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Gender Politics, Authoritarian Regime Resilience, and the Role of Civil Society in Algeria and Mozambique

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GIGA Research Programme:
Accountability and Participation

**Gender Politics, Authoritarian Regime Resilience, and
the Role of Civil Society in Algeria and Mozambique**

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Gender Politics, Authoritarian Regime Resilience, and the Role of Civil Society in Algeria and Mozambique

Abstract

The question of whether and how authoritarian regimes may use gender politics to preserve their rule has attracted insufficient academic attention so far. Research on state feminism shows that non-democratic regimes often enact women-friendly policies for the purpose of maintaining power. However, this finding has not been linked to the broader research on authoritarian resilience. To address this research gap, we connect recent debates on authoritarian resilience to the research on state feminism. Subsequently, we engage in a cross-regional comparison of the use of gender politics by the authoritarian regimes of Algeria and Mozambique in order to enrich both sets of theory on the basis of empirical findings. Specifically, we ask what strategies the two authoritarian regimes employ in the areas of women's rights and gender and how these might contribute to regime resilience, focusing on the interactions between these regimes and civil society organisations (CSOs).

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Gender Politics, Authoritarian Regime Resilience, and the Role of Civil Society in Algeria and Mozambique

Jasmin Lorch and Bettina Bunk

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1 Introduction

Since the end of the third wave of democratisation, comparative research has increasingly focused on the factors that can thwart democratic transition and enhance the resilience of authoritarian regimes (Croissant and Wurster 2013; Kailitz and Köllner 2013; Köllner and Kailitz 2013; Gerschewski 2013; Gerschewski 2010: 47). More specifically, several recent studies have focused on how regime performance in different policy fields, such as economic development or the provision of social services, may contribute to enhancing or weakening authoritarian durability (Kailitz and Köllner 2013; for an example see Croissant and Wurster 2013). However, the question of how authoritarian regimes use policy performance in the

fields of women's rights and gender in order to preserve their rule has not attracted sufficient attention.

One strand of research that provides insights into this issue is the nascent literature on state feminism in non-democratic regimes (e.g. Mama 2013; Tripp 2013: 521-527; Tripp 2012; Salhi 2010; Adams 2007; Soothill 2007: 71-102; Zheng 2005). Most notably, this literature shows that authoritarian regimes frequently enact women-friendly policies and establish institutions that are officially tasked with enhancing the situation of women, while at the same time using women's rights "for purposes other than those of gender equality" (Tripp 2013: 530), such as maintaining the power of the regime. So far, however, this finding has not been linked to the broader research on authoritarian resilience.

Our cross-regional comparison of the use of gender politics in the authoritarian regimes of Algeria in the Middle East and Mozambique in Southern Africa addresses this research gap. We ask what strategies the authoritarian regimes of Algeria and Mozambique employ in the areas of women's rights and gender and how these might contribute to regime resilience. In attempting to answer this question, we focus on the interactions between each of these authoritarian regimes on the one hand and civil society organisations (CSOs) working on gender and women's rights on the other. We take this approach for both theoretical and practical reasons. On the theoretical level, various recent studies have argued that in non-democratic settings civil society groups may help make authoritarian regimes more resilient, thereby contradicting earlier theoretical assumptions that civil society leads to democracy (e.g. Froisart 2014; Lewis 2013; Wischermann 2013; Cavatorta 2012; Lorch 2008; Ottaway 2004). On the practical level, studying CSOs,¹ which are relatively organised entities and whose representatives are fairly accessible, provides us with the possibility of tackling our research subject in contexts where reliable statistical data about political attitudes and women's interaction with the state bureaucracy are hard to come by.

Algeria and Mozambique constitute most dissimilar cases with respect to their colonial legacies and economic conditions, as well as their majority religions and ethnic composition. However, both of them are post-revolutionary and post-socialist regimes which underwent a process of political liberalisation in the 1980s and 1990s (on Algeria see Liverani 2008; on Mozambique see Serra 1993). And, as our findings show, the two authoritarian regimes are also remarkably alike in another important respect: since independence, both of them have

1 For the purpose of this paper, we use the broad and predominantly empirical definition of the London School of Economics (LSE), which defines civil society as follows, "Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups" (LSE 2004).

relied on a very similar mix of strategies in the field of gender politics in order to reinforce their stronghold within society in general and within civil society in particular.

We begin our analysis with a theoretically informed discussion that connects recent debates on the resilience of authoritarian regimes to the research on state feminism. Subsequently, we engage in an empirically grounded, cross-regional comparison of the use of gender politics in Algeria and Mozambique in order to link and enrich both sets of theory on the basis of empirical findings. Our empirical findings are mainly based on interviews conducted with CSOs and experts working in the field of women's rights in Algeria and Mozambique in 2014 and 2015.

2 Authoritarian Resilience and State Feminism: Theoretical Insights

With the focus of comparative research on democracy and authoritarianism shifting towards authoritarian resilience, many authors have started to ask what stabilises non-democratic regimes. Repression plays an important role. Excessive repression, however, can also destabilise authoritarian rule, as it may lead to counter-reactions such as mass mobilisations or violent uprisings (Gerschewski 2013: 21; Kailitz and Köllner 2013; Gerschewski 2010: 47). As a consequence, durable authoritarian regimes often rely on a mix of strategies, including not only repression but also legitimisation and co-optation (Gerschewski 2013).

Some recent research has focused on the legitimisation strategies that authoritarian rulers employ to maintain power (e.g. Dodlova et. al. 2014; Holbig 2013; Kailitz 2013; Hoffmann 2011). Another strand of research has dealt with the co-optation mechanisms, such as patron-client networks and arrangements for selective political inclusion, that can be used to make non-democratic rule more resilient (e.g. Erdmann 2013; Josua 2013; Richter 2010; Erdmann and Engel 2005). In addition, recent research on authoritarian resilience in the Middle East and beyond has stressed the importance of divide-and-rule tactics to the survival of authoritarian regimes (e.g. Thorp 2014; Cavatorta 2012: 6; Hinnebusch 2012; King 2007).

At least two other strands of recent autocracy research cut across the issues of authoritarian legitimisation, co-optation, and divide-and-rule tactics. The first is the research on nominally democratic institutions in authoritarian regimes, such as parties, parliaments, and elections (for overviews see Kailitz and Köllner 2013: 17-19; Schedler 2009). Such institutions may be used by authoritarian regimes to enhance their legitimacy and co-opt social groups that are important to their survival, while also having highly exclusionary effects that can be utilised in the context of divide-and-rule strategies. The second is the nascent research on authoritarian performance in different policy fields (Croissant and Wurster 2013: 3). Policy performance can be used by authoritarian regimes to increase their output legitimisation (Croissant and Wurster 2013; see also Dodlova et al. 2014). At the same time, performance gains in areas such as economic growth may also be used by authoritarian rulers to co-opt – and exclude – particular groups through the allocation of selective benefits.

As noted above, there is a need to include gender issues more explicitly into autocracy research. So far, however, the question of how authoritarian regimes use women's rights and gender politics has not been linked to the legitimization, co-optation, or divide-and-rule strategies that authoritarian regimes pursue. Nor has it been linked to the performance strategies and the building of authoritarian institutions in which such regimes engage.

The discussion on state feminism originated in the 1980s and initially referred almost exclusively to post-modern industrialist democracies in the so-called "West" (see e.g. McBride and Mazur 2011; Lovenduski 2008:169-173). State feminism, in this sense, relates mostly to changes in power relations by means of the promotion of feminist goals through public policies and measures taken by the state. In particular, this includes the introduction of political quotas, the establishment of women's policy agencies or "national machineries,"² and different forms of cooperation between the state and the women rights movement (see e.g. McBride and Mazur 2011; Lovenduski 2008; Adams 2007; Lovenduski 2005; Krook 2005). At the international level, the UN has promoted the establishment of such "state feminist institutions" since the early 1960s (Adams 2007: 177) and especially since the UN Decade for Women, Development and Peace (1975-1985) (see also Mama 2013: 149-150; Bell et al. 2002: 3-4).

In recent years, the debate on state feminism has travelled outside the "Western" world and been applied to (post-)socialist political systems and authoritarian states in developing countries as well (see e.g. Tripp 2013: 521-527; Tripp 2012; McBride and Mazur 2011). Three specific strands of this new research are particularly relevant for our purposes: firstly, the literature on socialist state feminism (see e.g. Ghodsee 2014; Zheng 2005; Gal and Kligman 2000); secondly, the literature on state feminism in the military and one-party regimes of (Southern) Africa (see e.g. Mama 2013: 152-153; Adams 2007; Sothill 2007: 71-102); and, thirdly, the research on state feminist policies in authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, including North Africa (e.g. Errazzouki and Al-Khawaja 2013; Salhi 2010; Al-Ali 2002 and 2000).

This nascent literature on authoritarian state feminism finds that, just like democratic regimes, authoritarian regimes frequently establish state feminist machineries and introduce policies, such as quota systems, which are officially intended to promote gender equality. In reality, however, the main motivation behind such measures is often not the advancement of women's rights per se, but the desire of the respective non-democratic regimes to realise other political objectives, such as maintaining power (Tripp 2013: esp. 530; Adams 2007; Sothill 2007: 71-102). In other words, the literature on authoritarian state feminism thus suggests that in non-democratic contexts, "state feminist institutions" (Adams 2007: 177) can form part of a wider ensemble of national authoritarian institutions and that women-friendly policies can be used by authoritarian regimes to boost their performance-related legitimacy.

