means introducing other equally powerful factors, such as colonialism, development policy, socialism, democratization and so on that interact with religion in complex ways.⁴⁶

In addition to historicizing religion and gender, Lazreg uses her personal knowledge as an Algerian woman to supplement her ethnography of women's activities in rural areas of Algeria. Moreover, she focuses on the aspect of time as a scale in her analysis of cultural temporalities; comparing socioeconomic and living conditions during the same period of time, among different societies. She distinguishes between Algerian and French women, "Algerian women's lives were embedded in a different temporal order from French women, even though they lived during the same time."⁴⁷ By explaining how the French imagination moved borders of 'the Orient' from Egypt to Algeria, and how related Orientalist concepts became embedded in the geographic space of Algeria, she also justifies women's choices to use the veil as a refuge from the colonizer's "denuding gaze."⁴⁸

Importantly, Lazreg argues that colonialism was a mode of production as well as a system of political and cultural domination. This argument is useful for my discourse analysis of the legal framework in post-authoritarian Tunisia given the shared history of French colonization in Tunisia and Algeria. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of understanding culture,

⁴⁶ Lazreg, Marnia. 1994. *The Eloquence of Silence*. (1994:15).

⁴⁷ Lazreg, Marnia. 1994. *The Eloquence of Silence*. (1994:18).

⁴⁸ Lazreg, Marnia. 1994. *The Eloquence of Silence*. (1994:53).

The Algerian case demonstrates that culture is identical with the concept of woman. The common perception that women are the keepers of the family as culture that appears crucial in Algeria, where women are seen as the embodiments of cultural authenticity [...] The colonial history of Algeria as well as the rapid socio-economic changes it has undergone since 1962 make the issue of culture paramount.⁴⁹

Likewise, French scholar Pierre Bourdieu (1979) studied the Algerian Kabyle peasants in the 1950s during his military service there. He addresses the influence of modern capitalism on Third World economies.⁵⁰ Bourdieu's work allowed for a new understanding of the history of North Africa as well as the colonial legal framework. He describes the assimilationist colonial policies and how they negatively impacted Algerian society as well as disrupted its progress. He reflects on gender policies, gender roles and the role of colonial legacy in reinforcing these roles,

“Marriage only liberates women from the authority of her father to deliver her up to the total domination of her husband, or more exactly, her husband's group. [...] Her duty is to be loyal and obey. Obsession with virginity only gives way to fear of sterility.” (Bourdieu. 1958:14)⁵¹

Ethnographic observations about gender roles around marriage and family relations in rural Algeria allowed for a contextualization of women's status within a larger history that includes French colonialism.

For the past half of a century, Tunisia has been a trailblazer for women's rights in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), drawing the attention of policymakers, scholars and journalists interested in the region. Following Independence, Tunisia's first presi-

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁵⁰ Grenfell, Michael James. 2004. *Pierre Bourdieu: Agent Provocateur*. (2004:37-8).

⁵¹ Grenfell, Michael James. 2004. *Pierre Bourdieu: Agent Provocateur*. (2004:38).

dent Habib Bourguiba promulgated the 1956 Code of Personal Status, a civil code guaranteeing women unprecedented rights and freedoms. Tunisia was the first country in the region to abolish polygamy, establish a fundamental framework for civil rights and liberties of women such as requiring female consent for marriage, enable women to file for divorce, and grant them custody rights. Importantly, it symbolized the significance of women's role in society. In 1973, Tunisia became one of the only states in Africa and the MENA region to legalize abortion and provide it as a reproductive health service and right.⁵² Aside from this positive impact on women's rights and freedoms, Bourguiba led a three-decade-long authoritarian regime that oppressed political opposition and marginalized people living in rural and non-coastal (interior) areas. Tunisian scholar and law professor Hafidha Cheker (2014) argues that even though post-independence movements relied on modernization to promote newly-acquired women's rights, the emancipation of women in the Muslim World remains challenging and incomplete.

The second President in post-independence Tunisia, Zine al Abidine Ben Ali, took power in 1987 in a coup d'état. As he lacked Bourguiba's popularity, Ben Ali appropriated women's rights narratives as a means of deflecting antagonisms regarding abuse of human rights as well as corruption accusations under the guise of promoting women's rights. State-feminism became the only uncensored and allowed form of advocating for rights and empowerment. Under the Ben Ali regime, women's mobilization and political activism were restricted to "top-down" state policy and any different action (especially from the grassroots level) was punishable, as well as any action to address or criticize vi-

⁵² Moghadam, Valentine. 2017. "Explaining divergent outcomes of the Arab Spring: the significance of gender and women's mobilizations". *Politics, Groups, and Identities*. (2017:).

olations of human rights and liberties.⁵³

As I am focusing on Tunisia's transition from an authoritarian regime to a Republic one, it is necessary to first define authoritarianism and second, understand the historical context as well as the evolution of the political system in place. Authoritarianism as defined by Antoni Abat i Ninet and Mark Tushnet (2015) is "a system in which the exercise of public power is unconstrained by law."⁵⁴ In the case of pre-uprising Tunisia, the political system is based on 'authoritarian constitutionalism;' it has characteristics from both authoritarianism and liberal constitutionalism. Ninet and Tushnet use these definitions in their analysis and comparison of constitutionalism and authoritarianism in the post-uprising MENA countries. They highlight the role of women and social minority groups in institutional systems. They explain that the context of the Arab uprisings pushed scholars and social scientists to further revise the concept of a revolution; the novelty here consists in two elements: non-violence and proliferation of social media and internet platforms in the uprisings. New advanced communication tools shun the spotlight on violence of the authoritarian state in dealing with peaceful and civil protests,⁵⁵

Non-violent methods are varied and diverse, ranging from demonstrations to strikes, from formal statements to symbolic public acts, public assemblies, methods of non-social, non-political or non-economic cooperation or methods of non-violent intervention. Mobile phones, tablets, and other information and communication technology tools facilitate non-violent means, and so change the logic of revolutions.⁵⁶

⁵³ Cheker, 2014; Charrad and Zarugh, 2014; Yacoubi, 2016.

⁵⁴ Antoni Abat i. Ninet and Mark Tushnet, 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. (2015:13).

⁵⁵ Ninet & Tushnet, 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism*. (2015:22).

⁵⁶ Ninet & Tushnet. 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism*. (2015: 23).

Zakia Salime and Frances Hasso (2016) define revolutions or popular uprisings in the MENA as peaceful political protests, which started in Tunisia and continued to spread to other countries in the region. They argue that these large-scale protests were initiated by those who struggled with the state's oppression, repression and marginalization. They highlight the significance of bodies in a revolutionary space by examining experiences of activists. They address the different terminologies used in referring to the uprisings in the MENA; these include the 'Arab spring,' 'Amazigh spring,' and 'Jasmine revolution,'

Ruling governments in every Arab country fearfully consolidated as millions chanted in Arabic, '*Al-Sha 'b yurid isqat al-nizam!*' — The people want the fall of the regime! In Arabic *nizam* denotes 'order,' 'regime,' and 'system;' thus the resounding collective demand challenged many orders and systems and was not read simply as a call to rearrange ruling seats.⁵⁷

In other words, the transition from an authoritarian regime to a Republic is not solely political, it encompasses social and cultural changes as well. Additionally, as Salime and Hasso point out, recognizing the diverse meanings and symbolic references behind different terminology helps defy the universalism in referring to these uprisings as 'Arab.' In fact, it is important to pay attention to the symbols, meanings and other sociocultural elements pertaining to the 'order' in place, to understand revolutionary contexts. Popular demands reflected in the slogans and chants of the uprisings, included drafting a new constitution, electing a new parliament and a new president, ending corruption, promoting social justice, and allowing more freedoms and liberties. One of the most prominent

⁵⁷ Salime, Zakia and Hasso, Frances. 2016. *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:1).

slogans that accompanied the transnational mobilization in the MENA of December 2010 and January and February 2011 to topple dictatorship was ‘employment, freedom and national dignity,’⁵⁸

The revolutions publicly disputed gender and sexual orders in novel, unauthorized and often shocking ways, even as a range of forces actively worked to reassert order and respectability boundaries. This is a permanent legacy that will continue to roil sexual and gendered orders in the region.⁵⁹

The sociocultural nature of popular demands triggered public debates and the emergence of multiple narratives around social change, the revolution, and freedoms and human rights, as well as gender and sexual order. Focusing on spatiality, spatial policing and similar feminist geography concepts, they investigate body policing in a revolutionary context and look at how the state’s repressive policies rely on identity to exclude nonconformity.⁶⁰

The 17 of December 2010 has become a memorable date for Tunisians; the date of Mohamed Bouazizi’s self-immolation. While Bouazizi’s death is commonly approached as a principle trigger of the uprisings, he was neither the only Tunisian who set themselves ablaze, nor the only civilian killed in protesting the political and socioeconomic conditions. In December 2010, Houcine Falhi committed suicide by climbing an electric pole for similar reasons and both Mohammad Ammari and Chawki Belhoussine were killed by policemen’s gunshots at unarmed protests.⁶¹ Tunisian scholar Lamia Ben

⁵⁸ Salime, Zakia and Hasso, Frances. 2016. *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:2).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁰ Salime, Zakia and Hasso, Frances. 2016. *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:4).

⁶¹ Ninet & Tushnet. 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism*. (2015:25).

Youssef (2016) analyzes the various narratives that emerged following Bouazizi's death by examining post-uprising images, discourses, spaces and symbols⁶². Some of the main narratives that emerged portrays Bouazizi as an immoral, sexist failure given his drinking habits and alleged comments to the female municipality officer Fadia Hamdi, with whom he argued before setting his body on fire. The early narratives around Bouazizi on social online platforms (like Facebook and Twitter) claim that he was an unemployed and highly educated young man who was humiliated by a female officer.⁶³ The image of Bouazizi as a hero and a martyr did not emerge until former president Ben Ali was forced to resign and flee Tunisia on January 14, 2011. The early narratives might be explained by the increasing unemployment rate (14 percent) among highly educated youth;⁶⁴ the emphasis on the humiliation of a man by a female officer, who allegedly slapped him, echoes gendered assumptions and embedded meanings of hurt masculinity,⁶⁵

It turned out that Bouazizi had not completed high school, his first name was Tareq and there was no evidence that he was slapped. The early days of the Tunisian revolution were embedded in this gendered account of humiliated masculinity, joblessness and an oppressive state. Hundreds of thousands of unemployed young people identified with the story as the revolt spread to the South and interior regions.⁶⁶

Like Salime and Hasso, Ben Youssef relies on feminist geography in her analysis; she

⁶² Ben Youssef, Lamia. 2016. "Gender and the Fractured Mythscapes of National Identity in Revolutionary Tunisia" in: *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:51-3).

⁶³ Ben Youssef, Lamia. 2016. "Gender and the Fractured Mythscapes of National Identity in Revolutionary Tunisia" in: *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:51).

⁶⁴ Ninet and Tushnet. 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism*. (2015:166).

⁶⁵ Ben Youssef, Lamia. 2016. "Gender and the Fractured Mythscapes of National Identity in Revolutionary Tunisia" in: *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:51).

⁶⁶ Ben Youssef, Lamia. 2016. "Gender and the Fractured Mythscapes of National Identity in Revolutionary Tunisia" in: *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:51).

coins the concept of a ‘mythscape’ which combines a landscape with the social assumptions, myths and images around it. The divisions in public debates and “identity anxieties” around new politics reflect the polarization of Tunisian society post-uprisings.⁶⁷ This polarization goes beyond the dichotomy of secular vs. Islamist ideologies and politics⁶⁸ and is better understood through discourses around gender and the body, and through cultural symbols pertaining to freedoms and human rights.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁶⁸ Ninet and Tushnet. 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism*. (2015:184).

