Gender Issues In Islamic Countries

2017–2018
INTRODUCTION

I. What is gender?

II. Focus on Islamic Countries

III. Why treating gender-based violence in Islamic Countries?
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I. Main factors influencing women’s position in Islamic Countries

II. Multiplicity of women’s statutes and their changing characters

III. Patriarchy and subordinated relations

IV. Social control and cultural inheritance
Plan

V. Honor and silence

VI. Economic inequalities and gender-based violence

VII. Constitutional guarantees

VIII. The interrelated categories of Giele J.Z. to analyze women's statutes

CONCLUSION
I. What is gender?

- Concept of Gender VS Concept of Sex
- Gender inequalities
- Gender discriminations
II. Focus on Islamic Countries

- Sociological approach ≠ Theological approach

- Macro approach: analyze of the social context of gender-based violence
Distribution of Muslim population by country and territory (PEW Research Center Report 2009)
Countries with the largest number of Muslims (PEW Research Center Report, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Estimated 2009 Muslim Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Population that is Muslim</th>
<th>Percentage of World Muslim Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>202,867,000</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>174,082,000</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>160,945,000</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>145,312,000</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>78,513,000</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>78,056,000</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>73,777,000</td>
<td>99.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey*</td>
<td>73,619,000</td>
<td>-98</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>34,199,000</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco*</td>
<td>31,993,000</td>
<td>-99</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Muslim population in 2016: about 1,7 billion people out of approximately 7,4 billion people on earth

Muslims are a heterogeneous group

- 74 groups
- Largest groups: 84% Sunni, 15% Shia, 1% Kharedjites
Introduction

- Islam and Arabism
  - Only 25% of Muslims are Arabs
  - Qur’an is written in Arabic

- There is no Muslim woman in singular but Muslim women in plural
Introduction

III. Why treating gender-based violence in Islamic countries?

- Universal phenomenon: in every country, every culture and every social environment regardless of income level, culture, age, religion or ethnicity

- Monotheistic religions: importance is given to continuity of the religious community and its values and thus to maternity.

Confusion between women and mother and exclusion from the public sphere
Facing a lot of information about women’s rights and Islamic countries through the media: statistics and analysis enable understanding the situation of gender-based violence in a given context.

In addition, reports and statistics of global organizations denounce high rates of violence in many Islamic countries.
Violence against women is everywhere.

In most countries, less than 40% of women who experienced violence sought help of any sort.

Of those, less than 10% sought help from the police.

Women make up less than 35% of police personnel in all 86 countries with data.

Number of countries that have passed laws on:
- Domestic violence: 119
- Sexual harassment: 125
- Marital rape: 52

Countries that collected data on violence against women:
- 89: 2005 - 2014
- 44: 1995 - 2004

The World’s Women 2015
Violence against women in the world

PREVALENCE

1 in 3 women throughout the world will experience physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or sexual violence by a non-partner

Map showing prevalence of intimate partner violence by WHO region

KEY:
- Region of the Americas
- African Region
- Eastern Mediterranean Region
- European Region
- South-East Asia Region
- Western Pacific Region
- High income countries
I. Main factors influencing women’s position in Islamic countries

✓ **Religion**: Several interpretations of Qur’an and Hadiths (strength or weakness determined by its transmission chain) leading to diversified bodies of law and women’s statutes

Many women's rights associations in Muslim countries request laws that are autonomous from the religious sphere
I. Main factors influencing women’s position in Islamic countries

✓ **Pre-Islamic customs**: Islam appears in the Arabian Peninsula, in tribal societies in Saudi Arabia, with the message of the Prophet Mohammad.

Women lived under a highly patriarchal reign. Islam has brought some regulations particularly in terms of marriage, divorce and femicides which improved women's status.

There are different adaptations to Islam due to pre-Islamic customs persistence

Example: Property right in Afghanistan, matrilineal groups in Malaysia, Female Genital Mutilation
I. Main factors influencing women’s position in Islamic countries

✔ **Modernization:** Urbanization and industrialization reshaped Islamic societies and developed conflicts between patriarchal social norms and women’s economic independence.

Instrumentalization of Islam by politicians: meeting between tradition and modernity through the image of women. Women receive the ambivalent role of guardian of the tradition at home and image of modernity outside

Head of states can introduce change in the women’s rights field
Besides local traditions there are also several interpretation schools (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali School…) to understand the sacred texts of Islam. Most of the time interpretations are made by men creating a men’s world.

Even within a country there are differences between urban and rural areas.
II. Multiplicity of women’s statutes and their changing character

- Even after accomplishments and victories in women’s rights, regressions are always possible: nothing is ever acquired.

Example: Kabul and Tehran in the 1970s and today.
Kabul in the 1970s and today
Tehran in the 1970s and today
III. Patriarchy and subordinated relations

- Patriarchy as common foundation for violence against women

- Women's productive and reproductive activities are exploited by men (Example: the male guardian issue (wali) in Islamic Countries, Legacy,...)

- Men’s domination and women's subordination considered as a normal phenomenon: middle and consequence of violence against women
Each social environment has its referents, its own system of values, to set a threshold of tolerance toward gender-based violence.