While these insights are of great relevance to our research, the literature on state feminism focuses mainly on the gender outcomes that different kinds of state institutions and

2 For the purpose of this paper, the terms "women's policy agencies" and "national machineries" (e.g. Adams 2007) are used interchangeably.

policies are able to produce. However, as Tripp (2013: 529-530) has also argued, more research is needed to tackle the question of why authoritarian regimes adopt gender-friendly policies. In the following discussion, we show that in authoritarian contexts, state feminist policies often form part of three specific patterns of authoritarian survival strategies: legitimization, co-optation, and a specific form of divide and rule.

Pattern 1: Using Women's Rights and Gender Politics as an Authoritarian Legitimation Strategy

Recent research on authoritarian legitimation shows that the legitimation strategies employed by non-democratic regimes often include the use of political ideology, historical narratives, and nationalist discourses as well as the establishment of quasi-democratic institutions and international engagement (Dodlova et. al. 2014; Holbig 2013; Kailitz 2013; Hoffmann 2011). The research on state feminism suggests that the policies that authoritarian regimes adopt in the area of women's rights and gender politics can form part of each of these specific legitimation strategies. Studies on state feminism in authoritarian regimes in the Middle East show that, in this region, women's rights movements were closely related to national liberation movements. As a consequence, discourses on gender equality often became interlinked with the broader nationalist discourses peddled by post-independence states (e.g. Salhi 2010; Al-Ali 2002). As Salhi argues, for many (post-)revolutionary, authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, state feminism came to constitute a "historical strategy" to "brighten up the image of the state" (Salhi 2010: 49). Despite considerable geographical and social differences between the two regions, the literature on state feminism in Southern Africa comes to similar conclusions, arguing that here as well the participation of women in national liberation movements has often influenced national discourses and policies on women's rights and gender (see e.g. Casimiro 2014: 186-189; Mama 2013: 150-152). At the same time, the literature on socialist state feminism shows that authoritarian socialist regimes around the world have often presented the realisation of women's rights as an integral part of their political ideology. Gender equality, in this sense, has often been promoted by such regimes but at the same time "subsumed" under the wider legitimating ideology of socialism (Tripp 2013: 523-524; see also: Mama 2013:151; Zheng 2005: 542-543; Gal and Kligman 2000: 5-6).

Furthermore, the literature on state feminism shows that strategies linked to gender and the promotion of women's rights often change during processes of democratization (Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet 2002), a finding that is bound to be relevant for liberalization processes in authoritarian regimes as well. Specifically, the opening up of authoritarian regimes to greater political competition frequently gives rise to the "emergence of autonomous women's movements" (Tripp 2013: 523). At the same time, many liberalised authoritarian regimes seek to legitimate themselves by publicly portraying the partial realisation of women's rights as an important step towards democratisation (Mama 2013: 150-153; Tripp 2013: 529-530; Salhi 2010; Soothill 2007: 78). Often, this strategy may form part of broader attempts by the respec-

tive regimes to portray themselves as conforming to international norms of democracy and good governance (e.g. Salhi 2012: 51; Tripp 2013: 529-530). For example, Salhi notes that, often, in the Middle East “women’s rights have been exploited by the states to attain political goals and to show to the world that democratization is being seriously launched” (Salhi 2010: 51).³ Similarly, Mama argues that authoritarian regimes in Southern Africa have often established state feminist machineries in line with UN rhetoric in order to gain international legitimacy at times when their revolutionary credentials were fading (Mama 2013: 152-153).

Pattern 2: Women’s Organisations as Mechanisms of Co-optation

The research on authoritarian regimes shows that nominally democratic institutions in such regimes can contribute to enhancing authoritarian resilience, because they can be used as mechanisms of *co-optation*. As Svolik (2012: 162-166) argues, for instance, authoritarian political parties can contribute to regime resilience by serving the twin function of co-optation and control. In addition to political parties, Schedler (2009) also identifies other ostensibly democratic institutions, such as elections, media outlets, and CSOs, that can be used by authoritarian regimes. Building on this, a review of the research on state feminism shows that in authoritarian settings women’s organisations can constitute authoritarian institutions and function as co-optation mechanisms as well. Specifically, scholars working on socialist state feminism point out that socialist authoritarian regimes in different parts of the world have often created their own mass women’s organisations and other co-opted women’s groups, which have mainly served the needs of the respective ruling parties. Such mass organisations have often acted as transmission belts for the regimes’ socialist ideologies, mobilised voters during elections, and prevented the emergence of more autonomous women’s groups (Ghodsee 2014; Tripp 2013: 523-527; Soothill 2007: 88-89; Zheng 2005).

Similarly, in post-independence Southern Africa, women’s activism has also often been channelled through women’s mass organisations, which have supported national ruling parties through the mobilisation of popular support (Mama 2013; Casimiro 2014). Women’s political participation has thus, to a certain extent, been shaped by state-related structures of patronage (Tripp 2013: 522-523; Mama 2013: 152-153; Adams 2007; Soothill 2007: 78). What is more, co-opted women’s organisations have themselves sometimes acted as vehicles for the distribution of state patronage in the form of services and material benefits (Tripp 2013: 529-530). Against this backdrop, Mama (2013: 152, referring to Cheeseman in the same volume) has noted that state feminism in authoritarian Southern African regimes may sometimes constitute a “political strategy of unconditional co-optation.”

Similar tendencies have been observed in authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, where women’s organisations have often been linked to authoritarian ruling parties and have been used by the latter to gain votes and political influence (e.g. Salhi 2010: 51-55; Al-Ali

3 On the relations between external pressures and the introduction of state feminist policies in newly democratised states see Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet (2002).

2002: 4-5 and 2000). In some cases, women's activists in this region have occupied prominent positions in their countries' authoritarian governments and have publicly supported rather than challenged the latter's non-democratic political agendas (e.g. Errazzouki and Al-Khawaja 2013). In authoritarian regimes in both Southern Africa and the Middle East, such co-optation strategies have contributed to preventing the emergence of more autonomous women's rights movements (on Southern Africa see e.g. Mama 2013: 152-153; on Northern Africa and the Middle East see e.g. Al-Ali 2002: 24).

While authoritarian rentier states in the Middle East have usually been able to use domestic resources to fuel their patronage networks (e.g. Richter 2010), authoritarian regimes in Southern Africa have often used state feminism as a strategy to gain access to international assistance, which they have subsequently employed to co-opt women's activists and other social groups into clientelistic networks (Tripp 2013: 530; Adams 2007; see also Soothill 2007: 94 on the case of the 31st December Women's Movement in Ghana).

Pattern 3: The Instrumentalisation of Social Divisions and the Duality of Women's Status

Various studies on authoritarian regimes argue that divide-and-rule strategies are related to and can, in fact, be seen as the flipside of co-optation, because the (selective) co-optation of some social groups into clientelistic networks is usually achieved at the expense of – and through the exclusion of – other such groups. While the resulting divide-and-rule situation often constitutes a deliberate strategy on the part of the authoritarian regime, social conflicts resulting from selective co-optation can also escalate and endanger authoritarian survival (e.g. Van den Bosch 2015: 3; Josua 2011: 19; Ghandi and Przeworski 2006). Conversely, this implies that authoritarian regimes may sometimes try to balance their divide-and-rule tactics through the co-optation of mutually opposing social groups. These tendencies are aptly exemplified by the duality that exists in many authoritarian regimes with regard to the promotion of women's rights in the public sphere and the deliberate neglect of women's rights in the private sphere (e.g. Mama 2013: 152-153; Errazzouki and Al-Khawaja 2013; Tripp 2013: 529-530; Salhi 2010; Al-Ali 2002 and 2000).

Research on state feminism suggests that divide-and-rule strategies in the areas of gender and women's rights are prominent in many authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, where debates on gender equality often constitute "a battleground between secularist and Islamist visions of national identity" (Tripp 2013: 530). Accordingly, several authoritarian regimes in the region use state feminism as a strategy to co-opt secularist-oriented sections of the middle class and delegitimise the Islamist political opposition. In doing so, they exploit and deliberately reinforce the political polarisation between secular and Islamist opposition forces (e.g. Sanches 2014; Errazzouki and Al-Khawaja 2013; Salhi 2010; Al-Ali 2002: 9). For instance, many such authoritarian regimes have introduced state feminist policies, such as quotas, in order to increase the representation of women in the political sphere. At the same time, however, they have sought to accommodate Islamist and socially conservative and/or patriarchal

forces by issuing personal status laws that treat women as minors in the family and the private sphere (e.g. Salhi 2010: 49-50; Eddouadia and Pepicelli 2008; Al-Ali 2002: 10). As Al-Ali (2000: 33) notes, this duality can often be traced to contradictions in the respective regimes' nationalist discourses, which frequently portray gender equality as an integral part of national modernisation while at the same time depicting women as the guardians of tradition and the main agents of "cultural reconstruction."

While these tendencies are sometimes perceived as specific to Islamic societies in the Middle East, the literature on state feminism in Southern Africa clearly shows that a similar duality with regard to women's rights frequently exists in authoritarian contexts in this region as well. Just like their Middle Eastern counterparts, authoritarian regimes in Southern Africa have often promoted the participation and representation of women in the political sphere while at the same time legally disenfranchising women in the private sphere (e.g. Mama 2013: 152-153; Soothill 2007: 75, 78). According to Soothill (2007: 75) there have been "attempts by successive postcolonial governments to re-domesticate women" following the success of national liberation movements and to portray them as "the embodiment of 'tradition' and a symbol of African nationalism."

A review of the literature on authoritarian resilience and the nascent research on state feminism in authoritarian contexts thus suggests three patterns according to which authoritarian regimes can instrumentalise gender politics for the purpose of maintaining power: first, through the use of women's rights and gender politics as an authoritarian legitimisation strategy; second, through the utilisation of women's organisations as mechanisms of co-optation; and, third, through the establishment and maintenance of a duality between the status of women in the public and the private spheres as part of a broader strategy of instrumentalising existing social divisions. The following subsections investigate whether and to what extent these patterns can be identified in Algeria and Mozambique.

