Final technical report

Table of Contents:

i) Basic project information

Project Title: *Young women and political participation: institutional and informal mobilization paving the way to future actions*

IDRC Project Number-Component Number: *Centre file 106501-001*
Country/Region: *Tunisia*
Full Name of Research Institution: *Center of Arab Women for the Training and Research (CAWTAR)*

Address of Research Institution:
7 impasse nr.1 Rue 8840 Centre Urbain Nord
P.O. Box nr 105 - 1003 Cité El Khadra
Tunis - TUNISIE
Tel. + 216 71 792298
Fax. +216 71 780002

Abstract

The evolutions and transformations of engagement logics since the January 14, 2011 Revolution justify interest in this study, which tries to give count of the complexity and diversity of young women political participation in Tunisia. Our study explores political engagement modalities starting from the individual while taking in consideration, on the one hand the link between macro-social transformations and engagement, and on the other the organizational configuration of activism.

This research cover three axes: 1/ the first axis analyzes a new form of political participation: cyber-activism. One objective of this research is to try to understand by making the comparative analysis of conventional activism and cyber-activism, reasons underpinning the choice of civic and social engagement rather than party activism. 2/ The second axis relates to young women's motivation to engage in politics. It analyzes disposition systems and individualization processes leading to the formation of appetence for engagement. Different factors leading to engagement were investigated (weight of socialization, social and cultural properties, influence of significant people, social world experiences, meetings, biographical incidents, professional positioning, etc…) as well as implementation modalities. By analyzing male and female representations transmitted during various socializations of which mainly the primary one, women's relations with activism were highlighted. 3/ The third axis concerns the identification of factors that may ensure the sustainability of political participation: material and symbolic rewards, generated by activism, deliberately or involuntarily

deployed by the political organizations – and that can contribute to the reinforcement of political activism; media exposure as a social recognition instrument that has been identified as a powerful participation engine; the role of the mentor in political learning and in the identification process.

Key words:

Women, political participation, gender, citizenship, activism, young women, Tunisia, cyber activism, youth, revolution, "arab spring"

ii) The research problem:

Our preliminary observations led us to develop a hypothesis suggesting that young women do not engage in politics in spite of higher educational skills and the contraction of engagement risks, due to the negative perception about politics and mainly about representative democracy.

The fact that young people rather fall back on associations' programs and activities or on occasional protests instead of voting or joining party structures seems to be due to two factors: age and the nature of political offer. The purpose is then to explore the extent to which the transitional context has reconciled youth with politics after 23 years of authoritarianism (party in power prevailing over the political space, which in addition was selective, satellite political parties, political forums highly controlled by the State, etc.).

It is recognized that when critical perceptions go the rounds about well-established party structures and well-set political practices, the tendency to engage becomes weaker[1]. The hypothesis inferring the decline of conventional participation and party activism to the profit of social participation is not specific to the Tunisian context, but seems to be an international phenomenon, mainly in Western countries[2].

The Tunisian Revolution has changed the vision people had on youth not willing to engage in politics, as it showed that they were actually interested but differently. Authoritarianism affects engagement by increasing participation costs (risks taken by engaging in protest movements), and by implying rejection of politics. The change witnessed since the Revolution in the structure of political opportunities (new context of democratic transition) has to some degree increased participation

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[1] Daniel Gaxie, « Rétributions du militantisme et paradoxes de l'action collective », *Revue suisse de science politique*, 11 (1), 2005, pp. 159-190.

[2] Mark Gray and Miki Caul, "Declining Voter Turnout in Advanced Industrial Democracies, 1950 to 1997: The Effects of Declining Group Mobilization", *Comparative Political Studies,* 2000 33, pp.1091-1122.

opportunities (this observation concerns our responders[3]) Nonetheless, this change has not transformed visions about politics, and we noted the persistence of informal protest practices such as cyber-activism (there are not many cyber-activists connected with political parties), in spite of their shift from underground to mainstream[4] in addition to young people still attracted by associations and protest movements (demonstrations, sit-ins, strikes, etc…) at the expense of political parties.

Our observations helped us to refine one part of our hypothesis: the negative vision of the political system in general, and more specifically of representational democracy, defines the form of political participation. The nature of political offer (democratic transition vs. authoritarianism is but one of several other factors contributing to the negative vision held about politics. It would therefore be necessary to inter-connect: a) contextual effects (macro-level), b) the social and cultural properties of social actors and their differentiated socializations and social experiences (micro level); c) the political organization or actual community (meso level) to determine differences in terms of forms of political engagement.

Our second basic hypothesis is that the type of young women's participation is distinct and has its own characteristics making it different from the political participation of young men. Characteristics relate to both the type of participation and the engagement rate. In terms of participation, the purpose is to know to which extent the gender identity and the gendered socialization, involving representations from the political/militant spheres based on male/female opposition, contribute to shaping women's militant practices and guide their engagements.

Concerning the engagement rate, it will relate to the way women mobilize their resources and develop capitalization strategies to evolve in a given political space taking in consideration obstacles facing them as women. This also includes exploring their rapport with rewards favoring sustainable engagement.

On the other hand, we need to note that the purpose of this study is not to make a monographic description of the different forms of participation, nor to focus on social actors' various reasons, but rather to identify factors favoring passage to act (*Action Taking*) and maintaining this type of activities. In other words, we are interested in why and how young people participate in politics and to later build some knowledge about this issue, while looking for significant recurrences according to studied profiles, which can be mobilized when implementing positive actions aimed at reinforcing young women's political participation.

