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16

A manipulação xenófoba e política dos direitos das mulheres

Centro de Estudos Sociais

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A MANIPULAÇÃO XENÓFOBA E POLÍTICA
DOS DIREITOS DAS MULHERES

ORGANIZAÇÃO

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Introduction

It is generally agreed that references to women's rights have often been instrumentalised for furthering political agendas, nationally and internationally. Sadly, not all concerns with women's rights are meant to further democratic causes. More often than not, appeals to women's interests, freedoms, and bodies serve as justifications for ethically and democratically problematic goals. The idea for this special number of *e-cadernos ces* came from a workshop with the same title organised under the aegis of the "Gender Workshop Series" of the Centre for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra in 2012. Júlia Garraio, Teresa Toldy and I invited a number of scholars to reflect on the ways in which public discourses about what are generally labelled "problematic cultural practices" – the public use of various forms of the Muslim veil, female genital cutting, or the institutionalisation of religious family law within Western democracies – often did not take into account women's voices and frequently used them to put a stop to migration, justify foreign intervention in a sovereign state or politically exclude certain groups from participation in decision-making. What is more, many times such discourses confront many women with a tragic – and unnecessary – choice between their rights as individuals and their cultural allegiance. The hope of the organisers was that, through constructive dialogues, the participants would overcome the two radically opposite positions that currently dominate public debates: a universal and aggressive form of liberalism, at one extreme, and a cultural relativism that requires us to suspend out moral judgement, at the other extreme. On the one hand, some militant liberals pose as concerned feminists and fight to "liberate" the "poor women" from "their culture," without any sensitivity for the value of the cultural practices for the women concerned. On the other hand, relativists often and too easily relinquish the responsibility to formulate an informed, complex critique of certain practices and institutions that prevent women from exercising their rights and participating in the life of the political community.

The presenters at the workshop unpacked the complex issues associated with such debates and concluded that the polarization of the public sphere around women's rights

had a negative impact on the quality of the public deliberation and, more importantly, on the lives of those concerned. First, the internal complexity and the multiplicity of functions that cultural practices fulfil for women were dismissed as irrelevant. The idea that religion could have any positive role in the lives of these women is dispelled as irrational or implausible. The autonomous, Western woman is, more often than not, represented as a model that women from "backward" societies should aspire to. This amounts to a reductionist, culturally insensitive, paternalistic move. Secondly, the non-cultural factors (economic, geopolitical, environmental) that affect the lives of women may became invisible. The story commonly told is about "their" being victimised by "their" culture and religion. The structure of the global economy, international or domestic conflicts and climate change are seldom taken into consideration when analysing the fate of "disadvantaged women." Third, under the pretext of defending women rights, imperialist, xenophobic and racist agendas oftentimes get promoted. As mentioned above, women's rights – not necessarily women's voices – make is justifiable for the governments of Western states to make decisions that affect them and their communities a great deal. Fourth, the ways in which women exercise agency within their cultures frequently becomes invisible. It becomes inconceivable, for a certain brand of Western feminism, that women might exercise any sort of meaningful decision-making outside the confines of the generous West. And fifth, high levels of violence against "emancipated" women in the "developed world" are, again and again, ignored. Criticising the oppression of women elsewhere makes some "good liberals" make self-righteous statements about how far they have made it in the struggle for emancipation, forgetting the structural violence that women in the West still face in the 21st century.

Encouraged by the interest sparked by the workshop, we launched a call for papers that addressed these thorny issues from a variety of perspectives and disciplines. We enlarged the scope of the call to include broader political manoeuvres to mobilise women's rights for political goals. The result is a set of thought-provoking, insightful articles that tackle these themes in ways that add important layers of complexity to the debate. The articles look at a variety of contexts (domestic, migratory, international and domestic war) and focus on the use of women's rights for political purposes by the media, domestic governments and international organizations. The instrumentalising discourses that emerged from the analysis are not, however, limited to journalists and decision-makers. They permeate the public culture of contemporary democracies in ways that can only be detrimental to women's equal participation as full citizens.

In what follows, I will briefly introduce the contributions to this number. The importance of women's rights for building antagonistic cultural identities, the manipulation of women's concerns for undemocratic agendas, and their representation as lacking political and

cultural agency emerge again and again in all articles and give coherence to this special number. Due to the international political context, most articles deal with the ways in which Muslim women's bodies and rights have been instrumentalised for political purposes. The editors of this number want to clarify that, although such phenomena are currently more prominent in public and academic debates, the manipulation of women's concerns is not exclusive to this group.

Arik offers us a historical reconstruction of the conflict between two rival understandings of women's freedom in Turkey: the Islamist and the republican. She challenges the dichotomic thinking that links the veil with pre-modernity and Western dress with freedom and unmasks the instrumentalization of women's bodies and dress for furthering these opposite political agendas. Arik demystifies the veil through a reconstruction of the ways in which they were used historically in Muslim societies. She challenges embedded ideas about its oppressive character but also offers an analysis of its sexualised nature and its relationship with issues of honour, issues that are not always in tune with women's interests and rights. Controversially for some, Arik critically shows how the republican discourse can be as oppressive to women as the religiously inspired one. She writes: "Although they might seem contradictory, constructions of the Republican woman and of the headscarved woman are embedded in the same heterosexual matrix that ascribes women with traditional roles of femininity, sexual modesty, and honour." (p. 27). Western dress co-exists with a common sense that relegates women to the private sphere. Oftentimes, women use the veil as a means to manifest their religious identity and this presupposes agency and deliberation. Through this nuanced article, Arik encourages us to think discriminately and avoid the pitfalls of dichotomic thinking about women's conditions.

Toldy also looks into the way in which discourses about Muslims in general, and Muslim women in particular, are played out in public debates within a democratic society, Portugal. The author uses discourse analysis to critically engage with the media coverage of a controversial statement by the Cardinal of Lisbon, regarding the "dangers" associated with marriages between Portuguese women and the Muslims who have historically been living in Portugal. The rigorously researched and insightful article reveals how the statement itself, as well as the way in which the Portuguese media reported it, display a Manichean vision of "good Christian" versus "bad Muslims," of "us" versus "them." The Muslim community is abusively portrayed as hermetic and disingenuous in its dealings with the Catholic majority. Most importantly, the Cardinal of Lisbon, as well as the newspapers that reported his statements, resort to a predictable manoeuvre: they appeal to women's freedoms in order to caricaturise and vilify the different other, the Muslim. In order to capture the audience's attention, the cardinal and the journalists alike reinforce

the idea that the brutalisation of women is inherent to the Muslim culture. A stark warning is launched about the fact that marital alliances between "their men" and "our women" are fraught with problems. This is why any Christian woman considering marriage with a Muslim man should be aware that trouble lies ahead and that, once she enters "their" culture, nobody can save her. Sadly enough, this type of vilification permeates the wider perception of Muslims in Portugal and is reproduced unreflectively by the media.

The kind of dichotomic and monolithic thinking is not exclusive to the Portuguese case. **Giorgi** shifts our attention to the migratory context. In her article on the representation of migrant women's lives to Italy, she analyses 634 articles published in Italian newspapers between June 2005 and July 2012 in order to highlight the way in which issues of fertility and sexuality dominate the public discourse on the immigrant woman. The public discourse does seem to be more differentiated than in Portugal, with the left-right distinction crucial for the position journalists adopt on the topic. On the right, migrant women reproductive behaviours are seen as ignorant, irresponsible and strictly determined by their country of origin. Concerns over different understandings of "proper" sexual behaviour by migrant women lead journalists to affirm the superiority of Western women's freedoms over the plight of women whose cultures oppress them. They are also feared as vehicles of a de-italianization of Italy. Their attitudes – unequivocally determined by their culture or religion – constitute a sufficient reason to put a stop to multiculturalism and immigration. On the left, analysts fall prey to the chimera of the Western woman's emancipation and make self-determination the test for migrant's women's integration in the Italian society. While deploring the kind of painful adaptations and hardships that migrant women face in the host country, Italy, left intellectuals tend to reinforce the problematic idea that the only life worth living is the autonomous life. Thus, in various ways, discourses on both the left and the right contribute to the alterisation of the migrant women and to seeing them merely as victims, never as agents. Their cultural and/or economic subordination is read as their main characteristic.

Agboola's contribution remains within the confines of a migratory context and takes issue with the Canadian government's decision to ban the wearing of the niquab from citizenship ceremonies. Two goals guide the author: first, proposing a normative account of why the niquab is not in tension with Canadian values and second, a criticism of the undemocratic process through which the decision to ban the head-dress was reached. Through a nuanced analysis, Agboola shows that wearing a niquab is not synonymous with being oppressed by one's culture. Like Arik, the author outlines the multiple functions that the niquab can play in the life of a woman, emphasising its role in securing her cultural and religious identity. Failure to recognise the Muslim woman's need for social respect and recognition can lead to great distress for those affected. Using Bouchard and

Taylor's account of reasonable accommodation, Agboola offers us normative reasons why the niquab should not be banned from citizenship ceremonies: it is not in tension with equality clauses and allowing it does not impose undue hardship on the government. He speculates that the exclusion of niquab wearers from citizenship ceremonies might not have passed had the decision been made in an inclusive manner. Based on an exclusionary, undemocratic process of decision-making, a process in which the voices of Muslim women were never heard, the Canadian government established that the wearing of the niquab contravened Canada's endorsement of gender equality. And this is, argues the author, where trouble begins: in the silencing of those whose rights are at stake.

Garraio's article takes us to conflict zones and explores the strategy of using crimes committed against women as justificatory tools for the warring parties. The author tackles the ways in which wartime rape has been depicted by two international media outlets – BBC and CNN – during the conflict in Libya. Through careful and detailed analysis, she shows how these two agencies focused on reporting those cases of war rape that helped justify the allies' intervention in Libya. However, this is not the whole story. In addition to choosing to emphasise certain types of victims and perpetrators, BBC and CNN sent another, subtler, message about the "culture" of a Muslim society. Garraio argues that the outlets put a great emphasis on women's failure to report having been raped, a fact they too easily explained by blaming "their culture": in the eyes of Western journalists, women did not report rapes for fear of cultural opprobrium and social stigma. Non-Western women belong to "backward" cultures where rape is shameful for the victim and the victim is blamed for her own suffering. The implication is that, unlike the conservative, traditionalist Libyan society, the West has long overcome such regressive ideas. This is another manner, argues the author, of stereotyping the different others and relegating them to an inferior or backward status. And, as in the articles discussed above, it is women's bodies, rights and interests that are invoked, while their voices are sometimes framed to suit certain political interests.

In contradistinction to the articles discussed above **Cunha** and **Nicholls** share a concern with solutions. While mainly critical, these two pieces also seek to propose tentative solutions to our conundrum. Cunha highlights the colonisation of Timorese national foundational myths by heroic men, to the exclusion of heroic women. To the extent that women are included in the national foundational narrative, they are included as subordinate, essentially private persons. Through a series of four theses, Cunha proposes an alternative narrative of the national struggle for independence, based in the experience of a politically engaged woman, Bi-Murak. Such a woman-centred narrative is more conducive to a democratic future, where internal differences can be engaged productively. Her exercise in reconstruction is meant to rescue women from their secondary role as

political actors and recuperate them for the post-conflict Timorese imagined community, and not only.

Nicholls's paper tries to unpack the nature of abusive relationships by using insights from Fanon's analysis of the colonial state. Her grim, yet hopeful contribution makes for a great closing contribution to this number. The author builds a provocative parallel between the structural oppression of colonised people and the structural oppression of women. She writes: "Fanon's analysis seems to me to provide the most fruitful theoretical bridge between the violence of abstraction that allows legislation guaranteeing women's bodily integrity to become a political football and the structural violence that marks the everyday lives of women (and their male allies) who survive and resist the gendered violences of sexual assault and intimate partner abuse." (p. 175). Fanon is helpful in making us see both the overt and the hidden faces of oppression. The solution, Nichols argues, lies with grassroots mobilisation and the building of alliances. Yet, without a clearer understanding of how oppression works and without solidarity between social actors, no change in the plight of abused women, present and future, is possible.

The *@cetera* features a set of insightful testimonies by Osman Tekin and Lisa Gabriel, two young people involved with a Youth Centre in Berlin, a centre where cultural differences are negotiated daily in an atmosphere of respect and mutual support, against the background of a public culture fraught with stereotypical images of immigrant men and women. The contributions by Tekin and Gabriel highlight the practical nefarious effects of Manichean thinking. Speaking from experience, the two interviewees elaborate on how stereotypes of both Muslims and Westerners negatively influence the lives of the children and teenagers they have been working with. These negative effects can be felt in terms of their identity, their sense of the social world and the possibility of intercultural dialogue. The interventions by these two activists represent an important and necessary supplement to the theoretical reflection in the academic articles. It serves as a reality check, it shows the salience of the topic today, and helps us calibrate our prospects for a more democratic and inclusive future.

It is the editors' hope that this thematic number constitutes a valuable contribution to meaningful debates about women's rights and identities, debates that must continue in more productive directions from now on. Changing the terms of the debate from a dichotomic, stereotypical understanding of "us" v. "them" is, however, a prerequisite if we are to avoid reductionist visions of democratic politics.

Mihaela Mihai

SPEAKING OF WOMEN? EXPLORING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN THROUGH POLITICAL DISCOURSES: A STUDY OF HEADSCARF DEBATES IN TURKEY

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Abstract: This paper explores the production of violence against women through political discourses in Turkey. Since the foundation of the Republic (1923), women's bodies have been on the agenda as the markers of secular Turkish modernity. With the rise of political Islam as of the 1970s, the image of the headscarved woman has challenged the construction of "modern Republican woman" and the association of women's bodies with secularism. Especially after the 1980s with the introduction of bans, "the headscarf issue" has intensified and become the embodiment of the clash between political Islam and the official secularist ideology. By drawing on the sexualizing aspects of the headscarf and its significance in the construction of female honour, I will demonstrate how women's bodies are turned into readily available topics for consumption in politics. I argue that headscarf debates have factored into patriarchal discourses, which inflict violence on women on both discursive and material levels. By analysing a few cases on media reflections and art projects on the "headscarf debate", I aim to show how women's bodies become vulnerable to violence through political discourses.
Keywords: headscarf debates, violence, sexuality, female body, honour.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Turkish media has been occupied with rape trials in which final judgments are made in function of the victim's "lifestyle" and the woman's "honour." But beyond these cases, misogynous murders based on the male partner's jealousy or rage have always been part of the news landscape. In 2011, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that domestic and family-based violence on women are notoriously high in Turkey. According to HRW, 42 per cent of women aged 15-60 in urban areas and 47 per cent of women in rural areas had experienced physical or sexual violence by their husbands or partners at some point in their lives (HRW, 2011). The Turkish Statistical Institute's figures show that, in the past five years, there has been a 30 per cent increase in the number of cases of rape and sexual harassment against women (TUIK, 2012). The HWR report also argues

that there are too many gaps in the law and that authorities' infrequently enforce preventive and punitive measures (HRW, 2011).

Other than feminist groups and NGOs, no authority has publicized these figures or taken action to fix the problems they point to. Instead, the political scene has focused on women's need to regulate their behaviour and dress in public space in order to not get assaulted. For example, in February 2011, theology professor Orhan Ceker publicly stated, "Wearing décolleté is asking for rape" (Dekolte giyene, 2011). And in 2012, in the midst of a debate on the introduction of an abortion ban, the mayor of Ankara publicly stated that pregnancies as a result of rape should not be exempt from an abortion ban, since "it is the fault of the mother not the child who has to suffer" (Cocugun ne sucu, 2012). These statements support a gender regime in which female sexuality, as it is defined on and through the female body, becomes the measure of women's honour. The adoption, at a political level, of a patriarchal discourse with normative understandings of female honour justifies and reproduces the enactment of physical and sexual violence on women.

These public and political entanglements with women's dress, bodily rights and sexualities are not new in Turkey. Since 1923, when the Turkish Republic was created, there have been political traditions that have made women's bodies and sexualities into legitimate points of discussion. The secularist state has incorporated the modernly dressed Turkish woman into its political ideology and discourse, while political Islam, especially since the 1970s, has incorporated the headscarved woman into its political discourse. Since then, the headscarf has been persistently categorized as an issue of Islamist identity politics, rather than as a women's issue that pertains to women's sexuality.

Perceived as proof of the Islamization of public space, headscarved women have been stigmatized and become subject to bans and regulations since the early 1980s. Beyond being the symbol of Islamist politics and lifestyle, the headscarf became the embodiment of the conflict between the competing sexual regimes prescribed by Western forms of secularism and Islamist discourses in Turkey. Contained within the dichotomist framework of "modern, liberated Republican woman" and "religious headscarved woman", headscarf debates have formed a significant part of the political rivalries between political Islam and the defenders of the secularist state ideology. These discourses are masculinist not only in the sense that they prescribe and reproduce traditional gender roles for women, but also, in that they rely on constructions of female sexuality and honour that approve of and aggravate violence against women.

In this paper, I focus on the headscarf debates as an issue that has extensively occupied the Turkish political scene in the past three decades. I aim to show how wearing

a headscarf, a practice quintessentially linked to female sexuality and honour, has been constructed as a political matter in ways that enable violence against women. Here, I perceive women's dress as a way of conveying and performing female sexuality and honour on the body (Werbner, 2007); and I discuss wearing a headscarf as a particular dress code. I take adoption of headscarf as a way of ensuring women's sexuality and honour in public space (El Guindi, 1999; Werbner, 2007) which can be forced upon or taken up voluntarily, or neither of these, as any other form of dress can be. I introduce female honour into this debate as a fundamental aspect of the construction of 'proper' and 'acceptable' form of femininity that significantly relies on female sexuality and chastity. Honour, specifically within the context of Turkey and the Middle Eastern societies in general, is constituted as the primary factor in enactment of violence against women. Through this, I demonstrate how debating the propriety and sincerity of headscarf enables violence as it is actually a debate on women's bodies, sexualities and the construction of female honour.

By headscarf debates I refer to the political engagements with the headscarf bans, which, since early 1980s have prohibited women from wearing headscarves at university campuses, state offices such as court rooms and the parliament, in addition to barring their employment by the state. These debates have involved political parties' reactions to the attempts for removal of the ban, discussing either women should wear headscarves or not, and how they should wear it in case they are allowed and where. These discussions have placed women's bodies and their sexualities at the centre of an ideological conflict, and solidified the tensions between the sexual regimes prescribed by republican secularism and by Islamism, as well as the moral claims each ideology can make over women's bodies. Formed within the discursive framework of patriarchy, headscarf debates have increased the discursive and physical tangibility of women's bodies and sexualities, and they have contributed to the gender regime that enables and tolerates violence against women.

In order to demonstrate this, firstly, I will provide an overview of Turkish modernization and secularism, with an emphasis on the construction of gender identities since the early Republican era. Secondly, I will briefly explain the emergence of the Islamic middle- and upper-classes and the parliamentary gains made by Islamist political parties since the 1970s. Through a survey of the trajectory of headscarf bans and debates in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, I will show how women have been collapsed into a "headscarved" vs. "non-headscarved" dichotomy. I will examine, in particular, crises surrounding state protocols and receptions, as well as student reactions and court cases. I will then discuss the semantic field of sexuality, honour, and gendered violence in which the headscarf has been understood. And finally, to demonstrate the connection between headscarf, honour

and violence, I will provide examples from national news media and social media, and artistic reflections on the issue to show how critiques of women's sexualities – such as sexually explicit remarks on headscarved and non-headscarved women – target women's bodies. [1]

TURKISH MODERNITY AND SECULARISM

One of the founding principles and practices of the Turkish Republic and nation-state was the secularization of state practices and the removal of religious items from the public sphere, such as the state, the law, and public space. Reforms were made in civil law and various facets of life. In 1924, the Ottoman caliphate and *sharia* law, two significant institutions of religious regulation, were abolished. Religious schools and orders (*tarikats* and *tekkes*) were also closed as part of the process of regulating this new secular public space by removing religious identities (Ozdalga, 1998). These modernizing reforms included the adoption of Western time and metric measurements, the Latin alphabet, monogamous modern marriages under the purview of law (as opposed to religious marriages and polygamy), and Western clothing (Kandiyoti, 1997).

These were significant components of the Kemalist[2] project, which committed the society and people to a particular way of being. As Saktanber (2002) suggests, the Kemalist reforms of the 1920s had once and for all released the state apparatus from the hold of a "backward looking," traditional, religious order. The new public sphere of the nation-state was imagined and institutionalized as a site for the implementation of a secular and "progressive" way of life (Gole, 2002; Cinar, 2005). This new way of life was built on a dichotomist understanding of public and private spheres, in which religious practices would be confined to the private sphere (such as daily prayers and religious clothing) and public ones (such as funerals) be subject to the control of religious institutions (Arat, 1998; Saktanber, 2002). Turkish secularization was a two-fold process that aimed at clearing the state apparatus—law, education, state institutions, and political parties – from religious references, and of integrating all public religious affiliations and practices under the state's Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA) (Davison, 2003).[3]

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[1] The examples I provide are selections from a wide range of findings based on content research of national news media and social media on the internet for over the period of 2000s. While searching archives of conservative right wing (*Zaman, Akit, Yeni Safak*) and mainstream (*Radikal, Hurriyet, Milliyet*) newspapers, as well as social media such as facebook and eksisozluk, I used key words such as "turban", "basortusu" and "turbanli kadin".

[2] Kemalism is the official ideology of the Turkish state and is defined by the principles of republicanism, secularism, nationalism, populism, statism, and revolutionism (or reformism), as established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Ozcetin, 2009).

[3] DRA, founded in 1924 to monitor and regulate religion, is annexed to the prime minister. As Gokariksel and Mitchell (2005) suggest, it promotes interpretations of Islam that help create a "modern" republican subject that will develop the modern state.

These processes took place under the name of the principle of *laiklik*, which is a direct adaptation of the French word *laicite*. Although largely used synonymously, *laicite* and secularism represent two related, but distinct phenomena. As various studies have explored, in principle secularism defines a negative relationship to religion; the secularization process refers to the decline of the social importance of religion; and a secular state means a "religion-free" state (Asad, 2003; Casanova, 2006; Davison, 2003). *Laicite,* on the other hand, emphasizes the distinction of the laity (people, community of believers) from the clergy (religiously wise, clerical strata) and thus refers to an institutional arrangement between the state and the religion (Davison, 2003). Similar to its meaning and use in the French context, in the Turkish case *laicite* means the separation of state and religious affairs and the state's control over religion (*ibidem*). This can be seen through the abolition of the caliphate and the establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, which embodies a Sunni Islam identity, functions within a state-defined space, and overlooks issues such as the education of religion (Gokariksel and Mitchell, 2005). However, in their contemporary use, the principle of separation of religion and state, *laicite*, is used within the broader context of secularism and secularization processes, which connote a negative relationship to religion.

From its beginning, Turkish modernization and secularization relied heavily on gender identities and sexed bodies in public space. This included the regulation of public attire to erase religion from public space and the introduction of markers of "civilization" to form new "modern and civilized" identities (Cinar, 2008: 898). The idea of "emancipating" women from the "confines of the Islamic patriarchal regime" constituted the general scheme whereby women's public visibility and citizenship rights were defined (Gole, 1997; Saktanber, 2002). The Swiss Civil Code replaced Muslim family law, and women were granted equal rights in inheritance and divorce in 1926, and suffrage rights in 1934 (Arat, 1998; Kandiyoti, 1997). Suffrage was accompanied by nationwide campaigns for women's education and the abandonment of veiling (Parla, 2001).

Modernization of dress constituted a significant part of the modernization of identities and the public space in which these identities were visible. To regulate men's dress, the Ottoman *fez*[4] was banned through a forceful introduction of European-style hats in 1924; and later, in the 1930s, religious attire was restricted to individuals who performed official religious duties. For women, Islamic veiling was discouraged and emphasis was put on modern/western-style apparel, which was deemed to be "proper" (Gokariksel and Mitchell, 2005; Gokariksel, 2009). These measures were geared toward increasing women's

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[4] The *fez*, a felt hat in the shape of a red truncated cone, was widely adopted by men in the late Ottoman period.

presence in the public sphere, a presence seen as emblematic of Turkish modernization (Cindoğlu and Zencirci, 2008).

Nevertheless, the image of the modern and liberated Republican woman has never been exempt from standards of virtue and chastity or her role as the bearer of national values and honour (Parla, 2001). Traditional gender roles were reproduced with an emphasis on women's reproductive roles as mothers, caregivers, and carriers of culture, and national honour (Sirman, 2004). By promoting the new public sphere through women's unveiled bodies, the official state discourse laid the grounds for doing politics through women's bodies, which rendered women's bodies and sexualities as legitimate discussion items.

ISLAMISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF ISLAMIST IDENTITIES[5]

The modernizing and secularizing Kemalist reforms were mainly carried out by middle-class elites (including politicians, bureaucrats, and military personnel) (Keyman, 2007) who distinguished themselves from the parochial elites who remained attached to more traditional, local, and religious lifestyles (Gole, 1997; Gulalp, 2001). The new public sphere was established through the social recognition and status gained through the exclusion of religion and the Islamic life-world (Gole, 1997). This dynamic became the background from which emerged Islamist movements in the 1960s and the "secularist" and "Islamist" encampments that exist to this day (*ibidem*).

Following a large-scale migration to urban centres starting in the 1960s, the Muslim rural population gained access to secular education and upward social mobility (Gole, 1997; Delibas, 2009). Through the neoliberal economic policies of the 1980s,[6] this population also obtained social and political power (Gokariksel and Secor, 2009). A new Islamic middle class emerged and started appropriating the urban space in an effort to fuse it with Islamic lifestyles (Gole, 2002; Komecoglu, 2006; Seckinelgin, 2006). This appropriation includes the emergence of the veiling fashion industry, the establishment of cafés and restaurants serving only non-alcoholic beverages, and everyday spaces such as segregated beaches (Komecoglu, 2006; Seckinelgin, 2006).

Starting with the National Order Party (NOP) in 1969, Islamist political parties have joined the Turkish political scene with an agenda to provide previously rural Muslims with a guide of conduct for daily life and new forms of political expression (Gole, 1997; Gulalp, 2001). Since the dissolution of NOP in 1971, secularist anxieties have helped shut down

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[5] I differentiate between the words 'Islamic' and 'Islamist'. In this paper, Islamic refers to the norms, customs and practices that emerged from sources of Islam (Quran, *hadith*, the life of the prophet); whereas, I use the concept 'Islamist' to refer to particular discourses of Islam, especially associated with political discourses.
[6] These policies include market and trade liberalization, financial austerity measures, increased transnational capital mobility, and the privileging of small-scale businesses more adaptable to flexible markets (Gokariksel and Secor 2009).

Islamic parties, which have continued to exist by reopening under different names (Sakallioglu, 1996). These parties pursued steady growth and gained major electoral success in the mid-1990s and 2000s. For the first time, under the name of the Welfare Party (WP), Islamist politics entered the parliament and became part of a coalition government in 1997 and then closed down. One of the successors of WP, the Justice and Development Party (JDP), has been in power since 2002 as the single ruling party.[7]

The political discourse adopted by Islamist parties has always created significant concern for Kemalists, military generals, and secular-minded civilian politicians (Uzgel, 2003). High on Islamist parties' agendas have consistently figured the dress, mobility, and status of Muslim women as well as the secularists' headscarf ban. Following the 1980 military coup, the government introduced in 1982 the "Dress and Appearance Regulation," which defined the headscarf as a symbol of Islamist ideology and prohibited its wear by public employees in state institutions and on university campuses (Olson, 1985). This development coincided with the increased enrolment of headscarved students at universities and created considerable legal and Islamist opposition to the Turkish state (Gole, 1997). Headscarved students started protesting in front of university campuses. With a visible corporeality that challenged "secular" public space, headscarved women came to be perceived as crucial agents for the daily articulation and reproduction of Islamist ideologies (Saktanber, 2002; Gole, 1997).

HEADSCARF: THE POLITICIZED HEADGEAR

Since the moment Islamist political parties started playing a significant role in Turkish politics, a subtle but strong distinction emerged between "political" and "cultural" Islam (Saktanber, 2002). Anything considered harmful and threatening to the existing secular social order was allotted to the category of "political Islam," whereas that which was considered harmless and tolerable was put into the category of "cultural/traditional" (*ibidem*). This distinction occurred due to the disruption of the trajectory that secularism prescribes for religiosity and its public display through dress. This is a trajectory that anticipates decreasing or more privatized representation of religiosity as parallel to increasing level of education and urbanization, which are taken as markers of modernization. This led to categorization of the headscarf of rural women and housewives as "traditional", while singling university students' and professional women's headscarves out as "political" markers.

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[7] JDP is considered to be the current active Islamist party in Turkish politics; however, in terms of political discourse it cannot be fully identified with the previous Islamist parties. JDP led a much more pro-EU and liberal-economy politics than have previous Islamist parties.