3 Gender Politics and Authoritarian Resilience: The Case of Algeria

Algeria emerged as an independent nation in 1962, following a bloody war of independence with France in which women played an important role both as political activists and as combatants.⁴ After independence, the Front de Libération National (FLN, National Liberation Front) established socialist one-party rule, but the regime soon faced a massive political crisis. Following the oil-price shocks of the 1970s, the ability of the Algerian rentier state to provide social services was reduced, and starting from 1988, the regime faced large-scale popular protests fuelled by widespread poverty (e.g. Butcher 2014: 730-732; Bustos 2003: 2-5). From 1988 to 1992, the regime undertook a number of political reforms, such as the introduction of relatively free elections and a multiparty system. In 1992, however, the military took

4 E.g. interview with a leading representative of Tharwa Fatma n'Soumer, Algiers, 13 March 2015.

over power to prevent the Islamist Front Islamique du Salut (FIS, Islamic Salvation Front) from winning the upcoming national elections. As a consequence, the FIS was driven underground and from 1992 to 2002 the country suffered a bloody civil war between the Islamist insurgency and the military, a period that is often referred to as the “black decade” (Butcher 2014: 731-732). In 1999, Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected president, and Algeria can be seen as being a liberalised authoritarian regime since then (e.g. Geary 2011).

The scholarly literature on Algeria traces the increase in more independent women’s groups – and more independent CSOs in general – back to the political liberalisation process which occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s (e.g. Butcher 2014: 732-733; Roca 2012; Liverani 2008). Previously, during the socialist period, the regime had channelled women’s social and political activism through the Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes (UNFA, Algerian National Women’s Union), a mass organisation of the FLN which largely lost its direct links to the former ruling party in the 1990s and the first decade of this century but continues to exist and remains close to the existing authoritarian regime up to the present day (e.g. Roca 2012: 72).⁵

Pattern 1: Using Women’s Rights and Gender Politics as an Authoritarian Legitimation Strategy

The Algerian regime has long instrumentalised gender politics and the partial realisation of women’s rights in order to enhance its legitimacy. As part of this strategy, it has used the narrative of the role of women during the war of independence from France to strengthen its historical legitimisation discourse. During the liberalisation process that began in the late 1980s the regime discarded socialism as its guiding ideology (USLC: Dem: 2014) and moved to create a new legitimisation discourse in which the historical narrative of the liberation war played a crucial role. Independence was mainly achieved by the FLN and by what later became the Algerian armed forces. The liberalised authoritarian regime that emerged in the 1990s still remains dominated by these two groups and has constantly invoked the narratives of the “liberation war” and the “revolutionary family” to justify its rule (e.g. Mehdi 2011).⁶

What is even more interesting from the vantage point of our research, however, is that the narrative of the liberation war also constitutes a central element of the political discourse of many women’s CSOs. When asked about historical factors that might have an influence on their organisation, virtually all the interviewed CSOs active in the fields of gender and women’s rights mentioned the war of independence. What is more, several women’s CSOs defined the role that women played during this war as the main impetus for their own engagement in the field of women’s rights. Interestingly, the answers given did not differ according to

5 Interview with a local expert and political scientist, Algiers, 14 September 2014; interview with a well-known, critical journalist, Oran, 11 September 2014; interview with an independent journalist, Algiers, 16 September 2014.

6 Interview with a high-ranking representative of the CNES, Algiers, 18 September 2014.

whether an organisation was politically loyal to the regime or not. Instead, heavily co-opted women's organisations, politically neutral women's CSOs, and even women's CSOs affiliated with the political opposition were all unanimous in defining the war of independence as an integral part of their organisational identity. Similarly, many women's CSOs, including organisations that see themselves as being in open opposition to the regime, issue publications or organise events, such as photo exhibitions, for the purpose of commemorating the liberation war and the role that "women in the avant-garde" played therein.⁷ By doing so, they continually – albeit perhaps unwillingly – repeat and reinforce a historical narrative that is central to the regime's own legitimisation discourse. What is more, only a few women's rights activists appear to critically reflect upon the problems inherent in the use of such discursive practices. One of them, a leading representative of the CSO Femmes Algériennes Revendiquant de leurs Droits (FARD, Algerian Women Demanding Their Rights), stated that the state's discourse on women was a "revolutionary discourse" that did not leave any room for dissenting voices.⁸

In addition, the Algerian regime has also sought to legitimate itself by portraying the partial realisation of women's rights and the representation of women in the public sphere as proof of the success of its proclaimed projects of state-led modernisation and democratisation. Since the 1980s, the regime has implemented measures to increase the representation of women in politics. As early as 1984, for instance, the first female cabinet minister was appointed (USLC: WM: 2015). During the socialist period, the participation of women in the public sphere was portrayed as proof that the regime was making progress with regard to its ideological project of socialist modernisation. In 2004, Louisa Hanoune, the head of the Parti des Travailleurs (PT, Workers' Party), ran for the presidency for the first time, becoming the first female candidate to ever have campaigned for this post in the entire Arab world. She has since participated in all presidential elections, while at the same time maintaining close ties to long-standing authoritarian president Bouteflika (Wakli 2015).

The regime's most recent attempt to increase the political representation of women was the introduction of a 30 per cent quota for female parliamentarians (e.g. Faath 2012: 17). Notably, Algeria currently has numerous female judges, as well as some women in the police force.⁹ Since the political liberalisation of the 1980s and 1990s, the regime has portrayed its measures to advance the public representation of women as successful steps towards meaningful democratisation. In 2014, for instance, the general secretary of the FLN, Amar Sadaani, claimed publicly that the promotion of women had progressed to an unprecedented extent during the tenure of President Bouteflika and that this was nothing less than a "lesson of democracy" (Sadaani 2014; quoted in Lobna 2014).

7 Interview with a representative of the organisation Tharwa Fatma n'Soumer, Algiers, 10 June 2015; interview with a leading representative of Tharwa Fatma n'Soumer, Algiers, 13 March 2015.

8 Interview with a leading representative of FARD, Oran, 2 July 2015 and 7 July 2015.

9 Interview with a women's rights activist, Algiers, 15 March 2015.

The reactions of women's CSOs to this strategic use of women's rights on the part of the regime have ranged from open support to pragmatic engagement to, more rarely, criticism. Heavily co-opted women's organisations, such as the UNFA, have been very vocal in their support for the regime's policies in the field of women's rights. A leading representative of the organisation stated that President Bouteflika had given the issue of women's rights a "new breath" and that the introduction of the quota was only "thanks to the president."¹⁰ More independent women's activists have sometimes made similar statements. For instance, a leading representative of the CSO Femmes en Communication (FeC, Women in Communication), which trains journalists and runs its own radio channel, claimed that many women-friendly policies, such as the introduction of the quota, had been pushed through by the president in the face of strong political resistance and that it was Bouteflika's "political line" not to tolerate any discrimination against women.¹¹

Many of the interviewed CSOs active in the field of gender and women's rights described the introduction of the quota as a success. Moreover, various women's CSOs – including rather independent ones – have implemented various support measures to make the quota work. For instance, both FeC and the Centre d'Information et de Documentation sur les Droits de l'Enfant et de la Femme (CIDEF, Centre of Information and Documentation for the Rights of Children and Women) have offered capacity-building programmes for women parliamentarians who entered parliament following the introduction of the quota and still lack political experience.¹² However, some critical women's rights activists lamented that many of the women delegates who entered parliament for parties loyal to the regime were "alibi women"¹³ who defended their respective parties' political lines rather than using their positions in order to advocate for women's rights.¹⁴

The regime's efforts to use the partial realisation of women's rights as a legitimisation strategy have been directed not only towards Algeria's civil society – and Algerian society as a whole – but also towards the international community. This is exemplified by, among other things, the fact that the regime actively encourages women's organisations to celebrate international holidays relating to women's rights, such as International Women's Day on 8 March, while it at the same time actively shapes – and manipulates – media reporting and public discourses about such events and the issue of women's rights more generally (e.g. Radio Algérie 08.03.2015). On 8 March 2015, President Bouteflika declared publicly that "it is

10 Interview with a high-ranking representative of the UNFA, Algiers, 12 March 2015.

11 Interview with a leading representative of FeC, Algiers, 19 August 2015

12 Interview with a leading representative and two journalists/regular members of FeC, Algiers, 19 August 2015; CIDEF: Séminaire de clôture du projet de renforcement des capacités des femmes parlementaires. Assemblée Populaire Nationale, Alger le 18 mars 2014, *CIDEF Revue*, 33, Algiers, 2014.