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[3] According to the National Youth Consultation of 2009, the participation rate of young respondents (18-29 years) in the elections is 25%. The enrollment of young people to vote for the election of the ANC has not exceeded 20.42% for the age group 18-30 years against 18.48% for 31-40 years and 21.52% for age 41-50 years. If changes are minimal between the three age groups, we see that the female enrollment rate decreases ostensibly based on age and contrary trend among men, in which the enrollment rate increased from 51.40% (18-30) to 67.27% for 51-60 years. The rate is calculated based on the number of registered voluntarily until July 28, 2011 voters, 1,350,240. At the close of registration on 14th August 2011, the total number of registered voters voluntarily reached 4 108 202. Data disaggregated by sex and age are not available for the total number of registered voters and non-registered. Source : Instance supérieure indépendante pour les élections, Rapport sur le déroulement des élections de l'Assemblée nationale constituante, février 2012, pp. 105-107. http://www.isie.tn/Ar/

[4] Access to visibility and recognition after January 14, 2011.

iii) Objectives:

This research project had 3 main objectives summarized as follows:

***Objective 1 Knowledge*:** creating and sharing knowledge about young women's political participation in Tunisia.
Major findings/outputs:
  ➢ To know **why** young women are actively engaged in politics in Tunisia: *analysis of i) motivation and ii) variables (social, economic and political context, family, organisational/institutional allegiances, political capital, significant "others", education) which influence that motivation*
    and **how** they are active in politics: *analysis of i) different forms of participation (formal participation versus informal participation or occasional event-related and non-militant protests linked to social movements); ii) characteristics of young women's political participation in regard to men; iii) characteristics of young women's political participation in regard to "senior" women politicians; iv) cultural influences on modalities or strategies of political activism; v) factors determining young women's continuous presence in politics.*

This objective has been fully met. The research illustrates the main results of the study which can be summarized as the following:
  - Hacktivism has emerged as a new form of political participation that informs about changes in visions of politics and representative democracy.
  - The study analyzes the processes through which hacktivism becomes a legitimate form of political participation and mechanisms leading a cyberactivist to consider himself/ herself as a political actor by comparing it to conventional political participation and ordinary usages of User Generated Contents (UGC) platforms (blogs, facebook...).
  - The research also highlights differentiated ways to enter politics and differentiated obstacles to political participation between women engaged in traditional political organizations and women cyberactivists. Particularities of young women political participation with regard to men in one hand, and to senior women politician, in the other hand are analyzed in a transversal way.

***Objective 2 Participation/appropriation*:** promoting stakeholder's responsibility and active participation in fostering young women's political participation in Tunisia
Major findings/outputs:
  ➢ a group of "active participants" will be more acquainted and engaged with young women's political participation related activities
  ➢ a group of "passive participants" will be involved in project activities and informed about the project topic.

The National Observatory of Youth was identified for being the main governmental partner. It provided specific quantitative data collected in occasion of the 4th National Consultation on Youth conducted in 2010 broken down by gender, which includes a section on youth participation in political and social life. The National Observatory of Youth (NBY) was however supposed to be deeper involved in the implementation of the research accompanying all its phases (preparation of questionnaire, selections of people to be interviewed, realization of focus groups, discussion of preliminary results….) in order to facilitate ownership and appropriation of research results from the NBY itself and, at a broader extent, from the Tunisian government. Unfortunately the contact person in the NBY participated only to the very first steps of the research project. For very sad personal reasons he then missed all the following steps and the NBY didn't' really provide another contact person - despite CAWTAR's solicitations - showing in this way a weak interest in playing a more active role than just providing statistical data.

On the other side, 12 women (6 "couples" of experienced and less experienced politicians (senior and young women politicians)) have been involved in attending a coaching techniques learning module in order to improve their relationships and facilitate the transfer of political know-how and political transferable skills among them. They became aware of potential obstacles in the relationship between women from different generations and background and identified tools to overpass these obstacles and improve their relationship in the framework of women's political activism.

A significant number of "passive participants" (41 interviewed, 38 participating to focus groups) have been involved in project activities at different levels, making them more acquainted about different aspects related to young (women's) political participation in Tunisia.

Objective 3 Action: providing strategic inputs for immediate and future action oriented to promote young women's political participation in Tunisia.
Major findings/outputs:
   a) Improved visibility and communication about young women's political participation (through video contest)
   b) Coaching pilot experience (through focus group and meetings between senior and young women politicians)
   c) Strategic dissemination of research results (through final press conference and radio broadcasts)

As already stated, this research project considered communication and participation as strategic aspects to translate research results into action and it therefore grasped different occasions (workshops, meetings, etc..) in order to give visibility to the research itself. More details are available in the "project activities" section of this report.

   a) Improved visibility and communication about young women's political participation (through video contest)

10 videos participated to the video contest and 2 videos won ex-equo. The participation to the video contest has been below expectations besides the vast spreading of its announcement. More details are available in the "project activities" section of this report.

b) Coaching pilot experience (through focus group and meetings between senior and young women politicians)
Please refer to what has been described in objective 2. More details are available in the "project activities" section of this report.

c) Strategic dissemination of research results (through final press conference and radio broadcasts)
On the 3rd of October 2013 CAWTAR has organized a press conference with journalists and different stakeholders to launch the final research and executive summary. 24 people attended and a radio interview (RTCI) has been realized. In annex 1, 2, 3 and 4 the press release, signatures of participants, and PPPs presented during the launching.

The electronic versions of the research (in French and English) and the executive summary (in French and English) have been posted on the Cawtar website and diffused, by email, to more than 600 contacts in the region.

iv) Methodology

The choice of tools was made based on an epistemological position : the comprehensive approach. This position allows to explore the meaning of individual and collective behaviors: i.e. to highlight the significance put by each individual to his/her action and identify reasons accounting for responders' attitudes and practices. In this regard, interviews do not constitute ways to test pre-established hypotheses, but a co-construction process of the meaning of social actions.
The choice of data collection methods mainly depends on research questions and on the elected theoretical framework. This tool enables us to have access to information we are looking for, in the most efficient and rational way. It is clear that every research method has advantages and drawbacks, and no method can pretend to fully analyze social reality.
Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews and focus groups. The choice of tools used was related to an epistemological position that is comprehensive approach. This posture gives off the sense of individual and collective behavior in that it focuses on the discovery of the meanings that each individual assigns to its action. Interviews are by then, not a means of testing hypotheses pre-established but a process of co-construction of meaning of social actions.
For three specific aspects (1.differentiated visions of politics between cyber-activists and women politicians, 2. Relationship between men and women within political parties, 3. relationships between young women and senior within CSOs and political parties) focus goups were held to deepen data collected through interviews. Indeed, group dynamic and the confrontation of visions and point of view brings up elements that do not necessarily emerge as part of the interview.

