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Policy and Practice for Developmental Leaders, Elites and Coalitions

DEVELOPMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

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Working Politically Behind Red Lines:
Structure and agency in a comparative study of women's coalitions in Egypt and Jordan

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

''Engaging politically behind red lines'' examines six cases of collective initiatives to advance women's rights in Egypt and Jordan between 2000 and 2010. The study explores what accounts for the emergence, success and failure of women's coalitions in these two countries. Using a case study approach, the study examines the interface between collective agency and structure in two national contexts characterized by authoritarian rule and powerful Islamist movements strongly opposed to any structural transformation of gender hierarchies. The research suggests that politically inhibiting and closed policy environments can seriously undermine the potential for collective action to influence positive policy change. Yet the ability to 'work politically' is critical if activists are to make progress in achieving their goals and in developing strong coherent internal organizational structures. The general finding therefore is that engaging in informal or 'backstage politics' is equally - if not more - important than formal channels of engagement in these contexts. Policy change relies heavily on informal relationships rather than formal citizen-state engagements, or interactions of civil society organizations and the organizations of the state. The study examines ways in which the international community has positively contributed to the success of the coalitions as well as occasions when its practices have compromised the organizational development and consolidation of coalitions and their policy impact. The study concludes by identifying key policy messages that may help donors and supporters in the international community to support women's coalitions.

Executive Summary

How can the international community advance gender equality in politically closed and socially conservative contexts through effective support to women's coalitions? This report presents the findings from a study of how six collective initiatives in Egypt and Jordan have formed and worked politically to advance the gender agenda in a number of key areas. The study involved in-depth interviews with coalition leaders and members, donors and locally based gender and development experts.

The key findings from this study are here presented under the following headings:

- Critical overarching themes regarding women's coalitions in politically closed and socially conservative contexts
- Factors that facilitate the formation of coalitions
- Factors that facilitate the relative 'success' of women's coalitions
- Coalition strategies for greater influence
- What donors should avoid doing
- Key elements of effective donor support

Critical overarching themes regarding women's coalitions in politically closed and socially conservative contexts

- Coalitions to advance women's equality are rare in the Middle East, challenged by a restrictive and professionalized political culture that discourages collective forms of agency.
- A constellation of factors, rather than a single factor, accounts for the emergence of coalitions. This constellation includes (but is not restricted to): a cause that touches on people's lives, a politically opportune moment, and local actors that respond by mobilizing to form a collective initiative.
- Given that the space for influencing policy is restricted to a closed circle of elites, it is not the agency of the coalition alone that leads to policy influence. The key finding is that engaging in informal 'backstage' politics is equally, if not more, important than formal channels of engagement in these 'closed' political spaces. Policy influence heavily relies on informal relationships rather than strictly formal citizen-state engagements. The "formal" faces of advocacy [such as through petitions, conferences and media advocacy] play a secondary role to informal processes in eliciting change, which is often facilitated by informal, backdoor processes of negotiation and mediation between coalition leaders and key players.
- Moreover, informal networks and, often, prior relationships, are crucial for building the internal cohesion of a coalition; and they also help to reduce their vulnerability to external political threat.
- Influential coalitions are those that are able to build formal as well as informal links with the appropriate actors, establish the right kind of image locally and secure the right kind of support from international official and civil society actors.
- In all of the six case studies studied, strong linkages existed between international and national actors, hence highlighting the importance of understanding how international actors can play an enabling role to support coalitions. In five out of six coalitions studied, donors played a critical role at some point in the life of the coalition, in both positive and detrimental ways.

Factors that facilitate the formation of coalitions

- Coalitions for advancing gender equality commonly emerge in 'openings' created by some international event or local happening, activity or initiative (including funding).
- Such occasions tend to occur at those times when strict control on participation in political space

has been relaxed by the government and hence where women's leaders recognise the urgency of seizing the opportunity before political spaces are closed again.

- Understanding those openings, 'seizing the moment' and defining the realistic limits of the possible is a key political analytical skill required by leaders and donors alike.
- Coalitions sometimes also form in response to perceived threats that are seen to seriously undermine women's choices.
- Organizations join coalitions because of the incentives to increase their visibility, their networks and their sphere of influence. But they also join coalitions because of fear of social or political marginalization if they do not become part of the "in-group". Pre-existing social networks between individual leaders commonly form the basis for successful coalition formation.
- The members of these coalitions are very aware that in order to have policy influence they need to rely significantly on the social and political networks that are often based on their common class, professional and educational backgrounds. Without such political and social clout and protection, they can face difficulties in withstanding the often-harsh realities of unpredictable political conditions.
- The availability of foreign funding has served as a major incentive for the participation of different leaders and organizations in collective initiatives and the formation of some coalitions was either facilitated or driven by available funds

Factors that facilitate the *relative 'success'* of women's coalitions

- **A legal umbrella:** In the light of the restrictions on freedom of association and freedom on citizen-led collective action in both Jordan and Egypt, having a legal umbrella is crucial for the viability of a coalition's organizational form and the continuation of its activities.
- **Cultural and national authenticity:** As both countries have politically and culturally complex relationships vis-a-vis the West, the question of positionality (or perceived identity) is as important as the cause, framing and the timing. The public perception of the cultural and national authenticity of the leaders of a coalition serves to significantly enhance prospects for its success and to facilitate its ability to mobilize wider support for its work. More importantly, it can help to withstand fierce opposition from those who label the members of the coalition as agents of the West.
- **Official and unofficial support:** Successful coalitions are able to combine official support that openly supports their cause, as well as unofficial, informal support from other key figures in the regime or wider society which - if publicly announced - would be counter-productive for the coalition.
- **Framing or avoiding sexuality:** In view of the conservative culture in both Jordan and Egypt, and the particular sensitivities associated with sexual politics, successful coalitions were either able to avoid choosing issues associated with sexuality altogether or were able to frame them in completely different terms.
- **Outmanoeuvring the opposition:** Coalitions are effective when they are able to outmanoeuvre the opposition by appropriate framing and securing support from politically powerful actors.
- **Internal consensus building:** Coalitions are most effective when they are able to withstand fragmentation and ensure a sense of ownership among their leading members through institutionalized internal mechanisms of consensus-building and conflict mediation.

Coalition strategies for greater influence:

- Strategies to elicit change through collective action need to be tailored from within, and according to the local context.
- Strategies based on international blueprints are awkward to implement and sometimes backfire. However, local leaders do and can borrow strategies from their exposure to international experiences and ideas, and they learn to adapt them appropriately to local conditions.
- Framing an issue involves not only finding an appropriate way of representing the cause to the

outside world, but also ensuring that the 'packaging' of the message is acceptable to the collective leadership.

- Having to deploy multiple framings for multiple audiences means that coalitions have often had to frame their campaigns in a variety of ways to ensure the compatibility of their messages with international conventions or with religiously prescribed frameworks or national constitutions.
- Securing effective engagement with the media, which at times requires securing positive coverage while at other times means maintaining anonymity and protecting the coalition and its activities from media coverage.

What donors and high-level officials should *avoid:*

- **Creating local coalitions themselves:** When international donors seek to 'create' local coalitions, and are seen to do so, these coalitions can often be perceived by the public as 'creatures' of the donors or as being driven by financial or professional incentives rather than commitment to the cause. Their work and legitimacy can hence be severely undermined by questions regarding their integrity and commitment to the cause.
- **Criticizing gender inequality without careful consideration:** Donors, political spokespersons and officials need to be sensitive to the wording and timing of criticism of gender inequalities locally in order not to undermine local efforts.

Key elements of effective donor support for women's coalitions

The international (donor) community plays an important role supporting women's coalitions as a means of furthering gender equality. While some positive support has been provided by donors, there is room for improvement. Below are the key elements this study has identified that can make the contribution of donors more effective.

- Detailed understanding of the local history and politics of gender. Knowing and listening to the key players and organizations, identifying the windows of opportunity.
- This requires donors to have a trained workforce, both local and international, with political analytical skills in the gender field that enables them to 'work politically', with understanding and sensitivity, with women and their organizations.
- The ability to create an enabling environment, mood and momentum for the emergence of coalitions. This might involve promoting and supporting international and especially regional activities and events which often create a ripple effect on an issue locally. Such events need to be carefully 'framed' and positioned so as not to provoke local opposition or antagonise possible allies.
- Brokering and convening opportunities for women's leaders to meet, to articulate and aggregate their aims and agreements.
- Organizational memory within the donor communities about previous experiences, endeavours, relationships and an analysis of their successes and failures.
- Local and international staff that have developed previous local relationships and networks across a long period of time, amounting to a repertoire of social and political capital.
- Understanding the political constraints but also being able to identify openings for engaging with both government and civil society actors.
- Making sure that any proposal presented by an organization is one that reflects the vision, internal division of roles and planned activities of the key leaders of the coalition, who are likely to come from more than one organization.
- Ensuring that there is a high level of transparency regarding all parties vis-a-vis the budget and its components.
- When monitoring the work of a coalition, it is important to consult with as many of the coalition's leaders as possible, rather than relying on the feedback given by the member that received the funding.

- During the evaluation of coalitions, attention needs to be given to processes as well as outputs or outcomes, as internal governance and decision making can affect performance on the ground.

Finally, this study has found that successful donor support for emerging coalitions was characterized by a deliberate policy of making a number of important diversions from the typical project cycle. These include:

- Ongoing investment in, and commitment to, the process of building internal cohesion and organizational and political capacity rather than focusing solely on delivery of outputs.
- A recognition that coalitions need time to discuss and debate the division of roles, appropriate strategies, relationships with stakeholders, government and non-governmental actors and consequently do not function well with three-five year funding cycles.
- A conscientious effort on the part of donors to remain low key and neither claim the formation of the coalition as their "success" nor any policy change to which the coalition has contributed as an outcome of their own intervention.
- A willingness to think outside the box and take risks in supporting unconventional forms of collective agency – and nurturing their collective leadership: in other words, a focus on the actors rather than strictly the project.
- **An understanding of the complexity of policy-influencing processes and the fact that while local actors can and do have an impact in many instances, there is no linear causal relationship between a coalition's actions and the policy change itself.**

Glossary

AWSA: Arab Women's Solidarity Association

BC: British Council (Jordan)

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CEWLA: Centre for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance

CSO: Civil Society Organization

DFID: Department for International Development

IRC: Information and Research Center (King Hussein Foundation)

JNCW: Jordanian National Commission for Women

MOSD: Ministry of Social Development

NCFA: National Council for Family Affairs

NCHR: National Council for Human Rights

NCW: National Council for Women (Egypt)

NGO: Non-governmental Organization

NWRO: Network of Women's Rights Organization

RNGO: Royal Non-governmental Organization

SIGI: Sisterhood is Global Institute

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Section One

INTRODUCTION

Research Questions and Purpose

This study is a political analysis of 6 coalitions that have sought to advance gender equality in Egypt and Jordan. It explores two key questions:

1. What factors have facilitated and frustrated the emergence of leaderships and coalitions around related gender issues in Egypt and Jordan?
2. What factors have influenced their relative success or failure in the different political and institutional contexts?

In pursuing those questions, this analysis offers a comparison of 6 case studies of how women's groups and coalitions seek to influence policy processes on gender justices in authoritarian contexts within shifting and highly constrained political spaces. In particular, the study explores the politics of the interaction between leadership and coalitions on the one hand, and government agents, on the other hand.

The purpose of this research is:

(a) To explore the role of women's leaderships in relation to shaping the gender agendas in Egypt and Jordan.

(b) To analyse and compare how different factors - internal and external, structural and agential – interact to shape outcomes.

(c) To understand how women's coalitions forge locally appropriate strategies for political action in pursuit of their goals in the political and institutional contexts of the two countries. The deployment of locally appropriate strategies involves negotiating relationships, making trade-offs and working through multiple framings.

In seeking to answer the questions, this work will contribute to the overall aims of the Developmental Leadership Program (DLP) which are to understand better the role which developmental leaders, elites and coalitions play in promoting institutional change to bring about inclusive social development and to generate new policy and operational messages for the international community.

The context and the issues

Note: It is important to note that this research was completed in December 2010 before the citizen protests erupted in Egypt demanding the ousting of President Mubarak and the demise of his authoritarian regime.

Egypt and Jordan are both authoritarian regimes, although the contextual dynamics of the interface of structure and agency spawn local variations of hegemonic control.

Both regimes have come under pressure (although sporadic and inconsistent) from the US and the EU [1] to show a commitment to democratisation and have responded by accommodating certain aspects of liberal democratic systems, but in a manner which does not pose a threat to the status quo or the ruling elite. The political space that is allowed for citizen action is therefore tightly controlled. It is intended to give sufficient "evidence" to the West that each country is committed to democratisation while unpredictably contracting and expanding the parameters of this space depending on regime considerations (Ottaway, 2003). One way in which the above dynamics have played out in both the Egyptian and Jordan regimes is through the endorsement of parliamentary and local level elections while manipulating the conditions and/or outputs of such processes, a form of what Schedler terms electoral authoritarianism, and which he succinctly describes as follows:

> [E]lections are broadly inclusive (they are held under universal suffrage) as well as minimally pluralistic (opposition parties are allowed to run), minimally competitive (opposition parties, while denied victory, are allowed to win votes and seats), and minimally open (opposition parties are not subject to massive repression, although they may experience repressive treatment in selective and intermittent ways). Overall, however, electoral contests are subject to state manipulation so severe, widespread and systematic that they do not qualify as democratic (Schedler, 2006:3).

The above typifies the electoral system in both countries, where representation and voice are allowed, but sufficiently controlled, co-opted or made compliant in such a manner that power hierarchies remain intact.

The way in which electoral systems are governed by the two regimes is reflective of how governments in Egypt and Jordan function vis-a-vis other dimensions of political life, such as the press, civil society organisations, political movements and citizen action more generally: their existence and participation in the political life of the country is mostly tolerated but the terms of their engagement is constantly subject to negotiation, contestation and reconfiguration.

Both governments' engagement with gender issues and women's activism reflect some of these dynamics. In both contexts, the political leadership have in the past ten years introduced a number of reforms to address gender discrimination in policies and laws. Simultaneously, the spaces available for autonomous civil society organisations and movements to hold the state accountable and champion rights beyond what is offered are very limited, and often severely controlled. In controlling dissent while simultaneously promoting certain gender reforms, regimes are seeking to give the external image of being on the path to democratisation while preserving the status quo.

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1   The EU and US leadership has sporadically made critical comments of both governments' human rights records and political repression.

Understanding women's activism in Egypt and Jordan through the structure-agency prism

Actors and spaces

It is important to note that women's coalitions have been far and few in both Egypt and Jordan. Forms of sustained collective activism in contemporary history have generally been rare, either around women's empowerment or other issues. And a combination of structural factors associated with geopolitical orders, national political systems and institutions as well as agential factors such as the nature of leadership, contending actors for legitimacy have shaped the trajectories of women's activism in Egypt and Jordan.

The historical trajectories of both countries partly explain why in Egypt some women's organisations are more likely to engage in contentious politics vis-a-vis the state than in Jordan. In the case of Egypt, civil society organisations emerged in the 19th century, founded by members of the land-owning aristocracy but also by members of the middle class. They were autonomous, vibrant and operated in relatively politically free space. They assumed different forms of activism (social and political and sometimes both). Since the 1950s, civil society in general, including women's organisations, has been subject to political repression. On the other hand, in Jordan, civil society organisations were formed at a much later Nonetheless, some actors will and do play a role in challenging state hegemony[2]. stage in the country's history and engagement in adversarial politics vis-a-vis the state are not intrinsically part of the country's political culture (Clarke, 2003). The women's movements follow roughly the same historical/political trajectory described above in each country context[3]. In Egypt, an organised women's rights movement was founded in 1923. While it was led by upper class elite women, it was nonetheless an autonomous, independent movement from within civil society. It played multiple roles in claiming women's rights including advocacy for change in state laws, policies and practices towards women, as well as the extension of charitable assistance to underprivileged women and the mobilisation of resources to encourage women's education. In Jordan, the women's movement emerged two decades later, in the 1940s, with the establishment of the Feminist Union in Jordan led by Princess Zein el Sharaf. Although a variety of independent organisations also flourished, leading members of the royal family have historically played a key role in shaping the national agenda on women's rights issues[4].

Women's NGOs in Egypt tend to be larger in number and more diverse in orientation (leftist leaning, Islamist, liberal etc.) than in Jordan. However, the areas of NGO activism has tended to be fairly similar, ranging from charitable assistance to marginalised women and their families, developmental interventions in education and health, and more recently activities to boost women's political representation. More recently, women's organisations have become more engaged in advocacy on a policy-level. In all six case studies analysed here, the target of the interventions was national policy and policy making processes

The conceptual framework through which these forms of activism are discussed is one developed by Coelho and Cornwall on how actors relate to the government through open, closed and claimed spaces. While this framework was developed with democratic and democratising contexts in mind, it is analytically useful for discussing contemporary dynamics of the interface of structure-agency vis-a-vis women's activism in Egypt and Jordan.

Coelho and Cornwall contend that relationships between government and citizens can be examined through the kind of spaces which emerge for engagement. These may be closed, invited or claimed.

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2   For an excellent account of the history of civil society formation in Egypt see Kandil and Nefissa, 1994.
3   For a historical account of the women's movement, see Al-Ali, 2000; and Badran, 1995.
4   For a most comprehensive historical overview of the formation of Jordan women's organizations, see Naf'a,1999.

Closed decision-making spaces are those with minimal opportunities for participation. These are spaces in which decisions are made by a set of actors behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion (Coelho and Cornwall, 2006). Invited spaces are those in which there are efforts to widen participation, whereby "formal power is more diffusely shared between states and non-state actors while the claimed/created spaces are those which are claimed by less powerful actors "or created more autonomously by them" (ibid).