13 Interview with a representative of the organisation Tharwa Fatma n'Soumer, Algiers, 10 June 2015.

14 Interview with a representative of the organisation Tharwa Fatma n'Soumer, Algiers, 10 June 2015; interview with a journalist of FeC, Algiers, 19 August 2015. Interview with a critical journalist, Algiers, 16 September 2015.

necessary to get the Algerian woman out of her status as a minor" (Hamma 2015).¹⁵ He also receives a delegation of women's associations every year on 8 March (*Ennaharonline* 08 March 2015), a gesture that is appreciated by some women's rights activists.¹⁶

The former socialist mass organisation UNFA, which continues to have close ties to the authoritarian regime, is part of various African and Middle Eastern women's confederations and its members have participated in several conferences in Africa and the Middle East, portraying Algeria as a regional front runner in the field of women's rights. One of its leading representatives claimed that the UNFA has also cooperated with various international organisations, including the United Nations.¹⁷ In March 2015, members of both the UNFA and women's organisations critical of the regime, such as FARD and Tharwa Fatma n'Soumer (TFNS, Children of Fatma n'Soumer), were permitted to attend the World Social Forum in Tunis.¹⁸ A leading representative of the country's oldest human rights organisation, the League Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (LADDH, Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights) alleged that women's groups were sometimes granted room to manoeuvre because the promotion of women's rights was good for the regime's international "image."¹⁹

Pattern 2: Women's Organisations as Mechanisms of Co-optation

Since the early post-independence period, the Algerian regime has repeatedly used women's organisations as mechanisms of co-optation. One important part of this strategy has been to use loyal women's organisations to mobilise popular support for the regime. During the socialist period, when independent civil society groups were banned, the ruling FLN mobilised society through sectoral mass organisations such as peasants, workers, women's, or youth groups (e.g. Roca 2012: 72). One of the most prominent of these mass organisations was the FLN's women's front, the UNFA, whose existence predates the formation of Algeria as an independent state.²⁰ While today the UNFA has mostly lost its direct links with the FLN, it remains closely affiliated with the ruling establishment, as many of its representatives are party members or even parliamentary delegates of the Rassemblement National Démocratique (RND, National Democratic Assembly), one of the major ruling parties and effectively a sister party of the FLN.²¹ The UNFA continues to play a crucial role in mobilising political support for the regime. A leading representative of the group stated that she and her fellow

15 Authors' translation from French.

16 Interview with a journalist from FeC, Algiers, 19 August 2015.

17 Interview with a high-ranking representative of the UNFA, Algiers, 14 September 2014 and 12 March 2015.

18 Interview with a high-ranking representative of the UNFA, Algiers, 12 March 2015; interview with a leading representative of Tharwa Fatma n'Soumer, Algiers, 13 March 2015; conversations with members of FARD, Oran, March 2015.

19 Interview with a leading representative of the LADDH, Algiers, 11 March 2015.

20 Interview with a high-ranking representative of the UNFA, Algiers, 14 September 2014.

21 Ibid.

organisation members support the Bouteflika government “whenever it calls upon us,” explaining that the UNFA’s main objective is to contribute to the “general stability of the nation,”²² a formulation that is also used by the regime to justify repression. The UNFA also mobilises voters in support of regime representatives during election periods. In the run-up to the 2014 elections, the UNFA supported authoritarian president Bouteflika’s highly disputed bid for a fourth mandate, with the organisation’s general secretary, Nuria Hafsia, stating publicly, “we are convinced that Bouteflika will do everything to realise the rights of women, as he has always done” (Naiit Chahal 2014).²³ The UNFA is currently seeking to open numerous local chapters on national university campuses in order to strengthen its influence over what it perceives as the country’s new intellectual elite.²⁴

Many nominally independent women’s CSOs have been partially co-opted by the regime as well. The women entrepreneurs association *Savior et Vouloir Entreprendre* (SEVE, Knowing and Wanting to be Entrepreneurial), for instance, is, to a certain extent, controlled by the Ministry of Industry, which exerts some influence over its choice of activities and its leadership selection processes.²⁵ In other women’s CSOs, such as *Ame Femmes Entrepreneurs* (Ame Women Entrepreneurs), former cadres or delegates of the FLN exert significant influence.²⁶ In addition, several leaders of vocal women’s rights NGOs have personal connections to members of the ruling establishment. One important reason for this is that many of these NGOs are run by women professors, who had to become members of the FLN during the socialist period in order to be allowed to carry out their professions.²⁷

The oil-rich rentier state of Algeria also co-opts civil society groups through the allocation of material benefits, such as annual subventions (e.g. Liverani 2008). Women’s CSOs are no exception to this rule, and several of the groups interviewed for this paper received some kind of material support from the state.

As part of its attempts to use women’s organisations as mechanisms of co-optation, the regime has also allowed various women’s CSOs – including rather independent ones – to participate in consultation processes on public laws and policies relating to women’s rights. The *Rassemblement contre la Hogra et pour le Droit des Algériennes* (RACHDA, Assembly against the Disrespect of and for the Rights of Algerian Women) has worked with the Algerian parliament to reform the country’s penal code and criminalise domestic violence. According to a leading member, RACHDA has also formed part of a national commission instituted by the Bouteflika government for the purpose of developing a national strategy to end violence

22 Interview with a high-ranking representative of the UNFA, Algiers, 14 September 2014 and 12 March 2015.

23 Authors’ translation from French.

24 Interview with a high-ranking representative of the UNFA, Algiers, 12 March 2015.

25 Interviews with a leading representative of SEVE, Algiers, 17 September 2014, 31 March 2015; interview with a leading representative of SEVE, Oran, 15 July 2014.

26 Interview with a leading representative of AME Femmes Entrepreneurs, Algiers, 19 June 2014.

27 Interviews with women’s rights groups and activists, Algiers and Oran, September 2014 and March 2015.

against women.²⁸ Members of CIDEF have also been consulted – though usually in a private capacity and not as formal representatives of CIDEF – by both regime representatives and leading bureaucrats on various laws and policies relating to women’s rights.²⁹ The women entrepreneurs association SEVE has been invited to consultations with ministries and regime representatives and been allowed to provide input on various laws and policies relating to women’s entrepreneurship.³⁰

However, there has usually been a huge difference between consultation and political decision-making,³¹ and while women’s CSOs have often been able to participate in the former, they have usually been prohibited from taking part in the latter.³² Nevertheless, women’s CSOs that have been allowed to participate in law and policy consultations have sometimes appeared to be more likely to accept the resulting law and policy outcomes, or at least to refrain from criticising them publicly. A representative of SEVE stated, for instance, that her organisation would not position itself as against a law or policy on which it had been consulted. As she explained metaphorically, “If I have participated in making the couscous, I have to eat it as well, whether I like it or not.”³³

Pattern 3: The Instrumentalisation of Social Divisions and the Duality of Women’s Status

The authoritarian regime of Algeria has also instrumentalised gender politics for the purpose of sustaining and reinforcing existing divisions between secularist and Islamist forces in the framework of a broader divide-and-rule strategy. While women’s rights activists were at the forefront of the popular movement that challenged authoritarian rule in the late 1980s (see e.g. Liverani 2008), the stance of many women’s organisations towards the authoritarian establishment changed significantly during the “black decade” of civil war between the military and the Islamist insurgency of the FIS. Fearing violent onslaughts by Islamist militias and the introduction of a political system based on the *sharia*, many women’s rights activists turned to the military as a perceived saviour during this time (e.g. Lalmi 2014: 38). Just as the regime mobilised other mass organisations, such as the Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens (UGTA, General Union of Algerian Workers), to stage public demonstrations against the establishment of Islamist rule (USLC: Ret. 2014), it also relied on the UNFA and other women’s organisations – both co-opted and more independent – in order to mobilise popular support for maintaining the existing authoritarian but largely secular political order. During

28 Telephone interview with a leading representative of RACHDA, 15 March 2015.

29 Interview with a representative of CIDEF, Algiers, 11 March 2015; interview with a leading representative of CIDEF, Algiers, 16 September 2014.

30 Interviews with a leading representative of SEVE, Algiers, 17 September 2014, 31 March 2015.

31 Interview with a well-known local political scientist, Algiers, 14 September 2014.

32 Interviews with a leading representative of SEVE, Algiers, 17 September 2014, 31 March 2015; telephone interview with a leading representative of RACHDA, 15 March 2015; interview with a representative of CIDEF, Algiers, 11 March 2015; interview with a leading representative of CIDEF, Algiers, 16 September 2014.

33 Interview with a leading representative of SEVE, Algiers, 31 March 2015.

our field research, members of both the UNFA and the women entrepreneurs' association SEVE recalled how leading members of their organisations had given public speeches during the "black decade" to express their resistance to Islamist rule.³⁴ Women journalists now organised in the association FeC showed unveiled women on television during the civil war in order to protest against the Islamic dress code propagated by the FIS.³⁵

Many secular women's rights activists' fear of an Islamist seizure of power has persisted in the post-civil-war period, shaping their political attitudes and allegiances up to this day. When asked about the major obstacles to the realisation of women's rights in Algeria, most of the women's CSOs interviewed did not mention the country's authoritarian political order but rather the influence of Islamist parties and the persistence of patriarchal stereotypes in society as a whole. A leading representative of RACHDA opined that the government had made significant progress in the field of gender equality and that the main hurdle to realising and securing women's rights was the existence of "retrograde" groups belonging to the Islamist opposition.³⁶ Up to this day, the organisation issues a periodical entitled "*Femmes contre l'oubli*" ("Women Against Forgetting"), which documents crimes committed by violent Islamists against women during the civil war.³⁷ A well-known journalist and leading member of FeC went even further, stating that the Islamists who were demanding democracy (and had almost been voted to power in the 1991/92 elections) would introduce a "dictatorship" against women once they were in power. The historical experience of the "black decade," she added, had shown that the Algerian people were not yet ready for full-fledged democracy. Just like RACHDA, the FeC has published stories of women who were killed by violent Islamists during the civil war. At least one of these publications was realised with the support of the Ministry of Culture.³⁸

The authoritarian regime thus often appears to be rather successful in instrumentalising secular women's activists' fear of an Islamist takeover and the persisting polarisation between secular and Islamist forces in society more generally in order to maintain power (see e.g. Lalmi 2014; Cavatorta 2011). The political instrumentalisation of women's rights in this sense forms part of a larger regime strategy of using the memory of the "black decade" for the purpose of blocking democratic change (see e.g. Dris-Ait Hamadouche 2011 on this general point).

While the regime has used women's rights as a weapon against the Islamist opposition, it has also sought to accommodate Islamist and socially conservative and/or patriarchal forces

34 Interview with a high-ranking representative of the UNFA, Algiers, 14 September 2014 and 12 March 2015; interview with a leading representative of SEVE, Oran, 15 July 2014.