Given the changing character of cyber-activism, the first focus group, which was held in May 2011, was followed by another meeting to see what changes have occurred at this level.

a) **Baseline of women's political participation:** We received from the National Youth Observatory results of the 4th National Consultation on Youth conducted in 2010 broken down by gender[5]. We also collected information about women's presence in political organizations and in labor unions at the decision making level, without any exclusion. Data would help us to define a baseline survey about the presence of women in political structures. The information sought concerns only formal and sustained participation, as we were unable to collect quantitative data about informal participation. As a result, we cannot know whether young women tend to prefer one type of participation at the expense of others. However, these data would allow us to check the hypothesis of whether young women better engage or not in social organizations (associations) than in professional politics. But, in addition to difficulties in collecting data from various stakeholders, the rapid transformations in parties, the creation of new ones, the dissolution of others, and the formation of party coalitions made the few data collected obsolete.

b) **Survey based on semi-structured in depth interviews:** The choice of the detailed interview method aims at collecting information about individuals' reasons for action, which is our first research question[6]. The interview guide was produced according to this logic of tracing the trajectories of the actors in order to uncover the reasons for commitment or disengagement (disposal systems) and the factors that sustained commitments over time. This is specifically the historical-social interactionist approach which takes into account both the systems of dispositions and social interactions.

As predispositions cannot be perpetual, this method also enables us to report on the variation of motivations across time. The interactionist perspective is based among other elements on a phenomenological approach aimed at exploring how individuals interpret the world and their social experiences. Interest in actors' subjective moods requires the exploration of life stories; they provide information about the evolution of subjective interpretations guiding individuals' behaviors across time, depending on their interactions with the social world.

In addition to reasons for action –why would young women engage in politics?-, the detailed interview gives us information about the various forms of participation: how do young women pick up their engagement method? What are the variables that play a role in maintaining engagements? The impact of some variables such as gender and age in the choice of political engagements was explored. In addition, the influence of the social and professional position, socio-cultural properties, socialization, education, peer groups, important people, biographic incidents, meetings, social promotion or downgrading, change of status, in short anything that can somehow shape individuals' choices.

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[5] Data we were provided concern the "youth and participation" aspect.
[6] The study was conducted between February 2011 and May 2013.

c) **Focus Groups**: Four focus groups have also been organized: two focus groups were devoted to cyber-activism. The first involving men and women cyber-activists and women active in the traditional sphere, aimed at defining this practice compared to participation in political parties or in associations. The second brought together men and women cyber-activists and was organized one year after the first one[7]; it tried to track the development of this practice one year after the Revolution and to investigate gender-based discrimination in this domain. The third focus group explored men-women relationships in party structures, while the fourth examined senior-junior relations, and particularly the transmission of know-how and of inter-generational political know-how.

d) **Online observation:** The observation of the performance of 12 cyber-activists[8] on Facebook, selected based on their notoriety (not mediatic only) and the diversity of their profiles has enriched our corpus. Observation focused on onsite debates, and on internet users' comments on cyber-activists' publications and statutes in order to better understand the evolution of cyber-activism's challenges and relations between various stakeholders.

In addition, we monitored and analyzed conversations and publications on Facebook[9] related to political women and we watched some women's personal Facebook accounts and pages.

Construction of the Sample

Forty-one detailed interviews were conducted with a mixed panel of women and men[10], enabling us to explore the contrasted relations that politically active men and women have towards politics as well as between politically active young women and older women.

When making up the sample of politically active young women, we tried as much as possible to have it best representing various participation patterns (cyber-activists, independent activists, labor union activists, and members in associations and in political parties), political affiliations (opposition/party in power). On the other hand, we also took into consideration the variety of sociological profiles, their social background, their economic, social and cultural capital, whether inherited or acquired, that may be determining in terms of motivations and/or expectations and the modeling of participation patterns and engagements sustainability conditions.

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[7] i.e. one year after the January 14, 2011 Revolution.

[8] They are 6 ladies (Bent Trad, henda hendoud, Fatma Arabicca, Jolanare Jo, Massir Destin, Amira Yahyaoui) and 6 men (Z, Azizi Amami, Hamdi Kaloutcha, Big Trap Boy, Kerim Bouzouita et Chut libre).

[9] We deliberately chose Facebook from a range of other tools available because of its popularity in Tunisia compared to other tools (Twitter, blogs, etc…). We were able to note in this regard that even the most prominent cyber-activists tend to favor this tool.

[10] We decided to assign pseudonyms to our responders in order to preserve their anonymity. We kept pseudonyms already chosen by interviewed cyber-activists only when we believe that they are known and may reveal responders' identities.

When forming our sample of women acting in conventional politics, we mobilized CAWTAR's contact network in political organizations. However, for cyber-active young women, our technique was more the snow-ball effect. We started with a little number of people we already know, and through them we worked on reaching out to other young women.

The approach followed in conducting the interviews is to let the interviewees talk about their path in trying to steer the story based on the interview guide. This was developed following three axes: the first relates to the process of primary and secondary socialization in the choice of commitment (role of parents, educators, peers, association activities within the school), the second concerns differentiated forms of commitment and experience of actors in political life (meaning participation, choice of type of participation), the third axis concerns the conditions for sustainability commitments in time.

v) Project activities

The following activities have been implemented in the period February 2011 – September 2013:

1. *Recruitment of the research team*

The project team was composed as follows:
Giorgia Depaoli - Project Leader - *giorgiadep@gmail.com* +216 20540543
Maryam Ben Salem - Researcher -*maryambs@gmail.com* +216 23751874
Azza Chaabouni – Research assistant in charge of interviews -*chaabazza@yahoo.it* +216 24270577
Lilia Ben Salem - Senior advisor -*liliabensalem@yahoo.fr* +216 26950937

A part time collaboration from the administrative department of CAWTAR guaranteed proper administrative follow up and reporting of all project activities.