This distinction constituted the background to the aforementioned bans on headscarf and the secular state's efforts to modernize and secularize the public space through women's bodies. In reaction, as of the 1990s, a new style of Islamic dress became popular among the educated, upwardly mobile young women who started playing active roles in Islamist politics (Aktaş, 2006; Gokariksel and Secor, 2009). Termed as veiling-fashion, this new style includes an increasingly diverse range of ways of wearing a scarf combined with overcoats or tunics, all the while adhering at varying degrees to an Islamic code of modesty for women (Gokariksel and Secor, 2012: 2). As opposed to its perception as a sign of women's oppression in "backward" religious regimes, which is essential to the secularization processes and the bans, the headscarf is now adopted in defence of individual rights of religious expression, as well as a symbol of prestige (Saktanber and Corbacioglu, 2008). Accordingly, a veiling industry proliferated, driven by an Islamic middle class that started gaining economic power (Gokariksel and Secor, 2009).

Through 1960s and increasingly into 1980s, legal cases were being made against the headscarf ban. These cases have been situated within the broader context of "human rights" in Western liberalism, which emphasized equal claims to rights and citizenship benefits as well as religious freedoms (Saktanber and Corbacioglu, 2008). University students and women in various professions and occupations argued that the ban violated constitutional rights to freedom of religion and conscience;[8] they filed their case at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). In their articulation, freedom for religious expression through religious outfit, as in this case, was annexed to equal rights education and employment and principle of non-discrimination. In all of these cases, however, ECHR reached a decree stating that the headscarf ban in Turkey was not a violation of human rights and asserted that the state holds the right to make prohibitions in order to protect public order, pluralism at universities, gender equality, and respect to others (Saktanber and Corbacioglu, 2008: 520-521).

The unrest about the headscarf ban in social life pursued a parallel process in the political arena. The 1982 ban was implemented somewhat loosely and inconsistently until the military intervened in politics in February 28th 1997. Also called the postmodern coup, this intervention sought to silence the voice, and shut down the power, of Islamist parties. Rather than a complete usurpation of power as in previous times, this time the military engaged in an education campaign to reverse the Islamization of Turkey through a number of "suggestions" for the government.[9] This coup led to extreme measures against

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[8] These court cases were based on the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, article 8, respect for private and family life; articles 9 and 10, freedom of thought and of expression; and article 14, prohibition of discrimination (Saktanber and Corbacioglu, 2008: 259).
[9] On 28 February 1997, army generals declared Islamist fundamentalism the biggest threat to national security. This was the beginning of a process that led to the closure of WP and the elimination of agents of

the "Islamization" of politics and society and prescribed a strict implementation of the headscarf ban (Cindoglu and Zencirci, 2008).

In 1999, the headscarf appeared in parliament and lead to the highest form of crises that took place on this headgear. Elected as a member of the Virtue Party, Merve Kavakcı attended the parliamentary oath-taking ceremony wearing a headscarf. She faced extreme protest from social-democrat parties, and her action was defined as a bald challenge to *laicite* and secular order.[10]

Similarly, after JDP came to power in 2002, state protocol was challenged by several "headscarf crises." "Reception crises" occurred in 2003, when the presidential palace failed to invite to a significant reception the headscarved wives of JDP deputies (Cindoglu and Zencirci, 2008).[11] In 2007, the presidential election of Abdullah Gul, one of the founders of JDP, was met with massive public protests and became a sensational issue.[12] These elections were remarkable: the previous staunchly Kemalist president, considered "as the last castle of Kemalist establishment," was replaced with someone with an Islamist background who had a headscarved wife. Moreover, in 2008, JDP tried passing constitutional amendments to overturn the headscarf ban in higher education. However, the Constitutional Court of Turkey immediately annulled the amendments on the grounds that they violated the principle of secularism, threatened national security, and undermined the integrity of the Republic's foundations.[13]

During the three decades leading up to 2010s, the headscarf remained one of the most popular and frequently visited topics in politics, media, and public discourse. In addition to the institutional regulations and court appeals, opponents to and defendants of the headscarf in civil society started to organize around the issue.[14] State-level crises found their reflection in society in people's mutual objectification and stigmatization in

Islamist fundamentalism, such as religious organizations, schools, etc. As Cindoğlu and Zencirci (2008) suggest, the 28 February process is significant because it instigated the suspension of normal politics until a secular correction was completed.
[10] This incident initiated a Constitutional Court case that led to the closure of Virtue Party and more significantly objectified the headscarf as an Islamist weapon against secular order (Saktanber and Corbacioglu, 2008).
[11] These cases included also various smaller occasions in different cities when military officials abandoned the meeting upon the arrival of headscarved women. Also, until recently, no headscarved wife of an MP was invited to any reception held at the presidential palace.
[12] Kemalist women's organizations led several massive public protests under the name of "Republican Meetings" as a reaction to his candidacy. These protests were against the JDP's "hidden Islamist agenda" and the possibility of having a headscarved first lady (Cindoglu and Zencirci, 2008; Cinar, 2005). However, in the end, Abdullah Gul was elected president, and his wife, Hayrunisa Gul, obtained privileged access to state protocols and state offices.
[13] At present, bans of religious clothing, especially of headscarves, are not strictly applied on university campuses. Since 2011, headscarved students have been accepted with only a slight change in the Council of Higher Education's regulations, and without amending the constitution (Universitede artik, 2011).
[14] On the side of the Kemalists were the Association of Kemalist Thought (Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği), the Association for the Support of Modern Life of Turkey (Türkiye Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Vakfı), and the Association of Republican Women (Cumhuriyetci Kadınlar Derneği). On the Islamist side were organizations such as Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform (Gökkuşağı Istanbul Kadın Platformu), Capital Women's Platform (Baskent Kadin Platformu-BKP), and Women's Rights Association against Discrimination (Ayrimciliga Karsi Kadin Haklari Dernegi-AK-DER).

public space. On TV and in print media, women's bodies and the ways women should or should not wear headscarves became objects of debate.[15]

These debates are constituted of political discussions in the parliament and in media amongst representatives of political parties. As I demonstrated through review of the abundant scholarly literature on headscarf debates, they were centred on the main question of whether or not headscarved women could enter university campuses, courtrooms or the parliament building as MPs; or how the acceptable style of headscarf should be. As heated discussions took place at the level of politics, the effects trickled down to different layers of social organizations, activists and associations as well as to everyday conversations. These debates emerged from competing interpretations of religious expression and proper representations of female body in public space in the respective domains of Islamist and secularist socio-politics.

SEMANTICS OF THE HEADSCARF

Studies on the meanings and cultural significance of the practice of wearing a headscarf, cross culturally and generally referred to as veiling, are inexorably rich. Various scholars of gender and Islam have studied and complicated the story of the "veil"[16] by introducing the culturally divergent and historical reasons for this practice (whether within religion or not) and by analysing in-depth religious texts. Fatima Mernissi is one of the first theoreticians of gender and Islam to offer a gender analysis of Quranic verses and the *Hadith*s (stories from Prophet Mohammed's life). According to her study, the veil, or *hijab*, was introduced and conceived in the Quran's Sura 33, as a means to regulate sexual relations within the community and to separate the private sphere of Prophet Mohammed and his wife Zaynab from public space and other men (Mernissi, 1991: 85). Fadwa El Guindi's (1999) study also suggests that the veil was used to regulate the Prophet's homestead, which was open to anyone at anytime for advice and counsel. In this sura, Mohammed was ordained to draw a curtain, a *hijab*, between his wives' privacy and the community (El Guindi, 1999: 153).

Besides segregating space and covering women's bodies, the *hijab* was also introduced as a solution to Mohammed's wives' problems in everyday life (Ahmed, 1986). Both Mernissi (1987) and El Guindi (1999) suggest that Mohammed's wives were the first women to adopt the Islamic practice of veiling to mark themselves as separate from "other

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[15] This was also reflected in the marketing strategies of Islamist businesses. For example, in response to the attempts to lift the ban, Tekbir (a major Islamic clothing company) publicized new styles of wearing the headscarf for university students and projected a 30 per cent increase in sales (Gokariksel and Secor, 2009: 10).
[16] I am using the term 'veil' here while referring to the works of the authors who have preferred to use it that way. In Turkish context, and throughout the paper, I use the term headscarf (*başörtüsü*) that is used most generally to refer to the act of covering the head and a form of religious dress.

women," who could be suspected of being slaves or prostitutes. Ayahs 30 and 31 of Sura 24 state that both men and women should control their gaze in public and not reveal their private (sexual) body parts and beauty. And in several other places in the Quran, women are directed to "draw their *jilbab* [a form of head covering] close round them […] so that they may be recognized and not molested" (Quran 33:59 quoted in El Guindi, 1999: 154-155).

Mernissi's (1987, 1991) and El Guindi's (1999) analyses make it clear that the sexual segregation of spaces and the introduction of the *hijab* emerged from the need to regulate everyday life and sexual relations within the first Islamic community during the life of prophet Mohammed. However, El Guindi's (1999) cross-cultural and comparative analysis of the practice of veiling suggests that neither gender segregation nor women's veiling was specific to Islam at that time or to Arab societies. Also, Shirazi (2001) suggests that head covering was a common practice in pre-Islamic Iran as a marker of prestige and a symbol of status for upper-class women (also El Guindi, 1999: 16). Likewise, the practice of spatial segregation of women was established in Hellenic and Byzantine societies and was based on the lower status given to women (*ibidem*: 17). However, in Islam and Islamic societies, these practices became institutionalized through their incorporation into the Islamic texts (Ahmed, 1986).

As studies indicate, these practices are rooted in the regulation of sexualities through control of bodies and spaces. Mernissi puts it succinctly: "Muslim sexuality is territorial" (2003: 489). In her chapter "The Meaning of Spatial Boundaries," Mernissi contends that Muslim sexuality is regulated through a strict allocation of space to each sex and "an elaborate ritual for resolving the contradictions arising from the inevitable intersections of spaces" (Mernissi, 2003: 489). Having an important place in sexual spatial regulations, the concept of veiling gains significance in a three-dimensional perspective: visual, spatial, and ethical (Mernissi, 1991: 93). First, the veil visibly "hides" certain parts of a woman's body from public gaze; secondly, it spatially separates and marks a border between bodies who are considered illicit (because they exist outside of marriage or familial ties); and, thirdly, "it belongs to the realm of the forbidden" (Mernissi, 1991: 93).

This third aspect is crucial to the ways women's bodies are regulated according to Islamic discourses. In her book *Beyond the Veil* (1987) Mernissi argues that within Islamic discourse, the maintenance of social order depends on the spatial confinement of women's bodies. Because of her strong sexuality, the woman poses a threat to the harmony of the *ummet* (the Islamic community) (Rhouni, 2009: 166). In her critique, Rhouni (2009) suggests that Mernissi's take on the degraded status of women in Islamic societies is based on Islam's ready assumption of the power of female sexuality, which needs to remain under the control of men, who are considered mentally, physically, and

morally superior. Although Mernissi's analysis has been critiqued for essentializing Islam and analysing it from a modernist perspective in isolation from wider cultural and patriarchal influences (see Ahmed, 1992, Rhouni, 2009), it raises points about Islam and sexuality that still pose challenges to current Islamic identities and discourses.[17]

Islamic forms of gender segregation and veiling can be said to have emerged from already-existing forms of patriarchal relations and practices and been consolidated into an Islamic discourse. However, since there is no singular Islamic discourse, these practices have never shown a unitary and homogenous quality as is portrayed through Orientalist discourses. In their meanings and practice, gender segregation and veiling have shown considerable variety and inconsistency. As El Guindi argues, *hijab*, veil, *burqu*, *jilbab*, headscarf, and *purdah* have different meanings and connotations that deserve individual focus from a cross-cultural perspective (El Guindi, 1999). It is the Eurocentric perspective that subsumes all forms of veiling under the concept of "veil" or *hijab* and essentializes them as proof of women's oppression within a framework of "*veil-harem-eunuchs-seclusion-polygamy*" (El Guindi, 1999: 3-4).

It can be argued that the totalizing Orientalist view of Islamic societies has not only epitomized the image of oppressed woman, but has also imagined and reproduced an overtly sexualized and eroticized view. For instance, Mernissi (2001) explores the construction of the image of Muslim women in European literature and art as passive sexual objects in harems. Similarly, Yeğenoğlu (1998) investigates the representation of the veil and the Western fascination with veiled women due to their invisibility and inaccessibility to the Western gaze. She suggests that the "veil is one of those tropes through which Western fantasies of penetration into the mysteries of the Orient and access to the interiority of the other is achieved" (Yeğenoğlu, 2003: 543). In the same vein, Shirazi investigates the semantics of veiling by analysing the plentiful visual and printed material on the veil. By focusing on the role of the veil in popular culture, such as its use to advertise Western products, she explores how fixed sexual images of Middle Eastern women have been imagined in the Western mind, often ascribing an erotic meaning to the veil (2001: 11).

Veiling, however, cannot be considered only as a tool for the regulation of women's sexuality or as an eroticized construct in Orientalist discourses. It is also a practice that equips women, and communities, with tools to resist hegemonizing discourses and gendered power relations. Veiling has had a significant meaning in constructions of anti-

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[17] It is noteworthy to emphasize that patriarchal structures constitute the base for not only Islam but all religions, as a main force for shaping social relations and construction of gender identities. However, due to the epistemological standing of Islam as the "other" within the Orientalist Euro-Christian political and social imaginary, gender asymmetries within Islam has always been under the spotlight, as evidenced by the literature I addressed.

colonialist movements and in the development of postcolonial nationalisms. Frantz Fanon's work (1965) on French colonialism and the Algerian nationalist liberation movement presents the veiled female body as a form of resistance to the modernizing and secularizing projects of Western imperialism. Lila Abu-Lughod's early work (1986) on cultural constructions of gender and honour in a Bedouin society also presents examples of how women use veiling to position themselves within a patriarchal social order and how women empower themselves through meanings of sexuality and honour that are inherent to veiling. More recently, Saba Mahmood's (2005) work on the women's mosque movement in Egypt presents a compelling view of women's deliberate adoption of veiling and study of Islamic knowledge to gain power and authority in an area that has previously been reserved for males.

Whether textual analyses of Islamic discourse or examinations of totalizing Orientalist discourses, studies on veiling converge on one point: veiling's sexualizing aspects. As intended by the Quranic verses, as a concept for sexual spatial regulation, and as an aspect of women's dress, the veil has publicly marked the boundaries of sexual interaction in public space and on women's bodies. As Mernissi mentioned in her three-dimensional analyses, the veil connotes what is forbidden: a woman's sexual privacy. It is a practice that "underscores the sexual dimension of any interaction between men and women" (Mernissi, 2003: 491). If we put it another way, veiling is a practice that underscores what we consider to be female honour.

As I will describe in the next part, the concept of honour is intrinsically connected to the regulation of sexual space and behaviour, which in the case of Islamic discourse, becomes synonymous with the veil. Explanations that refer to Mohammed's life indicate that the veil was intended to secure women's privacy and "decency" in public space. European fantasies of unveiling the Oriental woman are symbolically connected to a desire to break the honour of women and, thus, to rupture the sexual social order that the community depends on. Even though they are effaced from today's public political discourses, moral crises related to the headscarf conflict in Turkey have emerged from the moral claims veiling makes through its regulation of female sexuality and honour. If the headscarf conflict in Turkey is a moral one, as I will argue, it is because of the veiling practice's regulation of sexuality and honour of women and the moral claims made through women's bodies.

HONOUR

In 2008, during the debate and controversy caused by JDP's proposal to amend the constitution to remove the headscarf ban at universities and in public employment, one of the prime minister's advisors, Cuneyt Zapsu, said, "Asking a woman to take off her

headscarf is the same thing as asking a woman on the street to take off her panties."
(Turbanini cikar, 2008) Out of all the controversial statements made during this debate,
this was the most explicit reference to the sexualizing aspects of the headscarf and its
significance for a woman's honour. More significantly, this statement underscored the
potential of sexual violence that is inherent in the headscarf debates, a form of violence
that cannot be dissociated from the construction of honour.

Studies on gender and honour, and the relationship between them in Turkey and
surrounding geographies, almost unexceptionally look at their significance within the
context of violence against women. As a concept so central to constructions of female
sexuality in Turkey, honour subsumes all the cultural codes and meanings that enable and
justify a violence that seeks to control women's bodies. As Sirman (2004) contends, the
concept of honour pertains to both men and women, and it refers to one's ability to live up
to the standards of femininity and masculinity. However, because of the asymmetries in
the social construction of gender, a man's honour is measured by his ability to undertake
his social responsibilities and to control his sexuality and that of the woman he is
responsible for (Sirman, 2004: 44). On the other hand, a woman's honour is linked only to
her sexuality, and it is defined within the private sphere in which she belongs (Akkoc,
2004). In this context, female honour becomes a key determinant in women's
experiences, because social constructions of love and honour place women in a position
that requires controlling their sexuality (being chaste) and demanding them to be sexually
accountable to the family and even to the community (Sirman, 2004).

The most common phenomena through which honour and violence have been
examined are honour crimes and domestic violence. Within the Turkish context, "honour
crime," and more specifically "honour killing," is used as a "generic term to refer to the
premeditated murder of a preadolescent, adolescent or adult women by one or more male
members of the immediate family or the extended family" (Sev'er and Yurdakul, 2001:
964-965). Upon suspicion or proof of a victim's sexual impropriety, family members form a
family council to decide on the woman's punishment—death in the case of honour killings
(Sev'er and Yurdakul, 2001). However, even though various forms of sexual violence such
as domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape are also defined as honour crimes,
they cannot be limited to the concept of honour alone. In her analysis of the social
conditions that produce honour-related crimes and domestic violence, Sirman (2004: 39)
refers to these crimes as an "infringement of women's human rights, including their right to
work, to travel, to their own bodies, and finally their rights to life."

The problem with honour killings and the reason they persist is that they are
considered "traditional" and thus perceived as doomed to disappear with the advancement
of modernity, education, and progress (Sirman, 2004). However, as Sirman (2004)

suggests, in postcolonial nation-states the notion of honour is reproduced in the new subject and is still based on "traditional" notions of femininity and female sexuality. The state supports the construction of gender identities through law, and since honour is considered a constitutive element in the making of society, honour crimes are perceived as an extension of the protection of virginity and gender values essential to the maintenance of the social order (2004).

In her study on forced virginity examinations in high schools in Turkey, Parla shows how the state defended these examinations as "a vital means of upholding 'our practices, customs, and traditions'" (Parla, 2001: 67). Until 2004, the Turkish penal code assigned reduced penalties to perpetuators of most honour-related crimes on the legal basis of "grievous unjust provocation," "which refers to a situation when a woman is suspected of bringing dishonour to her family as having provoked her murderers unjustly" (Sirman, 2004: 41). This gender bias is even more obvious in the categorization of attacks on the body as breaches of individual rights only when a male body is attacked (Parla, 2001: 77). As Parla (2001) puts it, attacks on the female body are considered an infringement, not of individual rights, but of the family order.

In judgements of sexual violence cases, discourses associating women's dress with her honour and agency have been prominent. Wolf (1997, cited in Entwistle 2000: 22) gives examples of rape cases in the United States, where (except in Florida) lawyers can legally cite the victim's dress at the time of the attack and whether or not the victim was "sexually attractive." The patriarchal discourse that is pervasive in the court system puts women in a position where they can be blamed for "asking for it" because of how they were dressed at the time of the attack (Entwistle, 2000; Moor, 2010). From this perspective, veiling in general, and the practice of wearing a headscarf specifically need to be considered in their efficacy in either "provoking" or "deterring" sexual assault or attacks. As Secor's (2002) research on migrant and working-class women in Istanbul also demonstrates, women use the headscarf to avoid harassment on the streets and to protect their honour in public.

By covering body parts that are considered as private and sexual, the practice of wearing a headscarf or veil embodies certain codes of honour, which, in most cases, become the criteria that determine the range of women's experiences – from being respected to being harassed. As demonstrated by research on Islamic texts, the initial intention of putting on a veil, or headscarf, conveys certain meanings on the female body, defines a "decent and honourable" female identity, and draws the boundary between public and private on the body of the female subject. Thus, contesting the propriety of such practice, as is the contestation of any form of female dress (such as the mini-skirt),

puts women in a morally obscure space where their sexuality becomes questionable, thus open to violence.

FROM HEADSCARF DEBATES TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A FEW EXAMPLES

When looking at the conflict between secularism and Islamism, it is important to acknowledge that both regimes and the practices they endorse (veiling/unveiling), operate by defining and debating female sexuality, honour, and privacy. During the past three decades, especially since political Islam started posing "threats" to the secular order, perceived discrepancies between these sexual regimes have become sharper and more visible. As Cinar points out (2008), the headscarf becomes a subversive force in the secular public sphere, because it asserts its own unconventional and non-secular (Islamic) norms of privacy and sexual modesty. Secularist norms, on the other hand, assert different public-private boundaries by specifically leaving the hair and neck, which are considered private aspects of female embodiment, open to public gaze (Cinar, 2008: 903).

Whenever the "issue of the headscarf" has been on the public agenda (whether in parliament, in public political discourse, in newspaper columns, or in the claims of various NGOs and feminist groups), its tension has become part of everyday life, too. As I observed from my surroundings and in the national news media, it became all too easy to pass judgement on a headscarved woman and to ask if she was sincere in her adoption of the headscarf or if she is using it just as a tool for Islamist politics. Thus, headscarved women became objects of attention and surveillance in terms of their congruence with the entirety of Islamic principles of sexual modesty.

A picture of a headscarved woman that has been circulated in emails and on social media in the past few years exemplifies this objectification. In this picture, there is a woman sitting on grass by a lake. She is wearing a black top, a black headscarf, and denim trousers. The photo, taken from behind, shows the backside of her belly, revealing her underwear at the waistline and a little part of her buttock cleavage. The important part of the picture is the caption: "She will burn in hell for 80 years if a single string of her hair shows, that's why she has to cover her hair. She is waiting for a new *fetwa*[18] to cover her ass!"

This kind of moral outrage against women's "inappropriate" dress is not an uncommon phenomenon. Joan Scott's work on headscarf conflicts in France provides an enlightening account of the "string affair" in which school girls whose thongs were visible at the waistline were sent home (2007). However, in the case of the headscarved woman whose G-string or thong is visible at the waistline, the critiques point at the inconsistency

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[18] Religious ruling.

between the moral claims made by the headscarf and the woman's dress style, perceived as sexually provocative. The persistence of the headscarf and the right-to-wear question in political debates makes headscarved women open to public scrutiny and despise. Similarly, this makes headscarved women who drink alcohol or show sexual intimacy in public open to violent remarks in campaigns against the headscarf.

Moral judgements in defence of the non-headscarved women have also been important. For example, in 2008, at the height of the debates surrounding JDP's proposal to amend the constitution to remove the headscarf ban, the major Islamic-dress company Armine launched a new commercial campaign. In large billboards all over Istanbul, Armine showed a beautifully dressed headscarved model, under which we could read, "Dressing is beautiful" (*Giyinmek güzeldir*). This campaign immediately drew considerable attention and criticism. Several columnists (Arman, 2007; Capa, 2007) expressed their unease with the punch line, as it equated dressing only with wearing the headscarf and thus implied that non-headscarved women were naked or not dressed "properly". The commercial campaign functioned within a semantic field in which "non-headscarf" was equated with nakedness, a state that is intimately connected to a lack of morals and honour and that puts women in a place deserving of sexual objectification and harassment.

The stark contrast between the moral claims made by "secularists" and "Islamists" is also reflected in the work of artists who look at the female body and forms of symbolic violence perpetuated on the female body. Neriman Polat, a visual artist based in Istanbul, produces photography and collages on issues such as class- and gender-based social inequalities, the roles of women in society, and violence against women (Polat, 2012). In a group exhibition called "Collective Privacy," Polat displayed her work "The *Hasema*[19] Series." The exhibit sought to draw attention to the changing notions of "privacy" and "collectivity" in a society of surveillance. In their collective statement, the artists placed special emphasis on the notion of privacy that is often referenced through women's bodies (Utku, 2010).

In this exhibition, Neriman Polat's work on the *hasema* questions how conflicting notions of the privacy of women's bodies are being "collectivized." In one of the installation images, Polat juxtaposes body-length images of two models posing for the camera, with a beach in the background. One of the women is wearing a bikini and her head is cut and pasted from a headscarved hasema model. The other woman, standing next to her, is wearing a hasema, but without a headscarf, since the head is cut and pasted from the non-headscarved bikini model. By creating this provocative image, the artist draws attention to the ways the bans on headscarves, the debates on women's bodies, and women's sexual representations become "collectivized." The image of these two women

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[19] A hasema is an Islamic swim suit for women, which covers the whole body and the hair.

portrays the contradictions that are inherent to the ideological conflicts, and it shows that women's bodies and sexualities are at the heart of headscarf debates.

CONCLUSION

Neither the modernly-dressed non-headscarved republican Turkish woman, nor the "Islamist" headscarved women are devoid of moral notions of femininity. Although they might seem contradictory, constructions of the Republican woman and of the headscarved woman are embedded in the same heterosexual matrix that ascribes women with traditional roles of femininity, sexual modesty, and honour. Starting as early as the 1960s, and becoming more persistent into the 1980s, headscarf debates in Turkey have put women's bodies and sexualities under public and political spotlight. Through the headscarf debates, each discourse's idealized image and sexual construction of women's bodies have been further polarized. These debates actively engaged female sexuality and honour, and thus made them matters of everyday discussion and banal aspects of the social dynamics of Turkish society. The increasing number of cases of domestic violence and honour crimes cannot be considered in isolation from the political discourses that reify codes of female sexuality and honour, even when no concrete or direct correlation can be made.

In her work on geographies of slavery and the black female body, Kathryn McKittrick says,

> The point of sale [of the black female body on the auction block] marks the scale of the body as "sellable", thus abstracting human complexities and particularities and discursively naturalizing multi-scalar ideologies that justify local, regional and national violence and enslavement. (2006: 79)

I likewise argue that a multilayered objectification and othering of women, as headscarved or not, is occurring. The discourses over the headscarf allow the emergence of spaces of violence where the female body can be acted upon in terms of its physical integrity, sexuality, and mobility. As demonstrated by the aforementioned cases, the discourse over the headscarf reinforces the control of female bodies through the social construction of female sexuality and honour. It constructs the female body as a scale, which is discussible and measurable, and makes violence possible.

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"Cautela com os amores". Declarações do Cardeal de Lisboa vistas pela imprensa portuguesa

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Resumo: O Cardeal Patriarca de Lisboa, numa tertúlia ocorrida em 2009, teceu considerações sobre o casamento de mulheres portuguesas com muçulmanos e sobre o diálogo com estes. A imprensa portuguesa fez eco destas afirmações, acentuando, fundamentalmente, a questão do casamento, bem como da "situação das mulheres muçulmanas". O presente artigo procede a uma leitura crítica de notícias de jornal, bem como de artigos de opinião e de um editorial sobre o assunto, recorrendo às ferramentas de análise da estrutura textual propostas por Teun van Dijk e por Michelle Lazar. A análise apresentada visa tornar visível a lógica de oposição entre "nós" e "eles", presente nos textos e focalizada na questão das mulheres muçulmanas, bem como argumentações representativas do "feminismo hegemónico".
Palavras-chave: muçulmanos, casamento, mulheres, diálogo, feminismo.

> … the issue of Muslim women,
> a "fantasy within the fantasy"
>
> Geisser (2004: 45)

INTRODUÇÃO

D. José Policarpo, Cardeal Patriarca de Lisboa, foi o convidado da tertúlia "125 minutos com Fátima Campos Ferreira", decorrida no Casino da Figueira da Foz, no dia 14 de janeiro de 2009. O jornal *Expresso* reproduziu a seguinte notícia da Agência Lusa sobre o acontecimento:[1]

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[1] Existe um registo de som e imagem de alguns excertos destas declarações: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xAZokwSl7I (consultado no dia 17 de janeiro de 2013). Trata-se de um discurso em contexto de diálogo com a jornalista e com a plateia, e não de uma conferência, o que poderá contribuir para explicar o entrecortado das frases. Não foi possível aceder às declarações na sua forma completa, visto não estarem disponíveis nem gravações integrais da tertúlia, nem transcrições. O facto de

O Cardeal Patriarca de Lisboa surpreendeu na noite de terça-feira o auditório do Casino da Figueira da Foz ao advertir as jovens portuguesas para o "monte de sarilhos" de se casarem com muçulmanos.

Falando na tertúlia "125 minutos com Fátima Campos Ferreira", que decorreu no Casino da Figueira da Foz, D. José Policarpo deixou um conselho às jovens portuguesas quanto a eventuais relações amorosas com muçulmanos, afirmando: "Cautela com os amores. Pensem duas vezes em casar com um muçulmano, pensem muito seriamente, é meter-se num monte de sarilhos que nem Alá sabe onde é que acabam."

Questionado por Fátima Campos Ferreira se não estava a ser intolerante perante a questão do casamento das jovens com muçulmanos, D. José Policarpo disse que não.

"Se eu sei que uma jovem europeia de formação cristã, a primeira vez que vai para o país deles é sujeita ao regime das mulheres muçulmanas, imagine-se lá", ripostou D. José Policarpo à jornalista e anfitriã da tertúlia, manifestando conhecer "casos dramáticos" que, no entanto, não especificou.

Na sua intervenção, o Cardeal Patriarca de Lisboa considerou "muito difícil" o diálogo com os muçulmanos em Portugal, observando que o diálogo serve para a comunidade muçulmana demarcar os seus espaços num país maioritariamente católico.

"Só é possível dialogar com quem quer dialogar, por exemplo com os nossos irmãos muçulmanos o diálogo é muito difícil", disse D. José Policarpo durante a tertúlia.

