

Muslim women's quest for equality essays example

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



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BETWEEN ISLAMIC LAW AND FEMINISM

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Introduction

First of all, in the scope of this paper it is essential to put an emphasis on the fact that the concern of female's rights from the Eastern and Southern is mainly referred to the Mediterranean, who inhabit the territory of Egypt, rather than in Morocco or Algeria. Those females, who have left the above listed countries for emigrating to Europe, currently represent the paradigmatic expression of the human rights, which is related to the conflicts between local and global in terms of female's rights protection.

For instance, after the events of September 11, the discussion on Islam and

females has become urgent on Mediterranean basin' both sides. While, following the anti-terrorist policies enactment, the attitude towards migrants has worsened, and the discussion about the compatibility or not of democracy and Islam have taken center stage in both local and international politics. More than that, the female's condition has become emblematic of the two cultural areas analysis.

Females as Representation

of the Culture of Their Identical Social Group

It is essential to put an emphasis on the fact that females have always been the symbolic- figures in the culture, upon whom moral system of society has been usually impressed. Currently, the situation has returned towards representing females as the symbols and custodians of the community, which is identified with them. In such communities, females are considered in terms of final reward or the battlefields themselves and in terms of the conflicts, related to the territory and identity -related issues (Sabbath2009). Currently, the legitimization of wars is attributed to women since they have become the cultural and national identity' guardians. In the timeframe of 1990s and more evidently- after the events of 9/11, the discussion on Islam and woman have come to the central themes of politics both in Western and Moslem countries. International plans for cooperation, in the same manner as armed intervention, represent their actions as those, directed for the human rights' defense and female's rights protection in particular. Giuseppe di Marco has considered that the timeframe from the end of the cold war to the globalization' full development and the world market

expansion was accompanied by a world politics model, that was mainly grounded on the human rights' foundations. In other words, with increasing frequency, the peace' foundations and the casus belli, that have the legitimacy for political actions, are underscored by a willingness for human rights' affirming or defending in those nations, where those rights are violated or denied (Joseph et al 2013).

Democracy and Islam

The discussions, related to the democracy, both in the timeframe of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, were more effective and important, while comparing them to the war against terrorism, which has been decreed after the events of September 11th. Even while taking in consideration the fact that both of these conflicts, even if they were represented as a war against terror, soon have turned into the set of struggles for affirming the human rights and the rights of females in particular (Ziba 2006).

In Afghanistan, freeing women from the taleban and burqa have become one of the core arguments in the discourses of American government. In Iraq, development the model of democracy has take its place for the countries of the Middle East region, directed for determining element in the argument towards the occupation maintenance.

Additional emphasis should be put on the fact that it has been repeatedly stated by President Bush that the spreading and sustaining respect for females' rights may be considered as the representation of an absolute imperative in the United States-issued foreign policy. This statement may be

supported by the evidence from the document, concerning the Iraq situation, which was dated 17 July 2003.

Global Projects and Regulations

for Protecting the Rights of Islamic females

It is essential to refer to the fact that both European and American political projects in the Mediterranean are significantly correlated to the concern of human rights protection. For instance the plan for the Greater Middle East, which has been drafted by the US administration and dedicated to the cooperation in an area, extending from Afghanistan to Mauritania, is grounded on the three following issues: promoting good administration and democracy, economic opportunities expansion and constructing a society of awareness (Jeffreys 2013).

Even while taking into account the fact that this plan was already shelved, there is an option of tracing the strategic guides from this plan to the new order in the world, where the reproduction of the bloc against bloc ideology is issued alongside with the same lines as it was done in the timeframes of the cold war. In such context, the following key words of the strategic planning are expected to emerge equal opportunity, female emancipation, awareness and access to information.

One of the most essential European Union projects, concerning the Arabic-Mediterranean countries – the European partnership, is mainly developed for establishing the zone of the free trade in the Mediterranean region and in such manner - reinforcing the interrelation between the two cultures. This project may be attributed to the high rate of respect towards freedom and

rights of humans. One of three pillars of this project is represented by these rights maintaining and further development of the democratic tools.

At the same time, additional emphasis should be put on the fact that the issue of women's rights is neglected to be mentioned in the Barcellona Meeting. Only in 2001, six years after the Euro-Mediterranean Project inception, the issues, related to gender were mentioned specifically for the first time during a partnership meeting in the concluding comments.

While taking in account the fact that the women condition' improvement has become an issue of flag-waving within the world redefining, it is possible to witness the women's rights renegotiation, which broadens out into a greater debate concerning the relationships between individuals, cultures, and communities (Mir-Hosseini 1999).

Cultural Relativist and Universalistic theoreticians make claims, concerning defining the particular rights, which are to be guaranteed to females. It is accused by the first group of sacrificing females to patriarchal subjection under the auspices of cultural pluralism and traditional cultures defending. In accordance to such approaches, the cultural prejudice widespread is tending to placing the Moslem women into the cultural membership cage, while considering them as the custodians and representatives of specific cultural identity (Rhouni 2010).