2. *Meeting for hypothesis validation*

A first meeting to validate research hypotheses has been organized on the 23rd February 2011.
A second meeting (February 2011) has brought together research team members to finalize interview's guide, content of the focus group and sampling process.

8 persons participated to the meeting for hypotheses validation together with the research team and one representative of the National Youth Observatory.
The debate raised several interesting suggestions and proposals:
- In addition to forms of participation that were intended to be studied in this research (conventional and not conventional forms of political activism, through social media, blogs using satirical cartoons etc..), it was suggested to include the arts as a form of civic expression

- As mentioned on the project proposal, participants agreed to place the research in a specific temporality, that of the changing political context resulting from the Tunisian revolution of January 14, 2011. Taking into account this radical transformation, implied a careful analysis of the changes that may occur or not in political participation forms and claims: militant conversions, access / initiation to political participation, persistence or change of political allegiances and ways and means of participation etc.

- Define the concept of political participation a posteriori, which means starting from the field to elaborate a definition: what the Tunisian mean by political participation? This approach allowed the researcher to capture different forms and meanings of political participation and eventually to include some aspects that could not be taken into account, if the research was starting with a preordained definition.

3. *Organization of different meetings :*

A kick-off meeting inviting different Tunisian and international stakeholders to launch the project was foreseen at the very beginning of the project (February-march 2011).

That period and the following one has been characterized by a sensitive social and political context, where political tensions, rallies, sit in and protests were the everyday life events in Tunisia. Political actors and national and international institutions were absorbed by the ever-changing political priorities and CAWTAR itself has been running into a reflection period about how to position itself in the new political context.

The IDRC research project has been then officially launched on the 8th of June 2011 in the occasion of a press conference organised by CAWTAR where the final results of the regional project "*Strengthening women's leadership and participation in politics and decision-making in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia*" implemented by the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW now UN WOMEN) in partnership with CAWTAR, have been diffused.

In that framework the IDRC research initiative has been presented as an important relieving and capitalization of the previous work done by CAWTAR on women's political participation, and as an opportunity to analyse further and deeper the young women's political participation in Tunisia before, during and after January 2011 revolution. At the press conference about 80 persons participated.

4. Elaboration of interviews, focus groups, etc...

46 interviews have been realized in the framework of the research project in the period going from March 2010 to April 2013.
In the same period, 12 pre-selected (on the base of their notoriety and their diverse profiles) cyber activists have been observed daily on their websites, blogs, etc…

4 focus group with different stakeholder have been organized:
- cyber activists and political actors in political parties and CSOs and politically non active women (Mai 2011);
- men and women in political parties (July 2011);
- senior/junior women in political parties and CSOs (November 2011);
- Men and women Cyber-activists (April 2012).

Focus group men and women

13

Focus group women junior and senior

They helped to enrich and complete the analysis on specific issues, namely: 1 / relationships between persons engaged in a traditional political structures and cyber-activists 2/ relationships between men and women in political parties.3 / the relationship between senior and junior in traditional political structures. 4 / the evolution of the construction process of hacktivism as a social practice (meaning given to that practice, construction of a specific militant identity in the difference vis-à-vis the political professionals and ordinary Internet users and gender discrimination within the cyber community).

The project team has also organized a round table on "Accountability and political rights of women in Tunisia" (14t[h] of May 2012), with the aim to discuss and debate about how accountability can strengthen women's political participation in public life and improve decision makers' efficiency in considering women's rights and specific needs. This round table was not foreseen in the project document but its implementation has been considered opportune to raise and debate, among political activists, this specific topic related to political participation.

11 participants highlighted the following aspects:

- Accountability must be together with an obligation and sanctions for not respecting such an obligation: if it stays on voluntary bases it will never be respected
- Accountability must be preceded by a clear request of something: in this case, a clear request about women's rights that civil society (/women parliamentarians ?) could express
- Accountability must be established at local level as well (with different requests, characteristics, etc.)
- Accountability is a practice of citizenship (of rights and duties) and it is a matter of culture; it demands, as complementary components, access to information and justice
- Participants have highlighted the importance to know other experiences about accountability and women's rights in order to learn how to better approach the same concept in Tunisia
- External donors/partners can lobby to Tunisian government for accountability and women's rights.
- Participants highlighted the need to spread the culture of accountability through raising awareness activities and education.