Respondendo a uma pergunta da anfitriã sobre se o diálogo inter-religioso em Portugal tem estado bem acautelado, o Cardeal Patriarca sublinhou que, no caso da comunidade muçulmana, "estão-se a dar os primeiros passos".

"Mas é muito difícil porque eles não admitem sequer [encarar a crítica de que pensam][2] que a verdade deles é única e é toda", sustentou.

Sublinhou ainda que o diálogo serve para os muçulmanos, num país maioritariamente católico, "como fazem os lobos na floresta, demarcarem os seus espaços e terem os espaços que eu lhes respeito".

Mais tarde, quase no final de mais de duas horas de conversa e respondendo, na altura, a uma pergunta da assistência sobre a presença muçulmana na Europa,

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não haver acesso a um registo integral das afirmações do Cardeal constitui o obstáculo à análise discursiva das mesmas. É óbvio que estas declarações seriam alvo direto do presente texto, caso existisse um registo completo. Na ausência deste registo, optei por uma análise de material jornalístico gerado em torno das mesmas.

[2] A expressão que se encontra entre parênteses retos foi acrescentada pela Agência Lusa, visto que a frase, no seu original, não faz sentido, como se pode verificar no registo áudio e vídeo já mencionado.

lembrou que a comunidade muçulmana de Lisboa representa cerca de 100 mil fiéis "centrados à volta de três grandes mesquitas" e definindo as relações com o Patriarcado como "habitualmente boas e muito simpáticas".

No entanto, e noutro registo, alertou para a necessidade de existir "respeito e conhecimento" sobre a religião muçulmana enquanto "primeira atitude fundamental" para o diálogo.

"Nós somos muito ignorantes, queremos dialogar com muçulmanos e não gastámos uma hora da nossa vida a perceber o que é que eles são. Quem é que em Portugal já leu o Alcorão?", inquiriu.

"Se queremos dialogar com muçulmanos temos de saber o bê-a-bá da sua compreensão da vida, da sua fé. Portanto, a primeira coisa é conhecer melhor, respeitar", acrescentou D. José Policarpo.

Outra atitude a praticar na relação com os muçulmanos, sublinhou o Cardeal Patriarca é "não ser ingénuo", afirmação que ilustrou com a visão que alegadamente possuem de que o sítio onde se reúnem para rezar "fica sempre deles".

"Os muçulmanos têm uma visão na sua religião que o sítio onde se reúnem para rezar fica na posse deles, é o sítio onde Alá se encontrou com eles portanto mais ninguém pode rezar naquele sítio", disse D. José Policarpo.

Lembrou, a propósito, um "problema sério" ocorrido na Catedral de Colónia, na Alemanha, cedida pelo Cardeal da cidade à comunidade muçulmana local para uma cerimónia no Ramadão.

"Depois consideravam a Catedral posse deles, foi preciso a intervenção da polícia para resolver aquilo […] Não sejamos ingénuos na maneira de trabalhar com eles", argumentou.

Estas declarações, amplamente difundidas nos meios de comunicação social, provocaram polémica, dando azo a notícias, artigos de opinião e editoriais de jornais. No entanto, apesar de, imediatamente após o acontecimento, os jornais terem transcrito na íntegra (salvo o *Correio da Manhã* e o *Diário de Notícias*) a notícia tal como saiu da Agência Lusa, a expressão "cautela com os amores" e as frases que se lhe seguiram ("Pensem duas vezes antes de casarem com um muçulmano. Pensem muito seriamente. É meter-se num monte de sarilhos. Nem Alá sabe onde é que acabam") acabaram por constituir o foco das atenções noticiosas.

O tema do casamento com/de muçulmanos é recorrente na imprensa, no contexto de peças sobre as comunidades muçulmanas na Europa, ainda que apareça associado mais frequentemente ao tópico dos "casamento forçados" (cf. por exemplo, Ehrkamp, 2010;

Joseph e D'Harlingue, 2012; Navarro, 2010; Fundación Trés Culturas del Mediterráneo, 2010; Sian, Law e Sayyid, 2012; Macdonald, 2006; Fekete, 2008). A menção a este tema insere-se, muitas vezes, na lógica que Razack (2004) sumaria no próprio título de um artigo da sua autoria ("Imperilled Muslim Women, Dangerous Muslim Men and Civilised Europeans") e que consiste em argumentar a necessidade de uma intervenção ocidental, "civilizadora", em espaços culturais nos quais as mulheres, supostamente, são brutalizadas por homens que não são capazes de se comportar de outra maneira, pelo facto de serem muçulmanos. De acordo com esta visão estereotipada, as mulheres islâmicas são representadas como "as pessoas talvez mais dignas de dó do planeta e como vítimas de uma religião patriarcal e opressiva: o Islão" (Hasan, 2012: 59).

Importa, pois, analisar a forma como o "mote" ("Pensem duas vezes antes de casarem com um muçulmano"), dado pelo Cardeal Patriarca de Lisboa e selecionado pelos jornais como central, foi tratado e como se enquadra no contexto das peças sobre as declarações do prelado católico, bem como importa verificar se o material abordado reflete ou não uma estratégia de invocação dos direitos das mulheres para reforçar a linha que separa um "nós" (ocidental) de um "eles" (não-ocidentais, "não-civilizados").

Socorrer-me-ei nesta leitura das ferramentas de análise crítica do discurso, tanto na perspetiva de Teun van Dijk, como na perspetiva feminista, sobretudo, a partir de Michelle M. Lazar (2007). O *corpus* será constituído pelas notícias da Agência Lusa (AL) (transcritas no jornal *Expresso* - EXP) e por textos dos jornais *Correio da Manhã* (CM), *Jornal de Notícias* (JN), *Diário de Notícias* (DN), *Público* (P) e *Expresso* acedidos através das respetivas páginas online. Serão analisadas notícias destes jornais sobre as afirmações do Cardeal Patriarca na tertúlia "125 minutos com Fátima Campos Ferreira"; a reação das comunidades islâmicas em Portugal às declarações do Cardeal; a reação da Conferência Episcopal Portuguesa, através do seu presidente; a reação da Conferência Episcopal Portuguesa através do seu porta-voz. Serão ainda analisados três artigos de opinião e um editorial do jornal *Expresso*.

1. CONTRIBUTO DA ANÁLISE DISCURSIVA

Segundo van Dijk (2001: 352) a análise crítica do discurso estuda as formas como "os abusos de poder social, a dominação e a desigualdade se criam, reproduzem e resistem no texto e na fala em contexto social e político" (*ibidem*). Como tal, a análise crítica do discurso identifica e procura explicitar as desigualdades escondidas e veiculadas (muitas vezes, de forma sub-reptícia) nos diversos tipos de discurso. Significa isto também que esta análise está "explicitamente consciente" do papel social dos discursos, focando-se, portanto, sobretudo em "problemas sociais e em questões políticas (2001: 353). A análise crítica do discurso procura explicar as estruturas discursivas do ponto de vista das

propriedades da interação social e, sobretudo, da estrutura social" (*ibidem*), reconhecendo o papel que o poder tem na mesma. Assim, van Dijk define o poder social em termos de capacidade e possibilidade que determinado grupo tem de exercer controlo sobre outros grupos. Do seu ponto de vista, esta capacidade pressupõe um acesso privilegiado a recursos sociais, como "a força, o dinheiro, o estatuto, a fama, o conhecimento, a informação, a 'cultura'" (van Dijk, 2001: 355), ou a diversas formas de discurso ou comunicação pública. A dominação de classe, o sexismo e o racismo constituem, para van Dijk, exemplos daquilo que, segundo a definição de Gramsci (*apud* van Dijk: *ibidem*), se pode classificar como formas de "hegemonia". Esta pressupõe que o poder do grupo dominante se integra em "leis, regras, normas, hábitos" (*ibidem*), gerando um consenso geral, portanto, podendo passar despercebido, porque naturalizado.

Este conceito de poder hegemónico "naturalizado" é igualmente relevante para a perspetiva feminista da análise crítica do discurso, que pretende "mostrar as formas complexas, subtis e, por vezes, não subtis, como pressupostos de género e relações de poder hegemónicas tomados frequentemente como adquiridos são produzidos, sustentados, negociados e desafiados em contextos e comunidades diferentes" (Lazar, 2007: 142). A análise crítica do discurso em chave feminista visa, pois, uma abordagem crítica aos discursos que sustentam uma ordem social patriarcal, na qual as mulheres, enquanto grupo social, são subalternas. Uma das características dos discursos patriarcais hegemónicos consiste precisamente no facto de, muito frequentemente, não parecerem nem aparecerem como tal: muitas vezes, parecem ser "consensuais e aceitáveis para a maioria, numa comunidade" (*ibidem*: 147). Este "consenso" e a perpetuação da relação de dominação apoiam-se em estratégias discursivas que procuram tornar as formas de submissão algo "natural" e do "senso-comum".

Tanto Lazar como van Dijk estão cientes da existência de articulações entre as diversas formas de discurso hegemónico. Para o segundo, esta hegemonia, quando assume a forma de racismo, constitui um "sistema complexo de desigualdades sociais e políticas" que excluem aqueles que são definidos como "outros 'racializados' ou 'definidos etnicamente'" (van Dijk, 2001: 362). Para a primeira, a hegemonia de género cruza-se com outras "categorias de identidade social", incluindo "a sexualidade, a etnicidade, a idade, a deficiência, a posição social e de classe e a localização geográfica" (Lazar, 2007: 141).

Estamos, pois, perante projetos de análises discursivas complexas, nas quais se cruzam relações de poder baseadas em assimetrias étnicas, de género, de classe, de cultura. Segundo Lazar, o reconhecimento da existência de diferentes e diversos mecanismos de poder implica, também, o reconhecimento de que diferentes formas de relações assimétricas podem ter consequências diferentes para grupos diferentes de

mulheres. Como tal, uma análise crítica do discurso em chave feminista deve "sugerir uma perspetiva que é implicitamente comparativa, mais do que universalizante, e atenta aos aspetos discursivos das formas de opressão e de interesses que dividem tanto quanto unem grupos de mulheres" (Lazar, 2007: 149). Neste sentido, a análise feminista do discurso deverá aperceber-se criticamente das relações existentes entre grupos de mulheres, estudando as formas de solidariedade que poderão existir entre elas, face a determinada forma de discriminação, mas também as formas como as mulheres podem ser cúmplices de culturas androcêntricas, "ajudando a perpetuar atitudes e práticas sexistas contra outras mulheres" (*ibidem*: 150).

O reconhecimento da existência de múltiplas formas de articulação entre as assimetrias de género e as diversas relações de poder constitui, aliás, também, um dado adquirido para análises discursivas feministas pós-coloniais, que criticam a certas formas de "feminismo ocidental" a adoção de estratégias discursivas relativamente a "mulheres do Terceiro Mundo" que reproduzem uma hegemonia colonial. Segundo Mohanty (1991), por exemplo, os discursos feministas ocidentais acerca das mulheres do Terceiro Mundo possuem categorias de análise fixas, rígidas e universalizantes que passam por seis afirmações generalizadoras: as mulheres são vítimas da violência masculina; as mulheres são universalmente dependentes; as mulheres são encaradas como sujeitos político-sexuais (tratadas como um grupo homogéneo, sujeito a estruturas de parentesco que determinam a sua existência); as estruturas familiares dessas mulheres são sempre as mesmas, independentemente das culturas a que pertencem; as ideologias religiosas são sempre opressoras das mulheres; as mulheres do Terceiro Mundo têm sempre necessidades e problemas, mas nunca ou quase nunca têm possibilidade de fazer escolhas ou de agir livremente.

A comunicação social também reproduz estes esquemas retóricos hegemónicos. Nas palavras de van Dijk (2009: 150): "os média medeiam entre o texto e o contexto". Não só reproduzem o pensar e agir do contexto do qual resultam, como produzem modelos de pensamento e ação, intervindo, assim, sobre o seu contexto (cf. van Dijk, 1995). Pode, portanto, dizer-se que os meios de comunicação reproduzem e produzem pensamentos hegemónicos, que, ao serem assimilados pelos leitores, resultarão, novamente, em pensamentos e asserções hegemónicas, porque supostamente consensuais.

A análise da estrutura e das estratégias dos média constitui, pois, uma forma eficaz, do ponto de vista de van Dijk (2006), de fazer emergir ao nível micro (de um texto noticioso, de um editorial, de um artigo de opinião) a perspetiva que um grupo dominante tem, em determinada sociedade, sobre o grupo dominado. No caso aqui analisado, procurar-se-á que a análise do corpus textual já referido faça emergir aquilo que Martín Muñoz (2005: 206) designa como "um paradigma cultural consensual", forjado pelas

sociedades ocidentais, acerca do "'Oriente' árabe e muçulmano, baseado numa interpretação culturalista das sociedades islâmicas, explicado a partir de uma perspetiva essencialista e etnocêntrica" (*ibidem*), na qual, como diz Kassam (2008: 71): "Muslim women have become media darlings".

Van Dijk propõe que a análise estrutural dos textos se concentre nas estratégias e nos elementos presentes nos mesmos que podem constituir instrumentos manipuláveis e manipuladores. Do seu ponto de vista, apesar de a análise crítica se concentrar, antes de mais, "nas categorias contextuais" (*ibidem*) do discurso, mais do que nas suas estruturas textuais, um dos seus aspetos fundamentais está relacionado com a identificação da "estrutura dos títulos, dos leads, da organização temática, da presença de um enquadramento explicativo da informação, do estilo e, especialmente, da selecção dos tópicos que se considera valer a pena noticiar" (van Dijk, 1991: 41). No caso do material que pretendemos analisar, espera-se que esta análise estrutural faça emergir o icebergue da manipulação dos direitos das mulheres islâmicas a favor de um discurso de demarcação entre "nós" e "eles".

2. ANÁLISE DO ENQUADRAMENTO DA AFIRMAÇÃO "CAUTELA COM OS AMORES" NO MATERIAL ANALISADO

Apesar da concentração das notícias, editoriais e artigos de opinião relacionados com as afirmações do Cardeal Patriarca de Lisboa na tertúlia "125 minutos com Fátima Campos Ferreira" na sequência de frases iniciada com a expressão "cautela com os amores", como já referido, esta é inserida em peças cujas referências às outras declarações cardinalícias importa analisar, uma vez que o seu conteúdo contribui para enquadrar o enfoque no aviso contra casamentos com muçulmanos. Refiro-me, concretamente, às notícias relativas às reações das comunidades islâmicas em Portugal e da Conferência Episcopal Portuguesa, através do seu presidente e do seu porta-voz. O mesmo acontece com os artigos de opinião e com o editorial que analisaremos.

2.1. TÍTULOS

Segundo van Dijk (1991), os títulos: expressam o tópico principal da notícia. Podem enviesar o processo de compreensão da mesma, já que sumariam aquilo que o jornalista considera mais importante e, como tal, implicam uma margem de subjetividade. Funcionam também como auxiliares de memória, isto é, ficam na memória como o assunto fundamental da notícia. As palavras escolhidas para o título não só "exprimem a definição da situação, como também assinalam as opiniões sociais e políticas que o jornal tem acerca dos acontecimentos" (1991: 53). Portanto, os títulos não só sumariam, como avaliam.

Os títulos das notícias sobre as declarações do Cardeal referem-se todos às afirmações relativas ao casamento com muçulmanos. O EXP, o JN e o CM apresentam no título a expressão do Cardeal: "montes de sarilhos". O título do JN e do EXP é igual, o que faz supor uma fonte comum, provavelmente, a AL: "Cardeal Patriarca alerta jovens portuguesas para 'montes de sarilhos' de casarem com muçulmanos". O P opta por deixar cair a expressão "montes de sarilhos" e titula apenas: "Cardeal Patriarca alerta portuguesas para riscos de casamentos com muçulmanos". Por seu turno, o CM apresenta um título e um subtítulo: "Casar com muçulmanos é 'monte de sarilhos'. Cardeal Patriarca de Lisboa alerta jovens". Observa-se, pois, que todos os títulos enfatizam a declaração de que casar com muçulmanos constitui um risco, "um monte de sarilhos". O CM reforça a ideia, ao apresentá-la como afirmação: "Casar com muçulmanos é 'monte de sarilhos'". De facto, enquanto os outros jornais citam explicitamente o Cardeal ("Cardeal Patriarca alerta…"), o CM afirma que casar com muçulmanos é um "monte de sarilhos" e, em subtítulo, legitima a afirmação: é o Cardeal que o diz. Todos os jornais referidos utilizam no título o verbo: "alertar". O DN trabalha a peça de uma outra forma, como veremos mais adiante. O título escolhido é o seguinte: "Muçulmanos chocados com patriarca" (portanto, a notícia já engloba a declaração da Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa).

A univocidade nos títulos começa a perder-se nas notícias seguintes, relativas às diversas reações às declarações do Cardeal. Assim, o EXP e o P, na notícia sobre a reação da Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa, adotam o mesmo título (fazendo supor, mais uma vez, uma fonte comum – a AL, provavelmente): "Comunidade Islâmica 'magoada' com D. José Policarpo"), enquanto o JN, o DN e o CM, em peças que trabalham conjuntamente a reação da Comunidade Islâmica, do porta-voz da Conferência Episcopal e do seu Presidente escolhem como títulos, respetivamente: "Conselho do patriarca surpreende muçulmanos" (JN), "Muçulmanos chocados com o patriarca (em subtítulo: "Comunidade Islâmica reage com muita ponderação") e "D. José fala em diálogo difícil com muçulmanos. Bispos unidos no apoio ao Patriarca". Notar-se-á a passagem da referência à "Comunidade Islâmica" para a referência aos "muçulmanos", bem como a diferença entre "magoada" e "chocada" (ainda que "com ponderação"). O CM opta por um título que acentua a dificuldade do diálogo com muçulmanos e a ideia de uma "união em torno do Patriarca", como se houvesse lados opostos. Note-se ainda que os jornais que optaram por sintetizar as diversas reações numa peça só optam por títulos relacionados com "os muçulmanos". Por seu turno, o EXP e o P intitulam a peça sobre a reação da Conferência Episcopal dos seguintes modos (com acentuações opostas), respetivamente: "Conferência Episcopal diz que é 'justo conselho'" (referindo-se à

"advertência" contra casar com muçulmanos") e "Conferência Episcopal garante que Igreja 'não tem nada contra' casamentos inter-religiosos" (P).

Por seu turno, os artigos de opinião analisados apresentam também uma maior variedade nos títulos: dois deles referem-se à questão do casamento com um muçulmano, dois outros, não. O Editorial de HM-EXP também não inclui essa referência. Veremos, contudo, que este material também se centra nessa questão.

2.2. SEQUÊNCIA DOS TÓPICOS DAS NOTÍCIAS

A seleção dos tópicos depende da subjetividade do jornalista. E, tal como acontece com os títulos, estes tópicos serão aqueles que terão mais probabilidade de ficar na mente dos leitores. Segundo van Dijk (1991), mais do que a sequência cronológica, o que é relevante nas notícias é a sequência de importância. As notícias são estruturadas de forma a que os temas considerados mais importantes apareçam primeiro. Van Dijk (1991) utiliza a imagem de uma pirâmide para se referir à forma como uma notícia é apresentada num texto. Assim, de cima para baixo, aparece, ao cimo, aquilo que é considerado mais importante e, depois, à medida que o texto vai avançando, tópicos mais específicos e subtópicos, até chegarmos ao nível detalhado, na base da pirâmide.

A primeira notícia sobre o assunto, difundida pela AL e transcrita pelo EXP, o JN e o P, apresenta uma sequência das afirmações do Cardeal que não corresponde à sequência original, como se pode verificar no excerto disponível no youtube.[3] Assim, segundo este registo sonoro, o Cardeal ter-se-á referido primeiro às "dificuldades" no "diálogo com os muçulmanos em Portugal" e a toda a sequência sobre o tema, que termina com a comparação destes com os "lobos na floresta", e só depois terá feito a afirmação que se tornou manchete: "Cautela com os amores. Pensem duas vezes em casar com um muçulmano, pensem muito seriamente, é meter-se num monte de sarilhos que nem Alá sabe onde é que acabam". O registo sonoro parcial não permite reconstituir a sequência das restantes declarações, pelo que teremos aqui apenas em conta este facto: a referência ao casamento com os muçulmanos é posterior à afirmação da dificuldade de diálogo e da comparação dos muçulmanos com lobos.

A inversão da sequência verificável das declarações é reveladora daquilo que a AL e, subsequentemente, os jornais que a citaram, bem como aqueles que optaram por apresentar sínteses das diversas notícias, consideraram ser de maior destaque: a questão do casamento, que aparece sempre como primeiro tópico das notícias sobre as declarações do Cardeal e sobre as reações às mesmas. Assim, a notícia da AL, divulgada no EXP e no P, relativa à reação da Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa apresenta a seguinte sequência de tópicos: no início, diz-se que a Comunidade ficou "magoada"

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[3] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xAZokwSl7I (consultado a 15.01.2013).

com as palavras do Cardeal que "advertiu as jovens portuguesas para o 'monte de sarilhos' de se casarem com muçulmanos". A apresentação do comunicado da Comunidade Islâmica começa no segundo parágrafo da notícia, depois desta referência inicial. O comunicado acentua a existência de "relações fraternas e cordiais" e de um "diálogo frutífero" entre "as duas religiões em Portugal". Volta a mencionar-se que a Comunidade está magoada. Diz-se ainda que o presidente da Comunidade Islâmica, Abdool Vakil, pensa que as declarações do Cardeal devem ser lidas como "uma chamada de atenção para o necessário respeito pelas diferenças". Menciona-se que Vakil afirmou que o diálogo "não será necessariamente uma dificuldade quando estão em causa cidadãos do mesmo país, que, embora professando religiões diferentes, partilham da mesma cultura e interagem na mesma sociedade". Refere-se que Vakil lamenta que em Portugal ainda exista "uma grande ignorância do outro em relação à religião islâmica". O comunicado não faz qualquer referência à questão do casamento.[4] Contudo, ela surge novamente, quando a AL, no fim da notícia, faz um resumo do acontecido no Casino da Figueira. Depois desta repetição, a peça termina com as palavras de D. José acerca da dificuldade no diálogo. Poder-se-á dizer que, para além da prioridade dada à questão do casamento (que não se encontra no comunicado da Comunidade Islâmica), se considera também relevante frisar a dificuldade do diálogo, apesar de o comunicado em causa acentuar que tal não será "necessariamente uma dificuldade".

A notícia da AL, citada pelo EXP, relativa à reação do Padre Manuel Morujão, porta-voz da Conferência Episcopal, centra-se, mais uma vez, na questão da "advertência" contra o casamento com muçulmanos. O porta-voz considera ser "um conselho de imprescindível realismo". Só no quarto parágrafo são referidas as "dificuldades do diálogo, concretamente, com os muçulmanos". A referência ao "monte de sarilhos" aparece, novamente, no antepenúltimo parágrafo da notícia.

Valerá a pena analisar a sequência dos tópicos das notícias dos jornais que optam por apresentar uma síntese das diversas reações, sendo que se reserva a análise do seu conteúdo para o ponto seguinte (2.3). Assim, o DN começa por destacar a frase: "Casar com um muçulmano 'é meter-se num monte de sarilhos…". Em seguida, noticia as reações da comunidade islâmica. No quarto parágrafo, refere a reação do SOS Racismo, seguida de referência à reação da Secção Portuguesa da Amnistia Internacional. Continua referindo as declarações de Fernando Soares Loja (citado como membro da Aliança Evangélica Portuguesa) e, depois, as do Padre Peter Stilwell, responsável pelo Departamento das Relações Ecuménicas e do Diálogo Inter-religioso. Os tópicos subsequentes à citação inicial "meter-se em sarilhos" não mencionam explicitamente esta questão.

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[4] Cf. http://www.comunidadeislamica.pt/webservices/docs/Comunicado.pdf

O JN, por seu turno, inicia a sua súmula noticiando que o porta-voz da Conferência Episcopal considera "um justo conselho de realismo" os "avisos do cardeal", portanto, sem citar a frase, refere-se-lhe. Esta aparece explicitamente no segundo parágrafo, seguida da afirmação da dificuldade de diálogo. Refere-se em seguida a reação do SOS Racismo, do responsável pelo Departamento das Relações Ecuménicas e do Diálogo Inter-religioso, depois, novamente, declarações do porta-voz da Conferência Episcopal e, por fim, as declarações de Abdool Vakil.

O CM começa por dizer que os bispos portugueses não concordam com a ideia de que D. José Policarpo tenha ofendido os muçulmanos pelo facto de ter aconselhado as jovens portuguesas a não casarem com muçulmanos. Seguem-se declarações do Presidente da Conferência Episcopal sobre o mesmo assunto. No quarto parágrafo, volta-se a citar a frase "cautela com os amores" e as suas subsequentes. Em seguida, mencionam-se as declarações da comunidade islâmica e depois, novamente, referências ao casamento com muçulmanos. Os artigos de opinião e o editorial analisados centram-se todos na questão do casamento com muçulmanos.

Resumidamente, as afirmações do Cardeal relacionadas com este tema são tidas como as mais relevantes para todo o material analisado, uma vez que aparecem nos tópicos inicias dos diversos textos. No entanto, como já mencionado, o comunicado da Comunidade Islâmica não se lhes refere. As notícias estabelecem uma sequência discursiva entre as declarações do Cardeal e as declarações do porta-voz e do presidente da Conferência Episcopal, não atendendo ao facto de a Comunidade Islâmica não ter feito quaisquer declarações sobre o tema do casamento. Esta questão aparece relacionada com o diálogo, isto é, as notícias parecem possuir a seguinte lógica explícita: 1. o casamento com muçulmanos constitui "um monte de sarilhos". 2. O diálogo com os muçulmanos é "difícil". Ora parece haver uma lógica implícita que liga uma coisa à outra: 1. o casamento com muçulmanos constitui "um monte de sarilhos" porque 2. o diálogo com os muçulmanos "é difícil", isto é, os "sarilhos" constituem a prova da dificuldade do diálogo.

2.3. SELEÇÃO DE CITAÇÕES DAS DIVERSAS REAÇÕES

A análise da forma como os diversos jornais selecionaram extratos das declarações dos diversos envolvidos parece corroborar esta lógica implícita.