Philosophical Approach

Towards Female's Rights Protection

The cultural relativism' supporters make the following replies to their critics - the concept of equality, which is usually adopted for discussing the question

of the female's rights stems from a rights' conception, which are built up around a following subject – the one, which is nothing more than neutral, asexual, with no social membership and without color.

That is why, currently, the Moslem woman' condition, the process of her emancipation in her native country and the country she migrates to – are the factors, located at the top of an iceberg. Thus, the dynamic interplay of these factors cannot not be regard to the woman only. Beginning from the specific terms of life for of Moslem women, the set of the questions rearing the interwoven and complex patterns of respect for diversity and universal rights recognition, emerges (Mir-Hosseini et al 2013).

The tension between a human rights' prospective universalizing and the culture-specific practices tutelage, that deny the set of the universalizing demands, is the major characteristic of the debates, concerning the female's rights in the Mediterranean area. There are the two sides between which the debates, concerning the gender shuttles is conducted – traditional cultural rights' defense and the protecting the right for escaping from traditional communities (Gellner 1995).

It is essential to put an emphasis on the fact that that inside this significant-scale debate, where the often exclusion of the interested parties takes its place, a new point of view, directed for conciliating the feminist demands and Islamic values is emerging in the global scales – both in either in Moslem countries and Islamic Diaspora. The significant share of the scholars and activists as Islamic feminism refers this movement.

Emancipation of Islamic women

It is argued by the Islamic feminists that the process of emancipation of women should not necessarily occur through one's own culture abandoning in favor of Western culture ideas and Western values from the perspective of women's rights (Moghissi 1999).

Some roles or institutions that appear to be forms of discrimination or oppression, such as hijab wearing, may be considered as identifying practices and forms which are capable of women's power enhancing in the family or community. Since the late 1980s, increased quantity of both females and males are rereading Islam textual sources, hadith and Koran in particular. It is proved in such manner that those inequalities, which are fiqh-bedded are neither divine will manifestations nor cornerstones of an irredeemably backward social system; rather, they are human constructions.

Additional emphasis should be put on the fact that the Islamic feminists, as the Asma Barlas from Pakistani, Iranian Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Amina Wadud - Afro-American, represent the way of how the very essence of divine justice is contradicted by such unequal constructions - as it is revealed in the Koran.

Additional emphasis is put on the of spoiling the sacred texts of Islam's by their interpreters' ideologies.

In accordance to these ideologies, every right is granted by Islam to females and in such manner, the gender equality is supported. At the same time, as the time has passed, male elites will have distorted the interpretations of Divine and afterwards, patriarchy was sustained by them in the name of Koran. Such elites have misapplied and misunderstood Sharia. It is argued by

Islamic feminists that currently in order to obtain women's rights, it is essential to come back to the gender justice Islamic message and to fight against Islamic orthodoxy.

Even while taking into account the fact that among those, who are referred as Islamic feminists, there is a set of the differences of identities and positional ties. The idea of considering them as self Islamic feminists is refused by some of them due to the fact that feminism is considered by them as product of Western world.

This label is rejected by opponents of such approach since they integrate their struggles into the universal movement of feminists, and they do not consider that there is a need of referring to Islam, even in the case if they are Muslim believers.

Finally, it is essential to refer to the fact that Margot Badran has particularly underlined in the scope of her studies that it is essential to remind that Islamic feminism represents the global phenomenon: it is not the product of Eastern or Western cultures. Indeed, it transcends West and East.

As it has been already claimed, Islamic feminism has emerged at various places around the globe among the females inside their own countries, whether they be from old established communities of minorities or from the countries with Muslim majorities (Pepicelli 2010).

Additional emphasis should be put on the fact that Islamic feminism is also increasing in the convert communities and Muslim Diaspora in the West. In fact, in the case of depicting Islamic feminism' geographical map, it is possible to see that it is represented in different countries all over the world.

Conclusion

As it is shown by Martha Nussbaum, adopting the females point of view on the set of different issues, means applying the most severe and rigorous test to the policies of the public.

Quite rightly, it is stated by Seyla Benhabib, that it is a correct approach to consider feminism as a form of philosophy of deconstruction. A background for the epistemological assumptions, discussion the subject, ethics and politic is proposed by “ Hermeneutics of suspicion” – in accordance with eth statement, made by Paul Ricoeur.

Thus, while taking in consideration the set of the perspectives towards the gender issues consideration, discussed above, it is possible to make a statement that gender itself becomes an essential category for historical analysis. In addition, it may be considered as an interpretative variable for convicting an analysis of the political and social aspects of the Mediterranean.

The rights of females in the area of South-Eastern part of the Mediterranean, both as they exist in countries of emigration and in Moslem countries, in the same manner as the imagined way for setting down these rights and their receiving, processing and using by organizations and governments, becomes more and more conceptual issue for interpreting the stakes and challenges of the Mediterranean reality. Either a geo-cultural and geopolitical areas poised on the brink of being a zone of destabilization and continual disorder or becoming a laboratory for new relationships experimenting is located between both sides of the basin.

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