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Maria Småberg

# Democratic Transition and The Arab Spring

A comparative study on gendered agency and women's  
empowerment



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# ABSTRACT

After the Arab spring, states in the MENA-region that were enrolled in the popular uprisings are now entering different settings. Some have been more successful, and reaching all the way to democratic consolidation. Others like Egypt are currently experiencing severe backlashes. In this post revolution context, time is starting to run out for an escape out of the transitional maze. Tunisia is not the only country that have managed to stabilize their post revolution setting, but also the only country that can be said to have been promoting gendered agency and creating spaces for women's empowerment during its transition. This study seeks explanation to the question if gender prospects in transitional justice initiatives are crucial in order to be successful in today's democratizations. The goal is to unveil power relations through an intersectional view on gendered structures. Reaching over and beyond earlier approaches, this paper discovers how women's agency can help democratic consolidation. It does so by comparing two recent cases of transitions. The conclusion is reached that Tunisia has created space for gender justice to get intertwined with its democratic transition process, while Egypt rather falls back on authoritarian principles than letting female emancipation through its patriarchal doors.

*Key words:* the Arab spring, democratic transition, transitional justice, gender, agency, women's empowerment, Tunisia, Egypt

# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	The Arab spring .....	2
<b>2</b>	<b>RESEARCH PROBLEM.....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	Research question .....	3
<b>3</b>	<b>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1	Previous research .....	4
3.2	Gendered agency in transitional justice .....	5
3.3	Democratization and social movements .....	6
3.4	Defining the variables .....	7
<b>4</b>	<b>RESEARCH DESIGN.....</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1	Operationalization.....	9
4.2	Analytical tools .....	9
4.3	Sources and demarcations.....	10
<b>5</b>	<b>CASES.....</b>	<b>11</b>
5.1	Tunisia's transition .....	11
5.1.1	Initial phase.....	11
5.1.2	Emerging phase.....	13
5.1.3	Advance phase .....	14
5.1.4	Final phase .....	15
5.2	Egypt's transition.....	16
5.2.1	Initial phase.....	16
5.2.2	Emerging phase.....	18
5.2.3	Advance phase .....	18
5.2.4	Final phase .....	19
<b>6</b>	<b>RESULTS .....</b>	<b>21</b>
6.1	Tunisia .....	21
6.2	Egypt.....	22
6.3	Conclusions.....	22
<b>7</b>	<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>24</b>

# 1 INTRODUCTION

How do you seal the deal with democracy? No matter how the concept of democracy is defined, the road to democratic consolidation after a revolution or a regime-change is well known for being a problematic and turbulent process. The leap forward is the first step, but when in transition; “nothing can be taken for granted until democratic principles are widely supported and entrenched in daily political life” (Newton & Van Deth, 2010, p. 58). The change of moving towards democracy is referred to as a democratic transition process (dtp). Seen from a perspective of time, the dtp is a crucial period when it comes to form conditions for its own consolidation and societal inclusion; not least women’s political inclusion (Paxton, 2009, p. 154). Current research acknowledges that the various contexts and geographical differences, makes it hard to create a generalized schedule for post-revolution states to follow and for researchers to analyze them (Newton & Van Deth, 2010, p. 54, 55). Saying that, there are still some ‘patterns’, which seem to be present in both failed and successful recent transitions (p. 57). *Transitional justice* initiatives are today commonly seen as being of high importance for example. It can be defined as:

The set of judicial and non-judicial measures that have been implemented by different countries in order to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses. These measures include criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programs, and *various kinds of institutional reforms* [Emphasis added] (ICTJ, 2015a).

One aspect of the quotes “various kinds of institutional reforms” that this study tackles is the promotion of *gender prospects* in transitional justice. This is challenging old theoretical assumptions on what makes democratic transitions stable or not (see e.g. Rossi & della Porta, 2009; Björkdahl & Selimovic 2013; and 2015). Social movements and democratization from below, like the dtp’s sprung out of the Arabian spring, cannot be explained entirely by old mainstream theories such as ‘top-down’ economic and social perspectives. Therefore, cases from the Arab revolutions and dtp’s in the MENA-region<sup>1</sup>, stresses the importance on research handling new approaches and looking at new and different angles. This study has a post-structuralist and comparative perspective. The goal is to provide an analysis on democratic transitions that reaches over and beyond the top-down, and bottom-up perspectives.

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1 Middle-Eastern and Northern Africa region: MENA consists of 22 countries, these are; Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (UCDP, 2011a, p. 3).

To stress more on the relevance with broadening the current explanatory factors regarding Tunisia and Egypt; recent reports present arguments that political instability in the MENA-region, will not only have global long-term effects but reaching everyone in the EU-system as well (Bergenwall and Eriksson, 2014, p. 7). I argue that feminist theory like gendered agency, has not been given enough space in this debate, and has been overshadowed in the overall ‘social movement’- discourse used when examining these two cases. Depending on the turns the states in the MENA-region make at transitional crossroads, women’s role in these new ‘democracies’ will be stipulated. With the help from combining the democratization- and feminist literature with an intersectional eye on women’s empowerment, this paper is a contribution in explaining the transitional-puzzle by looking at gendered agency through stages and phases of democratic transition.

## 1.1 The Arab spring

The MENA-region has effectively withstood the powerful waves of democratization that globally stroke the world from the 1970’s and into 2002 (Markoff & White, 2009, p. 55-73). Democracy actually saw a decline among these states during this period (UCDP, 2011a, p. 1). In the first half of 2011 however, large and popular uprisings took place from where we today can see a range of unequal outcomes. The protests and their escalation are known for being collectively referred to as “The Arab spring”. Among the most mobilized protests were countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Yemen. Change, came out sufficiently as a result in the states of Tunisia and Egypt, while the other cases are locked up in intrastate and soon to be- intractable conflicts. Syria is an empirical example of this. Another example is Libya, who has inherited a case post the Arab spring where they have been unable to make any democratic progress at all. Answers to why the ‘Arab awakening’ took place have reached many different conclusions. Discussions on ‘triggering factors’ have suggested aspects such as “unemployment, corruption, police brutality and poverty” (ibid). The beginning of this regional movement is however uncontested. It started with a personal catastrophe when the grocery vendor Mohammed Bouazizi, a 26 year old Tunisian got his cart confiscated by the police. He was physically abused in public by a police officer, and when he tried to get his cart back he was ignored by the municipal office (UCDP, 2011a, p. 2) Desperate after not getting help from the corrupted authorities, he set himself on fire and got so badly injured that he died a few days later (p. 2-3). This is said to be the flash point for the popular uprising in Tunisia, *the jasmine revolution* – which quickly spilled over to Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and later on to Syria and Yemen (p. 3). Although the Arab spring quickly reached Egypt after the uprising in Tunisia, their outcomes varies highly. It is an empirical puzzle.