TABELA 1 - Declarações – Comunidade Islâmica

EXP	P	DN	JN	CM
Ficámos de alguma forma magoados com a escolha das palavras do senhor Patriarca de Lisboa		Ficámos de alguma forma magoados com a escolha das palavras do senhor Patriarca de Lisboa	Surpreendida e magoada com a escolha das palavras do patriarca	
Magoada	Magoada			
Relações fraternas e cordiais	Relações fraternas e cordiais			
Diálogo frutífero	Diálogo frutífero			
Ficámos de alguma forma magoados com a escolha das palavras do senhor Patriarca de Lisboa relativamente à nossa Comunidade e ao diálogo que temos procurado com todas as confissões religiosas e, em particular, com as religiões cristãs	Ficámos de alguma forma magoados com a escolha das palavras do senhor Patriarca de Lisboa relativamente à nossa Comunidade e ao diálogo que temos procurado com todas as confissões religiosas e, em particular, com as religiões cristãs			Ficámos de alguma forma magoados com a escolha das palavras do senhor Patriarca de Lisboa relativamente à nossa Comunidade e ao diálogo que temos procurado com todas as confissões religiosas e, em particular, com as religiões cristãs
Uma chamada de atenção para o necessário respeito pelas diferenças e conhecimento das outras religiões, para que qualquer relação seja estável e duradoura	Uma chamada de atenção para o necessário respeito pelas diferenças e conhecimento das outras religiões, para que qualquer relação **consiga se manter** e seja estável	Uma chamada de atenção para o necessário respeito pelas diferenças religiosas e conhecimento de outras religiões, para que qualquer relação seja estável e duradoura	que só pode interpretar como "uma chamada de atenção para o necessário respeito pelas diferenças"	
O que não será necessariamente uma dificuldade quando estão em causa cidadãos do mesmo país que, embora professando religiões diferentes, partilham da mesma cultura e interagem na mesma sociedade	O que não será necessariamente uma dificuldade quando estão em causa cidadãos do mesmo país que, embora professando religiões diferentes, partilham da mesma cultura e interagem na mesma sociedade	Essas diferenças não serão "necessariamente uma dificuldade quando estão em causa cidadãos do mesmo país"		
Ainda uma grande ignorância do outro em relação à religião islâmica	Ainda uma grande ignorância do outro em relação à religião islâmica			

TABELA 2 - Declarações – Porta-voz da Conferência Episcopal

EXP	P	DN	JN	CM
Advertência do Cardeal Patriarca às jovens portuguesas que pensem casar com muçulmanos é "um justo conselho de realismo"			Um "justo conselho de realismo" (2 x)/para quem decida casar com uma pessoa de outra cultura e religião.	
Afastou "qualquer "discriminação ou menosprezo" pelo islamismo			Recusou que as declarações sejam de "discriminação ou menosprezo" pelo islamismo	
É um conselho de imprescindível realismo que seguramente qualquer um de nós de cultura ocidental e de religião cristã, ou então de cultura árabe e de religião muçulmana, daria para bem de ambas as partes e das respectivas famílias	É um conselho de imprescindível realismo que seguramente qualquer um de nós de cultura ocidental e de religião cristã, ou então de cultura árabe e de religião muçulmana, daria para bem de ambas as partes e das respectivas famílias			É um conselho de imprescindível realismo que seguramente qualquer um de nós de cultura ocidental e de religião cristã, ou então de cultura árabe e de religião muçulmana, daria para bem de ambas as partes. **Bento XVI tem feito declarações na mesma linha.**
As declarações, proferidas num clima informal de 'tertúlia' e não numa conferência magistral, confirmam que este diálogo é importante, mas advertem para as dificuldades do mesmo diálogo, concretamente com os muçulmanos	As declarações, proferidas num clima informal de 'tertúlia' e não numa conferência magistral, confirmam que este diálogo é importante, mas advertem para as dificuldades do mesmo diálogo, concretamente com os muçulmanos			
Salientou que D. José Policarpo tem sido o maior promotor em Portugal do diálogo inter-cultural e inter-religiosos	Manuel Morujão afirmou que D. José Policarpo tem sido o maior promotor em Portugal do diálogo inter-cultural e inter-religiosos (2 x)		Lembrou que D. José Policarpo tem sido o maior promotor em Portugal do diálogo inter-cultural e inter-religiosos	
Lembrou que o Papa João Paulo II afirmou que o futuro no mundo depende do diálogo entre culturas e entre religiões	O religioso afirmou que "o Papa João Paulo II afirmou que o futuro no mundo depende do diálogo entre culturas e entre religiões"			
Bento XVI tem feito declarações na mesma linha. Advertir para as dificuldades do diálogo não é dizer que não se faça, mas promover o realismo necessário que o possibilite e o torne eficaz.	Bento XVI tem feito declarações na mesma linha. Advertir para as dificuldades do diálogo não é dizer que não se faça, mas promover o realismo necessário que o possibilite e o torne eficaz.			PAPA BENTO XVI SEGUE A MESMA LINHA

TABELA 3 - Declarações – Presidente da Conferência Episcopal

EXP	P	DN	JN	CM
A Igreja "não tem nada contra" casamentos entre católicos e fiéis de outras religiões, mas pediu que essas uniões respeitem os "valores católicos" da família	A Igreja "nada tem contra" os casamentos inter-religiosos			A Igreja "não tem nada contra" casamentos entre católicos e fiéis de outras religiões
Essas uniões "são coisas que vão acontecendo" um "pouco por toda a Europa" e "Portugal não é excepção"	Estas uniões "vão acontecendo" um "pouco por toda a Europa" e "Portugal não é excepção"			
"Alertamos a quem se quer casar pela Igreja" que o cônjuge "não se pode opor à educação católica"	No entanto, "Alertamos a quem se quer casar pela Igreja" que o cônjuge "não se pode opor à educação católica"			
As "pessoas podem encontrar compromissos" no respeito da fé de cada um podendo existir casamentos entre católicos e "hindus, muçulmanos, judeus ou evangélicos"	As "pessoas podem encontrar compromissos" no respeito da fé de cada um podendo existir casamentos entre católicos e "hindus, muçulmanos, judeus ou evangélicos			
Tem é que haver um cuidado nos processos" no "sentido do respeito e liberdade de cada um"	Tem é que haver um cuidado nos processos" no "sentido do respeito e liberdade de cada um			
o presidente da CEP recordou que a Igreja é apenas intransigente na educação dos filhos, admitindo mesmo cerimónias religiosas. Caso o cônjuge católico queira um casamento religioso, terá de ser aprovada a "dispensa canónica de paridade de culto" para que possa casar com um não-católico, explicou D. Jorge Ortiga. Para tal, o elemento do casal que não professa a fé católica deve comprometer-se em educar os filhos na fé cristã, respeitando a monogamia e as tradições religiosas do cônjuge. "Desde sempre, estes casamentos têm acontecido, em cerimónias parecidas" com os matrimónios católicos, mas apenas limitados à "Celebração da Palavra".				

Todas as notícias referentes às declarações da Comunidade Islâmica referem o facto de esta se ter considerado "magoada". Enquanto os jornais EXP e P referem que a comunidade menciona a existência de "relações fraternas e cordiais", bem como de um "diálogo frutífero", os restantes jornais não o referem, ainda que o CM cite a passagem em que se diz que a comunidade tem procurado o diálogo com todas as confissões religiosas. O DN e o JN não referem a palavra "diálogo", mas sim a necessidade de respeito pelas diferenças. Esta necessidade de respeito não é mencionada pelo CM. O JN e o CM também não fazem qualquer menção à passagem do comunicado da Comunidade Islâmica em que se refere que as diferenças não serão necessariamente uma dificuldade quando estão em causa cidadãos do mesmo país. E esta referência, no DN não inclui a segunda parte da afirmação, onde se acrescenta: "que, embora professando religiões diferentes, partilham da mesma cultura e interagem na mesma sociedade".

A tendência para selecionar passagens das declarações dos envolvidos que acentuam as dificuldades no diálogo com os muçulmanos é ainda mais notória nas citações das declarações do porta-voz e do Presidente da Conferência Episcopal. Assim, enquanto o EXP e o P, embora mencionando sempre com destaque a questão do casamento, fazem eco das afirmações que mencionam o diálogo entre culturas e religiões, o DN, o JN e o CM acentuam sobretudo o facto de o porta-voz da Conferência Episcopal considerar "realistas" as declarações do cardeal sobre o assunto. As declarações do Presidente da Conferência Episcopal citadas no EXP e no P debruçam-se longamente sobre questões técnicas relacionadas com a possibilidade canónica de casamentos entre membros de religiões diferentes. O DN e o JN não fazem qualquer eco destas declarações. O CM limita-se a escrever que a Igreja "não tem nada contra casamentos entre católicos e fiéis de outras religiões", afirmação que aparece também no EXP e no P. Os artigos de opinião e o editorial analisados não fazem qualquer menção explícita a declarações que não sejam as do Cardeal de Lisboa, salvo o artigo de João Miranda, que se refere à Amnistia Internacional.

2.4. PALAVRAS E FRASES

A centralidade do aviso contra o casamento com muçulmanos, associado à dificuldade no diálogo com os muçulmanos, que parece depreender-se da sequência dos tópicos das notícias e do relevo dado às declarações que vão nesse sentido, é reforçada pela escolha de palavras associadas às declarações sobre ambos os temas. Estas incluem a palavra "alertar" ou "alerta" 23 vezes, a palavra "aviso" ou "avisar" 4 vezes; "adverte" ou "advertir" 15 vezes. A palavra "difícil", associado ao diálogo aparece 24 vezes.

Mas a relação entre os dois temas é também coadjuvada por ligações frásicas. Assim, por exemplo, o DN escreve: "Casar com um muçulmano 'e meter-se num monte de sarilhos que nem Alá sabe onde acabam'. *Foi esta a frase* de D. José Policarpo *que magoou a comunidade islâmica em Portugal* (itálico nosso)". Esta ideia aparece duas vezes na mesma peça: "Surpresa e mágoa marcam *as reacções da comunidade islâmica aos alertas do cardeal patriarca de Lisboa sobre os casamentos com muçulmanos*" (itálico nosso). Atenda-se novamente ao facto de não haver qualquer menção ao assunto no comunicado da Comunidade. O artigo continua referindo-se às preocupações do SOS Racismo e da Amnistia Internacional relativamente a declarações que a primeira organização considera "um incentivo à islamofobia" e a segunda, "de carácter discriminatório". O DN continua: *"Mas* para Fernando Soares Loja, da Aliança Evangélica Portuguesa*, as preocupações do Cardeal são legítimas"* (itálico nosso). Mais, o DN noticia que "Fernando Soares Loja *subscreve e louva a coragem do patriarca"* (itálico nosso).

O JN, por seu turno, explicita a relação entre o casamento com muçulmanos e o diálogo difícil com estes escrevendo: "Um 'justo conselho de realismo', como lhe chamou o porta-voz da Conferência Episcopal Portuguesa, ou *palavras que podem contribuir para afastar católicos e muçulmanos. Os avisos do cardeal causaram surpresa*" (itálico nosso). E prossegue dizendo que "o país acordou ontem ao som de *uma polémica frase do cardeal patriarca de Lisboa*" (itálico nosso). A frase em causa é a que diz respeito aos sarilhos de casar com um muçulmano. O parágrafo procede, dizendo que o diálogo com a comunidade islâmica é muito difícil. Mais adiante, dir-se-á que, ao tentar obter reacções, *"a cautela e a reserva falaram mais alto"* (itálico nosso), isto é, *"só o SOS Racismo emitiu um comunicado…"* (itálico nosso). Note-se a referência à necessidade de cautela (supondo-se, implicitamente, a possibilidade do despoletar de um conflito) e a desvalorização do comunicado do SOS. O DN, aliás, refere também, em título, que *"A Comunidade islâmica reage com muita ponderação"* (itálico nosso). Estas referências deixam em aberto a possibilidade implícita de que não seria de esperar moderação por parte dos islâmicos.

Por fim, o material do CM merece-nos uma análise mais detalhada. Na peça intitulada "Bispos Unidos no apoio ao Patriarca", diz-se o seguinte: "Os bispos portugueses *não concordam com a ideia de que,* nas declarações proferidas terça-feira na Figueira da Foz, D. José Policarpo *tenha ofendido os muçulmanos*" (itálico nosso). Prossegue-se fazendo referência à questão do casamento e diz-se, mais adiante:

Todos os bispos contactados ontem pelo CM asseguraram que o alerta do Patriarca é para as mulheres católicas e tem a ver com o facto de, ao contrário de outras religiões, os muçulmanos não preverem o casamento misto.

Depois de citadas as palavras "Cautela com os amores" e sucedâneos, diz-se: "Quem não gostou das palavras de D. José foi a comunidade islâmica radicada em Portugal, que se disse 'magoada e surpreendida'" (itálico nosso).

Esta sequência de frases é reveladora da oposição que se estabelece entre "mulheres católicas" e casamento com muçulmanos, bem como da distinção entre "mulheres católicas" e "comunidade islâmica radicada em Portugal." Parece, portanto, poder dizer-se que nos amores de mulheres portuguesas com muçulmanos se poderá tornar visível a dificuldade do diálogo com alguém que "não é daqui", mas que "se radicou" aqui.

2.5. A RETÓRICA DO "NÓS" VERSUS "ELES"

A estratégia discursiva de estabelecimento de uma linha divisória entre "nós" e "eles" é recorrente nos média a propósito dos muçulmanos na Europa e nos Estados Unidos da América (cf. por exemplo, Deltombe, 2005; Poole, 2002; Richardson, 2004; Fekete, 2008; Hasan, 2012; Sian, Law e Sayyid, 2012; Martín Muñoz, 2010; Navarro, 2010; Toldy, 2008). Joseph e D'Harlingue (2012) comentam o seguinte, a propósito daquilo que designam pela "construção de uma diferença insuperável entre os muçulmanos e o Ocidente", nomeadamente, no caso dos média dos Estados Unidos da América (*ibidem*: 136):

Os muçulmanos, quer sejam americanos ou não, são representados como a própria encarnação da alteridade, o 'outro' cultural oposto ao Ocidente. A presunção normativa de um 'nós' com o qual é suposto o leitor identificar-se é construído como o americano ou europeu branco, e 'eles' nunca serão como nós.

Segundo van Dijk, o contraste discursivo entre um "nós" e um "eles", associado a estratégias semânticas de apresentação positiva do grupo dominante, é típico de sociedades que possuem aquilo que o autor designa como uma "norma oficial" segundo a qual "o racismo é imoral ou prejudicial". Estas estratégias consistem, por exemplo, na negação do racismo, acompanhada do estabelecimento de contrastes entre as propriedades do grupo dominante (positivas) e as propriedades do grupo dominado (negativas). Assume-se que o grupo dominado é que tem características negativas: "Nós não somos intolerantes, eles é que são!" (1991: 188).

Sayyid (2003), evocando, de novo, a incontornável tese do orientalismo, de Edward Saïd (2004),[5] sintetiza este processo de "alterização" (*othering*) (cf. também Riggins, 1997) que estabelece uma linha intransponível entre "nós" e "eles", do seguinte modo: "o Islão é 'o outro' que não podemos aceitar, mesmo quando somos o mais tolerantes que nos é possível, porque este outro não aceita as regras do jogo – porque considera o jogo como um jogo ocidental" (Sayyid, 2003: 169). No caso em análise, esta estratégia de "alterização" passa pela afirmação da dificuldade de diálogo, que se considera ser decorrente das próprias características dos muçulmanos, perante as quais é preciso "ter cautela", e do subentendido – que parece perpassar todos os documentos analisados – de que os muçulmanos "não são (bem) daqui".

O material analisado parece permitir concluir que existe um discurso implícito segundo o qual – e parafraseando Asad (2003: 164) – os muçulmanos podem estar *na* Europa (ou mesmo em Portugal), mas não *são* da Europa (ou de Portugal). A tolerância face à presença de muçulmanos na Europa deve-se, ainda na perspetiva de Asad (*ibidem*: 165), precisamente ao facto de eles serem considerados "externos à essência da Europa": por isso, pode falar-se de "coexistência" entre "nós" e "eles" – mas sempre baseada na noção de "fronteira".

A estratégia discursiva de estabelecimento de uma fronteira entre "nós" e "eles" recorre frequentemente à manipulação de temas relacionados com as mulheres: as controvérsias em torno do véu e da burka, por exemplo, às quais os medias deram cobertura em diversos países europeus e no Canadá (cf. por exemplo, Bullock, 2002; Fekete, 2008; Hasan, 2012; Sian, Law e Sayyid, 2012; Kassam, 2008; Navarro, 2010; Ehrkamp, 2010; Fundación Trés Culturas del Mediterráneo, 2010; Hancock, 2008; Tarlo, 2010; Meer e Modood, 2012; Watt, 2008; Shadid e van Koningsveld, 2005), parecem constituir um exemplo de uma "obsessão colonial" que se manifesta no "desejo metafórico de 'desvelar' culturas alheias, 'expondo-as' e tornando-as conformes com as normas ideológicas do poder dominador" (Macdonald, 2006: 9) que classifica, separando, "civilizados" e "não-civilizados" (Asad). No caso do material analisado, como já vimos, o móbil para estabelecer esta linha divisória passa pela menção aos "sarilhos" decorrentes de casar com muçulmanos e pela referência ao "regime das mulheres muçulmanas".

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[5] Num outro texto (Toldy, 2008), referi a síntese daquilo que Saïd designa como "dogmas permanentes do orientalismo": a) a ideia da "absoluta e sistemática diferença entre o Ocidente – racional, desenvolvido, humanitário e superior – e o Oriente – aberrante, subdesenvolvido e inferior"; b) a ideia de que "as abstracções sobre o Oriente, especialmente as que se baseiam em textos que representam uma civilização oriental 'clássica', são sempre preferíveis aos casos directos extraídos das realidades orientais modernas"; c) a ideia de que "o Oriente é eterno, uniforme e incapaz de se definir a si próprio"; d) e a ideia de que, "no fundo, o Oriente é algo a ser temido […] ou algo a ser controlado (através de pacificação, investigação e desenvolvimento, ou ocupação pura e simples sempre que tal seja possível)".

3. O "REGIME DAS MULHERES MUÇULMANAS"

A ideia de que os muçulmanos "não são daqui" e de que isso se objetiva na necessidade de as mulheres se acautelarem de "amores com muçulmanos" torna-se ainda mais nítida nos artigos de opinião e no editorial que passaremos, agora, a analisar. Estes textos debruçam-se todos sobre "as mulheres islâmicas". Recorde-se a frase específica de D. José Policarpo sobre o assunto: "Se eu sei que uma jovem europeia de formação cristã, a primeira vez que vai para o país deles é sujeita ao regime das mulheres muçulmanas, imagine-se lá". Os jornais não deram notícia de que o cardeal tivesse especificado o que entendia por "regime das mulheres muçulmanas". Contudo, dois dos artigos de opinião aqui analisados, bem como o editorial, exploram o tópico das mulheres muçulmanas em países muçulmanos.

3.1. "O QUE TODA A GENTE PENSA, MAS NÃO DIZ"

Assim se intitula o artigo de opinião de Sérgio de Andrade, jornalista do JN, que dedica apenas um parágrafo ao tema das declarações do Cardeal (reservando os restantes para críticas ao governo de José Sócrates sem qualquer relação com a questão). No parágrafo em causa, o jornalista começa por afirmar que "mais ou menos todos os comentadores entendem que o aviso de D. José Policarpo é essencialmente correcto". Contudo, na sua perspetiva, "não foi conveniente proferi-lo em acto público". Pensa o autor do artigo que o Cardeal não devia ter sido tão seletivo, uma vez que qualquer casamento com "judeus ortodoxos ou hinduístas fanáticos" pode ser igualmente problemático. Portanto, o Cardeal "não disse nada que não fosse verdade"; simplesmente "há por vezes coisas em que pensamos, mas que melhor será guardarmos para nós…" O artigo passa imediatamente para o tema seguinte: uma crítica a Sócrates. Ora, a afirmação de que o cardeal disse o que todos pensam, mas teria sido melhor guardá-lo para si, parece revelar uma lógica baseada na ideia da não-discriminação como sendo própria do discurso "politicamente correcto", mas não necessariamente verdadeiro ou relevante para a maioria dos leitores. Esta ideia é transversal aos artigos analisados: todos procuram corroborar as afirmações do Cardeal, associando-as à "necessidade" (e "coragem") de dizer a verdade que, supostamente, todos conhecem" (recorde-se a estratégia da referência a um suposto "paradigma cultural consensual", mencionada por Martín Muñoz (2005: 206), mas "ninguém quer reconhecer", como afirma Henrique Monteiro no editorial do EXP (jornal do qual era diretor à época) intitulado, precisamente, "As indigestas palavras do cardeal".

Por seu turno, Inês Pedrosa (colunista do EXP naquela época) termina o seu artigo intitulado "Cautela com os amores", afirmando: "A mim, as coisas que ele disse pareceram-me apenas evidências sensatas". Parece poder dizer-se que o apelo à adesão às palavras do Cardeal e ao raciocínio dos autores dos artigos analisados evoca

e reforça os modelos de pensamento sobre as mulheres e os homens islâmicos já conhecidos dos leitores: toda a gente sabe que é assim. Além disso, acusa-se de "alheamento da realidade do sofrimento humano" alguém que possa considerar "descabido, ou discriminatório, este aviso" (nas palavras de Inês Pedrosa). Henrique Monteiro ridiculariza mesmo as críticas às declarações do Cardeal, considerando que as "verdades" de D. José Policarpo "estragam as construções e engenharias sociais em que se baseia a nossa cultura", construções, essas, que preferem "um mundo de fantasia" à realidade. Recorde-se, neste contexto, que van Dijk (1991) refere como uma estratégia discursiva utlizada frequentemente pelos média de grupos dominantes e que consiste na ridicularização das atitudes e posições críticas relativamente às posições destes grupos, incluindo de "intelectuais", procurando os média enfatizar aquilo que constituirá o pensamento do "indivíduo comum".

João Miranda, no artigo "Crítica e Tolerância", publicado no DN, menciona diretamente a Amnistia Internacional, criticando o seu repúdio pelas declarações do Cardeal. O artigo adota uma estratégia de inversão do tema da discriminação: não foi D. José Policarpo que discriminou. Antes, ele "identificou correctamente uma das fontes de discriminação das mulheres no mundo muçulmano". A Amnistia Internacional, "que adquiriu a sua reputação por lutar pelos direitos humanos mais básicos", opta, segundo Miranda, por "tentar suprimir as críticas" à discriminação das mulheres, tornando-se, assim, cúmplice do silêncio perante a discriminação: "prefere criticar quem faz uma crítica certeira à religião muçulmana".

Resumindo, todos os três textos concluem que D. José Policarpo não foi intolerante: segundo Sérgio Andrade, Henrique Monteiro e Inês Pedrosa, ele disse a verdade. Segundo João Miranda, ele fez algo decorrente dos próprios valores "de uma sociedade livre e tolerante", já que, no seu dizer, "a crítica cultural e religiosa é parte integrante" dessa mesma sociedade, a "nossa sociedade", por oposição à sociedade "deles" (poder-se-ia dizer). Regressa, aqui, portanto, o tema do "nós" e do "eles", atribuindo-se ao "nós" características positivas e a "eles", características negativas. Ao "nós" atribuem-se, concretamente, as características que descrevem a "civilização ocidental": a liberdade e a tolerância. Ora, a atribuição à Europa das características essenciais da civilização, parafraseando Asad (cf. 2003: 168), resulta na afirmação de que quem não as assume nem é verdadeiramente europeu (ainda que viva na Europa), nem é verdadeiramente civilizado: "Sem a essência civilizacional, os indivíduos que vivem na Europa são instáveis e ambíguos. Por isso é que nem todos os habitantes do continente europeu são 'real' ou 'completamente' europeus" (*ibidem*). A cultura ocidental, associada à democracia, liberdade individual, liberdade de expressão, compreensão do Outro e da igualdade de direitos das pessoas, parece ser constituída como um paradigma de

humanidade, inacessível ou melhor, tido como agressivamente rejeitado pelas culturas não-ocidentais. O Ocidente apresenta-se como o Sujeito, produtor de uma história identificada com o progresso, em evolução, vocacionada para a universalidade, objetivando o não-Ocidente, que é apresentado como regressivo ou parado no tempo, a necessitar de ser "domesticado e civilizado" (Yeğenoğlu, 1998: 97).

As culturas "dos outros" aparecem objetivadas nas afirmações que "nós" fazemos delas, isto é, fala-se delas, mas elas não podem falar por si (os "subalternos não têm voz" – Spivak, 1994).

3.2. "AS GENERALIZAÇÕES" QUE "PERMITEM CHEGAR À ESSÊNCIA DO PROBLEMA": "A 'BURQA' DA DIFERENÇA CULTURAL"

O contraste entre "a nossa sociedade" e a "sociedade deles" constitui o eixo das afirmações dos textos em questão acerca das mulheres muçulmanas. Estas são descritas com base em afirmações genéricas, ou, pelo contrário, a partir de casos concretos, tidos pelos autores como passíveis de generalização. Aliás, o artigo de João Miranda, no DN, legitima o recurso à generalização: é certo que o Cardeal generalizou. Mas, do seu ponto de vista, as generalizações "permitem chegar à essência do problema". E acrescenta, algumas frases adiante: "no entanto, as generalizações não se aplicam a todos os casos particulares". Não explica porquê. Diz, simplesmente, que "como nenhum de nós é estúpido, todos sabemos que não se aplicam".

Todas estas afirmações desembocam numa mesma ideia geral: nos países islâmicos, "as mulheres não são abrangidas pelos direitos humanos", como diz Inês Pedrosa. Tanto o seu artigo, como o editorial de Henrique Monteiro fazem o seguinte raciocínio: mesmo que haja casos que contrariem esta ideia, na maioria dos casos, é isso que acontece. O leitmotiv da lógica discursiva de ambos os textos corresponde àquilo que Yeğenoğlu identifica como "um gesto feminista ocidental imperial" (*ibidem*), Razack (2004 e 2007: 5) considera obedecer à lógica da fantasia do "eterno triângulo da mulher muçulmana em perigo, do homem muçulmano perigoso e da Europa civilizada" e Mohanty (1991: 255) refere como "feminismos hegemónicos". Estes, segundo Mohanty, caracterizam-se por um pressuposto da existência de um "sujeito singular, monolítico" – as "mulheres do Terceiro Mundo" (*ibidem*) – lógica que se aplica também à ideia das "mulheres islâmicas" – referidas através de um "discurso de homogeneização e sistematização da opressão" (*ibidem:* 257) que não tem em conta a diversidade de situações e que transforma em universalismo uma forma de etnocentrismo:

Assim, as mulheres, independentemente das diferenças de classe ou culturais, são afectados por este sistema. Não só *todas* as mulheres árabes e muçulmanas são

encaradas como constituindo um grupo homogéneo oprimido, como também não existe qualquer discussão acerca das *práticas* específicas dentro da família que constituem as mulheres como mães, esposas, irmãs, etc. parece que os árabes e muçulmanos não mudam. A sua família patriarcal remonta ao tempo do profeta Mohamed. É como se elas existissem fora da história. (Mohanty, 1991: 263)

Esta visão das mulheres muçulmanas apenas e só no lugar de vítimas não revela apenas aquilo que as formas hegemónicas de feminismo pensam acerca das "mulheres não-ocidentais", como constitui, também, "a representação cultural que o Ocidente [neste caso, as feministas hegemónicas ocidentais] tem *de si mesmo*, através do outro" (Yeğenoğlu, 1998: 1).

Inês Pedrosa desenvolve a sua argumentação referindo-se a vários países islâmicos: Marrocos, Tunísia, Arábia Saudita, Irão. Considera que os dois primeiros correspondem à "versão light, turística e infelizmente minoritária do Islão contemporâneo". Na sua perspetiva, "na maioria dos países islâmicos (que são Estados confessionais, coisa que nenhum país católico hoje é) as mulheres não são abrangidas pelos direitos humanos". Falando genericamente dos "países islâmicos", Inês Pedrosa menciona, numa mesma frase, que, nesses países, as mulheres têm de "obedecer cegamente aos homens", "a vida pública é-lhes praticamente interdita" e estão "legalmente sujeitas a toda a espécie de sevícias, desde a mutilação genital ao apedrejamento até à morte".

Por sua vez, Henrique Monteiro opta por contar "três histórias simples para enquadrar uma mais complicada". E relata três episódios: um "num país islâmico" que não identifica, outra, em Maputo, e outra, em Portugal, numa entrevista ao Jorge Sampaio. A primeira história refere que as mulheres do tal país "de regime teocrático" não podiam mostrar o cabelo aos pais, filhos e maridos. A segunda história refere um caso de um amigo islâmico que bebia álcool e cuja mulher não usava véu (depreende-se o contraste com a primeira história, pelo facto de Moçambique não ser "um regime teocrático islâmico"). A terceira, refere que Sampaio, ao ser-lhe perguntado "o que faria se um dos seus filhos se casasse com um negro", respondeu que "jamais se oporia, mas que aproveitaria a oportunidade para chamar a atenção desse filho para as prováveis diferenças culturais que iria encontrar". Do seu ponto de vista, tanto ele como D. José Policarpo chamaram a atenção – como "qualquer pessoa sensata" – para o "provável choque cultural" (repare-se que Sampaio falou de "diferenças culturais"). Este texto é o único que estabelece um paralelo entre "casar com um negro" e "casar com um muçulmano", desvendando uma possível lógica de racialização invisibilizada no resto do material analisado.

Monteiro prossegue descrevendo aquilo que se deduz ser a história "mais complicada": "milhões de páginas negras de vil submissão, humilhação e maus-tratos

físicos – que são legais (sublinhe-se esta palavra 300 vezes) – em certos países islâmicos, como a Arábia Saudita, para dar um exemplo". O texto não refere nenhum outro país concretamente. Do ponto de vista de Henrique Monteiro, a cautela recomendada pelo Cardeal justifica-se, pois a "chicotada, a chapada, a impossibilidade de sair de casa, o repúdio puro e simples pode esperar a mulher incauta". E conclui: "Isto é desconhecido? Não! É mentira? Não! É racista? Não!"

Esta descrição das situações das mulheres islâmicas, em geral, transfere as referências à sua realidade para os "países islâmicos". Não se faz qualquer afirmação explícita sobre a situação das mulheres muçulmanas em Portugal: não existe qualquer comparação entre a realidade de umas e outras. Parece nada haver a dizer sobre as muçulmanas portuguesas. Ou, então, o que haveria a dizer não confirma as afirmações genéricas sobre as mulheres muçulmanas, pelo que é omitido. De facto, Inês Pedrosa diz apenas: "Podem encher-se muitas páginas de jornais com histórias de casamentos felizes entre mulheres anteriormente católicas ou agnósticas e muçulmanos – mas isso não invalida a ausência legal de direitos, sofrida pelas mulheres na maioria dos países islâmicos". Isto é, fala-se de mulheres "anteriormente católicas ou agnósticas", mas não de mulheres muçulmanas portuguesas: à visibilização do tema das "mulheres na maioria dos países islâmicos" corresponde a invisibilização das mulheres islâmicas portuguesas (que não são ouvidas). Não parece importar se as mulheres islâmicas portuguesas são ou não são "tratadas assim": fala-se apenas das mulheres em países islâmicos. São elas que constituem "a prova" da "dificuldade de diálogo com os muçulmanos": são as mulheres islâmicas, em países islâmicos, que constituem o obstáculo ao diálogo com os muçulmanos, independentemente do lugar. De facto, verifica-se uma articulação entre "a retórica colonial e a feminista liberal na qual o estatuto da mulher é usado como prova do atraso das culturas orientais" (Yeğenoğlu, 1998: 97). Segundo Yeğenoğlu, a perspetiva que define o Ocidente como o lugar da razão, do progresso e da civilização

> disponibiliza ao feminismo liberal ocidental toda uma bateria de estratégias discursivas para conhecer e compreender o seu outro etnográfico, garantindo, assim, a integridade da sua própria identidade *vis-à-vis* do seu duplo negro e estranho. (*ibidem*)

Henrique Monteiro faz o mesmo raciocínio e a mesma omissão, ao escrever: "Encheram-se páginas de mulheres casadas com muçulmanos e que são felizes. Bebo à sua saúde. Se são felizes, fizeram bem em casar-se com os homens que desejaram. Mas há milhões de páginas negras" (e segue com a referência já citada anteriormente). Tanto esta afirmação, como a de Inês Pedrosa ("mas isso não invalida…") parecem reproduzir a

lógica da "exceção que confirma a regra". E a regra é: "a ausência legal de direitos". As mulheres muçulmanas portuguesa ficam ocultadas pelas referências a mulheres muçulmanas em países islâmicos.

