Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

WOMEN AND RESISTANCE TO RADICALISATION

EDITED BY

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Introduction

Fatima Sadiqi

This volume is a follow-up of the 8th edition of the Mediterranean Women Forum on the theme "Women's Voices in the Mediterranean and Africa: Movements, Feminisms, and Resistance to Extremisms", which was held at the Merinides Hotel (Fez, Morocco) on May 5, 6 and 7, 2017. The forum was organized by ISIS Center for Women and Development and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Rabat. The main aim of the conference was how to fight radicalization and extremism, build-up peace initiatives, protect women's rights, and enhance women's empowerment.

An increasing number of women's voices in the Mediterranean and Africa is rising to fight the mounting violence against women in the name of radical Islam and the instrumentalization of religion to exacerbate Islamophobia and attain power. These voices range from academics, to activists, and policy-makers, and suggest new ways of looking at the concepts of Mediterranean and African "women's rights", "Islamic feminisms" and "resistance, as well as exploring theoretical and methodological tools. Through feminist discourses, activisms, and movements, the voices are denouncing biases, asking for justice, reclaiming rights in spaces, and reconciling older and newer generations of feminists in the Mediterranean and Africa.

In retrospective, women in the Mediterranean and Africa have always been sensitive to radicalized discourses as they are often used as scapegoats in situations promoting such discourses. Although the two regions are seen as distinct spaces, women in them are increasingly facing the same ordeal.

These and similar topics are addressed by the articles in this volume. The authors of the article were all participants in the above-mentioned conference. The themes of the articles may be categorized along three main axes: (i) Facts and contextualizations, (ii) Strategies of Resistance, and (iii) Emerging gender transformations.

FACTS AND CONTEXTUALIZATIONS

The articles by Zahia Smail Salhi, Nabila Hamza, Souad Slaoui and Hassan El Hajjami set the ground: extreme violence in Algeria during the 1990s decade, the return of Jihadists in Tunisia, poverty in Morocco, and political turmoil in Egypt.

Zahia Smail Salhi's article "Tales of 'Springs' and 'Revolutions': Women, the Algerian *Black Decade* and the Islamist Femicide" offers an account of the struggle of Algerian women against their inferior legal status and against their suppression under Islamic rule governing life in public spheres. It describes how women's living conditions under the sway of Islamic Militias during the *black decade* quickly deteriorated, how they were exposed to violence, rape and torture and how they transformed their suffering into a rallying cry for equality.

In "Femmes Djihadistes : victimes ou "impossibles coupables", Nabila Hamza describes the phenomenon of female Tunisian Jihadists in Syria and Iraq and provides a list of factors that draw Tunisian women to terrorist groups. Foreign fighters of both genders do not seem to bear uniform societal characteristics and this study reveals some surprising results as to the various motives of women joining Jihadist groups.

The article "Urban Poverty and Gender-based Violence: A Case Study of the City of Fez" by Souad Slaoui and Hassan El Hajjami is a case study of Fez' Ain Noqbi district which aimes at providing an empirical insight into the factors that contribute to gender-based violence, while analyzing the various aspects of poverty encountered in environments such as the one in Ain Noqbi. The authors elaborate on the relation between dire living conditions and violence against women.

As for Sarah Farag, her article "Contextualisation of Extremisms and Women's Resistances: The Case of Egypt" contextualises Egypt's feminist movements across the country's recent history of dictatorship, revolution, military coups and human rights violations. She highlights practices such as sexual violence and torture and points out the hostile environment of political

activism and human rights work in Egypt amid an increasing suppression of opposition forces by the regime.

STRATEGIES AGAINST EXTREMISM

The articles by Moha Ennaji, fatma Osman Ibnouf, Hanane Daghour, Aziza Ouguir, Edien Bartels and Lenie Brouwer, and Karen Vintges address various ways of countering extremism. These ways vary from concrete measures, care providing, politics, religion and art (filmmaking).

In "Youth Radicalization in North Africa: Suggestions for Combating it", Moha Ennaji addresses the phenomenon of foreign-fighters following the call of extremist groups such as Daesh and Al-Qaida, and provides an explanation of the societal factors which drive youth radicalisation. Furthermore, the article offers recommendations on how to counter this phenomenon in the countries of origin and how to re-integrate returnees.

"The Missing Link: Women as Care-Provider and Countering Violent Extremisms" by Fatma Osman Ibnouf discusses the role of women in conflict/post-conflict zones and their contributions to society in traditional contexts. Based on a field survey conducted in the Darfur region and focussing mainly on camps for internally displaced people, the study highlights how women can prevent young people from engaging in violent extremism.

Hanane Darhour's article provides a history of women's participation in the political system of Morocco, identifying them as the bulwark against societal radicalisation. Furthermore, she explains the competition between secular and religiously oriented forms of Moroccan feminism and how they shape political agency and women's activism in Morocco.

Aziza Ouguir's bases her article "Moroccan Women Saints" on Michel Foucault's concept of ethical self-formation and lays out an analysis of female Moroccan saints and how their stories are received by feminist activists today. The article uses accounts

of the lives of Moroccan saints and the results of interviews with secular and Islamist feminist activists.

Edien Bartels and Lenie Brouwer's article "Layla M.: A film about theradicalisation of a Moroccan-Dutch Girl. *Women's voices from Amsterdam West and the VU University"* discusses the impact of *Layla M.,* a movie by Dutch director Mijke de Jong about the problem of radicalisation among young Dutch women and factors that drive them to travel to Syria and join Daesh. Besides definitions of the phenomena of extremism and radicalisation, the article provides a list of characteristics that women drawn to jihad tend to have as well as an overview of the reception of the movie in the Amsterdam district the movie's protagonist is from.

Karen Vintges' article is a follow-up of the preceding one: it offers an introduction to the article written by Bartels and Brouwers about the Dutch movie *Layla M.* It explores the 'neoliberalization' of Dutch society which indirectly contributes to a culture of discrimination towards Dutch-Moroccans.

EMERGING GENDER TRANSFORMATIONS

The feminism and gender studies that have been accompanying the various social transformation in the northern and Sub-Saharan Africa led to changes in the ways gender conceptions and relations have been evolving. Two authors address these issues: Mary Hames and Tushabe wa Tushabe.

In "Religion and Transformation in South African Universities: a Feminist Perspective", Mary Hames recounts the historical development of faith relations on the campuses of three major universities in South Africa. Informed by the theory of intersectionality, the text offers perspectives on the relationship between Feminism and Islam and weaves in interviews conducted with students and staff.

Tushabe wa Tushabe's article "African Feminisms, Community, Power, and Decolonial Responsibility" addresses gender

identification in the African post-colonial context. It compares gender binaries with indigenous views of gender complementarity, and also illustrates the link between colonial rule and the criminalization of homosexuality and of identifications deviating from traditional gender norms.

Part One:
Facts and Contextualizations

Tales of 'Springs' and 'Revolutions': Women, the Algerian Black Decade and the Islamist Femicide

Zahia Smail Salhi

> Civil society is riddled with danger, since it gives freedom to despots and democrats alike.
>
> John Keane

The recent civil uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, which were erroneously defined as 'springs' and'revolutions' have failed to deliver the expectations of the masses who took to the streets to scream their anger and desperation about their precarious lives under dictatorial regimes denying them dignity and citizenship rights. From the October 1988 riots in Algeria to the 2011 uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria, similar patterns tend to reoccur; the masses' rebellions are quickly hijacked by Islamists as the only alternative to the old regimes, who ultimately return to power under a new guise to save the nation from Islamist rule and violence.

The relevance of this paper, which focusses on the Algerian case, is based on the view that in all such uprisings women are central to the Islamists' agenda of revivalism, and their bodies almost always become battlefields for the rioting factions. Images and news of sexual violence against Egyptian women in Tahrir Square bring to mind those exacted on Algerian women during the decade of terrorist violence (1991-2001), often referred to as the 'black decade'.

Throughout the 1990s, Algerian women led a dual struggle; whilst the urgency of the situation at stake engaged them to resist the Islamist femicide whose main aim was to preserve male supremacy under the cover of Islamic legitimacy, this did not detract them from their prime battle to regain their

citizenship rights by the abolition of the Family Code introduced in 1984 to institutionalise their status as second class citizens. This violent decade has been a formative period for women who intensified their actions to raise awareness and build strong solidarity networks amongst women both nationally and internationally.

While this paper strives to understand the causes and the roots of the Islamist femicide and the reasons why women were at the centre of the Algerian Islamist venture, it also looks at the ways in which organised and spontaneous resistance by women worked together for the same cause, and analyses the conditions which favoured the coming of age of the Algerian feminist movement and the new prospects of Algerian women in the aftermath of the black decade.

ALGERIA'S SPRING/REVOLUTION

Algeria's October 1988 riots, which did not earn the title of revolution or spring but that of a black decade, heralded the awakening of Arab nations to rebel against rising unemployment, poverty and social injustice. These legitimate demands and popular uprisings were quickly appropriated by the Islamists who, while they saw themselves as the main political and ideological opposition to the ruling elite, excluded all other tendencies which might have contributed with a third political voice, and while they were doing so, they side-lined women and designated them as the embodiment of all forms of moral corruption. It is the aim of this paper to investigate and analyse the roots, reasons and forms of Islamist violence against women in the context of Algeria and scrutinise women's reactions to violence and the various resistance strategies they have adopted in the face of this violence, which reached the level of femicide as it targeted women's bodies as battlefields and executed women with unprecedented violence not even seen during colonial times. The Islamists' conduct displays the depths of inherent misogyny which validates the term femicide as opposed to murder. According to Jane Caputi and Diana H. E. Russell (1992), "Calling misogynist killings femicide removes the obscuring veil of non-gendered

terms such as homicide and murder", and in the case of the Middle East and North Africa honour killings and Islamist violence against women are the most frequent forms of femicide.

In most Middle Eastern and North African countries, which are known to be largely patriarchal, women often find themselves underrepresented in the public sphere which is mostly dominated by men. From personal observations, I found that a common aspect of such societies is male control of the street through intense harassment of women who become subject of insults, verbal abuse, physical attacks and sexual pestering. Another common feature, however, is women's passive reaction to such abuse as on the one hand, they refrain from engaging in losing battles and on the other, they fear violent reprisals which would ultimately tarnish personal reputation and family honour. As a result, women's visibility in the MENA public sphere is gradually diminishing and their appearance is becoming increasingly dissimulated under the veil often imposed through social pressure.

I contend that private violence against women has direct implications on public violence in that such patterns of violence are cultivated in the private sphere and are directly transposed into the public sphere. Furthermore, consciously or not the goal of violence against women is to preserve male supremacy in both spheres, and the normalisation of violence against women in the private sphere is ultimately reflected in itstolerance in the public sphere, and is symptomatic of a patriarchal misogynous culture which in some societies motivates extreme violence amounting to femicide. Such extreme violence includes mutilation murder, rape murder, battery that escalates into murder, and crimes of honour (Caputi and Russell, 1992).

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ALGERIA

During the 1980s, Algerian women found themselves stranded between a patriarchal society hostile to women's presence in the public sphere, and a set of laws in the form of the 1984 'Family Code' which institutionalised discrimination against women

and whose provisions have facilitated violence against them, legitimized discrimination in practice and made it particularly difficult for women to deal with the consequences of widespread human rights abuses. In 1997 Amnesty International declared that Algerian women "have little prospect of obtaining justice and redress for abuses they have suffered and that current laws and practice continue to discriminate against women and facilitate violence against them" (Amnesty International, 1997).

It has always been the case in Algerian society that male and female spaces are strictly designated in the public sphere; women are not welcome in male souks, cafes, beaches and leisure places in general. Those who enter such places expose themselves to open harassment and are branded as having low morals. With the rise of Islamism, harassment in the public sphere repeatedly amounted to extreme physical violence. Such violence was often justified by the Islamists' 're-Islamisation from below' project, which justifiedany form of action they took to correct what they saw as 'wrongdoing'.

As early as the late seventies women became a clear target for the Islamic brotherhood, who bullied them out of the public sphere through intense harassment, verbal abuse and calls for segregation in schools and in the workplace. This quickly escalated into physical attacks of women who dressed up 'indecently' by throwing acid on their bodies, and disfiguring them with knives. Instead of condemning such acts, local authorities blamed the victims for soliciting such punishments with their western ways and immoral conduct.

It is in fact this silence and sometimes the complicity of the neo-conservative state that nurtured and stimulated the fundamentalists' attacks on women. The way a given society chooses to control the violence inherent in it reflects the value it places on mutual respect and tolerance of difference, and on human rights, democracy and good governance. The institution of the 1984 Family Code is in itself symptomatic of the Algerian government's lack of respect of women and its arbitrary negligence of women's basic human rights. This move is also symptomatic of the government's lack of regard to individual

liberties as it paid no heed to the numerous demonstrations led by women from 1981 to 1984 to demand the elimination of the project of the Family Code. The Algerian government co-opted the fundamentalists and once more ignored civil society's demands.

THE OCTOBER 1988 RIOTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON WOMEN

The October 1988 riots in Algeria were generally viewed as the ultimate consequence of a deepening economic crisis exacerbated by the severe drop in oil revenues, which resulted in intensifying unemployment rates together with a housing crisis and the soaring of the prices of basic consumer goods… It is also an uprising of civil society demanding social justice in the face of growing corruption. The waves of discontent expressed initially through a series of strikes and peaceful marches quickly degenerated into wide scale riots. Alarmed by the intensity of the destruction caused by the youths who plundered government buildings, the military resorted to violent repression resulting in the death and injury of several demonstrators and the arrest and torture of many others, which ultimately led to more anger and resentment, making many other groups join the protest to voice their concerns and call for radical political change.

The women's groups, who throughout the 1980s have incessantly expressed their anger at the institution of the Family Code, also joined the demonstrations and called for the respect of democratic liberties. In short, the whole society joined together and more than ever before, the political system was coming under sustained attack. In order to save his government, President ChadliBendjedid made promises of economic reform and political liberalisation.

This constitutional amendment brought an end to the one party rule and brought to the fore a new model of social organisation based on citizenship rights in lieu of an abstract notion of development. It seemed that the establishment of political pluralism served as an alternative to addressing social and economic needs. From its independence in 1962, Algerian people had yearned for both economic development and political

openness, while the ruling FLN suppressed all forms of difference and crashed any kind of political opposition. According to Marnia Lazreg;

> The 'discovery' of citizenship is a powerful tool of protest in the hands of political opposition groups and social groups such as women, traditionally excluded from the full enjoyment of their political rights. It opens up a new era of inquiry into the many dimensions of citizenship, and their culturally specific expressions as well (2000: 58).

The position of women in this new political climate is indeed most intriguing as, while they remained minors under the dictates of the Family Code which denied them their civil rights, they were enabled to enjoy political citizenship and form their own associations through which they can make claims for equality before the law.

The institution of the Family Code in 1984 was a strong wake up call for Algerian women and a re-launch of the Algerian women's movement which started in the 1940s as the Algerian Women's Union (UFA: Union des Femmes Algérienne). The Union which was mainly affiliated to the Nationalist political parties joined the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the armed struggle (ALN) from 1954 to 1962. In the post-independence period, the UFA was transformed into a state controlled organisation, namely the UNFA (Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes: National Union of Algerian Women), and in consequence, it was stripped of its militant platform and became a conformist organisation which was ultimately deserted by feminist women(Salhi, 2009). In order to challenge the state's decision to introduce the Family Code, the women war veterans who fought for the liberation of Algeria (1954-1962) joined forces with the new generation of women who opposed the UNFA, and solidified their ranks in a new feminist movement whose political platform is the abolishing of the Family Code.

Immediately after the launch of the political reforms which followed the 1988 riots, three women's associations were created and were granted permission to operate as of summer 1989. These are the Association for the Emancipation of Women,

the Association for Equality before the Law between Women and Men, and the Association for the Defence and Promotion of Women's Rights. Nevertheless, despite the genuine will and determination of the women's groups to exercise full political citizenship, the disjuncture between political and civil citizenship hampered Algerian women from enjoying full participation in public life and from achieving autonomy in the conduct of their private lives. What exacerbated this condition was the rise of the Islamic brotherhood as a political party known as the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS: Front Islamic du Salut). Political analysts describe this move as follows: "The one-party state co-opted conservatives, and later, Muslim fundamentalists, to safeguard their interests and stay in power. Various governments have many times made compromises and sacrificed women's rights and safety to keep peace with the fundamentalists" (Ait Hammou, 2004: 118) and, "the government's last-ditch effort to shield itself from the political opposition it has allowed to surface" (Lazreg, 1990: 779).

Women's associations and liberal political opposition parties were alarmed by the Islamists' non-democratic agenda and their use of a populist discourse which addressed the masses of frustrated unemployed youths to whom they sold packs of dreams, and through the expression of their outright hatred of the regime they quickly managed to pose themselves as the strongest alternative to the FLN. By dominating the public sphere, FISmembers and enthusiasts intimidated other political voices, resulting in the democratic process being compromised. Michael Edwards (2005) explains,

> In its role as the 'public sphere', civil society becomes the arena for argument and deliberation as well as for association and institutional collaboration, and the extent to which such spaces thrive is crucial to democracy, since if only certain truths are represented, if alternative viewpoints are silenced by exclusion or suppression, or if one set of voices are heard more loudly than those of others, the 'public' interest inevitably suffers.

Substituting the voice of the FLN with that of the FIS posed a threat to jeopardise the democratic process and kill the nascent

democracy in its infancy. The undemocratic claims of the leaders of the FIS and the attitude of its enthusiasts towards other civil society members go to confirm this point.

ISLAMIST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ALGERIA

This new political climate positioned women's organisations and the members of the FIS as direct opponents in a game in which the first group fought for their civil rights while the second worked intensely to suppress them. The members of the FIS who used the religious space of the mosque for propagating their fundamentalist views, especially vis-à-vis women whom they put at the centre of their populist propaganda, convinced unemployed youths that women should return to their homes to fulfil their God-given roles as homemakers and leave their jobs to the unemployed men who needed them most.

Time and again Ali Benhadj, the second leader of the FIS, portrayed women as needing male protection and reiterated that the safest place for them was the home and their prime duty was 'to produce lions to fight for the cause of Islam'. Islamist discourse repeated *ad infinitum* that society should be cleansed from moral corruption which was mostly personified in women, whom they branded as, 'the avant-garde of colonialism and cultural aggression' and, because they opposed the Family Code which legalised polygamy, they were dubbed, 'the women who wanted to marry four husbands'" (Bennoune, 2000: 197).

Alarmed by the Islamists' misogyny, and the danger they represented to the nascent democratic movement and to women's organisations, the Association for the Equality before the Law between Men and Women, called for a massive gathering to celebrate the International Women's Day on the 8th March 1989. The members of the association emphasised their determination to continue their struggle against gender segregation as exemplified in the Family Code, which they described as an obstacle to justice, equality and democracy which they highlighted as the main components of the full development of the Algerian woman and of the society as a whole (Feminist

Declaration, 1989: 15). Women's status as minors under the law prohibits the whole society from progressing into a democratic state, and makes them extremely vulnerable in front of the Islamist campaign of intimidation directed against them.

Alarmed by the women's gathering, the leader of the FIS, AbbassiMadani told *Agence France Presse*that the recent anti-fundamentalist demonstrations by women were one of the greatest dangers threatening the destiny of Algeria. This is because the women participants were "defying the conscience of the people and repudiating national values"(Bennoune, 2000: 187-198). What ensued is a total domination of the public sphere by FIS members; they removed satellite dishes from people's roofs and installed loud speakers through which they preached their new way of life. Their discourse was loaded with threats and hatred directed at those who did not follow their way. The loud speakers which dominated cities such as the capital were backed up in Islamists' shops with audio cassettes which played the Qur'an instead of the usual music played in stores. The scenery also changed and the streets were fully occupied by bearded men wearing*qamīs*and *sirwāl* (such as worn in Pakistan), while Islamist women wore a plethora of new Islamic veils (*hijāb, niqāb, jilbāb, chador*…) which were all alien to Algerian society. Walls were covered with aggressive graffiti messages which shouted threats such as, "O you woman who wears the *jilbāb* may you be blessed by God, O you woman who wears the *hijāb* (long robe and headscarf) may God put you on the right path. O you woman who exposes yourself, the gun is for you" (Bennoune, 2000: 187-198).

This level of intimidation resulted in many women donning the veil out of fear and many others carrying a headscarf in their handbag which they would wear in the street and take off when they reached their destination. Bennoune quotes one such woman who testified, "None of us want to wear the veil. But fear is stronger than our convictions or our will to be free. Fear is all around us. Our parents, our brothers, are unanimous: Wear the veil and stay alive" (Bennoune, 2000: 187).

Furthermore, the Islamists intimidated people on beaches and swimming pools and interfered with cultural life in general by prohibiting all forms of celebrations which used music including wedding ceremonies. They issued death threats against singers and performers, and cancelled all festivals. They closed all cinemas and theatres and transformed them into their party headquarters. In 1990-1991 they issued a curfew on university female students living in halls of residence after six o'clock in the evening. Saadi reports that anyone opposing this was 'corrected' with the aid of a whip or bicycle chains (Saadi, 1991: 117).

What started as verbal attacks, threats and intimidations soon transformed into outbursts of extreme violence in 1992, quickly after the government annulled the December 1991 Parliamentary elections, during which the Islamists made major electoral gains, and banned the FIS as a political party. In February 1992, a state of emergency was declared and in March of the same year the two main leaders of the FIS, Abassi Madani and Ali Benhadj were arrested. These moves by the government resulted in the Islamic Salvation Front transmuting into several armed terrorist organisations, the most notorious of which were the GIA (Groupe Islamique Armé: Armed Islamic Group), the AIS (Armée Islamique du Salut: Army of Islamic salvation), and the MIA (MouvementIslamiqueArmé: Armed Islamic Movement).

The fear of civilians was intensified by the random killings of policemen, journalists, intellectuals and women. The armed groups issued death threats against the intelligentsia, government security workers and feminist activists. It soon became obvious to all, however, that the terrorists harboured a worrying misogyny.

One of the first women to be gunned down was the 21-year-old Karima Belhadj, who worked as a clerk in the youth and sports department of the general office of national security. She was shot in the head and abdomen on 7 April 1993. On 23 January 1994, Mrs Mimouna Derouche, a 28-year-old mother of five children was decapitated in front of her family. On 25 February 1994, two sisters aged 12 and 15 were kidnapped and gang raped. On 3 March 1994, SamiaHadjou, an old woman aged 69

had her throat cut. On 7 November 1994, two sisters named Saida and Zoulikha, who refused to consent to temporary marriage with the terrorists, were gang raped, tortured (their fingernails and toenails were pulled out), and then their throats were cut off. Their bodies were discovered by passers-by on a roadside.

Unveiled women were now being shot down in the street; in March 1994 three unveiled high school students were shot down (Ghazi, 1991: 1), one of whom had been warned but refused to veil.

Feminist activists were openly targeted. Their names were listed and pinned on mosques' doors and shouted over the loudspeakers. On 15 February 1995, Nabila Djahnine, the president of the Berber women's group, Thighri N'tmettouth (The Cry of Women) was gunned down in Tizi-Ouzou. In Sfizef (south of Mascara), eleven women teachers were slaughtered in front of their pupils by an armed group outside the Ain Addenschool (Amnesty International *et al.*, 1997: 18).

KhalidaMessaoudi whom the fundamentalists sentenced to death in 1993 testifies:

> Over the loudspeakers, whose monotonous echoes penetrate into the very centre of the surrounding houses, imams would hurl curses at me, describe me as 'a woman of delinquent morals' and a 'danger to the morality of women', and warn those women who might be tempted to follow my example (Messaoudi and Chemla, 1998: 87).

It soon became evident that women were at the top of the terrorists' agenda and that their bodies were primarily targeted as symbols; the terrorists' lists of women to be killed were extensive and included women from all walks of life: women who worked in government offices; women who owned shops such as hairdressers, beauty salons, Turkish baths; women teachers and University lecturers; women related to government officers or security workers; feminist activists, women artists and singers, school girls, women who lived on their own, even husbands of important women such as the husband of the government

Minister, Leïla Aslaoui were targeted. The latter dedicated a whole book;*Les Années rouges* (Aslaoui, 2000) to document and expose the horrors of the black decade.

After targeting individuals, the terrorists soon moved to mass murders, bombings of buses and public places and the massacre and ransacking of remote villages.

When they attacked villages, whole populations were massacred. In one single night in August 1997, the terrorists slaughtered 100-300 women, children and men in Hay Rais, and in September of the same year, they assassinated 64 women in Beni Messous and 100-200 in Bentalha (Barrak, 1998: 11-20).

Daily newspapers reported the kidnapping of young girls by the terrorists whom they gang raped and turned into sex slaves. Those who disobeyed them or attempted to escape had their bodies mutilated and abused, with their genitals often amputated. The hideous machine of sexual torture reached unimaginable dimensions. It was reported in the media that they used a technique they called *Tafrī*', meaning to split women's bodies into two halves by attaching them to two vehicles which drove in opposite directions.

Ait Hamou describes the horror in the following terms, "Women were attacked in their homes, brutally beaten, abducted, raped, taken as temporary wives of the 'emirs', or as slaves. They were shot dead, torn apart when they were pregnant, and their foetuses smashed on the walls." (Ait Hamou, 2004: 120). Abduction of women and rape became common practice among armed groups. Human Rights Watch (1998: 4) reported that more than 2000 women were raped in five years of conflict, many of them were held by armed Islamist militia, to be violated, beaten and forced to perform domestic tasks for the men. When some of these women managed to escape, they were unable to secure any support and were "therefore damaged by the initial rape, but also by the shame and stigma which separates them from their families" (Amnesty International *et al.,* 1997: 20-21).

Such practices make the terrorists' war against women a genuine femicide. Women were truly petrified not of death but of torture and dishonour. Bennoune reports that one woman told her, "I thought of buying poison so I can kill myself if taken by them alive, so all they get is a corpse. I am losing my hair from nerves" (Bennoune, 2000: 185).

Practices which resembled madness and rage against women were reported on a daily basis. Pondering on the Islamists' femicide Khalida Messaoudi (1998: 100) observes,

> At the heart of their way of life, their mind set, their imprecations, and their savagery, I perceived a constant obsession, of the kind that is symptomatic of madness: an obsession with women. The truth is; no other theme looms as large as this one does in the ideology of the FIS… According to the fundamentalists, women are the root of all evil.

Targeting women's bodies and using them as battlefields makes it obvious that gender is at the core of the issue of Islamic terrorism and inflicting violence on their bodies is a means of controlling women and terrorising their community; "The treatment of women raises serious questions about the level of faith and Islamic behaviour on the part of the protagonists in the civil war in Algeria", remarks Aisha Lemsine (2001). She adds, "As in Bosnia, Algerian women are the first victims of the civil war in their country. In the Balkans, rape and forced pregnancy were tactics of 'ethnic cleansing'; in Algeria, the persecution of women is a key element of 'religious cleansing'" (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, it has to be underlined that in their attempt to suppress women and confine them to the private sphere, Islamists' violence was making them more discernible and more central to the fight and resistance against their barbaric acts.

ALGERIAN WOMEN'S RESISTANCE STRATEGIES TO TERRORIST VIOLENCE

Speaking of women's resistance strategies, might allude to an organised and collaborative action taken by women in face of terrorism, which was not the case. Their reactions and strategies

were dictated by their traumatic experiences, and to say that these women were not terrified of terrorism would be incorrect. Algerian women, like the rest of the population were traumatised and deeply frightened for their lives and those of their loved ones. The whole society lived through a general psychosis which the population experienced day and night. No place in Algeria was safe or sparred from fear and danger. To 'resist' as opposed to 'succumb' was not even an option. Women had to stand to Islamism as a terrorist movement which not only opposed progress and democracy, but disrupted the lives of citizens at all levels.

Trapped between the dictates of an infamous Family Code and the barbarism of the Islamic fundamentalists, women were not prepared to submit to the threats of the terrorists or to give up their struggle to repeal the Family Code. At every opportunity, women activists voiced their determination to have the code repealed and their belief that Algeria with its principles of liberation drawn from its revolutionary not-too distant past would eventually triumph over the retrograde forces of terrorism. Women's new struggle took a dual course of action; one social and spontaneous, as was the stand of the whole population, and the other political and structured, mainly led by the feminist groups. On the social level women's motto was 'life in the face of death'. As such their strategy was to resist and oppose the destructive powers of Islamic terrorism by simply continuing to do lead 'normal' lives despite the atmosphere of war. Despite the call of the GIA in September 1994 for a total boycott of schools and their threat of reprisals in the form of school burnings and murders of pupils and teachers, on anyone defying the order, women obstinately continued to send their children to school.