14

5. Contacts with institutions, political parties, etc. to collect specific data

Thanks to previous CAWTAR's projects, some strategic contacts have been maintained also with political parties in order to collect sexo-disaggregated quantitative data.
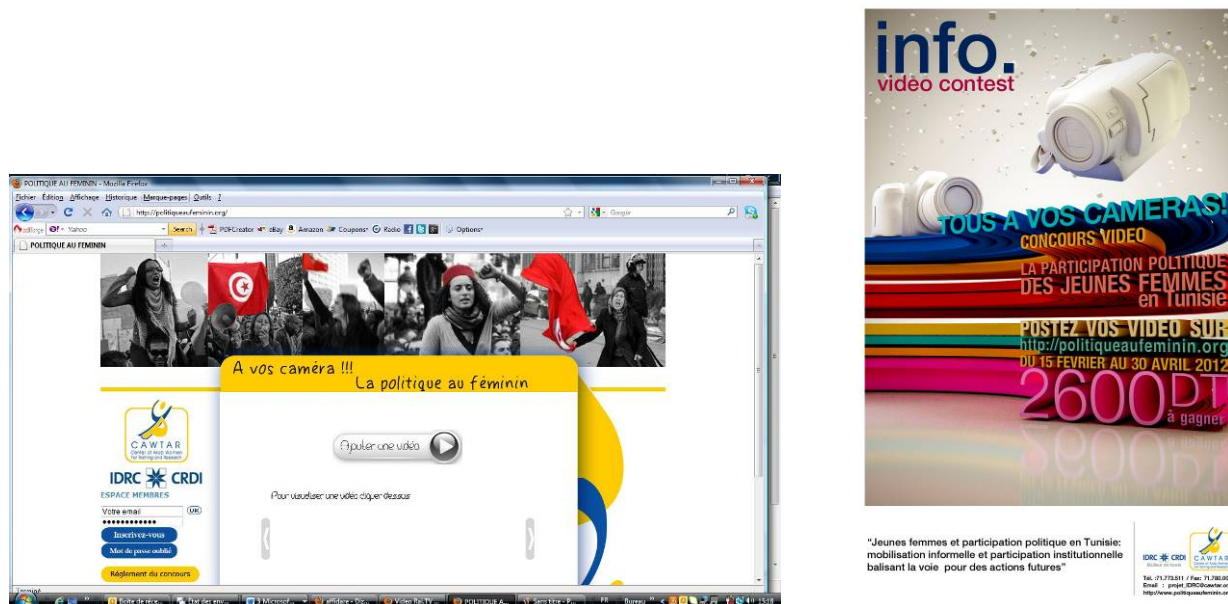
Letters to a limited number of political parties have been sent asking for sex-disaggregated data on women's presence into political parties with the aim of having an overview of women's and especially young women positions within political parties.

A strategic collaboration has been established with the National Observatory of Youth that provided the research team with selected specific raw sexo-specific data that have been crossed with qualitative data collected in the framework of the research interviews.

6. Organization of a video contest

A video contest has been organized in order to stimulate politically active young women to play an active role in the research by producing self-portraits on the positive aspects of their political experience as women.

The web section for the video contest has been created (http://politiqueaufeminin.org) and the launching of the video contest – via an attractive poster - has been realized in the second half of February via blogs, Facebook group, mailing lists, radio, etc.…

Proper follow up has been guaranteed to the video contest, to which 10 videos participated.

A jury has been composed by 5 members (3 researcher, 1 communication specialist, 1 project coordinator) in order to evaluate the videos received. Those have been voted following the 4 following criteria:

- Content's coherence with the proposed topic

- Creativity and originality
- Pertinence of objective and clarity of the message
- Technique

2 videos did not respect one of the criteria (duration) established for participating to the video contest and they have been therefore excluded from the contest.

2 videos won *ex-equo* and they received their prizes in occasion of the launching of the research results and publication (October 2013).

7. *Coaching techniques learning module*

The focus group with junior (in terms of political experience) and senior women in political parties and CSOs has been held on the 30 of November 2011 with 13 participants. This represented the first step for better setting the consequent training module on mentorship techniques articulated in three workshops. The main objective of this action was to observe and detect some aspects of the intergenerational relationship between women politically active and to give them (10 junior/senior women participating in 5 couples) the possibility to improve their joint work in politics, via capacity building in mentorship technics.

The first of the three training workshops has been held on the 10th -11th December 2011, the second on the 19th of February 2012 and the third and last one on the 26th of February 2012.

8. *Data analysis phase*

Maryam Ben Salem, main researcher of this project, carried on the data analysis of all data collected. Once all 41 interviews were transcribed, the researcher analyzed the information collected through the interviews, focus groups and on-line observation. She crossed also qualitative data with quantitative data provided by the National Observatory of Youth and together with data from political parties on women's presence in decision-making bodies within parties.

Questions stated in the Interview guide helped us to answer the research issue while at the same time set the framework for interviewees. A good preliminary knowledge of the field, the challenges, conflicts, and even of interviewees' profiles improves the quality and pertinence of the maintenance grid and facilitates the survey process.

A special focus was put on relations built between interviewees and interviewers. The relation's asymmetry may be in favor of either party; this is why surveyors should try to build relations based on trust and mutual respect, they also should properly use the Interview Guide and give scientific credit to their work, while avoiding symbolic violence that could be generated by the Guide towards individuals coming from popular social categories[11].

When conducting interviews, surveyors had pay attention both to iterated answers as well as to non-vocal replies (body language, eye expressions, attitudes, hesitations) that could help them better understand answers, and namely "politically correct" replies, designed to protect deep thoughts. Risks of artifacts are also present in qualitative surveys. In fact, it is usually difficult to make interviewees talk about their personal experiences and their own vision of the world. Affiliation to

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[11] Stéphane Beaud and Florence Weber, *Guide de l'enquête de terrain*, Paris, La Découverte, 2003.

structures often binds individuals to talk on behalf of the group and not in their own name (use of "we" instead of "I"). The use of prompts is the best way to avoid this trap.

Data collected from individual interviews have been analyzed using different pertinent variables: age, gender, social background, professional status, socialization, engagement history, etc…; these variables in fact provide information about the different relations and perceptions of activism and hence of any rewards that can be generated from there. On the other hand, special focus was put on analyzing key events that can modify or maintain conduct: change of status, biographic incidents, encounters, learning, experiences, etc.