## 2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The greatest danger in a dtp is the backsliding to authoritarian rule and political oppression (Tucker, 2012, p. 8). A failed transitional process can escalate critical tensions and promote renewed- or intractable conflicts. Empirical examples like Libya, have taught us that a powerful backslide usually also requires external actors to intervene. If we find ways to explain how to make democratic transitions smoother, quicker and more societal inclusive– these critical processes in the beginning might help the long-term phase of democratic consolidation. The purpose of this Bachelor thesis is therefore to explore the bigger phenomenon, why some post-revolution states make the transition to democracy better than others.

### 2.1 Research question

This paper also examines and takes on statements saying that “Tunisia is a light in the region” and “Egypt is backsliding in the transitional circle” (Bergenwall & Eriksson, 2014, p. 7). Together with Israel, Tunisia is also the only country in the MENA-region that ranks as fully ”free” by Freedomhouse<sup>2</sup>. What can explain that a state in a region without any democratic neighbors gets these statements and rankings? Together with previous literature on democratization and gender theory, I aim to answer the research-question: *Why did the democratic transition process become strong in Tunisia, and weak in Egypt?*

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2 The ”Freedomhouse ranking” is an index produced by the independent research institute *Freedomhouse* [freedomhouse.org/regions/middle-east-and-north-africa#.VUnMO9Ptmko] (accessed 15/05/06).

# 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

When an explaining ambition is claimed, the theoretical framework needs to be created by theories of explaining character (Teorell & Svensson, 2007, p. 44). I begin this chapter by giving a summary of the previous research done in explaining democratic transitions. After that I present the theories I have used to identify this study's variables.

## 3.1 Previous research

In the past, explaining why some states manage to reach democratic consolidation or not has overruling been done by looking at social and economic aspects (Newton & Van Deth, 2010, p. 64). These 'top-down' perspectives have been claimed in earlier research to be the most necessary prerequisite for states in order to fulfill the transition (ibid). Since democratic transitions historically started to vary in character and geography, the framework with modernization theory were later on a more popular approach (Rossi & della Porta, 2009, p. 173). Modernization theory also recommended economic support in order to reach democratization, such as Marshall plans (ibid). The main problem with the early research on democratic consolidation was however that "the theory relies heavily on European experience and is too broad and general to provide us with exact explanations for democratization (Newton & Van Deth, 2010, p. 64).

Recently, a lot of contemporary research has been made that shows a connection with gender prospects in transitional justice, and its effects on democratic transitions (see e.g. Ní Aoláin, 2012; and Valji et al, 2012). Catherine O'Rourke says in her research that this is a contested but valid claim that feminist researcher makes. A gendered approach to transitional justice is of necessity in today's complex transitions (2014). Annika Björkdahl and Johanna Mannergren Selimovic's research on the subject takes its background in the limited knowledge we have when it comes to the multifaceted ways gender and women effects how we do justice, and consolidating a democratic peace. By what they call "advancing the agenda" through conceptual dimensions for analysis, they reach a conclusion that "agency and spaces for agency are ignored by mainstream transitional justice" (p. 177). The three dimensions *transformative agency*, *critical agency*, and *creative agency*, are used in their research to map the type of agency, and the gendered dynamics of a peacebuilding setting (p. 169). The aim is as they say, to ultimately "unveil relations between gender, power and inequality (p. 169). Gender as a concept is also claimed by them to also construct and distribute agency (ibid). I have later in this study re-shaped their conceptual framework, and

used their three dimensions in combination with an aspect of women's mobilization in my schedule for analysis.

## 3.2 Gendered agency in transitional justice

Transitional justice is “a response to systematic or widespread violations of human rights. It seeks recognition for victims and promotion of possibilities for peace, reconciliation and *democracy* [Emphasis added]” (ICTJ, 2009a, p. 1). The background and emergence of transitional justice was a response in the late 1980's and early 1990's, when political change in Latin America and Eastern Europe was on the rise (ibid). Today, transitional justice approaches to post-conflict or post-revolution settings are widely seen as a necessity in order to move to consolidation of democracy. It is therefore a holistic approach including a variety of initiatives like gender justice.

It is not only though about making “justice”, it also treats and includes institutions that create incentives to promote gender equality, or other institutions that generally helps the dtp forward. That is how this study uses the transitional justice perspective, by looking at gendered agency in two cases of recent democratic transitions. What is agency? There is a certain need to discuss the definition of “agency” and “agents” in it self, since it is sometimes in the social sciences confused to have the same meaning as an “actor” and “actions”. The earlier mentioned research by Björkdahl & Selimovic (2015), tackled this by deconstructing the concept of *agency* in a clear and adequate manner. Three aspects are important. First of all, “agency has to do with human capacity to act” (p. 170). Which interprets as in order to *promote agency*, you need to have the ability to *perform actions*. Actions are therefore in themselves not agency, but needs to be analyzed whether they can be categorized as such. Secondly, as Björkdahl & Selimovic emphasizes: “The defining component of agency is the ‘achievement of change’ (Shepherd, 2011: 506)” (ibid). Thirdly, women's agency is constantly re-invented and re-created (p. 170). This means that in a larger process, such as transitional justice-institutions or dtp's, you need to have different indicators for the type of agency that is promoted or present during that time and space. That is why the agency I look at in my initial phase of analysis is not the same agency I discuss in my final phase. Change or the promotion for change, which agency can be summarized to be all about, is different according to when, how and why it is needed. Just like Björkdahl and Selimovic conclude in their definition, “agency is not exercised in a vacuum” (p. 170). How can agency claim to be gendered? For this paper the definition of gendered agency can be concluded to be about women's empowerment. My definition of gendered agency has therefore a slightly different focus than previous research that looks more at post-conflict rather than post-revolution contexts (e.g. Björkdahl & Selimovic, 2013).



