NERMIN ALLAM, *Women and the Egyptian Revolution: Engagement and Activism during the 2011 Arab Uprisings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). Pp. 221. $99.99 cloth. ISBN: 9781108434430

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doi:10.1017/S0020743819000175

That the Egyptian uprising did not end well for women is well known. Much has been written about the exhilarating eighteen days of the initial Tahrir Square occupation, when women and men, young and old, Muslim and Christian formed a unified collectivity calling for the end of the Mubarak regime. Shortly afterwards, however, women protesters experienced sexual harassment and abuse, and the government of president Mohamad Morsi, backed by a parliament dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, sought to re-introduce regressive policies. A second wave of protests, this time against Morsi, was followed by a military coup in July 2013, a clampdown on dissent and protests, and the sniper killing of a socialist activist, Shaima al-Sabbagh, during a January 2015 commemorative march. Meanwhile, the birthplace of the Arab Spring, Tunisia, experienced a very different trajectory, including expanded political freedoms and feminist mobilization to ensure new gains in women's participation and rights.

Nermin Allam's *Women and the Egyptian Revolution* is driven by the question of why women protesters did not explicitly voice women's rights and gender equality demands in the 2011 Egyptian uprising (p. 13). More specifically, Allam draws on social movements literature to identify the "collective action frames" used by women protestors. Those frames focused on citizenship and national unity vis-à-vis the Mubarak regime, rather than women's rights more explicitly (p. 163). Allam argues that the women participants' "subjective experience of solidarity and equality contributed to the absence of gender from their collective action framing." She explains that the citizenship and national unity frame was both a function of historical legacy and a strategic move. There is, indeed, a substantial literature on women's participation in the anti-British Egyptian uprising of the early 20th century (the so-called 1919 revolution) and on the impact of president Abd al-Nasir's nationalist rhetoric and policies on Egyptian society and movements. Although the women's rights agenda was never absent, it was arguably subsumed by the dominant discourse of nationalism and anti-imperialism. For Allam, the dominance of the nationalist legacy put women at a disadvantage; when activists came out for women's rights in March 2011 and afterwards, they faced assaults from marauding gangs of men as well as by police and the military.

Allam's interviews reveal that women protesters grounded their inspiration in nationalism or social betterment, not feminism. One interviewee declared that she was not feminist and that she found the term alienating and limiting to her activism. The majority of Allam's interviewees reported that feminist ideologies carried a negative connotation in Egypt.

The book's broad argument, therefore, is that nationalism trumps identities, whether Coptic or feminist. Allam thus joins and contributes to a large feminist literature, predominantly in political science, that finds nationalism and feminism to be antithetical.

A second theme of the book is that top-down "state feminism" prevented legitimacy to the feminist frame. In 1979, amendments to the family code were hotly contested and disparagingly known as "Jihan's law"; they were overturned in 1985, after Anwar Sadat's death and during the Mubarak era. Suzanne Mubarak headed the National Council for Women, regarded by many as a pet project and ineffective institution. Some advances were made, such as the 2004 law enabling Egyptian women married to foreign men to pass on their nationality to their children (although women married to Palestinian or Sudanese men were denied the right), and the 2008 law banning female circumcision. A gender quota adopted in 2010 was short-lived. It would appear, therefore, that the unpopularity of Sadat and Mubarak and their wives made their policies, and by extension feminism itself, unacceptable.

In addition to the secondary sources—as noted, the literature on social movements, feminist studies of nationalism, and postcolonial literature—Allam's work relied upon primary data generated in two ways. First, she interviewed women from various women's rights organizations and women who took part in the January 2011 Tahrir Square occupation and protests. Second, she conducted an analysis of media representations of the women through a survey of a sample of press accounts in two Egyptian newspapers—*al-Ahram* and *Wafd*—and the *New York Times*.

The "meat" of the book is contained in Chapters 3 and 4, where the author draws on her rich interview data and other source material to elaborate on the implicit or explicit decision by women protesters, including those from women's rights organizations, to initially refrain from feminist frames and join the broad chorus for national unity and citizenship. One quote is especially telling: we "did not want to disrupt the unity" that characterized the uprising (p. 90). Other interviews confirm that there was no long-term vision or plan. These are masterful chapters and Allam convincingly shows how and why "the communitas-like features of the square were conjunctural" (p. 108).