A estratégia de invisibilização das mulheres muçulmanas portuguesas, parece revelar uma mimetização da lógica de invisibilização relativamente à própria comunidade islâmica portuguesa, tema ao qual que se referem Tiesler (2010) e Vakil (2004a, 2004b), ainda que de formas diferentes. Sem pretender reproduzir aqui a complexidade da argumentação de cada um dos autores, dado que tal extravasa os propósitos do presente texto, valerá a pena referir que Tiesler, num texto com o título (significativo) "No Bad News from the European Margin: The New Islamic Presence in Portugal", defende a tese da existência de "uma consciência sócio-histórica selectiva mais do que uma discriminação consciente" (Tiesler, 2010: 84) na sociedade portuguesa relativamente às comunidades de muçulmanos portugueses. Do seu ponto de vista, tal deve-se a uma série de fatores da história portuguesa (de entre eles, aos processos de colonização e de descolonização e à capacidade de integração na sociedade portuguesa dos próprios muçulmanos de classe média e de elite). Para Tiesler, a invisibilização dos muçulmanos em Portugal dever-se-á, pois, por um lado, à sua capacidade de integração e, por outro lado, a uma certa "desatenção" por parte de Portugal. Como tal, a invisivilidade das mulheres muçulmanas portuguesas, caso sigamos a lógica de Tiesler, poderá compreender-se à luz da própria invisibilidade da comunidade muçulmana em Portugal.

Por seu turno, Vakil (2004a: 295) considera que "a história da presença dos muçulmanos em Portugal na atualidade é uma história por escrever", imperando a ignorância e o preconceito relativamente ao Outro, que é "coisificado e sistematicamente interpretado a partir de um esquema pré-estabelecido, e infundado" (Vakil, 2004b: 35). Ao longo do seu texto intitulado "Pensar o Islão: Questões coloniais, interrogações pós-coloniais" (2004b), Vakil refere-se frequentemente às formas como o tema dos direitos das mulheres nos países islâmicos é utilizado para cumprir uma agenda anti-islâmica, na qual, como afirma num outro texto, "o Islão funciona como um rótulo designativo de uma entidade aparentemente identificável, simples, monolítica e indiferenciada, apreensível na sua totalidade" (2004a: 284) ou como "uma matriz essencialista e determinante, explicativa de todo e de qualquer fenómeno que, respeitando a muçulmanos, ou sociedades islâmicas, assim necessariamente passa a ser islâmico" (*ibidem*).

Tiesler (2010) considera que nem o fator religioso terá chamado a atenção para as comunidades islâmicas, já que, do seu ponto de vista, em Portugal, a emancipação das minorias religiosas foi protagonizada pelos grupos religiosos minoritários de denominação protestante, e não pelas comunidades islâmicas. Ora, o que se verifica no material analisado é que o fator religioso é precisamente apontado como um lugar insuperável de

distinção. Esta distinção (que o próprio Cardeal enuncia ao afirmar que Portugal é "um país maioritariamente católico" e ao recorrer à metáfora dos lobos – declarações desaparecidas na cobertura que os média analisados fizeram) torna-se mais visível, do ponto de vista de Inês Pedrosa, na religião islâmica. E esta é opressora das mulheres, mesmo que as mulheres muçulmanas portuguesas não sejam chamadas a falar sobre o assunto.

As mulheres muçulmanas portuguesas ficam ocultadas pelo véu da vitimização que lhes é imposto como constituindo a sua "essência". Subentende-se que à incapacidade atribuída às mulheres não-ocidentais para se libertarem das situações identificadas como de opressão corresponde a autorrepresentação das feministas ocidentais como "os únicos verdadeiros 'sujeitos' da sua contra-história" (Mohanty, 1991: 271). Enquanto as mulheres ocidentais são capazes de se libertar, as mulheres não-ocidentais "nunca emergem da generalidade debilitante do seu estatuto de 'objecto'" (*ibidem*). Nunca serão capazes de (ou autorizadas a) passar para cá da linha traçada pelo Ocidente, sobretudo, no seu espaço público, como parece decorrer do raciocínio de Inês Pedrosa, num outro artigo de opinião intitulado "Traçar a linha". Diz a autora, a propósito da proibição do véu integral em França:

> Mesmo que muitas dessas mulheres se manifestem defensoras do traje que as anula, a nossa liberdade acaba onde começa a dos outros – e um ser fantasmático, sem rosto, sem identidade, é uma ameaça evidente a todos os outros que circulam no espaço público. Não faz sentido que, ao mesmo tempo que se afinam as máquinas de detecção de bombas nos aeroportos, se deixem circular por escolas, hospitais e museus potenciais bombas humanas. E não faz sentido que, num país com as responsabilidades históricas que a França tem na conquista de uma civilização laica, com direitos iguais para todos, se passeiem pelas ruas mulheres tapadas como monstros ou criminosos. O exemplo da humilhação humilha – a burka é um enxovalho para todas as mulheres e homens que se vêem como seres livres e iguais. Se, no recato das suas casas, as mulheres quiserem usar burkas, ou homens e mulheres adultos tiverem prazer em ser chicoteados, insultados, ou andar pela trela, é lá com eles (desde que não estejam crianças presentes).

E termina, dizendo: "A liberdade inclui o disparate. Mas não inclui a tolerância para com o esmagamento das mulheres debaixo de burkas". É aí que é preciso "traçar a linha".

Portanto, parece confirmar-se a análise que Martín Muñoz (2005: 208) faz do tratamento dado pela imprensa espanhola às mulheres muçulmanas: "não interessa tanto

a mulher em si mesma como a representação da 'mulher e o Islão' ou melhor, 'a mulher vítima do Islão'". O Islão constitui um obstáculo intransponível, uma linha inultrapassável.

Com efeito, segundo Inês Pedrosa, a fonte da ausência de direitos das "mulheres muçulmanas", deste "martírio" (segundo palavras suas) está no Islão, ou, no dizer de João Miranda, na "religião muçulmana": "os fatores culturais e religiosos são a principal causa de discriminação das mulheres no mundo muçulmano". O "estatuto" que esta cultura e esta religião atribuem à "mulher no mundo muçulmano, […] não seria facilmente aceite por uma mulher de cultura católica". O artigo de Inês Pedrosa também expressa uma oposição entre catolicismo e Islão, patente na situação das mulheres.

Esta oposição parece corresponder à estratégia de estabelecimento de um contraste entre os valores do grupo ao qual os leitores e a autora supostamente pertencem e o grupo ao qual as mulheres muçulmanas pertencem. A linha de demarcação passa pela diferença religiosa. por um lado, e pelo laicismo, por outro. Na argumentação de Inês Pedrosa, o catolicismo evoluiu para o laicismo, enquanto o Islão não o fez. Do seu ponto de vista, o Islão foi, "em tempos idos, uma civilização de conhecimento e diálogo", mas, hoje, não o é, porque não fez a "evolução espiritual da Igreja Católica no sentido da compreensão do Outro e da igualdade de direitos das pessoas", mais, porque a esta evolução corresponde "um retrocesso do Islamismo[6] em relação a assuntos fundamentais". A "nossa cultura" evoluiu no sentido do "laicismo" e este "obrigou a Igreja Católica a humanizar-se". Este processo de laicização levou à democracia e à liberdade individual, nomeadamente, à liberdade de expressão, sobre as quais a "nossa cultura" se "fundamenta" atualmente. Inês Pedrosa explora o contraste entre "nós" e "eles" marcando-o territorialmente, através da diferença cultural e religiosa, à qual corresponde uma demarcação geográfica: "eles" são os países islâmicos, "nós", o Ocidente, onde "só reza e obedece quem quer" e onde "todos têm o direito a recomendar cautelas ou a dizer coisas desacauteladas". É certo que Inês Pedrosa reconhece que a Igreja Católica "não é, ainda, o paraíso de compreensão que apregoa": "faltam-lhe mais cardeais com a inteligência, o genuíno amor e, sobretudo, o humor de José Policarpos". E cita, como prova do seu humor, precisamente a expressão "sarilhos que nem Alá sabe onde acabam", que, do seu ponto de vista, nos recorda que "Deus nos ofereceu o luxo do livre-arbítrio – e do riso" (portanto, mais uma vez, o contraste entre "nós", a quem é permitido o riso sobre Deus e "os outros", acerca de cuja representação de Deus podemos rir, mas – subentende-se – que não se podem rir da sua representação de Deus).

Note-se a dupla referência de Inês Pedrosa à presença e ausência da religião como elemento de fronteira/distinção entre "nós" e "eles": de facto, se por um lado se afirma a superioridade do cristianismo, nomeadamente, da Igreja Católica", por outro lado, afirma-

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[6] Supõe-se que a autora utiliza indistintamente "Islão" e "Islamismo".

se que o "laicismo" é constitutivo do Ocidente, melhor, afirma-se que a cultura que era cristã evoluiu para a "laicização", que levou à democracia e à liberdade. Ora, tanto uma coisa como a outra são alheias aos islâmicos: eles nem são católicos, nem evoluíram para o laicismo, característico, segundo Pedrosa, das sociedades ocidentais. A narrativa da Europa como (sucessivamente) cristã, pós-cristã e secularizada constitui-se, assim, como um espaço simplificado, no qual os islâmicos foram e continuam a ser vistos como "o outro da Europa" (Asad, 2003: 169).

Do ponto de vista de Inês Pedrosa, o cardeal "pôs o dedo na ferida quando disse: 'Só é possível dialogar com quem quer dialogar e com os nosso irmãos muçulmanos o diálogo é muito difícil'". Explicita-se, assim, a ligação entre "a situação das mulheres muçulmanas" e o diálogo com os muçulmanos. Diz Inês Pedrosa: pode "não ser difícil dialogar com a Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa – mas como se pode dialogar com os líderes do Irão ou da Arábia Saudita, por exemplo?" Portanto, chama-se a atenção para o Irão e a Arábia Saudita para fazer um juízo de generalização da situação das mulheres islâmicas que retira peso à possibilidade de diálogo com a Comunidade Islâmica em Portugal, isto é: mesmo que este diálogo seja possível com esta comunidade, tal não é "representativo" da possibilidade de diálogo com os islâmicos "em geral". A sua "diferença" é inultrapassável: não o reconhecer é, "continuar a consentir" no "martírio" das mulheres, e isto, no dizer de Inês Pedrosa, constitui uma forma de cobrir esse martírio com a "'burqa' da diferença cultural". A autora não nomeia aqueles que pretende atingir com esta acusação, mas estabelece um contraste implícito entre estes (supostamente representados nas "reportagens de repúdio às afirmações do cardeal-patriarca português") e os islâmicos. A sua argumentação inverte, pois, o repúdio pelas palavras de D. José Policarpo, em nome da tolerância, afirmando que, quem as repudia em nome do respeito pela diferença cultural, de facto, está a impor a "diferença cultural" às mulheres como se fosse uma burqa.

Notas para uma conclusão

Como vimos, o material analisado revela uma estruturação da argumentação em torno de um "nós", oposto a um "eles", sendo os primeiros, os portugueses (ocidentais, laicos ou "maioritariamente" católicos), e os segundos, os muçulmanos (islâmicos, não seculares, não ocidentais, "como os lobos", opressores das mulheres).

A oposição entre portugueses/ocidentais e muçulmanos/não ocidentais torna-se visível na polémica em torno de casamentos com muçulmanos. Estes constituem "um risco", "um monte de sarilhos" para as mulheres. E constituem-no devido à forma como, segundo o material analisado, as mulheres islâmicas "são tratadas". À essencialização da "condição das mulheres islâmicas" corresponde uma essencialização da condição das

mulheres ocidentais: as primeiras estão "destinadas à submissão", enquanto as segundas estão "destinadas à emancipação". A menos que as primeiras se desfaçam daquilo que o Ocidente considera "problemático" ("o seu apego ao Islão"), já que este é tido como responsável pelo compromisso dos muçulmanos com valores que constituem uma afronta ao Ocidente. Portanto, se os islâmicos e as islâmicas forem despojados dos véus da sua religião, poderão ser assimilados:

> A des-essencialização do Islão é paradigmática para todos aqueles que pensam na assimilação de não-europeus pela civilização europeia. […] A convicção de que os seres humanos podem ser separados das suas histórias e tradições torna possível exortar à europeização do mundo Islâmico. E, de acordo com a mesma lógica, é subjacente à crença de que *a assimilação* dos imigrantes muçulmanos que já se encontram […] na Europa pela civilização europeia é necessária e desejável. (Asad, 2003: 170)

Chegada ao fim da análise da cobertura dada pela imprensa às declarações do Cardeal Patriarca de Lisboa, julgo útil verbalizar uma pergunta eventualmente incómoda: existirá islamofobia em Portugal? Termino citando dois estudos. No primeiro, de Bruno Peixe *et al.* (2008), sobre "O racismo e xenofobia em Portugal (2001-2007)", os autores escrevem o seguinte, a propósito do tema da existência ou não de islamofobia em Portugal:

> No que concerne ao caso específico da islamofobia, os dados recolhidos indicam que a discriminação anti-islâmica é percepcionada pelas fontes consultadas como pouco significativa ou praticamente inexistente. Essa percepção parecer tornar o tema pouco relevante para os estudos académicos, os artigos de opinião e o debate público em geral. Porém, é possível que exista também uma causalidade inversa neste processo, ou seja, que a islamofobia seja vista como irrelevante porque não existe interesse no seu escrutínio nem mecanismos adequados para tal. (Peixe *et al.,* 2008: 19)

Num segundo estudo, de Edite Rosário, Tiago Santos e Sílvia Lima (2011), sobre "Discursos do racismo em Portugal", no qual se seguiram metodologias centradas em grupos de discussão, os autores, depois de reiterarem a constatação da inexistência de estudos sobre a islamofobia em Portugal, dizem o seguinte:

Não será, contudo, de escamotear o que emerge dos vários discursos surgidos nos grupos de discussão no âmbito do presente estudo. Tal como poderemos ver adiante, em quase todos os grupos surgiram opiniões que corroboram a ideia da existência de uma essencialização e categorização de um Outro muçulmano, cujos contornos em muito coincidem com as crenças que sustentam a discriminação anti-islâmica no resto da Europa e nos Estados Unidos da América. (Rosário, Santos e Lima, 2011: 34)

Se, tal como van Dijk pensa e já foi referido," os média medeiam entre o texto e o contexto" (cf. van Dijk, 1995), será útil proceder a estudos que possibilitem investigar se a inexistência de islamofobia em Portugal não constituirá também "uma fantasia dentro da fantasia", nomeadamente, a fantasia do não-racismo em Portugal.

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THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF MIGRANT WOMEN IN THE ITALIAN PRESS

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Abstract: This contribution focuses on the migrant women's portraits that emerge in the Italian press. This discursive arena is dealt with by paying attention to what is taken for granted in the discourses about migrant women and their reproductive rights and behaviours. The analysis is based on a dataset of 634 newspapers articles, published between June 2005 and July 2012, and include both partisan, non-partisan, and religious press. It highlights the culturalization of migrant women, mainly portrayed as victims, and points to the high risk of xenophobic manipulation and political instrumentalization of migrant women's rights

Keywords: migration, women, press analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Italy is a relevant case study for the analysis of the possible instrumentalization and culturalization of migrant women's rights in political discourses, for three main reasons.

Firstly, migration is a politicized issue, at least since the '90s (Sciortino and Colombo, 2004). Migration flows regulation is a crucial topic in recent political campaigns and some political parties lever on anti-immigration agendas in constructing their political identity (Cousin and Vitale, 2006). The radical populist Northern League particularly focuses on undocumented migration at the main issue in its political discourses (Biorcio, 1997 and 2010; Diamanti, 1996). Thus, the defence of migrant women's rights is intertwined with the political discourse on migrants.

Secondly, the public discourse on migration has been widely studied in Italy (Binotto and Martino, 2005; Dal Lago, 1999; Calvanese, 2011; Corte, 2002). However, much of this research deals especially with media racism, paying little attention to its impact (see Sciortino and Colombo, 2004). This wide attention lead to the "Charter of Rome", a code of conduct for journalists in the media coverage of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees,

and victims of trafficking, signed in 2008 by the National Council of the Journalists' Association and the Italian National Press Federation.[1]

Third, the issue of women's rights (a well-established topic in the Italian political sphere, where the feminist movement has a long history – Lussana, 2012) has been recently revived in the public sphere by a number of events. In 2011 (February, 13th), a large demonstration was launched after the sex scandals involving Prime Minister Berlusconi. The demonstration, protesting against the discrimination of women in politics and the labour market, gathered an impressive amount of people and was widely covered by the media.[2] About the same time, a documentary and a book on the use of female body in the media gained a wide echo.[3] As a consequence, the political and public debates over the role of women in society gained animus.

In this political climate, the present contribution addresses the media representation of migrant women, by focusing specifically on their reproductive and sexual rights. – The sources are newspaper articles from the Italian daily and weekly press (2005-2012). The analysis of media shows a systematic lack of attention to issues of concern to migrant women: feminine migration appears to be almost completely invisible. In the rare cases where they do become visible, migrant women are predominantly represented through cultural lenses, portrayed as 'the others'. As it will be shown, this 'otherization' is often related to a political instrumentalization of migrant women's rights, whose defence is turned into an argument against migration.

The next section gives a brief overview of female migration in Italy, while the third section addresses aims and methodology. The fourth section is devoted to the analysis of the results, while the last section discusses the outcomes of the research project.

2. MIGRANT WOMEN IN ITALY

The category of 'migrant' includes a large variety of situations: unskilled job-seekers as well as professional elites, UE as well non-UE citizens, single-migrants as well as families, seasonal workers as well as long-term residents, undocumented persons, and asylum seekers (see Bonizzoni, 2011). Official data bases vary, depending on the classification criteria they adopt (Busso, 2007). According to the public common-sense 'migrant' is often a synonym with 'foreigner', thus extending the displacement process much longer than the

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[1] See the English version at http://www.eui.eu/Projects/MEDIVA/Documents/TraduzioneCartadiRoma-definitiva(EN).pdf
[2] After the event a women movement has been established, "If not now, when?" (Se non ora, quando?).
[3] *Lorella Zanardo, Il corpo delle donne* – Documentary available at
http://www.ilcorpodelledonne.net/?page_id=91 (English version);
http://www.ilcorpodelledonne.net/?page_id=209 (Portuguese version).

actual migration experience, which, instead of being an event, is turned into a status and a public identity (Bordignon and Diamanti, 2002).

Until the late 80s, the regulation of immigration was based on temporary measures and occasional regularization programs (sort of 'amnesties' – see Triandafyllidou, 1999 for a historical reconstruction). Scholars agree that there often was a lack of a long-term institutional perspective: until the framework law of 1998, the laws on migration could be defined as 'emergency laws', without a scheme of policies to support migrants (Caponio, 2005; Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2005; Ambrosini, 2001). The framework law of 1998, reinforced by the 2002 migration law, introduced a mechanism that connected residence permits with job contracts - for economic migrants.[4]

According to the official data (ISTAT, 2012),[5] foreign citizens living in Italy represent 7,5% of the population (4,570,317) – an increase of 8% over the previous year. The migrant population is sex-balanced: however, huge differences emerge when considering the country of origin. Ukrainians, Moldavians, Poles, Peruvians, and Ecuadorians have higher percentages of women, while Indians, Tunisians, Egyptians, and Bangladeshis are mostly men. Moreover, migrants' presence has a huge regional variety, showing higher rates in Northern counties, even though the sex distribution is quite balanced (ISMU data, 1995-2011).[6]

The number of foreigners living in Italy started rising in the 70s, and it especially increased in the late 80s (Triandafyllidou, 1999), when women began to assume the first-migrant role. According to Tognetti Bordogna, women's migration in Italy includes three phases. During the first one, in the 70s, migrant women mostly came from Latin and Central America, the Philippines, Cape Verde, and Eritrea – mainly Catholic countries –, and middle-class families employed them as domestic workers. The second phase took place since the 80s: countries of origin differentiated and there was a decrease in job-segregation. Nevertheless, women's migration remained an invisible process, for both scholars and the public sphere. In the 90s, migrant women became more visible, for different reasons, such as family reunification - that involved also non-working women - and sex trafficking (Tognetti Bordogna, 2004). Nowadays, as Italian families become increasingly dependent of migrant women's work, they are mostly employed as caregivers in reproductive work. The increasing presence of migrant women – characterized by a high degree of internal differences in terms of migratory experience and legal status (Bonizzoni, 2011) – triggered an increasing interest from the media and, slowly, feminine

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[4] For an analysis of migration laws and residence permits see Einaudi, 2007; Bonizzoni 2013,
[5] Official data available at http://noi-italia.istat.it/
[6] Data available at http://www.ismu.org/index.php?page=490#.

migration began to be visible even in the press, modifying the predominant representation of migration as an essentially male process.

3. Aims and Methodology: Migrant Women in the Public Discourse

This contribution focuses on the representation of migrant women in the media. In the last decades, the public sphere underwent a process of "mediatization" (Mazzoleni and Schultz, 1999): scholars consider contemporary societies to be "Democracies of the Public" (Manin, 1992; see also Rosanvallon, 2008).

Therefore, the analysis of discourse in the mass media is crucial in order to understand how migrant women are constructed as a political subject in Italy, and how their rights are open to political and/or xenophobic manipulation. A long and well-established tradition of studies explored the close interconnections between discourse and power (Foucault, 1975) from a number of perspectives, such as political and/or critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Van Dijk, 1997), policy frame analysis, (Yanow, 1996), and media frame analysis (Gamson, 1992). In this perspective, the analysis of the representation of migrant women in the media includes the analysis of the narratives and frames they are located within in the public sphere.

The relationships between migration and media have been widely studied. Many scholars have focused on racism, stereotypization and/or criminalisation of migrants, and Islamophobia (see, for instance, Said, 1997; Van Dijk, 1991). Nevertheless, significantly less attention has been paid to the specific representations of migrant women (Campani, 2001; Nash, 2006; Navarro, 2010). This has to do with the almost complete lack of media coverage (Van Dijk, 1991).

In order to explore the Italian media narratives about migrant women I analysed 634 articles from Italian newspapers, published between June 2005 and July 2012. I chose 2005 as a starting point because the referendum over the regulation of medically assisted procreation, which took place on 12/13 June, has triggered the resurgence of public interest in reproductive rights, which constitute the focus of this project. I selected the articles dealing with migrant women and reproduction, and I codified them per topic (abortion, fertility, maternity, sexuality, other). Then, I used a text-driven coding scheme in order to identify the ways in which migrant women are connected to the topics taken into consideration (see table I to IV), and to explore the extent of women 'victimization' within the Italian press, as well as the role attributed to religion (table V). Finally, I reconstructed migrant women 'figures' as they emerge in the Italian press.

I divided the press into four main categories: Non-partisan Mainstream Newspapers (*La Repubblica*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, *Il Sole 24 ore*, *Il Messaggero*, *l'Espresso*); Right-wing Newspapers (*Il Giornale*, *Libero*, *Il Secolo d'Italia*, *Il Foglio*, *La*

Padania); Left-wing Newspapers (*L'Unità*, *Liberazione*, *Il Manifesto*); and Catholic Newspapers (*Famiglia Cristiana*, *l'Avvenire*, *Osservatore Romano*). The Italian media sphere is inherently intertwined with politics: the national mainstream newspapers are connected to powerful economic groups, while political newspapers are financed by political parties or groups, addressing different political audiences. Specifically, *La Repubblica* and *L'Espresso* are connected to the De Benedetti group, a slightly centre-left group, also active in energy and healthcare; *La Stampa* is associated to the Agnelli group (which owns the powerful FIAT empire); RCSmediagroup owns *Il Corriere della Sera* (and *El Mundo*); *Il Messaggero* is owned by the Caltagirone group (centre-right oriented), while *Il Sole 24 Ore* is the voice of Confindustria (Italian employers' federation). *Famiglia Cristiana* is the most read Catholic weekly magazine, as well as one of the three most diffused weekly magazines in Italy; *l'Avvenire* is considered the daily newspaper of the Italian Bishops' Conference, while *l'Osservatore Romano* is close to the Vatican hierarchies. As for the openly political newspapers, *Il Giornale* is owned by the Berlusconi's group, *La Padania* is the Northern League newspaper, while *Libero, Il Secolo d'Italia* and *Il Foglio* address the larger right-wing audience. *L'Unità* was the Communist Party newspaper, now it voices the Democratic Party; *Liberazione* is the voice of the Communist Refoundation party, while *Il Manifesto* mainly addresses left-wing audience and grass-root movements. I decided to sample newspapers focused on different audiences in order to highlight the possible differences in framing and narrating migrant women's issues.

Migration is a key-theme in the Italian public sphere. The attention towards migrants in the Italian press is hardly new. A careful reconstruction shows different phases in the migration discourse of the mainstream press (Sciortino and Colombo, 2004). The first phase (70s) describes two immigrant figures: the elite, rich foreigner and the foreign worker, destined to low skilled jobs and the focus of a slightly negative narrative about unfair labour market competition. The second phase took place in the 80s, and was related to the dramatic increase in the immigration flux. The discursive field changes: it is far less centred on the labour market and much more preoccupied with the impact of immigration. The "migration issue" undergoes a process of politicization (Balbo and Manconi, 1992; Maneri, 1998; Mansoubi, 1990). Finally, in the 1990s the interest in this issues diminishes, and the term *immigrant* is acknowledged as part of the common language - indicating a political problem. In media coverage a strict relation is built between immigrants and crime, while references to the labour market virtually disappear (Cotesta and De Angelis, 1999; Dal Lago, 1999, Maneri, 1998; Triandafyllidou, 1999). In the 2000s, the press begins to include references to Islam-related migration. Recent studies focus on racism in the media, including Islamophobia, and underline the wide

media coverage of crimes related to migrants. In general, scholars' analyses on media and migration in Italy focus on media racism, by analysing the press as well as television channels with both local and national audiences. In broad terms, one could say that Italian media sphere is characterized by a negative image of migrants.[7] Moreover, migrants in Italy can be described as very absent from their own narratives, since they rarely have a voice (Sibhatu, 2004).

Very few studies specifically focus on migrant women in the Italian press (Campani, 2001; Censis, 2002). Campani, for instance, underlines their virtual absence compared to men. When they become visible, migrant women are mainly depicted as maids, as reassuring figures (especially in the 70s and 80s). In the late 80s and in the 90s, other figures emerge. First, the image of the migrant prostitute – presented with a high degree of emotiveness, submissive, completely dependent on men, and often labelled as a "slave". This victimized figure has been widely important in criminalizing migrants – and the press completely ignores the cases of women who managed to regain control over their lives. Second, the Islamic woman, arriving through family reunification, gets presented as "the other", submissive toward the Islamic men and completely embedded in the culture of her country of origin. In the next section, I present the results of a first exploration of the Italian media sphere concerning its representation of migrant women.

4. MIGRANT WOMEN IN THE ITALIAN PRESS

The research focuses on the media coverage of migrant women between 2005 and 2012. Table I shows the topics related to the images of migrant women, and focuses especially on reproductive rights.

As it can be seen, the articles in the sample mostly focus on fertility/abortion: migrant women are mentioned either for their fertility or for abortion rates. A large percentage is also related to sexuality: this category includes topics as prostitution, gender relationships, and related issues (forced marriages and 'Female genital mutilation'). Finally 15% of articles focus on migrant women and maternity and, more broadly, on the relationship between migrant mothers and their children (in Italy and abroad). The last category (various and mix) collects articles that mention migrant women in relation to other topics,

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[7] A brief bibliography on media and migration in Italy includes studies on the racism in the national media sphere Balbo and Manconi, 1992; Belluati, Grossi and Viglongo, 1995; Binotto and Martino, 2005; Calvanese, 2011; Campani, 2001; Censis, 2002; Corte, 2002; Cospe, 2003 and 2008; Cotesta and De Angelis, 1999; Dal Lago, 1999; Etnequal, 2003; Guadagnucci, 2010; Lunaria, 2011; Mai, 2002; Maneri, 1998; Mansoubi, 1990; Marletti, 1991; Medici senza frontiere, 2012; Naletto, 2009; Osservatorio di Pavia, 2001; Riccio, 2001; Sciortino and Colombo, 2004; Sibhatu, 2004; Triandafyllidou, 1999; Villa, 2008. For analyses of the local media sphere see Bonerba and Mazzoni, 2013; Iris, 1991; Lippi and Tirotta, 2013; Lodigiani, 1996; Macciò, 2012; Riccio, 1997. On photojournalism, see Gariglio, Pogliano, and Zanini, 2010. In the last years, the on line media monitoring also increased. See, for instance, http://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/; and http://www.mmc2000.net/.

such as their presence in the labour market. Three types of articles are mapped: interviews with experts (doctors, sociologists, volunteers working with migrants) or with politicians; crime news; life stories.