Sarah Mosedale makes this link with looking at gendered agency in this manner. Her theory on women's empowerment guides "how power relations might be described and evaluated in a particular context" (2005, p. 243). In order to track changes like gendered agency she also presents the framework as looking at not only "possibilities" but "actual actions taken" (Mosedale, 2005, p. 255). If gendered agency should be women's empowerment, a definition of that concept is also needed. Mosedale says it is about "having access to and control over the means to make a living on a sustainable and long term basis, and receiving the material benefits of this access and control" (p. 247). What I find interesting and where she does conclude with previous research regarding how agency can distribute gender structures by itself; "women can act to challenge gender roles as part of any collective struggle they are involved in" (Mosedale, 2005, p. 252). The theory also mentions how gendered agency is a continuum that requires continuous action and attention. It is a long-term process rather than short-term goal (p. 245). If change in normative values is to take place, like women's societal and political inclusion, it must come from *inside* a society (Mosedale, 2005, p. 246). Mosedale's perspective and interpretation on *power* here can be theoretical linked and concluded to have a meta-theoretical linkage to what's called an intersectional view of power-relations like gendered structures (p. 249-252). Intersectionality motivates how gender has a constitutive role for power relations. It is used in order to make power-relations in the post-colonial world more understandable (de los Reyes & Mulinari, 2005, p. 8). Theories with intersectional understandings, is an instrument in order to trace the intersection of several factors that in different contexts reproduce current power structures, or might open up for agency to change them (p. 23, 24).

To conclude, power should be treated as a complex, dynamic and intersected concept (p. 23). This post-structuralist approach is needed in order to open up to identify for example why actors in Egypt won't allow gendered agency to take place. This is where top-down and bottom-up perspectives won't reach in. Intersectionality is not a theory in it self, but needs to be combined with other theories in order to shape clues for reflections on how power is distributed in important processes such as a dtp (p. 25). I have included it in order to look both horizontal and vertical gaps in the dtp's.

### 3.3 Democratization and social movements

Tunisia and Egypt can be argued as examples on what is called 'democratization from below' (Rossi & della Porta, 2009, p. 177). Democratization processes starting from the Arab spring are results from a long and withstanding social mobilization, which "needs an acceleration of certain dynamics in order to occur" (ibid). When looking at these cases through different phases, it also needs some theoretical understanding on what it is we try to explain. Establishing that four important *stages* can be said to take place within a democratization that has been brought up by a social movement (p. 177-183). The stages are theoretical concepts

used in order to know what to put an elucidative emphasis on. The first stage is *resistance*, which is mobilization against the non-democratic regime. The second is *liberalization* and the upsurge of mobilization, where social movement theory suggests looking at who promotes the expansion of the mobilization towards transition, and who undermines it (p. 179). The third is the stage of *transition* to procedural democracy. This “the elimination of the reserved powers that limit democracy” (ibid). The fourth stage is *consolidation*, when the movement demands a substantive and inclusive democratic rule. There is also a fifth stage of *expansion* in the theory but this is not included in my phases for analysis. This is because the fifth stage is mostly looking at international organizations and how they work to campaign for democratization. I argue that the first four stages need specific focus before looking at that.

### 3.4 Defining the variables

The independent variable in this study is said to be gendered agency that is part of the policy-perspective transitional justice. I claim it has had effect on my dependent variable, democratic transition that has started from below. Gendered agency is labeled in this study like it is in previous research – with the conceptual dimensions: *transformative*, *critical* and *creative agency* (Björkdahl & Selimovic, 2015, p. 166). I have myself added a dimension of *women’s’ mobilization* as coming before the three different types of agency. This is done since resistance is part of the starting phase’s theoretical focus. To these four types of gendered agency, I have included different theoretical power aspects to them. The type of power I define as gendered agency is women’s empowerment (Mosedale, 2005). Four models of power can be identified within the concept of empowerment according: *Power over*, *power within*, *power to* and *power with* (p. 250). *Power over* is defined as a zero-sum game; to give power is to loose it yourself. *Power within* means that there is a belief that agency can be pursued; basically self-confidence that change is possible. *Power to* is “power which increases the boundaries of what is achievable for one person without *necessarily* tightening the boundaries of what is achievable for another party” (ibid). *Power with* is the power of collective action in critical periods like transitional phases. It is about “creating opportunities for women to spend time with other women reflecting on their situation recognizing the strengths they do posses and devising strategies to achieve positive change “(ibid).

## 4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The comparative approach does exactly what it says; by comparing a few cases, an explanation to the research question is hoped to be given (Teorell & Svensson, 2007, p. 236). The comparative framework with few cases for analysis needs to fulfill certain criteria (p. 222). The cases need to be linked to a bigger population of cases, and there needs to be both an academic as well as an empirical relevance to comparing cases (ibid), this has been motivated throughout the study's earlier chapters. If an explaining ambition is claimed, the comparison also needs to show what is called "contra factual difference" (p. 239-243). To be able to label a connection as causal, the cause must have taken place *before* the outcome in time (p. 245). For a comparative analysis to track what is believed to be the causal-mechanism, the comparative framework needs to be combined with what is called *process tracing* (p. 247). Quintessentially, it means that instead of looking at "several tables" you conduct a "within-cases" analysis (p. 248). Process tracing can therefore be concluded to be done through descriptions, divided into sections, so that details on a lower level than where the independent variable acts can be identified and included in the analyze (p. 249). It is a constant 'making the connection' through observations of what the researcher finds as indicators (p. 250).

Why compare Tunisia and Egypt? There are two well-known approaches to strategic case selection. These are born out of John Stuart Mill's philosophy and methods called *method of difference* and *method of agreement* (Teorell & Svensson, 2007, p. 225-230). I have used the method of difference. In order for the comparison to explain varied outcomes, the two cases need to be selected towards the background that they share similar and comparable variables, except for the  $x$  and  $y$  variable (p. 226). I could for example have decided to compare Tunisia and Libya instead, but I don't find the criteria "to match all other variables except  $x$  and  $y$ " to be present in Libya's case. Tunisia and Egypt are post-colonial states; their democratization and social mobilization for democracy are also both post-revolution results from the Arab spring. I argue that the processes are linked closely in time and geography. I also argue that the options are very similar for these two states, which motivates my purpose, research question and case selection. Like any other method, there are pro's and con's that one needs to be mindful about. When conducting a cross-national study, some might claim "every country in the world is unique so comparisons are impossible" (Newton & Van Deth, 2010, p. 5). But this depends on what you want to compare (p. 8). I compare a concept that problematizes gender prospects in transitional justice. I see women's empowerment as a universal right that should be present in every definition of democracy, and therefore I find that a comparative approach is highly valid. The critic on using process tracing to explain outcomes is the

possibility and consequence of an existing “in-between” variable. This variable in case it exists, acts and effects between the independent and dependent variable (p. 261). It makes a fake connection to what the theory and analysis tries to explain. Process tracing *alone* within a chosen case doesn’t give any scientific evidence for the contra-factual (ibid). This is however actually solved by comparing two cases according to Teorell & Svensson (2007, p. 261). It is like I said up to the student or researcher to make this linkage by careful descriptions. The goal in this study is not to show on an absolute causality. The aim is to reach a conclusion to prove that there might be a stable linkage to what effects democratic consolidation.