In Jordan, opportunities for feminist activists to claim spaces have historically been minimal and continue to be so because the public sphere is heavily controlled by the state. Hence, conferences, workshops, protests, petitions and most other forms of activism that take place in the public sphere require prior government permission, without which activists face a real threat of imprisonment, and this is often acted upon by the authorities. Independent citizen action in general is subject to heavy government control, which means that - in politically inhibitive contexts - any claim-making cannot be made autonomously but must first be negotiated with the government. In that sense, claimed spaces are co-created spaces, with the government evidently playing a visible or behind-the-scenes role in setting the parameters of what is politically acceptable and giving the signals of the possible and the prohibited. For example, many of the forms of women's activisms that take place in Jordan take place through invited spaces. Invited spaces are not necessarily always led by the government, but often actors in close proximity to the government such as Royal NGOs (non-profit associations and foundations under the patronage of members of the royal family) or semi-governmental organisations including national human rights councils and women's machineries. However, in participating in invited spaces, autonomous civil society organisations are not on par with royal NGOs or government institutions: inequalities in the power relationships are evident. So they may be invited to participate in the discussions, to receive their feedback and suggestions on proposed law or policy changes but hardly ever to set the agenda.

In Egypt, the situation vis-a-vis women's activisms has some similarities with the Jordanian context but there are some conspicuous differences. Women's advocacy NGOs have historically played a more adversarial role vis-a-vis the government than in Jordan. While they are excluded from invited spaces, they have sought to claim space by engaging with the media, participating in international and regional conferences and disseminating their research as widely as possible, locally and internationally. By virtue of their marginalisation from invited spaces, their ability to engage policy-makers directly is greatly compromised. However, sometimes they make significant inroads in influencing the press and the media in taking on an issue that then becomes widely debated in public opinion circles. This has a ripple effect in policy circles but in an indirect way. Nonetheless, as with Jordan, the scope for claiming spaces autonomously through public activism is severely limited by government control.

Women's NGOs are increasingly present in invited spaces. However, this is a relatively new phenomenon attributable, in large part, to the national women's machineries created in the past decade: the National Council for Women (NCW) and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM). These national women's machineries have assumed the role of representing Egyptian women and the gender agenda. However, they have also used their powers to control the newly invited spaces they have created, engaging in highly exclusionary politics over who gets invited, what the agenda looks like and the terms of engagement.

In both the Egyptian and Jordanian contexts, national women's machineries are highly influential political actors[5] who have a monopoly on influencing government policy and practice on gender issues. In the contemporary context of Egypt, the women's movement has been weakened by the many decades

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5   The UN's definition of a national machinery for women is "a single body or complex organised system of bodies, often under different authorities, but recognised by the Government as the institution dealing with the promotion of the status of women" (Bell et al., 2002: 6)

of government political repression. It is moreover deeply fragmented by a variety of factors, including ideological prisms (to be discussed below) and competition between organisations over resources from external funding. In Jordan, women's organisations are championing women's rights; however, they know that to influence the policy agenda, they need to work closely with the national women's machineries, which have historically been closer to the centres of power.

In Egypt and to a lesser extent Jordan, women's NGOs have become increasingly active in launching campaigns for policy change and for raising awareness of an issue in public opinion. The most successful coalition in the contemporary history of Egypt was the FGM [Female Genital Mutilation] Taskforce. Its establishment was triggered by the flurry of governmental, feminist and Islamist attention on the practice, and it was successful in both influencing public opinion, promoting a model of a socially sensitive approach to grassroots engagement and influencing the government. However, it dissolved in 2000 due to internal challenges to the absence of an institutional framework under which it could work (Tadros 2000). With the exception of the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) Coalition in Egypt and the Family Protection from Violence Coalition in Jordan, most forms of activism take the form of short lived campaigns. For example, in Egypt, in 2010, a campaign was launched against the State Council, Egypt's highest administrative court, for refusing to allow women to become judges. The majority of judges voted in favour of prohibiting women from being admitted to the bar, and women's organisations responded by organising protests in front of the State Council building in Cairo and launching an aggressive media campaign to challenge their stance. A week later, The Supreme Constitutional Court deemed the State Council's decision unconstitutional and required its repeal.

In Jordan, most campaigns tend to be short lived too, focusing on one specific policy issue. For example, in 2006, the Jordanian Coalition for Adopting CEDAW was formed comprising the Human Forum for Women's Rights, the National Centre for Human Rights, Misan-Law Group for Human Rights and the General Federation of Jordanian Women and women's Organisations. The Coalition pressed the government to publish the CEDAW Convention in the Official Gazette to give it force of law. On the 1st of July 2007, the Jordanian government published the Convention in the Official Gazette (Nasser 2009).

The nature of the actors participating in campaigns is very much linked to the contextual dynamics of state-society relations in both countries. Civil society organisations in Jordan often work in partnership with Royal NGOs and semi-governmental institutions. The political weight of autonomous civil society organisations is so minimal and the political culture so inimical to leadership from non-governmental sources that working with the government and through RNGOs[6] seems the only way to stand a chance of having some impact. In Egypt, where state-civil society demarcations are more clearly marked, campaigns are comprised of autonomous women's rights organisations. Informally, national women's machineries have on some rare occasions rendered support to the causes but informally and not through participation in CSO-led campaigns themselves. These dynamics are reflected in the leadership of the six coalitions under study. In Egypt, all three coalitions involved non-governmental organisations. In Jordan, all three coalitions involved partnerships with the government and/or members of the royal family or RNGOs.

In both the Egyptian and Jordanian contexts, it is the civil society arena that generates the greatest opposition to a progressive women's agenda. The political weight of voices from civil society actors [for example, Islamist forces, religious establishment and many NGOs] against women's rights is far greater than the voices of feminist organisations that endorse a progressive women's agenda. Furthermore society's sentiment is generally antagonistic to increasing women's rights, in particular in the area of sexual

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6   Royal NGOs are founded and chaired by members of the Royal Family as civil society organizations to undertake a variety of developmental, cultural and intellectual activities.

politics (marriage rights, domestic violence, marital rape etc.). In many cases, Arab governments pass laws that redress some forms of gender discrimination in spite of civil society opposition. This is critically important since passing progressive legislation is often met with street resistance which requires sustained and intensive sensitisation in order to elicit social change in its favour.

In the contemporary Egyptian and Jordanian settings, the most powerful and significant opposition to reforming gender agendas emanates from the Islamist movements. They have consistently blocked progressive legislation put forward to increase women's rights have been one of the most vehement opponents of the CEDAW. For example, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the Muslim Brotherhood party in Jordan, convened a conference to object to the Jordanian Cabinet's decision to lift its reservations on paragraph four of article 15 of the CEDAW which gives women freedom of mobility and choice of residence without consent of their husbands or other male family members. The IAF argued that such a decision contravenes Islamic teaching and would lead to the collapse of the family (Ben Hussein 2009).

Moreover, Islamist movements in Egypt, Jordan and the Middle East more broadly have played a central role in disseminating cultural values that re-enforce traditional gender roles and values, often giving them a sacrosanct quality by justifying them on religious grounds. How to engage with this opposition and the pervasive and deep Islamisation of social values emanating from their role is a critical challenge for women's rights activists in both Egypt and Jordan.

Women's NGOs in both countries have been galvanised into playing a more active role influencing gender agendas through their participation in international conferences. International conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo 1994) and the International Women's Conference (1995) and more recently Beijing+15 have given women's NGOs a boost partly because of the process of mobilisation in preparation for these conferences, and the allocation of donor funds for civil society participation.

 It is highly significant that where spaces are closed on a national scale, regional and international arenas have significantly opened spaces for women's activisms in both Jordan and Egypt. These spaces have been instrumental in reinvigorating women leaders in a number of ways: sharing experiences, creating allies, galvanising support for a particular issue, and fund-raising. Yet regional and international spaces are also exclusionary in their own way. The conditions of involvement tend to mean that participation is highly restricted. Activists who have accesses to these spaces tend to be highly educated, have a working knowledge of the English language [or French depending on context], have received the training on how to engage in international arenas and have experience in engaging with audiences beyond their immediate settings. Yet disengaging from international spaces is no longer an option for women's organisations who wish to influence policy-processes: As one activist from Pakistan pointed out:

> ''There is a growing realisation that we cannot de-link ourselves from global advocacy processes and debates, because they have far-reaching implications for our lives. It is critically important in this context to share global experiences and link international learning on women's lives with our in-country realities and analyses'' (Mumtaz, 2005:68).

This is very pertinent to the analysis of all six coalitions since international and regional spaces and actors have been influential both at the stage of their establishment and continuation and sustenance. In the section to follow, some of the contextual and agential factors leading to the emergence of policy-influence as a major site of women's activism and coalition work will be discussed.

Beyond the policy paradigms: donors, governments, women's activists

Until the 1990s, women's organisations were primarily engaged in charity and developmental activities in low income communities. While women leaders have throughout sought to engage the governments in changing discriminatory policies and laws, this was often done whenever the opportunities arose in conjunction with other interventions. However, in the past decade, policy influence has become an arena requiring a specialised, expert form of activism, requiring planning, organising and training- it is the arena that requires advocacy.

Advocacy is very much in vogue and not least in feminist circles (Evans, 2005; Nabacwa, 2005). Advocacy is broadly defined here as an approach to influence policy and the policy making arena through a set of deliberate actions. In the contemporary advocacy literature, the main instrument of advocacy has been campaigning which often involves raising awareness of the issue through use of the media, building a constituency supportive of the issue and seeking through a variety of legal and political avenues to influence decision-makers. Certainly, many of these activities are not new and have been the conventional form of engagement in politics for many decades (if not centuries), yet it is the use of a constellation of these methods that has come to characterise advocacy.

Implicitly advocacy is considered not a substitute for other interventions and approaches, but a kind of graduation to a higher, more influential level of engagement. "Advocacy strategies remain essential parts of the essence and evolution of feminist engagement and struggle", suggests Evans (2005:10). The idea of activism evolving into advocacy suggests a linear path, in which there is a kind of graduation to a better form. Doing advocacy in a feminist way entails "infusing advocacy strategies with feminist values. It would seek to advance women's rights and address the effects of policies, laws, corporate behaviour and other processes on the lives of women around the world"(ibid). Feminist advocacy includes: "lobbying, campaigning, research, communication and alliance-building activities which seek to advance women's rights and gender equality" (AWID, 2003:1)

The popularity of advocacy derives from feminist experiences of engaging in transnational experiences (see for example AWID, 2003). However, it also derives from the popularity of advocacy among donors including those that fund organisations and coalitions in Egypt and Jordan. However, from the study of local political contexts and an examination of the dynamics of organisations' responses to donor practices and fads, this study contests some of the underlying assumptions about how engagement in advocacy influences policy and policy processes.. Three main arguments are made here: a) the assumption that policy change happens through feminist coalition, b), the notion that governments are responsive to citizen voices and c) the notion that through a number of activities in the public sphere such as protests, petitions and media advocacy, the government will listen. I will briefly touch on each here, showing how they reveal a disconnection between the kind of agential model of engagement put forward by external actors and the contextual realities on the ground. The themes will then be revisited in the conclusions. The first problem is the assumed causality between civil society activism (including in the form of coalitions and movements) and national level policy change.

In authoritarian contexts such as those of Egypt and Jordan, policy process is responsive to the level and kind of international pressure to democratise, and how the highest political will (the President and the First Lady) respond to it and manage the elitist entourage around them. In Egypt, this comprises the leaders of the ruling National Democratic Party; in Jordan, members of the royal family and the highest echelons of government.

Amal el Sabagh, former secretary general of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW)

argues that there is a fundamental misconception held by many outsiders that policy change happens in response to coalitions' mobilisation. Rather, policy change happens through the political will of the ruling regime. Coalition may help in creating enabling prerequisites such as awareness-raising among the public and media and diffusing likely opposition for an issue among MPs. El Sabagh argues that the establishment of any direct causal relationship between governmental action and coalition work is erroneous. This is critically important because in many donor circles, there is a kind of assumption that citizen action through advocacy forces governments to change. There is an implicit linearity about the path to political change: intervention of factor A will have an impact on factor B. There is a vicious circle in which, in response to donors' inclinations, many women's organisations have reproduced the same misleading representation of the relationship between their interventions and the policy changes, thus re-enforcing the myth. An example of this comes from one of the coalitions, Karama, under examination in this study:

> "After Karama partners in Jordan submitted a CEDAW Shadow Report to the UN and met with Jordanian authorities, the Jordanian Parliament backed a domestic violence law, now awaiting approval in the Senate, and the government withdrew a law that would have restricted NGO funding, the right to gather and the right to participate in international conferences."[7]

Karama's work in Egypt and not in Jordan is explored in this report; however, the case study of how the domestic law was passed in Jordan reveals that there is very little connection between Karama's agency and the highly complex processes of negotiation and mediation that extended over many years in mobilising support for this legislation.

What this study will examine, for each context, is the kind of structural-agential alignment that helped create the enabling prerequisites for change and which were facilitated by right political moments, sometimes unplanned.

The second issue flagged here is associated with government responsiveness to citizenry action (the bigger the collective entity the more pressure on the government to respond).

The advocacy guide for feminists suggests that:

> "The more people involved in strategic advocacy efforts, the louder and more unstoppable are the demands for change and reform. Inclusive and diverse representation is vital for success and diverse voices of those most affected should be included in meetings, strategy sessions, public statements, etc."(AWAD, 2010).

Yet in Egypt and Jordan (as well as many other contexts) it is rare (although it does occasionally happen) for the citizenry to lead in taking public action to the streets. The reasons for this are many. From the coalitions under study, it appears that they are associated with fear (citizens fear incarceration or worse should they engage in what would be dubbed "political" activity), authoritarian political culture (one which discourages activism in general) and an absence of accountability of coalition leaders to the citizenry (by virtue of lack of internal institutional democratic mechanisms).

Yet even if a group of citizens were to venture to express their voice, through signing petitions for example, this does not necessarily translate into influence. While the governments of Egypt and Jordan are not completely oblivious to the voices of their subjects, their policy processes are not responsive to them either. Governments are sensitive to public opinion; however, this is not the same as citizen voice. Gaventa and McGee argue from the eight cases they examined, that "citizen action can play an important role in promoting change, but such change comes through broad coalitions of deeply embed-

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7   "Our Impact" from the un-authored, undated, Karama website http://www.el-karama.org/content/our-impact accessed on 20th November 2010.

ded social actors, who also link to and build alliances with reformers in the state" (Gaventa and McGee 2010:35). In Jordan and Egypt, one would go further and argue that citizen action can often be left completely out of the equation. In the coalitions analysed by Gaventa and McGee, democratic spaces allowed citizen action to materialise through these forms of collective action. However, in all but one of the six cases explored in this research, there was no citizen action. In the one case in which citizen action took the form of participation in a petition, this element did not strengthen their ability to influence. Citizen participation represents one of the major differences in coalitions that emerge in contexts with "a modicum of democratic space" as opposed to ones which emerge in contexts where democratic space is more fragile and under threat.

The above suggestion does not imply in any way that mobilisation of voices for change should not be encouraged and that citizen participation is not important and should not be supported in its own right. Rather, it is to suggest that the signals which serve as incentives for governments to change policy do not necessarily come from citizens, but from elite circles - as is evident from the case studies presented here. The third contention here is that the 'universalization' of advocacy, as a strategy, has often paid little regard to the political and historical specificities of each country. It has led in the end to the export of advocacy models and tools which assumed all too easily that change happens in the formal, public sphere. In Indonesia, India, the Philippines, Brazil and Bangladesh, for example, social movements, coalitions and NGOs' engaged in advocacy to demand and secure all kinds of political, social and economic freedoms (Cohen, de la Vega and Watson, 2001; Miller 1994, Samuel 2007). Advocacy by CSOs was deployed successfully in countries associated with second and third waves of democratisation. The one common feature in all of the above case studies is that advocacy was initiated in countries in democratic transition or already enjoying some level of democracy. In other words, they were taking place at a historical-political conjuncture which made it possible for citizens to claim spaces.

Comparing three case studies of union coalitions in Australia, Canada and the US, Amanda Tattersall notes that coalitions' success in eliciting positive policy outcomes was also determined by structural factors beyond their control, such as the degree of state openness (Tattersall, 2010: 151-152). The more politically closed, the more difficult it is to effect change. Gaventa and McGee's review (2010:3) of campaigns in eight countries (South Africa, Philippines, Mexico, Chile, India, Brazil, Morocco, and Turkey also reaches the same conclusions: "each has at least a modicum of democratic space which is a prerequisite for citizen engagement on national policy issues" In development practice and feminist activism as well, there has been a tendency to try and convert the best practices from these particular country contexts into universal recipes to be followed. For example, a leading feminist development organisation, AWID, recently published a guide on advocacy in which it calls for the deployment of certain communication tools that serve to increase the visibility of the actions and which force policy-makers to pay attention. These include various tactics for successful communication include:

> "… public demonstrations, eye-catching banners and memorable slogans, informative flyers and posters, succinct briefings for policy makers, 'urgent action' letter-writing announcements, captivating interviews in the media, and various means of creative expression such as street theatre and poetry." (AWID, 2010).

Evidently, all these tools involve communication in the formal sphere, and many are potentially adversarial in nature. Yet in many authoritarian contexts, the political spaces and opportunities to engage in similar contentious politics are severely constrained. Activists and NGO leaders find that engaging in a politically effective manner sometimes requires finding alternative channels of conveying messages and ideas. Such forms of engagement are often in the informal sphere and often rely on non-confrontational forms of communication. Engaging in behind-the-scenes negotiations sometimes allows different parties to listen to each other, to arrive at compromises without being under the pressures of media exposure

or pressures from the organizations they represent. This study will show the complex context-specific ways in which agency is exercised through both the formal and informal spheres and through both adversarial and behind the scenes negotiations. These themes will be revisited in the conclusions.

HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY

This section will outline the research questions, hypotheses, variables and methodology that shaped this study.

Subsidiary questions and hypotheses

In order to address the two main questions referred to earlier, on the creation and success of the six selected questions, a number of subsidiary questions guided this research:

- Why are developmental women's leaderships and coalitions so rare in these two countries?
- Where they exist, where do these organisations come from? How were they formed? Who leads them? How are they funded?
- How, if at all, has the level, kind and quality of education of the leaders affected the formation and functioning of developmental women's leaderships and coalitions?
- Have prior relationships and networks between women leaders in the organisations influenced the formation and sustenance of developmental coalitions?
- Are there any empirical characteristics in common amongst the leaderships of successful women's coalitions?
- To what extent do the driving forces behind the coalition (ideals or interests) influence their success?
- How do different coalitions exploit political and institutional space to achieve their objectives and to what extent do their strategies explain their success or failure?
- When, why and how do women's coalitions appeal or respond to different sources of support and funding? And with what effect on structure, strategy and outcomes?
- To what extent do these coalitions learn from and draw on the experience of other women's developmental leaderships and coalitions in other countries; and to what extent do they adapt these lessons to local institutional and structural conditions?

Hypothesis

The overarching hypothesis is that the ability of developmental or reform coalitions and leaderships to advance gender agendas rests greatly on their ability to engage politically with local and international institutions, organizations and actors that influence the context in which they work.

There are a number of working hypotheses deriving from the overarching hypothesis, namely,

1. The capacity to recognize real or anticipated internal or external threats, or opportunities for action, acts as a powerful incentive for developmental leaderships to emerge.

2. The recognition by leaders that coalitions are required to achieve collective action solutions – within and between civil society, customary authorities, bureaucracies, politicians, private sector interests and NGOs – often at elite levels - and that these are critical in achieving positive outcomes.

3. Prior or existing networks play a significant role in underpinning and facilitating the formation of

developmental leaderships and coalitions.

4. Women's coalitions grow and learn through a process of 'spiraling' and 'recycling' participation and membership, drawing on a limited repertoire of organizations and activists.

5. Educated elites play or have played a critical role in the most diverse of institutional set-ups to push for institutional innovation, reform and change.

6. Openness to 'foreign' ideas, accompanied by a willingness to learn from other countries, campaigns or organizations (both South-South and North-South), is a necessary condition but, crucially, is also balanced by the willingness and capacity to adapt lessons to local conditions and requirements.

7. Locally devised strategies and appropriate institutional arrangements have far greater prospect of success than externally-generated or imposed ones.

8. Informal political processes and the use of networks, connections and persuasion of key players can often be a significant element in the strategy of women's leaderships and coalitions, especially in societies where open democratic processes are minimal.

9. The way in which external supporters and funding interacts with domestic leaderships and coalitions can have positive or negative influence on domestic outcomes.

Building on earlier work done in the DLP, and using these hypotheses as starting points, a number of factors or variables of interest were identified and used to compare the origins, processes and outcomes of the coalitions and to provide a framework for their comparative analysis. These were divided into two broad categories and were used to formulate the questions explored in the interviews.

A. *Factors (agential and structural) shaping the formation of coalitions*

1. **A 'trigger' event.** This may have been a *threat*, a *challenge*, an *opportunity* or an *event*. For instance the 'trigger' might have been threat of external invasion or economic crisis; a major international conference; a change in government; a new constitution; an epidemic (social or medical); democratization or the onset of decentralization. We perceived this as some change in the structural, political or institutional environment.

2. **The capacity to respond.** Did (and why and how did) the leaders/elites see and seize the opportunity/moment to respond to the 'trigger'? What enabled them to do so?

3. **The identity of the 'founders'.** Is it possible to identify the 'founders'?

4. **Empirical characteristics of the 'founders'.** The socio-economic, occupational and educational background of the agents involved in initiating the organization or coalition?

5. **Funding and engagement with donors.** Sources and extent of funding (internal/external; governmental, donor, commercial, charitable, private other). What role did this play in the establishment of the coalition?

6. **External impetus.** Has there been a role of external agents/agency (other than financial) in influencing or encouraging or shaping the establishment of the coalition?

7. **Salience of the issue or cause.** What has been the salience of the issue – and for whom - around which the coalition has formed? How widespread has been the perception of the 'trigger' as danger, threat or opportunity?

8. **Prior networks.** Were there any prior links or relationships between the various leaders of the coalition through formal or informal networks?

B. *Factors influencing relative success or failure of developmental leaderships and coalitions*

1. **Nature and scope of the issue.** The aim or goal of the organization or coalition – how 'big' and general was it. For instance to change social attitudes on a key issue or principle may be thought of as 'big' and long-term; but to get a zebra crossing or a new well in a village might be thought of smaller and specific. To provide health or education for all may be a meso-level issue. What interests does it challenge?

2. **Formal institutional context.** Is the formal political institutional structure an open, hierarchical democratic, closed or authoritarian one? Is it federal, unitary? What kind of spaces (open, closed, claimed) exist for different actors to engage in?

3. **Informal institutional context and strength.** This would include cultural dimensions, customary systems of power and authority, informal institutions, prevailing ideologies and belief systems as well as all informal mechanisms for exercising hidden or visible power.

4. **Position of central or local government on the issue.** Is it positive, hostile, neutral? Has it been changing?

5. **The nature and power/influence of the 'opposition'.** Who is against the aims and goals of the coalition? What, if anything, are its links with formal and informal features? In many reform and developmental contexts, there is opposition to change or improvement or inclusion, often in the form of an opposing coalition (formal and informal) of interests, organizations and ideas.

6. **Empirical characteristics of the leadership.** Once again, given the interest in agency, it is necessary to know more about the actors who formed/lead the organization or coalition.

7. **Practices of leadership.** How does the leadership operate within and beyond the organization or coalition? How is it perceived by others? How does it sustain and run the coalition? Open and transparent?

8. **Vision and goals.** Is there a shared vision, ideology, set of goals and/or interests, or is it a compromise or accommodation of views? A feature of coalitions is that their constituent parts may have significant or minor differences. Does the coalition therefore congeal around a compromise position, or is there unanimity?

9. **Networks.** Role of networks, formal and informal, internal/external in gaining access to knowledge, support, influence? What implications for effectiveness of the coalition?

10. **Funding.** Do funders (internal/external) influence the mission (or legitimacy) of the coalition, the

choice of strategies and organizational features?

11. **Framing.** Impact of 'framing' of the issue on outcome? For example, in respect of the provision of universal education is the 'framing' to do with justice and equality, or fulfilling the law as laid down in statute or constitution? Does the coalition adapt the framing of the issue according to differences in audiences?

12. **Strategies pursued.** What strategies are used to promote the goals of the coalition/organization? Open public campaigning? Backstairs politics? Use of informal links and networks?

13. **External factors.** External may be out of the country or beyond the immediate vicinity (for instance how do links between districts and the centre affect outcomes and politics). This is beyond the narrow funding issue.

14. **Learning and adaptation.** Is the coalition open to learning and adapting ideas, policies, programs, strategies from prior experiences or other external or internal campaigns and programs?

Methodological approach

The methodology was guided by the structure-agency approach and so in conducting the interviews, these factors were pursued in discussion with the interviewees. This approach was qualitatively different from a strictly institutional approach. In the institutional approach to the study of politics, the emphasis is on how the existing configuration of institutions, their stability and internal workings facilitate or obstruct policy. From an institutional perspective, policy influence is associated with the quality or strength of political institutions (Acosta, 2010). In Egypt and Jordan, governmental and non-governmental institutions are fairly well developed. However, for political reasons that are explored at length in this study, institutions are not necessarily the pathways through which policy change occurs.

If the research had focused on government institutions and formal decision-making structures and policies, it would have failed to capture the story of how coalitions' leaders approached and engaged with the complex and dynamic political context in which they work. For example, the limitations of an institutional approach (at least a formal institutional approach) became very evident in examining how activists and leaders circumvented existing institutional set-ups in both countries in order to avoid having their demands blocked. In Jordan, conferences and protests, for instance, require prior permission from the governor- this is the institutional mechanism through which citizens must function. In the coalition against so-called crimes of honour, when the campaigners were denied permission from the governor to hold a conference, they sought a higher standing official in the government to grant them permission. Such a request for permission was not through a formal institutional mechanism or process; it was informal, through family connections between one of the members of the coalition and the Minister in office. In the coalition on family protection against violence, it was the institutional mandate of the Ministry of Social Development to assume leadership of the multi-agency Protection Team. Yet power struggles within the team over leadership as well as the resistance of many to the Ministry's assumption of such a role because of its bureaucracy and poor performance on many fronts meant that another route had to be found. To overcome the institutional set up in place, Queen Rania- then Princess- intervened- by creating another organisation that could anchor the work. Hence, institutional analysis does not allow us to take into account the agency of leaders, informal and formal, who influence the politics of policy process and change.

In the agential approach, actors are assumed to influence the course of events. In this research, agency

is considered central to the understanding of how actors engage politically, and how policy processes unfold. A focus on agency allows us insight into the "inside story" of the kind of manoeuvrings happening in order to engage with power struggles and relationships. An agential approach contributes to our understanding of why some coalitions- as organisations- are able to withstand the contextual pressures upon them (political repression, conflicting interests between being part of a coalition and self interest), while others are not, and dissolve or gradually become defunct. An exploration of agency allows us to also understand informal networks as central mechanisms through which politics happens. It is through informal networks that engagements, mediations, negotiations or even dialogues that are sometimes blocked in the formal institutional political arena occur. It is through an understanding of how leaders, managers, members, donors understood and responded to the opportunities and challenges presented in their contexts that we can get a better understanding of the pathways of political change.

However, the analysis of agency needs to be embedded in the analysis of the institutions and structures at hand. Hence in this case, agency explains a great deal, but not fully why some coalitions succeed and others not. Sometimes the structural (contextual) odds against the coalition are too high despite the most effective of leadership processes and strategies. Even in authoritarian contexts in which powerful elites can circumvent institutional dynamics, there are limits to how far actors can go. This is one of the critical limitations of much of the leadership literature which focuses on the qualities and attributes and choices of the leaders without sufficient attention to the opportunities and constraints created by structural dynamics associated with context or the political moment. In that sense not only were their personal trajectories of leadership important, but understanding the web of relationships in which they were embedded was extremely important. The definition of coalition as used in this research is that conceptualised by Leftwich and Hogg as follows:

> "A coalition is best thought of as an association of groups and organisations working to resolve specific problems or to achieve specific goals that are beyond the capacity of any individual member of the coalition to resolve or achieve on their own" (Leftwich and Hogg 2009: 4).[8]

Developmental Leadership is understood as "an inherently political process involving the organization and mobilization of people and resources in pursuit of particular goals, in given institutional contexts of authority, legitimacy and power (often of a hybrid kind)" (Leftwich 2009).

The methodology was qualitative. The approach taken to the study of coalitions was two-fold: first it adopts a "thick description case study" approach and second it is based on purposive case study sampling. A case study approach was deemed as most appropriate to the study of structure-agency in all its complexity, dynamism and contextual specifics. The case study approach also allowed comparisons to be made across coalitions and across country contexts. It provided an opportunity to study relationships as well as actors, shifts and dynamics in spaces, the formal and the informal realms, the historical background as well as contemporary events.

For each country context, three case studies were selected: a successful one, a failed one, and a coalition in the making or struggling to take shape. The purpose of examining a case study of a successful coalition was to contribute to the understanding of under what conditions development coalitions emerge and succeed. The examination of an unsuccessful coalition offers opportunities for examining what agential and structural dynamics- and their interplay - affects the dissolution of this form of collective action or its inability to achieve its objectives. The study of coalitions in the making sheds light on the *processes* of attempting to form collective action around an issue, and thus seeks to capture the dynamics of what facilitates or frustrates the emergence of development coalitions, and how leadership influences this process.

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8   http://www.lpdlec.org/ftp/download/Public%20Folder/Background%20Paper%2001.pdf

The criteria applied in the selection of the coalitions under study were:

1. Coalitions that have emerged in the past ten years. Since structure-agency interactions are highly dynamic and non-static, it was considered preferable that coalitions to be studied in a particular country context would all be in existence around roughly the same time period. Moreover, all of the coalitions (or those in the making) are phenomena in the present. The study however also looked at coalitions that were established in the past and have dissolved (within the last twenty years or so) in order to inform the understanding of contemporary coalitions.
2. They are all coalitions to which the researchers had access with respect to both their leaders and other relevant data.
3. They are all *developmental* coalitions. Development was interpreted in accordance with Robert Chamber's definition of the concept as "good change". Since the researchers espouse a standpoint in which good change is change in the direction of eliminating gender discrimination and in compliance with the spirit of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), women's coalitions which advocate agendas that constrict or inhibit women's rights were excluded.
4. Researchers adopted a consultative process in each national context with a select number of women activists to identify which coalitions offered most opportunities for learning. Many of those consulted were veteran women's activists and were thus well positioned to offer insight into the choice of coalitions and articulate their own justifications for their positions.

The six coalitions selected were as follows:

For Jordan:

1. The coalition on the Protection of the Family against Violence as a successful case study.

2. The Coalition against so-called Crimes of Honour as a case study of a coalition that failed to accomplish its objectives.

3. The right of women to pass on their nationality to their children initiatives; a case study of a number of collective formations in the making.

For Egypt:

1. The CEDAW Coalition as a successful case study.

2. Karama as an initiative that failed to become a coalition.

3. The NWRO as a collective networking initiative that aspires to become a coalition.

It is significant that during the conception phase in December 2009, Karama was classified as a coalition in the making and NWRO as a failed coalition. However, during the course of the study, their position, role and impact in the Egyptian context changed, leading to a reconsideration of how they have been previously assessed. This shows the highly dynamic nature of coalitions and the non-linear forms of collective engagement and action.

Methodological tools and process:

In pursuing a case study approach, a number of research tools were adapted to the context. A thorough literature review in English and Arabic of academic material and grey literature was undertaken. Internal coalition documents such as press releases, platforms of action, internal correspondence, memos, minutes of the meeting were also analysed.

The principle research tool was the interview. The interviews were semi-structured to afford interviewees some space and flexibility in presenting their own stories. However, the set of questions was the same across both the Jordanian and Egyptian contexts in order to allow for cross-case and cross-country comparisons. The set of questions were tested through a series of interviews conducted in Jordan in May 2010 (and which provided us with some helpful clues about where questions need to be rephrased for clarity and to avoid getting repeat answers).

In Jordan, interviews were conducted by Taghreed Hemdan and the author. In Egypt, interviews were conducted by Hind Mahmoud and the author.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with leaders of the coalitions, founding members and other active members. For all six case studies, all the leading members of the coalitions were interviewed. The only exception was Hibaaq Osman the CEO of Karama who declined to give an interview on the premise that Karama-Egypt was an Egyptian initiative and the Country Director, Ashgan Abd el Hamid should be interviewed rather than herself. Repeated attempts at engaging with her failed. However, her response was evidence of one of the recurring concerns that were cited in almost all interviews, namely Osman's emphasis that this is a locally led movement while in essence power is centralised in her hands (see Karama, case study). In addition, members who played a key managerial role were also interviewed.

Moreover, managers and administrative staff who play a key role in the day to day co-ordination of the activities of the coalitions were also interviewed. Some gender experts in both countries were also interviewed. Donors were also interviewed as well as other stakeholders, such as one private consultancy firm contracted to monitor the work of the coalition. More than one interview was conducted with many of the leaders, involving several hours of sharing, reflection and analysis. As the research was unfolding, our "hunches" about what practices and issues meant were shared with the interviewees to get their feedback. Did it make sense, why yes, why not? What other layers need to be unravelled? This was one of the key elements of action-research that allowed for a high level of participation not only in identifying and naming issues but their taking account of their own analyses as well. Interviews commenced in April 2010 when the initial test-interviews were conducted, the core interviews were undertaken between June-August 2010 however as events unfolded in one of the case studies in Jordan, this was followed through with interviews up to mid-December 2010.

In order to cross-check information and ensure the validity of the data, the research relied on triangulation. Information captured in interviews was cross-checked against minutes of meetings, internal coalition documents and a variety of other sources. Research ethics were critical to the process of investigating the selected coalitions because of the reasons mentioned above.

02

Section Two

The following six case studies provide examples of successful coalitions, coalitions that have failed to achieve their goals, and collective entities that are aspiring to become coalitions or are already coalitions in the making. The coalitions are described in terms of the issues around which they mobilised, the emergence of their collective entity, their objective, structure, strategies of engagement and the outcome(s). This is followed by a brief analysis of the outcomes in terms of the structure-agency interfaces as well as the key policy messages.

In a recent study of coalitions, Amanda Tattersall has suggested four broad criteria by which the success of a coalition might be measured (Tattersall, 2010: 22-24).

- Has the coalition 'won' a particular goal, for example influencing a policy or law that has a bearing on gender equality?
- Has it shaped or influenced the 'broader political climate', for example did it 'break the culture of silence' on gender issues or shaped or influenced public opinion to engage with gender issues in a more positive way?
- Has it strengthened relations and ties between the constituent organizations and hence facilitated stronger ties, a sense of solidarity and a repertoire of social capital?
- Finally has the experience of the coalition enhanced the organizational capacity of the constituents so as to be able to act in the future on similar or other issues?

Each of these needs to be treated with caution. For example, winning a policy outcome (a new or reformed law, for instance) does not necessarily mean that it will be implemented. Likewise, changing the terms of debate does not mean that it will be changed everywhere. Nonetheless, these criteria serve as a very useful guide for evaluating the effects and outcomes of coalition politics and will used in evaluating each of the coalitions in the cases that follow.