The outcome of this defiance was grim; many educational establishments were burned down and ransacked, and on 5 October 1997, sixteen pupils were assassinated while at school (Turshen, 2004: 125). Prior to that, in September 1997, twelve teachers, some of whom were veiled, were assassinated in front of their pupils and several others faced the same destiny prior to them. However, female teachers who were not sure of returning to their homes in the evening continued to attend to their duties,

and every time a female teacher was assassinated another filled her post (Aslaoui, 2000: 9).

In the same way, despite the atmosphere of war and eminent danger, women continued to go to work and do their daily errands. They persisted to go to hairdressers and beauty salons despite the Islamists' threats, and they continued to find ways to celebrate births, weddings and their children's birthdays and school achievements in the way they had always done. Despite the fear and difficulty of gathering, they continued to celebrate International Women's Day, during which they staged mock tribunals against terrorism, they showed films and staged plays that highlighted the dangers of fundamentalism and glorified women's courage, women's contribution to society and more importantly, raising the morale of women. They highlighted the importance of women's solidarity networks and the importance of their active participatory roles which they have yet to play.

In summary, Algerian women celebrated life and the continuance of life at a time when the terrorists spread death every single day and transformed the country into a graveyard (on average more than eighty people were killed every day). In the face of grief, women consoled and helped each other by hosting orphans and widows and aiding the needy. The feminist groups launched many charitable organisations to help survivors of rape who were disowned by their families because of the shame they allegedly brought on them. These organisations, such as 'SOS Femmes en Détresse', took care of the children of the women and girls who were forcibly impregnated by the terrorists and pressed the government to authorise abortion in such occurrences. They recruited doctors, midwives, psychologists and lawyers as voluntaries to help in the rehabilitation process of the women survivors of violence.

In the absence of men, women stepped into new fields and positions which were traditionally designated as male domains. In some areas they led funerals, and in the work place they took positions such as in the construction and civic engineering sectors. Women took charge of small enterprise and run new businesses. In short, at a time when women were forcibly bullied

from the public sphere they became even more visible with adopting new roles and moving into new economic domains.

On the political level, women sustained their advocacy to have the family code repealed and worked tirelessly to widen the spread of awareness amongst high school and university students about the Family Code and its perils, and most importantly about women's human rights which were denied to them by society at large, in view to mobilize support for its abolition. What is important to highlight here is that women's organisations refused to have their rights and claims for the abolition of the Family Code put as a second priority yet again, as was the case after independence when they were constantly told that economic development took priority over the issue of women's rights. The word of the day was that no progress could take place and no democracy could be achieved if half the population was excluded from the equation and denied its human rights.

Despite their status as victims of terrorist violence and minors under the law, throughout the 1990s women engaged in consolidating their roles as agents of change and resistance to Islamist terrorism; on the 2nd January 1992 women were the first to stage a massive demonstration against the FIS and their electoral victory of December 1991. Having participated in this demonstration, I was amazed to see how what started as a group of about one hundred demonstrators who gathered in the centre of Algiers, recruited massive crowds along the march. Alarmed by the urgency of the moment, women and men from all ranks of life joined spontaneously as the march processed by their homes or shops. The crowd called for the cancellation of the electoral process in which many women's voices were taken by the FIS through the proxy vote, and warned of the danger of Algeria becoming an Islamic state.

Between an Islamist regime generally known for imposing religious law on the detriment of civil law, and a military regime that would limit democratic freedoms in the name of national security, women had no choice but to support the military believing that as the heir of the National Liberation Army who liberated Algeria from French colonialism, the Algerian military

were the only one who could save the nation. In her book on the terrorist decade LeïlaAslaoui asserts, "On the night of the third to the fourth of June 1992, the army came out to save the republic" (Aslaoui, 2000: 144). She explains that without the army which unlike the government was strong and unified, the country would have become an Islamic republic.

These same claims were shouted by the women demonstrators whose banners carried slogans which read, 'Jaysh, Shaab, dimuqratiya: The Army, The People and Democracy', 'Lā Iran, lāKabul, JazayirJazayriya: No Iran, No Kabul, Algeria is Algerian', 'Jazayirhurra, dimuqratiya: Algeria Free, and Democratic'.

The numbers of women participating in the demonstrations amounted to thousands; their aim was to reclaim the public sphere which the Islamists were largely dominating, but more importantly to manifest their strong rejection of a fundamentalist rule which they saw as a threat not only against women but also against the whole society and most importantly, against the nascent democracy. Such demonstrations became anunrelenting routine to demonstrate that Algeria was not to submit to terrorist violence. On the women's demonstrations the independent newspaper *Al-Watan* wrote, "Tens of thousands of women were out to give an authoritative lesson on bravery and spirit to men paralysed by fear, reduced to silence… the so-called weaker sex refused to be intimidated by the threats advanced by 'the sect of assassins'" (Moghadam: 2001, 140).

It has to be highlighted at this point that since the celebrations of national independence in 1962, women were almost absent as civil society members and did not take part in demonstrations. The institution of the Family Code and the rise of fundamentalism in Algeria are the two main triggers which brought them out of their passivity to become active agents and claim their space in the public sphere as well as on the political arena. Several feminist groups started organising themselves and working together to change the awareness of women's issues in Algerian society and provide women with the knowledge that will enable them to counteract fundamentalism and produce a counter-discourse both on the national and international levels.

To do so, they maintained their stand as staunch opponents of fundamentalism and terrorism, by voicing their views and making their suffering known to all. The women survivors of rape testified on national television and daily newspapers about their ordeals, telling the whole nation and those who remained in doubt about what the terrorists were doing to women and how their savage acts contradicted the essence of Islam. This act was, in my view, a very powerful move in Algerian history and in the history of Algerian women in particular; what used to be an unspoken taboo during the war of independence and in the years that followed became spoken of openly and was widely mediatised during the black decade.

Rape as a repressive measure was widely used by the colonists during the Algerian war of independence. The stories of such ordeals were never told, as if there was general consensus that these horrors which were directly targeting the honour of the victims and their families were to be buried for ever. It is astonishing to remark that until now no one ever speaks about this subject whether in public or in private.

In her article, "From Taboo to Transnational Political Issue: Violence against women in Algeria" Catherine Lloyd (2006: 453-462) demonstrates how in the 1990s, Algerian women transformed the issue of Islamist violence in terms of rape, from taboo into a campaigning issue, which has taken on transnational dimensions.

The front pages of the Algerian Daily newspapers carried pictures and stories of the lived horrors and the feminist organisation, RassemblementAlgérien des Femmes Démocratiques (RAFD), carried out the documenting of human rights violations and the collecting of women's stories of abduction and torture. It is indeed thought-provoking to remark how these survivors of rape related their stories in minute detail to magnify the human tragedy they went through. Their testimonies motivated the women who experienced torture at the hands of the French soldiers during the war of independence to break their silence after so many decades and tell as well as compare their experiences.

In summer 2000, Louisette Ighilahriz, a war veteran came forward and testified about 'the torture of rape' she underwent at the hands of French soldiers in 1957. She spoke about this traumatic experience on national television and showed viewers the locations where the hideous acts took place. She then published the full story both in France and Algeria, as a book titled *Algérienne*. This fusion of colonial and post-colonial women's histories of torture and resistance was also performed in political activism and the joining of forces between the war veterans and the new feminists in the fight against the Family Code.

FROM LOCAL RESISTANCE TO GLOBAL NETWORKING

Having strengthened their ranks on the national level as a resistance group against terrorism and fundamentalism, Algerian feminists reached out to the international arena. They forged solidarity networks with other women globally but particularly with those living under Muslim laws. In 1995 they joined the Maghreb Egalité Network together with Moroccan and Tunisian women's groups to represent Maghrebi women at the Beijing Conference in 1995, where they made violence against women a priority and cooperated in this with organisations such as *Women against Fundamentalisms* and *Women living under Muslim laws*. By joining such groups and international networks, Algerian women also sought to secure resources for the women survivors of violence and widely mediatise their cause.

According to Lloyd, in establishing resources for women who had experienced violence, the women activists began to liaise with international funding agencies, building their capacity for effective action. This work generated solidarity and funding for equipment and premises, such as the women shelters. Algerian women's regular contacts in the Diaspora also provided useful resources: for example many Algerian women's organisations continued to use France as a base for their activities such as confiding their funds to bank accounts in France managed by trusted colleagues who regularly sent them small sums of money, Algerian women in the Diaspora raised funds and medicines which they regularly shipped to Algeria during the years of the black decade.

Along with raising funds these women were keen to secure the support of many Western countries whose media often portrayed the Islamists as victims of the undemocratic Algerian state who crushed their victory by cancelling the electoral process in 1992. Their main aim was to create a counter-discourse to that of the FIS and demonstrate to world opinion that the FIS used democratic means to eradicate the nascent democracy in Algeria. Feminists publicised FIS leaders' statements against democracy and presented themselves as an alternative voice to that of the state which lost its credibility on the international scale. The women of the RAFD filed a civil action suit in Washington DC against the FIS and its US representative, Anwar Haddam. The founder of the RAFD, Zazi Sadou, was given an award for her work for Algerian women's human rights from the US-based network, *Women, Law and Development International*. (Moghadem, 2001: 142).

Zazi Sadou, Salima Ghozali, Khalida Messaoudi and other feminist leaders became tireless ambassadors in various countries across the world telling Western audiences about the realities at stake in Algeria. At the height of the Islamic terror in November 1994, Saida Benhabiles, the official Algerian representative to the UN-sponsored regional meeting that took place in Amman gave an impassioned speech denouncing the violence against women (Moghadem, 2001: 143).

The reality which the Algerian feminists aimed to explain to the world is that Islamic terrorism is not a home grown phenomenon and a result of socialist mismanagement, as claimed by Mark Paris, the acting assistant secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, in a statement before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Foreign Affairs Committee in March 1994 (Bennoune, 2000: 200-201), but the result of the US and other Western governments' actions in promoting Islamism and training Arab fundamentalist armed men in Pakistan and Afghanistan during the 1980s. In *The Jordan Times*, Miriam Shahin wrote, "The West indirectly supports the FIS with its IMF and World Bank demands on Algeria. It is weakening the middle class and making the poor poorer and the rich richer" (Shahin, 1994: 1).

In brief, while world opinion in the 1990s supported the view that Algerian authorities should have given the FIS the opportunity to rule after winning the 1991 elections, Algerian public opinion thought the opposite; members of the FIS were terrorising their society well before they won the elections. Letting them rule the country would have resulted in the Talibanisation of Algeria. The rise of the FIS in the 1990s coincided with the return of some 3,000 Algerian men who fought and trained in Afghanistan. General Belkheir declared in an interview that what the army did in Algeria was to prevent it from becoming another Afghanistan. The task was made very difficult by the moral embargo imposed by the West on Algeria which prevented it from supplying its units and men with adequate weapons such as reconnaissance and night-vision equipment.

By the end of the 1990s the Algerian army succeeded in neutralising the threat that Islamism represented for the state. Yet, the international community still had not recognised the legitimacy of the war against Islamic terrorism and continued to hold Algerian authorities responsible for human rights abuses, while the terrorists' acts which resulted in a death toll of 200 000 victims, the dislocation of thousands of people and the destruction of both state and private infrastructure remained underestimated. The 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York resulted in a radical change in world opinion towards Islamic terrorism and a reassessment of violence in Algeria. At this stage charges of human rights violations by the Algerian security forces were dropped and the legitimacy of the war against terrorism in Algeria was recognised.

CONCLUSION

With the end of the most terrible decade of terrorist violence in Algeria and as the Islamist threat subsides, Algerian women are emerging from a difficult yet formative period. The legalisation of their associations in 1989 has allowed them to organise themselves as pressure groups and become active actors in the public sphere. Their continuous demands for their legal rights, while combating and resisting Islamic terrorism, made them real

political actors and maintained them at the centre of political manoeuvres.

This trajectory, I would argue, is only the continuation of the political struggle they started in the 1940s which led them to become active agents in the fight against French colonial domination in the 1950s. Moving back to the centre of political action in the 1980s gave the women's movement more legitimacy and made their struggle for gender equality a concrete possibility, though fraught with difficulties in terms of changing prevailing mentalities. In the post terrorist period, women are once again represented in government; 11 women won seats in the national assembly in 1997 and in 2003 Khalida Messaoudi (now known as Khalida Toumi) became the government spokesperson (Turshen, 2004: 130).

On the subject of gender and violence, the Algerian government came under continued pressure from regional and national women organisations as well as from international bodies to take serious action to address the problem of violence against women. Violence is now debated as a social phenomenon and is treated as a health problem which the society has to fight. Various media have been used to encourage women to bring violence to the open and report it to the authorities, whose attitude toward domestic violence has also changed.

In October 2000 the organisation 'SOS Femmes en Détresse', convened a conference in Algiers on violence against women and children and set up a network which has published its own report on violence. Lloyd explains:

> These actions were significant in that they acknowledged the problem and recognised a role for specific legislation to protect women from violence. This would be backed up by data from bodies such as the police, social services, the courts and other state bodies that serve as points of contact for victims of family violence (Lloyd, 2006: 460).

The work of NGOs resulted in lifting the veil of shame from all forms of violence, be they domestic, sexual, institutional, etc. the website of SOS Femmes enDétresse published testimonies

of survivors of violence on matters such as domestic violence, rape, incest, and child abuse; subjects which the society refused to acknowledge in the past, on a regular basis. They also set up a legal and psychological aid hotline for women and children to report all forms of violence. However, women groups insisted that the government campaign against domestic violence could not be successful for as long as the Family Code remained unchanged. They maintained that women ought to be protected by adequate laws which would bring perpetrators of violence to justice.

On the subject of the Family Code, women NGOs pressed for government action to repeal it. By 2004 the group '20 ans Barakat' (20 years are enough) became very active and pressed hard for the repealing of the Code. Although this has not been achieved, in 2005 some changes to the Code were introduced after heated debates and long protests by conservative political parties who opposed its modification. Although the draft is believed to stop far short of eliminating all discriminatory provisions of the Family Code, most women activists in Algeria recognize these amendments as a significant improvement to the present law, and the removal of the sacred aspect of the Code which was almost viewed as a God-made document.

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Femmes Djihadistes : victimes ou « impossibles coupables »

Nabila Hamza

INTRODUCTION

Les jeunes tunisiennes, comme bon nombre d'autres femmes musulmanes de souche ou récemment converties sont de plus en plus nombreuses à rejoindre les rangs de l'organisation terroriste Daesh, Etat Islamique en Irak et en Syrie. Ce phénomène est loin d'être marginal, puisque selon la ministre de la Femme, de la Famille et de l'Enfance, elles seraient environ 700 femmes tunisiennes, impliquées dans les filières djihadistes opérant en Syrie. Plus d'une centaine seraient par ailleurs, détenues dans les prisons tunisiennes pour des affaires liées au terrorisme et 1200 autres auraient été empêchées de rejoindre la Syrie. 10% des Tunisiens en Syrie seraient des femmes, selon le centre international des études stratégiques sécuritaires et militaires.

Depuis l'été 2014, il ne s'est guère passé une semaine sans que l'on apprenne qu'une femme a participé à un acte extrémiste ou terroriste. En Irak et en Syrie, on assiste à une progression graduelle des attentats suicides perpétrés par des femmes, à la solde de Daech. Au Nigeria, le groupe Boko Haram utilise des femmes kamikazes pour semer le chaos. En Europe comme dans le monde arabe, de jeunes femmes revendiquant ouvertement leur soutien à l'Etat islamique (EI) sur Facebook et Twitter s'enfuient en Syrie pour épouser la cause des Jihadistes.

Généralement non combattantes et investies d'un rôle de génitrices, d'éducatrices ou encore d'esclaves sexuelles (Jihad al-Niqah), ces femmes s'y distinguent toutefois par une grande détermination et une véritable cruauté, voire des formes d'hyper-violence, comme l'attestent le nombre d'opérations

terroristes menées tant sur le territoire national que dans les zones de conflit.

Longtemps peu prises en considération par les services antiterroristes, elles commencent à être vues comme une menace tout aussi préoccupante que celle des Djihadistes masculins.

Outre la question de sécurité posée par ce phénomène, la problématique de la sortie et de la radicalisation de jeunes tunisiennes représente un enjeu crucial pour notre société.

- Quelle signification donner donc à ce phénomène ?
- Qui sont ces jeunes femmes qui rejoignent les rangs des organisations terroristes ? A quels milieux socio-économiques appartiennent-elles ? Comment expliquer leur basculement dans l'extrémisme et la violence ?
- Quels rôles jouent-elles dans les filières Jihadistes ? Quelles sont les missions qui leur sont assignées dans la construction du *« califat »* autoproclamé ? Sont-elles de simples victimes, aveuglées par la propagande et l'idéologie fondamentalistes ou des complices et des partisanes intransigeantes, sinon violentes, et par conséquent responsables?
- Comment comprendre l'utilisation des femmes par des groupes terroristes à prédominance masculine, parfois en premières lignes du jihad, alors même qu'une femme libre est le symbole de tout ce que les Djihadistesdétestent ?Quel est donc leur stratégie ? Quels sont leurs modes de recrutement ?

ETAT DE LA RECHERCHE SUR LES FEMMES DJIHADISTES : LES DONNÉES ET LEURS LIMITES

Avant tout développement ou tentative de répondre à ces questions, j'aurais deux remarques à faire :

La première concerne l'état de la recherche sur le sujet : il convient en effet, de signaler que les experts du

contre-terrorisme et les analystes ont rarement concentré leur attention sur les femmes terroristes, partant sans doute de l'idée que les femmes jouent un rôle subsidiaire dans les réseaux terroristes, en dépit de l'utilisation croissante de femmes musulmanes par des groupes terroristes en premières lignes du jihad.

Dans le cas tunisien en l'occurrence, il est frappant de constater le peu d'informations quantitatives et qualitatives dont nous disposons sur les groupes terroristes et le profil de leurs membres, en général. Les études nationales sur le sujet manquent à l'appel. Rares sont les rapports de commissions, les enquêtes et les études universitaires consacrés au terrorisme en général et à la radicalisation des femmes en particulier.

Le terrorisme n'est pas encore un objet d'étude légitime pour les sciences sociales dans nos pays. Il ne l'est pas encore au sein de l'université tunisienne où il est probablement perçu comme un phénomène difficile à circonscrire et d'une actualité sans cesse renouvelée.

Les choses commencent toutefois à changer et un certain nombre d'institutions et de chercheurs commencent à se pencher sur le sujet. Je pense notamment au lancement des activités du « Centre Tunisien des Etudes et des Recherches sur le Terrorisme » (CTRET) en 2016, et la publication des résultats de la première étude du centre intitulée : « Terrorisme en Tunisie à travers les dossiers judiciaires[1]. »
Sur le plan régional arabe et plus précisément sur la question des femmes engagées dans l'extrémisme violent, il est à signaler la toute récente étude de Mahmoud Abu Romman et de Hassan Haniya « Achiqat El shahada », paru en Jordanie en 2017[2].

La deuxième remarque a trait aux aspects méthodologiques de la recherche sur le Djihadisme.

Il est important en effet, de souligner les difficultés méthodologiques posées par l'analyse de la radicalisation tant au plan de la définition que de l'approche méthodologique. Les sciences sociales ne disposent encore d'outils méthodologiques

appropriés pour étudier, d'une façon cohérente et rigoureuse, le phénomène de la radicalisation et de la violence, motivée politiquement. Il y a deux difficultés méthodologiques majeures posées par l'analyse des radicalisations. La première est d'ordre terminologique, car la définition du terrorisme et de la radicalisation pose des problèmes, alors que la deuxième est d'ordre analytique et empirique. En effet, les chercheurs sont confrontés à des problèmes d'accès au terrain et aux sources, le recueil de données primaires est pratiquement impossible dans la plupart des cas. C'est pourquoi les documents publiés se nourrissent principalement de renseignements obtenus à travers des sources secondaires provenant de journalistes, des forces de l'ordre ou de sources judiciaires, sans pouvoir s'appuyer sur l'expérience et les trajectoires réelles des acteurs engagés dans cette violence. C'est le cas, entre autres de l'étude du Centre Tunisien pour les Recherches et les Etudes du Terrorisme, qui s'est principalement appuyé sur l'analyse des pièces constitutives des dossiers et documents judiciaires disponibles auprès des tribunaux de 2011 à fin 2015, relatifs aux accusés de terrorisme. En dépit des limites d'une telle approche, le rapport du CTRET apporte un éclairage non négligeable, pour comprendre le phénomène de la violence terroriste et djihadiste en Tunisie. Il permet de décoder les dynamiques du phénomène, la structuration de ses organisations et de dégager certaines tendances communes à une majorité d'accusés de terrorisme (les lieux et les espaces de propagande et d'embrigadement, le niveau scolaire des prévenus, leur âge ou leur statut marital ainsi que les régions par lesquelles ils ont transité). Le rapport du CTRET ne traite toutefois pas de femmes tunisiennes engagées dans la violence terroriste.

MON PROPOS

Dans cette étude, je me suis donc interrogée sur la signification de l'irruption des femmes dans le terrorisme et leur l'engagement dans des formes de radicalités violentes qui demeure sous-documenté et encore trop peu exploré, en essayant de comprendre les ruptures et les continuités anthropologiques dans les rapports genre et terrorisme ainsi que les enjeux politiques et sociaux de ce phénomène.

Mon objectif est d'apporter une perspective de genre à la compréhension des phénomènes de radicalisation qui permet de réintroduire une lecture plus fine des phénomènes de radicalisation qui conduisent des femmes à passer à la violence, et de comprendre les mécanismes de subordination sexistes qui s'exercent sur elles, ou de la quête de sens et de revendication de ce qu'elles considèrent comme leur juste place, qui sous-tend leur engagement ;car les motivations politiques, idéologiques ou religieuses des femmes engagées dans des trajectoires de radicalisation se trouvent fréquemment occultées par une mise en récit personnelle qui ne dévoile pas toujours les véritables motivations du passage à la violence de ces femmes.

Pour ce faire, je me suis principalement basée sur des sources secondaires : une analyse de la littérature disponible sur le sujet, articles de presse, communiqués officiels, ainsi que les actes de colloques et articles de spécialistes tunisiens publiés ces dernières années, qui apportent un éclairage sur la question. Les multiples travaux de chercheurs français en la matière, ont été également convoqués à l'appui de mes propos.

QUI SONT CES JEUNES FEMMES RADICALISÉES ET QUEL EST LEUR RÔLE AU SEIN DES GROUPES DJIHADISTES?

Il convient d'emblée de souligner que les experts ne sont pas unanimes s'agissant des causes qui conduisent à adhérer au radicalisme islamiste, qu'il s'agisse de jeunes garçons ou de jeunes filles. L'enrôlement dans des filières djihadistes résulte d'une multiplicité de facteurs qui se situent au croisement des dispositions acquises au cours de la vie par un individu (milieu familial, conditions économiques, expérience de la discrimination, de la violence, etc.) et des conditions spécifiques d'une configuration sociale et politique particulière[3]. Il s'agit donc d'un phénomène aux ressorts complexes. Autrement dit, il n'y a pas de profil type de personnes radicalisées.

Il y a différentes approches ou théories sociologiques de la radicalisation, en particulier djihadiste.

Certains chercheurs mettent l'accent sur les facteurs économiques et l'exclusion sociale comme principale explication de la radicalisation, surtout chez les jeunes des zones défavorisées. D'autres soulignent les facteurs politiques, en particulier la disparition des utopies dans nos sociétés et le rôle de l'islam radical dans la fabrication d'une nouvelle utopie transnationale. Je pense notamment à Olivier Roy, qui est l'auteur de nombreux ouvrages comme L'échec de l'Islam politique, L'Islam mondialisé ou La sainte ignorance et pour qui « les jeunes djihadistes s'apparentent aux militants de l'ultra-gauche des années 1970 ». Autrement dit « Chez les jeunes anti-système, le djihad a remplacé le mythe de la Révolution». Ce serait donc un phénomène générationnel, que l'on retrouve avec la Gauche prolétarienne en France, les Brigades rouges en Italie et le groupe Baader-Meinhof en Allemagne.

Les experts constatent toutefois un certain nombre de constantes ou éléments de basesusceptibles de favoriser le basculement dans le radicalisme islamiste.

Nous tâcherons toutefois, en nous basant sur un certain nombre de rapports d'experts, de mettre en évidence quelques-unes des caractéristiques de ces jeunes femmes impliquées dans les filières Djihadistes et des facteurs susceptibles de favoriser leur basculement dans le radicalisme islamiste.

Une première caractéristique, concerne l'âge des femmes recrutées par les terroristes de Daech. Elles sont majoritairement jeunes, âgés de 15 à 29 ans. Elles ne sont parfois que des adolescentes, les plus jeunes ont 14 ans. Les plus âgées ont la trentaine.

Certaines sont déjà mariées et partent, avec leurs enfants, pour suivre leurs maris candidats au combat en Syrie. C'est un phénomène assez courant : on part faire le Jihad en Syrie avec femmes et enfants. D'autres jeunes femmes y vont pour épouser un combattant en pensant que grâce à cette union, elles se garantiront une place au paradis en tant que femme de martyr, si celui-ci meurt au combat. La promesse de mariage avec un Djihadiste qui est déjà sur place se fait souvent sur Skype ou

via les réseaux sociaux. Elles partent seules mais retrouvent leur prétendant sur place. A noter qu'en Syrie, les Djihadistes de Daech ont ouvert une agence matrimoniale destinée aux femmes «désireuses de se marier avec des combattants», enfin, il y a celles qui se marient sur le sol national dans le but de partir en Syrie.

Les experts notent par ailleurs, un niveau d'éducation plutôt élevé. Toutes n'ont pas un bas niveau scolaire et intellectuel, loin s'en faut. La radicalisation touche tous les niveaux scolaires et peut faire basculer une jeune lycéenne ou encore une étudiante dans une grande école, en pleine réussite et ascension sociale, comme le montre bien le profil des jeunes filles impliquées dans les opérations de Oud Ellil en Octobre 2014.

Paradoxalement, une majorité des jeunes filles ont une connaissance plutôt basique de l'islam. D'où l'accent mis par les organisations terroristes sur l'éducation et la morale religieuses et l'adhésion à un concept central du djihadiste : l'*aquida* ou « vraie croyance ».

Le rôle du milieu socio-économique et plus particulièrement celui du rapport entre terrorisme et pauvreté dans le phénomène de radicalisation, reste très controversé. L'idée reçue du terroriste comme d'un laissé pour compte de la mondialisation économique, phénomène qui jouerait un « rôle probable » mais pas « déterminant ». Pour Jenny Raflik, la notion d'exilé serait pour lui, plus opératoire : « le terroriste est, ou se pense souvent comme, un exilé : de l'intérieuret de l'extérieur, lorsqu'il perçoit comme radicalement différente ou antagoniste l'entité contre laquelle il se rebelle ».

Toutefois, dans le cas tunisien, un fait reste certain, le discours radical fascine en premier lieu les jeunes de classes sociales défavorisées, comme l'atteste l'origine sociale de nombres de terroristes. L'exclusion sociale et économique, la marginalisation territoriale, le sentiment d'injustice, voire d'oppression, le recul de l'école publique comme ascenseur social, créent un sentiment de frustration chez ces jeunes et favorisent leur radicalisation, signalent nombre d'experts tunisiens.

Enfin, différents facteurs psychosociaux, qui ne sont pas nécessairement exclusifs les uns des autres, jouent un rôle déterminant dans l'adhésion à l'idéologie mobilisée par les groupes terroristes islamistes. L'endoctrinement fonctionne plus facilement sur des jeunes fragiles et en perte de repère, qui se posent des questions sur le sens de leur vie, leur place et leur rôle dans l'univers, comme le signale l'anthropologue et co-fondatrice du Centre de prévention contre les dérives sectaires liées à l'islam (CPDSI), Dounia Bouazar, dans un rapport qui apporte un éclairage neuf sur les processus de radicalisation et d'embrigadement des jeunes[4].

La quête de sens, les frustrations socio-économiques et le sentiment d'injustice, trouvent une voie d'expression privilégiée dans l'identification à la communauté musulmane transnationale, la « Omma », le désir d'appartenance et le besoin de se sentir utile ou encore de prouver sa valeur.

A cet égard, la propagande djihadiste fournit une grille de lecture dont l'efficacité repose sur une vision dichotomique du monde qui oppose le pur à l'impur, le licite à l'illicite, le califat aux sociétés matérialistes et impies. Les candidats au Jihad trouvent dans l'idéologie radicale un système de valeurs, un cadre cognitif et structurant qu'ils n'ont pas réussi à trouver par ailleurs et qui leur donne le sentiment d'adhérer à une cause juste et, par extension, d'être quelqu'un.