## 4.1 Operationalization

In order to understand this study’s independent variable: gendered agency, a deconstruction was needed. I have in chapter 3 done this when “defining the variables”. The dependent variable varies accordingly to the methodological criteria, and the variations are: *failed* transition to democracy vs. *successful* transition to democracy. In order to do the process tracing that my comparative framework requires, I have used Newton & Van Deth’s recommendation on how to analyze democratic change (2010, p. 53-68). A dtp can be divided into sub-processes labeled as phases (p. 57-59). I have used this division of phases as analytical tools together with my theoretical framework. The phases are named *initial*, *emerging*, *advance* and *phase of consolidation* (ibid). Included in the phases, my theoretical categories with “stages” from social movement theory will be found. My schedule for analysis shows the four types of gendered agency and how it includes four different power aspects. Below I present my schedule for analysis.

## 4.2 Analytical tools

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Initial phase</b>	<b>Emerging phase</b>	<b>Advance phase</b>	<b>Final phase</b>
<b>DV</b>	Resistance	Liberalization	Transition	Consolidation
<b>IDV</b>	Women's mobilization <i>Power over</i>	Transformative agency <i>Power within</i>	Critical agency <i>Power to</i>	Creative agency <i>Power with</i>

DV= Dependent variabel (Democratic transition process)

IDV= Independent variabel (Gendered agency)

Since power and gender is said to be intersectional, I have created these divisions with stages and phases as guidelines for comparison, and not as an absolute doctrine. From an empirically aspect, different types of agency might happen before or after one another, or even at the same time. I do however argue that the types of agency are carefully matched with the stages since they have in earlier research shown to move transitional justice processes forward in that order (e.g. Björkdahl & Selimovic, 2013). The most important is that *some type* of gendered agency happens before consolidation, like I said in my methodological discussion.

### 4.3 Sources and demarcations

The sources used for material are NGO reports like the one from *FOI*, as well as writings from various ones like *International Crisis Group* and *Freedom House*. I also use previous research on women and the Arab spring. A few articles from the news agency *Al Jazeera* are cited, but articles analyzed are overweighing of academic character. Regarding demarcations I am not looking at external interventions for e.g. economic aid. Neither do I look deeply at the countries current interstate relations to old colonial rules, or USA and Russia for example. These can also prove to affect movements who support or undermine a turn towards democracy. The effects of natural resources are also excluded. I have earlier argued why economic, or other kind of structural approaches would most likely prove to be insufficient in explaining these two cases' different outcomes.

## 5 CASES

This chapter is where I apply my analytical tools on my empirical material. I begin by analyzing and presenting Tunisia's dtp, systematically followed by Egypt's. Before discussing each country's phases, I give some contextual background.

### 5.1 Tunisia's transition

Tunisia can be concluded to have a history of uprisings against undemocratic regimes, but has been unlucky until now with the outcomes that have followed (UCDP, 2015a). In terms of a gendered perspective, there are highly gendered differences between male and female citizens as with every society in the Arab world (Ben Salem, 2010, p. 1). Education has though been highly inclusive for both men and women. It is generally regarded as important that also the daughter in a family receives this (ibid). This "momentum" was driven forward after the revolution, and is said to have been a positive force for social change. Tunisia has also a better history of presenting men and women as "equal before the law" (p. 4). In 2010, just a year before the democratization started, 27 percent of the judges and 31 percent of the lawyers were women for example (ibid). Even though gender-related discrimination certainly exists, it is an overall perception that "a woman's testimony carries the same weight as a man's before the court" (p. 4). It can be argued that before the initial phase was entered, Tunisia had already established a good foundation for gendered agency to take place.

#### 5.1.1 Initial phase

The initial phase is the about the stage of resistance. On January 5 2011, Mohamed Bouazizi the 26 year old fruit salesman dies from the self-inflicted burns he got when he set himself on fire (Al Jazeera, 2011a). Mobilization and uprisings had already been reported before his time of death. One powerful event was when the Tunisian Bar Association, had ordered a strike to be held on January 6 in protest against the regime (ibid). The resistance can be summarized to have been vast, fast and widespread all over Tunisia. Online-activism and social media forums like Facebook and Twitter has been said in almost every writing about the initial phase help do this, giving the young branch of protesters the nickname 'The Facebook generation'. According to Al Jazeera it also seems that the uprising was highly inclusive reaching all the way down from grass-root level, up to the higher elite such as the country's judicial organs. In the strike that

was held on January 6 there were 8,000 lawyers and judges marching for a political change, which is 95 per cent of the total legal force in the country (ibid). In regards of women's social mobilization this was also largely done online: "Beyond their presence on traditional media, feminist movements have organised themselves online so as to make themselves heard and to be able to mobilize public opinion" (Zlitni & Touati, 2012, p. 46). It can be concluded that Facebook was a forum that wasn't censored by the government, and therefore this was a highly popular forum for women to mobilize their resistance. Right after Ben Ali's regime fell, women had a chance to reflect online on what may come. A post in a popular feminist democracy group reads:

The goal is to fight for the preservation of our status in civil society, to exchange ideas and information that can help understand how the new democracy works, and to stay united to defend our interests against some movements that can be harmful to our rights. Actions may follow. (Quoted in: Zlitni & Touati, 2012, p. 54)

This shows that gendered agency in the initial phase was highly present and had large influence over protesters and demonstrators. It also shows that these were not only discussions but like the female participant said "action may follow". The quote above was posted in a Facebook group with over 8,000 active members at the time, both men and women (ibid). Women could organize themselves and reaching past the strong patriarchal *power over* democratic emancipation and mobilization. Zlitni & Touati strengthen my analysis by saying: "Facebook is a tool that has brought about an upheaval in the various forms of military and the militant's relationship to organized structures" (p. 46). There was also a very large importance to bloggers here. Lina Ben Mhenni made a big contribution in breaking the lead for gendered agency in this phase. Her blog 'A Tunisian Girl' was banned by the regime. She risked her own life when covering state atrocities in the uprisings (Pedersen & Salib, 2013, p. 257). Later she was awarded several awards and a nomination to the Nobel Peace Prize for her contribution to women's empowerment and journalistic coverage in Tunis (Pedersen & Salib, 2013). It is however important to not reduce this female contribution to a 'digital revolution':

During the whole process that lead to President Ben Ali's fall on January 14th 2011, women participated in all the stages of the Tunisian revolution. They were very active in the unions, they were there during marches and demonstrations, and their activism was relentless on the Internet. (Zlitni & Touati, 2012, p. 51)

The most important point that the material shows in this phase is that women's social mobilization helped the democratization forward, and at the same time promoting gendered agency. It was done through various social networks and the establishment of a further ground for gender equality. I argue that agents managed to start a break down of the intersectional power over women's role in society and democracy, by mobilizing and acting in new ways at a very formative moment in space and time. Like Mosedale's theory on empowerment says: Women can act for gendered change in every movement they are in, and at times do so in

collaboration with men to “improve their mutual situation” (2005, p. 252). This was a gender challenge female agents intertwined with the resistance of the regime.