Analysis of the data collected (depth interviews) was carried out according to an analysis grid below to initially determine in each case the steps of militant career and mechanisms that govern the creation of a provision for activism, acting out and maintenance of militant activity. Then, this reading was mobilized to make a comparison between the interviewees and to uncover similarities and differences between social actors who allows a better understanding of differentiated activism choices and mechanisms:

- On the basis of the age variable
- On the basis of the gender variable
- On the basis of the type of activism

AXIS 1	Tendency –disposition- and incentives to engagement / political participation and the mechanisms that govern the passage to the act		
1.1. Dispositions to political engagement (primary and secondary socialization)	Parents / family / teachers / lectures role (political or civic engagement of family members, see in this case the differences in the types of commitments between parents and interviewed)	Role of education (weight of patriarchy / encouragement from parents...	Participation in extracurricular activities (scoot, school children etc.) And their influence at the confidence, public speaking, teamwork, interest in certain topics (environment, social, women's rights, health, etc.).
1.2. Acting out (actual entry in politics or social life, beginning activism)	Biographical disruption, meetings, biographical availability / appointment (at which moment of the biography was made the acting out?)	Engagement experience: feeling valued, excitation of collective action, the possibility of social mobility, etc..	
AXIS 2	Form of participation choices		
2.1.	weight of experience	Vision of political	Choice of social media :

mechanisms at work in the choice of engagement (association, party, web, union)	(satisfaction or disappointment + weight of social and cultural factors (social status, age, etc.)	participation: try to detect which promotes interest in a form of participation rather than another negative view of politics (loss of confidence in the politicians a) influence of the political context, the Ben Ali regime, partisan bickering after 14 etc.. b) influence of a negative experience: feelings of exclusion in the political organization of belonging / rigid hierarchy c) the influence of social and cultural background: readings, peer experience	influence of the cultural and technological capital of the interviewee and his social environment (level of education, level of education and occupation of parents)
2.2. influence of the revolution in the interviewee political carrer	- reduction of the commitment / activist retraining or early commitment	Causes that explain these differentiated attitudes toward changes that occurred since the revolution: reduction of the recognition / changes in political opportunities structure of / changes in the context / disintegration or restructuring of the organization of political affiliation	
2.3. risk perception and management	Detect differences between those who are committed before the revolution (with a risk-taking) and those who are committed after	Parents or relatives' activism past to whom the interviewee identify himself? Learning to manage risk in situ? valorization of risk-taking	Differences in the risk perception between men and women and reactions of family members in relation to this

19

	(especially those who justify the non-commitment by the authoritarian climate)	by peers? (What are the satisfactions found in risk-taking?)	
AXIS 3	<u>The conditions for activists commitments sustainability</u>		
3.1. weight of recognition in the engagement maintainance	Visibility	Access to a social, political, culturel capital	Evolution within the hierarchy, reponsabilties given to the militant, valorization by the group members
3.2. relations with older members	Rôle of an experienced person in the acting out and maintaining activism	Transmission of political *savoir-faire* and *savoir-être* / identification to a mentor	Exclusion of young people with regard to senior militant
3.3. relations with men	Experience of gender discrimination / access to decision making positions	How the respondant dela with the exclusion experience/ feeling and in what extent it intervene in the decision to withdraw	-

9. *Presentation and validation of preliminary results*

The pre-analysis and the preliminary results of the research have been discussed on the 6th of May 2013 with a selected number of stakeholders in order to provide comments and remarks for the researcher results finalization.

10. *Finalization of research results*

After discussion of preliminary results Maryam ben Salem has finalized the research, which has been then submitted to the senior advisor for revision and final validation.

11. *Translation of research, graphic layout and printing*

Once the final version of the research was available (in French) it has been translated into English and Arabic, designed in graphic layout and printed (200 copies in Arabic, 200 copies in English). The 3 versions have been uploaded in 2 thematic CAWTAR's web sites.

A research summary has been written (in 2 languages) and sent, together with the final publication, to a series of national, regional and international key actors like political parties, government institutions, syndicates, NGOs, media, international organisation, research centres.

12. Dissemination of research results

This research project considered communication and participation as strategic aspects to translate research results into action. The communication/outreach activities realized since the beginning of the project aimed to interest different stakeholders to the research activities and prepare them to welcome its results.

In the first phases of the project the communication actions have been mainly focused on the illustration of the initiatives to all stakeholders involved in it (interviewees, participants to focus group, institutions partner, etc…) and on some specific outreach activities, hereinafter described.

A specific page on CAWTAR's web site has been dedicated to the initiative:
http://www.cawtar.org/template.php?code=26&pere=21
and a description of the project has been posted as well on Wikigender web site:

and on the women's political participation CAWTAR web site:
www.womenpoliticalparticipation.org

A specific web page for the video contest has been created: http://politiqueaufeminin.org and the video contest information disseminated.

Since the beginning of the project, Maryam Ben Salem, main researcher, participated also to different national and regional conferences related to women's political participation. Talking about how and why young women participate in Tunisia's political sphere, and how the country's political landscape has changed for women, Ben Salem stressed some aspects more specifically related to the news form of political participation – namely cyber activism.

She participated to the following conferences:
- regional conference organised by the Institute of Research on the Contemporary Maghreb (IRMC), on 24-25th of June 2011, on the topic "*Social movements online, cyber activism and new forms of expression in the Mediterranean*", presenting some very preliminary results of the research summarized in a paper titled "*Tunisian Women and the diverse utilisation of the web net as tool for political participation*"
- conference organized by the British council on the 4-6 mars 2012, in Istanbul, and titled *"Gender Awareness Raising: Case Studies, Tools and Practise"* where Maryam ben Salem presented a paper on "*Tunisian Women Use of the Cyberspace*"

- regional conference organised by the Institute of Research on the Contemporary Maghreb (IRMC), on 12-13-14 of April 2012, in Tunis, on the topic "*Virtual communication via internet and transforming social ties and identities in in the Mediterranean*", presenting some very preliminary results of the research summarized in a paper titled "*Process of (de)legitimation of female cyber-activism in Tunis: towards dwindling gender based discriminations?*"

- In December 2012 (23rd and 24th), in Cairo, Maryam Ben Salem did a presentation on "women's political participation through social networks" in a conference organised by CAWTAR and CARE on "*The image of Arab woman in media after the revolutions and the role of civil society and NGOs*" and she also finalized an article titled "new configurations of citizenship practices in Tunisia: street and virtual rallies" for the Tunisian Association of Social and Cultural Anthropology, which held a conference in Tunis on December 2012 on "Democratic Transition".