Commence alors un processus de « désaffiliation, réaffiliation et appartenance »[5], qui passe par la transgression des repères traditionnels et une succession de ruptures avec les amis, les activités de loisirs, l'école ou le travail, en bref, tout ce qui insère socialement l'individu. A ces ruptures, s'ajoute un« effacement de l'identité individuelle ». La norme permet de se reconnaître comme membre d'un groupe tout en se distinguant de ceux qui n'en sont pas. Elle crée l'appartenance en supprimant les caractères propres. Pour les jeunes filles, le port du jilbab ou du niqab permet de se couper de l'extérieur et d'uniformiser la silhouette. La dépersonnalisation des filles passe par l'effacement du contour individuel, signale Dounia Bouzar[6]. Le vêtement est le premier accessoire d'identification

et de démarcation. Il devient très visible pour « marquer la différence » dans le meilleur des cas, pour « se couper » de l'extérieur la plupart du temps. Et comme pour signifier davantage la métamorphose et se reconstruire autour d'une filiation symbolique, on se donne un autre nom : « Abu » (« père de ») pour les garçons et «Omm» («mère de») pour les filles, des noms que se donnent les djihadistes une fois en Syrie.

Ces jeunes femmes nouvellement radicalisées, vont également tenter d'imposer leurs normes à leur famille et leur entourage. Il s'agit là de revendiquer et d'affirmer son appartenance à *un contre-modèle, une contre-culture***,** qui s'oppose aux figures traditionnelles d'autorité. A ce stade, dans l'esprit du radicalisé, l'autorité du groupe se substitue à l'autorité parentale et institutionnelle, dans un processus d'affirmation d'une nouvelle identité.

S'il n'existe pas de profil type de jeune fille ayant basculé dans le djihadisme, Internet est en revanche désigné comme étant un vecteur essentiel de radicalisation. L'endoctrinement passe principalement par les réseaux sociaux, en premier lieu Facebook, et par les vidéos qui permettent d'entrer en contact avec une « communauté de substitution virtuelle » qui va progressivement remplacer les cercles sociaux traditionnels (familles, amis, milieu scolaire, etc.) et isoler la jeune femme.

DE QUELS RÔLES SONT DONC INVESTIES CES JEUNES FILLES, UNE FOIS SUR PLACE ?

Ces femmes sont généralement décrites comme non combattantes, car dans l'organisation Etat islamique, ce rôle est dévolu en premier lieu aux hommes. Même engagées volontairement dans la militance radicale au côté des hommes, les femmes n'occupent pas nécessairement une place égale ni ne bénéficient du même statut et avantages. Leur mission : être d'abord des épouses de combattants et, surtout, faire des bébés et fabriquer la future génération de Djihadistes pour peupler le califat autoproclamé de Daech. « Allah a conçu les hommes pour supporter le djihad avec force, comme il a conçu les femmes

pour porter les enfants ». La plupart, sont donc des femmes au foyer, mais quelques-unes – les plus diplômées – apportent un soutien logistique, s'occupent des hommes blessés au combat, ou encore sont employées dans l'administration au service de la propagande de Daech. Des emplois d'ailleurs très bien payées, comme le dévoile un récent rapport de l'« Institute for Strategic Dialogue »[7].

Elles sont donc un vecteur clé de la transmission culturelle et religieuse. Elles soutiennent l'organisation en tant qu'épouse, mère, recruteuse voire, parfois, comme promotrice de la violence sur les réseaux sociaux.

Un autre rôle dont elles seraient investies, mais qui reste à confirmer, serait le Djihad Nikah (djihad sexuel). Cette pratique, autorise de contracter un mariage temporaire pour satisfaire les besoins sexuels des combattants et au passage gagner le paradis. En Tunisie, le débat autour de Djihad Nikah (djihad sexuel) a défrayé la chronique et embrasé les réseaux sociaux en Aout 2013après le témoignage d'une jeune étudiante (Ines) de 17 ans, qui regagne la Tunisie, veuve et enceinte de six mois, après avoir suivi son mari en Syrie, où il a décidé de rejoindre les mouvements de libération.

Toutefois, plusieurs réserves ont été émises par nombre de journalistes et reporters étrangers sur l'ampleur du phénomène[8], considérant que l'affaire du "djihad al-nikah" relevait davantage de la propagande de guerre contre les intégristes, que de la réalité. Ceci dit l'exploitation sexuelle des femmes et leur utilisation comme des objets sexuels, reste un fait et une pratique courante des organisations terroristes, comme le révèle les témoignages de centaines de femmes et jeunes filles Yazidies détenues par l'Etat Islamique en Irak et en Syrie.

L'ONU a dénoncé à maintes reprises ce que Daech fait subir aux femmes lorsqu'il prend le contrôle de nouveaux territoires : viols, esclavage, sadisme et meurtres. Les extrémistes tiennent des marchés aux esclaves pour les femmes qu'ils ont capturées dans les territoires conquis.

Mais au-delà de l'exagération qui a pu être faite de cette «prostitution hallal» vers la Syrie et des violences signalées, notre propos est de montrer que ces femmes ne sont pas que des victimes aveuglées par la propagande djihadiste, des proies faciles et de simples femmes soumises. Rapports et témoignages montrent aussi des femmes déterminées, prêtes à surmonter les obstacles pour arriver en Syrie, prêtes à tout pour la création d'un Etat Islamique. Une des raisons qui les pousse à partir et à participer à cette orgie barbare et moyenâgeuse est en effet l'établissement d'un califat régi par la charia.

En effet, ces femmes ne sont pas qu'épouses, mères ou encore esclave sexuelles : leur mission s'étend bien au-delà. Elles ne sont plus seulement les mères de ceux qui donnent leur vie pour tuer. Bien que leur nombredemeure encore faible, certaines sont devenues de véritables « émissaires de la mort», servant, tout autant que les kamikazes masculins, de pions et d'agneaux de sacrifice.

A Raqqa, fief de Daech en Syrie, elles sont regroupées dans des brigades spécialisées et prennent un part active au djihad. Et si elles ne combattent pas, leur rôle est ultra-répressif. Dans son livre, « Dans la nuit de Daech »[9], publié par Robert Laffont, Sophie Kasiki, l'une des rares françaises à être partie et revenue de Syrie, témoigne de la détermination, voire de la cruauté et de l'hyper-violence, dont font preuve les nombreuses femmes a avoir rejoint les rang de Daech.

Il existe, explique-t-elle, de multiples preuves de cette ultra-violence promue par l'Etat islamique. Notamment les SMS et photos retrouvés dans le téléphone portable de l'une des jeunes filles revenues de Syrie. Ce sont ces documents que s'est procurés Dounia Bouzar, la co-fondatrice du Centre de Prévention Contre les Dérives Sectaires liées à l'Islam (CPDSI), pour dénoncer les pratiques ultra-répressives des brigades féminines de Daech. On y découvre des scènes d'horreur, des mises en scène macabres dont la sauvagerie n'a rien à envier à celle des hommes. « Comme les hommes, elles s'échangent des photos où elles tiennent à bout de bras des têtes coupées, d'autres où elles apprennent à des enfants de un an à jouer au football avec des

têtes coupées. Et ce sont des gamines qui l'année dernière étaient encore au lycée en 1ère ES dans des campagnes françaises !… [10]. »

En Tunisie, les dernières opérations terroristes ont montré que le rôle des femmes opérant dans les groupes terroristes ne se limitait pas à des missions d'appui et des actions non-combattantes.

Le 24 octobre 2014, elles se manifestent dans l'action violente et le maniement des armes. Six femmes contribuent, armes à la main, aux tentatives de repousser l'assaut des forces spéciales de la garde nationale sur la maison de Chebaou à Oued Ellil.

Plus récemment encore, le 7 Mars 2016, des femmes terroristes ont participé à l'attaque meurtrière de Ben Guerdane, dans le sud-est tunisien, attribuée à l'organisation de l'État islamique (EI) et dont le bilan s'est élevé à 54 tués, dont 36 djihadistes et 11 membres des forces de l'ordre. Quatre d'entreelles ont fait usage d'armes et tiré sur les installations sécuritaires. Les autres avaient pour mission d'assurer la coordination entre les groupes terroristes relevant de Daech, de communiquer aux terroristes les plans et l'heure de l'attaque ainsi que la date de la livraison des armes.

Ces opérations révèlent deux choses :

1. que les assignations traditionnelles de genre sont remises en cause à l'épreuve de la guerre. Le terrorisme a généré un ajustement, une recomposition des représentations traditionnelles du genre ;
2. que les groupes terroristes s'orientent de plus en plus vers l'implication des femmes dans le combat et les actes de carnage, confirmant par la même, un changement dans les pratiques et le discours djihadistes concernant les femmes.

Il y a en effet un changement dans les stratégies marketing de Daesh

Pour nombre d'experts, si le phénomène attire désormais les femmes, c'est parce que le discours et le message tenus par

les groupes djihadistes a changé. Une place plus importante est dévolue à la femme musulmane dans le djihad syrien, alliée à une image qui reste traditionnelle. Selon Géraldine Casutt qui est en contact avec certaines de ces femmes, "l'idéologie djihadiste a tendance à présenter la femme comme un être de très grande valeur, complémentaire de l'homme. Une image de la femme musulmane "al-ukht", bafouée, selon eux, en Occident et dans les pays musulmans qu'ils estiment corrompus. Ces femmes ont le sentiment de servir une cause qu'elles estiment juste.

Contrairement aux jeunes femmes Yyézidies, qui sont doublement avilies et asservies sexuellement car considérées comme impies et impures, ces jeunes femmes musulmanes sont louées par l'organisation. Leur présence au sein du Califat est valorisée, elles y sont présentées comme « bénies ».

L'EI affiche d'ailleurs clairement sa volonté de recruter de plus en plus de femmes, avec la création d'un « bureau des mariages » pour gérer leur arrivée. Dans un discours tenant à la fois des relations publiques, du soutien au moral des troupes et de la stratégie d'édification d'un nouvel Etat, les femmes sont appelées à construire le « califat », et c'est là un élément capital. Etant donné qu'elles incarnent les premiers vecteurs de transmissions culturelle et religieuse (par le biais des enfants), plus les femmes sont engagées idéologiquement, plus le projet extrémiste porte ses fruits. Il est utile de signaler qu'en 2011, Al-Qaida a lancé un magazine féminin appelé Al-Shamikha et Boko Haram possède une aile féminine.

Pour les attirer l'organisation terroriste recoure à des stratégies de recrutement « par des filles pour les filles » qui mettent en avant des images de femmes modèles. Un phénomène que les experts dépeignent comme une sous-culture du "girl-power" djihadiste. Sur les réseaux sociaux, le groupe mène des opérations de propagande visant spécifiquement les femmes en postant des messages sur «l'empowerment»à la sauce djihadiste.

L'Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), qui suit les comptes des réseaux sociaux des jeunes femmes vivant dans l'Etat islamique (EI), a constaté l'apparition d'une véritable

« sous-culture des femmes djihadistes » sur Internet : devenir une « *califette* » leur conférerait du prestige et du pouvoir[11].

Si les islamistes qui meurent en martyr récoltent des vierges au paradis, Quelle récompense fait-on miroiter aux femmes kamikazes ? « Si vous vous faites exploser et tuez les ennemis de l'Islam, vous déjeunerez avec le Prophète » est l'un des arguments utilisé pour convaincre les candidats à un attentat-suicide.

Pour Olivier Roy, la stratégie de communication de Daech est résolument moderniste, différente de celle de Al-Qaïda et la féminisation croissante des djihadistes traduit bien le fait qu'il s'agit d'un phénomène moderne. « Avec Daech, signale t'il, vous êtes sûr de faire la une des médias et de plaire aux filles, comme Che Guevara ». En en faisant la plus grande menace actuelle, les medias donne aux djihadistes une auréole et les transforme en héros. « Daesh, poursuit-il, offre un formidable terrain de jeu à ces jeunes, c'est le jeu vidéo total dont ils sont nourris, l'aventure. Ils sont beaux, virils, avec leurs mitrailleuses lourdes sur leurs 4x4 chargeant leurs ennemis. Prenez les images des décapitations : ce sont les mêmes mises en scènes que celles des narcos mexicains. Il y a, dans le djihadisme, dit-il, une dimension romantique, la beauté du meurtre[12]… »

Pour Farhana Ali, analyste associée de politique internationale auprès de la RAND Corporation à Washington, l'utilisation croissante de femmes par des groupes terroristes à prédominance masculine obéit a des considérations tactiques et à court terme. Convaincus des avantages opérationnels de l'utilisation de femmes combattantes et de l'attention médiatique que celles-ci attirent, ceux-ci ont commencé à faire confiance à des femmes pour perpétrer des attentats et à reconsidérer l'utilisation de femmes musulmanes en premières lignes du djihad[13].

En effet, pour les groupes terroristes locaux, harassés par le nombre croissant d'arrestations et la mort de nombreux activistes masculins, la perception de l'improbabilité de la

perpétration de tels actes par des femmes, combattantes – connues également sous le nom de « mujahidaat » – ont davantage de chances d'aboutir que celles perpétrées par les djihadistes masculins. Elles sont moins susceptibles d'être repérées. Par ailleurs, le choc médiatique d'attaques perpétrées par des femmes, focalise beaucoup plus l'attention que les attaques perpétrées par des hommes. La conscience accrue de l'attention instantanée des médias peut à leurs yeux, susciter des vocations et encourager d'autres femmes à perpétrer des attaques similaires.

Voilà pour le constat. La réponse, elle, est encore à trouver.

Les femmes djihadistes : des acteurs sociaux et politiques à part entière.

Je terminerai cet exposé par une dernière réflexion :
Comment des femmes peuvent-elles être auteures d'une telle violence ?Comment appréhender le désir de mort de ces femmes qui aspirent à mourir mais aussi à tuer ?

Tout ceci nous invite en fait, à explorer de nouveaux champs de recherche et à repenser ce cliché naïf de femmes forcement victimes et par définition hostiles à la violence. Il nous amène à repenser le rapport des femmes à la violence, à la guerre, aux armes, aux crimes, à la défiguration de soi par la mort d'autrui, qui reste un sujet peu exploré. La violence des femmes a longtemps été un point aveugle des recherches en sciences sociales, à quelques rares exceptions près. Le lien entre « femmes » d'une part, et « violence », d'autre part, reste majoritairement envisagé sous l'angle de la victimisation des femmes.

Pourtant, l'implication des femmes dans la lutte armée et les actions extrêmes dont elles sont capables, ne sont pas des phénomènes nouveaux. L'historiographie du terrorisme moderne mentionne en effet, nombre de précédents historiques dans ce domaine; où se côtoient des révolutionnaires françaises (les Communardes), des kamikazes moyen-orientales et des

«génocideuses» (génocidaire est un masculin sans féminin) rwandaises.

Que ce soit au sein de mouvements indépendantistes, (les Moujahidates, en Algerie, en Palestine) d'armées révolutionnaires, d'organisations de résistance ou de groupes insurrectionnels, les femmes des quatre coins du monde ont utilisé la violence à des fins politiques dans des régions aux cultures, religions, histoires et organisations politiques variées. (*Historiquement, les femmes ont, depuis longtemps, été associées à des mouvements politiques violents).*

Toutefois, le nombre croissant de ces combattantes, le rôle de plus en plus important qu'elles jouent dans les théâtres d'opérations et leur participation à des actes de carnage et de douleur dévastatrice suscitent plus que jamais un mélange de stupéfaction, de révulsion et d'intérêt public. Parce que les femmes violentes demeurent singulières au vu des représentations, classiquement masculines de la violence, elles dérangent et fascinent à la fois. Elles remettent en cause les stéréotypes et les perceptions erronées qui font des femmes des citoyens de seconde zone dans les réseaux terroristes et en l'occurrence, de simples victimes de l'utopie djihadiste. De fait, il y a une sorte de négation et d'invisibilisation des violences perpétrées par ces femmes. Penser qu'elles sont toutes manipulées, sans défenses et soumises à la domination masculine revient à les priver de la responsabilité de leurs actes, qu'elles sont par ailleurs, nombreuses à revendiquer.

Car, comme le signale la sociologue Geneviève Pruvost dans un ouvrage consacré à la violence des femmes qu'elle a co-dirigé avec Coline Cardi «*Les chercheur(e)s ont d'abord étudié les violences faites aux femmes, tant l'urgence de l'impunité imposait ces nouveaux champs et il est moins inconvenant politiquement et stratégiquement d'aborder cette prise en main des femmes de leurs destinées que constitue aussi l'usage de la violence.» «Penser la violence des femmes revient, écrit-elle, à replacer les femmes comme sujets à part entière de l'histoire, et l'usage de la violence participe à cette lecture, puisqu'au-delà d'une vision primaire de la violence, les émancipations, les progrès*

démocratiques ou individuelles ont aussi été conquis par les armes[14]*.» «Les femmes peinent à faire reconnaître comme non pathologiques ou non exceptionnelles les violences dont elles sont victimes, mais aussi les violences qu'elles infligent. Elles ne sont reconnues ni comme objet de la violence ni comme sujet de la violence»,* signale encore Iqbal Gharbi qui s'interroge sur l'irruption des femmes dans le terrorisme au sein d'une société arabo-musulmane, marquée par le patriarcat, qui est la société tunisienne[15].

«Les femmes n'*acc*èdent pas au statut de sujet à part entière, susceptible de revendiquer la pleine possession et maîtrise des fins et des moyens de leurs actes.» En ce sens, la perspective de genre permet d'éclairer plus justement les parcours de radicalisation menant à la violence des femmes, car elle prend en considération cette tension inhérente entre, d'un côté, les mécanismes de subordination sexistes qui s'exercent sur elles et, de l'autre, unetension pour devenir «agent de sa propre histoire»qui ne peut leur être niée*.*

Cette analyse est corroborée par Géraldine Casutt, Doctorante-chercheuse suisse travaillant sur les femmes djihadistes à l'EHESS, pour qui les femmes djihadistes sont souvent considérées à tort, comme de simples victimes. *«Toujours victime avant tout (de manipulation, de chantage, d'abus de faiblesse, etc.), il semblerait ainsi difficile de concevoir non seulement que la femme auteure de violence meurtrière dans des contextes hautement politisés et teintés de religieux puisse être capable d'uneradicalisation autonome – ou du moins, de suivre un processus de radicalisation semblable à ses homologues masculins – mais aussi et surtout de lui prêter une qualité de «sujet» à part entière, dot*é d'une conscience politique et morale», écrit la sociologue[16].

Pour certains auteurs comme Frédéric Chauvaud et Gilles Malandain (2009), les femmes qui passent devant la justice aux XIX^{e} et XX^{e} siècles se trouvent dans une occultation double : «impossibles victimes» et «impossibles coupables». Les femmes peinent à faire reconnaître comme non pathologiques ou non exceptionnelles les violences dont elles sont victimes, mais aussi

les violences qu'elles infligent. Elles ne sont reconnues ni comme objet de la violence ni comme sujet de la violence.

En outre, la participation des femmes à des actes violents représente une infraction importante aux codes normatifs et culturels dans la plupart des sociétés. Ces femmes sont porteuses d'une double altérité : d'abord en tant que vectrices de violence qui est historiquement et visiblement monopolisée par les hommes, ensuite parce qu'elles s'inscrivent à l'encontre en faux avec la représentation dominante du genre et de la différence sexuelle.

CONCLUSION

Le groupe terroriste Etat Islamique (Daech) est en perte de vitesse et multiplie les revers militaires. Au cours des derniers mois, il a perdu une grande partie du territoire qui formait son califat, à cheval sur l'Irak et la Syrie. En Irak, ses combattants viennent d'avoir de fâcheux revers à Fallouja, qui était considérée comme un de leurs bastions dans le pays. Dans la Syrie voisine, Daech fait preuve de plus de résistance, mais aurait toutefois perdu « entre 16 et 20 % » de son territoire. Enfin, la situation se complique également en Libye, où le groupe terroriste est acculé sur une zone de 5 km2 dans son bastion de Syrte. Ce recul, conjugué à une plus grande vigilance des pays occidentaux depuis les derniers attentats en Europe, provoqueen outre une baisse des «recrutements» de djihadistes. Ceux-ci auraient été divisés par dix sur un an, selon les experts.

Alors que l'offensive contre l'Etat Islamique (IE) se durcit et que les morts se font de plus en plus nombreux, les femmes pourraient prendre la relève des hommes et prendre les armes à leur tour, ou même frapper dans leur pays d'origine. Des interventions qui pourraient aller encore plus loin, selon l'Institute for Strategic Dialogue. Il ne faut surtout pas les sous-estimer, confie Farhad Khosrokhavar[17], *« Les femmes ne doivent pas s'exposer à la mort selon l'islam, mais je pense que si l'on leur donne l'occasion de prendre les armes, elles le feront. »*

Si les autorités chargées de la sécurité sous-estiment le rôle des femmes, les groupes extrémistes en comprennent en revanche très bien l'importance. En s'ouvrant davantage sur les femmes en leur offrant reconnaissance, visibilité, récompenses religieuses et rétributions financières, le « califat » recueille aujourd'hui de nombreux suffrages. En outre, la plupart des experts soulignent l'efficacité supérieure du terrorisme féminin. Les stéréotypes sur le rôle des femmes contribuent à l'efficacité de cette violence de trois manières : les femmes suscitent moins la suspicion ; il leur est plus facile de dissimuler des explosifs ; elles sont soumises à des mesures de sécurité moins strictes.

Il est urgent que nous comprenions comment les discours extrémistes parviennent à combler des manques dont nous avions à peine connaissance. Il nous faut pour cela nous intéresser en profondeur aux motivations et à l'histoire des jeunes femmes qui rejoignent ces mouvements, si nous voulons lutter sérieusement contre leur radicalisation et leur basculement dans le terrorisme.

NOTES

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2 | *Mohamed Abu Roman and Suleiman Haniya,* Achikat Al Shahada*, Frederich Ebert Stiftung, Jordan, 2017.*

3 | *Institut national des hautes études de la sécurité et de la justice, « Radicalisation islamiste et filières djihadistes : prévenir, détecter et traiter »,* Rapport du Groupe de diagnostic stratégique *n° 3, 26e Session nationale « Sécurité et Justice » - 2014/2015, Paris, juillet 2015, ISSN 2265-447X.*

4 | *Bouzar Dounia, Caupenne Christophe et Valsen Sulayman,* La Métamorphose opérée chez le jeune par les nouveaux discours terroristes*, CPDSI, Paris, nov. 2014.*

5 | *« Radicalisation islamiste et filières djihadistes : prévenir, détecter et traiter », cité plus haut.*

6 | *Dounia Bouzar,* op. cit*.*

7 | *Institute for Strategic Dialogue, Becoming Mulan? Female Western Migrants to ISIS, Carolyn hoyle, Alexandra Bradford, Ross frenett, Jan, 2015. http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-*

8 | Tunisie. La vérité sur le « djihad sexuel », *Sara Daniel, L'enquête de l'Obs. Publié le 9 novembre 2013.*

9 | *Sophie Kasiki, dans* La Nuit de Daech : confession d'une repentie, *Robert Laffont, janvier 2016.*

10 | *Dounia Bouzar,* op. cit.

11 | op. cit.

12 | *Olivier Roy, « Chez les jeunes anti-système, le djihad a remplacé le mythe de la Révolution », article paru dans* L'Opinion *du 21 novembre 2015.*

13 | *Farhana Ali,* Terrorism Monitor*, Jamestown Foundation. Novembre 2005.*

14 | Penser la violence des femmes*, ouvrage collectif dirigé par Geneviève Pruvost et Coline Cardi, Editions La Découverte.*

15 | *Iqbàl Al Gharbi,* De la femme kamikaze au Djihad du sexe : une guerre faite sur le corps des femmes*, Université la Zitouna, Tunis.*

16 | *Géraldine Casutt est doctorante et chercheuse suisse à l'EHESS et consacre sa thèse de doctorat au rôle des femmes dans le djihad. Les femmes musulmanes dans l'ombre du djihad : une « armée de roses » entre soutien visible et invisible à l'utopie djihadiste dans une conception féminine du « fard al ayn ».*

17 | *Citée dans* Femmes de djihadistes ou djihadistes femmes ? Un rôle ambigu
http://information.tv5monde.com/terriennes/femmes-de-djihadistes-ou-djihadistes-femmes-un-role-ambigu-10 mars 2015.

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Urban Poverty and Gender-based Violence: A Case Study of the City of Fez

Souad Slaoui and Hassan El Hajjami

ABSTRACT

The present paper seeks to shed light on the issue of urban poverty as one of the forms of gender-based violence against women. This issue is characterized by its being original and current as it approaches the intersection between gender-based violence and environment, more particularly the urban space which suffers from poverty, marginalization at the spatial, socio-economic and cultural levels. In such urban spaces women do not have direct access to some luxury spaces like sports clubs, public spaces such as gardens, etc., and consequently, these deprive women of some of the basic rights in everyday life. The focus of this study is on one of the marginalized district areas in the city of Fez.

Key words: Urban poverty; Gender based violence; AinNoqbi headquarter; Culture and urban space.

INTRODUCTION

A large discrepancy between cities or urban environments is observed in North African developing countries such as Morocco, which can be explained by territorial, socio-economic and cultural differences. Some of these urban spaces appear to be metropolitan cities with important infrastructure and basic facilities for decent living especially in middle income groups, while other urban centers adjacent to these cities lack the lowest facilities and buildings, and they witness the spread of under-equipped neighborhoods, making it a breeding ground for many abnormal social phenomena, notably violence, especially among women. Numerous studies conducted on this issue pointed out

the various forms of gender-based violence in marginalized urban environments. These studies sought to highlight the causal relationship between urban poverty and violence affecting women both in the private and public space. The present study is based on fieldwork conducted in the headquarter of *Ain Noqbi*, located in the far east of Fez. Fez is considered as one of the largest cities in Morocco, known by its double urban governance, and it has equipped neighborhoods and poor marginalized areas, of the type of Ain al Naqbi. The present study addresses the following research question:

What are the manifestations of urban poverty in AinNoqbi, and how do they contribute to the spread of violence against women in both the private and public spheres?

To address this research question, we have formulated the following hypotheses:

1. The lack of basic equipment in Ain Noqbi area makes women more vulnerable to violence (viz., verbal, symbolic and physical).
2. The lack of security in this marginal area exposes a large group of women to violence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This case study adopts a gendered approach to analyze the relationship between urban poverty and violence against women. To this end, we used a quantitative method to understand and analyze gender discrimination in the division of the city and its impact on violence against women. The questionnaire, as a quantitative tool of research, is administered to a sample of 150 respondents who are students of secondary school. Those informants are children of immigrants from villages near the city of Fez who migrated between the 1950's and the 1980's. Their agevaries between 15 and 22 years. 70% of them live in the neighborhoods of Ain Noqbi—a marginal district area in the city of Fez. 85% of them are from poor families; 6% of them are unemployed and 4% are retired. However, 90% of the parents

work in traditional industry and self-employment sectors (informal sector). 95% of these respondents' mothers are housewives.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Urban poverty

In most studies addressing this close relationship between the phenomenon of poverty and territory, the concept of urban poverty emerges as a concept that translates the poverty issue into its territorial and environmental dimension. Indeed, the phenomenon is no longer considered as being economic and social, but it is also measured in terms of the environment. For example, the lack of infrastructure such as electricity, water, transport, roads, public lighting, pollution to cite but a few are considered substantial in this respect.

Gender Based Violence

The International Declaration of the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines Violence as: Any act of gender-based violence which results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm of suffering to women including threats of such acts. Coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty occurring either in public or private life.

This includes violence occurring in the family or domestic unit… physical and mental aggression, emotional and psychological abuse, rape and sexual abuse, incest, rape between spouses, regular or occasional partners or cohabitants, crimes committed in the name of honor, female genital and sexual mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women such as forced marriage.

Urban Poverty and Gender–Based Violence explain the relation between Culture and Space: Theoretical Background

Following Louis Worth and Robert Park (1917), one of the Chicago[1] school pioneers in the field of urban sociology, the

relationship between culture and space, like other major sociological problems, always raises a lot of debate among urban sociologists. The fundamental issue raised by ecological analysis is the relationship between the individual and his / her environment (i.e., the natural and social environment), and more specifically, the influence that this medium can have on the behavior, attitudes and beliefs of persons. The space created by man, according to his values and culture, is the same one that later on adapt these values and culture.

This dialectical relationship between culture and the field can be clearly demonstrated through several phenomena such as the relationship between urban poverty and gender-based violence. While rates of violent crime increased globally from 6 to 8.8 incidents per 100,000 persons between 1990 and 2000, much of this increase has been in cities (UN Habitat, 2007). Sixty percent of urban residents in low – and middle – income countries have been victims of crime over a five-year period; the rates are as high as 70 per cent in parts of Latin America, theCaribbean and Africa (UN Habitat, 2007). In Latin America, more than half of the total homicides occur in cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Mexico City, Lima and Caracas (Moser, 2004). As noted above, there has been a marked increase of deaths from external causes in this region (homicide, assaults and traffic accidents) between 1950 and 2010. On average, the rates of mortality for external causes are four times higher for men than for women, and homicides are the highest percentage (Alves, Cavenaghi, and Martine, 2011). While these data are not disaggregated by residence, it is reasonable to assume that, given the high level of urbanization in the region, the majority take place in urban areas.