### 5.1.2 Emerging phase

In the emerging phase, Tunisia enters the stage of liberalization. The state now needs “promoters of the expansion of the transition towards procedural democracy” in order to move forward with their democratization (Rossi & della Porta, 2009, p. 179). Tunisia was in overall very effective with this, an analytical summary on Freedomhouse’s comprehensive assessment of democratic governance, called *Countries at the Crossroads, 2012* shows. The summary starts by saying that although Tunisia have showed very positive signs on transitional progress; “there are no guarantees that the reforms enacted since the historic ouster of longtime leader Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in January 2011 will be consolidated” (Tucker, 2013, p. 2). Freedom house grades states in a pointing system<sup>3</sup> in order to classify its civil liberties. They gave Tunisia high gains during this period, even highest possible in the first category showed below.

Country	Protection from state terror, unjustified imprisonment, and torture	Gender equity	Rights of ethnic, religious and other distinct groups	Freedom of conscience and belief	Freedom of association and assembly	Civil liberties Average
Tunisia	5.00	4.33	4.25	3.33	4.75	4.33

Source: Countries at the Crossroads 2012: Comparative Country Scores (Tucker, 2013, p. 10)

Opening up space for ‘promoters for democracy’, can be traced in this phase since there was what Tucker says “an explosion of new political parties and civic organisations” (p. 2). The former oppressive *power over* the political sphere is in this phase diminished, which allowed “a wave of civil society participation” (p. 2) this including women’s political inclusion. In order for this to occur, some kind of transformative agency must have happened. According to Tucker’s essay, there was a fear in Tunisia at this time that Islamist political parties would seize office after the revolution. In order to meet this threat with their new rights getting rolled back, Tunisia established a gender-parity rule for candidate lists represented (p. 3). I argue that this opened up space for women to reach what Mosedale calls for the *power within* (2005, p. 254). Agency that acts for *power within*, are changes that give women in Tunisia the perceptions and “belief that their actions can have effects” (ibid), as for example engaging in the political sphere and be given a chance to take office. Why is this so important? Mosedale says that in order to advance agency, it “is generally agreed empowerment cannot be bestowed but

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3 “Country ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest and 5 the highest level of freedom women have to exercise their rights” (Freedomhouse.org, 2015).



must be won” (p. 256), like in free and fair elections. Although transformative agency might have been carried out here to meet the influence of political Islam, I argue that this act was crucial for moving forward in the democratic transition. Tucker also concludes in her summary of the report, that in order for Tunisia to advance and reach consolidation, it is imperative that they keep this gendered agency going (p. 3)

### 5.1.3 Advance phase

In this post revolution phase, the transition process towards democracy needs critical agency to secure that women’s empowerment won in earlier phases sees results, and gets protected. This *power to*-aspect means for gendered agency that it “increases the boundaries of what is achievable” (Mosedale, 2005, p. 230). Critical agency that is traced in this phase is therefore ultimately about “changes in policies and politics” (Björkdahl & Selimovic, 2015, p. 170).

Political inclusion in the transition stage, such as women’s representation is a good measurement for this. According to Moghadam; “Tunisian women were present in the four High Commissions established to run the country during the 2011 transition period” (2014, p. 71) This also shows that the gender parity law and discussion on women’s political inclusion, got enforced not only in theory but also practically in Tunisia. For a post revolution state in the MENA-region, this is a big step. It shows how gendered agency in the earlier phases has had effect. It can also be argued that the gendered agency traced here actually stabilized Tunisia’s whole dtp. Since women’s movements were so strongly involved and mobilized in the initial phase, it also needs to have been incorporated here in order to come as far as a successful stage of transition. It is explained by my social movements-theory: “without this coalition democracy is usually not achieved because contending counter movements are likely to push for restoration of the authoritarian/totalitarian regime” (Rossi & della Porta, 2009, p. 180). This means that if gendered agency acting for change in Tunisia’s dtp wasn’t accepted in this phase, a serious throwback in the democratization should be visible, such as renewed conflict or uprisings. Although the democratization can be said to gotten stabilized here, women’s empowerment were threatened, and ”feminist groups remained mobilized, holding many rallies in 2011 and 2012” (Moghadam, 2014, p. 71). Advancing the agenda for women in Tunisia, and expanding their boundaries took a lot of actions upholding agency. This is exemplified when the “Ennahda” – Tunisia’s Muslim party, tried to back earlier progress made for gender equality by proposing article 28 described below:

When the Ennahda members of the NCA sought to replace the term “equality” with words akin to “complementarity” or “partnership” in the new constitution, women’s rights activists and their male supporters in the secular and left-wing parties took to the streets in protest, forcing Ennahda to retreat. (Moghadam, 2014, p. 71-72)

Article 28 created massive tensions and fear for political crisis in Tunisia's advance phase. Civil society groups had to mediate between the parties in Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly (ibid). The fight for gendered agency can again be proved to have had effect in Tunisia's dtp, since the government as a result had to step down and announce a re-election. Not only is this an example that critical agency acting for *power to* was present, it is also as Moghadam's article says: "demonstrating Tunisia's political maturity" (p. 72,). during their stage of transition. It also shows that critical agency performed by social movements were able to win over actions that can be "rewarded by patriarchal structures" (Björkdahl & Mannergren Selimovic, 2015, p. 170).

#### 5.1.4 Final phase

Democratic consolidation has a tendency to be seen in political science as a dichotomous concept (Rossi & della Porta, 2009, p. 181). I treat the concept as I do with gender, a continuum and a long-term process. Democratic consolidation should not only be reduced to be identified as to when country had their first and free elections. I argue that democratic consolidation needs just as much everyday attention as does promotion for gendered agency, in order for each other to survive in a post revolution setting. This means that in a stage of consolidation, the work with creative agency needs to develop women's empowerment through a *power with* aspect. 'Power with' refers to collective action (Mosedale, 2005, p. 250). By "recognizing that more can be achieved by a group" (ibid), creative agency "can be exercised in a manner that unsettles conventional boundaries of women's agency" (Björkdahl & Selimovic, 2015, p. 171). It is ultimately about acting for change "while opening up new possibilities for women's agency" (ibid). The material in my final phase, now proves just how long Tunisia has been able to reach compared to Egypt.