THE THREE JORDANIAN COALITIONS

1. The National Jordanian Campaign to Eliminate So-called Crimes of Honour

The National Jordanian Campaign to Eliminate So-called Crimes of Honour was a short-lived citizen-led coalition of individual men and women who sought to reform the penal code so that judges would no longer be able to pass lenient sentences on men who killed female members of their family whom they suspected of sexual immorality, under the pretext of defending the family honour. Although the Campaign did not achieve success in changing the penal code, and soon disintegrated, it did succeed in breaking the silence and opening up the terms of debate about this matter. Its reluctance to give itself an organizational expression and its failure to mobilise sufficient political support amongst key players were key factors in not achieving the main objective. Moreover, the way in which the international community and media portrayed the issue did not help as this was seen to be invasive western 'interference' and criticism.

The Issue

In patriarchal societies women's sexuality is considered a proxy for families' and communities' honour. In such contexts, deviation from social norms on the part of women is seen as a violation of a family's honour and is severely punished - in some cases with death. It is usually male members of the family, such as fathers, brothers, uncles and cousins who commit the murder but sometimes mothers as well. The situations that are considered as leading to a loss of honour and therefore justify intervention on the part of the family are both context and time bound. In fact, in a large number of cases involving men taking the lives of female members of their family, post-mortem investigations revealed that the women had not been sexually active and, in the case of non-married females, they had been virgins.

In Jordan, Article 340 of the penal code stipulates that if a man catches his wife or one of his female family members in the act of adultery, he shall be given "an exculpatory excuse" if he commits murder. Article 98 of the Penal Code allows judges to pass more lenient sentences if the crime is undertaken in a state of fury provoked by an unlawful act performed by the victim. While article 98 is not explicitly related to honour killings, it was most commonly used in court cases since most cases do not involve catching women in the act of adultery but are usually pre-meditated acts of murder.

In some cases, women whose lives are under threat are put in custody for protection. In practice, this means their imprisonment with inmates who have been sentenced on account of committing a crime. Sometimes they are incarcerated for decades to protect them from being threatened with murder. In other instances, the authorities ask the family to vow not to harm the female, which they do, but then kill her anyway and make it appear as if she died in an accident.

Origin of the formation of the coalition

In 1998, Rana Husseini, a journalist for the Jordan Times, an English-language newspaper based in Amman, won the Reebok Human Rights Award for her reporting on cases of crimes of honour and her sustained efforts to raise awareness of this crime and bring it to the government's and public's attention. In 1999, Basil Burgan, a pharmacist who owned a pharmaceutical factory called Rana Husseini and suggested that an initiative be launched to try and stop the practice. Sultan Abu Mariam, an agricultural engineer, attended a lecture by Rana Husseini on honour killings and approached her too, and suggested collective action on the issue. Rana, Basil and Sultan each brought their friends and relatives and the numbers reached about 22 persons. From this, a working group of 14 persons was formed. The profile of the individuals was very diverse: two university students, a sculptor, and a lawyer, a food processing

factory owner, a public relations manager and a librarian. They shared some common characteristics: they were all brought into the coalition through informal networks (relatives and friends) and they were all educated (on a tertiary level) and came from the middle class.

Unlike the majority (if not all) of campaigns that are led by organised collective entities in Jordan, the National Jordanian Campaign to Eliminate So-called Crimes of Honour was an initiative that was entirely led by individuals in their capacities as citizens.

The Structure

The Jordanian National Committee to Eliminate So-Called Crimes of Honour was an informal collective actor. Rana explains that they were adamant not to work under an umbrella of any existing organisation: "We wanted to move away from the NGO model for social activism and do something where there would be no leader, where the structure would be more horizontal". The coalition had no proclaimed leader and members interviewed insisted there was no internal hierarchy. However, informally, it was clear that there was a core of three leading figures.

One of the key characteristics of this coalition was a commitment to internal democratic forms of decision-making and participation, a feature that all members of the coalition interviewed acknowledged and appreciated. There was a distribution of tasks among all members which strengthened the overall ownership of the campaign by the members, who were all working on a volunteer basis.

Basil Burgan argues that the absence of an organisational framework meant that operating informally made them wary of working like an NGO, which in turn meant that they did not work on building an organisational base for the coalition: "When one of the 14 persons left we did not bring in someone else instead and we were worried that if we expanded the group we would have to start all over again in arriving at a consensus. If we were registered, we would have written our minutes of the meeting, there was documentation via emails but that is not enough" (Interview with Basil Burgan June 2010).

Objective

There was consensus among the core group that action needed to be taken to discourage the practice of women being killed in the name of honour: through the meetings they agreed they should try and change article 340 since this was responsible for signalling that murder in the name of honour is condoned.

Strategies of engagement

In the light of the sensitivity of the issue, members sought to minimise opposition to the campaign by taking a number of decisions to actively disassociate themselves from any connection to the West by refusing any foreign funding or the participation of non-Jordanian citizens. Members further decided not to work under the organisational umbrella of any existing women's organisation in a bid to maintain their autonomy and avoid cooption.

The main activity of the coalition was to organise a petition in favour of reforming the penal code: with a target of collecting 50,000 signatures. However, the campaigners constantly needed to rely on contacts in the government and the Royal Palace to circumvent the obstacles facing them in their outreach with citizens. In addition to the petition, the coalition campaigners relied on two other principal strategies: first, engaging the media; and second, reaching out to sympathetic members in the Royal family.

Thanks to Royal support, the coalition managed to get the bill on the list of bills to be discussed by the newly and popularly elected Lower House. On 21st November 1999, the proposed repeal of article 340 of the criminal law was presented to parliament and was vehemently opposed by the deputies who believed repealing the bill would encourage women's licentious behaviour (Husseini, 2009:55).

The coalition members were caught by surprise when a couple of days after their defeat in the Lower House, Prince Ali, the half brother of the current King Abdallah, invited Jordanians to join him in a march to parliament to protest against honour killings. Not surprisingly, when the coalition members had applied for permission to initiate a march, it had been rejected. However, the Prince was readily granted one. Despite the march, on 6th September 2000 the Lower House rejected the proposed repeal of article 340 for the second time. The alliance between socially conservative and Islamist MPs who launched a counter campaign was effective once again in blocking the proposed legal change. In reaction, the members of the coalition were disheartened, and the coalition dissolved. Other events in that same year took centre stage, such as the Second Intifada of the Palestinians - and members' energies were directed elsewhere.

The aftermath

Other initiatives among women's organisations picked up where the coalition stopped. Their efforts accumulated in a temporary law that is still in effect today in Jordan. In the summer of 2001 when parliament had adjourned, the government passed a temporary law reforming article 340. Temporary laws are used by the government to circumvent parliamentary opposition but they still have to be ratified by the Lower House. According to Warrick (2009:76), the Senate, which approved the bill, sent it to the Lower House which has rejected it at least twice since 2003: hence it has continued to exist only as a temporary law. The change made to article 340 was to allow women, like men, to benefit from a reduced sentence should they surprise their spouses in the act of adultery and kill, wound or injure one or both of them.

An initiative to engage judges so that they would be more sensitised to the social dynamics behind honour crimes had a positive impact, leading to judges introducing harsher sentences. However, crimes of honour continued to increase: "The total number of honour crimes rose to 22 cases in 2009 compared with 18 cases in 2008. Based on the records of the High Criminal Court, the last three murders occurred in December 2009"[9].

Explaining the outcomes

Popular strategy applied to the wrong context at the wrong time: the disconnection between agential intervention and structural constraints. In many authoritarian regimes, organising petitions is one form of citizen-to-citizen action that is repressed by the government because of its mobilizing potential. The strategy chosen by the coalition (confrontation) and the tactics used (petition, media advocacy, marches) may be strategically appropriate for some liberal democracies as channels for putting pressure on the policy process. However, this is seldom appropriate when transplanted to an authoritarian context, where the structural or contextual political configurations necessitate the exercise of different forms of agential activism. This is not to suggest that authoritarian regimes are completely insensitive to the pressure from the street (as recent events in Tunisia, Egypt have and Jordan shown). They do take

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9   Punishment for honour crimes in Jordan stiffens but incident rate continues to rise 30 January 2010 Sawsan Zaydeh http://www.al-shorfa.com/cocoon/meii/xhtml/en_GB/features/meii/features/main/2010/01/30/feature-01
Accessed on 1 November 2010

into account public opinion, in particular high levels of public discontent. However, public opinion is one of a number of political considerations and not always the most important one when it comes to the specific details of policy or institutional change. In the case of the coalition on crimes of honour, there was a strong counter-public opinion against the proposed legal changes, mobilised via the Islamist opposition.

The coalition did not forge alliances to conjure the necessary political weight to influence the policy arena. One of the instrumental groups to influence the policy outcome was the Lower House of the parliament. However, the members were not among the main actors targeted in the campaigners' outreach. Moreover, the decision not to work with other women's organisations also involved a strategic trade-off which denied the campaigners the political weight, connections and political savvy of these organisations' leaders.

The excessive coverage of honour killings by foreign media and some policy-makers created a backlash against their work. The West - whether through the international media or through policy makers' attention to honour killings - undermined the coalition's chances of convincing the public that this was an entirely home-grown initiative. It is significant that Husseini notes that in conversation with her, Prince Ali said in February 2000 that the "The US embassy said a few days before the voting that the law should be changed. That helped the opposition who used this as the excuse they needed to say they would not be forced to do something that the West wants them to" (Husseini, 2009:74). The contextual nuances here are important. The US is seen as the "head of the serpent" by the Islamists, in particular, but this view also has sympathies among the larger population who believe that the US is at the centre of cultural imperialism.

Thus it can be seen that for the reasons given, this somewhat informal coalition did have some success in opening debate on this key issue, though there were no direct policy effects or organizational strengthening.

2. Coalition for the Protection of the Family against Violence

The coalition for the Protection of the Family against Violence was successful in introducing new legislation in Jordan to protect women against domestic violence. It managed to break the silence on a taboo issue and generated an empathetic and responsive public opinion in favour of legislation. Through the coalition's work, many organisations' own capacities in addressing domestic violence were strengthened. Further, the ties between some of the coalition members, in particular some non-governmental and governmental actors, have become stronger. The coalition itself has become an institutionalised and influential actor, working under a politically powerfully organisational umbrella, the National Council for Family Affairs. Even though two years have passed since the law's issuance, the executive regulations which bring it fully into effect have yet to be released. Nonetheless, the coalition continues its struggle to press the responsible authority to respond.

The Issue

Domestic violence is an issue that everywhere requires a highly sensitive and context-appropriate public policy response. According to a recent national study on violence against women, conducted by the Jordanian National Council for Family Affairs, half of female interviewees disclosed that they did not report violence against themselves as a result of uncertain and unfair procedures followed by the police and the court system. Of the interviewees, 42% said that procedures taken by the court were not adequate and did not prevent abusers from repeating the assault (Karama, 2007:8). The Public Security department,

the official body responsible for engaging with victims of domestic violence in Jordan, was at a loss as how to deal with cases of battered women. In many cases of women at risk of exposure to increased violence, the public security department would either send victims back home, out of belief that it was a private issue, or occasionally to the shelter operated by the Women's Union, a small-scale civil society initiative with a very limited absorptive capacity. State failure to help victims of domestic violence was partly due to the attitude of police officers and other personnel who were influenced by patriarchal notions of respecting family privacy, accepting violence against women as a form of chastisement some-times, and views on women's place at home and in society.

Origin of the coalition

The coalition on the protection of violence against women emerged out of the convergence of the work of the Family Protection Team and civil society organisations' mobilisation for the introduction of legislation that would provide women with socially feasible means of confronting domestic violence. The Family Protection Team emerged out of a process facilitated by the British Council which brought to-gether governmental and non-governmental actors. In 2000, DFID channelled funds to the British Coun-cil in Amman to start a five year initiative to increase inter-agency capacity to work on violence against women in Jordan. The Public Security Department chose partner organisations from the government, NGOs and the judiciary to form the Family Protection Team. The British Council sought to create an enabling environment for actors to come together to discuss the issue, their own capacity development needs and working towards arriving at a common agenda.

Power struggles among governmental actors over the leadership of the initiative were resolved when, in 2001, the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) was established under the leadership of Queen Rania, and it took over the role of hosting and co-ordinating the Family Protection Team. The British Council continued to support the initiative financially until 2005, and served as a facilitator in various capacities but no longer co-ordinated the initiative. Yet the Family Protection team continued to function effectively, meeting weekly and developing its action plan well after the funding discontinued.

The objective of the coalition's work on issuing a law

In 2006, civil society organisations presented their own proposal for a draft law, which prompted the Ministry of Social Development to draw its own version, a far less progressive document. The proposed legislation was brought to the Family Protection Team to deliberate. The law aimed at finding alternative ways of handling cases of spousal violence other than the incarceration of men, which often does not improve the long term welfare of vulnerable women. These alternatives were aimed at taking into ac-count long term security, ensuring discretion and treatment for victims of violence.

Strategies and Activities

From 2006 onwards, the Family Protection Team worked to create a favourable environment that would allow the law to pass through parliament. It is the constellation of all the strategies and interventions that worked together at an appropriate political moment that made it possible for the law to be issued. One of the most successful strategies adopted by the coalition was to frame the issue in socially ac-ceptable language. The focus on "the family" was a strategy adopted to reduce the political opposition to any explicit reference to violence against women. The coalition did not make the case for a new law on the premise of defending women's rights, but argued that the law aimed at protecting all vulnerable members of the family including children and the elderly.

While they did make reference to religious texts in defending their case for the need to protect women from violence, the essence of their strategy of engagement was in providing real-life cases of suffering, injustice and fragmentation of the family. It was these life stories, widely disseminated in the media, which captured the public imagination.

The establishment of a women's shelter (Dar el Wefak) in 2007 by the Ministry of Social Development was a means of institutionalising a governmental commitment to addressing domestic violence, pre-dating the call for a legislative intervention. The establishment of a government-run shelter contributed significantly to the de-stigmatisation of domestic violence by allocating a budget for it and equipping a management team from within the Ministry to run it.

Moreover, the coalition pursued a highly successful strategy of engaging members of parliament well in advance of plans to put forward the law in parliament. The Family Protection Team coalition strategically targeted 25 MPs a year in advance of launching the campaign for the proposed legislation. Both govern-mental and non-governmental sources interviewed have emphasised the importance of the Dead Sea Gathering with the MPs which happened more than year before the law was presented to parliament. The timing of presenting the law to parliament also represented a well calculated strategic decision. The law was discussed and passed in parliament in March 2008 with a clear majority – only a few months after the parliamentary elections of November 2007. Newly elected MPs needed to show their con-stituencies that they were performing well and that they were fulfilling their roles.

Outcomes

1. Passing a law is a political statement that recognises public responsibility for addressing complex social problems that cannot simply be left to the private sphere. It breaks the silence and acknowl-edges its prevalence and claims state responsibility for addressing it. Nonetheless, the law itself was diluted of many of its critically important articles and until the executive regulations are issued, its implementation is stalled.
2. The loose coalition effectively institutionalised mechanisms for work between government and non-government actors to provide care for victims of violence. In recognition of this highly unique model of adopting an intra-agency approach to domestic violence, the UN Human Rights Prize was awarded to the British Council in 2004. The success in institutionalisation has led to the sharing of the Jordanian experience in other countries such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Emirates, Syria, Sudan and Iraq, where they have been sought to build capacity and help establish locally responsive models.
3. The Family Protection Team is intact and functioning, even after the release of the law. It meets on the Wednesday at the end of every month and has sustained its pressure on MOSD to issue the executive regulations.

Explaining the outcomes: Engaging politically: powerful actors, appropriate strategies and seizing the right political moment

1. **The role of the British Council as an enabling agent was critical for building bridges within gov-ernment agencies and across the government-non-governmental divide.**

The role of the British Council in essence was to create the space for parties that did not conventionally collaborate to come together, dialogue, deliberate and find common ground.

Analysing the role of the British Council, it can be noted that:

I. It already had a history of engaging Jordanian organisations on family violence for many years. Some of the organisations with which it worked previously came to be part of the new initiative.

II. Its staff knew the context and its political and social nuances very well.

III. Neither the issue nor the agenda were imposed by the donor.

IV. The British Council helped in mapping out the players who they knew had a stake in the issue, but it was the Public Security who selected the parties who would comprise the coalition.

V. It did not pursue a project cycle approach but invested time and effort in the process of bringing people to work together.

VI. All interviewees agreed that the BC was very non-interventionist in its approach to facilitating group collaboration, and it did not assume the role of the leader or "headmistress".

VII. There were no public statements about DFID changing patriarchal and conservative local norms and values!

2. NCFA'S developmental leadership: overcoming structural constraints, brokering intra-governmental power struggles:

It is important to note that while the BC was the first to provide space first for parties to come together, this role was then proactively taken over by the NCFA after one year of its operation.

The NCFA served as a power broker through corporatist politics: it invited the two rival state organizations (Public Security Department and the Ministry of Social Development) to stay as part of the Protection Team. It kept the same structure in place but played an active role in co-ordination and follow-up. The political stakes for members to pull out of an initiative adopted by Queen Rania served as a disincentive to disengage from the corporatist set up.

3. A consensus building process not output-driven project:

The process of building consensus on the cause and then mediating between different versions of the law unfolded over eight years' work. There was a long and turbulent process of building bridges among agencies with very different agendas, arriving at a common understanding of what the issue was, finding the right terminology for describing what it was they wanted to tackle and of institutionalising policy and practice within governmental agencies. Consensus building requires negotiation, mediation and space which all take time.