Besides, it is widelyrecognized that urban women are at greatest risk of being victims of violence (Chant, 2011; CPRC, 2010). In this regard, Hindin and Adair (2002) cited CeciliaTacoli (2012) stated that:

> while gender-based violence is largely determined by unequal gender relations and cultural notions of femininity which dictate the 'appropriate place' for women, in too many instances it is directly linked to inadequate basic infrastructure and access to services that increase women's

vulnerability to attacks. Living in urban informal settlements can lead to a greater incidence of violence against women, especially that perpetrated by someone who is *not* a partner, although this is not uniform.[2]

This unequal treatment of women and men in the public sphere, which seems to be accentuated in settlements with poor infrastructures, makes women in these environments more vulnerable and more likely to be subjected to gender-based violence. A similar remark is made in relation to Columbian headquarters where the phenomenon of drug addiction and consumption tend to be in low-income environments and are widespread in surroundings like the area by the river bank which isalso secluded (cf. Moser and McIlwaine 2004 cited in Falu Ana (2010). Such areas are known by the absence of security services, which makes the risks of violence much higher. With this background in mind, what we will try to capture in this paper is the extent to which these statements made above can apply to the head squares of Ain Noqbi in Fes, the case study of this research.

DATA ANALYSIS

In response to the first question related to whether any of the respondents' female relatives has ever been subjected to domestic violence, we came up with the following results:

Figure 1: The distribution of the respondents according to whether any of his/ her female member has ever been subjected to violence

Victims of domestic violence	The Number of informants	The Percentage
Yes	43	29%
No	72	48%
Rarely	32	21%
No answer	1	2%
Total	148	100%

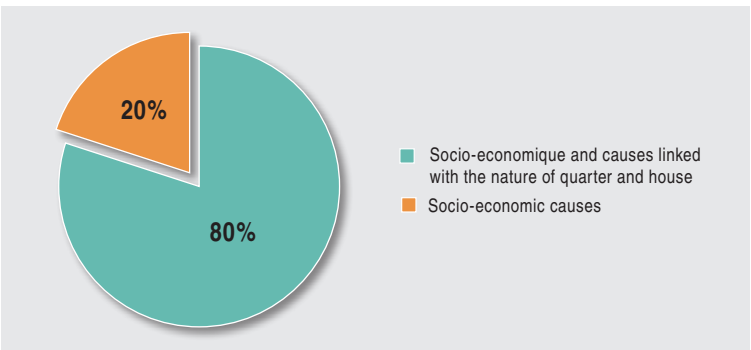
It is clearly demonstrated by the above figures that while 48% of the overall respondents declare that no one of the female

members of their family (be they mother, sister, aunt or other relative) have ever been subject to violence before, 29% of these informants state that at least one of their family members has been subjected to violence. 21%, however, claim that this phenomenon rarely happens among any member of their relatives. It is worth noting in this respect that despite the low percentage of respondents confirming the scarcity of violence against women in their family, this does not deny the absence of such a social behavior within the context of the informants' family.

Relatedly, verbal violence isconsidered as the most dominant type of violence against women. From the above findings, welcome to the conclusion that 80% of the violence observed is of verbal nature. This verbal violence performed on wives, sisters, daughters, mothers, etc. can take the form of insultsthat devalue women and reduce their values and dignity. These statements areindeed confirmed by the Moroccan scholar Fatima Sadiqiwho worked on gender-based violence in North Africa and identifies gender-based violence as:

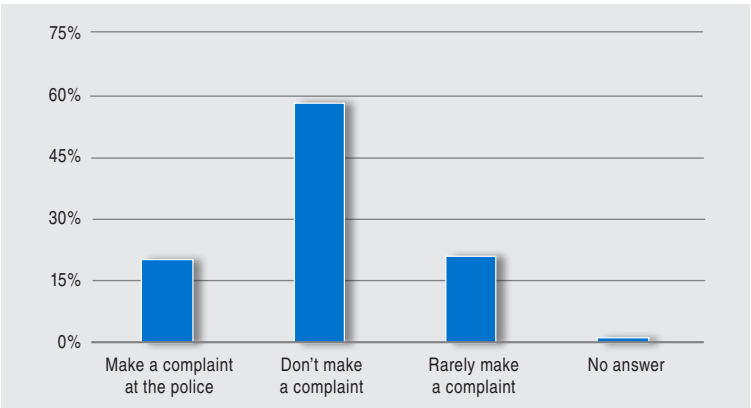
> […] the use of abusive and threatening behaviors (usually of men) to exert and maintain control and power victims (usually women). Domestic violence may be physical, verbal, or moral. […] and the theories of domestic violence allow an of why women are battered. Such theories are based on numerous interviews of women victims of domestic violence over long periods of time. (Sadiqi, 2016: 4).

Figure 2: The distribution of the informants according to the causes of violence in private space



It can be deduced from the above figure that the socio-economic conditions, the type and nature of housing are among the most frequent variables responsible for the occurrence of violence in the private space. This can be associated with the area under study, which is characterized as being vulnerable. As a telling example, most of the houses in this region are built spontaneously. Besides, the crowded houses area, their being very condensed close to each other makes the neighbors very familiar to each other, and consequently, nothing remains private. Added to that is the problem of pollution which is very commonly spread in this type of region. We can observe from the aforementioned statements that this area totally lacks spaces of relaxations and entertainment such as clubs for women, youth centers/clubs, etc. Thus, these territorial variables can be considered as favorable grounds for violence against women.

Figure 3: The distribution of informants according to those who complain about domestic violence to the police



From the above figure, it can be observed that 58% of the respondents state that women never report to the police as far as this violence is concerned. However, only 20% of the informants submit complaints to the police while they go through violence in the private sphere. The rest of the informants, 21%, rarely present their complaint. The phenomenon of violence against women is not declared by these women because of the

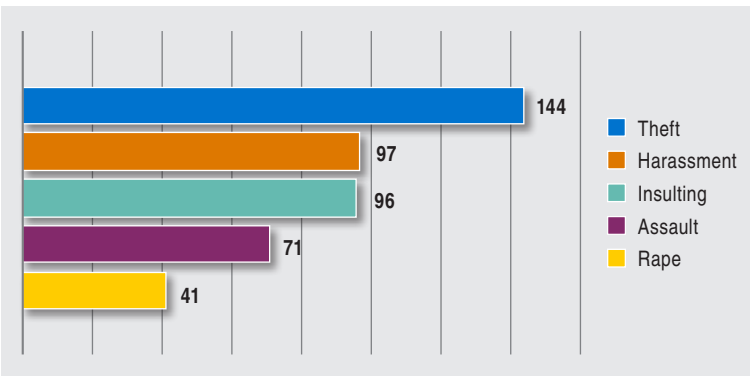
following reasons: the fear of the husband's retaliation, the fear of divorce and its bad consequences on the whole family, and the fear of stigma which can affect women's reputation and dignity.

Figure 4: The percentage of women subjected to violence in the public space

Gender-based violence in public space	The Number of informants	The Percentage
Yes	110	74%
No	10	6%
Rarely	28	20%
Total	**148**	**100%**

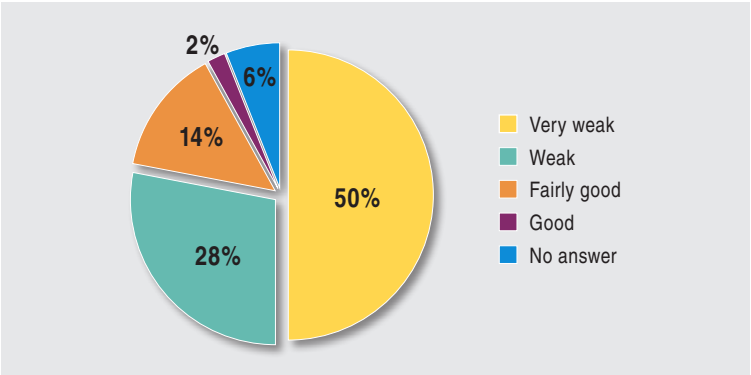
The above table shows that 74% of the respondents said that women are subjected to violence in the public space. This is the highest percentage among the respondents who either denied or stated that this phenomenon rarely happens. This can be mainly attributed to the weak or even lack of security in the marginalized district areas in Fez, and the region of Ain Noqbi is no exception here. Another interesting factor contributing to the spread of violence against women in this region is the absence of public lighting. Hence, 24% of the quarters are not equipped with public lighting, which makes it very dangerous to pass by especially at night while women return from work.

Figure 5: Violence in Public Space Divided into Categories



It can be observed from the above figure that theft is one of the most predominant types of violence against women in public sphere. Harassment can be categorized in the second class. Insulting and assault come after this type of violence. However, rape represents a less recurrent form of violence, though still existing.

Figure 6: Evaluation of security in region of AinNokbi



Some of the respondents go even further to attribute this lack of security to the police's fear of this segment of inhabitants in this sector, who are known for their drug addiction or their aggressive behaviors.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that in public open spaces, where the main area is said to be dangerous and where violence is not feared especially in such overcrowded places, where drugs are sold and especially in such environments where nothing is done to protect women, violence is much more serious. Thus, we suggest that it is a question of will on the part of the state and the civil society whether to end this serious scourge.

ENDNOTES

1| *E. Burgess (1970), «La croissance de la ville, introduction à un projet de recherche»,* in L'Ecole de Chicago*, p. 127-143.*

2| *Cecilia Tacoli (2012),* Urbanization, Gender and Urban Poverty: Paid Work and unpaid Care work*, International Institute for Environment and Development, United Nations Population Funds, p. 26.*

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Contextualisation of Extremisms and Women's Resistances: The Case of Egypt

Sarah Farag

Since the revolutionary upheavals in 2011 and the political turmoil during the last six years, women's rights and women's claims have become more and more scrutinised in Egypt. Not only have they become the battlefield for discussions over national identity and national reform. Also, various forms of extremisms have silenced women's rights claims and have made feminist interventions much more difficult. These are radicalised Islamist ideologies on the one hand, which came to power during the brief reign of Muḥammad Mursī from 2012 to 2013. On the other hand, and especially since the military coup against Mursī in July 2013, Egypt is witnessing an increasing process of militarisation and securitisation, which is used as a pretext to combat both Islamist groups as well as any kind of political opposition, including feminist activists. In fact, some of the most prominent feminists have been among the first and immediate targets by the elected government of al-Sīsī in 2014. Since the breakdown of the Muslim Brotherhood and the massacre against thousands of protesters on Rābiʿa Al-ʿAdawīya Square in Cairo in August 2013, where, according to the investigations of Human Rights Watch, more than 1000 people were killed in only few hours,[1] the regime is continuously silencing any further protest actions. Under the pretext of securing the country of Islamist terrorist attacks, Egyptian oppositional forces have been meticulously targeted, making any claim for rights or justice impossible outside the dominant binary of belonging either to an Islamist opposition or supporting the regime.

In these current developments, feminist interventions find themselves once again between the hammer and the anvil. Not only is feminist critique challenged by conservative, religious forces and, since the revolutionary upheavals in 2011 and 2013,

by a strong nationalistic discourse, which serves as a framework for both identity politics as well as the conceptualisation of human and women's rights. More so, the increasing authoritarianism by the current regime, which proves to be even more restrictive than the phase of hard authoritarianism by the previous regime of Ḥusnī Mubārak,[2] specifically attacks human rights and women's rights activists and places their activism in illegality.

Alongside these meticulous targeting, the framing and the conceptualisation of women's rights continues to propose an arena for the political battlefields between Islamist groups and the military forces currently in power. Especially the conceptualisation on violence against women poses a clear example of this struggle, which culminated during the Islamist regime from 2012 to 2013. The political war between Islamist forces and the military oriented regime emanated clearly in State-close entities like the *National Council for Wome*n, which was and is still led by allies of the former Mubārak regime and his *National Democratic Party*, such as Mirvat at-Tallāwī, the former head of the *National Council for Women*, and Farḥonda Ḥassan, its former secretary general. When the 57th session of the *Commission on the Status of Women* took place in March 2013 in New York, however not only at-Tallāwī and Ḥassan were appointed as official representatives of the Egyptian government, but also Pākinām Al-Sharqāwī, the then Deputy Prime Minister and Special Assistant of the President for political affairs. Al-Sharqāwī was assigned to be part of the delegation as a political sign of the Islamist regime, responding to numerous attacks from diverse Islamist forces on CEDAW and other international human rights conventions. In her official statement in front of the *Commission on the Status of Women*, Al-Sharqāwī referred to the previously mentioned 2012 constitution as a major contributor to safeguarding women's rights, while prohibiting "all forms of oppression and exploitation".[3] Based on this and the high number of women participating in the 25th of January revolution 2011, al-Sharqāwī thus demanded for the formulation of international discourses on women "that are more in tune with the values and cultures" in the Arab and Islamic world. Her statement prompted the rest of the Egyptian delegation, Mirvat at-Tallāwī and Farḥonda Ḥassan, to leave

the room in protest, however denying later the withdrawal during al-Sharqāwī's address. The political rupture between the Islamist regime represented by al-Sharqāwī and previous Mubārak-oriented forces, represented by at-Tallāwī, Ḥassan and the *National Council for Women* more generally, was as well highlighted in the statement made by Mirvat at-Tallāwī herself during an expert panel on the prevention of violence against women and girls during the very same session of CSW.[4] At-Tallāwī spoke very clearly of the threat religious fundamentalist movements in various Arab transitional countries are posing to women's rights, naming clearly the further marginalisation of Egyptian women in the new constitution of 2012 and its ignoring of basic political, social and economic rights of women and the attempt by several Islamist forces to change existing legal instruments concerned with women's rights. She as well mentioned the increasing phenomenon of group sexual harassment by organised gangs, calling it a new political weapon – which is, in fact neither new, nor was it only used during Mursī's regime. In her definition of violence against women, at-Tallāwī also specifically included the veiling of women, alongside with early marriage, FGM, revoking divorce laws and changing the age of custody of the child from 15 to 7.

The political narratives of violence against women must be understood in the context of this struggle between Islamist forces and military-oriented parties, both belonging to the previous regime of Mubārak as well as the current regime of al-Sīsī. During Mursī's reign, the *National Council for Women* was more explicit than ever before in enhancing the implementation of CEDAW and strengthening women's rights. In combatting violence against women, the NCW took specific measures in coordination with the *Ministry of Interior*, such as increasing security patrols, modernising surveillance cameras, providing policemen with training on human rights issues as well as appointing female police officers for the interrogation of women. This direction of enhancing security measurements in eliminating sexual and sexualised violence against women in public is one of the most significant developments in the reconceptualisation of violence against women during the last years. The national strategy to combat violence against women, adopted by the Egyptian government and the *National Council for Women* in

2015, is a clear example of this.[5] After years of feminist and women's rights organizations lobbying for the adoption of a clear national plan in eliminating gender-based violence, government officials finally announced a new, unified strategy, supported by the newly elected president ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Sīsī – however, without making the strategy transparent neither to the public nor to feminist organizations. The strategy includes the four objectives prevention, protection, intervention and prosecution as well as several executive plans. Even though the overall definition of violence against women is largely comprehensive and includes various manifestations of violence, the named strategies remain vague and somewhat unspecific. They seem to be mainly tailored to combat sexual harassment in the public sphere, as it includes intensive cooperation with police stations and police officers, as well as the *Ministry of Interior*. At the same time, the national strategy fails to mention the two most important manifestations of sexual violence in Egypt, which are collective sexual assaults and the role of the security apparatus as a perpetrator of sexual violence. The highly welcomed inclusion of female police officers by Egyptian media as part of the new strategy however doesnot lead to the decrease of sexual violence, especially not against female prisoners. As several feminist organizations such as *Nazra for Feminist Studies* and *Nadeem Centerfor the Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and Violence* have been highlighting in their research, female prisoners continue to be the target of various sexualized forms of violence, specifically also by female security forces.[6] Just as male security officers commonly use sexual torture against male prisoners, sexual assaults remain part of the degrading treating of female prisoners at the hand of female officers. The national strategy therefore lacks consideration for the specific contexts, where violence against women is situated, and its power relations. Even by highlighting the important role of women's organizations and the various coalitions, alliances, and initiatives against violence that have been established in Egypt since 2011, no mention is made of laws that limit the right to association and therefore lead to a general decline in protest actions.

This increasing backlash on any kind of oppositional action is the major obstacle for feminist interventions since the coming into power of al-Sīsī in 2014. Under the pretext of combating Islamic

terrorism, both against home grown Islamist movements like the Muslim Brotherhood and other groups related to the so-called Islamic State operating in Egypt, specifically in the Sinai region, civil societal organisations have been tremendously affected and targeted. Several laws have been issued, which severely restrict the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press and the right of assembly. Civil societal organisations acting independently were asked to register themselves within few months with the *Ministry of Social Solidarity*, leading to the dissolution of several organisations. The NGO foreign funding case, known as act 173/2011, counts as one of the most repressive acts used against civil societal actions since the first revolutionary upheavals in 2011. After coming into power, current President al-Sīsī immediately used it against the most critical oppositional voices, the first target being *Nazra for Feminist Studies* and its director, Muzn Ḥassan. By accusing her of illegally accepting money from unapproved sources, she is currently facing charges that could lead to the imprisonment of up to 25 years. With all financial assets frozen, neither Muzn Ḥassan nor any other member of Nazra could join the 61st session of the *Commission of the Status of Women*. However, in the light of these developments, Nazra publicly announced in a press release to hold a parallel event to CSW in Cairo on the role of *Women Human Rights Defenders* (WHRDs) in the MENA region with the support and presence of several other feminists and WHRDs. The targeting of *Nazra for Feminist Studies* caused an unexpected wave of international feminist solidarity, showing Nazra's embeddedness both globally and locally. The freezing of assets also included other prominent Egyptian rights organisations, such as the *Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies*, the *Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti Violence Studies*, the *Arab Organization for Penal Reform* and the *Hisham Mubarak Law Centre*, amongst others.[7] Personal assets of rights advocates such as Ḥussām Bahğat, founder of the *Egyptian initiative for Personal Rights*, were frozen as well. He was as well detained by military intelligence and interrogated for three days, based on his journalistic investigation published in the online news portal *Mada Masr*, where he questioned the conviction of 26 military officers in 2015 for attempting a coup against the current regime and for supposedly joining the Muslim Brotherhood. Another highly critical NGO, the *Nadeem Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture*, has been

forcibly shut down in early February this year. Leading feminists have been targeted as well, such as ʿAzza Sulaymān, director and founder of the *Centre for Women's Legal Assistance* (CEWLA) and a prominent human and women's rights lawyer. As a eyewitness to the murder of Šaymāʾ Ṣabbāġ, a young demonstrator killed at the fourth anniversary of the uprisings that ousted Ḥusnī Mubārak, ʿAzza Sulaymān testified in the police killing in court, only to find herself being charged under a law enacted in 2013 that criminalizes street protest held without an Interior Ministry permit. Although she was acquitted by a court order after a strong national and international campaign demanding her release, she was again targeted in 2016, first through frozen assets, then a travel ban, was finally arrested and is currently being investigated under the 173/2011 case. This is the first arrest warrant to be issued against an NGO worker in relation to this case.

This very specific targeting of the most critical women's and human rights defenders not only shows the narrowing political space under the current authoritarian Egyptian regime. It is clearly directed at those critical feminist voices, who have been working on sensitive and highly politicised issues such as structural violence, torture, domestic violence and marital rape. They as well not only have been acting as experts on gender inequalities, but more importantly as political activists, and have remained strong ties with broader social movements. Both CEWLA and Nazra designed strategies over the last years that strengthened their local networks and forged close links to local communities in Egypt, yet at the same time allowed them to connect on a global level with transnationally acting organisations. Their ability to specify rights claims along the needs of local communities without loosing sight of the broader social and political contexts makes them powerful feminist critics, visible both locally and globally. Due to restricted political possibilities, most other women's rights and feminist organisations tended to tailor their rights claims to a highly narrow group of women, mostly an already privileged one, without focusing on structural inequalities and unequal power relations within society at large, the economy, the State apparatus and security forces. Part of these different attempts in feminist action is as well a generational conflict. Both older and younger generations of Egyptian feminists work with a

strong reference to women's human rights and international conventions, but whereas the older generation mostly focuses on legal rights and the formal possibilities to access justice, younger feminists tend to strengthen social as well as political rights, trying to establish new grounds for a feminist revolutionary movement. In the current political situation, this leads to a schizophrenic division of the Egyptian feminist scene, where the more formalistic oriented feminism flourishes in support of the current regime, while younger generations of feminists are brutally targeted. Government officials work closely with the recently established *Egyptian Feminist Union*, an attempt to reify the historic EFU and to unify the feminist movement in Egypt. They actively address elder women and women in need or give their approval of women taking of their veil, just as Egyptian journalist Šarīf al-Šubāšī publicly asked for two years ago on television. The year 2017 has been officially marked as the "Year of the Egyptian Women" by al-Sīsī, stressing women's central role for the future of Egypt. After re-appointing the leadership of the *National Council for Women* earlier this year, the NCW recently presented its new 2030 Egyptian Women Empowerment Strategy, with strong support of the Egyptian government.[8] This dangerous shift of old state-feminist oriented forces to act in the form of civil social entities, while organisations with a long activist history are being continuously shut down, needs to be understood in the context of the revival of authoritarianism in Egypt and the on-going politicised war against religious extremism. Egyptian activists like CEWLA even speak of a highly dangerous cooperation between the State, religious extremism and the media in coordinating these specific attacks against feminists. These various forms of extremisms, which continue to shape female and feminist action, thus need to be carefully contextualised and put into perspective to better understand the conditions and possible futures of Egyptian feminist movements.

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Part Two:
Strategies Against Extremism

Youth Radicalization in North Africa: Suggestions for Combating It

Moha Ennaji

INTRODUCTION

A group like the Islamic State (ISIS) relies on its ability to attract young people to join its ranks, by offering frustrated individuals an ideologically charged sense of purpose. And ISIS has proven adept at doing just that, drawing fighters from all over the world who are willing to die for its cause – to create an expansive caliphate – and inspiring many more to radicalize and carry out attacks in their home countries (Cockburn, 2015).

According to the United Nations, some 5,500 Tunisians mainly aged between 18 and 35, have joined the ranks of jihadist groups fighting in Syria, Iraq and Libya.[1]

Recruiters use general propaganda and personalized outreach, with ISIS being more successful than other extremist groups at international recruitment because it takes advantage of the Internet's networking capabilities (Archetti, 2015; Atwan, 2015; Bloom, 2015; Ennaji, 2016).

Terrorist groups use unpredictable patterns of violence to sow fear among the public and undermine governments' authority. These violent attacks cause deaths and injuries, but also destroy infrastructure and institutions. Terrorism weakens the governing capacity of states and diminishes administrative functions. It can also cause the diversion of funds from development projects to defense and security. It discourages tourism as well as foreign and domestic investment. All of this is detrimental to democracy, development, long term peace and stability.[2]

Between 2007 and 2015, there were 100, 685 terrorist attacks worldwide.[3] Of those, approximately 40% occurred in

Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Thus, the main victims are other Muslims, but many casualties are also non-Muslim. From 2014 until 2017, more than forty attacks outside Syria and Iraq were committed by ISIS — currently the fastest growing terrorist organization in the world — while the rest were committed by Al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra, Boko Haram, and others.[4]

Thousands of youths have been recruited by terrorist groups from Africa, Europe, Asia, America and the Middle East. Over the past five years, an estimated 5,000 Western Europeans and over 6000 North Africans have travelled to the Middle East to join jihadist organizations such as ISIS group and the Syrian Fateh al-Sham Front, a former al Qaeda affiliate (Masbah, 2014; Schmitt and Sengupta, 2015; Wong, 2014).

Within this context, the issue of youth radicalization dominates the news and debates in Africa, the Middle East, Europe, America and beyond. Today, there is a growing consensus on the drivers of violent extremism, chiefly the economic appeal followed by personal motives, while religion seems to come second to visions of adventure and heroism in battle.[5]

However, there is still little understanding of how and why those drivers push and pull certain individuals down the path of radicalization; the systemic causes evidently are combined with individual character traits.

The reports of returnees from Syria and Iraq can offer important insights here — insights that can inform effective strategies to combat violence and terrorism. Interviews with returnees show that there are many facets of radicalized young people, and several push factors that attract them to adopt an extremist cause.[6] Consequently, there is no one solution that will eradicate this social evil.

Hundreds of those who joined ISIS or Al-Nusra Front have returned home with combat experience and pose a major security threat to the region. At least 400 Tunisians have, so far, returned to the country.[7] Authorities are concerned they could be linking up with existing terrorist networks to equip new

radicals with the skills and armament needed to launch major attacks.

THE ROLE OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND POOR GOVERNANCE

Unemployment, poverty, and underdevelopment due to bad governance are among the main drivers of youth radicalization.

It is no coincidence that the rise of radicalism among youth has taken place in countries that were failing to meet the basic needs of their populations, according to reports by the World Bank and the UN.[8] These factors have commonly contributed to substantial youth unemployment or underemployment, extensive urbanization and increasing deplorable housing conditions, and a rapid worsening of the quality of education, medical care, and other major services.

Normally, radicalism and terrorism thrive in marginalized districts and neighbourhoods, where development is nonexistent, and communities are left to their own devices, as well as in prisons where the government often has little presence.[9]

Thus, there are many facets of radicalized young people, and several push factors that attract them to adopt an extremist ideology. Consequently, there is no one solution that will eradicate this social evil. Nonetheless, it is necessary to outline that the causes of extremism differ within the Muslim-majority countries and the Muslim communities in Europe. While in the former, lack of economic development, failed states, dictatorship and segregation by sect, race and tribe have all led, over the last decade, to the growth of extremism, in Europe, the rise of Islamist radicalism among youth is due to factors like lack of integration, identity crisis, unemployment among immigrants or European citizens of Muslim origin.

A few things are in order though: First, dealing with radicalization of youth requires a community-based approach

customized at the local levels with all parties, namely: government, civil society, parents, schools and universities, local authorities, and religious leaders. Second, terrorist recruiters are successful because they take the time and effort to customize and personalize each recruitment to the individual target. Recruited young *jihadists* constantly remark that the recruiters valued them and listened to them. Other causes that motivate youth radicalization, range from the cultural aspect (a sense of belonging to a "noble cause"), to the social-economic aspects (*jihadists* are promised good salaries, marriage to beautiful women), to psychological factors like sensation-seeking, risk-taking traits, or the aspiration to become a hero; and religious factors like contributing to the building of the so-called Islamic Caliphate. All these various push-factors reverberate with angry youth sentiments, and are adequate tactics of recruiting and radicalizing youth.

This suggests the critical need for long-term strategies that address profound regional problems, especially issues of good governance, corruption, accountability and effective institutions, and lack of social justice, rule of law, and democracy.

What makes certain individuals turn to terrorism under these circumstances are: socio-economic and political exclusion, the impact of extremist literature and media, abuse or misuse of all acts of worships, and the lack of supervision by families and schools.

Similarly, there is much more blame to put on those states that support ISIS and extremism in proxy conflicts. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain have recently cut diplomatic relation with Qatar, which allegedly hosts and supports terrorist groups in order to destabilize the region.

Learning from Returnees

According to repentants and returnees, there are a few standard causes that motivate youth radicalization beyond religion or the will to contribute to the building of the Islamic Caliphate.[10] However, the socio-economic aspects are crucial, for jihadis are

promised good salaries, possibility of promotion, social mobility, housing, health care, and even marriage to beautiful women).[11]

As mentioned above, terrorist recruiters are successful because they take the time and effort to personalize each recruitment to the individual target, unlike their own governments and public authorities by which they feel socio-economically and politically marginalized and debased just for being young or poor.[12]

If not captured — as in the latest odious attacks on Barcelona, Manchester and London — even a handful of terrorists could cause destruction and tremendous mayhem. According to the *London Evening Standard*, "an estimated 23 000 people are on the authorities' radar as potential causes of concern; many have taken part in jihadist activities abroad".