In the context of the meagre harvest of the "Arab Spring", Tunisia remains the last hope for a successful democratic transition. The country and its allies have every reason to ensure that Tunisia continues on its exceptional course. (ICG, 2014a)

The same conclusion is also discussed a report from FOI. Tunisia has reached very far in their consolidation (Bergenwall & Eriksson, 2014, p. 18). Although being a "light in the region" the full results from Tunisia's final phase cannot be said to be visible just yet. Several ex-regime loyalists had been allowed to "make a political comeback", and how this will affect Tunisia's democratization, and women's empowerment is still unknown (ibid). In general, it is now safe to say that the image of the Arab woman and her place in the Tunisian society has gone through a massive change, something several academic articles agree upon (for e.g. Ibnouf, 2013, p. 19). There are also examples of the creative agency I defined above, and of gendered agency still evolving in present Tunisia. In March 2013, Tunisia hosted the World Social Forum at the University of Tunis: "The atmosphere at the university and indeed throughout the city, where marches and rallies took place, was one of *remarkable openness* [emphasis added], with the

participation of feminists, secularists, communists, anarchists, and many foreigners of various persuasions” (Moghadam, 2014, p. 67). This is just one positive example on how the patriarchy’s structural power over women in Tunisia, seems to have decreased in range as democracy grew. Another empirical finding that Tunisia are now undertaking this kind of agency is identified. In October 2014, the new parliament doesn’t only have 31 percent female share of members, but as much as 47 percent of the total of parliamentary candidates were female (p. 72).

## 5.2 Egypt’s transition

The first mobilized demonstration that really reached international attention took place at The Tahrir square January 25, and is referred to as “the day of rage” (UCDP, 2015a, p. 1). 250 000 demonstrators both men and women, are said to have been present at the square, urging for the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak (ibid). The demonstrations were successful. After Mubarak lost power over the military, he left Cairo, 11 February 2011. The power was quickly assumed by the SCAF. Renewed demonstrations against the interim institution have been intense and large in scale.

In regards of women’s situation, two major reforms took place in 2008. First was the one that women were allowed to become judges and work within the legal system like (Tadros, 2010, p. 2). Secondly, Egypt added amendments, which were crucial steps towards a future criminalization of female genital mutilation, and to rise the minimum age for marriage to 18 (p. 3). However, since Egypt’s judicial system is under high influence of Sharia-law, the two legal changes that would have strengthened female emancipation pre Arab spring were unfortunately re-written during Egypt’s advance phase.

### 5.2.1 Initial phase

After “the day of rage” on January 26, like in Tunisia; legal workers such as lawyers stage a protest in the town of Alexandria north of Cairo (Al Jazeera, 2011a). Although not as vast as the one in Tunisia this was considered a threat since social networks and phone lines were cut off this day (ibid). Basically making it much harder for the large mass of resistance to peacefully gather or organize their demonstrations. The effects from this *power over* action are where the uprising starts to differ from Tunisia. The whole stage of resistance, Internet was coming and going, and even traditional media claimed they had problems with broadcasts they had never experienced before (ibid).

When it comes to tracing women’s mobilization in this phase, there are similarities to Tunisian agency. Esraa Abdel Fattah, an Egyptian female activist,

has been said to be one of the most influential protester to act for gendered agency and women's mobilization before- and during the Arab spring. Like Lina Ben Mhenni, the famous Tunisian blogger, Esraa was also nominated in 2011 for the Nobel Peace Prize and got extensive international attention for her work in empowering women (Pedersen & Salib, 2013, p. 256). Both Lina's and Esraa's work has focused on highlighting women's contribution in the stage of resistance: "They have stayed active following the overthrow of the Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes by creating local civil society organizations, mobilizing protesters and documenting government abuses" (ibid). In an interview with Esraa I find one statement on gendered agency and perceptions about women's role in the initial phase that differs from Tunisia:

At the beginning of the protests women were participating and mobilizing other to join in – not only activist women but also housewives and young women who were not previously engaged in politics. (Pedersen and Salib, 2013, p. 257)

So far according to this, it resembles the uprising in Tunisia where the organization reached the larger population of women in different social groups. But she further develops how the mobilization was seen among women and what the goals were:

They knew they were seeking dignity and freedom, *not as women, but as citizens* [emphasis added]. (ibid)

In the initial phase for Tunisia, I claimed that I had traced actions in the stage of resistance that also worked as gendered agency; challenging old gendered roles and women's political inclusion. In Tunisia I argue that women took on a double fight, organizing not only for democratic change, but also for women's empowerment at the same time. It seems as Esraa Abdel Fattah, claims that women's mobilization here was rather done on existing premises in order for them to be allowed to be included; or for them to actually be engaged. It is my interpretation that this is a high difference in the protest dynamics, and that it has to do with a strong intersective *power over* women in Egypt. My analysis also gets support from Moghadam's research on the subject (2014). She says that: "Throughout history, we have seen women not always mobilizing as women" (p. 60). The mobilization in Egypt during this phase was also not as powerful as the feminist networks in Tunisia. Feminist NGOs in Egypt created several attempts to collaborate, but they were "not sufficiently organized to work together effectively" according to Salib & Pedersen (2013, p. 260). The constant state interference censoring online and media broadcasts, can be one aspect to why this was so tough for the activists in Egypt to accomplish. I argue that gendered agency, and challenging gender roles wasn't intertwined with the democratization in the same ways as it was with the uprising in Tunisia. As the next phase will show, women's mobilization in Egypt was however strong enough to threaten the regimes *power over* the female emancipation, and there were heavy actions taken in order to start breaking it down.

## 5.2.2 Emerging phase

Since this phase is about the stage of liberalization, it is of high importance that civil liberties here get a push, something when looking at Freedom House’s ranking, can be concluded were very absent. The chart below shows how Egypt struggled with state oppression even in this phase.