CHAPTER II METHODOLOGY

Gendered conceptualizations and norms influence micro and macro levels of life, hence the necessity of taking gender seriously at different levels of research. On a societal level and given the complexity of gender, exploring socially constructed and maintained discourses in texts, ideologies and social institutions are crucial steps in the analysis and understanding of gender. On an individual level, subject positions are negotiated within a dominant gender system and based on existent gender discourses.⁶⁹ In their book *The Political Interests of Gender Revisited: Redoing Theory and Research with a Feminist Face* (2009), Anna Jonasdottir and Kathleen Jones explore different approaches and methods in feminist studies, and emphasize the significance of understanding institutional structures and discourses in order to explain and assess social relations with the institutions in place. They give critical attention to narrative and discursive practices in society, and provide a non-deterministic account of social structures, as well as power relations. Similarly, in her book *Feminist Inquiry* (2006), Mary Hakersworth argues for using gender as an analytical tool. She explains “modes of embodiment” as cultural constructions of femininity and masculinity and calls for interdisciplinary collaboration among social scientists in this scope of work⁷⁰. These foundations in the literature of feminist methods aim at addressing questions such as: How is power negotiated? How are the mechanisms of power reflected in gender constructions? How is power negotiated in gender construc-

⁶⁹ Järviluoma, Helmi, Pirkko Moisala, and Anni Vilkkö. 2003. *Gender and Qualitative Methods*. London: Sage. (2003).

⁷⁰ Hakersworth, Mary. 2006. *Feminist Inquiry*. (2006:145).

tions? And how are social constructions maintained and resisted?

Moreover, gender studies include LGBTQ++ studies, as they aim at promoting the position of sexual minorities and at resisting homophobic and heterosexist attitudes.

Alongside queer theory, they both rebuke imposed binaries (such as femininity and masculinity) and fixed dichotomies⁷¹. With these questions and approaches in mind, I attempt to critically analyze gender and body politics in the context of post-uprising Tunisia, from an intersectional gender lens that focuses on the rights and freedoms of women, LGBTQ++ community and other marginalized individuals and social groups. Additionally, gender theorists and scholars share a common commitment to the struggle against sexism and patriarchy. That is why questioning social inequalities as well as power between the state and society is omnipresent in gender studies. In this particular framework, I follow a social constructionist approach to gender.

Combining Foucauldian perspectives and views with feminist, political and anthropological theories, I have done a discourse analysis of the legal framework in place in post-uprising Tunisia. Because Tunisian legal texts are available in both Arabic and French and not in English, I translated the legal texts myself (see Appendix 2). After carefully selecting the most important legal texts pertaining to individual and collective rights and freedoms, I study the language used, the meanings behind the discourse of power, the ideological and social assumptions within these meanings and the construction of gender. While paying attention to the specific context of these texts, and relying on intertextuality and interdiscursivity, I examine the socially-embedded presuppositions and underlying

⁷¹ Jarviluoma et al. 2003. (2003:13.)

processes of unequal power relations in the language of these structural and institutional texts:

As Briggs and Bauman (1992) suggest, questions of ideology, political economy and power must be addressed as well if we are to grasp the nature of intertextual relations⁷².

Additionally, Foucault stresses the importance of discourses in understanding the construction of gender and sexuality. He states that a discourse establishes a set of expectations and explanations that regulate and manage how a given topic can be discussed. He also draws similarities between a discourse and an ideology, explaining how they both set a “systematic way of thinking about a topic”⁷³. This is a necessary step to understand societal narratives and debates around body and gender; especially given the shifting and evolving nature of discourse:

“Intertextuality in action [...] not only contributes to the propagation of hegemonic discourses but also holds the key to understanding processes of social change”⁷⁴.

To supplement my analysis of discursive and ideological constructions of gender, I designed a list of open- ended questions and led semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 1) with all three activists. I also relied on follow-up questions for further details or clarifications. I used several social media and communication platforms (Skype, email, WhatsApp and Facebook) to contact my interviewees. These qualitative interviews address complex themes such as gender and sexuality in social protest, the gap between the

⁷² Tannen, Deborah, Heidi Ehernberger. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin. *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.(2018:158).

⁷³ Tannen et al. 2018. *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. (2018:54).

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 55.

institutional framework in place and realities of women and vulnerable groups, and body policing during a critical transitional phase from authoritarianism to democracy.

The qualitative interviews address complex themes such as gender and sexuality in social protest, the gap between the institutional framework in place and realities of women and vulnerable groups, and body policing during a critical transitional phase from authoritarianism to democracy. Through learning about the individual experiences and unique perspectives of the interviewees, I supplement my discussion of embodied social protest and my discourse analysis with their examples. While examining the activists' experiences, I link their stories to both the theoretical section of this work and the discourse analysis of legal texts in Tunisia's transitional stage. These interviews illustrate a variety of images of activists from different backgrounds to offer supplemental examples to my analysis of body and gender politics in Tunisia. By addressing their experiences as activists in addition to constructing a discourse around their involvement in the political and social transformation in Tunisia, I examine how they are trying to deconstruct societal prejudice and patriarchal constructs in their mobilization. In *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research* (2014), Della Porta stresses the importance of in-depth interviews as a qualitative method, in unveiling how interviewees perceive their surroundings and how they think they are perceived. She explains that bringing attention to people's interpretations of reality contributes to theory-building and theory-testing more generally. She argues that "the relative scarcity of systematic collections of documents or reliable databases gives in-depth interviews even more importance."⁷⁵ In *Methodological Prac-*

⁷⁵ Della Porta, Donatella. 2014. *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*. (2014: 228).

tices in Social Movement Research (2014), Della Porta stresses the importance of in-depth interviews as a qualitative method, in unveiling how interviewees perceive their surroundings and how they think they are perceived. She explains that bringing attention to people's interpretations of reality contributes to theory-building and theory-testing more generally. She argues that "the relative scarcity of systematic collections of documents or reliable databases gives in-depth interviews even more importance."⁷⁶ I designed the questions and interviews in a way that all three activists share how they perceive institutional structures in place, through their own experiences and interpretations. I asked the activists about their comments on constitutional articles and laws regarding individual and collective rights and freedoms.

In the following chapter, I address two main themes: the contradictions between the state's image and mechanisms, and realities of women and marginalized social groups; and the role of protests in Tunisia's transition and political processes. I use the discourse analysis concept of intertextuality to draw links and connections between my analysis of significant legal texts, individual experiences of Tunisian activists from qualitative in-depth interviews and my own experience covering the uprisings and participating in early protests and marches as a Tunisian student-activist. In my analysis of institutional frameworks and mechanisms, I focus on texts from the Tunisian state's structures: its 2014 Constitution, Penal Code and other milestone laws and bills that directly impact human rights and individual liberties. I first, scanned the new constitution several times and selected all articles related to individual rights and freedoms. Then, I critically ana-

⁷⁶ Della Porta, Donatella. 2014. *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*. (2014: 228).

lyze the legal discourse regulating individuals' bodies and freedoms by connecting this qualitative feminist method to previously mentioned theoretical work from interdisciplinary fields of social sciences. Relying on this combination of qualitative research methods, I examine the gap between the institutional framework of human rights and individual liberties by analyzing relevant legal texts. I also interviewed three young activists from diverse backgrounds in Tunisia. Using qualitative tools, I designed a list of open-ended questions and led semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 1) with all three activists. I also relied on follow-up questions for further details or clarifications. In-depth interviews can be considered a contemporary feminist method that prioritizes life stories and gendered bodily subjects.⁷⁷ I used several social media and communication platforms (Skype, email, WhatsApp, and Facebook) to contact my interviewees who are based in different locations. These qualitative interviews aim at addressing the complex themes of gender and sexuality in social protest, through learning about the individual experiences and unique perspectives of the young activists. While examining the activists' experiences and testimonies, I attempt to unveil the social and power dynamics that shape gender and body politics, as well as discourses and narratives around them. It is noteworthy that conclusions drawn from these interviews are not meant to be generalizations; they are mere examples to support my analysis of gender and body politics in post-uprising Tunisia. In light of globalization and information technology revolution, social media platforms such as Facebook and Youtube were "chipping away at the fortress of Arab au-

⁷⁷ Jarviluoma et al. 2003. (2003: 47).

tocratic regimes”⁷⁸. Given the pivotal role social media has played in Tunisia’s social and political revolution as well as during its transitional period, many activists rely on social media platforms to communicate their opinions, express their views and criticisms and comment on recent or controversial topics. Similarly, I chose the most active twenty Tunisian activists who were already in my professional network. I researched several on-line platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Using hashtags (#) combined with keywords that are relevant to main events and activities targeting women and LGBTQ++, I looked up posts that were critical of the state and focused on the relevant controversial legal texts. Examples of hashtags I used included but were not limited to the Arabic and French translations of the following terms: Inheritance Law, Equality, Inequality, Justice, Revolution, Reform, Movement, Protest, Manifestation, Violence against Women, Resistance, Freedoms, Rights, Human Rights, Liberties, Government and Parliament. I identified twenty Tunisian activists in my network of ‘friends’ on social media and requested an interview from them. I had already met the interviewees during different political events and protests during my work as a journalist in Tunisia from 2011 to mid-2016. More particularly, I chose a semi-structured format for the interviews to give the activists more space and freedom to mention their anecdotes and stories about their experiences. Della Porta suggests including the following sections while preparing for the interviews: basic information, substantive questions and prompts; and she recommends recording the interviews to produce a verbatim transcription of these conversations.⁷⁹ I used open-end-

⁷⁸ Mili, Amel. 2013. “Gender Standards vs Democratic Standards.” (2013:4).

⁷⁹ Della Porta, Donatella. 2014. *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*. (2014:236-7).

ed questions and applied several of Della Porta's strategies, such as asking the interviewees to comment on the legal framework after the uprisings.

Furthermore, there is a significant lack of research and data around LGBTQ++ rights. That is why I extended my material to include the only Tunisian documentary about the lives of seven Tunisian LGBTQ++ members. I use information from this secondary source — a film directed by Tunisian filmmaker Nada Mezni Hafaiedh— to provide further details about the images of bodies of the LGBTQI++ and how they are perceived. Additionally, one of the interviewees — Ramy Ayari — is featured in this documentary which has not been shown in Tunisia yet. I accessed a link to watch the film after asking Hafaiedh directly for the password. This caution around presenting images and bodies from the lives of LGBTQ++ individuals echoes the broader and deeper societal stigma around sexual minorities in Tunisia.

I reflect on my own experience and link it to examples from the activists' experiences as well as my discourse analysis of legal texts. Drawing from feminist and anthropological theories and methods, it is necessary to address the positionality of the interpreter of a given context. Tunisian scholar Lamia Ben Youssef reflects on her own positionality in her analysis of secular and Islamist 'mythscape' in post-revolution Tunisia.⁸⁰ As a family member of a former Tunisian opposition figure —Saleh Ben Youssef who was a prominent opposition politician under the rule of first Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba— Ben Youssef recounts the assassination of her uncle Nejib Ben Youssef by

⁸⁰ (See Chapter I: Literature Review.) Ben Youssef, Lamia. 2016. "Gender and the Fractured Mythscape of National Identity in Revolutionary Tunisia" in: *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:53).

Bourguiba's regime in 1978.⁸¹ Her personal experience is indeed relevant to discussing identity anxieties among Tunisians during times of political turmoil. Ben Youssef deconstructs the secularist 'mythscape' manifested in ethnic and class inequalities, using examples from her family's history as Tunisians who struggled with discrimination and isolation by former authoritarian rules. Similarly, and being the interpreter in this case, it is important that I reflect on my own positionality and relation to the context I come from. Born and raised in Tunisia, I find many familiarities while studying the Tunisian case. For instance, Lazreg relies on her personal knowledge as a woman and as an ethnographer, of the local context to fill in the gaps of the literature about post-colonial Algeria. My experience as a former reporter covering the political situation in Tunisia inspired some of my understanding for that specific context, and my access to interviewees. As to the limitations of research I have encountered, not being able to be on the ground or in the field of mobilization in the context of Tunisia presented the greatest hurdle for this research. Because of logistical concerns regarding my visa status in the United States, I have not been able to leave the country since my arrival in August 2016. Being on the field would have allowed me to interview a larger sample of activists, which could have either created a quantitative advantage in terms of method, or allowed me to make generalizable claims and theories in terms of qualitative data. Thanks to technology and because of globalization, interviewing someone who lives on a different continent is not impossible. I used several online platforms to reach out to twenty Tunisian activists with different back-

⁸¹ Ben Youssef, Lamia. 2016. "Gender and the Fractured Mythscapes of National Identity in Revolutionary Tunisia" in: *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:53).

grounds based on my former professional network, when I worked as a journalist in Tunisia from 2011 to 2016. I only managed to successfully interview three of them. The different timezones were an issue, but a bigger concern was the unpredictability of internet connections and online interviewing. For instance, one of the seventeen people I reached out to and was not able to interview, initially accepted to be interviewed then stopped responding altogether because she got frustrated with not having a reliable Internet connection. Three people responded but refused to be interviewed. And finally, I used diverse online platforms to communicate with the interviewees: Skype, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. While I tried to reach out to the same person using several channels (for example, I contacted all interviewees on both Facebook and Twitter first), I also chose the channel based on the interviewee's activity on social media (for example, if I am familiar with the interviewee's Facebook posts, I contact them on Facebook and refer to what they post). The issue here lies in the fact that there is no reliable way of finding out if a person uses a specific medium more often than another because of all the relative and potential variables in question.

