

## Forum Transregionale Studien & Zentrum für transdisziplinäre Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung

**Rechtskulturen – EUME Conversation:**

### Tunisia in Transition: In Search of a New Political Language

In January 2011, the ‘Arab spring’ started in Tunisia when it ousted its authoritarian leader after 23 years of rule. Since this moment, all eyes have been on this small North-African country, which until this day, is the only country in the region where the revolutionary process seems to have ‘succeeded’: compared to other countries in the Arab region, the situation in Tunisia is safe and there is no roll back of the revolution by the previous regime. Tunisia has passed a democratic constitution that relates universality to specificity. It embraces religious roots and identity but also enshrines civil, legal and rational politics, and guarantees equality between men and women at the workplace, and parity between men and women in all elected assemblies. On 26 October and 23 November 2014, the Tunisian people will vote in free and equal elections.

Regardless of this relative peacefulness, the Tunisian political transition is characterised not only by the will for compromise but also by a sometimes violent renegotiation of what the new Tunisia should look like. This process is taking place in a highly polarised context where groups accuse each other of being ‘anti-revolutionary’, ‘anti-democratic’, and ‘anti-modern’. This renegotiation focuses on questioning authoritarian legacies, narratives and truths concerning the country’s identity.

In this seminar, Leila Dakhli and Maaïke Voorhoeve discuss the issue of transformation after the Tunisian revolution. Leila Dakhli addresses the ways in which the understanding of certain concepts that are closely intertwined with national identity have (or have not) transformed, focusing on issues such as the flag and the notion of patriotism. Maaïke Voorhoeve will address debates on one specific concept that is strongly related with Tunisia’s national identity, namely ‘women’s rights’. Cilja Harders will moderate the conversation.

Leila Dakhli is a researcher at the French CNRS and associated to the Centre Marc Bloch in Berlin. Maaïke Voorhoeve is a former fellow of the RECHTSKULTUREN program at the Forum Transregionale Studien and is currently a post-doctoral researcher at the EHESS in Paris. Cilja Harders is professor at the Otto-Suhr-Institute of the Freie Universität Berlin and spokesperson of the Collegium of EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE EAST – THE MIDDLE EAST IN EUROPE (EUME).

The conversation marks the publication of the book *Gender and Divorce Law in North Africa: Sharia, Custom and the Personal Status Code in Tunisia* by Maaïke Voorhoeve (2014)

**Tuesday, 2 December 2014, 7.00 pm**

**Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Unter den Linden 6 (Hauptgebäude / main building), 10099 Berlin, room 3059**

The event is organised in cooperation with the Forum Transregionale Studien, its programs RECHTSKULTUREN and EUME, and the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies at Humboldt University.