Country	Protection from state terror, unjustified imprisonment, and torture	Gender equity	Rights of ethnic, religious and other distinct groups	Freedom of conscience and belief	Freedom of association and assembly	Civil Liberties Average
Egypt	1.13	2.33	2.25	2.00	1.99	1.99

Source: (Tucker, 2012, p. 10)

Why the scores differ so highly and the reason for Egypt’s low rating is said to be because of support that Egypt’s president Hosni Mubarak still had at this time (Tucker, 2012, p. 3). “Key Mubarak-era institutions and practices persisted after the president’s fall” (ibid). Obstacles for promoters of democracy, and transformative agency were highly present here unlike in Tunisia: “Severe Mubarak-era limitations on the registration and activity of NGOs were not removed, despite early signs that SCAF<sup>4</sup> would consult and include such groups in the policymaking process” (p. 3). This is where it can be said that Egypt started their severe constant backlashes in their dtp. Egypt actively made sure to block any kind of transformative agency by targeting out female protesters and arresting them. To make sure to break down women’s empowerment, the female protesters were sent and locked up in hospitals were they were forced to go through what the SCAF called “virginity checks” (p. 4). These gross violations on Egypt’s women were “intrusive examinations that were apparently designed to humiliate women into political passivity” (ibid). I conclude that this is an example on the fear that the patriarchal structure had for women getting space to obtain a *power within*. Gendered agency was perceived as a threat that could overthrow their control of the democratization.

## 5.2.3 Advance phase

In the stage of transition Egypt’s backlash to totalitarian rule escalates. Like the theory on social movement says, it is important in the transition process to seek coalitions among groups, so that “cycles of protests” doesn’t push in opposite directions – causing a throwback to conflict or revolution (Rossi della Porta, 2009, p. 180). Although Egypt managed to elect a “democratic” leader in the earlier phase, President Mohamed Morsi from the Muslim Brotherhood was removed by the military after a short rule. This created a high “polarization between

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4 SCAF; *Egypt’s Supreme Council of the Armed Forces*. The SCAF were the largest inter-rim power after the initial phase, promising to treasure the people’s right for democratic change, evidence show however that they arrested important voices and innocent bloggers. They blocked further mobilization throughout the whole process (Tucker, 2012, p. 3-4).

supporters and opponents” (ICG, 2013a), which can only be said to have been highly unfavorable for the democratic process. The backlash is so severe that “Egypt is embarking on a transition in many ways disturbing like the one it just experienced” (ibid). The problem is also that when the military are taking actions to break down the Muslim Brotherhood, it is also undermining any form of gendered agency. Since women need spaces to seek collective empowerment, this is not possible in Egypt when according to ICG; social networks and media broadcasts keeps getting shut down, with the streets becoming more and more unsafe. The stage of transition in Egypt is highly violent. Not only compared to the same phase in Tunisia – but also compared to its own history: “Only this time around, the cost of failure could well include political violence at a level not experienced by Egypt since the early 1990” (p. 3). It is uncontested to say that Egypt’s transition is ”marching in circles” (ibid). The political atmosphere for activists and protesters is described as a ”winner-takes-it-all approach” (ibid). What does this means for women’s ability to act? When trying to trace critical agency in this phase, it also shows the tough landscape that women are now in. Critical agency like gender-favorable “changes in policies and politics” is not present here. Neither do I trace a *power to* aspect with women’s empowerment. To be able to increase “the boundaries of what is achievable”, in this context is simply too demandable for gendered agency in this phase (Mosedale, 2005, p. 230). Esraa Abdel Fattah, Egypt’s famous feminist activists says in regards to the transition: “Women’s status has somehow gone backward, but we are fighting this by pushing ourselves forward with public participation, both politically and socially” (Pedersen & Salib, 2013, p. 259). In this phase it doesn’t only becomes clear just how threatened Egypt’s dtp is – it also becomes clear how strong gender-threatening agency is working to disempower Egypt’s women. This is a type of agency that try to “internalize hegemonic norms” in order to get “rewarded by patriarchal structures” (Björkdahl & Selimovic, 2015, p. 170). It is exemplified by this quote:

Since the revolution, conservative forces have also been on the rise, demanding policies and particularly reforms of family legislation that would represent a step backward for women and deprive them of their rights. (Pedersen & Salib, 2013, p. 260)

This is highly problematic for women’s empowerment and for the democratic transition. This suggestion on policies and reforms did include for e.g. women’s right to divorce (Jerusalem Post, 2012a). To conclude it can be said that there are forces in Egypt working actively against women, and doing it in a way that will be devastating for their ability to act for change.

#### 5.2.4 Final phase

It cannot be argued that Egypt has entered any stage of solid democratic consolidation. In the final phase, “Egypt’s military regime has reassessed control and are practicing oppression enforced on anyone of opposition” (Bergenwall &

Eriksson, 2014, p. 11). This can be concluded to build a climate of political apathy towards democratization. It is also highly concerning with latest build up of Islamic extremism in Egypt (p. 32). This only results in a dynamic where the current military regime tightens up their strength over Egypt's citizens (ibid). This affects every aspect of human rights, not at least women's rights, which are the first to get targeted when these patriarchal and powerful structures decide to increase in proportion. There are several examples of this: "The Coalition of Women's NGOs, composed of about ten women's groups, tried to advance a women's rights agenda but failed to mobilize sufficient popular support or support among the new political elites" (Moghadam, 2014, p. 69). Another example that is how gendered agency that had made progress even before the Arab spring now was eliminated (ibid). The amendments that Egypt had added already in 2008, which could lead to further female emancipation – were erased when the constitution was written. The draft constitution created by Egypt's first Constituent Assembly (CA), didn't only fall short in protecting women's right, but also religious minorities and child protection:

It restricted freedom of expression in the name of protecting religion; it allowed for the military trial of civilians; failed to protect the rights of children, especially those of young girls, by not defining a child as any person under age eighteen (as per the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child) to protect girls from early marriage. (Moghadam, 2014, p. 70)

This disturbing fact shows how failed democratization also gets interlinked with failed gendered agency. It also shows the intersectional character of power taken by Egypt's CA. Not only making sure women wouldn't threaten the patriarchy, minorities and other religious groups were also stripped of judicial grants for protection. Like said in the previous section, for gendered agency to move forward or even be present in Egypt's current context is highly challenged. No bigger signs of progress can be said to have taken place, instead traces of agency acting for further disempowering seems to have won. Some glimpses of light are though traced, and activists for women's empowerment weren't totally absent. After the military had overthrown Morsi's regime, the new CA managed to elect five women, three who are outspoken feminists according to Moghadam (2014, p. 70). If they will be giving space enough to act for creative agency and reaching *power with*, is hard to say. The CA only has 100 seats. The three women who say they are acting for gendered agency will need a lot of support in order to break through in the Islamist dominated assembly and their norms on women's place in a democracy.