Moreover, the idea of policy output - in the form of a law - was not the end point but part and parcel of a wider social transformational agenda. In fact, it is only after six years of building capacity, seeking to change mindsets within and outside the government, and synchronising interventions between the relevant parties that the moment arrived for civil society organisations to put forward a proposed bill on domestic violence to which the Family Protection Team responded positively.

4. Politically savvy strategies of engaging and communicating

These include the use of appropriate framing, effective use of the media, engaging the opposition, the MPs and creating a public awareness and sympathy for the issue before proposing the idea of new legislation.

5. Exposure to other country case studies and adaptation to local contexts:

One of the key elements of the capacity development approach was providing opportunities for judges, policemen and other relevant stakeholders in Jordan to visit existing initiatives on the ground in the UK. It is no secret that the CSO's draft of the Protection Law was also greatly influenced by the leader's visit to Indonesia, observing its family law in practice. It became difficult for the opposition to attack it as being a western import.

Though the legal change achieved was not all that had been hoped for, the coalition succeeded in that respect. And it also helped to open up debate and facilitate organizational development, especially with respect to cooperation between government and non-governmental organizations.

3. Attempted Coalitions for securing the rights of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanian men

Initiatives undertaken in the past five years to reform the nationality law in order to allow Jordanian women to pass on their nationality to their children, irrespective of the nationality of their fathers, have been met with great opposition on the grounds that the demand touches on national security and sovereignty concerns. In response to the immense structural barriers blocking any successful advocacy on this issue, semi-governmental actors are now calling for granting only socio-economic rights for the children of Jordanian women, rather than for granting them nationality. The extent to which these initiatives will succeed in mobilizing support for the issue and making policy gains remains to be seen.

The issue

Jordanian nationality is passed on along patrilineal lines, thus Jordanian women who marry non-Jordanian men are not able to pass on their nationality to their children. On the other hand, Jordanian men who marry non-Jordanian women are allowed to pass on their nationality to their children. Statistical records of the Ministry of Interior reveal that the number of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanian amounted to 65,956 in 2009 (out of a population of about 6 million).

At the core of the nationality issue are a number of geopolitical dynamics that are making many Jordanians feel that their Jordanian identity is under threat.

(a) First and foremost is the complete rejection of the idea that Jordan be an alternative homeland to the Palestinians as part of a political settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
(b) The influx of Iraqis fleeing from the insecurity of their homeland
(c) The surge in the past decade of poor unemployed men from other Arab countries (in particular Egypt, Yemen and Sudan) in search of employment in Jordan.

Attempts at coalition formation:

There are currently a number of different initiatives attempting to form a coalition to promote changing the nationality law, including an initiative to use the international arena (CEDAW review) to press the Jordanian government to commit to revising the law; a campaign to convince the Ministry of Interior to consider granting nationality on a case-by-case basis; forming a "national team" to demand residency rights as opposed to nationality; and, most recently, developing a platform to be presented to parliament to give Jordanian women's children the socio-economic but not political rights of nationality. The two most developed initiatives will be discussed here, the formation of a national team around residency

rights; and the development of a platform around socio-economic, rather than nationality, rights.

Objective of both initiatives:

The initiatives led by the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) and the Information and Research Center (IRC) both have a common objective: to secure a bundle of socio-economic rights associated with residency being granted to the families of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanian men. By dropping the demand for full nationality (political rights of citizenship: including the right to vote, right to hold a passport), they hope to avoid getting entangled in the debates about the Palestinian homeland question, or changing the demography and therefore "identity" of Jordan. This does not represent simply a reframing of the issue; it is a fundamental concession on the earlier objective of calling for full nationality rights.

The IRC initiative

One of the most recent collective initiatives to emerge is an EU funded project "Residential denial: Removing biases against the foreigner families living in Jordan" led by the IRC, part of the King Hussein Foundation, a highly regarded royal NGO.[10] The IRC conducts research and makes recommendations to practitioners and policy-makers on children's well-being and their families.[11] A request for proposals was announced by the EU, and the IRC responded by applying for, and winning a grant of 220,000 Euros for a two year project (2010-2012). Nermeen Mourad, the executive director of IRC, said that the trigger for the establishment of the initiative was the availability of the EU grant.

Strategies of engagement

1. Economic benefits as an entry point. The IRC will undertake national level research that looks at the economic implications of residency denial for Jordanian women's families. The research aims to show that granting certain economic rights to the visiting workers who are married to Jordanian women will not pose a burden on the welfare state in Jordan but will attract increased investment and financial contributions that strengthen the state of the economy. Mourad emphasised that the findings of the research will be framed in non-political language: "we want to make it very technical and remove all the emotions that people have on the issue out of this", she emphasised.
2. Establish a national team comprised of high profile political players. At the core of the initiative is the steering committee which has been formed to facilitate the research and to help develop a series of recommendations. The actors represent a number of government and semi-government actors and royal NGOs. So what would make the different actors have a stake in this? What would make them come to the meetings? "We are a royal NGO, it is the King Hussein Foundation", replied Mourad. It is the political weight that such a royal NGO carries and its proximity to the centres of power that fosters participation on the part of the actors. As with the Family Protection Team once taken over by the NCFA, there is a strong disincentive for choosing not to participate: namely, exclusion from important circles. In order to help focus the team on developing and following through on specific policy recommendations, three subcommittees were formed: an economic committee, a social committee and a child rights committee. The fact that there is a child rights committee rather than a women's rights committee is perhaps another tactic to purposely depoliticise this initiative. There is a deliberate avoidance of any reference to women's rights, the CEDAW and women's entitlement. Instead, there is a focus on children, their rights and wellbeing.

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10   A royal NGO is a non-governmental organized founded or led by a member of the royal Jordanian family.
11   Profile of IRC http://www.kinghusseinfoundation.org/index.php?pager=end&task=view&type=content&pageid=32

The (JNCW) Jordanian National Commission for Women's led platform

The Jordanian National Commission for Women has prepared a number of proposed legislative reforms on a plethora of gender-related issues, including granting socio-economic rights to the families of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanian men. These legislative reforms have been presented in the form of a package of proposals.

Strategies of Engagement

Incorporate demands as part of a wider Bills package. The package has already been signed by a number of women's civil society organisations such as Mizan and SIGI (not surprising since the secretary general of the JNCW founded them!) and the Arab Women's Organisation but also by some important Royal NGOs, such as the NCFA and the Royal Fund for Development.

Their strategy is to get more signatories to the package of demands from governmental sources such as the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Political Development and the Judiciary. When the support of as many politically significant actors is secured for the proposed reforms, the JNCW will then present the platform of demands to the Prime Minister and to parliament (both houses) for consideration.

Further, the JNCW intends to engage with the legal committee in the newly formed parliament in order to try and win their support and get them to become its advocates among the other MPs in parliament[12]. The political moment is ripe for taking this forward since this is a newly formed government that is keen to show it is active.

Explaining the outcome

Trying to build consensus on behalf of Jordanian women against the structural constraints
''The right to Jordanian nationality [for children born to a Jordanian mother whose spouse is not Jordanian] is not a women's issue, it is a political issue''. It is difficult to attribute this quote to one person since all the interviewees always started the conversation by pointing this out. In so doing, they were emphasising the highly specific political context against which women's equal citizenship rights in relation to nationality is being discussed. It reflects the immense structural (political) barriers that present themselves and which surpass any agential role. The contextual specificities are so nuanced that learning from other country experiences may offer very limited insight into how to tackle the issues on the domestic front. Structural barriers dis-incentivising agential response: reluctance of women activists to join a civil-society led coalition

Many activists join coalitions partly because they perceive this form of collective action as potentially being successful. Politically astute activists are likely not to want to join a coalition around a cause that they see as not winnable.

Agential responses to structural barriers

1. Depoliticising the rights of Jordanian women as a form of engaging politically: The IRC and JNCW hope that by dropping the claim to equal nationality rights for the time being, and by focusing on the Jordanian family, they would depoliticise a politically charged issue and detangle it from the national

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12 This is not only about framing but winning over the attention of the MPs. As one other member of the legal committee of the JNCW said in an interview: ''You can forget about the MPs bothering to read anything. In our previous campaign to have the parliament support the release of the CEDAW in the Official Gazette, we needed to find some way to communicate the message to them other than giving them something to read''.

security/sovereignty debates.

2. The instrumentalist approach by using the logic of economics to make a case for the increased economic wealth emanating from the presence of non-Jordanian men active in the workforce. If found to be convincing, and championed by key actors within the government, it may work strategically to deflate the argument that Jordan's limited economic resources and the extension of economic rights will be a burden for the welfare state. The economics entry point - showing the economic costs of social inequality - was previously deployed to press the Jordanian government to recognise the importance of addressing domestic violence and was successful in capturing the imagination of many patriarchal figures at the time, so it may provide helpful in making inroads.

3. The second strategic shift has been in the leadership profile and process. Whereas the two earlier initiatives were led by autonomous civil society organisations (and hence lacked the political weight to enable them to bargain with the government), the two most recent initiatives are led by two highly reputed political actors, with the involvement of key governmental actors as well. This process of leading through a corporatist style of including and engaging governmental and RNGO actors is likely to enable them access to the centres of power more so than the two earlier initiatives were able to do.

In this case there is as yet no clear outcome, and it is too early to know whether there has been any organizational enhancement or influencing of the debate, nor whether reframing the immediate objectives to focus on the more limited issue of socio-economic rights will be effective.

THE THREE EGYPTIAN COALITIONS

1. CEDAW Coalition in Egypt

The CEDAW Coalition is the longest-running coalition on progressive women's rights in the contemporary history of Egypt. It has achieved its goals of presenting Shadow Reports to the CEDAW committees and effectively using them to bring gender injustices to light in the international policy-influencing arena. Organisationally, the Coalition has survived despite two key challenges: absence of funding for some phases of its existence, and attempts at hijacking and turning it into a project by any single NGO.

The Issue

Egypt ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women ("CEDAW") on September 18, 1981. However, upon ratification, Egypt made reservations to a number of articles largely on the premise that they conflicted with the Shariah (Islamic Law). One of the mechanisms for holding countries to account is the CEDAW Expert committee which reviews country progress reports every four years. The Committee can take into account perspectives and voices from independent sources including civil society organisations (CSOs) before drafting recommendations for any government. One way in which their voices can be conveyed is through the production of an alternative or 'shadow' report to that presented by the government. In view of the importance of Shadow Reports, many feminist activists have mobilised since the 1990s in order to increase the capacity of local NGOs to prepare Shadow Reports through training and information sessions (Reilly 2009:62). In Egypt, no Shadow Reports were presented to the CEDAW Committee until 2000 because CSOs had not developed the awareness of the process or the skills required to engage with this kind of international space.

Origins of the coalition

In 1998, Fatma Khafagy, an Egyptian professional with many years of experience in gender and development, was working as a programme officer at the Cairo-based UNICEF office. She invited twenty Egyptian NGOs to attend a workshop on the CEDAW. These NGOs were all part of a network for strengthening women's rights that had been established to follow up on the Beijing International Conference of 1995. For the 20 participants who attended the training, including many women's activists, this was their first close, in-depth encounter with the CEDAW as an instrument of advocacy on women's rights. The workshop served as a trigger for mobilising the participants into wanting to create a forum of their own that would increase NGOs' awareness and capacity to work on the CEDAW and produce a Shadow Report as a means of lobbying policy makers.

Against a backdrop of gender equality being a priority for international donors and the leadership of a highly committed UNICEF country office director, Khafagy invited the Egyptian civil society leaders to come together to think through how they could collectively act on developing a common agenda. The meetings were held in the UNICEF premises led by the Egyptian organisations and everything was run on an entirely voluntary basis.

Structure

In the inception phase, the 20 organisations that showed interest in forming the CEDAW coalition established criteria for the selection of an NGO that would serve as co-ordinator for this initiative. They voted in favour of the Women and Society NGO to serve as co-ordinator. A 5-member steering committee was nominated by the member organisations of the coalition to co-ordinate the work. It is highly significant that all parties were keen to emphasise proudly that the funding that UNICEF allocated for supporting this work was very small, and that all the organisations made voluntary contributions to building the initiative.

Objective

The initial objective behind the very first group that was established in 1998 was the development of the first Shadow Report that would serve as a mechanism for urging the Egyptian government to improve its women's rights record, using the CEDAW as a yardstick against which to measure progress. In order to involve CSOs in monitoring the situation on the ground, however, other activities had to be undertaken to increase their capacity such as awareness-raising workshops in Upper and Lower Egypt and support for research on gender-related issues.

Activities, process and outcome

Despite UNICEF's partnership with the Egyptian government, the opposition to the work of the CEDAW was quite strong. In the initial phase and up to the late 1990s the Islamists were mostly repressed by the government and therefore their voices were muffled. However, when the government relaxed its tight rein on the Islamists in the early 2000s, they actively attacked the CEDAW as a western instrument for corrupting Muslim nations, and for its advocacy of same-sex rights. They accused organisations that espoused the CEDAW as being foreign-funded agents of the West. On the ground, there was also much resistance to the ideas that were presented to the people and to the NGOs because it clashed with the fundamental patriarchal mores of society. The main argument often put forward, very much influenced by the Islamist normative discourse pervasive in society, was "why do we need the CEDAW when Islam has granted women all their rights"?

CEDAW coalition members were very cautious not to frame the CEDAW as an alternative or competing framework with Islam. They would emphasise that because Islam is a religion it is of a sacrosanct nature, while the CEDAW is not and hence there is no basis for making comparisons. They would also emphasise the compatibility between Islam and the CEDAW and seek to give textual evidence of this. This framing was effective in diminishing opposition on the ground.

In 2001, the coalition nominated three delegates to present the Shadow Report in Geneva. During the preparatory phase, before the report was released, they purposely avoided working with the media as they had yet to form a unified collective position and wanted the process to happen quietly behind closed doors.

One year after the Shadow Report was released by the NGOs, the National Council for Women (NCW) decided in 2002 to work on the CEDAW. This had two important implications on the Egypt CEDAW coalition. First, once the government openly takes on an issue, it loses its taboo status. Second, the Ministry of Social Solidarity stopped harassing the CEDAW coalition and the NGOs which hosted it. On the other hand, the NCW approached UNICEF to fund its work on the CEDAW. UNICEF pulled out of continuing to support the CEDAW coalition and provided the funding to the NCW instead. This was possible, argued Khafagy, because Bacquer had left the leadership of UNICEF Egypt and a new director who was more risk averse took over. Nevertheless the CEDAW coalition continued to meet, even without funding.

Up till 2007, the CEDAW coalition was largely dormant, with few meetings taking place. This was possibly because the trigger for meeting - preparing for the next CEDAW committee and mobilising and organising collectively - was still some years away. However, in 2007, work started on a volunteer basis in preparation for the second shadow report. It was completed in 2009 and presented to the CEDAW committee in 2010.

In 2009, the EACP (Egyptian Association for Community Participation), an NGO was nominated to become the new host for the CEDAW coalition. This also coincided with the arrival of very generous funding from the EU. However, the EU support was different to previous grants in three fundamental ways. First, it was much larger than other grants (see below). Second, it was in the form of a three year project. Third, there was much confusion over whether the funding came to the organisation to "administer" the coalition or whether the funding was for the coalition, channelled through the organisation.

On another front, as the date for submitting the 2nd Shadow Report drew near (2010), the efforts that had begun a year earlier on a volunteer basis were stepped up. The process of preparing the Shadow Report highlights the importance of leadership as a process. The process requires several balancing acts. On the one hand, it requires allowing the space and flexibility for the participating organisation to make a contribution that speaks to their interests. On the other hand, the sum of all parts needs to contribute to a whole, which reflects the collective identity/standpoint of the coalition members and which has the endorsement of all members of the coalition.

This balance was, from the participating organisations' perspectives, successfully achieved in the CEDAW coalition, though not without trade-offs. In practice this was achieved through a process of delegating different organisations to prepare the material needed for different parts of the Shadow Report. However, the overall parameters and issues that the organisation addresses needed collective consensus before the organisation could lead on its preparation. The editor then compiled the different parts together in one document which was deliberated among all the member organisations.

In 2010, a delegation from the CEDAW coalition participated in the process of submitting their own shadow report while the Egyptian government presented its joint 6th & 7th periodic report on the implementation of CEDAW in Egypt. Most of the members pointed out that the organised, effective performance of the group created a positive sense of achievement and impetus to move forward as a coalition.

Outcome

There were a number of tangible successes that were directly related to the fulfilment of the CEDAW coalition's objective:

- Many of the recommendations that the CEDAW delegation had made in its Shadow Report, and deliberations over the lunch with the CEDAW expert committee members, were reflected in the final recommendations that were officially presented to the Egyptian government.
- The Shadow Report was well received and praised by the CEDAW committee.
- The National Council for Women called the CEDAW Coalition and asked for a meeting to be convened immediately upon their return to Cairo in order to draw up a future strategy for implementing the CEDAW recommendations. This is highly significant in that although the NCW certainly does not deal with the CEDAW coalition as an equal, and the power differentials in this relationship are very conspicuous, nevertheless, the fact that it had put forward an invitation to the CEDAW coalition to come and take part in an event at the NCW in its capacity as a coalition indicates that the government now recognises it as a power to contend with and as an actor that can engage in international space - one that is important for the Egyptian government.

The impact of the collaborative work in Geneva has had a very positive impact on the group morale. Whenever the general question was posed: why do you consider the CEDAW coalition successful? Interviewees often began to tell the anecdote of how they collectively worked together to present a unified force in Geneva in order to make a convincing case.

Organisationally, as the EU funds will terminate in 2011, there is talk of rotation of power of co-ordination among the members of the coalition. Currently, they are drawing up what such a process should look like, as well as how to work towards diversifying sources of funding to increase the coalition's autonomy. In terms of work agenda, one of the leading members is keen on strengthening alliances with the NCW in order to enhance potential impact on a policy level. This strategic choice is open for contestation: will it compromise on the CEDAW coalition's autonomy and lead to its cooption or will it create the space for a more fruitful dialogue between two historically antagonistic parties?