Using gender as a lens, I combine several qualitative methods with the aforementioned theories and concepts (in the literature review) to investigate the gap between the post-uprising institutional framework for human rights and individual freedoms and realities of women and marginalized social groups. I then examine the role of social embodied protest in the state's transitional political processes based on the same methods and relying on intertextuality to paint a wholistic image of how protesting impacts and is impacted by constitutional and legislative processes and institutional mechanisms. Finally, I

draw conclusions about power and gender negotiations around bodily and sexual rights and freedoms, in post-revolution Tunisia.

CHAPTER III:

ANALYSIS OF BODY AND GENDER POLITICS IN TRANSITIONAL POLITICAL PROCESSES

In this chapter, I argue that there are contradictions between Tunisia's institutional mechanisms and image (on paper) on one hand, and the status of human rights and individual liberties (in reality). I also showcase the role of protesting in the state's constitutional and legislative processes during and post-uprising. To examine this gap and how it reflects body and gender politics, I focus on discursive representations of and narratives around protests and protesters during and after the uprisings, as well as examples of embodied social protest that reflect the ongoing negotiation of power, gender and the body between the state and society in the context of Tunisia's transition. Based on the Foucauldian perspective of biopower and body politics, I analyze case studies of embodied social protest, as well as perceptions of the body in parallel to social movements during a political transition. Some of the main themes that stand out in this analysis are legibility/illegibility of the body and legitimacy (for example, legitimacy of popular and revolutionary demands).

Legibility and illegibility of the body

Salime and Hasso (2016) examine the body in revolutions using the concept of space from feminist geography. They address the body as a concept beyond its material

capacities and potentials to explain social change occurring through revolutions.⁸² They investigate how revolutions create emancipatory as well as repressive memories, images and spaces,⁸³

Indeed the body is not merely a surface or casement of the individual. It is a material space of multiple dimensions that irrupts and interrupts normative orders and activates competing ones through imagination, symbolism and enactment. Bodies are central to anxiety about difference and depictions of boundaries perceived as impermeable or dangerous, as indicated by infection, invasion and contamination metaphors.⁸⁴

Additionally, the body can be considered a scale or ‘a site of inscription’ that reflects societal expectations and contentions, cultural codes and social constructs, and negotiations around power and gender.⁸⁵ In other words, social differences and injustices as well as ideological conflicts, identity anxieties and class inequalities are essential elements in the processes governments follow to exercise control over the body—also referred to as ‘body policing’ or discipline. The context of the uprisings generated novel connections, solidarities and alliances across differences; hence the importance of considering cyberspaces, digital networks and platforms, imagination, institutions, language, physical spaces of protest and embodied practices.⁸⁶

⁸² Salime, Zakia and Hasso, Frances. 2016. *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:4).

⁸³ Salime, Zakia and Hasso, Frances. 2016. *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:3).

⁸⁴ Salime, Zakia and Hasso, Frances. 2016. *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:4).

⁸⁵ Salime, Zakia and Hasso, Frances. 2016. *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:4).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 5,6.

Space refers to arrangements and interactions (e.g. between human bodies, animals, nature, sound, the visual, the digital, built environments) at multiple scales, not all of them material.⁸⁷

In Egypt, Aliaa al-Mahdy, a 20 year-old student at the American University of Cairo, posted nude photographs of herself on her blog entitled “A Rebel’s Diary” in mid-November of 2011. In light of her photos going viral, she was condemned by diverse political and religious groups (including Muslims, Coptic Christians, liberals, leftists, secularists and Islamists). Scholar Marwan Kraidy (2012) addresses politics of the revolutionary body in the Arab uprisings through leading a semiotic analysis of media platforms covering the controversy around Aliaa’s body. In his analysis, Kraidy sheds light on the ways a woman’s body — and Aliaa’s specifically— is perceived and treated by the public sphere. In this framework, the human body is used as an instrument to communicate political protest: “the human body as a communicative agency — the body as medium⁸⁸.”

To understand the role of the body in protesting societal norms and institutional constraints, observing societal reactions and perceptions is central. Aliaa aimed at making citizenship rights more visible through corporality— which refers to the body,

young human bodies figured prominently in Arab uprisings themselves and in the battle of representation surrounding the rebellions in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and others. The self-immolated body of Tunisia Mohamed Bouazizi is credited with having sparked the Tunisian uprising and in turn all the Arab popular rebellions. The abused body of Khaled Said, whose death at the hands of Egyptian police brutality was captured on video, galvanized anger against the regime, building

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Kraidy, Marwan M. 2012. “The Revolutionary Body Politic: Preliminary Thoughts on a Neglected Medium in the Arab Uprisings.” *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5, no. 1. (2012:68).

support leading to the popular uprising⁸⁹.

The gendered body of Aliaa was at the heart of a public debate about rights and freedoms of women in Egypt post-uprisings. Kraidy describes this Foucauldian concept as a polemic reflecting “modernity’s biopolitical imperative”; the bodies of women as well as other individuals are governed, controlled and negotiated in private and public spaces⁹⁰. In other words, the body becomes the battlefield of political and social contentions. Kraidy compared Aliaa’s feminist stance to that of Egyptian activist and writer Nawal al-Saadawy to broaden the understanding of how different women are perceived. He explains that Saadawy was more accepted because she simply played by the rules of public discourse in the Egyptian society. Aliaa’s protest on the other hand, was not accepted as a political participation in a fixed public discourse. Narratives about bodies and policing public space became common themes in the context of the Arab uprisings.

In Tunisia, activist and former FEMEN member Amina Sboui followed Aliaa’s lead and posted topless photographs of herself, with writings on her arms and chest to protest society’s morals; the writings read “F*** your morals.” This marked the emergence of a discourse about gendered and sexualized experiences of women activists in a post-uprising context. In these narratives about the revolution, there is a noticeable shift from the image of protesters’ physical presence on the ground, to images of protesters’ bodies in cyber space. This can be explained by the proliferation of online platforms and

⁸⁹ Kraidy, Marwan M. 2012. “The Revolutionary Body Politic: Preliminary Thoughts on a Neglected Medium in the Arab Uprisings.” (2012:72).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 72-3.

social media advocacy; from images of the body of “the naked, tortured, and sexually harassed female protestor” to the “naked, exposed to gazing and touching, if not sexually assaulted”⁹¹. Moroccan scholar Zakia Salime compares different narratives around embodied social protest in the Arab Spring. She describes the revolution as marked by “a plethora of bodies” that are legible in some cases, and illegible in others⁹². She argues that the nude bodies of Aliaa and Sboui were perceived as disruptive of the predominant narrative of gender oppression, as well as innovative in introducing another narrative about sexual emancipation of women in the MENA. This again echoes the complexity of gender and body politics in the context of a revolution,

the Egyptian protest scene dominated public sentiment through stories of sexual violence, deployed as a technology of policing the public space and removing women’s bodies from the battlegrounds. The unitary mass-revolutionary body that marked the visual memories of the first weeks of the uprisings ceded the ground to the “micro-rebellious body” of the naked, tortured, and sexually harassed female protestor. The pious, modest, and morally agentic body that dominated the scholarship on the Middle East in the past two decades is now naked, exposed to gazing and touching, if not sexually assaulted. Silent and still, gazing and speaking, these bodies populated cyberspace to become the locus of intellectual traffic about revolution narrated mostly along gendered and sexualized scripts⁹³.

In the examples of Aliaa and Amina, nudity was used as a means of embodied protest, defying prevailing societal norms that control sexuality and gender. These controversial corporal statements made the bodies of Aliaa and Amina legible. Similarly, Egyptian researcher Omnia El Sakhry (2013) questions fixed binaries in gender and sexuality studies

⁹¹ Salime, Zakia. 2015. “Arab Revolutions: Legible, Illegible Bodies.” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 35, no. 3. (2015:525-6).

⁹² Salime, Zakia. 2015. “Arab Revolutions: Legible, Illegible Bodies.” (2015:525).

⁹³ Salime, Zakia. 2015. “Arab Revolutions: Illegible, Legible Bodies.” (2015: 535).

in the Middle East; she warns against polarizing feminist discourses about gender politics in the region, for examples: secularist vs Islamist.

Self-immolation as an example of embodied social protest

Frustrated with a female municipality officer who confiscated his fruit cart in December 2010, Mohammed Bouazizi lit himself on fire outside the Governor's office in the heart of Sidi Bouzid — a non-coastal, forgotten area of the country. While Bouazizi's case might be the most well-known, many Tunisians have committed suicide as an act of despair and protest against the state's indifference towards poverty and unemployment in the marginalized interior. Self-immolation, among other forms of suicide, is considered “an act of violence by the World Health Organization.”⁹⁴

In a ten-year study (2005-2014) about suicide by self-immolation, a team of Tunisian researchers examined 235 suicide cases (about 80% of the total number of cases nationwide) in a prominent public hospital at the capital Tunis — Charles Nicolle Hospital. The number of casualties tripled since Bouazizi's death. The researchers concluded that “self-immolation is a considerable phenomenon not yet explored in Tunisia” and that self-burning suicides have been on the rise since 2011⁹⁵. To understand the embodied suffering in suicide by self-immolation, it is crucial to understand the local and specific context of suffering — every community values a particular set of cultural and ideological

⁹⁴ Antoni Abat i. Ninet and Mark Tushnet, 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. (2015:25).

⁹⁵ Ben Khelil, Mehdi, Amine Zgarni, Malek Zaafrane, Youssef Chkribane, Meriem Gharbaoui, Hana Harzallah, Ahmed Banar, and Moncef Hamdoun. 2016. “Suicide by Self-immolation in Tunisia: A 10 Year Study (2005–2014).” *Burns* 42, no. 7. (2016:599).

beliefs and traditions, that is usually informed and shaped by the history and positionality of a given community. I use anthropologist Arthur Kleinman's 'Local Worlds' theory to justify a multitude of interpretations that should be taken into consideration, while evaluating a particular behavior or habit in a given culture:

No social change could be validly assessed without evaluation of its contextual meaning for those who experience it⁹⁶.

Medical anthropologists have called for considering ethnographic work in evaluating modern, psychiatric and psychotherapeutic models and treatments; ethnographic work captures details and images that reflect the cultural ideology of the patient and their environment. Hence its significance. Psychosocial distress studies provide evidence of alternative modes to expressing distress. In research on psychosocial distress among Havik Brahmin women in India, the absence of conventional ways of expressing emotions of frustration, fear, and anxiety, within a specific oppressive context, pushed the women to use different means to communicate their distress.⁹⁷ Similarly, a "contextual meaning in relation to particular stressors" can be theorized in cases of embodied distress in self immolation in Tunisia. Examining patriarchy within the specific case study of Havik Brahmin women explains how it shapes women's behavior and reactions. In Tunisia, the public opinion of Bouazizi was divided between viewing Bouazizi as a national symbol of revolution and dignity, and viewing him as a reckless, young drunken man with no ethics

⁹⁶ Kleinman, Arthur. 1995. "Critique of Objectivity in International Health." In: *Writing at the Margin: Discourse Between Anthropology and Medicine*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: UC Press. (1995:83).