Many African, Middle East, and European countries are struggling to deal with youth radicalization and violent extremism. However, what is missing is a comprehensive global approach, as well as cooperation and sharing of information and expertise between governments. Despite the obvious security threats that terrorists pose, it is still the exception to see cooperation endeavors, sharing of resources and intelligence to create a new synergy to deal with the challenges.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMBATING RADICALISM

As ISIS falls in Syria and Iraq, Tunisia must decide how to handle returnees.[13] At present, it has around 2, 400 terrorists in jail with a poor rehabilitation process or policy in place (Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2015).[14]

Morocco had an estimated 1,100 citizens fighting in Syria and Iraq as of October 2015. While some returnees have been jailed, Morocco needs an effective strategy to deal with the returnees.[15]

There are debates and divergences about what to do with returnees and the repentant. Some decision-makers seem to feel

that the latter will always be terrorists presenting a permanent threat to national security. However, a dialogue is necessary with the returnees, and their re-training and re-integration into their own societies are necessary.

As complex and fluid as the situation is, the key to resolving it may be rather straightforward. First, national and regional governments and non-governmental actors need to find ways to cut jihadist groups' financial lifelines. Second, the hateful and violent ideology fueling these jihadist movements needs to be confronted head-on, regardless of who might be offended (Ennaji, 2015).

As ISIS's dreams of a caliphate slip away, its hold over the hearts and minds of frustrated young potential fighters may be weakening. But, unless a concerted and comprehensive effort is made to discredit jihadists and strengthen political systems, the cycle of violence in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere in the Middle East will remain unbroken.

An all-inclusive rehabilitation scheme ought to tackle a large number of problems to include their families, neighbourhoods, local community, partnership with government, schools, universities, civil society organizations, and the private sector, etc., making reintegration particularly sturdy. This requires a community-based approach customized to the local levels with all parties – government, civil society, parents, schools and universities, local authorities, and religious leaders.

There are several methods to deal effectively with radicalized youth, ranging from continuous parental supervision and proximity from an early age on, to investing time, energy and money to create an optimistic environment and send a message of hope to targeted youth and communities. Governments should continue building relations with the local population, work to gain their trust, and derive knowledge from that relationship in order to help them defeat extremism and terrorism.

There are several international successful models of de-radicalization schemes and programs to learn from, as well as

effective parallel practices used to fight against terrorist groups and extremists.

For instance, Morocco's training of certified Imams throughout North Africa and the Sahel, as well as for European mosques has proven effective; also some amnesty laws, as well as new anti-terrorist laws in Europe. Other national programs that have been successful and are worth considering are: fostering participative citizenship such as encouraging local development; developing career plans; micro-projects for small and medium size businesses; health care assistance; cultural initiatives for the arts and music; and using the media, particularly social media, to counter extremism and terrorism, and to promote social cohesion.

There is a need to invest time, energy and money to create an optimistic environment and send a message of hope to targeted youth and communities. Governments should therefore continue building relations with the local population. By winning their trust, the population will support the government, provide information and help them defeat extremism and terrorism.

Although all these initiatives are badly needed, the key is political will, commitment, and funding support to youth de-radicalization and to counter-terrorism efforts. While all of these endeavors attest to the advances made by a few countries, such as Burkina Faso's participation in G5 and Liptako-Gourma, or Algeria and Tunisia's recent collaboration on the borders with Libya, they do not reflect a clear vision for the region's future and fall short by simply addressing the short-term immediate problem of security. In the meantime, they overlook the more profound regional problems, especially issues of good governance, corruption, accountability and effective institutions, and the lack of social justice, rule of law, and democracy.

Many North African countries already have limited agreements with Southern European partners – mostly focused on sharing information (Morocco-Spain and Libya-Italy). Much more could be done to create a synergy of resources and expertise sharing while stepping up cooperation.

CONCLUSION

We need a combination of both tough and soft responses to deal with the security threats posed by the radicals, such as severe anti-terrorism laws, monitoring returnees, imprisonment coupled with reintegration and reeducation, community participation, psychological support, job training, state controlled education of Imams, etc.

Finally, extremist and terrorist content should be removed from the internet, and no spaces should be allowed for terrorists and extremists online. Internet giants like Facebook, Youtube, and Google should adopt a tougher stance on online extremism and act more promptly in taking down extremist material.

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The Missing Link: Women as Care-Providers and Countering Violent Extremisms

Fatma Osman Ibnouf

ABSTRACT

Pre-existing protracted local and armed conflicts (war) in Darfur are one of the main drivers to violent rebellion and extremism. There are no religious differences between the warring parties in Darfur, all are equally Muslim. The youths, in particular, may become violent extremists by what they perceive as injustice and oppression. In such case, they perceive violence as a means of doing justice. Many young people have been conscripted forcibly or joined the rebels voluntarily depending on their affiliations and internal ideologies. Preventing and countering violent rebellion and extremism is a bottom-up approach. Women as caregivers/providers in war-affected areas are already on the frontlines fighting rebellion and extremism. The study stands to contribute to preventing and countering violent rebellion and extremism through links between the caregiver/provider during conflict/post-conflict stages and the complicated process of peace building and post-conflict nation construction. The study employed qualitative methods (interviews, focus group discussions, key informants, and storytelling) and focused on a conflict/war-affected area, Darfur of western Sudan. The role of women as caregivers/providers in resisting to rebellion and extremism in war-affected areas lacks recognition. To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing preceding study specifically focusing on this topic, so this will be a first step towards closing this gap. Women are the sole care-providersfor their families on the ground in wartime. A case study conducted in Darfur in particular indicated that women usually understand their local circumstances and thereby contribute to more effective practical solutions. Despite the fact that women during wartime are subjected to inhumane practices, the caregiver/provider

women always consider all precautions they can take to protect their children/youth from embracing extremist ideologies. During focus group discussions women revealed that they are working together (mothers, sisters, sibling, etc.) to build a community's resilience against the perils of violent rebellion and extremism among displaced people, particularly youths. The study contributes to how women as caregivers/providers can be empowered in conflict/post-conflict settings to bridge the gap towards preventing and countering violent rebellion and extremism. The study recommends that the role of caregiver/provider 'women' in this matter need supporting to be better utilized in the countering efforts of the government and other concerned bodies. It requires improving access for women to capacity building programs which will assist in developing their skills, knowledge and self-confidence necessary to be active in preventing violent rebellion and extremism in conflict/post-conflict societies.

Key words: Women; Care-Provider; Countering Violent Extremism; War-affected Areas; Darfur of Sudan.

INTRODUCTION

The violent extremisms that are raging everywhere have consequences for all human beings worldwide. No one can afford to ignore the catastrophes unfolding before their own eyes. Ongoing conflicts are the 'root causes' of violent extremism. Countering violent extremism and radicalization currently is a hot topic of discussion worldwide. Security is the first step to curbing extremism, but it is not a long term solution. There is a need for prevention in order to tackle the root causes that motivate violent extremism. Any approach to combat rebellion and extremism should consider socio-cultural contexts and practices.

Sudan is truly a multi-cultural nation with many ethnic groups. The country is composed of nineteen major ethnic groups and about six hundred sub–groups each have their own customs and traditions and cultural diversity. Sudan is a conflict-affected country. There are many local small arms civil strife that have plagued many parts of Sudan since its independence in

1956. Violent extremisms are made and fueled by a network of inter-related violent conflicts. Many possible other factors can contribute to initiation and continuation violent rebellion and extremism in war-affected areas. In such an increasingly insecure situation, there is a need foralternative solutions which may establish some elements of change around the value and meaning in joining violent groups. This might require knowing the specific socio-cultural contexts – socially acceptable values, even popular culture – to facilitate effective prevention.

Can women through their role as caregiver make meaningful contributions to the countering of violent rebellion and extremisms? Do women as caregivers/providers bear the biggest burden? Combating violent extremism has been a hot topic these last years and will remain a challenge for all in the years to come. What was missing in the debate is a link between "role of women as care-providers and countering violent extremisms" in conflict and post-conflict areas. In particular, how women through their role as caregiver/provider are challenging the status quo, and providing effective alternative tools to "countering rebellion and extremism". Do women actually take part in prevention strategies? How do they take part? In war-affected areas, women play a significant role, both as victims and actors, in violent rebellion and extremism. Women as caregivers/providers are preserving the social order. In war-affected areas, the preservation of a social order depends on women adhering to the same moral principles and practices. Due to the injustice imposed upon women, they know the price of suffering and can probably deal with it more effectively than men. Caregiver refers to an unpaid family member (mostly women) who provides care to their family (see Reinhard *et al.,* 2008), therefore caregivers and care-providers were used interchangeably in this paper. Women are the sole care-provider(the only one) for their family on the ground in conflict areas, under risky circumstances. Caregivers tend to work towards making their son, sibling, etc. standaway from the violent extremisms by preventing them from joining local militant rebels. Through providing unpaid care-work, women were able to build resilience in the face of growing vulnerability to violent extremisms in their society. This study sought links between the role of women as care-providers in conflict and post-conflict situations and countering violent extremisms.

RESEARCH METHOD

Field survey has been conducted to provide the primary data from the case study in Darfur, a war-affected area in western Sudan.[1] The study was conducted from August throughout September 2016 in five camps for internally displaced people (IDPs), the two largest camps for IDPs named Zamzam and Abu-Shoock in North Darfur State, and three IDPs camps namely Otash, El-Sureif, and Kalma in South Darfur State. During the field survey we employed questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions in addition to storytelling. All interviews were audiotaped with the participants' consent for further analysis. All interviews conducted were face to face interviews due to the low literacy level of the target population (Mertens, 2014). Qualitative information generated during the interviews of key informants was carefully reading as the whole material and then is summarized and presented as results.

THE STUDY SITE

The Darfur region occupies the far west location of Sudan (see Fig. 1 the map). Darfur covers an area of 493,180 square kilometers (190, 420 sq mi), approximately the size of Spain (Ali, 2013). Darfur means 'land of the Fur'; Fur is the largest ethnic group in Darfur (*ibid.*). According to the available statistical data from 5th Sudan's Population Census 2008, there are 7, 515, 445 people living in Darfur or 19. 19% of the total population of Sudan (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010). The Darfur Regional Authority is divided into five federal states, namely Central Darfur, East Darfur, North Darfur, South Darfur and West Darfur. The conflict in Darfur has flared in 2003 when rebels began fighting against the Government. The main problem of this conflict is the existence of numerous small-arm military groups. Conflict has raged in Darfur for more than a decade, forcing more than 2 million people from their homes.[2] This conflict adds more burdens on women's shoulders as women carry a great part of the burden of the unpaid care-work during and after war. According to UN estimates, 1.2 million from Darfur are in internally displaced persons camps. However the real

figure is certainly higher. Roughly three-quarters of the IDPs are women and children. It has not been possible to cover the entire displaced persons' camps in Darfur. The study was conducted in five IDPs camps in two states.

Figure 1: Darfur map

DEFINITION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION OF UNPAID CARE-WORK

Child care and household chores are activities ascribed to women based on gender–bias; they have come about as a result of socio–cultural socialization (Sikod, 2007, p. 60). Across all regions of the world, women spend on average between three and six hours on unpaid care activities, while men spend between half an hour and two hours (Ferrant *et al.,* 2014). Women are more responsible for care arrangements and usually serve as the main care providers in conflict (war) and post-conflict situations. In such situations there is an increase in demand for care–in terms of quality and quantity–due to higher demands of caring for daily activities and higher prevalence of disability, wounded people and of HIV/AIDS and even violent rebellion and extremisms.

As indicated by Orozco and Leiras (2016) "care" refers to all activities that serve, on a daily basis, to enhance or sustain

life; the life of all people as interdependent subjects and in any social context. For the purpose of this study care-work includes all functions performed by women as caregiver/providers during wartime and in post-conflict stage. It involves arrangements for day-to-day life such as provision of basic necessities to ensure the day-to-day survival, providing a mixture of emotional and psychological support, caring for children/adolescents, and also protecting her family members. Conflict/post-conflict may leave women with little choices but continued responsibility for caring for the younger to prevent them from being prone to radical/extremist ideology or behavior. The drudgery of such care-work in IDPs camps is also greater than in normal settings. Mother caring and emotional support of their children is often recognized as routine role. Most often women are neglected and ignored and their opinions and voices are cast aside. Thus far, the average rate of women's participation in peace processes around the world remains low (O'Reilly *et al*., 2015). However, women are the ones who really know what is needed (because they are the ones in charge of answering to daily needs) and are also the ones who value extremism prevention the most, and thus could have a more definite stake in peaceful life for their family. To sum up, as basic caregiver/provider for their children, women have primary responsibilities to prevent them from being drawn into extremist violence to ensure their safety. Moreover, decisions made during these periods tangibly affect the lives of their children; it is therefore time to recognize the role and power of women in the prevention process and in shaping the future of generations.

CURRENT SITUATION: WHAT ARE THE CAUSES THAT DRIVE YOUTHS TOWARDS VIOLENT CONFLICTS?

The violence and atrocities that have intensified in Darfur since 2003 have complex roots but, the role of four factors is crucial to understanding the origins of the present conflict, namely: land, settlement of disputes, national policies, and ideology (De Waal, 2005, xiv-xviii). Darfur currently is the locus of several complex conflicts involving many different armed rebel groups. The divergences of different ethnic rebels and their cultural differences in Darfur prevented them from forming a united

front. The crisis of identity/injustice/marginalization is a strong motivating force for many to become involved in groups with a common ethnicity who wish to avenge other ethnic groups through violent acts. Technologies and social media that are usually used to lure youths to violent extremism are not widely deployed in war areas or IDPs camps in Darfur. Nonetheless, some radical rebels have significantly growing spread, based on extremist ideologies to fight back against what they perceive as injustices. High rates of unemployment, poverty as well as insecurity, social exclusion, denial of rights and the experience of personal or community grievances are usually creating a fertile ground for recruitment by rebel groups. Some young people in such war-affected communities that feel rejected, sidelined, oppressed, and defenseless easily and sometimes forcefully joined the violent insurgents. Thus, such areas are at risk for high growth of violent extremist behavior. In war zones, children and youth today are tomorrow's violent rebels/extremists, not only in Darfur, but in Sudan and maybe globally.

Looting, rape and mass killings continue, displacing 2. 4 million people to refugee camps in Darfur and another 250,000 to camps in Chad (Leander and Munster, 2007). These types of environments are most likely to make the most vulnerable members of society (youth) ideal targets for recruitment by violent rebel groups. Understanding the root causes is critical to develop a long-term solution, which would effectively fight the causes. As Brynjar and Skjølberg (2000) described, the phenomena of terrorism, although initiallya matter of individual motivation, needs to be studied in the social context where it occurs. A case study of Darfur indicated that many rebels have various distorted beliefs/ideologies that they usually used to justify violence. Some of them often attempt to justify their violent extremism in the name of 'Islam'. The feelings of oppression and discrimination assist in providing a fertile ground for extremist ideologies. These ideologies tend to continue the circle of violence and hatred which remains unresolved. For instance, revenge is violent response to anger and humiliation. The prospect of taking their revenge apparently serves as an incentive for young people to join the rebels. The increasing trend of polarization by violent extremists tends to further endanger more young people and even children. The Darfur case

study showed that the recruitment of young people into rebel groups increased especially with those who assumed that their families had been oppressed earlier during wartime. Young people joined the rebels of ethnic groups to which they belonged, and then subsequently used extreme violenceto change their situation of perceived injustice and oppression. Rebel groups continue to operate and terrorize local populations. Some children and youths have been taken from their families and forced to join rebels, as testified by interviewees. They indicated that their youth/children would be killed if they tried to escape or refused orders. Such cycles therefore need to be broken by local-based solutions.

In the post-conflict stage, factors such as rising rates of unemployment, poverty as well as insecurity, violations of human dignity, bad housing conditions have negative impacts on children as they growup in IDP camps. Other emotional factors include anger, fear, insecurity, frustration or grief. They regard themselves fighting for the just, for those who steal their land and harm their people. These factorsonce again led children and youth to join rebel groups wanting to change the status quo. Thus, such factors may drive youths to violent extremism. Efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism require a fruitful inclusion of women at all stages of such processes, because women contribute to promote responsible growth for their children and adolescents.

The relationship between the military strategies and countering extremist violent strategies is long and complex. The military operations can defeat armed rebels but are less effective in defeating extremist groups "powerful and influential ideology". Rather, the situation is deteriorating. So far the outcomes of the military operations have created more problems than offered solutions. Consequently, the Darfur population, seeking more security, abandoned its villages and concentrated on the region's main urban centers (Pinto *et al.,* 2005). Moreover, military operations have angered most displaced people and increased the youth's vulnerability to recruitment by anti-government armed rebels.

Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars (2007) indicate there has been a sharp rise in the number of female-headed households in Darfur, with some communities estimating that up to three-quarters of households are now female-headed, especially in IDP camps. Women remain the primary caregiver/provider. They are often the first responders to crises and play a central role in the survival and resilience of their families and communities. Women guide efforts to develop a sense of national identity to bring attitudinal changes for a plural and peaceful society. Intermarriage between ethnic groups minimizes violent revenge risks and establishes closer ties among fighting tribes. This is very popular practice in the IDP community for peacekeeping and creates cohesion and thus, women have a key role in setting up resilient community.

SO WHAT ALTERNATIVE EFFORTS ARE NECESSARY TO EFFECTIVELY COUNTER VIOLENT REBELLION AND EXTREMISM?

Thinking differently develops necessary mechanisms to ensure more efficient responses needed to prevent younger people from engaging in in rebel groups in the ongoing violence in Darfur. Women through their care-role have been shown to assist in the breaking of these vicious cycles of violent rebellion. Women have unique responsibilities and roles related to raising their children at ages in which they are most vulnerable to fall victim to violent rebellion ideas. This is true particularly when women become mothers, having children whom they want to see grow in a world where there is peace and food and security and good health. In conflict situations, women start demanding and working hard for real lasting peace to prevail. Women's role as primary careers of their children, adolescents, young adults, and adults increase their ability to successfully confront rebellion problems. However, they regard it as a responsibility in times of such great need. They reported that they continue to work hard at community level in order not to offer any "nurturing environment" for extremists and violent rebels.

Violent rebellion and extremism are creating additional burdens for women to engage in providing care. Care-work includes enhancing social and emotional well-being of their families, and the role extends to their society, thus care-providing women contribute to build resilient societies. Women as mothers or sisters are usually starting their prevention from their homes and care for their children to contribute to stability and wellbeing of their society. They play a number of critical roles in countering rebellion and extremism. It is clear that the influences of caregivers/providers – i.e. mothers – on children's behaviors. Caregivers prepare their children for a better future – women are the backbone of care for future generations. The caregivers teach their children good habits that lead them to have confidence and abilities which may contribute to the prevention of recruitment by rebel groups in the future. As indicated by interviewed women, they work hard to keep away their youth from her old friends or family who joined rebel groups. As care-provider, women are involved in income activities and often contribute income to the house which is critical for their survival.

Despite the adversarial attitudes and behaviors of different ethnic groups, their interests and needs are relatively similar, they are peace and security. The case study of Darfur has shown that it is women as caregivers/providers who play the key role in strengthening IDP community resistance to violence, much of which is based on ethnic divisions. In IDP camps women as caregivers/providers for their family/community contribute to fostering the morals of diversity and tolerance. Women take active part in prevention as caregivers/providers (mothers, sisters, wives, etc.) of those in conflict on both sides. In this respect women are ambassadors across the lines of divisions through marriage. There is a high level of social cohesion reflected by the frequency of inter-ethnic marriage. For women married to men from another tribe this concerns social security and stability for their families, and for IDP community at large. Furthermore, this pertains to the demographics of society, a large change in which could prevent rebellion and extremism and hence stabilize Darfur as a whole.

THE ROLE OF CAREGIVERS/PROVIDERS IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT REBELLION AND EXTREMISM

How do women build resilience in the face of growing vulnerability to violent rebellion and extremisms? In war-affected areas women carry a significant weight of the care burden and they have consequently developed skills of empathy, connectedness to their dependents and provide care as a result. The case-study of Darfur, in addition to carrying on with their traditional roles, women take on new care-providing roles to secure food for their families. This is because the men are either in the battle field or dead, captured by the enemy or trapped in their homes without access to work and thus have lost all control of resources and sources of income they used to rely on to support their families. The research participant acknowledged that unpaid care-work is one of the most important aspects of a desirable trait in their fragile society.

GROUP DISCUSSION

During group discussions women indicated that: "We value care-work for its ability to shape the values and behavior of our families and community". "Care-work is part of us as human beings, the way we express care is strongly influenced by the cultural context". "Through providing care, we are the best placed to help prevent the growth of the catalysts driving violent extremist activities among young people vulnerable to extremism". "Schooling can be necessary, but not sufficient for changing violent ideologies". "This is because curriculums have not lived up to expectations to the task of addressing extremist problems". "As mothers, we have the ability to recognize early signs ofviolent extremist behavior". Participants in group discussion perceived that dialogue across generations (as a form of care) is essential at the household and community levels to build resilience against threats of violent rebellion and extremism.

During the focus group discussion women indicated that they care for and protect their own children by raising their awareness

that violence is not the best way of addressing their grievances, direct their thinking to other better activities and encourage them to take up positive activities with local community or even playing football. Female participants indicated that caring for their children requires them to develop empathy skills as a tool for responding to their radical thoughts with an appropriate emotional support.

Most of the interviewed women revealed that they don't want their children to join violent rebels or armed groups. A group of women during discussions indicated that they always try to convey to their children that trying to change current situations for the better is a very good work but they should remember to take into account their moral duties to others. So, they need to avoid taking violent action against others or supporting those that do.

In the focus group discussions with women in IDP camps, who generally agree that the following unpaid care-works are works that we carry out within our family in our roles as mothers, wives, siblings, daughters and so on. We, as the primary care-provider for our children, are in a privileged position to contribute to countering violent rebellion and extremism. We as caregivers take full care responsibility of promoting family/community safety behaviors and practices. This enables us to say No … No … and a big No … to reward individuals who sought to profit from violent conflict. There are unlimited chances for us as caregivers/providers to make this war-affected area a safe haven and the most peaceful place in the world. On the basis of our experiences, the prevention of violent rebellion and extremisms need to be started at the early ages. We believe in our popular proverb as these popular proverbs are gems of wisdom and complete truths. The proverb says 'knowledge at a young age is like engravings on a stone'. The proverb is highly regarded as a noble genre of African oral tradition that enjoys the prestige of a custodian of a people's wisdom and philosophy of life (Ssetuba, 2002). We are all convinced that early knowledge set the stage for how our children respond to similar circumstances later in life. It would be beneficial for such a set-up to exist from childhood and upwards. It basically depends on

how boys are natured from childhood socialization has molded both groups of males and females to behave that way in order to suit the expectations of the society they grow up in. "Our children are socialized". "As caregiver/provider, we usually teach them socially accepted gender roles and they internalize them from the beginning". Nonetheless, some women raise their boys from childhood to consider that it is their duty to protect their family and they have a natural tendency to play this role.

Many participants in the focus group discussions shared their views on how they made/and continue to make meaningful contributions to builds resilience against violent extremism. Women are more likely to identify vulnerability of their children which tend to be most at risk to be recruited by violent rebel groups. Thus, as caregivers they revealed that they build strong rapport with those 'atrisk' to turn them away from adopting extreme violence. As caregiver/provider, women are dispatching their children to the education and they also foster the benefits of peace. Women also indicated that they push their children/ youth towards tolerance and humanity and raise their awareness on the values and principles of the community. Participants in focus group discussions consider these care-work tools and techniques as effective enough to create meaningful change.

INTERVIEWED WOMEN'S RESPONSES

Given that this is a qualitative study and that quotations are the core currency of qualitative research, the following section provides a summary of the respondents we obtained. Interviewed women are fighting against violent rebellion and extremism, and each in their own way. This sub-section includes example of quotations from interviews to better illustrate the perceptions on countering violent rebellion and extremism. One of the interviewed woman said *"violent rebellion is more prevalent in conflict areas … the problem is that the way boys behave is shaped by such conflictual environments"*. Another woman added "*I always remind my children of the dangers involved in joining the rebels*". A mother of four boys stated,
"*I always care about my boys' behavior, have a close relationship*

with them, listen to them and this really makes the difference– none of them was ever willing to join rebel groups". A young mother carrying a boy on her back said, "*the conflict obligated us to change the way we care and grow-up our boys to prevent them from developing violent tendencies*". Another woman pointed-out, "*our care-work made difference but will never be enough … so what we need is a sense of shared responsibility to maximize positive outcomes*". A mother whose child joined a rebel group added, "*we need support … we need political, economic and social support"*. A mother of four teenagers stated, *"I never let the chatting with my children break down, because I believe, in my experience, that through good communication problem solving comes naturally"*. Another woman who succeeded in bringing back two sons who had been with the rebels urged, *"let us instead forgive them and grant them the opportunity to redeem themselves… as a mother I care about lessening the impacts and build back their confidence to be better behaved… to engage them in nonviolent actions* to *build* a more *peaceful common future".* As indicated by one of interviewed woman, *"I always care for my boys behavior… thus I often set clear boundaries to show them that they have crossed the line and their violent behavior is not acceptable*". A mother who is worried about her missing boy said, "*Instead, our care efforts may be met with resistance and sometimes even more violence".* A mother of a teenage boy stated, "*I tell my children that I love them everyday … I set aside at least an hour or two a day to talk to my children – I teach them to respect the core values of Islam and our societies"*. It is now well known that unless a child has a caring adult to love him and teach him life skills, social behavior and morals that it needs, its mental and emotional development will be impaired[3]. Another woman says, "*I used storytelling as a means to countering misperceptions that can lead to extremist behavior, tell my children stories about the mass human rights atrocities*". A mother who works as a teacher in an IDP camp stated, "*I always encourage my children to express themselves, to speak out freely and to ask questions they want me to answer, I believe that could change their violent behavior*". A woman who is a widow added, "*I always teach my children about the personal responsibility and the rights of others*". An old grandmother stated "*it's impossible to continue without support; none of us know it all, none of us can do it alone".*

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

There is a lesson being learned from the way of countering rebellion and extremism – through the persistent efforts of women as caregivers/providers who deal with the reality on the ground. It seems ideal as it would build upon their experiences. There are no short term solutions, but rather long term interventions. The lessons can be learnt from the experiences showing that women in countering violent extremism need better coordination between government institutions and the military to ensure all stakeholders have been managed correctly. It is now a time to think of a different way to break the concrete ceiling.

The mechanisms in place can be improved to incentivize a coherent solution. Mothers as caregivers from childhood to adulthood teach their children cultural values and promote effective counter messaging against the recruitment. The identification of good practices can encourage joint action and effective responses through and underlined the need for a collective response. As this could provide pointed guidance to decision-makers and peacebuilders on how to prevent violent rebellion and extremism. Women as caregivers/providers can be a powerful part of the solution. Women's role as primary careers of their children, adolescents, young adults, and adults increase their ability to successfully confront the rebellion and extremism problems. However, not all women have the capacity to fulfill to cope with the consequences, which in turn impacts their children they are caring for. Thus women's roles need to be recognized and empowered to contribute effectively to countering of violent rebellion and extremism. Women contribution needs to be truly supported.

Interviewed women indicated that they care for their youth who really lack of goals or ambitions. We need to listen to the voices of youth and understand them. The youth need to feel their lives have meaning to build up their self esteem. It is necessary to involve young teenagers and young adults with experiences that help them discover their interests and talents. This will mitigate the potential for violence with others who have belonged to other ethnic groups living with them in similar

circumstances – IDP camps. High rates of unemployment, the experience of trauma and personal or community grievances have created a fertile ground for recruitment by terrorist groups. These younger people have watched daily their people struggle exhaustively through horrible living conditions, i.e. overcrowded camps, poverty, scarcity of food, shortage of clean water and poor sanitation… what can we expect them to do? The creation of an enabling environment is needed for the younger people to fully use their abilities and for developing their skills. Such initiatives deserve warm support and collaboration not only from government but also from anyone else who cares for a sustainable peace. Education is the real driver of youth's empowerment. Access to education is crucial to the wellbeing of the displaced children/youth. Education also assists those children in mitigating the psychological impact of violence and displacement. Thus, schools provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to help preventing them from responding to this drifting. These will be a sure way of securing the country's future.

Concluding Remarks: Does this deserve consideration in terms of forming important policy measures?

Conflict/war has been and will continue to be the fertile grounds of violent rebellion and extremism. So what efforts are necessary to effectively counter violent extremism? This study indicated that women can change a lot to stop violent rebellion and extremism in the conflict and post-conflict areas.

The role of women in preventing violent rebellion and extremism can be seen as a role that needs attention, especially with regard to war-affected areas. Not all women would be able to make a difference, only the women with a capacity to withstand the pressure and resistance they could encounter from the others. Above all, women need access to quality skills development programs in order to build resilient and positive thinking human resources in such communities. Women need to feel safe to lead the way forward with their actions to prevent violence. There is often a gap of support. There is a need for support policies and practices that focus on the role that women

play in countering violent extremism and promoting peace. Human rights are the footing for women empowerment. There is a need of strategy in helping women to be empowered, and then women can effectively impact their surroundings. Caregivers/providers have been left out in issues of fighting against violent extremism. Women who know the ordeals of their children can change the international agenda in countering violent rebellion and extremism. With the women's nature as care-providers they can do everything with care and full attention. They use both their heads and hearts to convince those on the contrary.