Reflections on the outcome

1. A combination of structural factors associated with the right political moment and the effective leadership building process contributed to the conception of the CEDAW coalition. It is however, the strong leadership and ownership within the coalition that contributed to its survival in the later years when contextual factors, in particular funding and the professionalisation of NGOs, threatened to undermine it.
2. **Local ownership**: The significance of the UNICEF leadership in providing an enabling environment for the CEDAW coalition to emerge can be fully appreciated. It neither created the coalition nor did it seek to control it.
3. **The coalition was not subject to 'projectisation' in the first phase and is resisting the same risk right now**: UNICEF staff's emphasis was on the importance of committing to the process of bringing

together parties and allowing the space to develop common agendas was often cited as one of the key elements in building a strong foundation. This is in contrast with the EU's engagement with the coalition as a three year project.

Set against the Tattersall criteria and compared with the other coalitions in this study, the CEDAW coalition achieved clear outcomes it had sought, strengthened the coalition's capacity and influenced official thinking on these matters.

2. Karama - Egypt

Karama sought to create a movement or coalition around fighting domestic violence in Egypt. However, it failed to do so at two levels. On the issue itself, it has had no tangible impact on the ground. On an organisational level, it has failed to develop an inclusive leadership process to represent a locally owned collective initiative that binds together all the NGOs. In effect, it has failed to emerge as a coalition; rather it has become transformed into a foreign donor agency providing financial support for a number of separate NGO projects.

The Issue

Domestic violence has come to be recognised as a public policy issue that cannot be left to be dealt with privately within the family. While the criminal law in Egypt penalises violence in general, there are no provisions in the law which specifically recognise domestic violence. As with many other patriarchal contexts, neither the police nor the wider society believe that this is an issue that requires public intervention and tend to believe that it is best dealt with privately within the family. According to the Egyptian Demographic Health Survey, a study entailing nationwide household survey analysis using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, "nearly half of ever-married women age 15-49 reported that they had been hit, slapped, kicked, or subjected to some other form of physical violence at some point by their fifteenth birthday" (EDHS 2005: 221).

Formation of a "coalition"

In 2005, Hibaaq Osman, a Somali-American visited Cairo and invited some organisations to join in an initiative that was intended to become a movement on domestic violence in Egypt. At that time, Hibaaq Osman was representing herself as a leading member of the US-based organisation, V-Day, which was to support the establishment of an Arab regional initiative on violence. V-Day is a New York based organisation that carries out awareness raising work on violence against women through innovative communications means. Hibaaq's entry point into the Egyptian NGO scene came through a Jordanian activist who was then working for Karama and who had contacts with one of the leading women activists.

Organisations met regularly for a year to talk about a number of issues, including vision, strategy, objectives and processes. However, as nothing materialised, many NGO leaders lost interest. This was followed by a period when the founder disappeared and when she returned to Egypt, it was to announce the arrival of funding in 2008 to support NGO work on the issue.

Structure

After more than a year spent seeking registration, Karama was recognised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an international organisation based in Cairo and governed by its own internal board. The founder is the CEO of Karama. An Egypt country director was appointed to manage two initiatives. The first is the violence against women network (which was initially devised to be a coalition/movement), and the

second is the provision of direct funds and capacity support for individual organisations' initiatives. The network is co-ordinated by the country director and a number of cluster or "realm" co-ordinators. The cluster co-ordinators are responsible for delegating responsibilities among the member organisations and distributing funding for any activities to be implemented by the partners. There are six realms: legal, health, education, culture, media and economics.[13] Organisations form into clusters and each cluster examines the impact of violence on one realm, for example the impact of violence against women in the sphere of economics or, for instance, in health-related matters.

Objective

Karama's objective according to its website is "to bring together women, men, governments, activists and artists to examine the impact violence makes on women's health, education and economics and to come up with campaigns at the national, regional, and international levels to end violence against women, tailored to the cultural realities of the target country."

Funding

Karama-Egypt's main funding derives from a generous grant of 1,855,000 Euros from the Dutch Government for a 3 year period from January 2008-June 2011 as part of the government's commitment to promoting the MDG3 (Gender equality).

Price Waterhouse Coopers won the bid for monitoring the 45 initiatives funded by the MDG3 Fund, of which Karama was one. In a telephone interview, an Advisor at Price Waterhouse Coopers, explained that they won the tender to monitor all of the 45 projects worldwide [involving 70 million Euros] despite having no previous experience in working with women's organisations. Their field of engagement has been with the private sector. In order to make up for their lack of experience in engaging with women's organisations, they partnered with Femconsult, a Dutch organisation founded in 1985 offering consultancy services in Gender and Development.[14]

Strategies, activities and outcome

Karama has been funding a number of regional and local activities. Only the local activities and the participation of local actors in regional initiatives will be examined here.

Karama provides funding on a local basis through two mechanisms. The first is through the organisations participating with the "Karama network". The second involves direct funding to individual organisations' initiatives. With respect to the Karama network, seed money amounting to (LE10,000 around US$ 2,000) is provided to local organisations to produce outputs relating to the impact of violence against women in different areas or realms. The funding of the clusters that are part of the Karama initiative includes supporting the production of manuals, production of community theatre shows, training of lawyers and production of a fictional film. The initiative has only been on the ground for two years and hence an impact assessment of the different clusters/realms is perhaps premature. Thus far, however, the inter-connectedness between the activities has been very weak, almost non-existent at times. Moreover, the sum of all parts (or realms) does not seem to be leading toward one collective intervention.

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13   There was supposed to be a seventh realm, the political, but it never materialized because the person which was suppose to lead it, the head of the Egyptian Women's Rights Organisation, Nehad Abou el Komsan, froze her membership of Karama and stopped participating. No other organisation was invited to lead on this cluster of work.

14   http://www.femconsult.org/ [accessed 23.11.2010]

Reflections on the Outcome

The main reason why Karama failed to establish itself as a coalition in Egypt is due largely to agential shortcomings in building a consensus-driven, local leadership process in combination with a number of other factors, the most important of which are delineated below.

1. Positionality of the leader in relation to the NGO leaders/founders and lack of local ownership

The question of positionality (or how an actor's identity and relationships are perceived by different audiences in various contextual settings) is very important for understanding the unspoken politics of local perceptions of legitimacy and credibility.

The issue of domestic violence is a pressing and widespread social problem in Egypt. However, the fact that the invitation to participate in a collective initiative on domestic violence came from an outsider, who held promise of financial support, influenced the motives for involvement of many activists. Financial rewards for participating in this initiative greatly influenced some activists' desire to join Karama.

Moreover, all of the interviewees (with the exception of one) pointed out that the decision-making powers were clearly centralised in the person of the founder/leader. Members who joined Karama may not have raised questions over decision-making processes and powers had the founder clearly established from the outset that Karama was to provide technical and financial support as an international donor committed to working with local partners. Instead, the leader's emphasis at the inception phase that Karama was a movement owned by the activists themselves raised expectations of the kind of influence they would wield over running the initiative itself.

2. Competition over funding and the lack of internal cohesion among the group:

Members who are part of the Karama mentioned that collaborative work across the different clusters has been minimal and this has only further enforced the sense of an absence of collective purpose allowing organisations to pursue their own activities. It is highly significant that the only member of Karama who thought it was effective as a coalition was reflecting on the fact that the infrequency of meetings had given some people the impression that things were going well: "but honestly I think it is better that we are not meeting a lot because now we can focus on implementing our projects rather than gathering to fight among ourselves" (Interview with member, August 2010).

3. The disconnection between Karama leadership and the domestic political landscape and political affiliations of the actors

There was a consensus among all the parties interviewed that during the establishment phase, the founder/leader inadvertently recruited all the leaders and their NGOs from the Nasserite political camp. This is because as an outsider, she relied on a number of personal counsellors who happened to be affiliated to the Nasserite movement. They brought their friends and excluded others. A more balanced representation was later secured under the management of the country director (who was not a Nasserite). However, the choice of organisations made at the inception phase had already sent out a political statement which has led to polarisation across ideological lines to this day. These rifts have proven to be highly divisive and leading to some very petty fighting and displays of animosities between leaders and each other. The full implications of the selection process can only be appreciated when one takes into account the fact that activists who had been for decades working on the issue of violence against women were excluded, because they were not from the Nasserite camp.

4. Donor practices: relating to the coalition as if it was an organisation and to the cause as if it was a project

There are two common practices observed here that strengthen Karama's upward accountability to the donor rather than to its partners. The first is the absence of criteria to differentiate between an international organisation with partners and an indigenous coalition that was locally created and that invited partners from different backgrounds to join it. Karama presented itself as an Egyptian initiative involving multiple local actors, despite the fact that it was clearly an international organisation based in the US applying for international funds.

Second, the monitoring mechanism is not conducive to analysing process, contextual nuances and nature of relationships in Karama. Neither Price Cooper Waterhouse nor Femconsult know the local contexts well and this undermines the extent to which they can understand whether an initiative is internationally driven or locally led. The approach is to engage with the initiative as a project, hence monitoring is in terms of project outputs not collective action processes.

In short, just like it is not possible to force a fox to be transformed into a rabbit by repeatedly telling it "you are a rabbit", so it is not possible to force an external international organisation to become an indigenous coalition by repeatedly telling its constituency and the wider world that it is so. In effect, the failure of Karama to become a coalition is a case of mismatch between the agency of leadership and the structural norms, practices and politics of context.

Here then was a coalition, largely created from without, which had no clear and defined initial goals which it could pursue, had little if any impact on wider public discourse around gender issues and has left no locally embedded organizational legacy or potential.

3. Coalition in the making? Network of Women's Rights' Organisations (NWRO) formerly the Coalition of Women's Rights Organisations and commonly known as "The GTZ project".

NWRO is a network that aspires to be a coalition. Its greatest challenge is to build local leadership that would develop a locally relevant and winnable political agenda on gender issues. NWRO being conceived by the will and funding of a foreign donor is facing challenges of sustainability and autonomy. Whether a process of building local leadership will succeed in overcoming these contextual limitations to the development of an appropriate leadership building process remains to be seen.

The Issue

Personal Status Law has been at the centre of the feminist struggle in Egypt since 1929. It is the only legislation that entirely derives from Shariah law and not civil law and regulates the most intimate form of power politics: gender relations in the private sphere with ramifications for gender roles and statuses in society at large. Feminists have consistently mobilised to change the legislation regarding the gender injustices inherent in the Personal Status Law. These include men's unrestricted right to marry up to four wives, granting fathers almost unilateral guardianship over children and unequal rights to initiate divorce.

The origins of the coalition

In 2005, the German development-aid agency, GTZ (now GIZ), was interested in working with NGOs supporting women's causes as part of its international commitment to promoting gender equality and

supporting civil society. GTZ however, only operates in Egypt through working in partnership with the government.

Conventionally, it would be given an office in the premises of the governorate and would work in close partnership with officials there. However, in order to work with women's NGOs that are geographically spread across the country, the GTZ partner in this instance was the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the government department responsible for overseeing the affairs of non-profit organisations.

The trigger for the formation of a group of NGOs was an invitation from GTZ. It is highly significant that it was the internal staff of GTZ who selected the organisations with which to work. They chose some of the most established women's organisations who have worked on women's rights issues either through grassroots development and/or advocacy.

Once all the organisations were brought together, GTZ asked them to choose an issue that they would like to work on collectively (GTZ staff suggested that one issue they might wish to work on was informal marriages). Between 2005 and 2008 research was conducted, roundtables were organized and a film produced – but the issue was later dropped because some members considered it to be too socially sensitive. Afterwards a number of organisations withdrew. A number of new organisations were brought in between 2006-2009, bringing the total number to 11 organisations. The profile of the organisations changed dramatically with a significantly higher representation from non-feminist developmental organisations and organisations with less political clout. Moreover, with the change in the group's make-up, they resolved to work on a new issue and decided that it should be the issue of family law for Muslims.

The structure

When the group started in 2005, they referred to their collective body as a coalition. However, this has been replaced with reference to a women's rights network. In virtually all of the interviews undertaken, this initiative was consistently referred to as "the GTZ project". This suggests strongly that it is not identified by the cause (personal status law) but by the donor and it is not referred to as a network/alliance/coalition/campaign or any other term that suggests a collective will, or activist initiative. The word "project" neatly categorises the initiative as a development intervention.

NWRO has several layers of organizational arrangements. The leadership, according to the existing structure, is in the hands of the steering committee which is comprised of the eleven leaders of the NGOs. There is also an executive committee which is comprised of the administrative staff that belong to these organisations and who follow the day-to-day work of the network. Further, all administrative convening is led by the GTZ Secretariat which is comprised of a project manager and a capacity development expert.

The objective

The objective of the coalition/network, at its inception, was "building a strong network and changing the Personal Status law". However, now, the objective is more modestly to put forward some recommendations of areas where the Law may be changed.

The activities, process and outcome

The network works on two levels.
- On an individual organisational level, member organisations are given small amounts of seed money

to undertake activities on an intermediary level: for example, working with religious men, working with lawyers to be more gender-sensitive in the personal status cases and working with members of other civil society organisations. This level of project implementation is certainly one of the incentives for organisations to participate since there is much flexibility and autonomy in determining the agenda and the activities.

- On a policy-making level, the organisations have, through the network, sought to influence policy-makers using different strategies. First, some members representing the network have held meetings with members of the judiciary, key policy makers in the Ministry of Justice and the National Council for Women. One of the fundamental difficulties the group encountered is that there are currently three governmental bills which are secretly locked in closets. The first has been developed by the Ministry of Justice, the second by the National Council for Women (which is in dispute with the Ministry of Justice) and the third is by the High Policy Committee of the ruling National Democratic Party. Second, the network has produced a Legal Guide representing its collective position on the required changes in the Personal Status Law. NWRO hopes to use the Legal Guide as the basis for its future advocacy campaign.

Funding

It is not easy to make sense of the complex funding arrangements for the coalition as there is very little transparency regarding the total funds allocated for this initiative. GTZ funds a series of activities under the Women's network. First, each organisation receives LE 160,000 per year for the meso-level activities implemented. Second, the capacity development component supports travels (to study other countries' experiences, for example, and to attend international conferences) as well as supporting payment for international consultants.

Reflections on the outcome

The GTZ project - as is it is commonly known - faces a challenge as to whether the informal ties that bind most of the leaders of the organisations together will help cement some kind of collective entity to compensate for the current absence of collective ownership. The litmus test will be when the GTZ funding comes to an end. It is only with the removal of the original incentive - the availability of foreign funding that we will be able to examine whether a transition can be made from a project to a coalition, and whether any of the criteria of success (mentioned in the introduction to this section on the coalitions) will have been met. Yet when GTZ announced this year its intention to gradually step back from the leadership and co-ordination of the initiative, it was met with opposition from the group. The message relayed was clear: if you retreat now, the initiative will disintegrate.

1. The failure of the initiative to develop into a coalition is mainly due to the role of an external actor assuming the role of local leadership, in particular in the inception phase, and in view of the structural realities of the Egyptian CSO - donor relations. Agential shortcomings include running the coalition like a project, assuming leadership roles, ignoring the limitations of its own positionality. This is in a context in which the flow of substantial foreign funds for promotion of civil society has led to the professionalisation and technocratisation of many of the leading organisations working on gender issues in the country.
2. Moreover, the choice of issue around which the collective entity is formed poses its own challenges for NWRO. There are challenges to arriving at a consensus among NGO activists and practitioners from very different backgrounds and ideological standpoints on a highly contentious and deeply divisive issue such as the Personal Status Law. Furthermore, the fact that they have chosen an issue that is not winnable and is not politically opportune is problematic on another front: an inability to

make inroads will also affect group morale and mobilisation. In terms of its future plans, one of the ideas proposed is that they do not restrict themselves to one issue (the Personal Status Law) but rather use the network as a springboard to collectively work on other issues that are gender-related, such as female genital mutilation. This will lead to a fundamental shift in the conceptualisation of the purpose of the collective entity. Does the network serve as a space to network on whatever issue requires collective action or is it a collective entity that came to be because of its commitment to advancing a particular cause?

Thus far, there is little sign of achieving or influencing any reforms, nor evidence of either extending debate or organizational strengthening.

03

Section Three

SYNTHESIS AND MAIN FINDINGS

The findings presented here relate to a mix of the variables of interest, that is the factors mentioned earlier. For some variables, findings for all six coalitions are presented and for others, a select few ones are discussed, depending on their relevance.

1. Trigger
2. Political moment enabling agential responsiveness
3. Leadership characteristics
4. Leadership as process
5. Networks
6. Scope of Issue and Cause
7. Context
8. Vision
9. Strategy
10. Opposition
11. External adaptation
12. Donors

1. The trigger (threat, challenge, opportunity, event) influencing the emergence of coalitions, its timing and the response

It is striking that in five out of six cases, a donor played some contributing role in triggering the formation of the group

In the case of the CEDAW coalition in Egypt, the attendance of a group of women's rights and development NGOs at a training event by UNICEF on the CEDAW, and its use as a yardstick to monitor the status of women and hold the state accountable, served as a powerful trigger for participants to decide to form a group. The intervention of UNICEF in supporting the emergence of the group and providing them with the space to meet provided an important trigger to pursue group establishment around the CEDAW.

In the case of NWRO's formation in Egypt, what triggered the establishment of the coalition was the leading role of GTZ (now GIZ) in identifying, approaching and hosting the collective initiative. Organizations responded to the opportunity of available funds by agreeing to participate in the formation of a coalition on legal discrimination against women in the family law.