35 Interview with a leading representative of FeC, Algiers, 10 March 2015.

36 Telephone interview with a leading representative of RACHDA, 15 March 2015.

37 Présentation de RACHDA; see also: "8 mars [...] Femmes Algériennes", in: *Articles de Presse*, 8 March 2014, online: <<https://ajouadmemoire.wordpress.com/2014/03/08/8-mars-femmes-algeriennes/>> (22 August 2015).

38 Interview with a leading representative of FeC, Algiers, 10 March 2015.

in various ways. Since the end of the civil war in the early part of this century, the regime has co-opted many moderate Islamist parties, and various moderate Islamist leaders have formed part of successive authoritarian governments. The Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix (MSP, Movement of Society for Peace), which has roots in the Muslim Brotherhood, used to be part of President Bouteflika's ruling coalition (e.g. Werenfels 2012).

Another attempt by the authoritarian regime to accommodate Islamist and socially conservative and/or patriarchal forces is constituted by its strategic handling of the country's Family Code, which limits the rights of women in the private sphere. The Code was first passed by the socialist one-party regime of the FLN in 1984 and thus predates the Algerian civil war and the formation of the FIS (USLC: WM: 2015). The original version imposed severe restrictions on women's right to divorce, legalised polygamy, and clearly endowed women with an inferior legal status in the family. In order to marry, women required the consent of a male "tutor," usually their father. Since its introduction, the Family Code has been amended various times, with the most meaningful reform occurring in 2005. Major changes to the Code have included an extension of women's right to divorce and an improvement to the legal situation of divorced women. In addition, women have been granted the right to choose their male "tutor" in the case of marriage, and a man's right to polygamy has been made conditional on the consent of his first wife (for a summary of these reforms see e.g. Cavatorta 2011: 50-52).³⁹ Some secular women's rights activists perceive the introduction and maintenance of the Family Code as proof of a "division of labour" between the authoritarian regime on the one hand and the Islamist opposition on the other. A leading representative of TFNS stated, for instance, that the continuing application of the Code showed that the regime left the topic of social relations within the family to the Islamists while taking care of virtually all other fields, such as security or the economy.⁴⁰

At the same time, however, the regime also has undertaken various measures to advance the political representation of women, such as the introduction of the quota or the nomination of women to high-ranking political positions, thereby creating a dichotomy between women's advancement in the public sphere and their legal discrimination in the private sphere. This "grand duality"⁴¹ between public and private life has divided the women's rights movement and thereby weakened its influence as a social and political oppositional force.

Most notably, the question of how to deal with the Family Code has caused serious friction within the secular women's rights movement (see also Cavatorta 2012), given that, since it was passed, secular women's rights CSOs have quarrelled over whether to lobby for the abrogation or a reform of the Code.⁴² Several leftist organisations, such as TFNS and FARD,

39 Mostly with reference to the work of Doris Gray.

40 Interview with a representative of the organisation Tharwa Fatma n'Soumer, Algiers, 10 June 2015.

41 Ibid.

42 Interview with a representative of CIDEF, Algiers, 11 March 2015; telephone interview with a leading representative of RACHDA, 15 March 2015.

have fought for the abrogation of the law and demanded that social relations within the family be regulated exclusively by the Civil Code.⁴³ Other women's rights CSOs, such as CIDEF, FeC and RACHDA, have taken a more pragmatic stance and worked to amend the Code step by step, while at the same time pointing out publicly that this personal status law contradicts the Algerian Constitution, which guarantees the equality of men and women.⁴⁴ As of 2015, leading representatives of CIDEF were also exploring ways to reform the Family Code on the basis of existing Islamic laws. Similarly, well-known members of CIDEF have also engaged representatives of the Islamist opposition in public discussions about different interpretations of the Koran and the role of women therein.⁴⁵ This strategy is questioned by other secular women's rights activists, who believe that the secular women's groups lack the necessary competence to engage in religious argument and that religious discourses on women's rights should get as little public attention as possible.⁴⁶ The former mass organisation UNFA lobbies to reform some sections of the Code, such as the provisions on divorce, while at the same time accepting other provisions rather uncritically. A leading representative of the group opined, for instance, that the Code's provisions on heritage, which grant male heirs two-thirds and female heirs only one-third of a family inheritance, must not be changed as they were based on the Koran, whose teachings the UNFA deeply respected.⁴⁷

4 Gender Politics and Authoritarian Resilience: The Case of Mozambique

Women's rights and political representation as well as their participation in decision-making processes in Mozambique have experienced different degrees of attention and support, both from the state and from civil society, in different historical-political phases. The liberation movement Frente da Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo, Liberation Front of Mozambique) and its fight for independence from colonial rule in the 1960s and 1970s (independence was achieved in 1975) also opened up space for women's political activism in the name of "liberation, equality and emancipation" (Tvedten et al. 2008: 31-32). Apart from organising support for male combatants in the so-called "liberated zones," women also demanded the right to actively take part in the freedom fight (Casimiro 2004: 228). Then Frelimo leaders Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel were influenced by different types of international ideas on

43 Interview with a representative of the organisation Tharwa Fatma n'Soumer, Algiers, 10 June 2015.

44 Interview with a leading representative and two journalists/regular members of FeC, Algiers, 19 August 2015; Interview with a representative of CIDEF, Algiers, 11 March 2015; interview with a leading representative of CIDEF, Algiers, 16 September 2014; telephone interview with a leading representative of RACHDA, 15 March 2015.

45 Interview with a representative of CIDEF, Algiers, 11 March 2015; interview with a leading representative of CIDEF, Algiers, 16 September 2014.

46 Interview with a representative of CIDEF, Algiers, 11 March 2015.

47 Interview with a high-ranking representative of the UNFA, Algiers, 12 March 2015.

women's rights, including UN norms and socialist ideas of women's emancipation. They recognised the importance of women's support for the liberation struggle and for the implementation of Frelimo's political ideas and strategies as a liberation movement and, later on, as a ruling party. This laid the foundation for Frelimo's view of itself as being at the forefront of state-led female-friendly policies and discourses – a view that still prevails today.⁴⁸

During the socialist one-party regime, women's political representation increased but women in leadership positions remained scarce, despite Frelimo's continued adherence to its discourse of "liberation and emancipation." Civil society activism faced restrictions. Women's political activism was largely confined to centrally organised party-state feminism, with the women's mass organisation Organização da Mulher Moçambicana (OMM, Organisation of Mozambican Women) being the only legally recognised body for the representation of women's rights. The "civil war" between 1976 and 1992 with the rebel group Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Renamo, National Mozambican Resistance) as well as economic constraints due to the austerity measures of a structural adjustment programme in the 1980s, introduced under the supervision of the International Monetary Fund, hampered the possibilities for women's political activism. After the signing of the General Peace Accord of Rome and the regime's formal transition into a multiparty democracy in 1994, more independent CSOs working for women's rights emerged, such as the umbrella body Forum Mulher (Women's Forum) (Casimiro 2004: 198-211).⁴⁹

International cooperation has played a major role in supporting women's CSOs and state efforts to introduce more female-friendly policies and structures (ibid.).⁵⁰ Since the 1990s, a number of state institutions have introduced gender mainstreaming and specific state machineries for women have been established (Tvedten et al. 2008: 36-41). According to the OECD gender index (2014) Mozambique does comparatively well in terms of formal legislation concerning the rights of women and children. However, discriminatory social norms, violence, sexual harassment, and the violation of women's land rights continue to be widespread problems. Regime representatives often tolerate customary systems that enable male relatives to deprive women of access to land despite the law, which formally grants men and women equal land-usage rights. CSOs concerned about gender issues try to gain influence in political decision-making processes by conducting studies, by submitting written recommendations on ongoing law-making projects relating to women's rights, by engaging in formal and informal lobbying, and through public demonstrations, such as marches.⁵¹ However,

48 Interviews with Mozambican women's rights activists: Forum Mulher (FM), Maputo, 31 March 2015; Organização da Mulher Moçambicana (OMM), Maputo, 15 March 2015; and experts: Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; Women Law and Social Action (WLSA), Maputo, 8 August 2014.

49 Interviews with Mozambican women's rights experts: UEM, Maputo 15 December 2014; UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; and activist: OMM, Maputo, 15 March 2015.

50 Interviews with Mozambican women's rights experts: UEM, Maputo 15 December 2014; UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; and activist: OMM, Maputo, 15 March 2015.

51 Interviews with Mozambican women's rights activists: Forum Mulher, Maputo, 31 March 2015; OMM, Maputo, 15 March 2015; and experts: UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; WLSA, Maputo, 8 August 2014; UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014; Universidade Católica (UCM), Beira, 1 August 2014.

there are general concerns on the part of experts and women activists alike about the de facto persistence of authoritarian practices under the Frelimo government and the blurring boundaries between state, government, ruling party, civil society, and the private sector.⁵² The authoritarian post-socialist regime in Mozambique uses various strategies and policies to enhance its rule, in the field of gender politics as well. In this context, there is a consciousness on the part of women's rights experts that "gender questions are questions of power."⁵³ While the regime conveys the image of defending women's rights, empirical evidence shows that it also uses state feminism to pursue objectives linked to its maintenance of power.