In Chapter 5, Allam informs us that the labor and Islamist organizations were similarly devoid of feminist leanings. Labor strikes, for example, focused on class-based issues to the neglect of "women's specific grievances and gender inequalities on the factory premises" (p. 136). To me, this raises the perennial question of why labor organizations focus exclusively on class inequality and feminist organizations focus exclusively on gender inequality, leaving open a divide that has yet to be bridged. In Tunisia, to consider a rare counter-example, a number of senior trade unionists within the UGTT are also members of the country's feminist organizations, thus bringing together both class- and gender-based demands (e.g., decent work, paid maternity leaves, quality childcare, criminalization of domestic and workplace harassment).

The book is short enough to be read quickly, which is both a strength and a weakness, as several of the themes could have been further developed. For example, the book's second chapter, which focuses on the framing of women's roles in the protests by news media, could have been written in a more rigorous fashion, and Allam should have spent more time analyzing the Egyptian press and its depiction of women protesters during and after the uprising. Allam engages *New York Times* articles fairly extensively in order to reveal their "orientalism," though it is not clear that this goal is accomplished. Indeed, I would have preferred more discussion of the primary data (the interviews and the media analysis) and fewer citations of so many authors, sometimes repetitively; in a book that is just 166 pages long, there is an additional 44 pages of references cited at

the end. Finally, a stronger editing hand by Cambridge copy editors would have removed some of the spelling errors and corrected the few infelicitous phrasings.

Overall, however, Allam makes a strong and compelling case for why Egyptian women protesters deployed nationalist rather than feminist frames, and nicely ends on an optimistic note about hope and some movement toward resistance and change. She is to be commended for producing a fine book that adds to both the literature on the Arab Spring and the social movements literature on contentious politics and collective action frames.

NEIL KETCHLEY, *Egypt in a Time of Revolution: Contentious Politics and the Arab Spring*, Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Pp. 209. $29.99 paper. ISBN: 9781316882702

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doi:10.1017/S0020743819000187

Egypt in a Time of Revolution explains the highly unsettled state of Egyptian politics and society from late 2010 through early 2014. In contrast to accounts of the uprisings that identify the causal role of popular grievances, rentier-state windfalls, or the (dis)loyalty of coercive apparatuses, Ketchley's contribution centers the role of protest itself. This perspective rests on an impressive collection of empirical data on contentious politics, underpinned by event catalogues of hundreds of protest events, repertoires, and deaths. This allows Ketchley to convincingly explain the day-by-day details that shaped the trajectory of Egypt's ultimately failed transition: from the cross-cutting and diverse protest movement of 25 January, to the narrower Tamarrud movement that presaged the end of Egypt's democratic experiment, through the subsequent wave of anticoup protests.

The book's emphasis on the dynamics and contexts of protest also serves to highlight broader questions of interest to scholars of democratization, although at times these accounts raise as many questions as they answer. For example, the dramatic collapse of Egypt's transition should prompt speculation not only about causes, but also to identify whether other outcomes were possible. In Ketchley's telling, the spring of 2011 was a critical juncture. Having back-footed the generals, the protest coalition was perhaps poised to fundamentally revise the country's political and economic terrain. But the Brotherhood instead shifted towards electoral politics and gutted the momentum of protest. Dispatching common arguments emphasizing Islamists' drive for power or promilitary perfidy, Ketchley instead explains this moment by referencing comparative literatures on democratization. As Chapter 4 shows, the Brotherhood effectively viewed post-Mubarak Egypt as an exemplary case of a "pacted transition." Having ejected the autocrat, they saw their immediate task to sideline "hard liners" in the revolutionary coalition and seek out the "soft liners" among the supporters of the military regime. In the fall of 2011, for example, their party newspaper editorialized that "the people must protect the revolution by policing the political process and ceasing unnecessary protests and strikes that can create the conditions for counter-revolution" (cited in Ketchley, pp. 93). The Brotherhood subsequently demonstrated occasional revolutionary solidarity but generally withdrew from the streets to concentrate on the ballot box. Even at the time, according to key Brotherhood leader Essam al-Erian, the group understood that this was an