Based on the aforementioned, how can we all better engage in preventing and countering violent rebellion and extremism in all its various forms?

- Care-work needs to be regarded as a socio-cultural element for preventing and countering violent rebellion and extremism.
- Bottom-up approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism which start from childhood. For real change to take place there needs to be cooperation between those at the bottom position (care-provider/giver) and those at the top (policymakers).
- Addressing the conditions and factors that enable violent rebellion and extremism. So, there can never be intimidation by any cultural, religious beliefs that the youths may use as a justification.
- Governments need to respond to women's burden of unpaid care-work by re-conceptualizing the four principles of care-work in light of potential contribution to countering violent rebellion and extremism and peacebuilding processes. The four principles of unpaid care-work are recognition, reduction, redistribution and representation
- More research is required to help addressing the possible factors contributing to violent rebellion and extremism, particularly in war-affected areas.

Finally, we don't want to ruin the beautiful world we live in. That requires a continuous fight against violent rebellion and

extremism. There is no specific formula and no one method of creating a standardized output that leads to achievements, but we desperately need to infuse the caregiver practical experiences in a way that mirrors reallife . There is an urgent need to rebuild a sense of global joint action. Countering violent rebellion and extremism needs "power of influence" that takes shape with a solid structure of community-based resilience. Care-work and preparedness can make the difference. Female care-providers' perspectives definitely make combating violent rebellion and extremism more comprehensive and focused on establishing a constructive use of power and peace.

Policies which acknowledge unpaid care-work need to find more effective ways to balance work and care-to benefit women, men, families, communities, and the economy. Specific policy measures to take these four unpaid care-work principles into account are necessary while designing strategies preventing and countering violent rebellion and extremism. Otherwise existing women discrimination may be reproduced or even exacerbated as a result.

ENDNOTES

1 | *Recovery and Resilience in Darfur's Zamzam Camp, Relief International Organization https://www.ri.org/programs/recovery-and-resilience-darfurs-zamzam-camp.*

2 | *International Child Development Program http://www.icdp.info/programme*

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Islamic Women's Political Activism in Morocco: A Bulwark Against Extremisms

Hanane Darhour

INTRODUCTION

After independence in 1956, Morocco has witnessed the rise of Islamic movements and women's growing demands for political participation at approximately the same rate. These new developmentshave occurred as the political playing field became more diverse and open to stakeholders once marginalized because of their religious and gender discourses (Lamchichi, Abderrahim 1997; Maghraoui, Abdeslam 2001). Islamist movements in Morocco can be divided into those that work within the political system (i.e. the PJD) and those that work outside of it (i.e. AWI).

This paper concerns itself with the conformist Islamist movements that seek change from within the political institutions, particularly represented by the PJD which embraced electoral politics in the1960's. It tries to look at how conformist Islamist movements have created economic, educational and mainly political opportunities for women. The rise of political Islam, which supports women's rights from within the tenets of Islam, has encouraged the rise of a considerable number of Islamic women political activists whose political agendas are critical to bridging the gap between those championing a universal gender reform agenda and those seeking to oppress women in the name of religious tradition and also to countering Islamist radicalization. This paper draws from a qualitative fieldwork I conducted in 2013. Updates are provided by observing recent dynamics of Islamic women's political participation and reviewing various media articles and scholarships in Morocco and elsewhere.

EXPLAINING THE RISE OF ISLAMIC WOMEN'S POLITICAL ACTIVISM

The rise of the political activism of Islamist Women in Morocco has been influenced by profound changes in the MENA region in recent years. Specifically, this section explains that the rise of Islamic feminist activism in Morocco was caused by three factors: (1) the rise of a conformist political Islam, (2) the turmoil of the Arab uprisings, (3) and the strategic response of Morocco to extremism.

THE RISE OF A CONFORMIST POLITICAL ISLAM

Conformism in Morocco refers to stakeholders' respect of the foundations of the Kingdom based on an executive monarchy where the king reigns and rules. The PJD is a conformist party which accepted to seek change from within political institutions. The PJD was officially formed in 1998, out of the Unity and Reform movement, and became a political force when it won 42 out of 295 seats in the 2002 national legislative elections. The PJD is an Islamist conformist Democratic Party crucially supporting Moroccan monarchy. The PJD disavows violence, terrorism and seeks to defend Morocco's Islamic identity through legislative means.

During the 1970's to 1990's, Islamist movements and parties in Morocco were portrayed as fundamentalist, extremist and radical. Things have changed in the wake of the Arab Spring revolutions, where the PJD shifted from opposition to power, owing its success to democratic elections. The PJD became *moderate* with regards to their leading position in the government. Their language appears as the language of reform not rupture with the regime. The PJD has developed since then a large and resilient capacity for adaptation and reinvention (Clark, Janine A., 2006; Schwedler, Jillian, 2007; Wickham, Carrie Rosefsky, 2004). When it became involved in the decision-making process, it displayed a more conformist behavior towards the regime and other political forces.

Starting from 1997, the Party of Justice and Development (PJD) won eight seats in the parliamentary election. In 2002, it won 42 out of 325 seats, winning most of the districts where it fielded candidates. Its secretary-general since 2004 was Saadeddine Othmani. In 2007, it won 43 out of 325 seats, behind the Istiqlal Party, which won 52. This was contrary to expectations that the PJD would win the most seats. In 2008, AbdelilahBenkirane was elected leader of the PJD, taking over from Saadeddine Othmani. Having won a plurality of seats (107 seats) in 2011, the party formed a coalition with three parties that had been part of previous governments, and Benkirane was appointed Prime Minister of Morocco on 29 November 2011.

Female Islamist political activists are not only part of Islamist groups that have embraced electoral politics, but also play a role in groups that have chosen the path of democracy as a means of acquiring power through mobilization and popular support (Schwedler, Jillian, 2007). They gained more legitimacy after the Arab uprisings and the election of a PJD led government. Islamic politics has brought to the fore Islamist women's expressions of activism that embraced women's participation as an Islamic value but remained skeptical about gender equality in the private space.

THE TURMOIL OF THE ARAB UPRISINGS

In light of the uprisings which swept the Arab world in 2011, Morocco also witnessed unprecedented popular demonstrations across the country that prompted constitutional reform and the calling of early national legislative elections on November 25, 2011. The Moroccan government acted swiftly. The King proposed a new constitution delegating greater powers to the Prime Minister, the legislature and the judiciary, as well as strengthening human rights, democracy, good governance and economic transparency. In a June 2013 referendum, the constitution was overwhelmingly approved and adopted the following month.

By proposing new reforms and promulgating the new constitution, Morocco laid the legislative foundations of a new era for the exercise of democracy based on the universally-recognized human rights principles – although some claim that the reforms themselves may also contribute to the longevity of the monarchy.

Prior to the Arab Spring, Morocco had been undergoing a gradual reform process which began with the new King's succession in 1999. As a result, many pieces of legislation were revised or introduced with several important gains for women. These legislative gains occurred partly due to feminist activism and a strong human rights movement.

The Arab Spring uprisings, particularly the 20 February Movement in Morocco (20FM) broadened women's opportunities and platforms for activism and gave them hope that empowerment and greater participation in decision-making were possible. However, concerns remain related to the rise of religious-based actors who may reverse hard-won legislative gains and block future advancement. Since the uprisings, liberal feminist organizations and activists have developed a tendency to convene in strong coalitions, like the "Feminist Spring for democracy and equality" and the "Spring of dignity" (or *Rabi' al-karama*). Convening and working in strong, vocal coalitions have become one of the strategies used by feminists to oppose conservatism and demand more rights.

The post-Arab Spring period has witnessed an expansion in women's representation in elected office – and particularly within the ranks of the PJD, yet only one woman cabinet member was appointed to the first cabinet and six during the reshuffle (compared to seven previously). Several legislative bills to further advance women's rights have also been drafted and are awaiting parliamentary reading. Morocco is entering a new phase of implementation of the constitution – meaning that policies, programmes and services will need to be drafted, devised and debated to ensure they meet women's needs and expectations. For gender-sensitive implementation to succeed, the Moroccan women's movement[1] needs to be an essential player and interlocutor. However, the Moroccan women's movement is quite

fragmented, and there are challenges involved in working across Islamist/liberal-secular[2] binaries and identities. Whether the feminist movement will be able to pull itself together to forge alliances across identity divides or not remains a huge challenge.

The mechanism of creating and reserving the national list of 30 seats for women was enacted by an "honorary agreement" among political parties in 2002 and then expanded and legalized in 2011. Quotas have been effective in bringing a substantial number of women into parliament, from 1% in 1997, to 17% in 2011 to today's 21% (2016). Post-transition dynamics in Morocco represented mainly in national pressures and international incentives for increasing women's empowerment in politics have contributed to the institution and then the extension of women's representation in the parliament. Table 1 below traces the evolution of women's political representation across parties since 2002 elections. Table 2 shows how women gained inroads to the parliament to reach a percentage of 20.6% in 2016 elections.

Table 1: Women elected to the parliament across parties since 2002 to todays' 2016 elections

Political Parties	2002 elections	2007 elections	2011 elections	2016 elections
PAM	—	—	8	26
PJD	4	6	16	24
IP	4	6	9	7
RNI	4	5	8	5
USFP	5	5	6	5
MP	2	5	5	5
PPS	2	3	4	4
UC	2	—	4	3
PND	2	—	—	—
MNP	2	—	—	—
FFD	2	—	—	—
UD	1	—	—	—
Total n° of women elected	30	30	60	81
%	10%	10.5%	17%	20.6%

Source: Data drawn fromhttp://www.maroc.ma/en/news/parliamentary-elections-2016

Table 2: Women elected to the parliament across parties in 2016 elections

Parties	National list exclusive for women	District lists	Youth National list		Total number of women elected
			Males	Females	
PJD	18	4	4	2	24
PAM	14	5	29	7	26
IP	7	—	1	—	7
RNI	6	1	4	—	7
MP	5	—	—	1	5
USFP	4			—	5
PPS	3	—	15	1	3
UC	3	—	—	—	3
Total N of women	60	10	11		81

Source: Data drawn fromhttp://www.maroc.ma/en/news/parliamentary-elections-2016

Western women in IS-controlled areas **5**

The following numbers are estimates based on different reports of different dates. The numbers refer to Western women residing in IS-controlled areas. Based on these reports we estimate that the number of Western women in IS-controlled areas is at least a few hundred.
Total number of Western women: 550

German women: 70
of which are German women under 25: 28
of which are German schoolgirls: 9
French women: 63–70
British women: 60
of which are British schoolgirls: 20
Dutch women: 30
Austrian women: 14

WOMEN AT THE HEART OF MOROCCO'S STRATEGIC RESPONSES TO THE EXTREMISM

Following the 2003 Casablanca bombings, concerns related to security and specifically fears of violence from extremist Islamist youth in poor neighborhoods within the Kingdom triggered rapid

reform of the Family Code in a few months – a reform which had started in the early 1990s but stalled during the late 1990s (Clark & Young, 2008). Immediately following the Casablanca bombings, the King moved to adopt a moderate State Islam, bringing mosques and Friday sermons under state control, promoted Muslim women's engagement in religious office as religious guides (*murshidaat)* and on both the national and local religious councils (*ulema*). The role of women religious guides in those neighbourhoods, prisons, hospitals and other institutions involves promoting more moderate versions of Islam and countering extremist Islamist influences (Dirèche, 2010). This new empowered position of Moroccan women in the religious field has come about as a political response to the terrorist attacks in Casablanca in 2003, as women's greater participation in religious life was thought to curb all forms of extremism.

The reform included also a clear cooptation of the regime to conformist Islamist parties (Lamchichi Abderrahim, 1997). Cooptation strategies were clearer after the 2011 Arab spring uprisings. The PJD have embraced women's participation as a means of boosting female membership and claiming their commitment to modern, moderate policies. There were concerns that the PJD stakeholders are just "hiding their real ideas" about gender rights while encouraging women's participation to legitimize the movements and disarm those who criticize them as being against women's rights.

Aware of the important role moderate Islamic women activists can play to face violent extremism, the Moroccan government built strategies based on empowering women, starting from the fight against poverty, marginalization, and lack of economic and political opportunities.

The political opening lead to the rise of different expressions of feminist activism from within Islamic movements and the recognition of women's diversity in voices, experiences, and knowledge. This new trend of Islamic women's activism has shown greater ability to reach out to those most vulnerable to radical, violent Islamist messages and has allowed this different approach to mature and adapt to political realities. Similar to

Islamist parties, Islamic women political activists' platform has evolved from ideological, symbolic calls for greater integration of Islamic values to pragmatic calls for gender equality and development issues.

The contribution of Islamic women political activists in countering violent extremism manifests itself in their ability to provide a moderate vision on Islam and women's rights. Islamic women political activists struggle to prevent extremism and counter-terrorism and at the same time they provide culturally home-grown solutions to end discrimination against women in Muslim countries and promote empowerment at all levels.

WHAT IS NEW WITH ISLAMIC WOMEN POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

The Moroccan women's movement has been comprised of women activists of various political and ideological orientations; however, these activists have not necessarily been unified. In fact, during the Cold War and the "Years of lead" in Morocco from the late 1950s to 1991, socialists, communists and left-leaning activists and thinkers were targets of state repression. During the Cold War, across much of the Arab World, Islamist groups were frequently allowed to thrive to counter the influence of leftist groups. So, there are some historical tensions and ambivalences between some groups as a result (Daoud Zakya, 1996).

Islamic women political activists have been undeniably influenced by secular feminists regarding the reform of the Family Code. The enormous efforts made by secular feminists made in this field in the 1990s compelled the Islamists to adopt a position on gender issues and to reformulate their ideas. In general terms, feminist demands for equal rights have led various Islamist women activists to question their stance on marriage, women in the workplace, inheritance and divorce (Grami2013; Badran, Margot 2006). As a result, it became possible to analyze their antagonism as amounting to their competition for access to certain structures of power. Their mobilization obliges the State

to adopt the position of an intermediary that simultaneously responds to the narrative of gender equality, on the one hand, and the demands of Islamization, on the other. The ability of Muslim women political activists to simultaneously maintain individual control over their understanding and practice of Islam, while also attempting to reposition gender ideals within the Islamist institutional order has enabled them to reach greater maneuvers for participation.

In this respect, Grami (2013) points out that the movement has succeeded in activating the role of women in the religious domain and allowing them to propose reinterpretations for a number of verses (ayas) that specifically concern women, like diyya (payment of restitution money), *shahadah* (profession of faith) and mahr (dowry). It has also allowed them to submit different points of view on matters such *aqawwamah* (men's authority over women) (Saleh, 2002, 45-51; Yazbek Haddad and Esposito, 2003; Wadud Amina, 1999), ta'a (obedience), tafadol (granting the man double the woman's inheritance), *noshooz* (the wife's stubbornness and disobedience), wilaya (guardianship), taklif (religious obligations), *khilafah* (caliphate), *'adl* (justice) and darb (wife beating).

Islamic Feminism has succeeded in transforming the principles of gender equality and justice into tangible realities on the ground. It has given a number of women the power to speak on their own behalf and to represent themselves expressing, similar to men, their own understanding of the religious matter. This gradual approach has helped to ensure that the women's movement remains intact, but at the same time has impelled very different voices of Islamic political activists to be incorporated as a new trend in Moroccan feminism.

In some respects, Muslim women's activism can be an important complement to much of liberal feminism's legislative reform project because in many cases, it operates at a popular level and enjoys wider local legitimacy although both forms of activism are necessary. Liberal feminists have often focused on mainstreaming women's rights in legislation, and legal codes based on universal human rights declarations like CEDAW.

In some cases, laws and legal codes need to be introduced, modified, harmonized and/or rescinded to better promote and ensure the rights of women. Before 2011, many women's organizations relied on the support of the ruling government and the international community. By seeking this support from above, some liberal feminist activists have fallen into the trap of elitism. As a result, many are distant from grassroots women and from the realities of poor rural and urban communities, which is often the space where religious-oriented women activists work.

The presence of Islamic women political activists in poor neighborhoods fosters links with and knowledge of the living conditions of people in those communities. Through an extensive network of charities, these women political activists use community-based mobilization strategies that allow them to gain the trust of local communities. By delivering crucial social services in areas where state services are inaccessible, these activists often provide crucial services and assistance in poor and remote areas.

While religious texts constitute the ultimate sources of legal legitimacy for the Islamists, liberal women's organizations refer to international human rights conventions such CEDAW and Morocco's obligations as a signatory to them. A woman MP from the PJD explained that the party's legitimacy comes from its respect of the country's background. She thinks that all proposed reforms should satisfy the needs of Moroccan women and go in tandem with the socio-cultural specificities. "Moroccan people are very smart, and they know that the stability of Morocco comes from its monarchy and its background. If we start giving free access to any idea, then Morocco will become a hotbed for the deployment of any foreign ideology that does not fit with our background".[3] This respondent's comment also subtly touches on the sources of legitimacy for the liberal feminists which are in some ways external.

Defending the family is another important position informing Islamist approaches. For instance, to cite one Islamist woman MP, "we defend women's rights, but we also defend the

integration of the family unit".[4] The tendency in feminist circles is to assume that families are merely sources of patriarchal oppression where women are powerless and/or need to be liberated from. More nuanced understandings of family are also needed which incorporate the positive aspects of power, desire and emotional attachments which many women have for their families. The positions of different Islamist groups on protecting the family need to be more closely examined in terms of political economy and the socio-economic and material concerns underpinning these positions.

While liberal and religious-oriented forms of Moroccan feminism may differ in their emancipatory projects, understandings of women's oppression and approaches to women's rights, both share quite a number of similar demands although their strategies and tactics differ. However, the myth and assumption that liberal feminist and Islamist approaches to human rights issues are inimical to one another is unfounded (Moghaddam, Valentine M., 2002). The challenge is to surmount the root differences and build tactical alliances. A space can be created where human rights actors of a variety of different political and/or ideological orientations can work together on specific priority issues.

CONCLUSION

The lasting impact of the increased political mobilization and participation of Moroccan Moderate Islamic women will be seen at the level of the individual as more women (with dissident positions based on religious-based activism) will gain a heightened political consciousness, reclaim rights in the political space and come to believe in the possibility of social change. At the national level, the political discourse will be altered to the point at which gender issues will be a shared concern of a broad spectrum of political groups with different political and ideological orientations. In the long run, the more the participation in the democratic discourse is inclusive of all feminist Moroccan expressions (be they secular or religious), the more likely it will be that a society's development choices

will reflect the needs and concerns of all its citizens. Change is happening and it is being led by the political opening to the new voices of Muslim women gaining ground in the public space. Islamic women's expressions of activism brings greater stability and prosperity and stands as a bulwark against radicalized discourses on Islam and women' rights.

The growing popularity of the PJD in Morocco has provided unique opportunities for women's political participation and empowerment, which has led to larger discussions of Islamic feminist activism. Religious trends in Moroccan feminism emerged in the form of activism rather than ideology. Islamic women political activists can be regarded as agents (labeled as full feminists) when it comes to their activism and call for extending women's political participation in National politics. Yet, at the level of ideology and discourses it seems they are still reluctant to be vocal on other gender issues that are ruled by *sharia* (e.g. inheritance, family law).

Ideologically, the gap is still wide between Islamist and secular women's movements but when the PJD won in legislative elections in 2011, a platform for Islamic women political activists' has evolved from ideological, symbolic calls for greater integration of Islamic values to pragmatic calls for gender equality and development issues. This turning point in Moroccan politics has brought more stability and has aided the resistance against any potential increases in extremist ideologies.

Supporting women in public life is one of the strategies Morocco uses for countering violent extremism (Sadiqi Fatima & Moha Ennaji, 2006). However, the only problem with such strategies is when women's rights start to be instrumentalized and used for the sake of providing solutions to security problems not for ending discrimination against women. The idea that counter-radicalization measures and women's empowerment demonstrates that women's rights are usually only incorporated as a means of justifying national security policy, rather than as part of an endeavor that acknowledges their political agency" (Satterthwaite and Huckerby, 2013).

ENDNOTES

1 | The feminist movement in Morocco dates back to the 1940s with the foundation of Akhawat Alsafa (sisters of Purity), a wom-en's organization within the political party Istiqlal Party), which sought to improve women's status mainly through access to education. These demands resulted in the emergence of the first generation of educated working women. In the 1970s, various feminist sections were formed within political parties (namely the USFP and PPS). Despite these efforts, political parties failed to adequately represent women. Resentful of their marginalization within the machismo of their parties, feminists founded autonomous associations for the promotion of women's rights. Accordingly, various feminist and feminine autonomous organ-isations that were formed in the 1980s, such as the ADFM, UAF and AMDF remained allied with their respective parties.

2 | "Liberal-secular feminists" refers here to the organizations that strive to institute equality between the sexes by legislative means. From the mid-1980s, the Union for Feminine Action (UAF) and the Democratic Association of Women in Morocco (ADFM) devoted most of their activism to influencing public policy on the Family Code towards secularization and the equali-zation of the legal status of men and women.

3 | Aicha Kendsi, MP for the PJD Interviewed on 22 April 2013.

4 | Bouthaina Karouri, President of Montada Azzahraa.

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Moroccan Women Saints

Aziza Ouguir

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on female religious agents in Morocco's past and present. More specifically, it investigates historical women saints that we find in the past and their reception today by Moroccan women in general and by Moroccan feminist activists in particular.

Cupolas and shrines of female saints still stand throughout the Maghreb, especially Morocco. Little is known about these female saints. Practically the only sources about them are hagiographies and oral stories. Based on these sources, my paper discusses women's constructions of sainthood through a study of the self-techniques they used in this context. The research thus approaches them as agents, analyzing the way they actively sought sainthood, and questioning whether they transgressed the social limits that were imposed on them. It does so in the context of current discourses on Moroccan women and feminism, specifically by researching how the narratives of these female saints are received by Moroccan women today, especially by their venerators and by activists in Islamic women's organizations.

My presentation consists of four sections. In the first section, I will discuss the methodology and the conceptual background of the paper. The second section will explore female saints' agency and empowerment. I show that they are empowered by a self-formation process, which culminates in their construction of saintly personalities. In the third section, I discuss the way these historical exemplary women saints are received by their women devotees, venerators of the women saints. Finally, I explore the feminist activists' reception of women saints today. I will study that feminist activists also refer to these historical women to fight extremist ideologies among women today. My overall

conclusion is that Moroccan female saints are an inspiration for women today for their empowerment.

METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTS

The present study draws its data from hagiographic and oral sources. I studied hagiographic texts which still languish in manuscripts to have entries on historical women saints and Sufis. Among the hagiographic books I have consulted are al-Tadili (1997), al-Kettani (1900) and others. I also studied used participant observation and interviews to collect information on women saints and the way they were received by the venerators and the feminist activists.

In my research, I make use of a number of key concepts, but I will account only for the most important ones. They include Sufism, empowerment and agency. Sufism *al-tasawuf* is the mystical dimension of Islam.[1] It is the religious space where women saints' religious agency is highly stressed**.** The term empowerment refers to the expansion of one's ability to make independent decisions and individual choices, and to exercise this ability to achieve desired outcomes Naila Kabeer (1999). I have investigated whether Moroccan women saints who cultivated piety and eventually attained sainthood chose courses of action that empowered them. The same counts for their women devotees, and for the feminist activists.

Theoretical debates about agency, such as they currently take place among anthropologists, often refer to the works of Judith Butler (1990), Michel Foucault (2007) and Saba Mahmood (2005). In her *Politics of Piety* (2005), Mahmood based her study of an Egyptian mosque movement on Michel Foucault's final works on ethics. According to Mahmood the women she worked with are active agents who do not challenge patriarchy. Instead their actions conform to the dominant system. Egyptian women employed certain self-techniques to transform themselves to active religious women but their self-transformation displays their submission to the conventional norms. Like Mahmood's study, my thesis builds on Foucault's final works on ethics especially those

written after 1980 (see Foucault, 2007). He contends that in every society we find self-techniques that the individual performs to reach a situation of perfection and cultivates ethical self-improvement (Foucault, 2007: 154). His concepts of 'ethical self-formation' and 'ethical self- technique' refer to embodied ethical ways of life. But unlike Mahmood's work, this thesis also employs Foucault's concept of 'freedom practices'. Freedom practices are ethical self-practices that involve ethical self-formation, which create new ethical ways of life in opposition to existing forms of domination. Through his concept of 'freedom practices', Foucault emphasizes that individuals can activate their abilities to practice techniques of their own choice that enable them to create their own free state of being that challenge patriarchy. Thus, Mahmood here reads Foucault selectively with regards to the concept of ethical self-formation, completely overlooking Foucault's preference for 'ethical freedom practices'. More specifically, Mahmood dismisses his articulation of this concept of individual freedom. Do we deal here with the type of agency i.e. of ethical self-formation Mahmood describes in her study? Do the religious women as agents merely conform to the dominant moral system, or do we find here agents that transgress patriarchal patterns by opposing patterns of domination?

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SAINTHOOD

The answer to these questions makes us turn to the nature of Sufism. The Sufi path is open to men and women equally and it is characterized by gender neutrality on several levels. Both men and women used similar self-techniques to become saints

These self-techniques are as follows. Piety is one of these techniques. The Sufi's practice of piety is started by his or her initiation into the processof developing spirituality and renunciate worldliness. In hagiographic and oral narratives, the Sufi body is also subjected to certain rules and conditions for developing spirituality and piety. Through *mujāhada* the Sufi body loses its physical properties. Al-Tādilī (1997) describes the physical side of the Sufi woman Muniyya bint Mimoune al-Dukalī. He said that through *mujāhada* she became so thin that her skin stuck to her bones.

Crying constitutes another self-technique that a Sufi employed to achieve sainthood. Many hagiographers describe their saints as crying while supplicating the divine and bemoaning their blindness.

Al-Jadhb is a mysticism that Sufis sometimes chose as a medium for becoming saints. The Sufi found himself/herself attracted to the God. This attraction may cause him/her mental disturbance. This is called *al-Jadhb*. Al-Kettānī presents a number of *majdhūbāt* in Fes such as Şafiya Lubāda (19th century), Amina bint Khawa and others whose *al-Jadhb* empowered them to live God's closeness but also to criticize openly the social injustice of their time.

The Sufi, on his/her Sufi path, engages in celibacy and abstains from marriage to preserve himself/herself exclusively for God. A number of women saints and Sufis who refused conventional marriages to exercise their pietyfreely, to worship God and to serve His people. This is the case of the Berber women saints *Lalla* Aziza al-Saksawiyya (14th century) and Mu'mina al-Tilimsaniyya (14th century).

Sufi women distinguish themselves within orthodoxy by striving for knowledge. They engaged in fighting their illiteracy and in learning different sciences. This is the case of Fatima al-Fihriya (8th century) who built the first religious public space and religious educational center in North Africa located in Fes al-Qarawiyyīn. Zaynab al-Nafzāwiya (12th century) also built many schools in Morocco and in the Mashreq to teach women and men about Islam and the Islamic sciences.[2] There are also *ālimat* like Mu'minat Tilimsaniya (14th century), Zaynab al-Nafzawiyya (12th century), lalla Suhaba al-Rahmaniya (16th century) and Khnata bint Bekar (17th century).

WOMEN SAINTS' EXTRA-ORDINARY BEHAVIOR

All of these techniques empowered women saints to engage in extraordinary behavior. This extraordinary behavior is clear in their ability to construct saintly personalities. Women and men saints create independent selves through this behavior that refused to submit to the norms of the moral codes

and empowered them to play socio-political roles like *Lalla* Aziza al-Saksawiya (14th century) and Khadija Tamgdushtiya (19th century) who had chosen to become the political leaders of their tribes.

Other pious women who played political roles are Zaynab Nafzawiya (12th century) and Khnata bint Bakar (17th century) who helped their husbands to rule their empires. Suhaba Rahmaniya (16th century) played the role of an ambassador for the Sa'diyyin dynasty. After the brief overview of agents, the question arises which types of agency we come across among these women.

In my research, I found that female saints were applying basically the same self-techniques as their male counterparts. They worked on themselves and their bodies to develop into saintly personalities.

The female saints used similar self-techniques as their male counterparts. Their ways of life as narrated in the discourses on them thus entail equality effects, which sometimes even spill over into egalitarian effects. The gender-neutral self-techniques we found often implied the breaking of conventional rules and values.

Moreover, in the context of the patriarchal patterns in which they lived we can conclude that their ethical self-practices, [i.e. their applying of ethical self-techniques in the context of ethical self-formation], can be called freedom practices. Ethical freedom practices invent positive ethical ways of life which implicitly or explicitly oppose domination.