Pattern 1: Using Women's Rights and Gender Politics as an Authoritarian Legitimation Strategy

The post-socialist authoritarian regime in Mozambique draws on historical and other public discourses relating to women's rights and gender as one instrument with which to legitimate its rule. According to CSO representatives and scholars, Frelimo uses a women-friendly discourse in order to portray itself to the public as the vanguard of women's emancipation. In its official discourse, for example, the party emphasises institutional measures used to enhance women's political representation. One expert we interviewed summarised the widespread statements and self-perceptions of Frelimo representatives as follows: "we [Frelimo] have been the first to take a position and to introduce quotas."⁵⁴ At the same time, Frelimo has rejected the concept of "feminism" since the time of the liberation movement. According to a senior local academic at the Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM, University of Eduardo Mondlane), the discourse of "liberation and emancipation" that emphasises the role of women during the fight for independence has not changed. It continues to have an influence on politics and CSO discourses today.⁵⁵ However, it is not just the regime that refers to women's contributions during the war for liberation in its public discourse – for instance, on national women's day – all of the CSOs active in the field of women's rights which we interviewed do so as well. As one representative of the OMM, formerly the regime's mass women's organisation, put it,

The fight for national independence was the big historic moment in which women fulfilled their role; this inspired and inspires the women of today, because at that time there were men who did not believe that women were as capable as men of participating in the fight.⁵⁶

52 Interviews with national experts: member of parliament, Maputo, 29 July 2014; Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos (IESE), Maputo, 15 December 2014; interviews with leading CSO representatives: Conselho Cristão de Moçambique (CCM), 22 May 2014; Organização da Juventude Moçambicana (OJM), Maputo, 28 May 2014; OMM, Maputo, 13 and 18 June 2014; OMM, Beira, 17 June 2014; Sindicato Nacional de Jornalistas (SNJ), Beira, 6 July 14. For secondary literature see for example Macuane 2012; Weimer et al. 2012; Öhm 2009; ECORYS 2008; Hanlon and Smart 2008.

53 Expert interview with WLSA, Maputo, 8 August 2014.

54 According to UEM2 expert, Maputo, 14 March 2015.

55 Expert interviews with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014; UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015.

56 Interview with OMM representative, Beira, 17 June 2014.

The role of OMM has to be seen as ambiguous: on the one hand it reproduces the party's discourse; on the other hand it has also been influencing that same discourse since independence.⁵⁷ When asked how OMM influences gender discourses and policies, the respondent answered, "The party [Frelimo] is the father, it spreads its arms [the mass organisations] to disseminate discourses and ideas."⁵⁸ Strikingly, even women's CSOs considered as independent or in opposition to the regime resort to the same historic discourse as a basis for their activities and political involvement today. This is illustrated by a quote from a representative of the Liga da Mulher (Women's League), which is affiliated with the opposition party Movimento Democrático de Moçambique (MDM, Democratic Movement of Mozambique):

Someone has to sacrifice today [...] we want to change the country [...]. There were the women that fought. We praise the women that participated in the liberation struggle [...] each one of us contributed then.⁵⁹

All women's CSOs interviewed praised the Mozambican state for conveying women's positive role. Gender policies and the national gender strategy were regarded as satisfactory by all of them. Both the women's CSOs and various other CSOs interviewed defended the principles of gender equality and of women in leadership positions. However, many CSO respondents noted differences between the state's and their organisation's ideas about the role of women. As a general rule, mass organisations and professional organisations close to the regime tended to see fewer differences between their own ideas and those of the state than more independent ones. Especially the more independent CSOs argued that gender policies should not be limited to a game with numbers, referring to the quota established by Frelimo, but rather focus on the quality of women's rights.

In line with the above, many CSO representatives pointed to contradictions between the regime's discourse and the implementation of women's rights in practice. According to a leading expert and women's rights activist, the regime's image of itself as a defender of women's rights – which it conveys to the public – on the one hand and the practice of law formulation and implementation on the other are not congruent. For instance, she said that "during election campaigns 'hot issues' like women's rights were not thematised in order not to lose male votes."⁶⁰ Particularly NGOs and business organisations active in the field of women's rights demand more of a focus on the quality of women's situation on the ground. The representatives of such organisations view the situation of women in rural areas as particularly precarious.⁶¹ The more independent women's movement has been able to achieve

57 Interviews with former member of parliament and OMM representative, Maputo, 17 March 2015; OMM representative, Maputo, 13 June 2014.

58 Interview with former member of parliament and OMM representative, Maputo, 17 March 2015.

59 Interview with representatives of the Women's League of the Movimento Democrático de Moçambique (MDM), Beira, 2 June 2014; 20 March 2015.

60 Expert interview with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

61 Interviews with expert UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014; former member of parliament and OMM representative, Maputo, 17 March 2015; FM representative, Maputo, 9 July 2014.

some political successes, such as influencing the revision of the family law, introducing the law against domestic violence, and battling to have the severest violations of women's rights removed from the revised penal code. However, according to a UEM expert, CSOs that address gender issues have not been able to challenge the regime's general discourse of its role as a defender of women's rights, which it uses to legitimate its rule.⁶² This view was supported by another expert, also a committed women's rights activist: "The discourse of equality is used for legitimation, to maintain power."⁶³

In addition, the regime has also portrayed women's rights as an embodiment of state-led modernisation and democratisation in order to stabilise its rule during different historical phases. During socialist one-party rule, the Mozambican regime strived to achieve a major economic, social, and cultural restructuring and modernisation of the country and society in line with its socialist ideology of creating a "new man." The idea of the revolution included a "rupture with traditions and a fight against obscurantism,"⁶⁴ according to a UEM expert – for instance, by taking action against initiation rituals and traditional healers as well as traditional authorities. In the context of socialist modernisation, women were, among other things, perceived and supported as an additional workforce contributing to economic production. However, while women increasingly entered the formal labour market, they also had to continue to fulfil their traditional roles and duties in the household (Casimiro 2004: 190).

After the political and economic liberalisation officially embraced in the constitution of 1994, the ruling Frelimo formally adopted a quota system for women (30 per cent), youth (25 per cent), and former combatants (10 per cent) for its electoral lists at the central, provincial, and local levels. No other party in Mozambique has followed this example (Abreu 2004: 63-64). As Frelimo holds the majority of seats, Mozambique currently performs comparatively well with regard to women's representation in parliament (39 per cent in 2013) (OECD 2014). Notably, however, the quotas do not apply to candidates for executive boards of government (Abreu 2004: 63), limiting the general access of women to high-ranking political posts. The regime uses the relatively high percentage of women in parliament to present the picture of a modern state in terms of gender equality, both internally and externally.⁶⁵

The regime also instrumentalises women's rights and gender politics to gain international legitimacy. Since the socialist regime, but especially since international donors active in Mozambique began to promote the political participation of women in the 1990s, the Mozambican state has offered gender trainings for politicians and has sent female political representatives, such as parliamentarians and OMM members, to participate in several international conferences and international organisations, including UN bodies.⁶⁶ As an expert

62 Expert interview with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015.

63 Expert interview with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

64 Expert interview with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015.

65 Expert interviews with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; WLSA, Maputo, 8 August 2014.

66 Expert interviews with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; WLSA, Maputo, 8 August 2014.

on women's rights in Mozambique stated, "The state adopted the gender discourse due to international donor influence."⁶⁷ Because donors have channelled a considerable amount of foreign aid specifically to women's organisations and projects since the 1990s, new women's CSOs as well as both state and civil society projects in the field of gender have mushroomed.⁶⁸ There are state machineries such as the National Operational Group for the Advancement of Women, headed by the minister of women and social action coordination; a parliamentary commission on social, gender, and environmental issues; and a review of existing state legislation related to women rights, such as the family law, the law against domestic violence, and the penal code (Abreu 2004: 63). In 2009, the Mozambican government received the African Gender Award for its efforts to promote gender equality. However, some critical CSOs perceive the regime's focus on formal representation as an attempt to please foreign donors and to secure continued access to funding. As a representative of Forum Mulher stated, "The state is preoccupied with numbers and quotas to please donors."⁶⁹

Pattern 2: Women's Organisations as Mechanisms of Co-optation

Women's organisations were instrumentalised to mobilise political support for the ruling party during the socialist one-party regime as well as after the political liberalisation in the 1990s. Since then, other political parties like Renamo or MDM have also established women's organisations to organise support for their parties. In 1973 Frelimo's female combatants created the mass women's organisation OMM, despite male resistance within Frelimo. A former combatant and expert on women's rights recalled the internal fighting within Frelimo: "The creation of OMM was not peaceful."⁷⁰ Later, however, Frelimo claimed the formation of OMM as its own achievement.⁷¹ The socialist one-party state used the top-down hierarchical structures of the OMM, which had been established at all administrative levels – national, provincial, district – in order to reach out to the majority of women both in the cities and in the countryside. Accordingly, OMM's main task was to promote popular support for the regime, not only by taking care of the daily concerns of women, such as education and employment, but also by rallying for political projects. Similar tendencies continue to be evident under the new formally multiparty regime. OMM's structures continue to extend to all levels of government, and the organisation regards itself as the main representative of women's interests in Mozambique. As a member of OMM and former parliamentarian described it, "OMM is the mother organisation; all other women's organisations have been born out of it

67 Expert interview with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015.

68 Interviews with Mozambican women's rights experts: UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014; UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; WLSA, Maputo, 8 August 2014; UCM, Beira, 1 August 2014. See for example Sogge (1997) on aid and the genesis of civil society in Mozambique.

69 Interview with women's rights activist, FM, Maputo, 9 July 2014.

70 Expert interview with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015.

71 Interviews with former member of parliament and OMM representative, Maputo, 17 March 2015; UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015.