The availability of funds and the promise of access to international networks and spaces also triggered civil society organizations with an interest in women's rights to join Karama in Egypt. Activists mobilized around specific forms of violence prior to the establishment of Karama however, the organization of collective action in the form of a collective entity only materialized with the arrival of Karama (and their funding) to Egypt.

In the case of the formation of the Protection Team on Protection of the Family against Violence, the trigger for group formation was the invitation by the Public Security in an initiative hosted by the British Council in Amman (with funding from DFID).

2. *Agential responsiveness and the political moment*

Agential responsiveness relates to the leaders' and organisations' capacities to engage politically as well as enabling structural factors associated with the right political moment

In the case of the CEDAW coalition, the timing was opportune for Fatma Khafagy to seize the opportunity for suggesting to UNICEF that it fund the emerging collective body on gender issues from the funds they had allocated for following up on Beijing. It provided UNICEF with an opportunity to take a leadership role among the UN agencies in promoting gender equality. It is also thanks to the agential responsiveness of the regional director at the time who seized the opportune political moment to allow Khafagy to start this unusual civil society-led initiative.

From another perspective, the response of the NGO leaders who expressed a desire to form a group around the CEDAW was also due to the fact that at that time, in most cases, organisations were still in the early phase of their formation. They had not yet established themselves as reputable women's organisations, had not become so professionalised (foreign funding was still in its early days) and leaders were then willing to commit to a form of collective action that would grant them visibility and allow them to broaden their work.

It is interesting that in the case of NWRO and Karama, the agential response by the same organisations that had taken the initiative to form the CEDAW Coalition was not primarily motivated by an excitement about the cause itself. Their willingness to participate in NWRO and Karama was partly driven by the desire to seize another opportunity for funding and to access untapped resources and lobbying space in the international arena. The political moment in the history of the organisations that were invited to join was one in which they had already consolidated themselves and become quite professionalised and technocratised in dealing with the donor.

3. *Leadership characteristics*

The leadership profile of the founders of the coalitions clearly indicates that they are from the elites in terms of educational attainment, class background, overseas exposure, professional background (white collar) and, in some cases, access to those at the centre of political power.

It is highly significant that all the founders and leaders in all six case studies are highly educated. They all have at least an undergraduate degree, with a significant proportion holding a graduate degree and some representation from those who hold doctorates. The overwhelming majority of founders also have at least a working knowledge of English, and in some cases speak it fluently. In other words, they are able to communicate and tap into international repertoires of support and funding. With the exception of the coalition against so-called crimes of honour in Jordan, founding members of all the remaining

initiates tend to be middle aged or older. The vast majority of founding members also tend to have had exposure and engagement in contexts outside their home countries, regionally and in many instances internationally as well.

4. Leadership process

It is highly significant that in all cases studied here the organisations that formed the coalition were strongly associated with their leader/founder. This is very much a one-man/one-woman kind of organisational leadership.

In all of the five coalitions involving organisations in Egypt and Jordan, where members other than the central leading figures from the organisation are delegated to represent the organisation in the coalition, they often have very limited decision-making power and need to refer back to the "leader" before committing to anything.

However, in all the coalitions, there was an attempt to institutionalise leadership as a process through the establishment of a steering committee. The presence of a strong, autonomous and functioning steering committee comprised of members who are considered legitimate, has proven to be a highly effective mechanism for enabling leadership as a process in coalitions. In the CEDAW coalition, the steering group is nominated by members through voting, and elections are held to lead to a rotation of leadership, giving legitimacy to the members elected. This process has in fact been quite successful for the emergence of some new (younger) representation in the steering committee. It is one of the successful features of the CEDAW coalition because it creates a sense of collective ownership and responsibility. It is perhaps why when the EACP sought to encroach on the steering committee's decision-making power, it created a knee jerk reaction.

The case studies show evidence that successful leadership processes are integral for building socially cohesive, strong coalitions. In the two cases of successful coalitions (CEDAW in Egypt and Family Protection in Jordan) the decision-making processes were characterized by the following:

- An appreciation of all the efforts of each individual contributing to the coalition reflected in an open recognition of what s/he is bringing to the group
- An inclusive processes: having some level of joint decision-making and joint work
- Effective conflict mediation mechanisms
- Leaders who are seen as legitimate, and above all suspicion of being financially corrupt and self-seeking and their positionality does not raise questions regarding their motivations for participation in the coalition
- Clear division of labour in allocating responsibilities
- Building consensus through mediation and negotiation (even if the process is time consuming) rather than decision-making by majority vote

Leadership processes are important in the following ways:

- Members of the steering committee rely on formal and informal mechanisms for mediating organisational vs. coalition interests. Formal mechanisms include establishing clear procedural guidelines regarding organisational rights vs. coalition obligations. Informal mechanisms include personal dialogues with members whose actions are undermining the internal cohesion of the group.
- Information sharing. In particular among CSOs, when part of a coalition/movement, organizations

reasonably expect to know some of the public activities of other participating organisations because the collective image of the coalition cannot be entirely separated from the individual leaders who are part of it.

5. *Networks*

Formal and informal networks often played a critical role both at the phase of coalition formation and consolidation as well as in the strategic engagement with external context.

Informal networks have helped to create bridges between coalitions and their opposition in safe, non-confrontational settings. Moreover, informal networks give leaders access to insights and "insider information" that are not accessible through any other means. For example, while engaged in documenting the predicament of women married to non-Jordanian men and the mobilization around increased activism on this issue, a warning at a dinner party by a friend who happened to be a former Chief of the Intelligence Agency provided one activist with a reality check on whether this was the right political moment to step this up the campaign.

Informal networks allowed activists to escape from and circumvent politically repressive measures adopted by the regimes. The main reason why the authorities tolerated citizens to mobilise through the coalition on so-called crimes against honour in Jordan was because one of the activist's uncles was a popular and highly regarded minister in the government. It was only because of this informal network of relationships that activists collecting petitions arrested by the police were released, permission to hold conferences and media events were granted.

Informal networks play an instrumental part for the internal survival of the coalition itself. When a board member and a founder of the EACP, the hosting organisation, sought to take over the CEDAW coalition, the steering committee summoned the other leaders to what was termed a "meeting of the elders", indicative of the way in which the members felt that the relationships they had forged over many years of working together provided a basis for communicating together- and with Afaf Marei, who had shared in that history.

However, informal networks can also undermine coalitions if they perpetuate unequal power relationships. In NWRO, there was a struggle in order to develop mechanisms of democratic decision-making involving the leadership of all 11 participating organisations when the core group of five were tempted to take matters in their own hands. They would arrive at decisions in informal gatherings (waiting for the plane in an airport in Indonesia for example!) and simply make announcements to the smaller, newer organisations led by less powerful actors. Moreover, as one leader of a relatively newly established organisation confided: when this group [of big leaders] fight between themselves, "all hell breaks loose" because they drag the rest of the group into their in-fighting and they are obliged to take stances to demonstrate their loyalty."

6. *The nature and scope of the issue*

The six case studies suggest that the nature of the issue has a bearing on the emergence and success of a coalition in terms of how threatening it is perceived to be in relation to the dominant and prevailing social norms and values in a society and the political system in place at that moment in time.

In Jordan, the objective of the coalition on so-called crimes of honour was seen to be promoting sexual promiscuity and was therefore rejected by very powerful groups: the Islamist movement, represented

by the Islamic Front and Liberation Party, and conservative factions within the government and in some sections of society more broadly.

Similarly, early attempts to change the nationality law in Jordan were perceived to represent a threat to "national security interests" by the government and consequently deterred women activists from forming a coalition around the issue. Later attempts to form a coalition around the more limited objective of socio-economic rights abandoned all reference to equal citizenship rights in order to mobilize support on behalf of Jordanian women who are married to Palestinian men.

7. *Context*

In Egypt and Jordan, the two principle challenges that frustrate the emergence of coalitions are an inhibitive political environment and women's leadership, specifically what motivates their involvement in collective action. Each will be briefly summarised here.

While Egypt and Jordan are both authoritarian regimes, spaces for activism are not entirely and systematically closed, but they are highly volatile and unpredictable. In other words, these spaces operate in almost an amoebic fashion, their parameters shifting, expanding and contracting in irregular ways. Sometimes more opportunities for political engagement are possible *vis-a-vis* gender issues while the space is contracting for political party activism. Sometimes spaces are inhibited for all parties, and sometimes there is a relaxation of political inhibitions for activism more broadly. This is critically important for promoting gender agendas in two fundamental ways.

First, there is no linearity in progress in advancing gender rights. Progressive reforms introduced at one political moment in time may be reversed at another point in time. For example, in 2001, the Jordanian government introduced through a temporary law, women's right to khul'. Khul' is an Islamically mandated right granted to women who wish to divorce their husbands without any justification, in return for forgoing some of their financial rights (these vary from one context to another: in Jordan, this means returning any money or jewellery bestowed to them by their spouses prior to the wedding and forsaking their right to alimony). If the judge cannot reconcile the couple, he is forced to grant the woman their wish for divorce.[15] Yet in a proposed new Personal Status Law drafted in 2010, the Chief Islamic Justice Department, the judicial authority responsible for family affairs legislation, scrapped a woman's right to khul' under the premise that "it is not socially acceptable", despite the fact that hundreds of women have divorced through khul' since its introduction in 2001 (Alhsayni, 2010).

The second impact of the highly volatile political context in which women activists work is a very high level of insecurity regarding whether their initiatives will be considered to "cross the red lines" set by authoritarian regimes or, in other words, defying politically acceptable terms of engagement. In both contexts, the domestic intelligence agencies are very active in exercising informal power over actors who deviate from the official political line.

The constraints on the emergence of coalitions are not only due to the structural political and institutional factors identified above, but also to women activist leaders. Collective action often takes the form of foreign funded development interventions, often run like projects. The increased injection of foreign funding for civil society in the past 15 years has led to the professionalisation of activism. The emergence of coalitions has been severely inhibited by the fact that many women leaders will not work collectively if it means that their own organisational visibility (*vis-a-vis* the donor) will be undermined or that their own organisational slice of the donor funding cake will be smaller. Moreover, as professionalised lead-

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15   This is in contrast to the regular pathway to divorce in which women must provide evidence for complying with conditions on qualifying for applying for a divorce, and in which judges have the prerogative to deny their request.

ers, they often will not participate in collective initiatives where their own time, or the involvement of their organisations, is not funded. In the case of Egypt, since the women activists leaders generally lead well established organisations which have secured large funding, they will not work collectively together through coalitions where the amount of funding is small. Moreover, they will not volunteer time and effort, so needed for the internal building process of any coalition, unless there are financial rewards to incur for their organisations from such involvement.

The professionalised, depoliticised women activists' leadership has undermined the prospects for collective action. It has also meant that it is much easier for women activists to collectively work together on short term campaigns that do not require a substantial investment in time and effort than to work on causes that require a more sustained kind of collective action.

8. *Vision*

One of the central findings of this research is that individuals and organisations do not have to have a shared vision as a prerequisite for coalition formation but they have to have a personal stake in the issue in order to commit to collective action on it.

At the beginning of the formation of the Protection Team against Family Violence in Jordan, there was no common vision binding together the actors who came from different backgrounds, held different ideologies and standpoints on violence. They formed around a common problem: what do you do about conflict in the family which cannot be contained or controlled? Yet through a process of working together, a consensus was built around a common vision. The common vision forged through the process of consensus building within the team then facilitated reaching a point of convergence with CSOs on arriving at a law to deal with the inadequacies of the existing legislation in providing adequate protection for victims of violence.

Similarly, the leaders of the steering committee on the initiative for granting residency rights for the families of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanian men did not share a common vision. There are marked differences in standpoints on the issue of whether Jordanian women should enjoy equal rights with their male counterparts and some on the team are very hostile to the idea of making any concessions on this issue. However, they have committed to working through the team to examine the issue from various perspectives.

9. *Framing and strategies of influence*

Framing is not necessarily only about "packaging" messages appropriately according to the targeted audience. The process of arriving at an appropriate framing often involves negotiating different ideological standpoints and political perspectives. It often involves arriving at a consensus on the most basic elements of strategy, representation of the identity of the coalition and its vision.

It first requires a deep and nuanced understanding of what will touch a chord among different stakeholders and packaging the message accordingly. In the coalition on protection of the family against violence in Jordan, framing the issue in terms of protecting the family, its welfare and interests was strategically very successful in minimizing the possible backlash against it. Had the issue been framed in terms of protecting or defending women's rights the scope and level of opposition would have been considerably greater. In order to support the framing that the issue was about protecting the Jordanian family, the coalition highlighted in the media real life case studies of families suffering as a consequence of the existing laws. The impact of such suffering on the children and the whole household was emphasized

in order to bring out the "family" dimension of the issue.

Against the backdrop of the salience of religion as part of the normative framework through which people engage, coalitions in both Egypt and Jordan have sought to deploy religious discourse arguments in order to show that their cause is in compliance with Islam. This instrumental use of religion is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can show how the coalition is engaging with what counts in people's lives. On the other hand, and of itself, it is not enough to outmanoeuvre the opposition. The Coalition on so-called Crimes of Honour in Jordan was determined from the out start to show how crimes of honour were in defiance of Islamic jurisprudence. However the sensitivity of the issue and the stronger positionality of the Islamist movement to claim representation of Islam meant that such framing was not enough to shield them from fierce opposition.

One of the important strategies emerging from the coalitions is knowing when and how to engage with the media. It does not necessarily mean increasing media coverage. In the earlier years of the CEDAW coalition, in the earlier phase, keeping quiet and away from the media's eyes served its cause best. They did not think it is wise to gain coverage of the coalition's activities when leading members were still deliberating over the "common denominator" that should comprise the content of the report. In the case of the Coalition on so-called Crimes of Honour, in Jordan, the excessive international media coverage undermined the campaign and created a national backlash. On the other hand, the ability of the Family Protection Team to liaise with the Media ministry, to synchronize with newspapers to cover the issues favourably, contributed to creating an enabling environment for arriving at a positive public opinion.

10. The nature and power of the opposition

In both country contexts, opposition to these coalitions' goals often has come from both external actors in society and government and internal, from within the women's movements.

There are three main sources of external opposition to women's coalitions in Egypt and Jordan.

- Certain elements within the government who have vested interests in maintaining the status quo
- The Islamic movements which represent politically the most vocal and antagonistic opposition to gender reform
- The highly conservative (and often reactionary) normative framework. However, internal opposition from within the women's movements in Egypt and Jordan have also played the most significant role in threatening women's collective action initiatives.

Ideological diversity on the gender question exists between members of the same Islamic movement as well as among different movements. However, in both countries it is the same movement that has been politically active within parliament, and which has the strongest populist constituency and its own access to the media- namely the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and its offshoot in Jordan, commonly known as the Islamic Front. In both countries (and through its offshoots regionally and internationally), the Muslim Brotherhood movement has been one of the strongest opponents to the CEDAW.

The opposition to the CEDAW is not only ideological (although that is the essence of it) but also political, in its insistence on not "borrowing" from the West models that are not rooted in Muslim culture and values. Throughout the parliamentary history in both countries, the Islamist movement has consistently been against introducing any gender reforms and has assumed the role of protecting Islam from its enemies.

Yet, interestingly, the CEDAW coalition in Egypt was not exposed to heightened opposition from the Islamists because the impact of their work was limited. On the other hand, when women activists in Jordan pressed the government to publish the CEDAW in the official gazette (thus giving it the power of the law and the lifting of one of the country's reservations to the convention), the Islamists reacted vehemently calling for Jordan to reject the convention.

Second, the Islamic opposition tends to be strongest when the issue is associated with sexual politics. This explains the vehement opposition expressed by the Islamic opposition in Jordan to the repeal of article 340 (pertaining to removing the legal basis for granting lenient sentences to men who have killed women in "honour crimes") in comparison to their minimal opposition to promulgating new legislation on domestic violence.

While generally the Islamist movement has been a strong opponent of women's activisms for more gender equality, it is also strategic about its deployment of effort and policy focus. Initiatives such as Karama and NWRO are so lacking in political weight, constituency and potential impact [as they stand at the moment] that the Islamists have not, until now, bothered to attack them!

In the initiatives in Jordan concerning women's equal citizenship rights with respect to passing on their nationality, the opposition is very different to all of the five other case studies, the opposition cuts across less conventional lines. The opposition from within powerful factions within the government and powerful factions within parliament on geo-strategic and national security grounds has proven too strong a coalition to contest. Moreover, the internal divisions within the leadership of women's organisations has only served to highlight the importance of recognizing the intersection of gender, class and nationality in shaping identities and that any assumption that gender will be the most important marker of identity needs to be revisited.

Internal opposition from within the women's movement strongly undermined women's collective action initiatives with respect to all three case studies in Egypt as power struggles over leadership, resources and visibility got in the way. In the case of the Karama initiative in Egypt, the strongest opposition came from members of the coalition who left, and who accused Karama of being CIA connected. The backlash against Karama by these former members was intense and sustained over several weeks. According to Khafagy, the weak internal leadership of Karama and the lack of ownership of the initiative by members inside only encouraged the exited leaders to step up their opposition. In Jordan, the threat to the Family Protection Team's ability to achieve its objectives came from an internal member of the coalition, the Ministry of Social Development which wishes to flex its political muscles by delaying the implementation of the law.

11. Adaptation to external factors and learning

External factors examined here relate to both agential and structural issues but exclude donors who are addressed separately below.

The personal trajectories of leaders who have inspired collective action within their groups reflect the extent to which they have been engaging with the international feminist agenda. In Jordan, It is highly significant that the CSO version of the Family Protection Law was prompted by SIGI's participation in SALMA, an Arab network on violence, while the CEDAW coalition was established following an exposure to a workshop held by international advocates from India.