TABLE I - **Migrant Women and the Italian Press - Topics Distribution (Percentages)**

Topic					
	Non-partisan	Catholic	Left	Right	Total
Maternity	20	16	4	3	15
Sexuality	17	18	32	38	22
Fertility/Abortion	39	49	51	43	42
Various + mix	24	17	13	16	21
Total	100	100	100	100	100

In what follows, I will present how migrant women are described in relation to the listed topics and the predominant narratives that emerge. Naturally, I pay attention to the differences in the media representation according to their political orientation.

4.1. FERTILITY AND ABORTION

Most articles mentioning migrant women focus on fertility and abortion (42%). Specifically, the media underline the strict correlation between migration and abortion (45% of entries on fertility/abortion), and, to a lower extent, between migration and fertility (18%).

In all newspapers, migrants' abortion rate is connected to the difficulties that come with migration, especially the economic conditions of migrants (18%): job insecurity and hard work conditions, low incomes, and the absence of a family support affect the possibility of having a child.

> Therefore, she interrupts her pregnancy. It's her second time. 'If I were at home, maybe I could have a child, there is my mother, my family, we help each other, there, but, here, how can I? I am alone, my brothers are two males, they do not know anything of children, I am not married. I can not just lose my job, how do I live without money?'. (Redazione, "Le immigrate e l'aborto. L'Italia finto paradiso", *La Repubblica*, 30.03.2007)

The predominant narrative reads migrant women as characterized by a low socio-economic status and, because of this reason, forced to interrupt pregnancies, to abandon or even murder their children.

A number of articles also highlight migrant women's emotional distress, in relation to abortion (8%): the experience of dislocation and loneliness in host countries are, in the words of some articles, overwhelming.

Thirdly, some voices in the media portray migrant women as 'victims of ignorance' (11%). Specifically, they allegedly ignore contraceptive practices. Thus, their high abortion rate is related to their failure to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

> In the sample, 56 per cent do not use any kind of contraception for these reasons: 'The pill causes cancer' (Peru, in a relationship, without children). 'I thought that I used the pill so much that I have become sterile, so I stopped using it' (Peru, married, two children) 'My sister in law had the spiral, she got a bleeding. It is dangerous' (Ecuador, 25 years, married, one child). 'The condom hurts after childbirth' (Romania, 33 years, two children). 'I'm always with my husband and I don't betray him, so it is not necessary' (China, 23 years). 'In my country the pill is free, here it is expensive, even 12 euro, I do not have money' (Morocco, no children). 40 per cent do not know their fertile period, a high percentage is pregnant again within three months after delivery. 'For a week or two we meet every few months… why contraception?' (Romania, 28 year-old, in a casual relationship). 'If you do it once in a while nothing happens' (Peru, no children). (Redazione, "Le immigrate e l'aborto. L'Italia finto paradiso", *La Repubblica*, 30.03.2007)

The article above reports the outcomes of a project analyzing the reasons migrant women abort, and it clearly shows how the press characterizes migrant women: abortion is the ultimate contraception practice, connected to migrant women's alleged ignorance or cultural refusal of birth-control practices.

Moreover, it is said that migrant women often resort to illegal abortion, either because illegal immigrants are afraid of being denounced or because they don't know the legal terms of abortion. Thus, migrant women' agency and individuality disappear (as it is well underlined in the international literature on this subject: see Phillips, 2007). On the contrary, their behaviour is put in connection to their countries of origin.

> 'In fact, the choices of foreign women are strongly affected by cultural elements - says Graziella Sacchetti, gynaecologist of the Italian Society of Medicine of Migration – Among the Arabs, for example, male involvement in contraception is unthinkable, and therefore the condom is excluded. The Moroccans have less problems, while the Egyptians reject the pill.' [...] Women from Eastern Europe, especially from former Soviet Union, traditionally use the pill, or the spiral. For

Chinese women, also, contraception is not a taboo. However, they typically refer to the doctors of the big local communities, for example using a spiral made in China. (Ruggiero Corcella, "Aborto clandestino un dramma dell' immigrazione", 24.02.2008)

The midwife is in charge of up to 20 patients. Many foreigners. "I am in charge of many Roma women - says Fusco - for them, the birth-control pill is unthinkable, they do not like rules.' The Roma girls call her 'my sister'. (Cristina Zagaria, "La trincea dei consultori 'Ma non siamo abortifici'", *La Repubblica*, 23 .11.2005)

These citations from non-partisan newspapers clearly show how the connection between migrant women and their countries of origin is used to build a cultural understanding of their behaviours. In other words, migrant women's reproductive behaviours are explained as determined by their cultural belonging, rather than as an individual choice. This is consistent with what occurs in other national contexts (cfr. Lonergan, 2012, for UK; see also Phillips, 2007). When speaking of migrant women and abortion practices, partisan and religious newspapers also refer to a cultural frame, – with some significant differences.

In our case, the vast majority of foreign women master the methods of contraception: they do not use them either because of a lack of responsibility, or because of an 'elementary' forma mentis, so to speak – for example, the belief that if you have just had a baby you will not get pregnant right away. (V.G., Sempre più donne (straniere) nei CAV: "Da soli non possiamo aiutarle tutte", *Avvenire*, 17.04.2012)

This extract, from the Catholic newspaper l'*Avvenire*, reports the words of a doctor who volunteers in the Centri per la Vita (Centres for Life – Catholic organizations that try to prevent abortion). In a patronizing tone, he describes migrant women irresponsible and, in fact, ignorant about reproduction and pregnancy matters.

On the contrary, left-wing newspapers sometimes bring up the 'culturalization' issue, for the purpose of criticizing it.

The whole discourse on the 'Health of Migrants' and the protection of the human body is strictly connected to this issue. The possibility of an integration is directly proportional to the capacity of self-determination, in particular for the female gender. (Italia-Razzismo, "Aborto, i dati sono in crescita solo per le donne straniere", *l'Unità*, 01.08.2009)

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In this perspective, the recognition and the empowerment of migrant women's agency regarding their reproductive choices are connected with the migration issue.

Also, the strict relation between fertility and migration is pointed out in a variety of articles (18%). According to the Italian press, migrant women show a higher birth rate either because of cultural reasons or because their migratory experience was successful: thus their fertility is specifically connected to a faith towards the future.

In commenting on migrant women's fertility rates, right-wing newspapers flag the threat of invasion. The right-wing daily newspaper *Libero*, for example, frames the difference in birth rates by fomenting fears over the threat of a possible de-Italianization of Italy:

> [...] we would have no chance of winning the devastating sperm war. [...] Our people must be free to choose their demographic rates. [...] Immigration is not a corrective to the declining Italian birth rate, but a real replacing process. (Gilberto Oneto, "Le balle sugli immigrati. Alzano la natalità? No, ci invadono", *Libero*, 09.10.2011)

To sum up, in relation to fertility and abortion issues, migrant women's representations underline their economic difficulties and their cultural embeddedness. Therefore, migrant women seem, first of all, to be categorized as belonging to a disadvantaged class: thus, they suffer from demanding job conditions and they cannot afford contraception. Second, they are portrayed as ignorant, either for cultural reasons or because of a lack of education. Finally, migrant women are depicted as interrupting pregnancy only because of their difficult situation; under different circumstances, they would have several children. Nevertheless, there are some differences in reporting that we need to take into account: the argument from 'ignorance', for example, is more present in right-wing and non-partisan newspapers, while Catholic and leftist newspaper pay more attention to the material life conditions of migrant women.

TABLE II - Representation of Migrant Women (Percentages and Press Sub-Spheres Distribution): Fertility and Abortion

	Non partisan	Catholic	Left	Right	Total
Fertility and abortion					
Abortion/Immigration	43	39	62	47	45
Economic reasons	19	20	27	15	19
Emotional distress	8	10	3	7	8
Ignorance	12	5	5	16	11
Fertility/Immigration	18	26	3	15	18

4.2. MATERNITY

Maternity and migrant women becomes a theme related to fertility: migrant women have the 'merit' of increasing the low Italian fertility rate (13% of entries on maternity).

Especially in religious newspapers (and, also, in non-partisan ones), this merit is connected to the supposedly different vision of maternity of migrant women (39%).

> In the culture of her country, being a mother is the highest expression of being a woman. And her desire pushes her to risk anything to keep her child. With that child, the pride of being a woman, and an African woman, is reborn in her. [...] The life of the African woman is based on three pillars, as three are the firestones on which she cooks: God, the community, and the family. For African women, therefore, motherhood is something essential to femininity, in the end it is what characterizes their womanhood. (Suor Eugenia Bonetti, "Becky, da prostituta a mamma", *Famiglia Cristiana*, 09.05.2011)

This extract, that tells the story of a prostitute who changed her life through motherhood, shows the type of language related to maternity and migration: the migrant woman is framed as someone who has deep roots and connections with maternity, in an implicit contrast with the medicalized and rationalized Western way of life. Thus, motherhood seems to be culturally framed, in strict connection with the higher migrant fertility rates. This description of 'otherness' is consistent with the otherization that Yegenoglu narrates (1998): a reconstruction of Western women's identity mirrored by the construction of an 'other' identity.

Some articles tackle the issue of transnational maternity (16%). Migrant women are forced to leave their children in their country of origin, so they suffer from a 'mutilated' motherhood. Again, especially religious (and, to some extent, non-partisan) newspapers pay attention to this topic, underlining the difficulties of being a mother abroad, taking care of the children of their employers while their own live far away.

> There are immigrants who do not see their children and their parents for years. Not only because the journey is too expensive, but because, being illegally present, they cannot afford to leave Italy for the fear of not being able to come back. To those who help us to take care of our families we often deny the right to their own family. The result is a permanent situation of uncertainty, which results in easy exploitation, but also in blackmail. (Chiara Saraceno, "Quei bisogni ignorati", *La Repubblica*, 07.07.2009)

Migration processes, when involving families, heavily affect the intimate relations (Bonizzoni, 2009). This extract highlights what in the literature is referred to as 'international care chains': rich countries families are increasingly dependent on migrant women as care-givers; migrant women, in turn, leave their dependent relatives in someone else's charge (Bonizzoni, 2011: 316).

> The Ukrainians have left their children at home, and so have the Romanians, the Moldovans and all the other women, especially those from Eastern Europe, who came to seek their fortune in Italy (there are 416,311 immigrant women who work in Italians' homes): they know about their children by phone or by pictures. According to the last data from the Romanian Ministry of Family, there are 200.000 children with at least one parent abroad. And it is often the mother who leaves, because in the Ukrainian matriarchal family the woman is the one who bears the greatest responsibilities. [...] The other side of emigration is the destabilization of the family, which especially affects the youth and the elderly - the most vulnerable. (Giovanni Ruggiero, "Mamme e badanti: 'Noi, così lontane dai nostri bambini'", *Avvenire*, 13.11.2010)

This extract from the Catholic *Avvenire* frames migrant women as victims – and heroines, who sacrifice themselves for the sake of their families. Nevertheless, their choices also carry the heavy weight of destabilizing the family and its traditional roles.

Finally, migrant women are portrayed as mothers of children born in Italy. On the one hand, newspapers articles address the issue of the nationality of those children born to foreign parents. In Italy, second-generation children lose their residence right on turning 18 – at that moment, they can apply for citizenship, but they can be expelled in the meanwhile. This paradoxical situation, of children born and raised in Italy becoming foreigners on reaching adult agemakes the object of a fierce debate in the Italian political sphere.

On the other hand, more attention is paid to mother-children relationships when crime-events defined as 'cultural clashes' occur. Both partisan and non-partisan newspapers widely cover the stories of crimes related to clashes between first and second-generation migrants (cfr. *infra*).

Maternity is not a central issue in the Italian press concerning migrant women. Nevertheless, it helps to show different elements of culturalization. Again, some differences emerge in the press sub-spheres. Of course, right-wing newspapers do not affirm the merit of migrant women referring to their high fertility rate. The issue of a different (better) perception of motherhood is largely diffused in Catholic newspapers, but

almost absent in the leftist ones. The question of the nationality of second-generation migrants is a highly politicized issue, and is therefore dealt with mainly by partisan newspapers, as the percentages below show.

TABLE III - Representation of Migrant Women (Percentages and Press Sub-Spheres Distribution): Maternity

	Non-partisan	Catholic	Left	Right	Total
Maternity					
Maternity merit	14	11	20	0	13
Different maternity	25	39	0	12	26
Transnational maternity	14	29	0	11	16
Children citizenship	47	21	80	77	45
Total	100	100	100	100	100

4.3. SEXUALITY

Sexuality and sex relations are quite accounted for in my sample. A first sub-topic of migrant women's sexuality is related to the prostitution/sex-trafficking theme (11%). Migrant women were often mentioned when dealing with sex trafficking or positive experiences of emancipation from prostitution, especially in the 90s (Campani, 2001; Dal Lago, 1999; Sciortino and Colombo, 2004). Nevertheless, this topic seems to be less important in the media, and only Catholic newspapers pay some attention to it.

Secondly, there is a quite important focus on the 'cultural clash', concerning second-generation migrant women, which include their difficulties in simultaneously adhering to their family's traditions and culture and with the pressures of the Italian (Western) culture (40%).

> The laceration of the migrant adolescents, divided between the tradition of the family of origin and the modernity, the daily relationships with the Italian peers, so different, so free. (Nunzia Vallini, "'A noi giudici diceva: voglio essere bresciana' Mandato di cattura europeo per il cognato", *Corriere della Sera*, 18.08.2006)

Several newspapers report cases of crimes and murders, women killed or hurt by relatives, allegedly because of cultural or religious reasons. Articles frame these cases as 'cultural crimes', depicting migrant women as the victims of their tradition, which is often connected to Islam. The culture of the 'others' is behind these crimes and is implicitly described as traditionalist and primitive in comparison with Italian culture.

The danger of the next decade is likely to be the 'latent conflict', embodied by the girls who study and integrate but who live in traditionalist families. 'Many parents do not have a high level of education – says Fihan Elbataa, from the Brescia section of the Young Muslims of Italy – and then, faced with situations where they see a danger, they do not know how to react. They become severe and impose rules through aggressiveness. We try to encourage them to enter a dialogue, to leave a space of freedom'. (Gianni Santucci, "In Italia 2000 spose bambine ogni anno. E molte sono costrette a rimpatriare", *Corriere della Sera*, 20.01.2010)

Right-wing and mainstream newspapers pay particular attention to the 2nd generation's double identity, and describe the youth as being divided between opposite loyalties. Catholic newspapers are less attentive to this issue, preferring to focus on cultural differences *tout court*. In this perspective, as it has been mentioned earlier, mother-children relationships emerge as another issue.

Sister Claudia Biondi Caritas Ambrosiana has seen dozens of girls who go out dressed like daddy wants them to and then change clothes in the elevator, to match their peers'. 'There is always a greater attention and protection towards the daughters, especially by fathers and brothers, a protection bordering on possessiveness'. This often leads to a rupture. Do mothers mediate? 'Not always. In the case of a teenager runaway, for example, we had an encounter with a group of women who were divided'. Some linked to the origins, other allied to their daughters. (Alessandra Coppola, "Lo scontro di civiltà in casa e le donne in prima linea", *Corriere della Sera*, 05.10.2010)

The differences between the Italian culture and the tradition of 'the others' are assumed as a datum by most articles, especially by Catholic newspapers. Most articles list a series of supposedly homogeneous cultural or religious practices that state a difference between the "Italians" (more often the Westerns) and the "others": forced marriages, female circumcision, and restrictions to girls' liberties, for instance.

Female circumcision, for all African religions, becomes such an essential component of girls' life to make them forget the torture of having their genitals cut. (Carla Massi, "Infibulazione, carcere fino a 12 anni", *Il Messaggero*, 07.07.2005)

Specifically, what emerges is that migrant women's culture is always framed as traditionalist and detrimental for women. The role of religion is always underlined as

negative for migrant women, the specific target being Islam. Right-wing newspapers, especially, seem to consider only the migrants who arrive from Muslim countries, and to focus on Muslim patriarchy.

> There is a parallel city in our cities, an underground city that lives in harassment and abuse. But also in solitude and silence. Surrounded by family members, relatives, neighbours who observe, judge and monitor, for Muslim women who do not want to lower their heads and try to rebel, there are not many ways out. (Daniela Santanché, "Storie di donne violate in nome della sharia", *Libero*, 14.03.2008)

Even religious newspapers underline the differences between the Italian culture, associated to Christianity, and Islam, though in a more subtle way.

> The centrality of cultural heritage in foreigners' and their children's lives (especially for those coming from Arabic countries) is confirmed, and there are changes and contradictions generated by the encounter with the new context. In particular, Egyptians and Pakistanis focus on maintaining the role of wives or daughters, who are in charge of preserving and passing on traditional values. There are values which are considered non-negotiable, near to a grey area where there is a greater openness to change. (Giorgio Paolucci, Interview with Giovanna Rossi, Sociologist of Migration, "La doppia attrattiva delle seconde generazioni, *Avvenire*, 17.01.2010)

In this perspective, consistent with many scholars' observations, migrant women are culturally embedded. Moreover,they embody their culture because they are mothers: theyare responsible for transmitting a sense of identity to their children (Lonergan, 2012).

There are some differences, though, especially considering left-wing newspapers, where the distinction between Islam and patriarchy is usually underlined.

> But patriarchy is not an inevitable timeless, a-historical event: it is a socio-symbolic structure that engages other social and cultural structures (including Islam) and whose fates depend on the relationships and conflicts between women, between women and men, and between men. In her investigation of the Pakistani women in Val Trompia, last Thursday, Manuela Cartosio put a new light on how the conditions of the young Pakistani immigrants, even in the extreme cases, such as Hina's, is plagued by poor relationships between mothers and daughters, and by a lack of socialization and communication between women. And certainly this is the first node to address in order to change the situation. But the second step must be the

opening of a struggle by men against other men's violent behaviours, within the immigrant communities as well as within the Italian society, and transversely between the ones and the others. (Ida Dominijanni, Transversal Patriarchies (it is the title of the newspaper article, *Il Manifesto*, 22.08.2006).

The sexuality of migrant women also emerges as a radical otherness: migrant women appear to be sexualized (see Yegenoglu, 1998). Sexually active migrant women are described as either victims of sex trafficking or being torn between their loyalty to family and tradition, on the one side, and the freedom of modernity, on the other side.

TABLE IV - **Representation of Migrant Women (Percentages and Press Sub-Spheres Distribution): Sexuality**

	Non-partisan	Catholic	Left	Right	Total
Sexuality					
Prostitution/sex trade	12	30	12	4	11
2nd generation	46	13	38	45	40
Cultural differences	42	57	50	51	49
Total	100	100	100	100	100

4.4. VICTIMS AND ISLAM

Newspapers analysis shows, on the whole, a wide victimizing frame. Concerning reproductive rights, migrant women seem to be either driven by culture or at men's mercy.

Specifically, a connection between culture, tradition, and religion, especially Islam, emerges. Left-wing newspapers, for instance, wonder about the invisibility of migrant women for left-wing activists, especially considering women coming from Muslim countries. Again, the implicit assumption is the victimization of (Muslim) migrant women. Thus, left wing newspapers articles underline the supposed tension between women rights (feminism) and minority (multiculturalism) – cfr. *infra*. Nevertheless there is no criticism towards Islam as the whole (0%). On the contrary, an effort to differentiate religion from patriarchy is obvious (19%) – as is the wide denunciation of migrant women's precarious situation (59%). While scholars underline that migrants' life conditions are less of a concern for the Italian press (Sciortino and Colombo, 2004), they prove to be key-themes when reporting about migrant women. Religious newspapers also pay a great deal of attention to migrant women as victims. Even though there is virtually no complain against Islam (3%), a subtle suggestion of the necessity of teaching and guiding the 'others' unfolds:

A girl who lives and studies here acquires the self-esteem necessary to oppose, for example, arranged marriages in, for example, India... In some societies, male domination is still undisputed [...] But I remember that even in Italy, in order to stop the honour killing, we had to convince, and compel, otherwise the moral conscience does not develop. (Lucia Bellaspiga, "Cardia: niente alibi "culturali", sentenze severe", *Avvenire*, 29.05. 2012)

Migrant women emerge, again, as the vulnerable subjects, who have to be trained according to modern values by the supposedly emancipated Italians. In this perspective, there is a differentiation between 'Western women', driven by self-esteem, autonomy, and moral values, and 'non-Western women', whose behaviours are culturally driven (Phillips, 2007; see also Yegenoglu, 1998).

IT'S CALLED Chrysalis Project, a title that says it all: to get out from the 'cocoon' the many immigrant women who come to Italy for family reunification, dependent on husbands and without their economic autonomy, and therefore more likely than the others (those, that is, who come here to work), to take refuge in the house and to suffer alone from the problems affecting all the immigrants. (Maria Cristina Carratù, "Crisalide, contro la solitudine delle immigrate", *La Repubblica*, 26.05.2010)

This extract, again, clearly shows the image of migrant women as dependent on men and culture. Some articles from both leftist (22%) and non-partisan newspapers (27%) focus on positive examples of migrant women's stories of emancipation and empowerment, especially in relation to women's roles in the job market and in representative bodies (such as workers' unions). In other words, successful stories are related to a westernization of migrant women.[8] Nevertheless, in a number of stories, women's strength is attributed to a supposedly fixed character of femininity, as in this extract below:

Both Italians and 'new Italians' must break into the public sphere, and become the authoritative manufacturers of our civil society. We have one more resource to do this, that is the alphabet of feelings. [...] And it is in everyday life that women build the mixing of cultures and civilizations. Women are the leaders of a chain of coexistence – just think about the caregivers, the teachers, the child carer – and have the ability to create moments of celebration in their neighbourhoods and in

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[8] A strategy also apparent in other countries' media, see, for instance, Navarro's study on the media representation of Islamic women in Spain (Navarro, 2010).

their communities, through the many women's associations. (Livia Turco, "8 marzo: Italiane e straniere un fiore per i diritti", *l'Unità*, 09.03.2012).

Migrant women, thus, have a heavy weight to carry: they are women, sharing an ontological feminine character with other women; they are mothers, and they embody the culture of their country of origin, mysterious and radically 'other'; they live in Western countries, where they can learn about autonomy and emancipation. Thus, they are often portrayed as the possible mediators between supposedly radically different cultures.

It has often been said that immigrant women are a key element of growth, development and integration [...] And the immigrant women who carry with them the richness of their cultures of origin, lovers of life and motherhood, offer us this gift. (Suor Eugenia Bonetti, "La ricchezza delle donne immigrate", *Famiglia Cristiana*, 31.10.2011)

In particular, it is the daughters who can apply for this bridging role, as the following extract suggests:

From the interviews a dual identity comes out: Italians in all respects, but also proudly connected to their roots, the culture of the country of origin, their parents and their religiosity. A pride reinforced by the Arab Spring. (Jolanda Bufalini, "Generazione due: orgoglio musulmano e voglia di votare", *l'Unità*, 30.09.2011)

Right-wing newspapers focus on migrant women especially in order to stand against migration. First, migrant women in right-wing newspapers seem to originate only from Arab and Muslim majority countries: there is no room for other women. Second, there is a strict correlation between religion (Islam) and the image of migrant women as victims. In this perspective, the protection of migrant women's rights becomes an argument against migration and Islam.

[...] we are striving for a real integration in our country, that will never exist as long as you do not give up on these incivilities; until you put it into your head that women are citizens, and as such they have the same rights and the same dignity as men. (Antonio Mazzocchi – PDL elected and president of Cristiano Riformisti, "Non c'è solo l'infamia del burqa, in Italia si pratica l'infibulazione", *Libero*, 10.10.2009).

For this reason, the extracts show a high degree of culturalization and a homogenizing attitude towards the culture (and religion) of the others.

> In the Muslim culture a woman must obey her husband or father, if he decides that she must wear the veil, according to the Shariah, the wife or daughter cannot resist. The Muslim woman is not allowed to have male friends. The woman cannot contradict her husband and father and cannot leave the home, nor can she work or study without his permission. She is forbidden to have sexual relations outside marriage and to frequent non-Muslim men. These precepts are so deeply ingrained in the Islamic culture that even the converted adapt to these rules. (Patrizia Marin, "Dobbiamo difendere le donne musulmane dalla loro cultura", *Libero*, 08.09.2006)

This extract is titled, meaningfully, "We have to defend migrant women from their own culture". It suggests that Islam is characterized by a cultural homogeneity, and that Italy must help Muslim women even when they do not want to – because they are portrayed as being victims of their own culture.

> The other aspect that must be strongly emphasized is that, following this ideology of multiculturalism, women and the most vulnerable subjects are likely to remain victims of male domination, and of the strongest. (Souad Sbai, "Voglio tolleranza zero", *Libero*, 17.04.2008)

Souad Sbai is the president of the Italian Association of women from Morocco. For this reason, her declarations are reported as 'authority arguments' on Islam by right-wing newspapers. Multiculturalism is highly criticized as "not good for women": in other words, the only reference is to the possible perverse effects of multicultural policies on women (the argument of vulnerable minorities within minorities – see Phillips, 2007; Ponzanesi, 2007).

> Multiculturalism has brought to the fore forms of family organization different from those of our tradition, and the canons of cultural relativism prevent us from clearly stating that they, from the point of view of individual freedom, are worse. (Gaetano Quagliarello, "Quando i diritti sono incivili", *Il Giornale*, 30.01.2007)

As the following extract shows, critics of multiculturalism resist the very idea of the equal treatment of minorities and different cultures.

Lesbian or infibulated. Congratulations, women! The winning models in the autumn-winter trends of the leftist Italy – that has the ass-face of Romano Prodi and the Islamic-Zapaterist head of the post-communism – oscillate between the two opposite extremes. At the expense of the common woman, the normal female, the girlfriend, the wife, the mother, home-and-work. And this is the last glorious stage of women's emancipation. (Marcello Veneziani, "Lesbica o col burqa, così oggi si dice donna", *Libero*, 19.11.2006).

Right MP Santanchè addresses the connection between feminism and multiculturalism in order to compete on the traditionally leftist field of women rights and to present the political right as the new feminism.

I think the feminist issue is crucial to the process of integration. It is impossible to think of living together with the Muslim in our Country without reaffirming women's dignity. We cannot let them feel abandoned in Italy too. That's why I wrote my law proposal to remove the veil. And I must say that there has been only a deafening silence around me. Where are the feminists? And where were they, when Hina was buried, the Muslim girl killed by her father because she had rebelled against the Islamic culture? (Daniela Schiazzano, "Santanchè: l'integrazione deve partire dalla questione femminile", *Il Messaggero*, 22.03.2007)

In this extract, MP Santanchè refers to the 'foulard issue' – which had a wide echo in Italian press, even though almost no debate about the veil took place in Italy.

To sum up, migrant women are portrayed as "the others". They are victims, either of their culture and religion or of the pre-modern traditions of patriarchy that characterize their countries of origin. The degree of the patronizing attitude towards migrant women is slightly different: their empowerment is referred to in different ways, within the press sub-spheres. Leftist newspapers focus on migrant women's individual agency and education, as well as on their role within the job market; right-wing newspapers, on the other hand, affirm that they have to be aided to emancipate themselves, even against their will. Thus, positive stories are the tales of migrant (and especially second generation) women who fight their families and challenge their traditions. Religious newspapers tell stories of migrant women's empowerment that focus on women's role within families instead, underlining their efforts to care for family ties even under difficult circumstances.

TABLE V - Representation of Migrant Women (Percentages and Press Sub-Spheres Distribution): Victimization

	Non partisan	Catholic	Left	Right	Total
Victims					
Islam vs Catholicism	6	3	0	5	5
Islam and patriarchy	16	23	19	44	27
Victimization	51	67	59	48	52
Women strenghts	27	7	22	3	16
Total	100	100	100	100	100

5. PORTRAITS OF LADIES: THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE MIGRANT WOMEN IN THE ITALIAN PRESS

This contribution analysed the representation of migrant women in the Italian press, with a special focus on reproductive rights.

First, it is worth noticing that, consistently with the literature on media and migrants, migrant women are rarely a topic of debate *per se* (see Campani, 2001; Navarro, 2010). They become an object (and rarely a subject) of discourse. Second, five figures of migrant women emerge. The first three figures have been present in the Italian media sphere since the 80s and the 90s (see Campani, 2001): the maid, a reassuring image of migrant women working in Italian homes; the prostitute, dependent and subordinate; and the Muslim woman, dependent and subordinate as well, and embedded in her culture. Also, the figure of the emancipated (and westernized) migrant woman comes to the fore. Finally, the migrant mother, mainly ignorant and poor, subordinate either to her life circumstances, her family, or her culture, plays a prominent role. On the whole, migrant women are widely represented as being victims of their own cultures and traditions. Within a patronizing frame, migrant women are mainly described as ignorant, poorly educated, culturally driven and subjected to patriarchy – this is particularly the case of women coming from Arab or Muslim-majority countries. Even when reporting "positive" examples of migrant women's empowerment, there is an implicit contrast with their initial disadvantages.

Second, the representation of migrant women has two main characters: it expresses a radical 'otherness' and a process of 'culturalization'.

Migrant women represent a radical otherness, internally homogeneous. This otherness constructs the Western sameness in a dialectical perspective, since the practice of identity construction 'constitutes not only the objects but also the subjects' (Yegenoglu, 1998: 22). At the same time, an essentialized femininity is described as being a common character beyond women's differences.