Mythical-cultural system (Bourdieu) where men and women are supposed to have opposed characteristics (ex: docile vs. dominant). These characteristics are naturalized and implemented through informal social interactions.
IV. Social control and cultural inheritance

- Social control of women is made easy through the attribution of this characteristics: values and norms are internalized from primary socialization, daily, within the family...

- Women can also act as “little hands” in acts of violence against women: threats and sanctions are so repetitive and internalized that even women contribute to the process (example of the mother-in-law)
IV. Social control and cultural inheritance

- Culture can't be reduced to static beliefs and practices: cultural identities and ideologies can't be maintained without an adaptation to the material and ideological developments (Example: dowry in Pakistan)

- Fluid attributes of culture represent a crucial opportunity for women’s rights: Ijtihad in Islamic countries

- Gender-based violence is also a political issue
V. Honor and silence

- Violence against women is often veiled by shame because the victim feels guilty and/or fears judgment: gender-based violence is underreported.

- The woman is often blamed for the violence she undergoes because it is linked to failing in taking up the role attributed to women in a given society: feeling of no alternative to undergoing violence.
V. Honor and silence

- Honor as justification for violence against women: it is not the women's honor that imports, it's the honor of her father, her brother, her husband, and more globally her family that imports (Example: sexual violence as a weapon of war).

- Honor as reason for feminicides: the reasons are most of the time based on rape, suspicions about premarital sex or adultery.

- The United Nations Population Fund estimates there are each year about 5000 women killed worldwide for a honor issue.
VI. Economic inequalities and gender–based violence

- Privatization of the public sector increases social inequalities for women and exacerbate gender–based violence: capacity of governments to guarantee women's rights through social spending is reduced.

- Globalization: industrialization and migration allowed paid work for women vs. low waged, exploitative work conditions and violence.
VI. Economic inequalities and gender–based violence

- Women are more vulnerable when they have no income: their ability to act and make decision is reduced and leads to economic dependence (Anderson, K.)

- Alternative “Resource theory” (Hautzinger, S.): social capital inequalities can increase the risks of violence. Indeed, according to this theory, men with lower social status than their wives try to impose their domination and assert their masculinity by using violence.
VII. Constitutional guarantees

- Results often of long women’s movements struggles

- Change is difficult without sensitization campaigns

- Legal process can be avoided by victimized women because of: expenses, complicated or unknown procedure, fearing negligence and harassment in courts, police stations or even by their families.
VII. Constitutional guarantees

- International conventions have been established in order to protect women's rights worldwide.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 insisted on the equal rights of man and women, without distinction.

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966 both insist on the states commitment to an equal application and enjoyment for men and women of the rights enounced.
In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provides a legislative proposition to define and condemn violence against women at home but also more globally, in the society.

The definition of gender-based violence provided by this Convention is commonly accepted:

"Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life"
Forms of violence listed in the Convention: sexual abuse of children, marital rape, rape, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment, trafficking, forced prostitution...

This definition isn't all-inclusive of the different forms of gender violence around the world but provides a basis to fight gender-based violence (Example: the controversial question of control of woman's reproductive rights).
Violence against women takes many forms, including:

- Intimate partner violence, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse
- Honour killings
- Female genital mutilation
- Sexual violence, including conflict-related sexual violence
- Forced and early marriages
- Trafficking
VII. Interrelated categories of Giele J.Z. to analyze women’s statutes

- Data on gender violence are not constant, incomplete, doesn’t take all the factors in account and are not easy to find

- When results are publicly published, they encourage discussions on this topic
VII. Interrelated categories of Giele J.Z. to analyze women’s statutes

- Therefore, the interrelated categories of Giele J.Z. are useful to understand the women’s position in a given country.

  ✓ Political Expression:

    - Women’s right to property?
    - Women’s movements?
    - Women’s political representation?
    - ...

- Moroccan Example
VII. Interrelated categories of Giele J.Z. to analyze women’s statutes

- Cultural Expression:
  - women's role in the cultural field?
  - women’s place in media?
  - women in scientific community?
  - ...

- Moroccan Example
Family:

- age of marriage women/men?
- choice of partner?
- divorce conditions?
- status of unmarried men/women and widows?
- freedom of movement?
- ...

Moroccan Example
VII. Interrelated categories of Giele J.Z. to analyze women’s statutes

✓ Labor and mobility:
  
  - what kind of paid work?
  - women's wages?
  - space occupation by women?
  - women’s mobility?

☑ Moroccan Example
VII. Interrelated categories of Giele J.Z. to analyze women’s statutes

- Education:
  - Women’s education level?
  - Literacy rate men/women?

- Moroccan Example
VII. Interrelated categories of Giele J.Z. to analyze women’s statutes

✓ Health and Sexual control:

- Mortality rates for women?
- Sex ratio?
- Contraception?
- Maternal mortality?

☐ Moroccan Example
The interrelated categories of Giele J.Z. are closely linked to each other. An improvement in one of these categories influences automatically the others.

The improvement or degradation of these categories affects the risks of being exposed to gender-based violence for women.
Gender-based violence is a universal phenomenon.

Some factors can exacerbate violence against women: honor, social control, patriarchy, economic inequalities,…

Violence against women has heavy consequences: violation of human rights and impoverishing women and their communities.