To highlight this point I have selected the Berber woman saint*Lalla* Aziza al-Saksawiyya (14th century). According to ibn Qunfud (1965), *Lalla* Aziza al-Saksawiyya is a Sufi girl who worked as a shepherd for her family. She changed herself from a shepherd to the political leader of her tribe. She studied the *Qur'an*, *hadith* and *fiqh* in about Median al-Ghut's Zawiya, one of the greatest spiritual masters of North Africa. Ibn Qunfud (1965) said that he attended her lectures in Atlas and studied with her. He also saw her teaching women and men and settling

down their conflictual relations. He adds that he saw her how she stopped al-Hantati, the governor of Marrakech who came to Saksawya tribes to put them under his control. She urged the governor to leave her tribes and Saksawa people in peace according to Ibn Qunfud (1965).

Lalla Aziza al-Saksawiyya's life story shows that this woman saint created an ethical personality that challenged the patriarchal norms. Their self-ethical practices are freedom practices that entail not only equality effects but even egalitarianism. Equality and egalitarian effects of their ways of life as spiritual and political and social leaders affirm Leila Ahmed's conclusion that the beliefs on which feminism rests are an endemic part of Islam, is applicable in Moroccan context as well (Ahmed, 1989). In this context, the question arises how venerators receive historical women saints.

WOMEN DEVOTEES' AND FEMINISTS' RECEPTION OF HISTORICAL WOMEN SAINTS

Most of the venerators in the north and the south of Morocco stressed that Moroccan women saints are *qudwa's* (examples) in religion and piety. Whoever takes these women saints as role models gains their strength and empowerment. Others added that they perceive them as such because they succeeded in achieving a level of piety which was even stronger than that of male saints.

Niyya is an important technique that women venerators employed to worship their women saints. Good intention towards women saints empowered venerators to develop their piety and to have answers to their daily troubles. Friendship is another technique that venerators established towards women saints. It makes the venerators in a continuous relation with their favorite women saints. Do historical women saints arouse the interest of activists in Morocco's current women movements?

I have chosen to study the Islamist activists affiliated to the three most important mouthpieces of the feminist Islamist

movement and their reception of women saints. They include al-adl wa al-Ihsan, al-adala wa al-tanmiyya and Muntada Zahra. I also interviewed the feminist activists of the secularist feminist movement. They include ADFM and UAF. Besides the *Qur'an* and *Sunna,* the women Islamist and secularist feminist activists consider women saints and women who played a role in Moroccan history as a reference to draw on in underpinning women's rights. The activists also consider women saints as a source of empowerment both on an individual and collective level. Most of them confirm that women saints inspired them to develop their own piety and to increase their level of engagement in social activism. The activists consider women saints to be role models whose behavior and life-style transgressing patriarchy should be emulated.

WOMEN SAINTS AS ANTIDOTE TO EXTREMISM

Furthermore, the Islamist activists consider Sufism and women saints as antidote to women extremists. Before I discuss this point, I would like to refer briefly to the Islamists' definition of extremism and their interpretation of its causes. They strongly believe that extremism is any action or ideology that fails to respect moderation, a balance between worldly life and hereafter, between values and needs and between lust and principles.

Moroccan young women embrace extremist ideologies for the following reasons: Women's oppression, marginalization, discrimination, poverty and illiteracy are the primary causes of young Moroccan women's embrace of extremist ideologies and participation in terrorist activities. Thus, the Islamist feminist activists believe that most of Moroccan women extremists are victims of the patriarchal order in which they live.

To combat extremism, the Islamist feminist activists introduce a number of solutions and strategies. These strategies include the promotion of modern education, the creation of economic opportunities and the introduction of social justice, gender equality and democracy.

More importantly, the Islamist activists advocate for the reconsideration of Sufism and historical women saints to combat the culture of death promoted by extremist and radical women. Sufism reveals Islamic progressive values and observes sensitivity, love, peace and tolerance. It targets the heart and the inner relationship with God and renounces politics as part of worldliness. The Islamists organize a series of lectures and seminars and religious ceremonies in different public and private spaces in order to familiarize Moroccans with moderate Islam and its principles, Sufism and its philosophies as well as women saints and their empowering legacies.

Most of the Islamists activists consider historical women saints moderate Muslims and moral exemplars who engaged in *jihad al-Nafs, jihad al-Kalima and jihad al-Qalam* to propagate Islamic values, ethics and norms. They strongly admired *Lalla* Aziza al-Saksawiya's political leadership, a leadership which pleads for the renunciation of worldliness, war and violence. She refused to engage in bloody war against the governor al-Hantati and preferred to use words of peace, love and tolerance to settle their political conflicts. Therefore, Islamist activists refer to historical Sufi women to develop their faith, to support their Islamic identity, to underpin their feminist agendas and to advocate a moderate Islam.

CONCLUSION

The results of my research challenge the conventional image of passive Moroccan Muslim women and the depiction of women as victims of patriarchal religious ideologies. Instead, my thesis draws an alternative discourse that presents women, whether in the past or in the present, as religious agents, who are actively engaged in creating, re-defining, re-interpreting and transforming their religious roles both in the private and the public sphere.

Research on Moroccan women religious agency that resurrects feminist voices is still in its early phases. Its future success and development is tied to the overall discourses of Moroccan

democratic and political development that pave the way for women to gain access to more democratic and political positions.

ENDNOTES

1 | See Annemarie Schimmel (1975).

2 | Al-Tāzī 1992, 24. See also ben Khaldūn 2009.

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Layla M.: A Film about the Radicalisation of a Moroccan-Dutch Girl

Women's Voices from Amsterdam West and the VU University

Edien Bartels and Lenie Brouwer

- The radicalisation of Muslim youth is currently judged to be one of society's most pressing problems, not only in the Netherlands but in all European countries. Since 2014 about 3000 young people, among them 550 women, have travelled to Syria, to join Daesh. Various scientific studies related to the motives and backgrounds of those who went to Syria have been undertaken to gain a better understanding of the processes underpinning radicalisation (Buys *et al.,* 2004; Pels, 2014; Bakker and De Leede, 2016). The Dutch media have devoted a lot of time and attention to relating the personal stories of young Muslims and their anxious families (Van de Beek and Van Dyck, 2017). Parents worry, they do not know how to raise the issue with their children; it is a taboo topic, and teachers at schools lack the means and knowledge to identify any processes of radicalization taking place among their students. For that reason, all kinds of initiatives have been undertaken to open up this sensitive topic for discussion in schools and community centres. Anti-radicalisation programmes have been developed, some including theatre plays, documentaries and films, to find alternative ways of preventing young people from being radicalized (Booiijnk, 2015). One interesting example is the Dutch film *Layla M.,* recently (2016) produced by the Dutch director Mijke de Jong**.**

- De Jong's film imagines the individual process of radicalisation that a Moroccan-Dutch girl, Layla M., living in Amsterdam West, undergoes. It is based on four years of research carried out by the director on the radicalisation of young people and has already won international prizes and received several

positive reviews in the media (e.g. Waardenburg 2016). Most research and discussion on radicalisation is focused on young men, but in this movie, the subject is a young Moroccan-Dutch school girl who lives with her parents in Amsterdam New West. The aim of the film is to connect Muslims living in the Netherlands and native Dutch people by making the radicalisation process understandable. The context of the film is Dutch society, set against a background of the war and fighting in Syria by Daesh.

All young people go through a phase of puberty, migrant Moroccan-Dutch youngsters too, when they search for their identity. This phase of their lives often involves simplification and rigid thought patterns in which subjects are seen in terms of oppositions, in 'black and white', and in which extreme points of view develop, such as those about being a migrant woman, a Dutch Moroccan and Muslim woman in the Dutch secular society, for instance. The broader focus of this film is explicitly on the search for identity in puberty, but the film also provides lots of detail about the Netherlands' specific time and context. This is actually a paradox. The film director aims to transcend the topic of the radicalisation of Islamic youth and looks at the more general phenomenon of adolescence, but at the same time she does this by focusing on Islam and Islamic radicalisation.

In this paper we ask the following question: in what sense does the film respond to scientific findings and current knowledge about radicalisation and gender? Why and how are women and teenage girls, radicalised and indoctrinated into becoming Jihadi brides? This film highlights all the relevant issues: what are the characteristics of these girls and women, living in Europe, going to Syria, and what are their main motives? Why do they join Daesh and why as Jihadi brides? Are they violent or 'dangerous' individuals or are they victims of their (future) husbands and multiple repressive structures? Both of these perceptual frames are found in the Dutch media. In other words: are they agents who follow their own path and motivations or are they victims? But before we look at these questions we have to ask: what is radicalism and extremism? Is it typical of Jihadi Muslims? What are the characteristics of these jihadi individuals and what experiences

have formed them? We will then discuss how films are used in awareness-raising as part of an anti-radicalisation programme designed to break the taboo against talking about radicalisation.

We will show how this film is used for awareness-raising in two different scenarios. First of all, in the New West neighbourhood of Amsterdam. This is the district where the film Layla M. is situated. A district which was not chosen by chance; it is one of the two areas where most of the Syria-bound travellers from Amsterdam came from (Soetenhorst *et al.,* 2014). We will also discuss the film's impact on awareness-raising vis à vis university students. Finally, we will examine viewers' reactions to the film on the Facebook page Layla M. and demonstrate how two different publics, Moroccan-Dutch women (first generation migrants) and Moroccan-Dutch students at the university (second generation) as well as Facebook users in general, perceive this film differently.

This paper is based on interviews with the director of the film and the supervisor of the awareness-raising meetings with Moroccan-Dutch migrant women held in Amsterdam New West. Participant observation was carried out during these meetings, during a meeting called *Resistance to Jihadist Radicalisation* held by the SMN Foundation of Cooperation of Moroccan-Dutch people [the Stichting Samenwerkings verb and Marokkaanse Nederlanders] and throughout the showing of the film and subsequent discussions held on it at the VU University.

WHAT IS RADICALISM AND EXTREMISM?

Pels and De Ruyter (2012:119) explain the concepts of radicalism and extremism as follows: The term *radical* is derived from 'radix', root. The first, and non-working pejorative definition of radical is: *arise from or return to the root or base*. So when someone denounces domination and the contamination of the consumer society, proclaiming that all multinational companies should be boycotted and that only local products should be sold, he or she can be called a *radical*. However, this is not its dominant meaning. What radical usually means is: *a significant derogation from the existing or extreme*. A meaning with a negative connotation.

The website of the (Dutch) National Coordinator for Counterterrorism defines radicalism as:

> *The (active) pursuit and/or support of profound changes in society, which could endanger or provide for (the existence of) the democratic order (goal), likewise optionally with the use of undemocratic methods (means) that affect the functioning of the democratic order (effect).* (Derived from AIVD, General Intelligence and Security Service of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands, 2004).

Buijs *et al.* (2006) identify five central characteristics of extremism: (1) A sense of immediate threat and the propensity to enlarge the enemy, (2) Rejection of the existing world order, (3) The utopia of the Good, harmonious world in contrast to an Evil one, (4) There is a chosen population from a resolute vanguard, led by a noble leader, that can realize this utopia, and (5) The combat and purification of the world legitimizes the use of violence in the struggle to better the world and establish a dictatorship. It is, of course, particularly the fifth, characteristic that leads extremists to make negative judgments. Because, although the first four can be labeled strange or incomprehensible, they do not necessarily undermine the welfare of others (see Pels and DeRuyter, 2012:120).

This short overview of definitions makes clear that radicalisation and extremism can take many forms. The Islamic jihad is not its only form. Right-wing extremism is forceful too, especially in Europe. And, although the Islamic *jihad* may be the most well-known form at the moment, it is probably not the most important one. For individuals who feel called to Islamic jihad, the central feeling is that there is a battle being staged against Islam. Calls are made to struggle against this fight. But young people do not respond in large numbers. Questions therefore arise: who finds this extremism attractive? What are the common or shared characteristics of persons who feel comfortable with extremism? And how many people are we talking about?

The director of Layla M. explained to us that the protagonist wanted to demonstrate different forms of Islam; the daughter, Layla M., has a more fundamentalist view of Islam. She is

a member of a group of Salafist Muslims, she wears a black headscarf covering her head, neck and breasts and regularly searches on the internet for information about Islam. Her parents have a more common view of Islam, for them it seems to be more like a part of daily life. Her father goes to the mosque and her mother does not wear a headscarf. A police woman depicted in the film has a more personal view of her religion; she does not want to display her beliefs to the outside world. Besides, the boys of the soccer club are not at all interested in discussing Islam. At the same time, the street preachers, present at the soccer match, try to lift their religious message out of daily life and transfer it to the young people in the public. But, when there are different forms of Islam in existence, as the director tries to demonstrate, the characteristics of the category of radicalised people become especially important.

CHARACTERISTICS

Tillie (2016) has identified three characteristics of individuals who feel called to jihad: age, traumatisation and feelings of loneliness.

Age

Mostly young people are concerned. Pels (2012): Radicalisation is more prevalent amongst adolescents and young adults (15-30 years) and trends show that young people radicalise at a younger age. This is in line with other research (Buijs *et al.,* 2006; Sageman, 2008; Slootman and Tillie, 2016).

Trauma

Something has happened in their personal lives that has led to trauma, parental divorce, for instance, or living in a neighbourhood of deprivation. Research on mental health and the foreign fighter, a case study from the Netherlands (Paulussen, Nijman, Lismont, 2017:7) indicates that

approximately 60% of suspected jihadi radicals had a history of mental health issues, ranging from psycho-social problems to psychiatric disorders. The incidence of mental health problems in the general population is 25%. For women: in 80% of the cases analysed there was a history of domestic or sexual abuse, which may have contributed to the development of post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSS) or personality disorders such as borderline (Paulussen, Nijman and Lismont 2017:8).

Being isolated

This is not about having no family or friends but about feeling alone in the world. People who experience this cope with it in different ways: they can drink alcohol or feel depressed, but they can search for support as well. They can submit to a religion or another ideology that consists of two opposing groups that demands active defence: white people versus black people, religion versus non-religion. Tillie (2016), however, does not speak about the numbers of people who feel called or about the differences between male and female jihadi who travel to Syria.

Layla M. does not easily fit this criteria. Layla M. is 18 years old and her friends are in their twenties, so her age is in line with the general findings, but, as regards any supposed trauma, her parents are not divorced and she does not appear to be suffering from any feelings of isolation. In fact, her family is actually presented as an example of a modern well-integrated Muslim family. Her father is even a volunteer in his son's soccer team. By presenting this image of a mainstream family, and not the stereotypically strict Muslim family, the film director is trying to place special emphasis on the puberty of the girl; she is the one who makes problems, she is rude and brutal to her parents. The girl accuses her parents of being 'bad' Muslims. The film director's message is that she herself was such a girl in her puberty, protesting against her parents and society. By constructing the film's theme in this way the director is trying to transcend the notion that the phenomenon of radicalisation is not a specific problem of Islam and she emphasises the relationship between radicalisation in general and puberty. This raises important questions: puberty is a phase

that all young people go through, but not all adolescents become radical. So, how many young people actually go to Syria?

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE FROM THE NETHERLANDS WHO FEEL CALLED TO JIHAD

It is not easy to provide convincing numbers. An estimation of the number of people from the Netherlands who went to Syria or Iraq usually mentions about 220 people, dividedinto: Moroccan-Dutch 44.8%, Turkish-Dutch 12.2%, Somali-Dutch 8.2%, all children of second or third generation migrant parents. There are also more than a fifth (21.4%) of native (converted) Dutch origin (Bergema and Koudijs 2015). De Koning (2015) believes the number to be 250 in 2015. It is estimated that 40 have been killed and 50 have returned. In Europe the numbers of people travelling to Syria vary in different countries. Remarkably, Belgium has the highest number (relative to size of population) (Van Ostaeyen 2016). There are also a lot of young people who feel attracted to violence and jihadi fighting, especially on the internet, who have not gone (yet) (Van San 2013). In spite of all the reports in the media, all the recruiting for jihad fighters on the internet and the number of young people who feel called for martyrdom, the actual number of jihad fighters leaving for Syria and Iraq is low. Most of this group of young people stay at home.

In the film, Layla M. is portrayed as one of the Moroccan-Dutch girls who went to Syria. So gender comes into question.

GENDER

What is the gender dimension in the development of extremism? Seran de Leede, researcher at Leiden University, specialised in questions about women and terrorism, provides a number of additional characteristics describing the young women who leave for Syria and Iraq. One thing they share is a reluctance to be social, often isolating themselves and restricting all social contact to the internet groups they belong to. When the women decide to go to Syria, everything they need is on the internet:

there is practical advice about the airports to choose, what to take with you and what not, and how to travel in the guise of a western woman having a holiday.

Bakker and De Leede and (2015) wrote about the increase in the number of women from European countries who went to Syria to become, in one way or another, involved in the insurgency against the Assad regime.

> Many of these women are (very) young women who travelled either with their husbands (often as newlyweds), with other young girls, or even alone. Several counter-terrorism agencies have expressed concern over the role of women in relation to the foreign jihadist fighter phenomenon. (Bakker and De Leede 2015:3).

As stated earlier, it is difficult to estimate the number of European women currently in Syria. A recent study by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) estimates there are now around 550 Western women in IS territory (Bakker and De Leede 2015:3).

Western women in IS-controlled areas

The following numbers are estimates based on different reports of different dates. The numbers refer to Western women residing in IS-controlled areas. Based on these reports we estimate that the number of Western women in IS-controlled areas is at least a few hundred.
Total number of Western women: 550
German women: 70
of which are German women under 25: 28
of which are German schoolgirls: 9
French women: 63-70
British women: 60
of which are British school girls: 20
Dutch women: 30
Austrian women: 14

From: Bakker and DeLeede (2015:3).

But it is not only the number of female travellers that is important, the reasons underpinning their decisions to go are also significant. Sahar Nour (2016) conducted research based on a survey of literature and a number of interviews. She concludes that there are more specific characteristics that women ISIS

travellers share and asks why do they go? On the basis of her explorative research, she has identified the following conclusions, which are in line with the general characteristics above:

1. Most of them come from a suffocating home situation.
2. Their parents are divorced. There is no stable situation.
3. Practically all of them are very poorly educated, or they left school without graduating.
4. Most of them are licentious or headstrong and drink alcohol or take drugs and meet boys.

The girls experience a reversal, or conversion, in their thinking about their identity which is related to a major life event. Religion provides a possible answer to their identity questions and a simple solution to their problems. Layla M. is highly educated, although she left school during her exams. She wants to live according to the Islamic prescriptions, not drinking alcohol or taking drugs, and she only talks with boys on the Internet. The film shows that, for this girl, religion provides an answer to her identity problems.

The next question will be: how can we typify the girls who leave for Syria? Nour (2016) distinguishes three types of girls:

1. *Naïve* girls/women, about 70%, most of them are 16 or 17 years old. They are insecure and looking for a religion that can offer them guidance. They often have little knowledge about the practice of Islam and they accept a Daesh interpretation of Islam after about two or three months.

2. About 15% belong to the *idealistic-politically* committed person category who react against forms of institutional authority. They use Daesh ideology to justify their own behaviour. They are often stubborn, steadfast and well-spoken and feel discriminated against and excluded. Sometimes they have a criminal past and a tendency to prostitution or pimping.

3. The *ideologically* motivated. Again 15% belong to the *ideologically motivated.* They know about the doctrines of their religion and about political developments. They

are smarter than the other girls. They are older and manipulative. Most of the time they keep silent and do not feel the need to fight at the barricades, preferring rather to focus on knowledge gathering and the distribution of Daesh propaganda and publicity.

The second and third categories inform and 'feed' the girls from the first category who are naïve and susceptible. They are mostly active online spreading the Daesh way of thinking and recruiting for jihad. Layla M. is a combination of type number 2: idealistic-politically committed, and number 3: ideologically motivated. She uses the Islamic discourse to legitimize her ideologically motivated behaviour. It is important to know what motivates women to leave the Netherlands for Daesh. Nour (2016) identifies three kinds of motives: religious motives, political motives, and looking for a romantic adventure.

Religious: based on blogs by women who travelled to Syria, the religiously motivated see themselves as devoted Muslims who have sacrificed much for Allah, including their relationship with their family. A Muslim who takes her faith seriously should migrate (*Hidjra*) to the *house of Islam*, the caliphate. The duty of Hidjra, is referred to as migration to a region ruled by Muslims (Bjorgum, 2016). It is a relevant discussion topic for Islamic converts too (Vroom, 2014). Being rewarded in paradise is an important motive. Duties as wife and mother are much discussed. Women may not participate in the armed struggle but can sustain it by being doctors, nurses, teachers, mothers and spouses.

Political: women who want to travel to Syria believe that the Muslim community is being attacked in the world. For them, a major global war is being conducted by non-believers against Islam and Muslims. These women sympathize with Muslim victims and believe that the West maintains these conflicts, such as for instance, in Palestine. In addition, experiences of discrimination, feelings of exclusion and the stigmatization of Muslims and Islam, including in the media, reinforce this process. This evokes feelings of injustice and powerlessness.

Romantic adventure: many studies argue that women are motivated by the idea of marrying a holy warrior. This is a strong motivation for women. Research shows that young Muslim women who are susceptible to radicalisation have a deeply felt need for affection, love and recognition, even for romantic love.

All three aspects can be applied to Layla M. She is very religious, she carries out the Hidjra and migrates to the battlefield of Daesh. There, she is obliged to stay at home, while her husband is involved with fighting and attacks. Politically, she entirely agrees with the analysis that Islam is being attacked by the West. She criticizes Dutch society and media for discriminating and stigmatizing Muslims and Islam. She feels she has no identity, is invisible and powerless. Finally, the journey to Syria seems to be a romantic adventure: running away from home with her newlywed husband.

WOMEN'S VOICES IN AMSTERDAM NEWWEST, AT THE VU UNIVERSITY AND ON FACEBOOK

What kind of women's voices do we hear in Amsterdam, in New West, the part of Amsterdam where the film Layla M. is situated, at the VU University in Amsterdam and on Facebook? We have chosen these different groups of women because of the contrasting opinions they hold.

In Amsterdam New West, three women's organisations are active in awareness-raising, providing education, and offering social care for women and their families. One of these is a Moroccan women's organisation, called *Nisa for Nisa* which has developed a special programme for local women and mothers to recognise, discuss and resist radical ideologies which are spread through young people and their own children. In the programme, methodological tools were explored, such as interviews and discussions with parents/mothers of Syria travellers, discussions on Islam in the Netherlands, and films (for instance, the film 'My son, the Jihadist'). Local Moroccan-Dutch women/mothers living in the neighbourhood are introduced into discussions led by Muslim activists about what it feels like to be a young person

living in the Netherlands, on the one hand, and the appeal of radical ideologies on the other. The reason for these activities by the women's organisation is to build up a relationship of trust between the Moroccan-Dutch women working in the women's organisation and the local Moroccan-Dutch women/mothers. This women's organisation is embedded in a nationwide network of Moroccan-Dutch organisations called the SMN-Foundation of Cooperation of Moroccan-Dutch people [Stichting Samenwerkings verband Marokkaanse Nederlanders], which is recognised as representing Moroccan-Dutch groups in the Netherlands. A special programme has been developed by this network called "Resistance to jihadist radicalisation" which focusses on breaking the taboo against talking about radicalisation and raising awareness and, using these interventions to prevent or inhibit the process of radicalisation. An evaluative research project on this special programme has been conducted (Kriek, 2017) and it has been found that mothers, in particular, play an important role in the prevention radicalisation of young people. This programme is financed by the Dutch State.

Nisa for Nisa in Amsterdam New West has also developed a special programme for Moroccan-Dutch girls called Big-Sis. It has been running since 2008 and is focussed on vulnerable girls between 14 and 25 year who are poorly educated, offering them support on their way to adulthood, raising-awareness and, when desired, social care. Activities are developed and implemented with the aim of preventing these girls from becoming socially isolated or socially displaced, one of the central characteristics of the girls who leave for Syria. But, how did students at the university perceive the film Layla M.? The film was shown to students at 18.00 hours on 10 November 2016 and a discussion (questions & answers) with the film director Mijke de Jong took place immediately afterwards. The film attracted a mixed audience of around fifty people, with more female women than men, and about a quarter of the female students wearing a headscarf. The reactions to the film were diverse. There were positive responses to the fact that this sensitive topic was receiving attention. A few Muslim girls said that they recognized Layla M.'s problems with her parents, and said that they felt quite emotional about the content of the film. Negative responses were related to the specific way that Islam was represented in

the film with comments that it was too stereotyped and one-sided. Such a representation of Islam, in their view, reinforced the negative image of Islam propounded by Dutch media. Islam, to these students, meant peace and guidance in their lives, instruction on the way they want to live and an understanding of the Islamic rules as given by Allah. They were not as convinced by the different forms of Islam as the director had imagined. In their view: there was only one Islam.

The discussion with the students at the university went the other way from awareness-raising and the battle against radicalisation. The negative comments about the way Islam is typified in the film were supplemented with questions challenging a secular Dutch director's right to construct a film about this subject. Isn't this a form of cultural appropriation in itself? Can this director take a subject for a film that she herself has no direct experience or "subject of which she herself has no direct experience." Can she produce a film about a subject that 'belongs to a group other than the one she is part of'? Nevertheless, in spite of the negative comments about Islam, in the end, the audience thanked the film director Mijke de Jong for translating this difficult topical theme into an exciting film for a broad public.

If we compare these reactions to the film with the comments on the Facebook page Layla M., we see responses comparable to those of the university students. More than 8000 people 'liked' the page, but only 122 assessed the film. The film evokes extreme positions: 57 people gave the film five stars and 50 just one star (the remainder were equally divided between two, three and four stars). It was remarkable to see that native Dutch young people, in particular, evaluated the film quite positively, calling it beautiful and recommending that it be shown in schools and/or complementing the actress for her realistic portrayal of Layla M. Young people with Moroccan names, however, were especially critical of the actors, posing questions such as, "How could they sell themselves or their religion for this film?" and complaining that Islam had been ridiculed by the film and that Islam must go its own.

CONCLUSION

The director Mijke de Jong aimed to make a film on a topical theme, such as the radicalisation of a young Muslim girl, for a broad public. Despite this specific topic De Jong hoped that visitors would also discover the more general themes of the film: the process of adolescence, the search a young girl makes for identity and the relationship this has with radicalisation. She wanted everyone to be able to relate to her film, both Muslim and native Dutch people. This is the paradox of the film as we hope to have illustrated. But, did the director fulfil her intentions?

The process of radicalisation presented in the film corresponds largely with findings from current scientific and radicalisation studies. De Jong was able to provide a fairly realistic image of a radical Muslim girl, one who is neither naïve nor a passive victim of her future husband, but who is, in fact, quite idealistic and politically motivated: she shows real agency. Her lively and realistic depiction makes this film useful for awareness-raising activities against radicalisation in projects at schools and community centres, such as those, for instance, that *Nisa for Nisa* organises in Amsterdam New West. Most viewers could appreciate the quality of the girl's acting in the film, in particular native Dutch youth on Facebook.
But not all the intentions of the director are fulfilled. Her attempt to present a diverse image of Islam is barely noticed by the well-educated Muslim viewers at the university. On the contrary, they emphasised the stereotypical way that Islam was represented in the film. They commented on the amount of violence in the film that was associated with Islam, complaining that this conflicted with their own personal perceptions of Islam as a religion of peace. They also questioned the legitimacy of a Dutch director to represent a religion or a culture that was not her own. The accusation of cultural appropriation is easily made when religious identity is under pressure as is the case in the Netherlands for Islam and Muslims. The poorly-educated first generation Moroccan women of Amsterdam New West did not speak about representations of Islam or cultural appropriation. In a safe environment with their own community workers, they appeared

to accept and be able to discuss films like Layla M. without hesitation.

In a time when the debate on Islam in Western society is hugely polarised and very difficult, it is a challenge for a non-Muslim film director to make a film on such a sensitive topic without receiving criticism and accusation from Muslims. Despite these negative remarks, we believe that De Jong has succeeded in raising this controversial topic and has made a significant contribution to the lively debate currently taking place on Islam, gender and radicalisation. How this is perceived by the viewers, however, depends largely upon their backgrounds.

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Moroccan-Dutch Women's Multiple Voices: Introduction

Karen Vintges

ABSTRACT

Sociological research shows how European Muslims are affected by an increasingly hostile social climate, experiencing, among other things, a different treatment by the police and discriminatory practices in relation to housing, employment, and education. The Dutch government counters these negative developments with an equal rights discourse and by equally applying neoliberal 'activation' techniques: the population is increasingly regulated as a set of 'entrepreneurial selves', i.e. as persons who have to manage themselves and who are responsible for their own success or failure. Research shows the various ways in which Moroccan-Dutch women and girls respond to this dominant neoliberal frame of self and society.