## 6 RESULTS

In this part of the thesis I compare findings from my previous chapter. Below is an overview of the results from my analysis.

<b>Phases</b>	<b>Tunisia</b>	<b>Egypt</b>
<b>Initial phase</b>	<i>Women's mobilization was vast and influential. The gendered agency arose online. Agents reached past the patriarchal 'power over' their emancipative values.</i>	<i>State interference with online activism and media; women's mobilization not as effective for gendered agency; wasn't intertwined in the dtp as it was in Tunisia.</i>
<b>Emerging phase</b>	<i>Transformative agency traced by establishment of a gender-parity rule for candidate lists. Enabling 'power within'.</i>	<i>Gross state violations targeted at female protesters; undermining and threatening transformative agency and 'power within'.</i>
<b>Advance phase</b>	<i>Critical agency and reaching 'power to' was traced by social movements who kept acting for protection of earlier won results in gender equality, not accepting rewards by patriarchal structures.</i>	<i>Severe backlashes in the dtp. Egypt is reported to be "marching in transitional circles". Strong patriarchal and intersected powers working against females and gendered agency.</i>
<b>Final phase</b>	<i>Tunisia has shown "political maturity" and allowing spaces for creative agency. 'Power with' is enabled as women take a large number of seats in the democratic institutions in 2014</i>	<i>The military regime is enforcing renewed oppression. Gendered agency suffers backlashes in the CA. Women's empowerment gets sacrificed in the name of religious freedom.</i>

### 6.1 Tunisia

At the beginning of Tunisia's dtp, my analysis show that women did engage in the initial phase to act on a double basis. Firstly, they wanted a change towards democracy. Secondly, at the same time they wanted action for women's empowerment. I argue that this intertwined the uprising and later on the democratization with gendered agency. It did enable women's social mobilization to reach over hegemonic and patriarchal structures. As a result it can be claimed that the democratization process and the leap for female emancipation were mutually beneficial of each other. Not only were men *and* women protesting for a regime change, they were also marching together for gendered agency. When the gender parity for candidates list got established, my analysis shows that Tunisian women had understood that "empowerment cannot be bestowed but must be won" (Mosedale, 2005, p. 256). Another result from the analysis is that Tunisia clearly understood the importance of coalitions. After article 28 got presented, it was seen as a massive threat. Not only for the progress that had been made in gendered



agency, but for the whole new setting of a democratic rule. A re-election instead of trying to break down women's empowerment led to a result of 31 percent of female share in the parliament. Of all the countries involved in the Arab spring, Tunisia is the only one that has been successful with two things: Democratic transition and the promotion of gender prospects in transitional justice. As my result-overview shows though, this was not done without obstacles or in a consistent linear manner. However, the will to make democratic progress instead of a violent backlash like Egypt, led to these coalitions among civil- and social groups that are so crucial for reaching consolidation.

## 6.2 Egypt

In the initial phase, one of the results of my analysis is the effects of the regime breaking down the infrastructure during the stage of resistance. Since this was like in Tunisia, a social movement who tried to mobilize through online activism it was crucial that there was access to social networks. The result that my analysis makes here is that this could be why feminist NGOs and women had such a hard time to work sufficiently together. It marks one of the larger differences with Tunisia, where gendered agency got intertwined so early in the process. Another result from this phase is the fact that there might be an inability or simply unwillingness among Egypt's women to socially mobilize as *women*. The interview with Esraa Abdel Fattah that I analyzed shows signs leaning towards such a result. If this is because women were scared, or have accepted hegemonic gender norms isn't revealed in my analysis. It could be a combination of both and needs to be looked into further. In the emerging phase, I have presented reports saying that the regime specifically searched and arrested female protesters for extreme human rights abuses, referred to as "virginity checks". What effects this had for gender agency and the democratization in Egypt is also something that needs more research. Egypt's CA also made sure to strip women, children and ethnic minorities from important judicial protection. This clearly shows how different women were treated within the legal system, whilst in Tunisia a gender parity law was introduced. The result from my analysis in the final phase also shows that Egypt need to begin with restoring women's rights that were actually institutionalized before the Arab spring.

## 6.3 Conclusions

I want to start by following up the purpose. The purpose of this Bachelor thesis was to explore the bigger phenomenon, why some post revolution states make the transition to democracy better than others. So, is there a general causality between gendered agency and democratization? I cannot claim any absolute or general *cause leading to effect* between my two variables. That was neither my intention

like I said when presenting the methods and data for this paper. I do however stand by that my theoretical framework and analysis show that my independent variable seems to have large effect on why there is a variation of outcomes in my dependent one. What I have been able to do, is in a systematical way show that in these two chosen cases, we can see that the stronger the gendered agency became in Tunisia, so did their democratic transition process. I have also argued for the interconnection with a backlash in democracy, also leads to a backlash in women's empowerment, like in Egypt. I believe I can safely argue that variables are at least mutually beneficial processes. Strong presence of gendered agency also promotes democratic values. I don't think that any research in the nearest future will be able to substantially prove the opposite. In that case it needs to be established that: more gender equality – equals a weaker consolidation of democracy.

My research question was: why did the transition become strong in Tunisia, and weak in Egypt? What is fascinating is that the gendered agency got so intertwined with the revolution in Tunisia, being able to stabilize itself and the country's democratization. But why didn't it happen in Egypt? It cannot only be blamed on patriarchal structures and intersectional power relations, although these have had a very large impact and they are this papers standing as a main explanation. I am though well aware that Tunisia did have more beneficial prerequisites for building a strong foundation for both processes to escalate and become successful. I mentioned this before starting my analysis. The enormous complexity, and the dimension of both political- as well as religious aspects of Islam, is also not manifested in the Tunisian context like it is in Egypt, which my results clearly shows. The resources for reaching success in both democratization and promotion for gender prospects were also highly different. One aspect where both Tunisia and Egypt shared the same option though was to keep confidence for democratic institutions in times of backlashes. Tunisia did this by announcing a re-election after threats of renewed conflict. Egypt did instead consistently use its military and their oppressive methods, which makes it seem that they prefer going back to authoritarian principles in order to stabilize and await some kind of democratic ripeness. The danger with this is that a "temporary" totalitarian rule, waiting for the precise moment to give the power back, may just become a permanent one. People trying to grab power for renewed authoritarian principles to reach an end of violence, need to understand that this is no longer an option. "However difficult a transition to democracy may be, it is the only path to long-term stability" (Tucker, 2012, p. 8). The answer to my question is that Tunisia probably understood his quite early, as Egypt has not.

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