⁹⁷ Nichter, M. 1981. "Idioms of Distress: Alternatives in the Expression of Psychosocial Distress: A Case Study from South India." *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 5, no. (4: 1981).

by the more conservative crowd. Tunisia is a predominantly Muslim society; however, degrees of religiousness and conservatism vary widely across the country. Activists, politicians and Bouazizi's peers sympathized with his conditions and glorified his death by considering him a martyr — his family gained an unprecedented level of fame and were interviewed on television and radio channels, frequently. On the other side of the spectrum, conservative Tunisian Muslims strongly believe that suicide is a sin and that Bouazizi should not be considered a martyr nor be glorified. The stigmatization of suicide, and mental illness in Tunisia is reflected in these posthumous narratives of the body, stigmatizing Bouazizi for defying Islamic instructions. Additionally, in a ten-year study (2005-2014) lead by a team of Tunisian researchers in one of the capital's largest hospitals, Charles Nicolle Hospital, about suicide by self-immolation, Ben Khelil et al examined 235 cases, which represent about 80 percent of the total number of suicide cases, nationwide. In 24% of the cases, the reported reason of suicide was: decompensation of a psychiatric illness. Additionally, 17 percent of the cases had a psychiatric history of schizophrenia and 12 percent of the cases had a history of depression. The researchers noted the lack of accessibility to mental health services in Tunisia as a delimitation of the research, given that many of the casualties could have suffered from a mental illness, but had no diagnosis or awareness of it. They also criticized the lack of formal and state statistics about suicide, which echoes the stigmatization around mental illness,

In conclusion, our study showed that self-immolation represents a considerable phenomenon not yet explored in Tunisia. [...] The significant increase in self-burning suicides especially after 2011 needs to be further explored in order to detect the changes in the casualty's profile as well as the motives of such suicides

indicating potentially specific preventive measures.⁹⁸

The fact that the number of casualties tripled since Bouazizi's death seems to be the most significant finding being that of Ben Khelil et. al. Despite the slight drop in 2014, self-immolation became an epidemic and a rising trend among young, unemployed and impoverished men.

Before the uprisings, Tunisia used to be a police state. Freedom of expression, basic human rights and individual liberties were limited and even punishable; political criticism was censored. In light of the absence of a conventional channel for Bouazizi and others, to express their frustration with their socio-economic conditions, as well as to protest the tyranny of former rulers and government representatives. Moreover, social suffering and the embodiment of suffering are influenced by socio-economic circumstances, as well as social structures and cultural hierarchies in place. The 2008 global economic crisis increased suicide rates in 54 countries (mostly unemployed men); this is evidence of the impact of socio-economic hardships on the suffering experience. Additionally, self-immolation is more frequent in developing countries,

Examples of self-immolation can be found throughout history and within many diverse societies. These acts are often embedded within a culture's mythos or religious practices and are commonly perceived as gestures of ultimate sacrifice. Examples of self-immolation are less common in the Western culture and religion, though a few examples exist⁹⁹.

Ben Khelil et. al. coined an expression to describe the increasing trend of self-immolation: the Copy-Cat Effect of Bouazizi's suicide or the 'Bouazizi Effect.' The 'Copy-Cat

⁹⁸ Ben Khelil et al. 2016. (2016:595).

⁹⁹ Nisavic et. al. 2017. *Intentional Self-Inflicted Burn Injuries*. (2017:155).

Bouazizi Effect’ describes a particular response or reaction to social suffering, through somatic expression of self-inflicted burning injuries. During my experience as a reporter, I covered a funeral of a young man who burned himself to death, in public in 2013. His family lived in a small hut, with no electricity or potable water, in a marginalized and forgotten rural area. He attempted to sell small products, as an unauthorized street vendor in the capital, but policemen confiscated his merchandise— for not having a permit from the government. In an act of despair, he set himself on fire in the busiest street of downtown the capital Tunis. He left behind a widowed mother, and several unemployed siblings. The similarities between this case and that of Bouazizi, showcase how embodied suffering was also a means of communicating a statement — a last cry for help to draw attention to ignored or silenced struggling communities in rural Tunisia.

Ben Khelil et al addressed suicide motives in their study, and they included: a conflict with an intimate partner, a conflict with a state representative, and financial problems. They also mentioned that casualties of self-immolation are mainly 34 year old men, who are single, had no medical history of mental illness, and were either unemployed or daily workers. Behavioral disorders can imply pre-existing oppression factors within the local world of a patient. In rural Iran, suicide by self-immolation was mostly used by young women who protested patriarchal and oppressive structures and systems,

Various examples also exist of self-immolation as suicide epidemic, often initiating from political motivations. The largest of these occurred in the late 1970s and is thought to have started with the self-immolation of 7 members of the Progressive Utilization Theory, a Gandhi’s leadership in India. In 1978, Lynette Phillips, an Australian heiress and member of Progressive Utilization Theory, made headlines when she attempted to immolate herself in Parliament Square. Her attempt was aborted, but she later successfully committed suicide by self-immolation in

Geneva. Following her death, 82 people in England and Wales died by self-immolation between October 1978 and October 1979, in an epidemic thought to be mediated by news coverage.¹⁰⁰

A structural violence analysis allows us to better situate self-immolation as an embodiment of suffering, as well as to examine the role of Tunisia's history and culture in shaping bodily and sexual rights and liberties. In his book *Pathologies of Power* (2004), anthropologist Paul Farmer shed lights on the social and economic determinants of mental health disorders, taking into consideration social and cultural hierarchies, local structures in place, and how these structures limit the potential and capabilities of lower-middle class and poor class individuals. The popular uprisings were mainly led by people from rural areas and regions that had been marginalized over history. A deep look at Tunisia's long history of being colonized and exploited by most prominent civilizations (from the Romans to the Ottomans) would reflect the systematic oppression of the state over centuries. Rural areas and internal regions that are not close enough to the coast, were intentionally marginalized under the French colonization, which lasted from the end of the 1880s to 1956. Decades of oppressive measures and social injustice were followed by two consecutive dictatorships. When considering all these factors, underprivileged and frustrated youth were bound to react; the Bouazizi effect makes sense. It is crucial to consider historical social changes as well as the cultural repertoire of a given society in order to understand embodied social protest. In summary, across anthropological and sociological fields of work, self-immolation has been examined as a political protest tool, and as

¹⁰⁰ Ben Khelil et al. 2016. (2016:158).

an epidemic. In order to provide a thorough wholistic diagnosis of individuals with emotional and physical distress, awareness of the cultural context, and the social and economic determinants of suffering are necessary to understanding how somatic expression can go beyond physical suffering to encompass broader and deeper issues such as state oppression and societal constructs.

Salime addresses self-immolation as a form of embodied social protest in the context of Morocco. By studying and comparing two case-studies of self-immolation in Morocco, she examines the legibility of the body in each case and investigates the different responses from society. In the case of 16-year-old Amina Filali, who was protesting domestic violence after she was forced to marry her rapist. Her death drew attention and international scrutiny. While in the case of 25-year-old single mother Fadwa Laroui, who was protesting her exclusion from social housing, her death did not spark a revolution like Bouazizi's did in Tunisia. Salime argues that while bodies of Filali, Aliaa, Sboui and Bouazizi became legible and resulted in a transnational controversy, bodies of Laroui and others that were not covered by mass media became illegible in the same context. She identifies legible bodies as bodies that are vulnerable to intervention of media, law and activism, based on various interests and agendas of the actors involved. Bodies become illegible because of the shifting sensibilities in dominant discourses about gender and the body¹⁰¹. Laroui's body became a "non-event" despite the fact that it was the first self-immolation in the Arab region since Bouazizi's. Another similarity between Laroui and Bouazizi's deaths is that they both were in conflict with a state-representative; Laroui

¹⁰¹ Salime, Zakia. 2015. "Arab Revolutions: Legible, Illegible Bodies." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 35, no. 3. (2015:525-38).

protested the state's programs of housing and relocation of poor populations and Bouazizi protested the policewoman who confiscated his cart,

the potential of change that Bouazizi's self-immolation generated and created a space in which politics could be imagined through the performativity of death.¹⁰²

Salime links Laroui's death to the unique representational and political space for single mothers in Morocco; She links her gendered vulnerability to her class struggles and urban-rural disparities. In Foucauldian views, a 'regime of truth' symbolizes the knowledge that is treated as the truth within a society. The victimization of Filali's body fueled public sentiment against Islamic politics of consent. In the aftermath of her death, a public debate was sparked about consent. This is when various regulatory regimes of representation took control over the production of knowledge about Filali's death. Salime refers to Abu-Lughod's 'plight of women in Muslim' countries in Filali's case but not in Laroui's,

Filali's case is a good example of the way that certain narratives are made to fit what Lila Abu-Lughod and others have described as the dominant liberal discourse that garners support for saving or rescuing victimized Muslim women and girls.¹⁰³

When a case becomes an object of intervention through an already existing framework of law and already available tropes about patriarchy, gender and oppression, the body is legible. Representational regimes like media, law and local non-governmental organizations can produce discourse perceiving certain bodies as "innocent, immature and in need of state protection and already available Orientalist tropes about the 'vulgar' Muslim rapist

¹⁰² Salime, Zakia. 2015. "Arab Revolutions: Legible, Illegible Bodies." (2015: 528).

¹⁰³ Salime, Zakia. 2015. "Arab Revolutions: Legible, Illegible Bodies." (2015:530).

man and the unprotected unvalued, female child¹⁰⁴. In Filali's case, the body allowed an intervention that emphasizes discursive concepts around the Muslim's body as a victim of "backward traditions"¹⁰⁵. Salime criticizes the lack of attention to the postcolonial nature of the protested law. She points out that only Moroccan jurist blogger Ibn Kafka addressed colonial legacy in the legal framework of Morocco. The law in question is in fact a part of the patriarchal French legal system, which preserves the authoritative power over the daughter, established through marriage. Filali's death was treated as an offense against her parental authority and not her own physical body. Salime identifies this process as 'Francisation' instead of Islamization of the Moroccan penal code — as portrayed in the public debate about gender, morality and power¹⁰⁶. As the cultural and legal framework were missing, Salime criticizes liberal feminist discourses, in addition to narratives spread by state representatives and feminist organizations and cyber-activists. She blames them for their simplistic understanding of patriarchy, and for promoting fixed binaries of patriarchal oppression and patriarchal protection through marriage. Postcolonial feminist approaches fill in this gap. Examining arrangements in gender relations, family ties and 'subalternity' help us understand how gender roles and power dynamics are negotiated. Salime's analysis includes evidence from the work of Moroccan sociologist Fatema Mernissi, who contrasted the legal framework of male 'guardianship' under family law to the realities of female labor and search for economic independence,

By eliminating her body because of her impossible access to a plot of land,

¹⁰⁴ Salime, Zakia. 2015. "Arab Revolutions: Legible, Illegible Bodies" (2015:531).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 532.

Laroui announced her imagined sharing of middle-class subjectivities under neoliberalism and her desires for autonomy, ownership, and belonging to the normalized urban space of nuclear families¹⁰⁷.

Significance of Colonization/Decolonization in Institutional Mechanisms

Algerian feminist and sociologist Lazreg addresses the interconnectedness between the Islamic Law and the French Family Law in post-colonial Algeria,

It was not until 1957, three years after the struggle for decolonization began, that French legislators decided in earnest to reform Islamic Law with a view to bringing it in line with French Family Law¹⁰⁸.

The decolonization phase in North Africa was marked by a political and legal transformation in what Foucault refers to as the 'regime of truth' in a given society or culture. One of the impacts Tunisia shares with both Algeria and Morocco is the changes in language and introducing bureaucratic French systems. By examining the historical evolution of constitutionalism in Tunisia, Ninet and Tushnet (2015) argue that the French colonization as well as the decolonization processes heavily influenced Tunisia's political and institutional structures.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, they point out that the colonial intensity resulting from being a French protectorate for seventy-five years, and examine the long-lasting impacts of French institutions. Decolonization was centered around nationalistic ideology and politics in an attempt to unite Tunisians,

The first Tunisian constitution was influenced by the French legal system and

¹⁰⁷ Salime, Zakia. 2015. "Arab Revolutions: Legible, Illegible Bodies." (2015: 531).