Similarly, the initiatives on nationality in Jordan were very much affected by the successful experiences

of legal reform in Egypt, Morocco and Algeria. Local women do not blindly adopt issues that become salient in international feminist fora, as they are not simply repositories for external agendas and ideas. However, exposure does have a ripple effect on local feminists' agenda setting. In the Middle East, feminists have been reluctant to take up issues that are likely to generate broad-based opposition against them such as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans-sexual (LGBT) rights.

The study of women's activism here attests to the findings from other research (Nazneen and Sohela: forthcoming 2011) of the importance of international conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Beijing Conference in creating an international and local environment that puts gender on the agenda and prioritises women's empowerment. International events, information sharing and local feminist activists are constantly engaged with trends, issues, and approaches emerging on the international agenda.

The international community's use of the CEDAW as a yardstick for assessing a country's progress in addressing sources of gender discrimination has been controversial, eliciting reactions of essentialism, and scepticism about the universality of the values and ideas that have shaped it. On the other hand, the negative publicity about a country's record in meeting its commitments to fulfilling the convention can be politically costly and hence serve as an important lobbying space for local feminists. Donors supporting gender reform in the Middle East have also attached significant political weight to the extent to which women's rights comply with the CEDAW when setting their policies for a country. This has been an important factor in justifying the support that UNICEF has rendered to supporting the CEDAW coalition and not on a conventional project cycle. The fact that the Egyptian government was also under pressure to show progress on the CEDAW created a favourable environment to have this space for the coalition and for the credibility and legitimacy of its actors. Similarly activists have sought to use the shadow report for Jordan's progress to press for revising the nationality law and intend to dedicate a shadow report specifically to this issue at the 2011 review.

12. Donors

In Jordan, all the coalitions established received foreign funding with the exception of the coalition on so-called Crimes of Honour, which is very telling about the strong association between availability of funds and coalition activism.

It is significant that the two most successful coalitions (CEDAW Coalition, and the Family Protection against Violence team) were ones in which donors played a critical role at the inception stage. In both cases, there are some similarities which are important:

1. Donors did not select the organisations that comprised the group- this was an internal process
2. Donors had local offices in both countries and were working in close partnership with government and civil society organisations there (as opposed to externally managing the grant from overseas)
3. Donors were already working with an existing network of organisations out of which the coalitions' work was sustained - in other words, there was an institutional history of engagement which provided the basis for further work. (UNICEF through the Beijing follow-up initiative, and DFID through the work on violence against children).
4. Donors knew the context very well. Their staff knew the organisations, issues, politics, contextual dynamics and nuances very well
5. Both donors focused on these activities as processes not projects. They were equally concerned about building the process of group formation, cohesion, and mechanisms for consensus building and decision-making. The focus was not strictly on project output

6. Both donors played an initial hosting role but then the initiative was moved to a local actor, helping to instil a sense of local ownership

7. Both Donors took risks, and their leadership thought outside the box

8. The size of the grant given to each organisation for capacity support was relatively small.

One of the key findings from the CEDAW coalition's experience in Egypt and the Family Protection Team in Jordan is that for coalitions to work, investing in process is just as important as investing in achieving purpose. In other words, the projectivisation of coalitions undermines collective ownership. Investing in process is necessary in order to reconcile differences in perspectives, expectations and visions without alienating important actors and develop mechanisms of consensual decision-making as well as foster a common will and purpose.

The structural constraints of balancing funding coalitions' work with the foreign policy objective of maintaining positive relations with the government rests on the quality of donors' leadership. For example, GTZ acquiesced in the Ministry's wishes that the two organisations be removed from the coalition. In other words, while there are structural constraints, much depends on donor agency: the kind of leadership that can navigate and manoeuvre within the limited space.

One of the key dimensions of donor-coalition relations, and relations within the coalition itself, is the question of financial transparency. Financial transparency requires the disclosure of the details of the budget, not only the overall figure. The CEDAW coalition was at its strongest in the early phase when all members of the steering committee knew exactly how each piaster was being dispensed. This was given in a written form, put up on a flipchart for everyone to see. When the CEDAW coalition was taken over by EACP which did not share the details of the budget with the group, this severely undermined its internal cohesion.

Finally, the findings discussed above show how agential factors such as coalition leadership played a critical role in responding to openings in highly complex socio-political contexts as well as strategising to push the boundaries of the possible, and such constellations do show patterns of effective engagement. However, the agential-structural interface is very context specific and hence there is no linear path that can be drawn from these case studies on "how to" make coalitions successful.

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Section Four

POLICY MESSAGES FOR DONORS

Some key policy messages for donors are presented here in view of the significant role they played in five of the six coalitions. From the study, there are five policy areas that are central for donors to play an enabling role:

1. The importance of knowing context, its actors and nuances
2. Responding to the opportunities and limitations of donors' and recipients' own positionality
3. Recognising that supporting coalitions is not the same as supporting projects
4. Recognising the centrality of agency within donors and within coalitions
5. Create links across donors to share experiences on supporting coalition work.

Context

Donors played an effective enabling role when they had a presence in the country in which they worked over a sustained period of time. This enabled a nuanced and deep knowledge of the institutional and agential factors in the context in which they worked. Such cases were characterized by:

- Having an institutional memory within the donor organisation of previous experiences, endeavours, relationships and an analysis of their successes and failures
- Having developed previous relationships and networks across a long period of time, amounting to a repertoire of social and political capital
- Knowing the historical trajectory of actors and structural arrangements of the context very well
- Understanding the political constraints but also openings for engaging with both government and civil society actors.

Positionality

Enabling donors were the ones that recognised the opportunities and limitations of their own positionality, in particular when functioning in highly conservative, politically volatile contexts. Enabling donors were also the ones that were aware of the political nuances associated with the positionality of the leaders of the organisations they support.

- Local ownership is very important. Donors should support local agents to form coalitions, but they should not establish the coalitions themselves nor be the ones to select the organisations which will work together. Their role should be enabling agents, not creators of coalitions. Consequently,

politically nuanced, highly skilled facilitation between different parties is one of donor agencies' very important roles.

- The vision, mission and strategy should be developed by the internal organisations not by the external actor.
- In highly sensitive political contexts, donors should not publicly attribute positive change to their support. This undermines the sense that this is a local-led and local-owned initiative
- The role of donors in advocacy of the cause should be sensitive to how their own positionality will affect the coalition's legitimacy and power.
- Donors should also be aware of the positionality of the organisations they support and the importance of their being perceived as indigenous and national (which is also critically important for strengthening the leadership process of the coalition, in view of the importance of local ownership).

Don't treat coalitions as projects

Donors interested in supporting coalitions should not treat them as projects with a project life (three year or five year set period) and a project cycle (planning, implementation and evaluation). Supporting coalitions requires time and a focus on internal organisational strengthening as well as the achievement of goals. In other words, projectivisation of coalitions should be avoided at all costs because:

- It is not possible to support coalitions while complying with all the project management principles in vogue such as the logical framework and results based management.
- Building coalitions involves processes of creating consensus, identifying appropriate mechanisms of mobilising support, finding mechanisms for work that accommodate differences and adapting internal organisational dynamics to changing political contexts: hence the collective mediation of different interests is more complex than in projects, where the focus is on outputs
- Project monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are inappropriate when applied to coalitions. For coalitions, monitoring will not only be of the activities but also of the extent to which initiatives are based on consensual processes of decision making and the extent to which there are institutionalised leadership processes that are inclusive and representative. Opportunities for engaging with all members of the leadership of the coalition and not only the leader of the organisation that received funds needs to be integrated in the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- While funding is given to one organisation on behalf of the coalition (for legal and financial accountability mechanisms), donors must ensure that the coalition maintains a high level of internal financial transparency regarding the funding so that it does not become a source of internal dispute.

Recognize the centrality of agency within donors and within coalitions

In cases where donors have played a positive enabling role for strengthening coalitions' work, they have done so through:

- Having leadership within the donor that thinks outside the box and is willing to take risks
- Having a leadership that is able to invest in relationship-building processes among the different local actors as much as project outputs
- Having a leadership and staff that are able to bring different actors together in a space where they can dialogue, open lines of communication and engage. (This requires however, a leadership on the part of the donor who knows the actors in the local scene very well, and therefore knows where the personal and institutional tensions lie).

There has been a strong donor interest in supporting initiatives through project support or capacity development for public organisations. However, the research from both successful and failed coalition

initiatives suggests that a focus on agency is critical for building an effective leadership process. A number of policy interventions which can strengthen agency within the coalition include:

- Introduce financial and institutional incentives that support collective leadership within the coalition and not the one woman/one man show phenomenon.
- Help to provide leaders within the coalition with opportunities to broaden their horizons and their exposure to other actors' engagements with the issue they are tackling through more focus on experiential learning. Visits to other initiatives in other contexts and exchange programmes can be highly effective, if introduced at the right time and to the right people, in encouraging out of the box thinking on local strategies of engagement.

Create links across donors to share experiences on supporting coalition work

Since supporting the process of strengthening developmental coalitions is different from supporting an organisation involved in project implementation, there is a need to create a donor forum specifically on how donors can be enabling agents for coalitions. This forum would serve many different purposes:

1. Share experiences and best practice on working with coalitions
2. Harmonise policies towards coalitions. Implementation of the Paris and Accra agendas on donor harmonisation of policies has focused on engagements with the government rather than non-state actors and actors and combined governmental/non-governmental agency.
3. Develop specific guidelines and new frameworks for engaging with developmental coalitions.

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Section Five

CONCLUSIONS

Coalitions in general, including those that mobilise around gender-related issues, are not common in Jordan and Egypt. In view of the politically restrictive and narrow policy-making processes in place up to 2010, it has been very difficult for coalitions to form, to work and to generate the kind of policy change or institutional development that they have sought. Yet historically and in recent times, women's groups have 'worked politically' to achieve progress on the gender agenda. But this has seldom only been through tactics and strategies of formal and adversarial public advocacy, more common in open democratic polities. As this paper has shown, successful coalitions have had to work politically in 'quieter' ways, informally, through contacts and networks that link them with influential players in positions of both formal and informal power and authority. And when successes have been achieved, it has often been due to the agency of a number of actors, and not only the women's collective entities.

Moreover, as suggested earlier, there is a variety of measures by which the success of coalitions can be judged. These include victory on specific policy or legislative issues, but also opening up debate and ending 'cultures of silence', consolidating the sinews of a coalition and deepening and strengthening the capacities and skills of constituent organizations. As this paper has shown, even where they have not achieved specific policy goals, some of the coalitions studied have been successful in opening up debate or in consolidating their structures for future work. By opening up debate, and hence by breaking the silence on taboo issues, they have in turn created a more enabling environment for other activists to press for positive change. Where coalitions have formed and survived, politically savvy agents were able to 'read' the political context effectively, identify and seize opportunities, exploit contacts and networks, weigh the opposition, 'frame' the issue in an appropriate way – and hence act accordingly.

Throughout, however, it has been clear that the interaction of contextual and enabling factors (structure) with leaders (agency) who are able to respond, has facilitated the formation of coalitions, often against considerable odds. For donors and supporters it is important to have the staff with the political analytical skills to 'read' and understand these interactions, to recognise the importance of supporting these processes that generate developmental coalitions and to make long term investments in them. The six case studies analysed here confirm the hypothesis that the success or failure of these coalitions is not attributable to any single variable, such as the worthiness, urgency or significance of the cause, an opportune political moment, an enabling environment or the presence of seasoned women activists. Each separately does not account for success or failure. Success or failure of coalitions rests on the ability of the women activists to work politically, in often shifting institutional and political circumstances, rather than on their commitment or expertise on gender issues.

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APPENDIX

List of interviews for Egyptian case studies

1. Amal Abd El Hadi founding member of the New Woman Research Center , interviewed in July and August 2010
2. Amal Mahmoud, Member and founder of the NGOs Forum for Women's Development (NGO), interviewed in July and August 2010,
3. Farida el Naqash, , member and founder of the NGOs Forum for Women's Development, interviewed in July and August).
4. Afad Marei Vice Head of the Board of Directors of the Egyptian Association for Community Participation and Enhancement (EACPE), interviewed in July 2010,
5. Mozn Hassan Executive director of Nazra Center for Feminist Studies, interviewed in July and August 2010,
6. Afaf el Said, executive director of the Association for the Solidarity of Arab Women, interviewed in August 2010
7. Dalia Zachariah, Executive director of the Gender Programme at the Egyptian Association for Community Participation and Enhancement (EACPE), interviewed in August 2010,
8. Aida Nour el Din, head of board of Directors of the Women and Development Association (Alexandria) , interviewed in August 2010, .
9. Inas al Sahfai Executive director of the NGO Forum for Women's Development interviewed in July and August 2010.
10. Maher Bushra, head of the Board of Directors of Better Life Association (Minya) interviewed in July and August 2010.
11. Lamis Lotfy member of the New Woman Research Center, , interviewed in August 2010
12. Abd el Hadi Mohammed, , executive director of the Association for the Enhancement of Sinai Women and co-ordinator (Al-Arish) interviewed in August 2010
13. Mohammed Mahmoud Fahmy, executive director of Bader el Tawayel association for Development (Sohag) , interviewed in August 2010.
14. Azza Soliman, founder and manager of the Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA), interviewed in August 2010
15. Hala Abd el Kader, founder and manager of the Egyptian Foundation for the Development of the Family, interviewed in July 2010
16. Nehad Abou el Komsan, founder and manager of the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights, interviewed informally in April 2010.
17. Seham Negm founder and director of Women and Society association, , interviewed in July and August 2010.
18. Mervat Abou Tieg founder and manager of Omi association, interviewed in July 2010, interviewed in July 2010.
19. Azza Kamel, founder and director of ACT (appropriate communications and technology), interviewed in August 2010.
20. Hoda Badran, founder and director of Arab Women's Solidarity Association, interviewed in August 2010.
21. Eman Mandour, board member of CEWALA, interviewed in August 2010.
22. Ashgan Abd el Hamid, Country office director for KARAMA, interviewed in August 2010,
23. Magda Adley, founding member of the Nadim Centre for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture,   interviewed in July 2010,
24. Margot Seraphim, member of the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services, interviewed in August 2010

25. Vivian Mokhtar, member of CARE Egypt, interviewed in August 2010.

List of interviews in Jordan

1. Rana Husseini, Interviewed in May and June 2010, journalist at Jordan Times and founding member of the Coalition against so-called crimes of Honour
2. Basil Burgan, interviewed in June 2010, pharmacist and pharmaceutical factory owner, founding member of the Coalition against so-called crimes of honour
3. Sultan Abou Mariam, interviewed in September 2010, processed food factory owner, founding member of the coalition against so-called crimes of honour
4. Anaam Asha, interviewed in September 2010, member of Sisterhood is Global (SIGI)
5. Nadia Bashnak, interviewed in September 2010, manager of the Centre for Family Counselling, Zarqaa governorate
6. Nadia Shamroukh, interviewed in May 2010, Jordanian Women's Union
7. Emily Naf'a interviewed in May 2010, Human Forum for Women's Rights and leading feminist
8. Amal Azzam, interviewed in June 2010, manager of Dar el Wefak, Ministry of Social Development
9. Mukram Oudeh, interviewed May 2010, Deputy Executive Director- Jordanian Women Union)
10. Laila Naffa Hamarneh , interviewed May 2010, Executive Director Arab Women Organization of Jordan
11. Ra'eda Frihat, interviewed (via telephone) in December 2010, head of the legal department, Jordanian National Commission for Women
12. Nermeen Mourad, interviewed in November and December 2010, director of the Information and Research Center, King Hussein Foundation
13. Lamis Nasser, interviewed in June 2010, director of Human Forum for Women's Righs
14. Amany Hamad, interviewed in September 2010, acting director of SIGI
15. Mohammed Makdady, interviewed in September 2010, member of National Council for Family Affairs
16. Asma Khader, interviewed in June 2010, secretary general of the Jordanian National Commission for Women
17. Mohammed Tawarnah, interviewed in June 2010, judge
18. Eva Halaweh, interviewed in May 2010, executive director of Mizan (NGO)
19. Amal Haddadeen, interviewed in June 2010, Jordanian National Council for Women
20. Amna Helwah, interviewed in June 2010, Karama-Jordan
21. Amal al Sabagh, interviewed in June 2010, former secretary general of the Jordanian National Council for Women
22. Hanan el Daher, interviewed in June 2010, legislation officer, National Council for Family Affairs
23. National Council for Human Rights, Jordan
24. Rana Sandous, interviewed in June 2010, SIGI

Donors
1. Azza Hamouda, interviewed in September 2010, British Council, Amman, Jordan.
2. Fatma Khafagy, interviewed in November 2010, former officer, UNICEF.
3. Gaelle le Maire and Sonia Vila Hopkins, interviewed August 2010officers, Delegation of the European Union to Egypt.
4. Moustafa Youssry, manager of NWRO, GTZ, interviewed July 2010.
5. Friso Wiegman, Adviser at Price Waterhouse Coopers Telephone interview September 2010.
6. Ineke van de Pol, interviewed September 2010, Senior Policy Officer (DMH/EM) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Gender, Good Governance and Humanitarian Aid Department Bezuidenhoutseweg.
7. Maya Morsi, UNIFEM Cairo Office, interviewed in August 2010.

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2. David Sebudubudu with Patrick Molutsi (2009) "Leaders, Elites and Coalitions in the Development of Botswana".

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4. Heather Lyne de Ver (2009) "Conceptions of Leadership".

5. Adrian Leftwich & Steve Hogg (2010) "The Leadership Program: Overview & Objectives".

6. Adrian Leftwich (2010) "An Overview of the Research in Progress for the Leadership Program: Developmental Leaders, Elites and Coalitions".

7. Isabelle van Notten (2010) "Integrity, Leadership, Women's Coalitions and the Politics of Institutional Reform. Bringing Agency Back In. Mid-Term Workshop Report, Cape Town 25-26 May 2010".

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