[What are we talking about if we refer to Moroccan-Dutch people: Of the estimated 5. 6 million Moroccans living abroad, 5.1 million live in Europe, and 380, 755 (as of 1 July 2015) live in the Netherlands, which is together 2.2% of the Dutch population.]

We want to show and discuss a film on a Dutch-Moroccan girl living in Amsterdam, a girl who step by step radicalizes and finally travels to the border of Syria. As you might know since 2014 more than 3000 young people—between the age of 16 and 24—have travelled from Europe to Syria, among them 550 women by the way, so as to join IS, or Daesh. The director of the film Mijke de Jong was herself involved in the squatters movement as a student in Amsterdam and knows a bit about processes of ideological radicalisation among adolescent youth from her own experiences. While focusing on Muslim youth, she in fact wants to talk about processes of violent radicalisation

that, according to her, have a universal element, so her aim in that sense is rather to build bridges than to set Muslims apart - as is today witnessed in Western Europe, with the Netherlands being no exception.

In the following paragraphs, I will firstvery briefly go into the situation of Muslims in Western Europe and I will particularly focus on the current political and social climate in the Netherlands, that to date is one of the most neoliberalized countries of Europe, and in that sense is exemplary for an increasing policy of neoliberalization taking place across the globe. Then I will say something about the responses of Dutch-Moroccans to the society they live in—which are of course diverse. I will mostly focus on women and girls.

Debates on Muslim presence in Western Europe are often framed in terms of a 'clash of cultures', As French-Turkish sociologist Nilufergole phrased it in a recent article, controversies around Islam are 'framed within a discourse of incompatibility between Muslims and Europe, … The pillars of European culture are defined around secular values of Europe, gender equality, right for sexual minorities and freedom of expression'. Neo-populist movements warn against an Islamic invasion and a takeover of Europe, and call for politics of securitization against Islam which they claim as inherently violent and radical. But not only do we have these neo-populist parties and movements in western Europe, we also deal with what we nowadays call populism light, i.e. the framing by mainstream political parties and popular media of Muslims as out group. Being visible as Muslim, for instance by wearing a veil, today even raises hostility – to give you an example, in Dutch society today it can happen that a veiled woman in the streets is called a Bin Laden bitch, or something of the kind. Sociological research shows how European Muslims are affected by this hostile social climate, experiencing, among other things, a different treatment by the police and discriminatory practices in relation to housing, employment, and education. In the Netherlands, unemployment of the Muslim population is considerably higher than of the non-Muslim population, and this is unlikely to improve for the

younger generation. Poverty is widespread, especially among the Moroccan community.

Analyses show that migrants with the same characteristics as natives have less chances of finding (permanent) work, which also counts for higher education graduates, and that 'an applicant's ethnic background plays a role in selection decisions' (Statistics Netherlands, 2013: 198, 184).

The government counters these negative developments with an equal rights discourse and by equally applying neoliberal 'activation' techniques to all parts of the population. Research shows that the Netherlands is currently one of the most 'neoliberalized' Western European countries and a forerunner in dismantling the welfare state and in the burial of multiculturalism. The population is increasingly regulated as a set of 'entrepreneurial selves', i.e. as persons who have to manage themselves and who are responsible for their own success or failure. 'Activation' programs, such as courses to improve people's job application skills and enhance their 'employability' as well as radical cuts in social benefits for those who do not actively seek work or develop skills, are equally applied. Unemployment has become an individual failure, while migrants of all generations have no equal chances at all due to their discrimination on the job market. Christian Joppke (2007) characterizes the new Dutch integration policies in terms of a 'repressive liberalism' that increasingly marks Western European states, and that coerces migrants 'to release their self-producing and -regulating capacities…, seeking to make people both self-sufficient and autonomous by illiberal means' (Joppke, 2007:16).

But rather than speaking in terms of a repressive liberalism these policies are better characterized in terms of neoliberalism, which interestingly today is defined by some sociologists as a marketization not only of the economy but of self and society as well. As Thomas Lemke phrases it referring to the work of Michel Foucault who analyzed neoliberalism already in these terms in the 1970s:

'(G)overnment itself becomes a sort of enterprise whose task it is to universalize competition and invent market-shaped systems of action for individuals, groups and institutions' (197). 'Neoliberalism in this approach is more than the latest version of capitalism, it is characterized not only by a free market economy but also by a policy which organizes society along the lines of enterprises and activates and produces a new type of man – and woman: the market-shaped individual: a 'free', self-optimizing agent, who is 'the entrepreneur of himself' (Foucault, 2008: 226). This new type of personhood, in terms of an entrepreneur of her- or himself, is supposed to make the most of his or her own human capital, and is responsible for his or her own success. As Aihwaong has shown in her book Neoliberalism as Exception, this type of neoliberalism that transforms societal institutions and the self into enterprises spread across the globe, but it does so selectively: huge parts of the world, and huge regions of countries are left out as being not useful, as are for instance parts of Morocco which are literally called non-useful, and everywhere the gap between winners and losers increasingly widens, in many domains, ranging from jobs, to education, to healthcare and even to longevity.

In the Netherlands the dominant neoliberal frame of self and society involves an approach of 'responsibilizing' people, which is extra disadvantageous for migrant groups as is clear for instance from its effects in the school system. In schools, children are trained and supposed to behave as an 'entrepreneurial self', with skills such as coordination, self- and time-management, and cost-benefit calculation. Due to the system's individualizing, 'responsibilizing' approach, especially migrant children with illiterate parents have no hope of equal chances, since they lack parental support, and especially boys from migrant backgrounds drop out and follow the neoliberal message in a different way, namely seeking their own personal success via criminal activities: 60 per cent of boys [till the age 22] from Moroccan background have been in contact with the police as a result of the street culture they have developed.

But girls from Moroccan background are doing well in the school system. They also enter higher education and universities

more than boys from migrant background who—when they do so—reach these levels of education by taking the 'long route', compensating for their discrimination in the school system by moving step by step into higher education. Regular Muslim women's organizations in Western Europe – that focus on mothers – today organize social meetings, self-help groups, readings, workshops, and debates, to support Muslim women in their roles, in the family, in society, and in the Muslim community. It is in such a local Mulslim women's groups that my colleague Edien Bartels participates and is confronted with the big worries of Muslim mothers who see their children radicalizing and who don't know what to do about it. It is from this perspective that we feel the film Lalya M. is important, and Edien will tell you now more about it.

Part Three:
Emerging Gender Transformations

Religion and Transformation in South African Universities: A Feminist Perspective

Mary Hames

BACKGROUND

Cape Town is generally considered as the place where South African Islam originated. There are several historic mosques all over the Cape peninsula, the oldest was built in 1794 by a freed slave. The Islamic faith was brought to the Cape by the Dutch as political prisoners oreither as slaves during the Dutch occupation of Malaysia, India, Java and Bengal. The first mosque was only built during the British occupation of the Cape in 1794. The oldest mosques and Kramats (Mazaars) in South Africa are in the Cape. Many of the slaves were brought to Cape Town because of the artisan skills and they played an enormous role in the shaping of the religion and the religious practices, architecture, language, education, carpentry and cuisine of the Cape communities.

During the struggle against apartheid churches and mosques became known as safe spaces for activists to gather, meet and strategize. Many Imams were very visible and vocal opponents of apartheid. Some of these religious leaders were detained and even tortured to death during imprisonment. So although some radical acts have been taken against the proponents of apartheid, religious extremism does not have a similar understanding in contemporary South Africa as it has elsewhere on the globe. Also, Islam and Christianity have always co-existed peacefully.

Islam constitutes a minority religion in South Africa where the hegemonic religion remains Calvinist-Protestant. The apartheid regime created segregated racial residential areas and people

classified as Coloureds and Indians, irrespective of their religious affiliation, lived in separate residential areas, attended separate schools and universities and each of these racialised communities lived near mosques, *madrasahs* and churches in their respective areas (Tayob, 1996). There has always been respect for and from other sectors of the community when Muslims observed their religious holidays or conducted their religious practices.

The observation of Muslim religious holidays, prayer services on Fridays, the serving of strictly *halal* food at official events and in the cafeterias and the integration of the traditional dress code of the Muslim community have always been part of the institutional culture. Both the geographical location and the political positioning of UWC play an important role in the imagination of this academic institution. The university is located on the margins of the city and far from the amenities usually associated with a city. However, the university is close to the communities it serves. There are several mosques close to the university. There is also a prayer room on the university premises and Muslim staff and students have a choice where to pray especially on Fridays. The Friday lunchtime at the university is specially scheduled to accommodate Muslim students and staff.

UWC is close to two historical white universities namely the University of Cape Town, a historical liberal English university, and the University of Stellenbosch, a historical Afrikaans university. In this paper, I, amongst others, compare how Muslim women staff and students generally experience UWC and the historically Afrikaans university's academic environments. Underlying to this presentation is the question whether the presence of Muslim women contributed to the transformation of their respective institutions.

In this presentation, the intersectionality of race, gender, class and religion is used as an analytical tool to assess how Muslim women were affected by the academic and social environment at the respective universities which have very different apartheid histories. UWC was established under the apartheid regime to educate professionals for the 'Coloured'[1] (mixed race) community

and the University of Stellenbosch was created as a higher learning institution that solely educated Afrikaner elite and almost all the prime ministers and presidents in the apartheid state received their education at this institution. The University of Stellenbosch is in the lush and profitable wine- and farmlands of the country.

> It (University of Stellenbosch) drew the **cream** of Afrikanerdom – including the men who were to become National Party Prime Ministers of South Africa. (D'Oliviera, 1977:30).

Although this is primarily a qualitative study, I conducted a few unstructured interviews with Muslim women staff and students at UWC and had an email discussion with a colleague at the University of Stellenbosch who subsequently forwarded me a chapter written by her on the experiences of women staff at that university. I selected these two universities for several reasons. Both universities initially used Afrikaans as a language of instruction during the apartheid years and Stellenbosch continued to do so after 1994; the Dutch Reformed faith with its Calvinist Protestant ideology formed an integral part of education and this religious ideology was the practiced at both. During the apartheid years the education curriculum at both institutions of higher learning was premised on the teachings of Christian National Education (CNE).

Originally both the academic and executive administrative staff of UWC consisted of whites who were mainly drawn from the University of Stellenbosch (US). Paradoxically, shortly after the democratic elections in 1994 the US 'poached' many of the 'top' black staff and administrators from UWC ostensibly to transform their race profile. The first Black rector at post-1994 Stellenbosch was a former student and professor of divinity at the UWC. Many of the former UWC staff who joined the staff at Stellenbosch belonged to the Dutch Reform Mission Church which was considered as a 'sister' church of the Dutch Reformed Church. Their first language was often Afrikaans. These were important factors, because the assumption was that they would easily assimilate into the dominant white Afrikaner Calvinist Protestant culture.

The construction and intersection of race, religion, gender and language have been major barriers to transformation in the higher education environment. After 1994, the faculties of Theology, which mainly served the Dutch Reformed ideology, at most universities in South Africa, were transformed into Departments of Religion. The teaching and learning of faith and religion becamea more inclusive practice. South Africa is a secular state and according to the equality clause in the Constitution the state may not discriminate against any religion. Despite this, Christianity remains the hegemonic faith in the majority institutions of higher learning.

Daniels and Dasoo (2012) provide important background information to the history of Muslims in South Africa and I therefore will concentrate on my own impressionist view as feminist and as descendant of Zanzibari Muslims. I am particularly interested in Muslim women, education and feminist agency. I work with administrators, academics and students and have insights in how the different groups of women shape the academic environment from their perspectives.

Universities remain male and heterosexual and it is interesting to note feminists' continuous endeavours to transform these 'ivory towers' into inclusive centres of learning. South Africa has developed an enabling legal and policy framework and gender 'machinery' for women but there are still huge discriminatory practices on both societal and implementation levels that challenge women's inclusive citizenship. The Constitution regards the category 'women' as homogenous and it is up to individuals and groups in civil society to be vigilant and to challenge the existing discriminatory laws and societal perceptions. Religion and perceived cultural practices have been under scrutiny by South African feminists.

> Religion has rules about conduct that guide life within a social group and it is often organised and practised in a community, instead of being an individual or personal affair. All African societies view life as one big whole and religion permeates all aspects of life. In terms of this thinking, it is the whole that brings about the unification of the parts. There is no such thing as compartmentalisation or dichotomisation when

> it comes to human existence: there is no division between matter and spirit, soul and body, and religious practice and daily life. (Agbiji and Swart, 2015:2).

Daniels and Dasoo (2012: 187) remarked that white nationalist institutions lacked a comprehensive understanding of the cultures and religions of incoming groups and had a limited knowledge of Muslims and Islam. They argue that Christian National Education remains part of the hidden curriculum. This stands in contrast with what is happening in the social lives and upbringing of young Muslim girls and boys where attending madrasah after school is an important part of their existence. However, there is Daniels and Dasoo note that the religion practices at university functions are mainly Christian. Daniels and Dasoo refer to themselves as a 'minority within a minority'.

FEMINISM AND ISLAM

Secular feminist views about Muslim women and the relationship between feminism and Islam tend to argue that religious affiliation inevitably compromises feminist agencies. In her especially stark articulation of this secular view, Wendy Isaacs-Martin argues that:

> "Islamists have learned to use multiculturalist philosophy to their advantage by imposing a narrative in which Muslims are informed that it is their human right to practice their religion but that they must reject all other western philosophical positions because they are not based on Islamic views" (Isaacs-Martin, 2016: 116).

Here, Isaacs-Martin generalizes the Islamic belief as homogenous (failing to acknowledge how diversely Islam has been interpreted, including its interpretation by Islamic feminists), and denies how religious affiliation may lead to forms of conscientization, agency, self-assertion and solidarity that actively enhance women's powers to challenge patriarchal and other forms of power.

This is especially true when considering the role of Muslim women in education, since education has long been central to the socialization of many Muslim women in Islamic traditions. Even in contexts where young girls and boys, or men and women are strictly separated, many Muslim communities and countries (ranging from the Western Cape to Zanzibar) prioritize girls and women's intellectual advancement and forms of authority, solidarity and confidence (often associated with specifically feminist community building). In this sense, many Muslim women have been socialized into challenging the mind-body dualism that characterizes Christian and Western-centric traditions of patriarchal oppression.

EQUITY

Creating equity in the post-1994 higher education environment has been mainly supported by donor funding. Funders such as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Atlantic Philanthropies, The Ford Foundation and Carnegie Corporation spent millions of dollars on the development of programmes to promote transformative institutional cultures (McGregor, 2014). However, these funders and the subsequent programmes were not sophisticated enough to take certain nuanced intersections of various social and identity inequities in the higher education institutions into consideration. The interventions foregrounded by the funders concentrated to a large extent on race and gender as a binary construct.

DRESS CODE

Elsewhere on the globe, especially in the global West, Muslim women have been under attack for the way in which they dress. In the global West, this has often become part of the erroneous identification of women as either oppressed or as part of the extremist groups. It is partly in response to these misconceptions that this presentation looks at the experiences of a small percentage of Muslim women staff and students at a historical Black university at the southernmost tip of the African

continent, the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Muslim women were racially classified by the apartheid regime as either Coloured, Cape Malay or Indian and have been compelled by the state to study or work at the only historical 'black' university in the Western Cape.

Dress usually makes people more visible. At the university, there is a melting pot of cultures and students usually explore with their identities and either confirm their cultural, religious, gender or sexual identities or question it. During the recent student protests, young women feminists started to wear colourful headscarves to express their political identities. Because the Muslims have been classified as 'Coloured' during the apartheid regime I used the dress code of students to identify them as 'Muslim' and as a staff member I knew who of the staff were Muslim.

I conducted four unstructured interviews, one with a Muslim staff member and another three with third year female students. I wanted to establish what made the institutional climate and experiences of Muslim women different at the University of the Western Cape from that of other universities nearby.

I approached different women students on campus and introduced myself as the Director of the Gender Equity Unit and explained to them that I am conducting brief interviews with Muslim women students and staff to ascertain how they were experiencing the campus climate. I explained to them that I have been working with marginalised groups on campus but that I have never thought of Muslim students as marginalised or excluded as they have been an integral part of the campus community both as students and staff and that there has been an 'assimilation' of cultures and religion since the inception of the university. It is important to note that many Muslims from Cape Town are from Malay descent while Muslims from KwaZulu-Natal are mainly form Indian descent.

These 'interviews' were very informal and the intention is to conduct a follow-up as part of the study on the status of women and gender at the University of the Western Cape. As an

introduction and to break the ice I apologised to the participants for making assumptions about them just because of the way they were dressed. They laughed and said that they are 'used' to the fact that people make certain assumptions about them and that they don't feel offended.

The first student I interviewed was fully dressed in Hijab and said that she has never been discriminated against either socially or in the classroom at the university. She divulged that she has been wearing Hijab since she was 15 years old and that it was her choice to do so. She has diverse groups of friends and feels comfortable with everyone. She is currently a third year Arts and Humanities student. She indicated on very few occasions people would assume that she was married or highly religious and that that was the reason why she was wearing the Hijab. She said that dressing like that is what is making her feel comfortable in both her culture and her religion.

The interviews with two other students were also friendly and comfortable. They did not wear the Hijab but their heads were covered with scarves. The first respondent was from Cape Town and went to a former white public school. She said that she would never have dreamed of wearing a headscarf at school because the school rules and protocol did not allow. She too was a third-year university student in Health and Community Sciences and it was only when she came to university that she felt free to wear whatever she wanted to. She found it liberating to wear the scarf.

The third respondent hailed from KwaZulu-Natal. She was a third-year Occupational Therapy student. She felt that wearing the head scarf never excluded her from her peers who had other faith or cultural beliefs. She also found UWC extremely welcoming and 'tolerant'. So many other students were wearing head scarves and she said for her it was making a political statement of who she is.

The students indicated that they were aware of the negative perceptions about the Hijab or veil that existed in some of the Western countries but they did not feel oppressed or

marginalised. They also felt that the existing Muslim student society on campus, to which they belonged, raised important political awareness on the role the Muslim in society. I did not explore the work of the society and this needs further attention.

I am aware that there exist diverse opinions regarding the Hijab amongst Muslim feminists especially after presidential elections in the USA and the subsequent Women's March. However, I did not explore any of these opinions within the South African context. Muslim women academics at UWC have been in 'power positions' for several years. Three of the former Deans of Faculties have been women. Najma Moosa (2011), the former Dean of Law, was instrumental in challenging the discriminatory Marriage Act and traditional marriage practices for Muslim women. She also wrote a book, *'Unveiling the mind: the legal position of women in Islam – a South African context'* in which she reflects on her intersecting identities of professor, mother, Muslim, South African and feminist.

Where the Muslim women at UWC felt 'home' and of the opinion that they did not have to compromise who they were it was not the case at the historically Afrikaner university. Muslim women academics at the University of Stellenbosch wrote about their experiences at the university and they felt that they were continuously 'othered'. For them, the serving of non-halal was an indicator of their exclusion and invisibility in a larger Calvinist Protestant culture. While all the food served at UWC is strictly halal this is not the case at Stellenbosch and Muslim women often bring their own packed food to meetings to avoid feeling like 'troublemakers'. The issue of the food is but one of several insidious practices that invisibles their religion and culture.

CONCLUSION

It is my opinion that being a Muslim woman and defining oneself as a Muslim woman often goes along with a sense of confidence and pride in drawing on a legacy described by writers such as Fatima Mernissi, Fadela Amara and Nawal El Saadawi, amongst others. While women may be secluded, insulated and isolated, they draw on a sense of the historical legacy of feminised

intellectualism under Islam. They have also acquired confidence and strength through communities of sharing and bonding, with this allowing them to develop intellectual confidence and ambitions in similar ways to girls and young women who have attended single-sex schools. Moreover, many Muslim women, through demonstrating an allegiance to and pride in Islamic tradition, have inadvertently also acquired a sense of gendered confidence. In some ways like the women who have been conscientized by black consciousness or nationalism, Islamic women have acquired the confidence and strength to play political or educational roles of leadership and agency based on their racialized or national political agency.

ENDNOTE

1 | The notorious Population Registration Act of 1950 which classification people into race categories of African, Coloured, Indian and White was repealed in 1991.

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African Feminisms, Community, Power, and Decolonial Responsibility

Tushabe wa Tushabe

> Let Us ask: "What gets onto the map?" We know the territory does not get onto the map. That is the central point about which we here all agreed. Now, if the territory were uniform, nothing would get onto the map except its boundaries, which are the points at which it ceases to be uniform against some larger matrix. What gets onto the map, in fact, is difference, be it a difference in altitude, a difference in vegetation, a difference in population structure, a difference in surface, or whatever. Differences are the things that get onto a map.
>
> Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*

I have been teaching as well as writing on gender, women/feminist, sexuality and queer theories, decolonial thought, and African epistemology for some time, and I have reached a point where I find myself frustrated and asking myself: when will we break with identification—identification with systems that oppress us? I wonder: when will feminism break with social and political visions that rest restricted and bordered by identifications of gender, race, and sexuality (including sexual orientation)? I am grappling with these questions because they take me to my situatedness, my location, and history that I may be allowed to forget, but cannot, because they compel me to ask specifically: why do I continue to write myself out of existence? Why do I continue to write stigma, to write crime, and to write unequal positions on my body with gender identity, sexual identity, and racial identity, and many other identifications? I ask myself, when will we, as feminists, embrace difference whereby we could all learn from each other as a way to change practices and cultures of oppression and domination? I do not have answers to these questions and I am not simply exercising the brain. Rather, I am thinking about these questions in a commitment to find some relief, some solution to the devastation many of us experience on a daily basis. I ask these questions with the

awareness and appreciation of what anti-colonial, feminist, labor, and LGBTQ movements have achieved. I also ask these questions with the conviction that though we are born to work we are not born to struggle from birth to the day we die, to be relevant to the oppressor in opposition, and on the other hand, to be irrelevant to any voice apart from mine.

I reflect upon these questions by revisiting, rather superficially, where we started with gender theory and where we are now. So, looking at gender theory, and with appreciation of what it has accomplished, I shall say that in broader terms gender has been couched on two genders of man and woman structured by two naturally pre-given sexes—male and female. This understanding of gender excludes many differences including racialized genders that Sojourner Truth speaks about in her Speech, "Ain't I a Woman", delivered at the women's convention in Akron, Ohio, 1851. The speech demonstrates, among other factors, that gender could not be divorced from racial constructions. Women of color, Third World women, postcolonial feminists, and indigenous theorists, affirm Truth's inspiring and very difficult question, while examining, specifically, their particular histories, locations, and experiences.

As such, contemporary theory on gender demonstrates that the gender binary is slowly fighting for its survival and/or transformation. Patriarchy, which engenders a systemic gender-based oppression and discrimination, inscribes the natural gender binary in both thought and practice. In brief, though the naturalization of gender formation has been challenged, our identification with gender continues to make it an active agent of oppression. Through patriarchal thinking and practice, the idea that sex determines one's gender has been nurtured, keeping women out of or to limited political participation and decision-making responsibilities. Looking on the bright side, however, sex has no longer got an essential connection to gender, and gender does no longer necessarily correspond to sex. We now recognize genders that go beyond man and woman (transman, transwoman, and genderqueer), with their corresponding pronouns, and sexes that go beyond male and female (Fausto-Sterling, 1993). Still, some people find themselves outside these

somewhat expansive gender identification choices. Unfortunately, gender-based violence and discrimination continues to rise in different places around the world. If the collaborative logics of biology and the initial social constructions of gender no longer determine the nature of various genders, then what remains to account for gender-based oppression?

Studies of different societies have shown that most societies around the world were not organized based on gender, nor were their bodies legible in social meanings. Hildegard Diemberg's research among the people of Nepal, for example, showed that female is considered flesh and male as bone, which means that every single person is both female and male.[1] Similarly, different epistemes of various indigenous peoples see the complementarity, and not opposition, of female and male energies. Oyeronke Oyewumi argues that the Yoruba society was organized around seniority and not gender. Judith Butler (1990)[2] in the United States suggests that there might be more than two genders, while Simone de Beauvoir (1952) squarely challenged gender-based discrimination in Western Europe by showing that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (301).[3]

In Africa and many non-western societies, however, we see gender more profoundly in economic and political policies, and its overflow to other spheres of life. This is what Oyewumi calls "gendering" of people, spaces, histories, and institutions.[4] To say that gender was not an organizing tool of social relations does not mean that power conflicts between men and women did not exist in respective cultures. It is to show that once gender was introduced through colonialism and capitalist patriarchy, particular mechanisms for conflict resolution and dialogue were put to rest. Furthermore, to say that gender is a product of colonialism and capitalist patriarchy is to recognize that "gender emerges out of particular histories, localities, and social contexts".[5]

I had vowed not to use the language of gender, but I decided to do it to demonstrate what I see as conditions of existence in capitalist patriarchy: first, dispossession of the people, land, water, language, epistemic frameworks, memory, and

many more. Here, I am also thinking of all dispossessions that the colonizer/oppressor inflicts on the colonized/oppressed—specifically, I am thinking of the dispossessions that we experience in our families when one's sexuality and/or gender identity falls outside of normalized sexuality and gender identity. Secondly, capitalist patriarchy consolidates divisions and hierarchies of identifications as a condition of existence, creating a state of mind that assumes hierarchy is natural and always necessary. Here, I am reminded of Hillary Charlesworth's reflection in celebration of the 30th anniversary of CEDAW. On gender architecture in United Nations, Charleswroth reflected thus: "is it better for women to be part of the mainstream and be part of the same bodies, or do we have to recognize that there's systemic discrimination against women and create separate bodies for women, a commission on the status of women, that we would need in addition to the commission of human rights?" This question is important, because it acknowledges the unchanging structures of systemic oppression even though more women are integrated in politics, because the efforts to create movements, which do not replicate the structures of domination that feminists seek to eradicate, are always undermined. The efforts are undermined in part, because the identities by which we build resistance reaffirm the systemic oppression through our identification. Leela Fernandez suggests that identity politics will only give us short-term results. For long-term results, Fernandez proposes disidentification.

Disidentification, according to Fernandez, "is a letting go of all attachments to externalized forms of identity as well as to deeper ego-based attachments to power, privilege and control. Disidentification is not simply a negative process of detachment but a positive movement to creating a different form of self".[6] Creating a different form of self that is detached from identifications with oppressive hierarchies is important. According to Fernandez, "identity represents a structuring force in society that states and dominant social groups actively use to produce various forms of inequality".[7] So, identity, something we use in activism to claim what oppressive powers deny us becomes an obstacle to social transformation.

Now, I would like to think about disidentifcation as a process of decolonization by returning to some of the questions I begun with: when will we break with identification—identification with systems that oppress us? When will feminism break with social and political visions that rest restricted and bordered by identifications of gender, race, and sexuality (including sexual orientation)? Identities of LGBTQ come to mind, for example. In many colonized societies around the world, specifically in Uganda, where I have more familiarity with the history, Ugandans encountered criminalized and stigmatized identities of homosexuality only after colonization. In fact, even though Uganda inherited anti-homosexuality laws from the British, the attempt to enforce the penal code gained momentum only since 2000. Elsewhere I address the paradox of homosexuality as an identity, a crime, a sin, and knowledge. If to be civilized, to no longer be primitive is to criminalize homosexuality and to bear homosexual identities on one's body, then to decriminalize must mean to decolonize, which is to disidentify, to not name oneself with names of systemic oppression.

ENDNOTES

1 | *Diemberger, Hildegard, "Blood, Sperm, Soul and the Mountain: Gender Relations, Kinship and Cosmovision among the Khumbo (NE Nepal)",* In Gendered Anthropology, edited by Teresa de Valle, *London: Routledge, 1993: 88-127.*

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4 | *Oyewumi Oyeronke,* Gender Epistemologies in Africa: Gendering Traditions, Spaces, Social Institutions, and Identities*, edited. New York: Macmillan Palgrave, 2010: 96.*

5 | Ibid*.*

6 | *Fernandez Leela,* Transforming Feminist Practice: Non-Violence, Social Justice and the Possibilities of a Spiritualized Feminism, *San Francisco: Ante Lute Books, 2013: 25.*

7 | Ibid*., 27.*

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An increasing number of women's voices in the Mediterranean and Africa is rising to fight the mounting violence against women in the name of radical Islam and the instrumentalization of religion to exacerbate Islamophobia and attain power. These voices range from academics, to activists, and policy-makers, and suggest new ways of looking at the concepts of Mediterranean and African "women's rights", "Islamic feminisms" and "resistance, as well as exploring theoretical and methodological tools. Through feminist discourses, activisms, and movements, the voices are denouncing biases, asking for justice, reclaiming rights in spaces, and reconciling older and newer generations of feminists in the Mediterranean and Africa.