Moreover, migrant women's otherness is charged with a cultural significance. An exaggeration of cultures' internal homogeneity, and a diffuse use of culture as an all-encompassing explanation of migrant women's behaviours is apparent. Migrant women seem to be described, to a large extent, as incapacitated by their cultures and, as a consequence, as lacking in autonomy. Forced marriages, female circumcision, and veiling are all included in the category of cultural – coercive – choices. Thus, cultural differences appear to be loaded with moral significance.

By focusing on press sub-spheres some differences emerge, though. While the equation migrant women – victim is widespread, its understandings and specifications are more nuanced. The right-wing press promotes the defence of migrant women while targeting their cultures and religions. Thus, migrant women's emancipation and fair treatment imply the rejection of their culture. Migrant women issues, thus, constitute s a political lever against migration, and an argument against multiculturalism. The leftist press see the defence and the support of migrant women rights as requirements of multiculturalism and feminism. Therefore, even though migrant women are generally treated as victims, their emancipation deals with their conditions as 'migrants' and 'women'. More than Islam, it is the patriarchal culture that has to be fought, together with social and political discrimination against migrants. Finally, the Catholic press shows a charitable attitude towards migrant women and their difficulties. If characterizing a culture is itself a political act, the analysis of the Italian press also shows the political effects of the culturalization of migrant women.

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THE DILEMMA OF "REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION" IN CANADA'S MULTICULTURALISM: STATE'S DECISION TO BAN THE NIQUAB AT CITIZENSHIP OATH CEREMONY

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Abstract: Canada is internationally admired for its commitment to diversity and multiculturalism. However, the recent ban on the wearing of the niquab at Canadian citizenship ceremonies has challenged Canada's identity as an accommodating multicultural state. The issue is being framed as a dilemma of immigrants' religious and cultural practices versus the protection of women's rights. This paper presents three positions on the issue – first, I contend that allowing the niquab at citizenship ceremony does not compromise gender equality; in fact, it may even represent a symbol of empowerment and identity for Muslim women. Second, I draw on the conceptual framework of reasonable accommodation to make a normative argument for accommodating the niquab. Third, I argue that the elitist process by which the state made its decision is democratically illegitimate. In response, I suggest that, regardless of the decision reached, a deliberative democratic process would have met the standards of democratic legitimacy and multiculturalism for which Canadian society is so widely admired and respected.
Keywords: Niquab, multiculturalism, Muslim women, minority group rights, reasonable accommodation.

INTRODUCTION

Canada has a long history of finding ways to accommodate seemingly intractable differences of language, culture and religion, such as those between English and French Canadians, or Catholics and Protestants. However, as Canada becomes more religiously and culturally diverse resulting in an increase in its Muslim population, Canada's openness to cultural and religious differences and accommodation has shifted. This paper examines the recent ban on the wearing of the niquab by Muslim women at Canadian citizenship ceremonies as a case study to explore the growing tension between gender equality and minority group rights to freedom of religion. Generally speaking, the problem of accommodation of Muslim women's niquab, hijab or headscarf has often been framed in the language of equality in many Western democracies. Sometimes, it is also framed as

an issue around state security particularly after the tragic events of September 11, 2011 that exacerbated suspicion of Muslims. Although in the Canadian context, the niquab issue does not, on its own signify a failure of multiculturalism, the government's decision to ban it still has serious implications for a liberal democratic society. Announcing the ban, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism – Hon. Jason Kenny as quoted by the CBC News Network,[1] stated that:

> Wearing the niquab or burqa is a cultural tradition, which I think reflects a certain view about women that we don't accept in Canada. We want women to be full and equal members of Canadian society and certainly when they're taking the citizenship oath, that's the right place to start. (Payton, 2011)

Based on this statement, there is a suspicion that the state believes that the wearing of the niquab challenges Canada's institutionalized principle of gender equality, which is a fundamental Canadian value. Hence, the niquab should not be allowed at citizenship ceremonies.

The new policy was announced on December 21, 2011 indicating that Muslim women will no longer be allowed to wear the niquab when swearing the oath of citizenship. Although, one cannot derive from this singular case the conclusion that Canada is generally opposed to minority's religious rights. It is however safe to conclude that the state's decision on the niquab made without consultation with the Muslim women further promotes the exclusion of these women from public sphere. From this standpoint, this paper argues that the elitist process by which the state made its decision with little or no public deliberation demonstrates a lack of commitment to engaging in dialogue with citizens on issues that affect them. My argument is grounded in the theory of deliberative democracy that calls for the inclusion of minority citizens in political deliberation. My primary contention in this paper is not only to question the process by which the state arrives at its decision, but to also demonstrate that allowing the niquab at citizenship ceremony does not compromise gender equality, it may even represent a symbol of empowerment and identity for Muslim women. Allowing the niquab can also be seen as a sign of respect for religious and cultural pluralism.

Given the complexity of accommodating minority group claims in a pluralistic society, multiculturalism has become one of the most contentious social and political issues in Canada. For the same reason, the niquab issue has also become a subject of public contention that exacerbates the tension between state's goal of gender equality and

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[1] CBC News Network (formally CBC News world) is a Canadian English cable television specialty news channel owned and operated by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

minority group's demands for greater accommodation for religious rights. While the state affirms its commitment to principle of gender equality by requiring Muslim women to remove their niquab before taking the oath of citizenship, the Muslim women in response, claims that their right to freedom of religion is being violated if forced to remove the niquab. This raises the question of what should be done when claims of minority culture or religion contradicts the norms of gender equality. This paper attempts to provide answers to this contentious question by prescribing how a pluralistic society such as Canada that is tolerant of diversity should respond to minority's cultural and religious practices that conflict with mainstream values or beliefs. This is an unavoidable question in a multicultural society where there are obvious tensions between majority and minority values.

In the first part of the paper, I will provide a brief theoretical conceptualization of multiculturalism to set the stage for our understanding of the concept. I will also discuss the evolution of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* as an official policy and how it has been used to accommodate minority group rights. My aim here is to demonstrate that, despite Canada's history of accommodating minority rights, it has opted not to accommodate the niquab in this particular case. Part two of this paper addresses the niquab debate to illustrate the popular Western notion that portrays the niquab as a symbol of Muslim women's oppression. I also contend that not until the negative connotation of niquab was gauged against the liberal value of equality that the state decides to ban the niquab. This is because it is the first time in Canadian history that immigrant women will be denied access to Canadian citizenship because of how they dress.

In contrast to this negative connotation, based on the work of Tabassum Ruby, I argue in part three of this paper that the wearing of the niquab does not necessarily signify gender oppression. I defended this argument by analysing the significant roles that niquab plays in the lives of Muslim women. In order to make a case for niquab's accommodation at citizenship ceremony, I draw on the concept of reasonable accommodation in part four of the essay to provide a normative argument to allow Muslim women to wear niquab when taking the oath of citizenship. In the final part, I proposed democratic deliberations as an effective approach to mediating contested values in multicultural society in order to respect the views and opinions of minority and oppressed groups.

CONCEPTUALIZING MULTICULTURALISM IN CANADA

Multiculturalism is notoriously difficult to define and as such, has varying meanings across jurisdictions and societies. It is widely regarded as a politically acceptable framework for engaging diversity, it also provides a sense of hope for individuals to affiliate with cultural tradition of their choice without having to lose their right to full and equal participation in

society (Fleras and Elliot, 2002; Kymlicka, 1998). The basic value of multiculturalism is the formal recognition of differences of minority cultural groups, which is why it has been argued that a multicultural policy that endorses the accommodation of cultural differences can overcome the legacy of racism and discrimination against disadvantaged groups (Kymlicka, 1995; Taylor, 1994). Such policy guarantees minority group rights that go beyond the common civil and political rights of individual citizenship because these rights are already protected by all liberal democracies (Kymlicka, 1998). With multiculturalism, minority rights are advanced with the intention of recognizing and accommodating the distinctive identities and needs of ethnocultural groups (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000). This concept brings the language of cultural diversity and accommodation of minority group rights in a multicultural society to public debates. It is within this context that the debate surrounding the accommodation of niquab will be explored.

Historically, Canada was always diverse in terms of ethnic origins, religions, and political views and also in terms of economic and regional priorities. As such, Canada is a culturally and ethnically diverse nation and this diversity can be trace back to the time of Confederation, indicating that Canada has always been multicultural in empirical fact if not in normative principle. Changes made to the *Canadian Immigration Act* in 1962 and 1967 resulted in Canada becoming more receptive to immigrants from non-European countries such as Asia and the West Indies.[2] This further deepens the already diverse Canadian society and government's response to this diversity was ushered in the 1970s through the introduction of the official multiculturalism policy. Multiculturalism in Canada is embedded in law in the form of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. It is a part of a larger legislative framework that includes the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Citizenship Act*, the *Employment Equity Act*, the *Official Languages Act* and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. (CIC, 2012: 11).

Canada's adoption of multiculturalism as an official policy is in recognition of the diversity and pluralism that exists in Canada and it has come to be seen as a part of the Canadian identity being the first country in the world to legislate this policy (Fleras, 2002). But recently, Canada's claims of multiculturalism has been challenged when contentious debates in Britain and France over the wearing of the niquab and face veils in public crossed over to Canada resulting in the Canadian government banning the Niquab at citizenship ceremonies. Meanwhile, Canada's history of public debates on issues of cultural and religious accommodation for minority groups indicates that, the Canadian state has generally been disposed to providing accommodations to minority rights that

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[2] This happened after the passage of the Canadian Bill of Rights that prohibited discrimination by federal agencies on the ground of race, origin, colour, religion or sex. Retrieved from www.gov.mb.ca/chc/multi_sec/history.html, (accessed on 06.03.2012).

does not infringe on the rights of others. The question that arises is why the state chose not to accommodate the niquab in this particular case? This question raises the issue of minority religious rights that encompasses the broader question of the integration of the members of this minority group into the mainstream Canadian society.

Evidence of such cultural and religious accommodation in Canada's history involves the 1990 Barltej's case. According to CBC News (2012), Barltej Singh is a Sikh man who won a turban case that forced the federal government to remove a ban that prevented Sikhs in the RCMP[3] from wearing the turbans. Singh was faced with a choice between serving his country as a Sikh RCMP officer wearing his turban or to abandon his religious identity to be accepted into the RCMP. He chose to fight for his religious rights arguing that, it violates his rights of religious freedom to be forced to remove his turban before he can serve in the RCMP. The case challenged Canada's limit on cultural and religious tolerance and established a precedent of great symbolic power when the court ruled in his favour and Singh became the first turbaned RCMP officer in Canada (CBC News, 2012). In Quebec, Sikh students were allowed to carry ceremonial dagger (or Kirpan) as markers of religious identity to public schools in a controversial case that challenges the competing conceptions of secularism in Canadian society (Stoker, 2007). Also in 2005, the Islamic Institute of Civil Justice demanded the right to use Islamic sharia services in Ontario courts which led to a debate that questions the place of Islam in Western states (Korteweg and Selby, 2012). Another example is the turban-wearing Sikhs in Ontario who asked the provincial government to exempt them from wearing the mandatory helmet for Sikhs who ride motorcycles because of their religion (Nolan, 2011). Again, in 2008, the Supreme Court of Canada heard arguments in the case of a woman who sought to testify in court wearing her niquab as a victim of a sexual assault case despite being ordered to remove it by the court (Tyler, 2010).

These cases highlight three important points – first, they show that Canada has not met or overcome the challenges posed by multiculturalism and ethnocultural diversity. Canada continues to struggle with serious controversies over whether and how its public institutions should recognize or accommodate cultural and religious differences. Second, these cases demonstrate the tension between government policies and immigrant's religious symbols in the public sphere. The turban-wearing Sikhs in Ontario argues that being forced to wear a helmet violates their rights of freedom and obedience to their faith (Nolan, 2011). The niquab-wearing woman also argues that being forced to remove her niquab pits her freedom of religion against her right to a fair trial. In the woman's case, the Court of Appeal subsequently overturned the Supreme Court's order, setting up a legal

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[3] RCMP means the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which is both a federal and a national police force of Canada.

test to determine if the woman can wear her niquab and sent the case back to the preliminary hearing judge (Tyler, 2010; CBC News, 2011).

The third point highlighted by these examples is that, despite the contentious nature of the cases, they all show that Canada is capable of making adjustments to protect minority rights against flaws in the existing and emerging laws of the majority as we have seen in the case of the turban. As also been argued by Bouchard and Taylor (2008), the visible display of religious symbols in the public or in the institutions of the state that does not in any way impede the exercise of anyone else's rights should be accommodated. The concept of reasonable accommodation upon which this paper relies to make the argument for the accommodation of niquab rests on the premises that, nothing prevents the majority from participating fully as citizens while at the same time respecting the participation of minority groups. In this vein, it could be argued that the concept of multiculturalism as a model of living together with differences will be defeated if minority groups are forced to abandon their difference and embrace the majority norms. This is because the objective of multiculturalism is to eliminate discrimination, not through removing the differences between majority and minority groups but through accepting, reinforcing and protecting these differences (Pereira, 2008).

THE NIQUAB DEBATE

The Muslim niquab issue illuminates one of the many unique problems that immigrants and visible minorities face in Canada. Many of these problems result in social, economic and political exclusion of immigrants from state institutions. For immigrant women, this institutional exclusion is sometimes based on the assumption that non-Western women are situated within cultural contexts that requires their subordination (Volpp, 2001). Al-Saji (2010) also attributes the exclusion of Muslim women in the Western world to the representation of those who wear the niquab as synonymous to victimhood, voicelessness or powerlessness. These perceptions play a role in prohibiting niquab/veil in public places and makes Muslim women vulnerable for exclusion from various domains of public life (*ibidem*). Associated with this perception is the media representation of Islam that creates a common notion that Muslim women need to be liberated from the grips of veil/niquab (Byng, 2010). Most Western states' policies that affect Muslim women contribute to this exclusion based on their assumption that describes Islam as a static, monolithic and backward doctrine that contradicts the principles of liberalism (Bullock, 2003).

Despite the negative Western representation of niquab, Muslim women who seek accommodation for equal treatment often do so with an interest to keep their cultural and religious identity. More often than not, this creates debates that have significant impacts on public opinion. One example is the case under study that highlights the dilemma of

promoting religious recognition for minority groups and the need to protect women's right without infringing on the rights of minority women. The main argument articulated by the government hinges on the protection of women's rights, which suggests that allowing the niquab at citizenship ceremony may permit the exposure of Muslim women to violation of their individual rights or promotes the control of men over women. This notion of seeing the niquab solely as a symbol of oppression without paying close attention to its roles for Muslim women has been well documented in many studies (Volpp, 2001; Bullock, 2003; Ruby, 2004; Byng, 2010). As analysed earlier, the statement from the Immigration Minister enables one to understand the thinking behind the government`s decision – it reveals the government's interpretation of the niquab, purposely defined in a language of equality.

Muslim's negative perception also becomes more intensified after the events of 9/11 with the emergence of aggressive anti-terrorism policies enacted in many Western nations such as France, Britain, Ireland and Turkey. Such policies involve debates over the symbolic representation of Islam in public due to the general perception that Islamic cultures are less willingly accepted in Western states (Bullock, 2003). Okin (1999) also make the argument that when cultural or religious groups claim special rights, attention should be paid to the status of women within that group and if such culture or religion is patriarchal, the state should not grant such rights. Again, from the Minister's official statement, one could suspect a correlation with Okin's position – an underlying assumption that regards the niquab as a way of oppressing women in Islam. As Okin argues, the government believes that such perceived patriarchal religious practices should not be tolerated in a liberal democracy. The root of all these negative perceptions about minority women can be traced to the history of colonialism, depictions of feminism, and the limits of liberalism (Volpp, 2001).

With the above description of the Western construction of niquab mainly as a tool of gender oppression, my aim in the next section is to draw on selected literatures to deconstruct this notion. This is done by re-emphasizing the significance of niquab and reconstructing it as a tool of power as oppose to being misrepresented as a symbol of oppression and powerlessness. This conceptual deconstruction is important because it is only when the meaning of niquab, hijab or headscarf become inextricably tied to gender oppression that the passage of law to disallow them is possible (Al-Saji, 2010). Al-Saji further states that the Muslim veils/niquab are perceived in a way that provide the negative mirror in which Western construction of identity and gender be positively reflected. Since the discrimination against Muslims takes its root from stereotypes by creating negative images of members of the Muslim community (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008), my objective in deconstructing this notion is to counter these negative stereotypes.

It will also demonstrate why the niquab does not compromise gender equality, which is a non-negotiable principle of all liberal democracies.

THE ROLES OF NIQUAB FOR MUSLIM WOMEN

Portraying the niquab as a symbol of Muslim women's oppression and as incompatible or contrary to the principle of equality is an interpretation that has been widely contested by Muslim women in Canada. In one study, for example, contrary to claims of gender oppression attached to the meaning of niquab, Ruby (2004) argues that niquab plays a more significant role in affirming Muslim women's identity. As oppose to the notion that equate niquab to voicelessness, victimhood or powerlessness, in the interview conducted with Muslim women in Saskatoon, Ruby concludes that niquab actually empowers Muslim women by providing them an opportunity to take control of their lives, and offers them the status of a respectable person. Other studies have come to similar conclusions about the role of niquab as a tool to confer power and status for Muslim women, not only within their community but also in mainstream Western society (Ruby, 2004; Bullock, 2003; BBC News, 2005). Since our identity plays a fundamental role in our lives, in the same way that societal cultures play a fundamental role in the lives of members of minority groups (Kymlicka, 1995), minority women's identity needs to be protected. Also, as long as the niquab is essential to Muslim women's identity, the state should promote its recognition and help to protect it.

Although due the apparent inscription of gender oppression as an essential feature of Islamic religion by Western states, constructing, protecting and reaffirming Muslim women's identity in a liberal society is a difficult task. In Canada for example, public reaction to immigrants and visible minorities' appearance, religion and cultural differences contributes to this problem of identity (Fleras and Elliot, 2002). Because these immigrants may not share Canada's culture of tolerance and equality, people fear that the rights of women could be at risk, or those of homosexuals within ethnic and religious minorities (Ibbitson, 2007: 50). This makes the construction of identity difficult for Muslim women as they are forced to accept how the Western society perceives them – as oppressed, voiceless, powerless or as those who are utterly subjugated by men (Al-Saji, 2010). My argument is that this undoubtedly affects their identity because our identity is not only restricted to the ways we present ourselves but also how others perceive us. As Taylor (1994) argues, people can suffer real damage if the society around them mirrors back to them a confining or demeaning picture of them. According to Taylor, due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people; it is a vital human need. Since recognition for religious identity is central to the Muslim women's case and the niquab is fundamental to the

construction of this identity, denying the niquab at citizenship ceremony is a denial of vital human need.

The above analysis shows that allowing the niquab at citizenship ceremony does not necessarily signify gender oppression or powerlessness but has the potential to empower women and not relegate them to the private sphere. It could also represent a sign of respect for multicultural diversity, when religious rights are given equal recognition to coexist. This is because under a multicultural framework, tolerance and recognition are extended to those cultural or religious practices that do not break the law, interfere with individual rights, or violate fundamental Canadian values such as gender equality (Fleras and Elliot, 2002). One more reason why the niquab cannot be simply regarded as oppositional to gender equality is because the decisions over what constitutes as gender equality are revisable through political struggle and deliberation. The assumption that the niquab is oppressive to women is based on Western understanding of equality and liberty that preclude other ways of thinking about equality and liberty, which offer a positive meaning to the wearing of niquab (Bullock, 2003). Hence, it is unfair to legislate against the niquab without better understanding to of the cultural and religious context within which it exist.

Canada is normatively against the oppression of women as a liberal society, but to use the niquab as a symbolic means of demonstrating its commitment to gender equality is lamentable and lacks respect for Muslim groups that regards the niquab as one of the key principles of their religion (Ruby, 2004). Furthermore, liberal values, such as gender equality do not provide us with unique answers about what counts and what does not count as gender equality, so the meaning of the niquab should be balanced with the multiplicity of the roles it plays in the lives of Muslim women, rather than the Western ways of solely associating it with gender equality. Even when there is a suspicion of compromise to gender equality with minority practices, the solution should not be limited to the abolishment of such culture or religion rather, opportunity should be provided for dialogue and possible reform. This is because, as Gutmann (1995) argues, oppressed women typically want their rights as individuals to be secured within their own culture, not at the expense of exile from their culture. If this is put into consideration and the state's multicultural policy is viewed via the lens of reasonable accommodation, one can make a convincing argument for the acceptance of niquab in citizenship ceremony.

THE ARGUMENT FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

The concept of reasonable accommodation came to light in 2008, when Gerald Bouchard and Charles Taylor released an important report as Co-Chairs of the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences. The Quebec

Premier - Jean Charest established the Commission in 2007 in response to public discontent concerning reasonable accommodation. One of the main contributions of the Bouchard-Taylor report to the normative and conceptual debates concerning cultural and religious accommodation lies in its argument for reasonable accommodation to manage cultural diversity. This paper draws on the principles employed in the report to make a case for the accommodation of niquab at citizenship ceremony. There are three justifications for my conviction to use the "reasonable accommodation" argument for the niquab – first, the concept demands that cultural and religious differences do not have to be confined to the private domain, that, they can be freely displayed in the public sphere. Second, it rejects the idea of marginalization, which Bouchard and Taylor (2008) argues can lead to fragmentation that could prevent us from benefiting fully from cultural and religious diversity. The third justification stems from its recognition for pluralism and cultural harmonization to ensure that government's policy respects the basic principle of equality and fairness in order to facilitate intercultural relations.

Generally speaking, reasonable accommodation is described as "a legal notion that stem from jurisprudence in the realm of labour and indicates a form of relaxation aimed at combating discrimination caused by the strict application of a norm, which, in certain of its effects, infringe on citizen's right to equality" (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008: 24). This conception according to the report is based on the fact that as Western societies become more culturally diverse, democratic states begin to display greater respect for diversity and adopts new methods of managing coexistence based on the idea of intercultural harmonization (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008). Against this backdrop, it means that a government policy that respect intercultural harmonization must take into account the necessary changes to accommodate and respect people's right to cultural and religious freedom. This is why the report recommends that Quebec government should accommodate cultural and religious difference by combating discrimination but without creating either exclusion or division (*ibidem*). Since Muslim women experiences negative stereotypes, discrimination and exclusion in Western societies (Enright, 2011; Byng, 2010; Bullock, 2003), combatting this discrimination and at the same time promoting their inclusion in the Canadian society calls for the use of reasonable accommodation to support their claims for religious identity.

Another argument for reasonable accommodation is that accommodation does not require that a state regulation or statute be abrogated. It could be based on what Bouchard and Taylor describes as making provision for an exception to the new or existing rule in order to mitigate its discriminatory effect. Hence, accommodation for the niquab does not affect state's commitment to gender equality but affirms its willingness to prohibit discrimination that Muslim women may experience by being denied access to

citizenship on the basis of their religion. In order to ensure that each individual has the same moral value as citizen and each person is treated with equal respect, the state of a pluralist and culturally diverse society must remain neutral or impartial between competing religious and cultural values of its citizens. But this is not always the case, which is why accommodation has to be made for Muslims and Jews to obtain leave to celebrate their religious holidays, a permission that without exception according to Bouchard and Taylor, the state has always granted the Catholics to be absent from work on Sundays, Christmas Day and at Easter. So, for the rule of equality or fairness to uphold Bouchard and Taylor argues that what is legitimate for one religion is legitimate for the others.

The difficulty of state to remain neutral among competing values of its citizens is what Kymlicka (1999) refers to as "the illusion of state neutrality". Kymlicka argues that institutional neutrality is an illusion in the sense that institutions often make decisions that can be advantageous for one group and cause disadvantage for particular groups. In order to remedy this, Kymlicka proposed a new liberal framework through group-differentiated rights to create an accommodating diverse society. Taylor (1994) also argues that because the neutrality of procedural liberalism is not able to accommodate people of different cultural backgrounds, it must make way for politics of difference. The shortcomings of institutional neutrality is grounded in the fact that, "states always make decisions that implicitly titled towards the needs, interests and identities of the majority group which creates a range of burdens, barriers, stigmatizations, and exclusions for members of minority groups" (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000: 4). It is therefore important, according to the Kymlicka and Norman to give political relevance to claims coming from minority groups because it helps to remedy the disadvantages that minorities suffer within difference-blind institutions in order to promote fairness (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000). On the basis of this, and considering the significance of niquab for Muslim women, a request for accommodation of the niquab at citizenship ceremony must be politically relevant to be worthy of positive deliberation and consideration.

One significant feature of reasonable accommodation is that it takes the debates around cultural and religious accommodation beyond the dominant positions of traditional liberalism that tend to frame state's policies and regulations in the language of fairness and equality. As Bouchard and Taylor argues, state regulations are not always synonymous with fairness and as such, intercultural-relations within a liberal democracy demands that the law must recognize that the rule of equality sometimes demand differential treatment. With this new concept, the notion of multiculturalism becomes broadened with the intent to prevent individuals from being put at a disadvantage or excluded when they seek demands for equal treatment.

Multiculturalism now encompasses a process that aims at modifying Canadian laws, institutions, thinking, and other aspects of mainstream society to make them more accommodating of cultural and religious differences. As Bouchard and Taylor illustrate, a diabetic student that brings syringe into the classroom even though the school rules prohibit syringe in classrooms is permitted on the ground of reasonable accommodation because, what will be considered is the harm that the refusal of syringe might cause for a diabetic student including threat to his life. For the niquab, the harm of denying the Muslim women their religious identity is a factor that should be considered. Another feature of reasonable accommodation in its principle of equality and fairness is that it pays closer attention to differences. This separates its conception of equality from the traditional conception that is based on the principle of uniform treatment that lack respect for all (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008).

Despite my hope and aspiration on reasonable accommodation, there is a limit to what is admissible within its framework. For a minority's request to be admissible for accommodation, it must satisfy two conditions:

1. Discrimination as conceived by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom* must first be established (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008). The Canadian *Charter* prohibits several forms of discrimination based on sex, ethnic and religion. Under section 2(a) of the *Charter*, everyone is guaranteed the rights and freedoms of conscience and religion[4], this means that religious groups have the freedom to publicly display their beliefs. One implication of the new policy is that, Muslim women now faces a situation that forces a choice between embracing the Canadian value of openness and equality by removing their niquab or choosing to remain permanent residents and forfeit their citizenship. The discrimination inherent in this policy is that, it denies members of a minority group the access to Canadian citizenship based on their religious identity. Therefore, on the basis of this, one may say that there is an establishment of discrimination in the state policy on the niquab.

2. Request for accommodation must not lead to undue hardship. Undue hardship may be unreasonable cost, upsetting an organization's operation, infringing the rights of others or prejudicing the maintenance of security and public order (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008). Niquab does not cause any disproportionate cost to the state to accommodate and it does not upset the state operations neither does it infringe on the rights of other citizens. Therefore, the wearing of niquab at a citizenship ceremony could not be said to fail any of these restrictive guidelines that would lead to rejection of its accommodation or justify its denial.

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[4] *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, s 2, Part I of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act 1982* (UK), 1982, c 11.

From on the above analysis, it could be argued that the niquab satisfy both conditions and qualifies to be allowed at citizenship ceremony under the reasonable accommodation context.

Similarly, the Bouchard-Taylor report also concludes that cases such as the wearing of Islamic headscarf, a kippan, or a turban in classrooms or the wearing of headscarf in sport competitions should be accommodated, if it does not compromise the individual's safety. The report further argues that these accommodations promote integration into our society. Using the same logic, this paper also argues that, since the niquab does not compromise either women's safety or equality but promotes their integration into the larger Canadian society, it should be authorized at citizenship ceremony. Denying such accommodation will only intensify the marginalization and racialization that this group are already unjustly subjected to (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008). What reasonable accommodation demands is a respect for cultural diversity that promotes integration through pluralism, equality and reciprocity and this is what was absent from the state's approach. If the approach was open to deliberation, citizens could learn how to manage their differences and disagreement in a manner that respects minority's rights but this was the route that was never explored.

DELIBERATIVE PROCESS – THE ALTERNATIVE ROUTE IGNORED

Modern Western liberalism provides ways to deal with conflicts of fundamental values such as gender equality and minority group rights through deliberation and debates in order to foster unity between ethnocultural groups and the state. Deliberative democracy thus offers avenues to address difficult controversies in democratic process by allowing diverse groups separated by class, race religion and gender to reason together (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996). Because deliberation provides ways to settle conflicts by bargaining, negotiation, and compromise, it could be argued to be an essential tool for cultural integration. A state's commitment to democratic deliberation is a commitment to finding ways to address concerns, resolve disagreements, and overcome conflicts by offering argument supported by reasons (Sanders, 1997). Unfortunately, with the niquab case, there was no avenue or space provided for citizens including those affected to engage in deliberation, dialogue or to exchange ideas about the niquab. Instead, the state banned its use at citizenship ceremony without deliberation.

It could be argued that mainstream's hostility towards accommodation of minority religious practices, in this case, "the niquab" could partially be attributed to lack of knowledge about such practices. There is a great possibility that the permissibility of minority cultural and religious practices may be different if the state engages in deliberative approach to dealing with the conflicts that arises between minority practices

and mainstream values. Perhaps, if the public is more aware of the role of minority's religious practices, accommodating such practices might be easier and this could be achieved via deliberation. After all, the most democratically legitimate and just means of mediating tensions around contested cultural and religious practices is through deliberation that involves those affected (Deveaux, 2003). As this paper suggests, deliberation could improve our understanding of the religious dressing code and raises our awareness with the potential of shaping people's views about Muslim women in the larger society. Through deliberative approach, contrary to the Western perception of niquab as a symbol of women's submission and inferiority to men, the niquab be understood as a symbol of modesty, privacy and morality (Wiles, 2007; Bullock, 2003).