¹⁰⁸ Lazreg, Marnia. 1994. *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, (1994:90).

¹⁰⁹ Ninet and Tushnet. 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism*. (2015:148-9).

political understanding. The Tunisian founding fathers after the French occupation used Jacobinism and the Republican tradition to build up the sense of national identity and unity.¹¹⁰

Tunisia moved from constitutional monarchy in 1955 to declaring independence in 1956 to abolishing monarchy in 1957 and establishing a Republic and a liberal and democratic new constitution in 1959.¹¹¹ However, the 1959 Constitution abandons the French tradition, in committing to the teachings of Islam; without mentioning Islamic law in the constitutional text.¹¹² Based on their analysis, both former presidents Ben Ali and Bourguiba justified their authoritarianism by relying on constitutional politics. While Bourguiba claimed himself as ‘president for life’ by amending the 1959 Constitution, Ben Ali “continued using the constitution to maintain the appearance of political normality and democratic improvement, amending the constitutional text in 1997, 1998, 2002 and 2008.”¹¹³ Moreover, it seems that contradictions in constitutional clauses is not unprecedented, but is rather embedded in Tunisia’s constitutional history. Similarly, Tunisian scholar Lamia Ben Youssef focuses on gendered spaces and public perceptions around gender and the body in revolutionary space¹¹⁴. She addresses ‘mythscape’¹¹⁵ (a myth and a landscape combined) as she drew from feminist geography in her work — where she relies on the

¹¹⁰ Ninet and Tushnet. 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism*. (2015:149).

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Ninet and Tushnet. 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism*. (2015:165).

¹¹⁴ Ben Youssef, Lamia. 2016. “Gender and the Fractured Mythscape of National identity in Revolutionary Tunisia” in: *Freedom without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*.

¹¹⁵ (See Chapter I: Literature Review.) Ben Youssef, Lamia. 2016. “Gender and the Fractured Mythscape of National Identity in Revolutionary Tunisia” in: *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:53)

axis of time and space in understanding social movements. Ben Youssef examines hip hop and rap songs and lyrics to study the emergence of new means of expression in post-uprising Tunisia. However, she highlights the explicit misogyny in many songs by young rappers who are associated with a conservative mindset. Even though their lyrics spoke to social injustice and martyrdom — among other concepts that emerged in the revolutionary discourse since 2011— Ben Youssef argues that the rappers attempted to legitimize their misogyny by the fact that they come from marginalized and impoverished neighborhoods. She concludes that political discourse as well as embodied forms of activism mirror competing ‘mythscape’ —expressed through gendered discourse and experiences,

Tunisians, like many postcolonial subjects, are often imprisoned by colonial oppositional frames that perpetuate their own forms of remembering, forgetting and domination.¹¹⁶

Ben Youssef stresses the emergence of new forms of inclusion in the revolutionary context of Tunisia and explains the complexity and nuances embedded in post-uprising divisions.

Discourses and Narratives around Gender and Body Politics

Discursive shifts occur when predominant discourses are protested and transformed; Foucauldian thought influenced this field as discourse is considered a part of a wider web of power relations that are grounded in institutional and social practices: “Cul-

¹¹⁶ Ben Youssef, Lamia. 2016. “Gender and the Fractured Mythscape of National identity in Revolutionary Tunisia” in: *Freedom without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions*. (2016:74).

ture being a field of struggle, discourses are not unlimitedly hegemonic.”¹¹⁷ I follow Foucault’s principles in this discourse analysis, by paying attention to the regime of truth in place in the context of Tunisia. A discourse sets a body of assumptions and interpretations about how society is structured: “There can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactualize others¹¹⁸.” Considered a prominent qualitative tool in feminist and gender studies, discourse analysis allows for a critical and contextualized understanding of how language is used to reflect broader social and cultural norms and assumptions. In addition to relying on Fairclough’s ‘interdiscursivity’ (1989, 1992, 2012), a discourse analysis incorporates an interpretive framework that links lexical choices and intertextual meanings to the societal and cultural milieu — where these discourses take place. In the Tunisia context, analyzing the selected texts implies isolating presuppositions as well as intertextual contexts to illustrate the implicit processes of language use and how that is translated in power and gender relations¹¹⁹. Understanding the meaning of social practices and ideological assumptions behind institutional texts helps identify social constructs and the mechanisms maintaining and promoting them. Social interactions, embedded in language use, mirror the gender system in place, gender relations, gender roles and how power and gender are constantly negotiated within a given society. Moreover, Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) explains how discourses are impacted by social interactions and relations, and are thus a social phenomenon. By analyzing the selected legal texts, I at-

¹¹⁷ Shoshan, Boaz. 2000. *Discourse on Gender/gendered Discourse in the Middle East*. Westport (Connecticut): Praeger. (2000:XVII).

¹¹⁸ Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Discipline and Punish*. (1975:54).

¹¹⁹ Tannen Deborah, Heidi Ehernberger. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin. 2018. *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, (2018).

tempt to contextualize how power negotiation takes place between the level of state and the level of individuals. I focus on the social embeddedness of language and use the concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity as analysis tools, as used by Tannen et. al., 2015.

Tunisia's 2014 constitution was one of the first institutional structures to be rebuilt after the fall of the authoritarian regime of former president Ben Ali. Demands of protesters during the uprisings of 2010 and 2011 comprised drafting a new constitution, among other demands such as employment and social justice. In 2011, Tunisian citizens headed to the polls to participate in their historic first free elections. The first legislative elections resulted in the creation of a National Constituent Assembly (NCA). Members of the NCA were tasked with the drafting of a new constitution; this process took roughly three years. The 2014 Constitution encompasses 149 articles divided in ten chapters. Constitutional articles address rights, responsibilities and freedoms of citizens, as well as the role of the State in managing and arranging citizens' lives. While flipping the 51 pages of the constitution, most of the language used is that of a formal, judiciary setting. However, it is noteworthy to mention the first and last sentences, opening and concluding the constitution: "Au Nom de Dieu Clément et Miséricordieux" and "Allah est le garant du succès" which roughly translate to "in the name of God, the Merciful" and "Allah is the one to guarantee success." The combination of religious and legal texts reflects how identity is institutionalized through similar texts. The first article of the constitution identifies Tunisia as "a free, independent and sovereign State, Islam is its religion, Arabic is its language and the Republic is its regime." Article 1 is followed by a statement that

prohibits amending it in the future. This illustrates the central role of the State, religion and Arabic in the Tunisian society. It is additionally evidence of the interconnectedness between cultural norms and societal values on one hand, and the state's institutions on another. Ninet and Tushnet (2015) problematize eternal clauses and emphasize the possibilities of contradictions between norms and realities.¹²⁰ In other words, potential contradictions in constitutional meanings blur the lines between the institutional framework and its applicability in reality. It is noteworthy that Article 1 is the same version of the first article of the old constitution,

The Tunisian constitutional tradition expressing the context in which the constitutional text was approved, and it uses the same definition of the state as the one that appeared in the constitution of 1959 and has been maintained until today.¹²¹

Based on this discursive insistence on identifying all Tunisians as a hegemonic social group that is Muslim and Arabic-speaking, several social groups from different ethnic (such as Berbers) and ideological backgrounds (non-Muslims) are left unrecognized. This is true for the LGBTQ++ community as well; a group of illegible bodies within a fixed binary system that limits masculinity, femininity and gender to what is socially and culturally accepted. The predominance of the French language in Tunisia mirrors postcolonial feminist ideas about the colonial legacy of patriarchal laws and institutions. Echoing Salime's analysis as well as views of Lazreg and Bourdieu about the impact of French colonization in Algeria¹²², the French colonial legacy consists in patriarchal policies and

¹²⁰ Ninet and Tushnet. 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism*. (2015:177-8).

¹²¹ Ninet and Tushnet. 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism*. (2015:173).

¹²² See Chapter III: Embodied Social Protest.

bureaucratic practices that neglect the interests and progress of women and vulnerable social groups. Moreover, associating an official religion to the definition of the state reflects the French tradition of the Republic and its institutions.¹²³ Additionally, there seems to be a paradoxical link between Arabic as the language of the State and the use of French language in official documents and legal frameworks. The paradox is carried along the rest of the document and other legal texts. For instance, while Article 24 — of Chapter II entitled “Of Rights and Liberties”— states that citizens are guaranteed a private life and confidentiality, Article 230 of the current Penal Code directly contradicts it. Article 230 reads that sodomy is punishable with up to three years of prison. I use this example as a way to argue for how body and gender politics are negotiated between the state, and marginalized individuals and social groups through discursive approaches. Article 230 dates back to the colonial period of Tunisia (1881-1956) and has been protested since the 2010 and 2011 uprisings by representatives from and advocates for the LGBTQ++ community in Tunisia. Although the article does not explicitly criminalize homosexuality, the term ‘sodomy’ is used in a deliberately vague way. In addition to violating several articles in the new constitution about individual rights and freedoms, the article was used as an authoritarian tool to target LGBTQ++ individuals and not heterosexual individuals. The misleading nature of this law allows judges and policemen alike, to use their own interpretations to pass a judgement on specific intimate details about a bodily rights and functions; as these interpretations are embedded in societal assumptions and expectations, their judgement is central to the politics of legible and illegible bodies as well as the larg-

¹²³ Ninet and Tushnet. 2015. *The Arab Spring: An Essay on Revolution and Constitutionalism*. (2015:180).

er cultural repertoire of what is considered acceptable and what is treated as a punishable behavior. Furthermore, Article 230 is found under the Chapter of “Public Indecency” which is a historically compelling law given the diverse means it had been implemented in distinctly different cultural contexts. Similar laws have in common the focus on the space of ‘an indecent act’: which is always public space. However, the lines and traits defining what is decent and what is indecent are blurred; hence the central role of cultural and societal knowledge in regulating bodies and lives of citizens, and in maintaining fixed values. In her essay about violence and resistance, Stacy Hardy (2018) addresses the use of English language in South Africa among other institutional instruments. She reflects on the protests she participated in,

A single image remains: a girl. A body dragged. Bare legs raw on the tarmac. I can hear the tear. Smell the blood, the taste of it in my mouth. I watch as they throw her in the van. Watch it drive off. The shrill of the siren, tyres burning [...] I think of the alleged crime: indecent exposure. But how is it that a breast is more indecent than a bullet? A nipple more exposed than a wound?¹²⁴

Gender identities are often represented and constructed in subtle ways; thus, the crucial role of analyzing discourses in unveiling the ‘givens’ in a particular society¹²⁵. Explaining narratives and discourses around gender paves the way to understanding how gender is negotiated and how societal and cultural concepts of masculinity and femininity are mirrored in discursive practices. What does it mean to be a woman in Tunisia after the uprisings? Such questions highlight the gendered experiences of individuals and help deconstruct the mechanisms and structures in place that are supporting the current gender system:

Discourses exist then in relation to other discourses, and Foucault refers not only to the “great anonymous murmur of discourses held today” but also to the “set (l’ensemble) of discourses actually pronounced” (1989 :2 7, 45). This ‘set’

¹²⁴ Hardy, Stacy. 2018. ”Indecent Exposure – Writing Violence and Resistance Today.” *English in Africa* 45, no. 2. (2018:63-4).

¹²⁵ Litosseliti, Lia, and Jane Sunderland. 2002. *Gender Identity and Discourse Analysis*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2002.

refers to a complex of related social and discursal practices, found in both public and private texts, which can be seen as hierarchical.¹²⁶

In “Upon the Shadow,” the cameraperson follows Ayari and his friends—all members of the LGBTQ++ community—in their daily struggle of being subordinated and unacknowledged by both the state and society. It is less significant whether the scenes are staged or spontaneous; it is most relevant to examine the social expectations, assumptions and codes in this unique narrative. Ayari and his friends were hosted by Tunisian feminist activist Amina Sboui after being rejected by their families and kicked out of their homes.¹²⁷ Scenes of the documentary portrayed basic daily encounters and routines in their lives; most scenes are set inside the house and a few are set outside when the group goes out to public spaces. The significance of the film lies in breaking cultural and societal taboos around sex, sexuality, and nonconformity. Sandra, a Tunisian transgender woman who was born as a male, presents a tutorial-like segment about tucking—a daily procedure for many transgender women and Drag Queens more specifically that consists in hiding parts of the genitals in a way that covers what would otherwise be recognized as male’s genitals. The uncensored nudity of Sandra during her tucking routine reflects the emancipatory goal behind the film, as well as Sandra’s vulnerability and bravery. As it is difficult and unsafe for transgender women to be visible in the public space, many of them end up becoming sex workers once they find themselves homeless. Sandra is discriminated against by her own community for being a sex worker. In a scene

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, 11.