- In April 2013, an article titled "*Media visibility of women politicians in Tunisia in traditional media and new media: obstacles to visibility and media coverage strategies*" written by Maryam Ben Salem in collaboration with Atidel Mejbri, head of media unit in CAWTAR, was accepted and will be published in a book edited by Maria Raicheva-Stover and Elza Ibroscheva (2014) "*Women in Politics and the Media: Perspectives from Nations in Transition*", New York: Bloomsbury.

The book chapter will also be translated in Italian and published in a book edited by Renata Pepicelli from Bologna University on women and Arab media after the revolution for the Italian project "arab media report".

All these articles and presentations gave very good national and regional visibility to the research and allowed a certain number of stakeholders to get interested into it.

In occasion of working meetings or workshops, the staff of the project diffused also the information about the realisation of this research initiative and its expected outputs, in order to interest potential stakeholders.

The large visibility of the study has been guaranteed through the publication of the research and research summary on 2 thematic existing CAWTAR's project web sites - namely about women's political participation: www.womenpoliticalparticipation.org; and about local governance http://localgov.cawtar.org.

It has been distributed through an electronic mailing list with more than 600 contacts regionally and internationally. A specific page on CAWTAR's website has been dedicated to the initiative (http://www.cawtar.org/template.php?code=26&pere=21#projet_gender3 and a page on Wikigender has been created (http://www.wikigender.org/index.php/%C2%AB_Young_women_and_political_participation:_instit utional_and_informal_mobilization_paving_the_way_to_future_actions%C2%BB)

A press conference has been organized in Tunisia, on October 3rd 2013, inviting strategic stakeholders (political parties, government institutions, syndicates, NGOs, media, international organization, research centres) together with all project participants in order to distribute the final version of the research executive summaries and to watch the 2 videos winning the video contest.

A radio interview (in RTCI) has been realized illustrating main results of the research.

Different stakeholders have been involved, at different degrees, in project activities (in the occasion of the hypothesis validation meeting, kick-off meeting, interviews, focus group, round table,

discussion of preliminary results….). Some of them just participated once to a specific activity and then received the final research as follow up to their participation.

The National Observatory of Youth, who was supposed to be deeply involved in the whole project, did not really play an active role as expected, for the reasons previously described.

Some other stakeholders, perceived themselves as active protagonists of the project, not only expressing their views or orienting contents, but - more important – acquiring a nuanced knowledge about the topic (especially the women participating to the coaching techniques learning modules). This motivate them to transfer this knowledge, to take positive measure, or to become committed promoter of young women's political participation, demonstrating a certain level of ownership of the project contents.

13. Coordination among Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia research teams:

The self-proposed coordination of 4 countries (Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia) among 17 countries involved in the IDRC research initiative on Democratic Governance, Women's Rights and Gender Equality: "Young Women's Political Participation in the MENA Region", has been a very enriching experience.

The 4 countries, studying new forms of young women's political participation, met together for 4 times (in Egypt, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Egypt). Through exchange of analysis, interpretations, visions and joint discussions, the 4 research teams, considering similarities and analogies of their political contexts, have helped each other in designing and better defining their national researches.

The discussions, oriented by the Egyptian team, were focusing on new aspects, visions and exchange of information, useful to better contextualise researches.

This research project, especially in its component of the regional coordination (together with Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia) is revealing itself as a very special capacity building and learning opportunity for the researchers and the project coordinator involved in it.

The discussions and exchange held in the regional meetings with the other research teams and the representative from IDRC, had multiple positive effects:

o contributing to better finalizing some already identified aspects of the national research (new forms of political participation, cyber activism, etc..)
o exploring some other unforeseen angles of the research analysis (gender quota in politics, re-thinking of the community, ..)
o identifying strategic common fields of study that in their comparative dimension are of topical interest
o opening up to more advanced reflections on the socio-political changes which are taking place not only in the Arabic region but in the whole world. This is pushing the national researches to become -in their analysis and observation of the present – an innovative and original instrument for understanding the past/present and for contributing to a better future egalitarian political realm.

The possibility for peer's review (among the 4 teams) of national researches had been explored and the idea of finalizing joint papers (involving 2 or 3 country research team) on specific topics (quota,

new innovative forms of political participation) has been discussed as well. Unfortunately no one of these two ideas had been realized due to time commitment necessary to properly realize what proposed. This could have been an opportunity for obtaining further interesting research outputs.

vi) Project outputs:

A research (in French and translated into English) analyzing modalities of young women's engagement in politics in Tunisia and conditions for sustainability commitments in time.
The research consists on a comparison between new and traditional forms of political participation.
On the basis of the research's results a set of recommendations aiming to enhance young women political participation was elaborated by the researcher.
A research summary (in French and English) highlighting main results of the above mentioned research.

2 short videos illustrating different modalities of women's political participation

10 women politically active (5 couples of senior and junior politicians) who improved their relationships and learnt techniques for better transfer of know-how and transferable political skills

41 interviewed people + 38 persons participating to focus groups + 10 "passive participants" involved in project activities and informed about the project topic.

More narrative details:

Research

The research is producing and sharing knowledge about reasons and modalities for young women's political participation in Tunisia, comparing political activism before and after the revolution occurred in 2011 and taking into consideration gender related aspects.
In the first draft of the IDRC project proposal (pre-January 14), cyber activism was apprehended as a marginal, underground practice. But considering the importance that this practice has taken in the aftermath of the revolution, the interview guide has been adopted to this new state of facts by focusing on the processes that led to the emergence of cyber activism as a form of alternative political participation with its own logic and that reveals a transformation in the relationship to politics. Researcher became interested in both the role of recognition in the rise of this practice and the reasons that lead some actors to favor this form of participation, and the meaning they give: is it for them political participation or citizen participation? What is politics according to them?

This research project has an additional innovative aspect, which is the use of audio-visual tools (video contest) as, on one side a research tool to listen to political actors in their own description of their political activism, but on the other side, as a potential communication tool for sensitizing a large audience on different forms of political participation.