[...]. OMM has the force to call the women.”⁷² After a short episode as a formally independent organisation from 1990 to 1996, the OMM resumed its position as an organisation linked to the ruling party (Casimiro 2004: 249-258.). Frelimo needed OMM to mobilise for the party during elections and beyond. As one expert opined, “Frelimo could not leave aside 50 per cent of the women’s vote.”⁷³ Similarly, OMM also serves as a recruitment pool for the ruling party, with many members loyal to the party’s leadership having been appointed as female representatives of Frelimo in government and parliament.⁷⁴

The regime also maintains explicit and implicit linkages with other, formally more independent women’s CSOs. For instance, high-ranking individual ruling-party members form their own CSOs that also address gender issues. These organisations profit from donor funding and state contacts. In turn, such CSOs often carry out particular tasks for the state – for instance, in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention – which are well received by the population and, as a consequence, also benefit the ruling party. As an expert from UEM explained, the “government creates its own CSOs, which repeat the discourse of government.”⁷⁵ In order to be able to carry out their activities, several CSOs, including women’s CSOs, choose to maintain a sympathetic relationship with the regime. They opt for cooperation rather than confrontation, and are thus often co-opted by the regime.⁷⁶ An expert and OMM member explicitly termed this a “strategy of survival” for women’s CSOs and for CSOs working in other fields.⁷⁷

The regime also uses the inclusion of CSOs defending women’s rights in law- and policymaking processes as part of its co-optation strategy. CSOs are often officially invited by state institutions to provide input into law and policy decision-making processes concerning women’s and gender issues – for instance, those processes related to the above-mentioned family law, the law against domestic violence, and the penal code. However, CSOs do not always receive the necessary documents and invitations in time. Moreover, at the respective consultation meetings, CSO representatives are often not allowed to speak; rather, they are simply informed about the particular law- and policymaking processes.⁷⁸ There are examples, such as the more recent revision of the penal code, of CSOs first having to protest on the

72 Interview with former member of parliament and OMM representative, Maputo, 17 March 2015.

73 Expert interview with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015.

74 Interviews with OMM representatives, Maputo, 17 March 2015 and 13 June 2014. Interestingly, the women’s organisations of opposition parties such as Renamo and MDM seem to replicate the Frelimo model in terms of organising support by and through their respective women’s mass organisations: MDM, Beira, 20 March 2015. For a comprehensive analysis of the development of OMM see Casimiro (2004), 231; 233-258.

75 Expert interview with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

76 Interviews with high-level CSO representatives: Conselho Islâmico de Moçambique, Maputo, 29 May 2014; Empresários contra SIDA (ECOSIDA), Maputo, 3 June 14; Fórum Provincial das ONGs de Sofala (FOPROSA), Beira, 26 May 2014; SNJ, Beira, 6 July 2014.; OMM, Maputo, 17 March 2015 and 13 June 2014.

77 Workshop at UEM, Maputo, 23 July 2015.

78 Expert interview UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; interview with women’s rights activist FM, Maputo, 31 March 2015.

streets and actively demand their involvement before being granted access. According to an expert, problems with the authoritarian regime usually arise when CSOs try to act politically, challenging proposed projects of law: “Government views civil society as complementary to the state, not as independent.”⁷⁹ Accordingly, during law and policy consultations the regime has often tried to co-opt CSOs by handing out favours. Where this has not been successful, the regime has used other mechanisms to prevent their meaningful participation, such as not providing the necessary information about ongoing law-making processes or even repression.⁸⁰ However, despite these challenges, CSOs – including women’s organisations – do show resistance to co-optation. One women’s rights expert summed it up as follows: “civil society makes itself heard despite the infiltration of money.”⁸¹

Selected women have occupied high-ranking political positions since the 1990s, including minister, state secretary, and prime minister posts. However, it is necessary to ask what criteria women have had to meet to gain access to such political positions.⁸² Critical women’s rights activists point out that women have often held certain seats because they have defended a certain political line and the power interests of the party’s male leadership. Therefore, female political representatives have often been used to support party-political clientelism: “The power of the party is masculine.”⁸³ Women become co-opted, and a standard saying of experts as well as of women’s organisation representatives is that “They [women] are in power but without power.”⁸⁴ Similarly, the selection of women for election lists frequently occurs according to criteria of adaptation and loyalty to Frelimo’s leadership, as the following quotes by former female members of parliament, activists, and experts alike show: A woman’s rights activist held the view that “The loyalties to the party are bigger than any other.”⁸⁵ A former minister and still high-ranking female political representative stated, “I am here because of my party.”⁸⁶ And an expert explained, “Government wants to preserve the political order; this could be questioned by women in power.”⁸⁷

Pattern 3: The Instrumentalisation of Social Divisions and the Duality of Women’s Status

The Mozambican regime’s instrumentalisation of social divisions includes the strategic use of political competition and authoritarian divide-and-rule tactics, both of which also extend

79 Expert interview with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

80 Expert interviews with FM, Maputo, 31 March 2015; UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

81 Expert interview with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

82 Expert interviews with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

83 Expert interview with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

84 Expert interview with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; interview with women’s rights activist FM, Maputo, 31 March 2015.

85 Interview with women’s rights activist FM, Maputo, 31 March 2015.

86 Interview with former member of parliament and OMM representative, Maputo, 17 March 2015; see also expert interviews with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; WLSA, Maputo, 8 August 2014; and Osório (2010).

87 Expert interview with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

to gender politics. Representatives of the ruling party continue to employ a discourse of “us and them,” with the latter referring not only to the opposition parties but also to critical CSOs. Accordingly, the regime often rewards women’s CSOs loyal to it, whereas criticism from CSOs and women’s activists is often perceived as a threat. For instance, foreign-funded CSOs, including women’s CSOs, are often vilified as “agents of foreign powers,” with the regime alleging that they defend the agenda of international donors.⁸⁸ Many of the CSOs interviewed, especially NGOs that receive support from foreign partners, claimed that this external support allowed them to maintain a greater degree of independence from the state. Representatives of the regime, meanwhile, sometimes referred to more independent, explicitly feminist organisations as “radicals of the West.”⁸⁹ Accordingly, independent women’s activists voiced fears about speaking up critically because of possible sanctions by the regime. An expert from UEM explained,

You may say certain things as long as you do not question those in power [...] if I take a certain position [critical towards the regime], they are going to finish me.⁹⁰

With regard to the law-making process related to the law on domestic violence initiated by Forum Mulher – which the Centro de Estudos Africanos (CEA) and the Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) later also joined – an expert who was involved stated,

We are afraid to go on the streets and be penalised, especially by state officials. There is a lot of control [...] government has fear of confrontation with civil society as it influences public opinion.⁹¹

A distinction can usually be made between the women’s mass and professional organisations established under one-party rule and women’s CSOs that evolved after the political liberalisation in 1994. While the former generally continue to maintain close links with the ruling party, the latter are often linked to donor support. A representative of Forum Mulher stated, “A lot of CSOs have been created to assist government and not to criticise it.”⁹² This representative explained further that many CSOs had been founded by members of the ruling party, and as a consequence, it was difficult for them to critically reflect upon and question the regime’s discourses and policies. The umbrella organisation Forum Mulher includes a broad spectrum of different women’s organisations and has tried to organise the debate around gender issues among its member organisations in a way that allows the women’s movement to speak with one voice. Nevertheless, varying degrees of co-optation by – or, conversely, independence from – the ruling party have often led to conflict among the umbrella organisa-

88 Interview with women’s rights activist FM, Maputo, 31 March 2015; expert interviews with CIP, Maputo, 26 March 2014; IESE, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

89 Expert interview with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

90 Expert interview with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015.

91 Expert interview with WLSA, Maputo, 8 August 2014.

92 Interview with women’s rights activist FM, Maputo, 31 March 2015.

tion's members. For instance, a Forum Mulher activist said that sometimes women's activists within the umbrella organisation had placed their religious or political party affiliations above women's rights issues.⁹³ With regard to the revision of the penal code, one OMM representative and former member of parliament expressed disappointment because of the allegations and insults made by other women's CSOs about Frelimo women parliamentarians: "They [other activists] said we were sleeping [...] but we were three women against seven men."⁹⁴ Here she was referring to conflicts among male and female Frelimo members in the parliamentary commission responsible for drafting the penal code. Some Frelimo female parliamentarians and women's rights activists close to the regime may experience a conflict of interest between party loyalty and the demand to achieve the more far-reaching women's rights defended by other women's rights activists.

In a similar vein, women's CSOs linked to political opposition parties are frequently excluded from the law- and policymaking processes to which women's CSOs loyal to the regime are invited. As a member of the Women's League, which is affiliated with the more recent opposition party MDM, lamented, "If they [the regime] do not want that we speak up, they do not invite us."⁹⁵ The MDM women's representative also mentioned difficulties in recruiting more members to the Women's League as many women feared negative consequences in the workplace and other forms of repression if their affiliation to a CSO close to the opposition became known. Partnerships between the MDM Women's League and CSOs close to the regime were also difficult because of political party differences.⁹⁶ According to a UEM expert and a survey conducted by WLSA (Osório 2010), there are differences between different political parties with regard to how they deal with women's rights issues both in policy and practice. At the same time, both Frelimo and different opposition parties have used women's rights to strengthen their political power. Frelimo continues to be the only party in Mozambique that has introduced quotas for women and highlights this as women-friendly in its discourse. Renamo is often perceived as defending a patriarchal culture, partly because of its close links to traditional authorities. MDM officially defends equality in the family and women's rights in its programme. However, as an expert stated, in practice "forms of masculine power [within the party] are reproduced," albeit with more liberty of expression compared to Frelimo and its women's organisation OMM.⁹⁷ According to this MDM representative "the preoccupations around women's rights that the Women's League of MDM states are not different from other CSOs – in terms of party values yes, but in terms of the question of women's rights we meet."⁹⁸ In other words, while the leaderships of the

93 Interview with women's rights activist FM, Maputo, 31 March 2015.

94 Interview with former member of parliament and OMM representative, Maputo, 17 March 2015.

95 Interview with MDM, Beira, 20 March 2015.

96 Interview with MDM, Beira, 20 March 2015.

97 Expert interview with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014; see also Osório (2010).

98 Interview with MDM, Beira, 20 March 2015.

different political parties often try to portray a disparity between the regime and the political opposition around women's rights and try to use gender politics for purposes of power, individual women's rights activists may align around similar women's rights issues.