¹²⁷ See also Chapter III: Embodied Social Protest.

showing the group of friends chatting, drinking and smoking in the same room, one of the men called Sandra ‘a whore’ for doing sex work for a living. Sandra addresses her friend’s comment in a monologue where she explains her difficult financial and social situation, and her hurt feelings given the stigma and subordination even among her friends. Another important scene shows one of the men meeting secretly with a former romantic partner on the roof of the house because he was afraid of his friends’ judgement over talking to an ex-partner. The couple exchanges kisses —another taboo in a conservative society like the Tunisian one. This deliberate display of affection between two homosexual men defies societal and cultural norms of masculinity, femininity and nonconformity. In a different monologue with one of Ayari’s friends, the young man reflects on his childhood and on why he is not accepted by his family and environment for being gay,

I wonder sometimes if this has anything to do with my childhood. My mother used to take me with her to the hairdresser, then she started leaving me there because she wasn’t able to find someone else to take care of me while she worked outside. Maybe because I spent so much time at the hairdresser with her female friends. She used to put make up on me, both her and her friends. They used to dress me up; I was like their doll. My older sibling was more masculine and my dad always let me know.¹²⁸

This monologue is important as it echoes societal assumptions of what is masculine and what is feminine, who is a real man and who is not, and what a woman should be like and what she should not be or do. The documentary sheds light on mental health issues such as self-harm and suicide, for it shows how several members of the group of friends physically harmed their bodies when they get desperate in their struggle. They were rushed to

¹²⁸ “Upon the Shadows,” film by Nada Mezni Hafaiedh. 2017.

the hospital and survived the attempts, but the reasons behind such dramatic and painful moments are interesting. Before the incident took place in the house, Ayari and his friends went out to a bar in Tunis to chat over a drink. Many of his transgender friends like to dress-up, wear make-up and heels, and sound and look feminine. As the cameraperson was filming the conversation, they also catch the judging stares and astonished faces of people surrounding the group. A bar can be considered one of the least conservative spaces in a society, however that did not stop the bartender from asking one of Ayari's friends about their wig: "Why are you wearing this? Aren't you a man? You're a man! You can't do this and dress like a woman!" Even though the reaction of the young transwoman was simply a smile at the time, they attempted to kill themselves later that evening by cutting their wrists. The bartender's words and behavior reflects engrained public morality and body policing that exclude nonconformity and reinforce social construct and hegemonic discourse. Despite the negative and dark aspects of being LGBTQ+, the film succeeds in portraying the rare happy moments that unite the group, across their differences. The colorful images, bright and sparkling make up, and sounds of music, laughter and clapping were some of the elements that highlighted their hope for more freedom and equality for their community.

Role of Protestors in Constitutional & Legislative Processes

Reflecting on my own experience as well as the analysis so far, I explain how peaceful protesting plays a significant role in decision-making during the country's democratic transition. After toppling Ben Ali's regime in January 2011, protests and sit-ins

continued for several months. Some of the first political demands during the uprisings were dissolving former regime structures, forming a provisional government and drafting a new constitution through an elected constituent assembly; protestors chanted and held slogans calling for “dissolving the government” and “democracy.” In the aftermath of Ben Ali fleeing the country with his family, there were concerns around political vacuum, chaos and the threat of a civil war— a scenario that became a reality in Libya and Syria. Protesters had unified demands at the beginning; employment, freedom and dignity. However, this gradually changed as political transformation started and new freedoms and values emerged. Former opposition politicians and activists who used to be in exile, in prison or censored returned to civil society and the political arena. Suddenly, Tunisia witnessed an unprecedented proliferation of new political parties and associations; under Ben Ali, his political party of the Constitutional Democratic Party (also known as the RCD) used to be the only legal one participating in several rigged elections, and at the first constitutional elections of October 2011, over a hundred political parties in addition to independent lists participated. Former Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi attempted to remain in power after Ben Ali left. This was one of the reasons protestors continued exercising pressure on state representatives and other citizens who are not participating in protests post-uprisings of December and January 2010-2011. During the uprisings, peaceful protesters combined socio-economic and political demands; while the privileged elites focused on intellectual freedoms and democratic values like human rights, others from different classes prioritized employment, dignity and social justice. At this point, divisions did not seem as deep and demands remained more or less similar. On the state-level-

el, a group of intellectual and political elite announced their initiative of forming an interim government and transitional bodies such as the High Body for Realizing Revolution's Objectives, Political Reform and Democratic Transition, and the High Independent Electoral Board. These temporary bodies served as transitional institutions to pave the way for democracy. The Electoral Board (also known as ISIE) was created in March 2011 and had a limited mandate to hold legislative and constitutional elections in October 2011. The first provisional government was led by former politician (now President) Beji Caid Essebsi who represented a source of controversy because of his old links to the former regimes. As a Destourian politician, which is the former political party of first president Bourguiba, Essebsi's return to a decision-making position stirred heated debates and sparked a new discourse around a 'counter-revolution.' Unlike the first months of the uprisings, former supporters of Ben Ali re-emerged in the transition context and in the revolutionary scene of peaceful protests. In addition to the emergence of new political parties, the fear of a counter-revolution led by supporters of the former regime or RCD caused several confrontations and growing tensions between protesters. In October 2011, and for the first time in Tunisia's history, citizens participated in free and transparent elections that led to the creation of the National Constituent Assembly (NCA). Then, the 217 NCA members nominated an interim government and kept former head of Parliament as interim president. Drafting the constitution ended in 2014, but the NCA mandate was meant to end sooner. Fearing that the interim government would continue to prolongate its mandate, protesters took to the streets again in summer of 2014, this time outside the headquarters of the NCA and outside the government building in al Kasbah. Mass protests and

sit-ins resurfaced after a break since the 2011 elections, and protesters demanded dissolving the interim government and the NCA, and holding legislative and presidential elections. Again, citizens succeeded in influencing and guiding the country's democratic transition by peacefully protesting outside the NCA and the headquarters of the government. These sit-ins became better known as the Kasbah sit-ins which was a series of sit-ins where activists and citizens gathered from different regions of the country and not just the capital, demanded that the interim government leaves power and the ISIE to hold parliamentary and presidential elections. While covering these sit-ins, I recall the festive atmosphere of protesters who played music, set up tents, shared food (especially Iftar dinner during Ramadan) and debated politics for days and days. Simultaneously, neighboring countries where the Arab Spring spread started facing violence and threats of civil war. All these factors pushed the interim government, which was formed based on an alliance between the winning parties of the 2011 elections, to step down and respond to popular demands. The parliamentary and presidential elections were held in October and December of 2014 and a significant political deadlock was avoided. Moreover, politicians and activists agreed on starting a national debate where different representatives of civil society participated in solving the 2014 political crisis. Later, four national organizations won the Nobel Prize for Peace for their efforts in overcoming a political deadlock. This further highlights the significant role of protests in shaping the constitutional and legislative processes during Tunisia's transition.

Legitimacy in Constitutional and Legislative Processes

Tunisian civil society has taken advantage of the new context of newly-acquired freedoms to develop networks, take action and organize and mobilize against state oppression¹²⁹. The uprisings also represent an opportunity to claim legitimacy for popular demands. A novel discourse around legitimacy and illegitimacy emerged based on the nature of the popular uprisings (street action that influenced political processes), especially in the political arena and among the newly created and allowed political parties. Even though the exceptional pre-existing status of women, gender roles and relations, and gender policies shaped the nature of protests in the revolution¹³⁰, oppression and discrimination against the female body persist today, seven years in the wake of the revolution¹³¹. Studying gender stereotypes implies the stereotypical images of women and men, as well as the opinions about what constitutes masculinity and what constitutes femininity. An example of gendered stereotypes is that of early childhood gendered observations. In patriarchal settings, for instance, masculinity is a concept that gets shaped early: little boys are taught to be strong and not to cry while the little girl is the one who is associated with crying and showing emotion¹³². It is compelling to notice how the use of the expression “cry like a little girl” is a common theme across cultures and languages,

submission and passivity are passed down from generation to generation, none of which is capable of breaking out of the rigid customs to realize personal

¹²⁹ Charrad M. and Zarrugh A. 2014. “Equal or complementary? Women in the new Tunisian Constitution after the Arab Spring”. *The Journal of North African Studies*, (2014:19-20).

¹³⁰ Moghadam, Valentine. 2017. “Explaining divergent outcomes of the Arab Spring: the significance of gender and women’s mobilizations”. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*.

¹³¹ Cheker, 2014; Yacoubi, 2016

¹³² Shoshan, Boaz. 2000. *Discourse on Gender/gendered Discourse in the Middle East*. Westport (Connecticut): Praeger. (2000).

freedom.¹³³

Contradictions between the State's Image and Realities of Individuals

In Article 7, the Constitution sets a particular definition for 'family' as the core of society and emphasizes the state's role in protecting the concept of a family. Accordingly, protecting family values and maintaining a traditional image of society are significant cultural concepts in the Tunisia context. Gender equality is also protected by the constitution; the word 'woman' is mentioned five times only in the entirety of the document, including four times within the same article. Article 46 adds protecting the achievements in rights of women to the roles of the State. Gender parity in elections and other political fields of participation, is in fact guaranteed by the constitution; whether it is implemented in reality is a different story. In the same article (46) the state is responsible for ending violence against women. This particular measure received the attention of civil society and human rights advocates in post-uprising Tunisia. Three years after the constitution was drafted, a fundamental law of violence against women was legislated in August 2017. The new law can be considered an achievement for Tunisian women, once fully implemented. It addresses different types of violence against women: political, economic, physical and moral violence, as well as a category of discrimination against women as a type of violence. While parts of the law include preventative concepts, other parts stress the increase in sentences and punishment for perpetrators of violence against women. Furthermore, the jargon and lexical choices used in this law portrays women as constant victims. This can be understood as a way of empowering women from within the existing

¹³³ Shoshan, Boaz. 2000. *Discourse on Gender/gendered Discourse in the Middle East*. (2000:XVII).

gender system, by using the regime of truth (Foucault) that is specific to the context of Tunisia.

Another significant text I chose to focus on in Tunisia's post-uprising legal framework is the report of the Committee of Individual Liberties and Equality (COLIBE). A group of lawyers, activists and politicians constituted the committee, which was assigned by President Beji Caid Essebsi in August 2017, and tasked with evaluating and assessing the status of human rights, and individual freedoms. The report calls for the necessity of reform to keep up with social change and emerging needs of citizens. Despite criticism for not consulting with representatives of vulnerable social groups, the significance of the COLIBE report lies in the language used in it. When examining the text, the writers of the report deliberately relied on a mixed discourse which combined an assessment of rights and freedoms, and an incorporation of concepts from the Tunisian regime of truth such as religious justifications within a civil frame of human rights and individual freedoms. Here, avoiding polarizing dichotomies about Islam and women's rights is crucial however, it is important to acknowledge that combining religious discourse with legal and advocacy discourses tends to instigate heated debates around secularism, Islamism and similar binary narratives. When asked about the post-uprising legal framework, all three activists were critical of the COLIBE report to different degrees; but their critiques had one element in common: the religiosity of a text addressing human rights and civil liberties. Based on all three answers to the same question, and based on the COLIBE document itself, authors targeted a larger audience and justified the necessity of eliminating certain laws such as Article 230 (see Discourse Analysis chapter) with con-

servative values that are directly linked to Islam as a religion of society. The COLIBE recommended replacing the prison sentence in Article 230 with a fine, instead of advocating for decriminalization of basic human rights such as the right to decency, privacy and dignity. Additionally, quoting verses from the Quran to justify the necessary reforms to a law that conspicuously violates human and civil rights. Based on several investigative reports and press releases by prominent human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, as well as local organizations such as Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (ATFD), there have been numerous violations of human rights targeting LGBTQ++ individuals. These NGOs condemned the use of inhumane practices such as ‘anal testing’— a process of detaining gay men and convicting them based on a physical test administered by a practitioner, given the fact that the penal code addresses ‘sodomy’ which is a term borrowed from religious jargon more broadly, and from French Christian history as a part of the French colonial legacy in Tunisia, more specifically. Doctor and human rights activist Ramy Khouili who works for EuroMed Droits— the largest Euro-Mediterranean in the region, comprising of 80 associations and NGOs— problematized the religious reference in the COLIBE as well,

The report is revolutionary, but it is far from being perfect. Religious reference was very present in the preamble of the report and proposing options about fundamental questions is a little deceiving (for homosexuality, they suggested a decriminalization or simply ending the imprisonment sentence, as to the Inheritance Law, there were three options....) On the contrary, this report has the potential and merits to have addressed an exhaustive summary of the situation of individual freedoms, and the suggestions of related laws can revolutionize the situation of rights and freedoms in Tunisia.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ From interview with Ramy Khouili (September, 2018).