Capacity

As mentioned in the previous paragraph this research-oriented-to-action project has also contributed, through a very limited action, to the capacity building of 10 politically active women in terms of mentorship techniques.
The specific training action on mentorship techniques has allowed participants to get acquainted with the importance of an effective mentorship between less and more experienced women within political parties and CSOs in order to build trust relationships and boost joint work towards democracy and women's rights.

This research project had a pilot component related to the observation of the relationships between experienced and less experienced political women. The observation was done through the interviews but also in occasion of the attendance of a coaching techniques learning module by 5 "couples" of senior and junior women from political parties and civil society organizations. The assumption, arising from previous CAWTAR projects' experience, that young women sometimes interrupt their political activism due to negative relationships with senior political women within the same political party, was lying behind the decision of such observation. The 5 "couples" (10 women) involved had in the meantime the opportunity to improve their "mentoral" relationship and their skills in transferring political know how and political transferable skills

Policy and practice

The decision to involve and to partner with the National Observatory of Youth, whose mandate is the provision of data and analysis about Tunisian youth, had the aim to collaborate with a governmental key actor that could have played a role in the ownership and dissemination of the research results, especially to governmental institutions aimed to improve the youth social and economic status and participation to public sphere.

vii) Project Outcomes:

What was learned about design of conducting research, building capacities ?.... what problems and which solutions ?

- Involving "couples" of women politicians in learning coaching techniques has been an interesting exercise. Being it a "pilot" exercise, its dimension had, consequently, limited effects in terms of capacity building of participants and also in terms of "observation".
- The project was an opportunity for the main researcher to reinforce her capacities in designing and conducting a research and also regarding the conciliation between research and development goals and objectives.

Certain aspects in project design that were important ?

The most important aspect was the changing political and social context, which were very stimulating and challenging for the researcher in terms of project design and in terms of research results. Indeed, the research do not only gives an insight about young women political participation modalities but also highlights changes and transformation in youth's relation and perception of politics.

Which lessons from these outcomes ?

viii) Overall Assessment and Recommendations:

- This research project supported by IDRC had a perfect timing: it started at the very beginning of 2011 when in 3 (Tunisia, Egypt and Sudan) out of 4 (plus Ethiopia) countries interested by the "self- coordinated group" were going through important political transformations. Taking into consideration the very specific historical moment (characterised by social, political and economic transformations) of Tunisia, Egypt and Sudan, their researches implementations provide very useful elements of reflection on experiences and possible methodologies for implementing researches in such moving and unpredictable contexts. IDRC initiative has been, therefore, in this moment, a very interesting observatory and "workshop" on research implementation in transformational and politically sensitive contexts. In such framework IDRC has been a perfect partner in terms of flexibility and adaptation to the continuing and sometimes unexpected unfolding of the national researches.

- IDRC has been stimulated by CAWTAR in order to provide technical assistance on "how to write a policy brief" and how to design the "pilot initiative" related to coaching techniques learning among women politicians. Due to different reasons such technical assistance couldn't be in place.

- As previously expressed, the experience of the "self-coordination" dynamic among the 4 above mentioned countries has proven to be a very enriching exercise. The 4 countries, studying new forms of young women's political participation, met together for 4 times (in Egypt, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Egypt). Through exchange of analysis, interpretations, visions and joint discussions, the 4 research teams, considering similarities and analogies of their political contexts, have helped each other in designing and better defining their national researches. The discussions, oriented by the Egyptian team, were focusing on new aspects, visions and exchange of information, useful to better contextualise researches. The possibility for peer's review (among the 4 teams) of national researches has been explored and the idea of finalizing joint papers (involving 2 or 3 country research team) on specific topics (quota, new innovative forms of political participation) has been discussed as well. Unfortunately no one of these two ideas has been realized due to time commitment necessary to properly realize what proposed. This could have been an opportunity for obtaining further interesting research outputs and it is suggested to be realized in future similar initiatives

o A comparison among the 4 researches could have been envisaged too but that would have entailed the finalization of a commonly agreed methodology

o The ownership of research results is a strategic aspect. In a moment of deep transformation as the one characterizing Tunisia in this moment, it has not been easy to involve governmental authorities and other key stakeholders in project activities. Either they were over-solicited by donors, projects, political events, etc…, either they were not constant in their presence, diminishing the possibility of a real, concrete, collaboration and "appropriation" of research results. In addition, a deeper commitment by the National Observatory of Youth could have been translated into a more effective "outreach" and applicability of research results into public policy or actions

o We think the value and importance of the project, in relation to investment of time, effort and funding, is significant. The project had a time period of two years and a half during which political transformation has been observed and the researcher had the possibility to observe political actions in different circumstances and time periods and to re-interview people in an interval of time when opportune. This allowed the researcher to "verify/validate" certain aspects/results she wanted to highlight in the research.
We think that it would be important to allocate more funds for this kind of projects taking into account the costs of editing and publishing as well as the need for enlarging the research team.   In the occasion of this research project and its related considerations, some issues among the many touched, emerged as of topical interest. One in particular would be worth to be the focus of further, structured, analysis and it could be described under the provisional title of "*State accountability towards women's rights in Tunisia/Arabic region: which priorities ? Which mechanisms? Which way forward ?...*".
The social and political changes, arisen from the popular riots in the Arabic region, seem indeed not to conduct toward the expected egalitarian democratic new societies. Women's rights in particular are at stake with the realistic risk of their general regression. If then the state-citizen relationship is called into question and the actual representative democracy is challenged, new public decision-making systems cannot forgo the adoption of concepts such as participative governance, transparency and accountability. And, if this has to be the new frame, how women's rights and feminism are positioned in it?

o IDRC should play a strategic role in releasing project research and policy brief all over the world and in highlighting and implementing potential synergies and complementarities with other regions (South East Asia…) or actors.