Despite Frelimo's styling of itself as the main defender of women's rights, the post-socialist authoritarian regime of Mozambique also actively seeks to accommodate political opposition groups and alternative social authorities as part of its legitimisation strategy. In order to do so, it also compromises women's rights issues if it deems this to be opportune. This is evident, for example, in Frelimo's relationship with traditional authorities. During Frelimo's socialist one-party rule, traditional authorities such as local chiefs (*régulos*) were discredited as henchmen of the colonial regime and were disempowered. Entire rural communities were relocated and forced to work in newly set up communal villages (*aldeias comunais*) in order to increase agricultural production. Representatives of the women's mass organisation OMM played an important role in organising life in such villages. These collectivisation measures led many rural communities to join the Renamo militia together with their traditional leaders (Casimiro 2004: 242; for further information see e.g. Geffray 1991).⁹⁹

In order to regain the support of the traditional leaders, the regime has since the 1990s adopted a strategy of co-opting traditional authorities. They have been assigned a legal status as so-called "communitarian leaders" (Law 15/2000) and now receive subsidies and housing for carrying out certain state tasks, such as collecting local fees or mobilising support for government policies. Against this backdrop, several critical CSOs and scholars interviewed argued that the ruling party defends patriarchal customs that run counter to women's rights, such as polygamy, in order to please the traditional authorities and to counter Renamo's accusation that Frelimo has worked against traditional customs.¹⁰⁰ A representative of WLSA spoke of the persistence of "anti-human cultural values" – for instance, indebted families having to give a child to the traditional leader; initiation rites; and, recently, the proposals made by the responsible parliamentary commission in the context of the penal code amendment, which included one suggesting that a rapist was to be exempted from punishment if he married the violated woman.¹⁰¹ According to the interviewee, the regime uses a discourse of "respect for our culture" that is reflected in policies and practices intended to help it maintain power through traditional leaders and men, and "they [in turn] utilise culture to maintain the repression of women."¹⁰²

There is one important issue that has been broached already in the paragraphs above but not been analysed explicitly so far: the duality of women's status when it comes to their political promotion in public versus their discrimination in the private sphere, which is tacitly upheld by the Mozambican regime. This discrepancy is considered a "taboo topic" by most

99 Expert interview with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

100 Expert interviews with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014.

101 Expert interview with WLSA, Maputo, 8 August 2014.

102 Expert interview with WLSA, Maputo, 8 August 2014.

male Frelimo members as it does not fit with the regime's official discourse and its self-image of being at the forefront in promoting women's rights.¹⁰³ While, on the one hand, the regime points to policies such as the quota for women on Frelimo's election lists and state institutions' support for the political representation of women, it defends, or at least tolerates, on the other hand, customary systems of a patriarchal nature when it comes to women's rights within the family. The duality between the public and private realm with regard to women's rights and their instrumentalisation by the regime are exemplified in the following quotes from CSO representatives working in the field of gender. One activist explained,

Women are attributed the role of mother, worker, leader, and political mobiliser by the state, as there is the opinion that they more easily accept the ideas of the leaders of the state without much resistance.¹⁰⁴

This forms part of a larger regime strategy of instrumentalising social divisions: women and women's organisations are to be attracted to support the ruling party while, at the same time, the patriarchal demands of male members and potential Frelimo voters are addressed as well. A representative of Forum Mulher alleged,

The state is more preoccupied with numbers in parliament and tries in some way to show that women should not forget their role in family, that they should not seek to be like men; this way of looking at women is not positive, as it makes women always dependent on others.¹⁰⁵

One expert summed up this duality as follows: "Machismo and patriarchy continue in the heads of political leaders and women."¹⁰⁶ This mindset influences the use of gender politics on the part of the Mozambican regime.

5 Conclusion

Algeria and Mozambique differ markedly in terms of their colonial legacies and economic conditions, as well as their majority religions and ethnic compositions. However, both countries are ruled by post-revolutionary, post-socialist authoritarian regimes that adopted some democratic features in the 1980s and 1990s and have since been rather successful in maintaining power. Our comparative empirical findings show that in spite of the economic, religious, and ethnic differences of the societies they govern, both the Algerian regime and the Mozambican regime have applied a similar mix of strategies in the field of gender politics to

¹⁰³ Expert interviews with UEM, Maputo, 15 December 2014; UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; workshop at UEM, Maputo, 23 July 2015.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Órdem dos Médicos, Beira, 22 June 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with women's rights activist FM, Maputo, 9 July 2014.

¹⁰⁶ Expert interview with UEM2, Maputo, 14 March 2015; see also Abreu (2004).

reinforce their sway over society in general and civil society in particular. Three common patterns can be identified in this regard:

Firstly, both regimes have used gender politics and the partial realisation of women's rights as an authoritarian legitimisation strategy. More specifically, both in Algeria and in Mozambique, regime representatives have long utilised the narrative of the role of women during the independence struggle in order to strengthen a historical legitimisation discourse that portrays the incumbent post-revolutionary regimes as the sole guarantors of their countries' existence as sovereign and independent nations. In the immediate post-independence period, both regimes used women-friendly policies as part of their socialist modernisation projects. Since the state-led processes of political liberalisation, which occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, both regimes have used the partial realisation of women's rights and the toleration of more independent women's CSOs to convey the image that they have truly transitioned to democracy. At the international level, this has also meant that both regimes have portrayed themselves as conforming to a global discourse on women's rights, such as that promoted by the United Nations.

Secondly, both the Algerian regime and the Mozambican regime have used women's organisations as mechanisms of co-optation. Since the time of socialist one-party rule, both regimes have used mass organisations and other co-opted women's groups as transmission belts for their political ideologies and as channels to mobilise political support – for instance, through the mobilisation of female voters during election periods. Since the political opening up of the 1980s and 1990s, ruling political elites in both countries have tended to employ more subtle modes of co-opting women's rights activists and their political agendas, such as inserting political loyalists at the helm of well-known women's CSOs. In the Algerian rentier state, formally independent women's CSOs have also been co-opted through the allocation of state subsidies and other material benefits. In addition, the authoritarian regimes of Algeria and Mozambique have also granted CSOs working in the field of gender selective access to law- and policymaking processes related to women's rights.

Thirdly, both authoritarian regimes have passed and maintained laws that establish a duality with regard to the status of women by promoting the representation of women in the public sphere while, at the same time, restricting their rights in the private sphere. Both in Algeria and in Mozambique, the existence of this duality can ultimately be traced to political strategies of co-optation and divide and rule, which the respective authoritarian regimes employ to maintain power. This pattern is well documented in the scholarly literature on authoritarian regimes the Middle East (e.g. Al-Ali 2002; Errazzouki and Al-Khawaja 2013; Salhi 2010; Tripp 2013: 530). It is also evident in the Algerian case, where the predominantly secular regime has introduced women-friendly policies, such as quotas, in order to please secular sections of the middle class and portray itself as a bulwark against the Islamist opposition, while at the same time upholding a discriminatory Family Code that contains elements of the

sharia and constitutes a tool to accommodate precisely this Islamist opposition, along with socially conservative and/or patriarchal forces.

Interestingly, however, very similar tendencies can also be observed in the case of Mozambique, where political Islam and/or orthodox Islamic tendencies have so far not played a prominent role. The socialist one-party regime as well as, later, the liberalised authoritarian regime in Mozambique have both instrumentalised social and political divisions in order to maintain power. This also is also true for gender politics. Immediately after independence, the socialist Frelimo regime used the promotion of women's rights as part of its attempt to form a "new man," a strategy that was also directed at weakening the power of traditional social authorities. In recent years, however, the regime has mostly pursued a strategy of political accommodation vis-à-vis the traditional authorities so as to gain their support in opposing the political opposition, including Renamo. In this context and despite its official discourse of promoting women's rights, the regime has also adopted a policy of tolerance towards many so-called "cultural" customs that are highly patriarchal in character. As far as the issue of women's rights is concerned, this strategy of accommodation has been reflected in – amongst other things – the duality of the promotion of women's participation in the public sphere and their inferior (legal) status within the family. This finding is tentatively backed by the existing literature on the relationship between women's political rights and the accommodation of patriarchal social forces and/or patriarchal attitudes towards women in other non-democratic regimes in Southern Africa (e.g. Mama 2013: 152-153; Soothill 2007: 71-102).

On a broader theoretical level, the comparative findings presented in this paper suggest that valuable insights into the relationship between women's rights and authoritarian politics could be gained through the better integration of the research on state feminism and the theoretical literature on authoritarian resilience. More specifically, future research based on such a joint approach should explore whether the three theoretical patterns according to which authoritarian regimes can use gender politics for the purpose of maintaining power, which have been identified in this paper, can be found in authoritarian regimes outside the Middle East and Southern Africa as well. Similarly, future comparative research could also provide insights into whether these three patterns, which this study has applied to post-revolutionary and post-socialist regimes, also characterise authoritarian politics in countries that are ruled by other types of authoritarian regimes such as monarchies or military dictatorships.

Last but not least, our evidence from Algeria, a majority-Muslim country, and from Mozambique – a country of mixed religious affiliations, including Christian, Islamic, and indigenous animist beliefs – also suggests that political power structures and patriarchal traditions styled as "cultural heritage" are much more important in determining gender outcomes than religious factors. Future comparative research on gender politics in authoritarian polities that differ with regard to their majority religion and religious composition may provide further valuable insights into this issue.

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