Ramy Ayari, a queer Tunisian activist who was also featured in the documentary film “Upon the Shadow,” addressed his perception of the COLIBE report and commented on the approaches and tools used to produce it:

I’ve been critical of the COLIBE report. Unfortunately, two main things bothered me about the report. One of them is that: they suggested to remove the punishment of imprisonment for LGBTQI individuals, they also suggested to replace the prison sentence with a fine! A fine! I’m absolutely against any penalization for being who you are. It’s not about how much the fine is, even if it’s ten mil-limes [Tunisian currency] it’s about considering us as criminals who are doing something wrong when we’re not. [...] The second thing that bothered me was that young activists and people from the community were not consulted during the process of writing the COLIBE report. I wasn’t even aware that some organizations might have been involved in the COLIBE project.¹³⁵

Chaima Bouhlel, a Tunisian advocate for human rights and a radio show host, has dedicated her post-uprising career to mediate between civil society representatives and decision-makers in social policy. When asked about the COLIBE, Bouhlel addressed an important point about the legal and legislative approaches in post-uprising Tunisia. She argued that drafting technically-adequate laws represents a challenge to implementing them in reality, because of using a religious discourse that is rather hegemonic and does not apply to or recognize several marginalized minorities and individuals,

We’ve been stuck on making excellent laws on paper. We’re stuck on that stage and can’t move past it. Especially when it comes to vulnerable social groups. We can’t rely on vulnerable groups to fight their own fights. It’s not like fighting for or advocating for access to information which would benefit any NGO. For vulnerable groups that are not recognized, how would they check if laws are being implemented or applied. Unfortunately, we’re still using laws as political statements and not for our own progress. Even in the process of COLIBE report, I don’t understand why wait for the president to write this report. Many civil society members waited for a long time before it eventually became a political chip,

¹³⁵ From interview with Ramy Ayari.

while vulnerable groups whose lives could change because of these laws, were not consulted or included. I think it's a real issue that we're facing: laws and legislative approaches have skipped the stage of discussing whatever problem at hand with civil society and with representatives from different social groups. This especially happened with the COLIBE report. I was extremely angry about this report. It did not rely on the principle of a civil state, but rather prioritized religion, and that is a slippery-slope. I wish they didn't use that discourse of religion and using arguments from religion. We're talking about a civil state. But at the same time, we're talking about this state where people have not reconciled with their bodies or their religion. So we can't make progress in a field that we're not even reconciled with. How could you discuss the report after publishing it? And at the Culture City, somewhere where you're preaching to the choir?! Unfortunately, these things happen. There's also this sentiment of nostalgia to Bourguiba's era, which is strange. It's no longer about the Code of Personal Status. This is not post-independence Tunisia, this is Tunisia in the era of Facebook. That's not how you do it. But, but it's important to say that this is better than nothing. I really worry about people who draw a diving line and pushes others to pick a side. We're in a very critical position.

Furthermore, Bouhlel shared some of her most memorable anecdotes during her current experience as a radio host of an all-female morning talk-show. Her storytelling skills and quick wit allow her to experience several revelations about gender roles and stereotypes around women specifically. To spark such a debate, Bouhlel usually ask male-guests questions pertaining to gender roles by inquiring about their reaction or attitude if they were put in the same position as a woman. In other words, she asks her male-guests: "if you were a woman, what would you do?" And reactions say a lot about the person's ideology, mentality and their environment. This is another clip from the interview to reflect a small part of this conversation:

Samti: I find your show unique and novel. You mentioned that the title of the rubric/segment is 'Girls don't miss a thing' — Is it an intentional play on the existing perceptions about gender? Why did you pick that proverb? And what does it say about gender roles and about stereotypes in Tunisia?

Bouhlel: Of course, it is intentional. We need to end this thinking that only men

have access to news or that they're the ones who have the time to read the newspaper and sit in the coffeeshop. We talk about everything and anything, from what we encounter in the market to the coffeeshop and even cars, just to show that no topic is off limit. At first we got attacks at the beginning, because some people think that when they're asked 'if you were a woman' it means 'you're not a man', that's how they see it. So we are looking forward to that moment we have different reactions. We actually end these interviews with asking "if you were a woman, and someone told you that you're nothing but a woman, how would you react?" We're talking definitely about our president, but not just our president. And they all, all of them said that they'd say 'you're nothing but a man!' Even though they had different backgrounds and different profiles. And I thought that was fascinating! It shows you that even for men, the idea that men and women are equal and should be treated the same, comes naturally. Regardless of their background. So these types of questions are very deliberate.

These anecdotes reveal compelling narratives and discourses about public perception of gender masculinity and femininity, and sexuality. Most of Bouhlel's male guests had similar answers to the question 'If you were a woman, what would you do?' Because Tunisia can be considered a patriarchal society — despite the advances in women's rights in comparison to other countries in the region — answers from male-guests who rejected or got offended by the hypothesis of being a woman, reflect this dominant public perception of women as less funny, less entertaining, less witty, less cynical and simply less than what a man represents or can be. Patriarchy as a cultural influence has existed in Tunisia before its independence; as mentioned before, roots of patriarchy and oppression are deeply connected to Tunisia's history, and thus to French colonization, decolonization and all conflicts and wars that took place longer before then.

The men we invite tend to to kind of fall in the trap umm... For example, we asked a guest once: 'if you were a woman and someone started hitting on you in the street, what would you do?' And he talked about how he'd end up doing a lot of math to figure out how to avoid danger and where to walk, and asked about what they were wearing, then he stopped and said 'my God! All these calculations would go in my head to just go out. It's tiring!' And we were all like 'Exactly!

And this happens all the time!’ [...] I must say it was quite difficult even for us, because at first we felt the pressure of having to sound like men, or add a segment about cars. I remember the editorial meetings were very revealing even for us, we discover the stereotypes we have and make about men and women. I’m supposed to be the funny person in the segment {laughs} so I was listening to a lot of satire radio, most of it is about limits that men can cross that women can’t.

Lastly, Tunisia has witnessed a wave of feminist protests and online campaigns demanding equal inheritance between men and women. On August 13, 2018—National Women’s Day in Tunisia— President Essebsi announced a groundbreaking change in inheritance laws that would allow women to have the same amount or quantity of whatever her male relatives inherit. Former inheritance laws were inspired by Sharia law in Islam. The law is yet to be discussed and voted on by members of Parliament; it has already stirred a controversy in Tunisian society. In this context, it is important to consider the President’s position as the discourse of women’s rights has been instrumentalized in state-feminism under the authoritarian regimes of Bourguiba and Ben Ali. The controversy regarding the Inheritance Law paints a representative image of women negotiating power, along gender lines, through their mobilization for more rights both in the streets and on online platforms.

CHAPTER V:

CONCLUSIONS

To better understand the nuances of narratives and discourses around gender and the body in social protest, it is essential to avoid dichotomizing binaries which tend to cause more division than provide a holistic understanding of individual and collective experiences within the Tunisian society and culture. To do this, I examined themes around the role of protesting in the constitutional and legislative processes during Tunisia's democratic transition. I also rely on my analysis of gender and body politics to argue that despite the success of the uprisings and progress made since 2010, there are contradictions between the current institutional framework that governs body and gender rights and freedoms, and realities of women and marginalized social groups.

Based on the discourse analysis of legal documents regulating and managing human rights and individual freedoms in Tunisia and observations from the qualitative interviews with three Tunisian activists as well as my own reflection on my experience as a reporter covering the uprisings, I have discussed gender and body politics through interpreting and contextualizing institutional tools and mechanism regarding human and civil rights in post-authoritarian Tunisia (2010-2018). By deconstructing legal texts, discourses and narratives around gender and the body, I address specific cultural and societal influences on institutional processes and vice-versa, and I explore how gender and the body are addressed, constructed, negotiated, maintained and contested in the revolutionary context of a society in transition from an authoritarian regime to a civil state. In combin-

ing Foucauldian biopower and discipline theories with feminist and anthropological theories about colonization and decolonization on one hand, and political theory of state and society relations and social movements on another hand, I use on a gender lens to ensure an intersectional perspective and analysis that draws from interdisciplinary theory and material within social sciences.

To sum up, my analysis explains how social constructions of gender take place through disciplining the body and using institutional mechanisms to maintain those constructs. In the context of Tunisia's transition, the uprisings brought both a political transformation in the country's regime as well as social change on a micro-level. Within this unique context of building a new civil state, Tunisian citizens and civil society representatives benefit from revolutionary gains and negotiate their bodies, rights and freedoms with the state in this particular space or arena. However, and given the capillary nature of power, in the Foucauldian perspective, protesters play an important role in the state's political processes such as the constitutional process of drafting a new constitution. Popular demands provided citizens with legitimacy in light of toppling the authoritarian regime of Ben Ali. The discourse around legitimacy shifted after 2011 to include the concept of 'counter-revolution' which would bring back former regime figures to power. These interactions between the state and society are unique to Tunisia's transition context; in neighboring countries, the Arab Spring took different turns. Moreover, the ongoing negotiation between state and society is translated in the post-uprising debates and narratives around gender and bodily rights. It seems that the Tunisian civil society has been attempting to address and reform the legal framework to fit new assumptions that come with the

context of a democratic transition towards a civil state through mobilization.

I examined the legibility and illegibility of the body in the process of negotiating corporal rights and freedoms. While the narrative about the self-immolated body of Bouazizi gained attention that defied boundaries and spread to neighboring countries, inspiring similar events in the MENA, other narratives about the illegible and marginalized bodies of women and LGBTQ++ individuals, especially from a lower class or belonging to a minority social group (atheists, non-religious Muslims, single mothers etc). The gender lens allows for a holistic analysis that does not favor hegemonic assumptions, but rather sheds light on the ‘otherness’ of individuals and social groups that do not fit a cultural and societal set of constructed norms and values that are supported by institutional tools. As to mobilization strategies at this specific intersection of several complex themes and questions, I note that while some advocacy efforts relied on instrumentalizing the (Foucauldian view of a) regime of truth and stressed the importance of religious discourse in legal and legislative processes; this is mirrored in the co-existence of both civil and legal jargons as well as religious jargons in Tunisia’s 2014 constitution. However, other advocacy efforts are contesting religious reference in reforming legal frameworks. While some laws took several years to be implemented on a local level such as the law of violence against women, other laws and bills are still stuck in legislative processes and polarized discussions between what is acceptable in a conservative Muslim society, and the actual needs and concerns of citizens in realities. For instance, despite the protests and partial political efforts advocating for equal inheritance in Tunisia, the current parliament has a majority of Islamic politicians of Ennahdha party that will not sponsor a law that is

directly in contradiction with Islamic instructions. Moreover, examining emerging discourses and narratives in a post-uprising context is helpful to understanding the contentions and tensions between the state and society. To avoid binaries and acknowledge the 'other' it is essential to investigate the complexity and nuances of gender and body concepts in a context of transition. Using gender as a tool facilitates this inquiry. Performing gender roles and observing the symbolic and cultural codes in these performances mirror diverse, coexisting narratives around the dynamics of power negotiation and contestation.

Gender and body politics and concepts deserve more attention from scholars, both within and outside of Tunisia. Focusing on specific cultural experiences helps provide nuanced and intersectional views and perspectives about a given context. As the post-revolution period is still unfolding, increasing awareness around individual experiences and their advocacy paints a more nuanced image of the various discourses and narratives within a culture, without falling into dichotomizing binaries of secularism vs Islamism and whether Islam and democracy are compatible.

APPENDIX A

Questions for Qualitative, Semi-Structured and In-Depth Interviews

1. Ramy Khouili: (Questions and answers via Email/ Translated from French)

- 1- How would you introduce yourself, as a member of civil society? Can you tell me about your experience as an activist since 2010/2011? (Where did you work? What causes interest you? etc)
- 2- In terms of human rights, individual and collective liberties and freedoms, how well is Tunisia doing since the revolution? Have the new laws affected reality? How so?
- 3- I am focusing on marginalized social groups in Tunisia including LGBTQI++ community, women, and poorer/lower-class individuals. Do you think the situation of marginalized social groups in Tunisia has improved since the revolution? If yes how so, if no why not?
- 4- What do you think of the COLIBE report? Do you support it or are you critical of it? What are your reasons either way?
- 5- Is there a gap between the laws put in place (and even the new Constitution) and their implementations on the ground? What should happen to eliminate that gap?
- 6- In my theoretical section, I am using Foucault's biopower/body politics to explain the relations between the state and society and how body policing became more visible since the revolution.
- 7- I have noticed many recent online campaigns against sexual harassment in the public space. How efficient do you think such campaigns are? Are they the right strategies to use in mobilization?
- 8- In your opinion, how did social media help activists and citizens in general, react/respond to state policies/decisions etc?
- 9- What inspires you most to mobilize and be an activist? How did you start?
- 11- In case I missed to ask you about anything above, please feel free to add any comments or observations about the topic that you'd like to share.

2. Ramy Ayari: Interview via Skype:

- 1- How long have you been an activist for? How did you start?
- 2- What have you been participating in recently in terms of human rights advocacy?
- 3- As I explained in previous communications, I am focusing on gender and body politics and looking at institutional frameworks. What do you think about Tunisia's 2014 Constitution? How efficient do you think it is?
- 4- I have read and seen your commentary about the COLIBE report on social media. What is your criticism about? Do you think it is an efficient report?
- 5- You were recently a part of the documentary film "Upon the Shadow". How was that experience for you and why is it important?

- 6- How close are the experiences and scenes we see in the film to your actual daily struggle as a human rights activist?
- 7- What else can you share about the film and maybe the behind-the-scenes?
- 8- What should civil society focus on and address in terms of advocating for human rights and freedoms, especially when it comes to the LGBTQ++ community in Tunisia which is not recognized by society?

- 9- How is the situation different post-uprising from what it used to be like under Ben Ali's rule? 10- What have been the most significant challenges and lessons learned from your activism? 11- Who inspires you and keeps you motivated to do more activism?
- 12- How is your career different now? How do you think your work changed you or affected you?

- 13- What is the dearest event or project you work on and why do you like it?
- 14- What do you think about the reactions and responses to the new legal framework? What about the laws in place? What do you hope could change?
- 15- Why are the uprisings important for your cause?
- 16- What are your hopes and aspirations for the future?

3. Interview with Chaima Bouhlel: over Skype:

- 1- What have been your recent projects about? You have worked for the national radio before right?
- 2- What is your new show about? Why is it important to you?
- 3- How did you start your career and what inspires you to do what you do?

- 4- What do you think of the COLIBE report and of the 2014 Constitution?
- 5- You worked for Al-Bawsala before, which monitors legislative activities of the parliament and before it, the drafting process by the National Constituent Assembly. What are your most memorable stories or lessons learned from that experience?
- 5- You invite public figures, politicians and activists and even artists on your radio morning show. Have you had any funny anecdotes or stories pertaining to activism, women's rights or the political situation during this transition?
- 6- One of the segments of the show discuss gender, gender roles and assumptions in society. How do you deal with guests' reactions? Can you also share the editorial process of what questions to ask and what to say? Are there any controversial topics that were addressed on your show?
- 7- Why is it important to speak for people who cannot defend themselves? Why is it important to focus on marginalized individuals and vulnerable groups?
- 8- Is the situation of human rights and freedoms different since the uprisings? What about before the uprisings? How is it different and why?
- 9- What are the main challenges you go through as an activist and as a Tunisian woman?
- 10- Who inspires you to do what you do?
- 11- Have you experienced any epiphanies or revelations during your work as a radio host who addresses social topics in a daily morning show?
- 12- What are your aspirations and hopes for the future?

APPENDIX B

Tunisian legal texts are usually available in both Arabic and French. While the Penal Code is available on the website of the Tunisian ministry of justice (http://www.e-justice.tn/fileadmin/fichiers_site_francais/codes_juridiques/Code_penal_12_07_2010_fr.pdf) the 2014 Constitution is available online (https://majles-marsad.tn/uploads/documents/Constitution_Tunisienne_VF_Traduction_Non_Officielle_Al_Bawsala.pdf).

Marsad is a project by local Tunisian non-governmental organization Al-Bawsala (Arabic for compass) which follows and monitors constitutional, parliamentary and legislative processes, sessions and votes.

Because of the lack/absence of available Tunisian legal texts, I translated the articles to English myself. In this section of the appendix, I include first the original texts then they are followed by their respective translations in English.

Article 1: CHAPITRE I : DES PRINCIPES GENERAUX

La Tunisie est un État libre, indépendant et souverain, l'Islam est sa religion, l'arabe sa langue et la République son régime.

Il n'est pas permis d'amender cet article.

Article 1: CHAPTER I: General Principles

Tunisia is a free, independent and sovereign State, Islam is its religion, Arabic is its language and the Republic is its regime.

It is not permitted to amend this article.

Article 6

L'État est gardien de la religion. Il garantit la liberté de croyance, de conscience et le libre exercice des cultes ; il est le garant de la neutralité des mosquées et lieux de culte par rapport à toute instrumentalisation partisane.

L'Etat s'engage à diffuser les valeurs de modération et de tolérance, à protéger les sacrés et à interdire d'y porter atteinte, comme il s'engage à interdire les campagnes d'accusation d'apostasie et l'incitation à la haine et à la violence. Il s'engage également à s'y opposer.

Article 6

The State is guardian of the religion. It guarantees freedom of belief, conscience and freedom of worship; it guarantees the neutrality of mosques and places of worship regarding political instrumentalization.

Appendix 2 3

The State commits to spreading values of moderation and tolerance, to protecting the sacred and prohibiting any offense against it, as well as committing to prohibiting apostasy campaigns and inciting hate and violence.

Article 7

La famille est la cellule essentielle de la société et l'Etat doit en assurer la protection.

Article 7

The family is the essential cell of society and the State must ensure its protection.

Article 8

La jeunesse est une force vive dans la construction de la nation.

L'Etat veille à assurer aux jeunes les conditions nécessaires au développement de leurs capacités, de leur prise des responsabilités et à élargir et généraliser leur participation à l'essor social, économique, culturel et politique.

Article 8

Youth is a lively force in the construction of the nation. The State ensures the necessary conditions for youth to develop their capacities and responsibilities, and to broaden and generalize their participation in social, economic, cultural and political development.

Article 12

L'Etat a pour objectif de réaliser la justice sociale, le développement durable, l'équilibre entre les régions et une exploitation rationnelle des richesses nationales en se référant aux indicateurs de développement et en se basant sur le principe de discrimination positive; l'Etat œuvre également à la bonne exploitation des richesses nationales.

Article 12

The State aims at achieving social justice, sustainable development, balance between the regions and a rational exploitation of national resources, while referring to development indicators and based on the principle of positive discrimination; the State equally works on good governance of national wealth.

CHAPITRE II : DES DROITS ET LIBERTES

Article 21

Les citoyens et les citoyennes, sont égaux en droits et devoirs. Ils sont égaux devant la loi sans discrimination aucune.

L'État garantit aux citoyens les libertés et les droits individuels et collectifs. Il leur assure les conditions d'une vie décente.

Chapter II: Of Rights and Liberties

Article 21

Male and female citizens are equal in rights and duties. They are equal in front of the law without any discrimination.

The State guarantees to citizens individual and collective freedoms and rights. It ensures for them the conditions of decent life.

Article 23

L'État protège la dignité de la personne et son intégrité physique, et interdit la torture morale et physique. Le crime de torture est imprescriptible.

Article 23

The State protects the dignity of the person and his physical integrity, and prohibits moral and physical torture. The crime of torture is imprescriptible.

Article 24

L'État protège la vie privée et l'inviolabilité du domicile et la confidentialité des correspondances, des communications et des données personnelles.

Tout citoyen a le droit de choisir son lieu de résidence, de circuler librement à l'intérieur du pays ainsi que le droit de le quitter.

Article 24

The State protects a private life and the sanctity of home and confidentiality of correspondances, communications and personal data.

Every citizen has the right to choose the location of their residence, to circulate freely in the interior of the country as well as the right to leave it.

Article 30

Tout détenu a droit à un traitement humain qui préserve sa dignité. Lors de l'exécution des peines privatives de liberté, l'État doit considérer l'intérêt de la famille et veiller à la réhabilitation du détenu et à sa réinsertion dans la société.

Article 30

Every detainee has the right to humane treatment that preserves his dignity. Upon executing freedom-limiting sentences, the State must take into consideration the interests of the detainee's family and must work on rehabilitating the detainee and reintegrating him society.

Article 34

Les droits d'élection, de vote et de se porter candidat sont garantis, conformément aux dispositions de la loi. L'Etat veille à garantir la représentativité des femmes dans les as-

semblées élues.

Article 34

The rights to election, voting and candidature nomination are guaranteed, while conforming with law provisions. The State guarantees the representation of women in elected assemblies.

Article 37

La liberté de rassemblement et de manifestations pacifiques est garantie.

Article 37

Freedom of assembly and of pacific demonstrations is guaranteed.

Article 46

The State commits to protecting the achievements in rights of women, supports them and works on improving them.

The State guarantees the equality of chances between a woman and a man to undertake different responsibilities and in all domains.

The State works on achieving (gender) parity between the woman and the man in elected councils.

The State takes the necessary measures to eradicate violence against women.

Article 46

L'Etat s'engage à protéger les droits acquis de la femme, les soutient et œuvre à les améliorer.

L'État garantit l'égalité des chances entre la femme et l'homme pour assumer les différentes responsabilités et dans tous les domaines.

L'Etat œuvre à réaliser la parité entre la femme et l'homme dans les conseils élus.

L'État prend les mesures nécessaires afin d'éradiquer la violence contre la femme.

Article 49

La loi fixe les modalités relatives aux droits et aux libertés qui sont garantis dans cette

Constitution ainsi que les conditions de leur exercice sans porter atteinte à leur essence. Ces moyens de contrôle ne sont mis en place que par la nécessité que demande un État civil démocratique et pour protéger les droits des tiers ou pour des raisons de sécurité publique, de défense nationale, de santé publique ou de morale publique et avec le respect de la proportionnalité et de la nécessité de ces contrôles. Les instances judiciaires veillent à la protection des droits et des libertés de toute violation.

Article 49

The law fixes relative modalities to rights and freedoms which are guaranteed in this Constitution as well as the conditions of their practice without offending its essence. These means of control are only used in case the nature of a civil democratic State deems it necessary, and to protect third-right parties or for public security reasons, national defense reasons, public health or public morality [...] Judiciary boards works on the protection of rights and freedoms from any violation.

It is not possible for an amendment to touch the achievements in human rights and guaranteed freedoms in this constitution.

Penal Code: Article 230 in Chapter II: Of Indecency in Public

Sodomy, if not a part of the previously mentioned articles, is punished with imprisonment up to three years.

Penal Code: Article 230

Article 230 in Chapter II about DE L'ATTENTAT À LA PUDEUR

La sodomie, si elle ne rentre dans aucun des cas prévus aux articles précédents, est punie de l'emprisonnement pendant trois ans.

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