The National President of the Canadian Islamic Congress Mr. Whida Valiante expressed frustrations over the government's approach when he claims that the government did not consult with his community before making the announcement to ban the niquab. According to Valiante his community which includes the Shia and the Suni is the largest group of Muslims in Canada with lots of scholars including women who could understand, explain and draw negotiations around the issue if consulted (Raj, 2011). When liberal states fail to include cultural group members in deliberations about the future status and possible reforms of their community's customs and arrangement, they ignore the demands of democratic legitimacy (Deveaux, 2003: 782). Against this background, it could be argued that because the Muslim community were not included in the discussions regarding their religious practice's place in the official state policy, the government's decision on the niquab contradicts the principle of deliberative democracy and the process is therefore, democratically illegitimate. Inclusion of the Muslim community in the decision-making process would have satisfied the demands of democratic legitimacy and demonstrates respect for cultural and religious pluralism.

This lack of deliberation may somehow be attributed to the Canadian practice of elite politics. Dating back to the time of Confederation, excluding people from major public policy decisions that affect their lives is an historical institutional practice that has a deep root in Canadian history. Peter Russell (2004) argues that the formulation of the Constitution Act of 1867 was explicitly done through elite accommodation without direct involvement of Canadian people. McRoberts (2003) also claims that in particular, the Aboriginal people were totally ignored in the Confederation arrangement and deliberation and allowed no role to participate[5]. The entrenchment of the Constitution Act, 1982 was

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[5] The reference to the Aboriginal people here has no intent to assume that the experiences of the Aboriginal people or the Quebecois and the minority groups within the Canadian state are the same. The correlation made here is explicitly regarding the elitist decision-making process of the Canadian government and the lack of consultation with the people affected by those decisions.

also done without Quebec's consent despite the social and political implications it has on Quebec's claim of "distinctive society" (Gagnon and Laforest, 1993).

These examples demonstrate historically how public policies have been mostly dominated by the political elites in Canada. It could also be argued that the niquab case was another example of elite domination, since the decision to ban it was based on the state crafted definition and interpretation of niquab. The Muslim community particularly women who understands what the niquab means to them were excluded in the decision-making process. Also, considering the social, economic and political impacts that the ban may have on immigrant women such as decline of Canadian citizenship, inability to vote or run for political office, restriction on federal jobs etc., the decision to ban the niquab calls for justification. The justification for policies that involves cultural minorities in liberal democracies should therefore, pass the test of democratic legitimacy in order to avoid marginalizing and alienating minority groups in public sphere (Deveaux, 2003). When deliberation is well conducted, it has the potential to promote the values of negotiation, reciprocity, and exchanges of ideas; it can also allow citizens to engage in dialogue and self-criticism to mend their ways when necessary (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008). Public deliberation also leads to better policies, superior public education, increased public trust, and reduced conflicts (Sanders, 1997).

In spite of the benefits that deliberation may offer, I am cautious not to over-determine the substantive results of deliberation. This paper recognizes the distinction between the outcome of a decision-making process and the procedures by which the decision takes place. As such, I am aware that there is no guarantee that the procedure will produce the desired result but my emphasis is on the respect for the process. For example, purely procedural constraints such as problem definition, agenda setting, and collaboration may be insufficient to prevent the coercing from of the majority (*ibidem*). There is also no guarantee of equality of participation due to different social or economic power among citizens.

Despite these limitations, a democratic justification for a decision on a contentious issue like the niquab requires that we listen to the group affected by it. As argued earlier, it may provide opportunity to analyse the issue through exposure to a variety of perspectives to reach a peaceful resolution that may include accommodation on special grounds. The process could also allow citizens to consider relevant facts about the niquab from multiple points of views, converse with one another and reflect on the benefits of allowing and the harms of disallowing the niquab. This may have the potential to shape, shift and enlarge people's perspectives, opinions and understanding about the meaning of niquab. Even when there are irreconcilable views after exploiting the option of deliberation, accepting the differences could also be beneficial as it enriches our diversity.

As Arneil and MacDonald (2010) suggests, these differences should not be seen as a negative, because the key issue in multicultural pluralism is not to reduce diversity or divisiveness, but to figure out the principles and procedures by which such differences are to be renegotiated in the name of justice. Regardless of the result of deliberation, the decision reached from such deliberation would carry a greater degree of democratic legitimacy because the process of reaching that decision involves the active participation of the minority group concerned.

CONCLUSION

This paper has contributed to the dialogue of multiculturalism in the context of tolerance, accommodation and efforts to grow cultural and religious diversity in Canadian pluralistic society. The paper questions the process by which the state arrived at its decision to ban the niquab at citizenship ceremonies. I use the concept of a liberal deliberative democratic approach to argue that the process by which the state made the decision is democratically illegitimate. The concept of democratic legitimacy, which underlies my argument, should involve deliberation with the group affected by that decision. In this vein, deliberation should occur in relation to a minority's religious practices such as the wearing of the niquab that is so fundamental to the construction of Muslim women's identity. The paper has also endeavoured to make a case for the accommodation of niquab at citizenship ceremony using the concept of reasonable accommodation that demands government's policy to respect the basic principle of equality and fairness in order to facilitate intercultural relations.

Because discussions about group rights for minority women are deeply interwoven with gender issues, the paper observes that the lens through which Western states views niquab as a symbol of oppression in which Muslim women require saving, plays a role in Canada's decision to ban the niquab. In contrast to this Western perception, I argued in this essay that allowing the wearing of niquab at citizenship ceremonies does not signify gender oppression and can even represent symbol of empowerment and identity for Muslim women, a position I argued can promote their integration into the mainstream Canadian society.

Although there is an obvious tension between state's commitment to gender equality and accommodation of the niquab, what was ignored in the government's approach towards the niquab issue was a lack of respect of deliberation with cultural and religious groups. This may damage women's equality and rights because there is a reduction in freedom of choice to wear clothing not as a personal choice but as a choice that is for state regulation. This paper concludes that regardless of the decision reached by the state, a public deliberation that involves an active participation of the Muslim minority

groups would have met the standards of democratic legitimacy and multiculturalism for which Canadian society is so widely admired and respected.

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"ARRESTING GADDAFI WILL BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO STOP THESE RAPES".[1]

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE WESTERN MEDIA'S COVERAGE OF THE WAR IN LIBYA[2]

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Abstract: The aim of the present article is to tackle the way in which CNN and BBC – as leading examples of hegemonic Western media – represented the cases of sexual violence that were being denounced during the war in Libya. Looking into the coverage of this war may be useful to analyze the very concept of wartime rape and enquire to which extent rape narratives are framed by social constructs of sexuality, gender, and race, as well as by political agendas. I argue that the Western media tended to pay more attention to rape stories that were politically beneficial to NATO's war effort in support of the opposition, and showed less interest in accusations that did not involve Gaddafi's henchmen. I finally discuss the culturalization of sexual violence, by addressing the strategies of othering implied in the media explanations and contextualization of the rapes.
Keywords: sexual violence, Libyan war, CNN, BBC.

The coverage of the war in Libya reported extensively on rape. One of the most publicized moments of the war took place on March 26, 2011, when Iman al-Obeidi,[3] a woman from Benghazi, burst into a hotel in Tripoli and told foreign journalists that men from the dictator's forces had kidnapped her at a road block, beaten and gang-raped her for two days. In the weeks and months that followed, a flurry of claims was raised about a coordinated campaign of mass rapes by government troops to punish and frighten

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[1] International Criminal Court (ICC) chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo speaking in the CNN, June 16, 2011, about claims that Libyan troops were using rape as a weapon. Cf. http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2011/06/16/ctw.rajpal.icc.libya.rape.reaction.cnn?iref=allsearch

[2] Research funded by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, Centro de Estudos Sociais/Universidade de Coimbra. The origins of the present text go back to a short position paper that I presented at a workshop organized by the International Research Group "Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict" (SVAC) (http://www.warandgender.net/) about "Constellations&Dinamics of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict" (Science Po/Paris, July 6-7, 2012). I thank the members of this network for the stimulating discussions and important insights. My work on the representation of sexual violence has benefited immensely from the discussions held in the meetings of the group. I would also like to thank Mihaela Mihai, Tatiana Moura, Maria José Canelo and Fabrice Schurmans for their comments and revisions.

[3] Also written Eman al-Obeidy.

civilians and about Gaddafi's troops being supplied with Viagra to encourage sexual abuses. Stories of cell-phone videos showing rapes, and widespread coverage of the efforts by the ICC to gather information on a possible systematic use of rape as a weapon of war in this conflict were circulated widely.

At first sight, the media attention seems to signal a salutary moment of increased awareness to the plight of victims of sexual violence in war. Such a moment could be seen as part of international efforts to tackle the problem of wartime rape, in line with the famous UN Resolution 1820 (2008) and the last decades' attempts to bring to justice perpetrators of sexual violence in times of conflict.[4] However, the wording and argumentation employed in much of the Western coverage of the events in Libya should prevent us, feminists concerned with the problem of wartime rape, from being too enthusiastic: as I will argue in this paper, some of the Western discourses on Libya seem to point to a perpetuation of traditional perceptions of wartime sexual violence.

Before I begin, a caveat: I am not an expert on Libya or on the Arab world. This text will not propose explanations of the reasons that led to the occurrence of sexual violence during the war in Libya, nor will it speculate on the nature, forms, and extent of this crime in this conflict. My purpose here is not to discuss NATO's involvement, or the outcome of the war. I am also not going to explore the situation of Libyan women before and after the fall of the dictator. My aim is to tackle the way in which the hegemonic Western media represented the cases of sexual violence that were being denounced during the war. Looking into the coverage of this war may be a useful way to analyze the very concept of wartime rape and enquire to which extent rape narratives are framed by social constructs of sexuality, gender, and race, as well as by political agendas. On a broader level, this paper connects inevitably with studies on discourse analysis focused on the reproduction of ideology through the media (i.e. Teun van Dijk), with well-known works on the manipulation of the media in the context of "humanitarian interventions" and "just wars",[5] as well as with studies on orientalism (Edward Said's famous work and approaches like Etienne Balibar's understanding of "the new racism").[6] The problems addressed in these studies surely resonate in the present paper. However, the focus here is not actually the very concepts of manipulation, racism and orientalism, but the discursive configuration of rape stories. The paper hence addresses questions such as: which metaphors are

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[4] I'm referring here to the efforts to persecute crimes of sexual violence in the International Tribunals created for the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Liberia. The Foča-trial (2000) in The Hague is often referred as a breakthrough for prosecuting wartime rape, since it involved "only" crimes of rape and sexual slavery.

[5] For instance, by Noam Chomsky (e.g. *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda*, 1997; *Rogue States: The Rule of Force in World Affairs*, 2001), Ignacio Ramonet (e.g. *La Tyrannie de la Communication*, 1999; *Propagandes silencieuses*, 2000), and Serge Halimi/Dominique Vidal (e.g. "*L'opinion, ça se travaille...*" *Les médias & les "guerres justes": Kosovo, Afganistan, Irak*, 2006).

[6] For instance, "Y a t-il un 'néo-racisme'?" (1997); "Difference, Otherness, Exclusion. Anthropological Categories in the Analysis of Racism" (2005).

privileged in the process of reporting? How is sexual violence mediated and "domesticated" to the public? Which is ultimately the hegemonic syntax of wartime rape in the mainstream media? Can we perceive certain "scripts" in the process of mediating wartime rape? Such an analysis departs from Sabine Sielke's definition of the *rhetoric of rape*: to "talk about rape does not necessarily denote rape […]. Instead, transposed into discourse, rape turns into a rhetorical device, an insistent figure for other social, political, and economic concerns and conflicts." It assumes that every discourse of rape "has its history, its ideology, and its dominant narratives" (Sielke, 2002: 2) and that experiences of rape are given meaning and are shaped by a multitude of motives, constraints and interests that frame the process of mediation.

My analysis of the media coverage of the sexual violence during the war in Libya will be punctuated by questions such as: does the reporting on rape in this conflict mark a welcomed improvement signaling a greater public awareness of women's rights? Can we witness processes of silencing and of ideological instrumentalization that point to continuities with some traditional discourses on wartime rape? How far is the coverage of wartime sexual violence in Libya embedded in xenophobic stereotypes and traditional gender constructions? For the purpose of tackling those questions, I will start by referring to the findings of the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Human Rights Watch (HRW) concerning sexual violence during the war in Libya. The selection of these organizations as sources of information is not based on the assumption that they provide the "absolute truth", although I do believe that they have a privileged capacity to obtain data on the ground. The choice was motivated by the fact that they can reach the broader public: the mainstream press usually refers to their reports on highly covered conflicts, as it was the case of the war in Libya. Therefore looking into their work may be quite helpful in identifying which facts on the ground the hegemonic media focused on and amplified, and which ones it disregarded or silenced.

Since the purpose of this text is an analysis of the way the cases of sexual violence were addressed in the mainstream media, due to time and space restrictions, I narrowed my analysis to two of the most influential international broadcasters: CNN and BBC.[7] I will structure my argumentation around two topics. Firstly, I address the political framing of narratives of wartime rape. Here I will stress that the Western media tended to pay more attention to rape stories that were politically beneficial to NATO's war effort in support of the opposition. The coverage showed less interest in accusations of sexual violence that did not involve Gaddafi's henchmen. Secondly, I will discuss the culturalization of sexual

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[7] The texts, interviews and video reports analyzed in this paper were collected from the sites of CNN and BBC in English and date mainly from September to October 2012. Due to time and space constraints I will not take in consideration the comments of the readers.

violence, by addressing the strategies of othering implied in the media explanations and contextualization of the rapes. Since the coverage reinforced perceptions of Islam as a religion/culture that is bad for women, and since it echoed stereotypes about "backwardness" and "savagery", I will question in how far the reporting of the rapes had orientalistic and xenophobic undertones.

FINDINGS BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

On February 15, 2011, anti-governments protests and confrontations broke out in the Eastern Libyan city of Benghazi, which soon turned into a widespread rebellion across the country. On February 26 the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1970 condemning the violent repression by the government and imposing several international sanctions on the regime. As the government forces were preparing an attack in Benghazi, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1973 (March 18) demanding an immediate ceasefire and authorizing the international community to establish a no-fly zone to protect civilians and to use "all necessary measures" to enforce it. This marked the beginning of the NATO bombardments that were decisive for the end of Gaddafi's regime. Tripoli fell on August 28, and the dictator was killed by rebels on October 20, 2011.

As we can infer from this brief chronology of the war, from the very beginning human rights abuses were essential in the UN decisions that led to the military intervention in support of the opposition. On February 25, the United Nations Human Rights Council called for the creation of a commission of inquiry to investigate the allegations of human rights violations. The ICC got jurisdiction over war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Libya after February 15. A few months later, on June 1, 2011, the HRC made public a first report, which contained a few pages on sexual violence (HRC, 2011: 71-74). Some claims of rape by the government forces seem to point to a strategy of obtaining information, punishing opponents, and instilling fear: for example, a father said that his daughter from Misrata had been raped for two days by government forces while in a separate room others were trying to extract information about the rebels from her brother. The victims were mostly Libyan women and minors (the exception being a journalist from the *New York Times* who endured groping in detention,[8] and rumors about Government forces raping Sudanese women and minors in Ajdabiya). Apart from the Sudanese migrants, the victims were perceived by their attackers as disloyal to the regime, whether because they came from "rebel areas" like Benghazi and Misrata or because they worked for a "hostile" press. The perpetrators were reported to be forces of the regime and "alleged mercenaries and unidentified armed men". The report also

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[8] This case is dealt with in the section Freedom of Expression (IV.E), which lists severe abuses against journalists (HRC, 2011: 52-53).

mentioned media reports that it could not verify, such as the existence of video recordings of rapes in Misrata and what it called "more speculative information" regarding claims that the government troops had been given instructions to engage in rape and had been supplied with condoms and Viagra pills for that purpose.

The report also listed cases of rape by opposition armed forces during house raids or by civilians in areas controlled by the rebels. Out of the four cases referred to, three involved foreign victims: an Iraqi, a Syrian and a Chadian. The description by a Chadian eyewitness of the gang-rape of the latter in Benghazi suggests a strategy of using rape to frighten and expel an ethnic group:

> It was midnight and they [*eight armed civilians*] entered in the compound, beaten the people with machetes and threaten people with their arms, asking them to leave the country and robbing their belongings. That night they entered into the room of his neighbor, a Chadian woman, 28 years old […], took her by force, took her clothes away and raped her, one after the other. (HRC, 2011: 73-4)

On March 8, 2012, the HRC made public a final report on Libya,[9] which, though accusing both sides of war crimes and human rights violations, differentiated the nature, the targets and the extend of the abuses. The attacks by Gaddafi's forces are presented as systematic and there is a suspicion of abuses committed in order to control society. The violations of the rebels targeted specific communities, such as the people from Tawergha, thus hinting at possible ethnic and regional rivalries behind the violence. The summary refers to rape only with regards to the regime's forces, thus signaling a perception that there were higher levels of sexual violence at the hands of Gaddafi's loyalists (the data presented in the section on sexual violence corroborates it, HRC, 2012 a: 135-143; HRC, 2012b: 14-15). The Commission interviewed more than 20 male and female victims of sexual violence, 30 witnesses, 5 perpetrators[10] and reviewed NGOs reports. Regarding Gaddafi's forces, the Commission identified two patterns of sexual violence. The first pattern (seven victims interviewed) refers to women "beaten and raped by armed men in their homes, or abducted and beaten and raped elsewhere, sometimes for days. Some victims were targeted because of their allegiance to the thuwar[11] and

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[9] There are two versions of this report: the main one – *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Libya* (HRC, 2012b, 25 pages) – and a longer one – "Full Report of the International Commission of Inquiry to investigate all alleged violations of international law in Libya" (HRC, 2012a), which is an Annex to the main document (Annex I, 175 pages) and contains more detailed data to corroborate the conclusions of the shorter version.

[10] The Commission notes that it received one interview that was reliable, but suspects that the others might have been obtained through torture.

[11] Anti-Gaddafi forces.

others were assaulted for no known reason. Of those targeted, rape appeared to be used as a means to punish, terrorize, and send a message to those who supported the revolution" (HRC, 2012b: 14). The "Full report", which contains a detailed description of some of these cases, reveals how some rapes occurred within a chain of verbal insults, beatings and torture. It also differentiates the victims: one is actually a 10 years old boy who was kidnapped and raped by two young men after him taking part with his father in an anti-government demonstration in February (HRC, 2012a: 141). It also notes that some of the rapes committed by Gaddafi's men may actually be "opportunist" rapes, i.e. acts of sexual violence not directly framed by political reprisal.[12] The suffering and hardships experienced by the victims after the attacks (e.g. sexual transmitted diseases, pregnancy, social ostracism) are also reported.

The second pattern of sexual violence perpetrated by Gaddafi's forces (15 victims interviewed) "was of sexual violence and torture of males and females in detention centres who were thuwar or supportive of the thuwar, to extract information, humiliate and punish." The claims "included vaginal rape, sodomy and penetration with an instrument, as well as electrocution and burning of the genitals" (HRC, 2012b: 14). The Commission received limited evidence of sexual violence committed by the rebels, and interviewed only two victims, two female Gaddafi loyalists (one from the Revolutionary Guard and the other a volunteer from the Popular Guard), who had been sexually tortured in detention. Out of the 17 victims of sexual violence in detention centers 12 were male and 5 were female. Both male and female victims of rape mentioned the psychological trauma that they suffered as a result of the attacks (HRC, 2012a: 145-6).

Other sections of the "Full Report" are also important to access the forms of sexual violence in the war. The testimonies quoted in the section "Unlawful Killing" (*ibidem*: 61-2) suggest the fear of rape experienced by male detainees in an ad hoc detention center in Al-Khum (controlled by the government). The section "Torture and other forms of ill-treatment" contains a page on sexual violence as torture (*ibidem*: 108) against male and female detainees.

The Commission could not corroborate the claims circulating in the media about Gaddafi forces being supplied with Viagra and condoms to stimulate mass rapes nor the allegations of mass rapes (*ibidem*: 143-5). On the issue of cell-phone videos, there was some sporadic evidence: one victim said her rape had been filmed; the Commission was allowed to watch three records of alleged rapes and sexual torture, but was told that "almost none [*of these videos*] had been saved in order to protect the victims" (*ibidem*: 144).

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[12] The concept of "opportunist rape" does not necessarily exempt regimes and superiors from responsibility. Those in charge are supposed to prevent, investigate and punish such attacks.

According to the Commission, a variety of factors – lack of reliable statistics, the fact that some confessions of rape had been extracted under torture, the political sensibility of the issue – make sexual violence the most difficult issue to investigate in Libya. It states that both the law system of the country (see also HRW, 2006a) as well as the cultural background discourages female victims from denouncing rape:

> Some female victims of rape have been ostracized, divorced, disowned, forced to flee the country, have committed suicide, and some have allegedly been killed by their relatives because of the shame and dishonour that rape brings to the family and even the tribe. The silence surrounding rape existed before the conflict as well. In several conservative areas of Libya, female victims have been pressured or threatened by their community to remain silent about rape, as it is considered shameful for the community not to have been able to protect its own women. (HRC, 2012a: 139-40)

Despite these constraints, the Commission gathered sufficient information to conclude that sexual violence "played a significant role in provoking fear in various communities" and that "sexual torture was used as a means to extract information from and to humiliate detainees" (HRC, 2012b: 15).

The American based Human Rights Watch (HRW) has a long experience in monitoring and denouncing human rights abuses in Libya. In the context of sexual violence, three reports written before this war are worth mentioning. In *Libya: A Threat to Society? Arbitrary Detention of Women and Girls for "Social Rehabilitation?* (2006a) HRW denounces the confinement of women accused of extramarital sex (many had been sexually abused) in social rehabilitation facilities, and strongly criticizes Libyan legislation on rape. In *Libya: Stemming the Flow. Abuses Against Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees* (2006b) HRW denounces widespread racism, xenophobia and violence experienced in Libya by sub-Saharan Africans at the hands of traffickers, government forces, police, and also the broader society. The report stresses the particular problems faced by non-Muslim women from sub-Saharan Africa "because some Libyans assume them to be immoral, if not sex workers". Several testimonies hint at the persistence of rapes of black women and at the reluctance of the victims to speak out. Teclu, an Eritrean migrant, recalls his detention 2003 in a naval base: "The guards would go there at night, and the women would scream […] I can't swear to it, I don't know if any of them were raped. If they were, they wouldn't say so for the shame." (HRW, 2006b: 47). *Italy/Libya: Pushed Back, Pushed Around: Italy's Forced Return of Boat Migrants and Asylum Seekers, Libya's Mistreatment of Migrants and Asylum Seekers* (HRW, 2009) is a follow-

up of the previous report and is intended to criticize "The Treaty of Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between the Italian Republic and Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya" (the "Friendship Pact", signed on August 30, 2008), which promoted the cooperation between Italy and Libya regarding border control and enabled Italy to forcibly return migrants caught in the high sea. The report repeats the claims made in the previous one: the assumption that women were particularly vulnerable to sexual abuses by smugglers and policeman. An Ethiopian man told HRW:

> Most of the problems happened to her [*his wife*]. She was held after each arrest for about two months. [...] She never said anything to me about how she was treated in prison. But I was also in detention. I know what happens to women. (HRW, 2009: 61)

HRW monitored the human rights abuses in Libya from the very beginning of the conflict. After February 16, there were press releases – sometimes on a daily basis – denouncing police brutality, the killing of demonstrators, and arrests, and also calling on the international community to take measures to stop the violence and hold accountable those who were responsible for the abuses.[13] HRW welcomed the HRC resolution requesting an investigation on the human rights abuses, the no-fly zone, as well as the ICC's arrest warrants for three senior figures of the regime, Gaddafi included.

The first denunciation of sexual violence dates from March 28: "Libya: Immediately Release Woman Who Alleged Rape: Family and Journalists Should Confirm Eman al-'Obeidy is Free and Safe".[14] The text is based on information circulating in the media after al-Obeidi had denounced her gang-rape to foreign journalists in Tripoli two days earlier. Her mother's statement to Aljazeera, claiming that she had broken a taboo by talking openly about rape in a country that casts shame on the victim, are corroborated by HRW. On April 6, HRW posted another press release on al-Obeidi: "Libya: Allow Eman al-'Obeidy to Leave Tripoli: Woman who Alleged Rape Needs Protection, Access to Medical Care".[15] The text accuses the Libyan authorities of trying to silence her and, recalling the previous report on rehabilitation centers for women, voices deep concerns over her safety. Later HRW criticized Qatar for deporting her[16] and posted "Help Obeidy out of Libya",[17] an emotional plea by Bill Frelick (HRW) on CNN (June 5, 2011).

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[13] Apart from the above-mentioned reports, all other documents authored by HRW, as well as the news by CNN and BBC will not be listed individually in the final bibliography. To facilitate reading, the links will be listed in footnotes.

[14] http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/03/28/libya-immediately-release-woman-who-alleged-rape.

[15] http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/06/libya-allow-eman-al-obeidy-leave-tripoli.

[16] "Qatar/Libya: Forced Return of Rape Victim. Eman al-'Obeidy Alleged Assault by Gaddafi Forces" (June 2, 2011), http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/06/02/qatarlibya-forced-return-rape-victim.

In an interview for *The Mark* with Liesl Gerntholtz, women's rights director at HRW, entitled "Women in the Crossfire. The wars in Libya and the Congo highlight the vexing problem of rape as a military weapon" (June 8, 2011),[18] Al-Obeidi's case is referred as potentially emblematic of the war. The fact that so far rape could not be documented sufficiently by independent agencies comes to Gerntholtz as no surprise since rape victims are stigmatized there. The same difficulty in gathering information on the issue is expressed in a later press release by HRW: "Libya: Transitional Government Should Support Victims Promote Justice for Sexual Violence" (September 19, 2011).[19] The text calls on the National Transitional Council (NCT) to investigate allegations of sexual assault and to provide medical care and support for the victims. HRW could not confirm claims of mass or systematic rape by Gaddafi's forces, but signals that the stigma of rape, the fear of reprisal, and the lack of available services for victims may lead to underreporting. HRW documented 10 cases of gang-rape that took place between February and May 2011, nine by Gaddafi forces and one by unidentified perpetrators.[20] The rapes, involving seven female and three male victims, were accompanied by extreme violence (beatings, mutilation, and penetration with objects).

HRW blames foremost the government forces for the extent of human rights abuses in the war and links anti-government violence to the lack of respect for the rule of law in the previous decades. Nonetheless, HRW has also been relentlessly denouncing the severe human rights abuses committed by anti-Gaddafi forces during and after the war. The vulnerable situation of Sub-Saharan migrants became a matter of deep concern from the very beginning of the war. The first alert dates from March 3: "Libya: Stranded Foreign Workers Need Urgent Evacuation. Sub-Saharan Africans Appear at Greatest Risk".[21] HRW, recalling the persistence of racist attacks in prewar Libya, notes that the situation became even more dangerous due to Gaddafi's reported use of sub-Saharan African mercenaries to quash popular protests.[22] Information on the ground indicates widespread persecution of migrant black workers (physical aggression, plunder, expulsion).[23] Acts of

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[17] http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/06/05/help-obeidy-out-libya.
[18] http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/06/08/women-crossfire.
[19] http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/09/19/libya-transitional-government-should-support-victims.
[20] The same conclusions are presented in the section about Libya in the World Report 2012 (HRW, 2012: 597).
[21] http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/03/02/libya-stranded-foreign-workers-need-urgent-evacuation.
[22] HRW acknowledges that Gaddafi did indeed recruit Sub-Saharan mercenaries to crush the rebellion. It notes, however, that those constituted a small number compared to the thousands of migrant workers and refugees who were already living in Libya before the war.
[23] See other HRW's efforts to call attention to this topic: In "Dying to leave Libya" (May 4, 2011), Judith Sunderland, senior researcher on Western Europe for HRW, advocates that the UN mandate to "protect civilians" in Libya should not neglect African migrants, http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/04/dying-leave-libya. This call on European countries to protect Sub-Saharan migrants fleeing Libya by boat is reiterated in the "Oral Statement – U.N. Follow Up Libya Special Session" (June 9, 2011), http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/06/09/oral-statement-un-follow-libya-special-session. See also "Libya's forgotten civilians" (*The Huffington Post,* June 23, 2011) by Samer Muscati and Sidney Kwiram

revenge and abuse of Gaddafi loyalists and their relatives also became quite early a matter of concern for HRW, especially since this would steadily increase as the opposition gained control of the territory. The first alert is on June 5.[24] Several press releases from the last three months of the war call special attention to the situation of black Africans suspected of being mercenaries.[25] Of deep concern for HRW is also the persecution by militias from Misrata of the citizens of Tawergha.[26] The abuses indicate acts of revenge embedded in racism.[27] Some detainees bearing signs of torture claim that they heard from their abusers comments like "We will send you back to Africa" and "Monkey needs a banana." A process of racializing sexual violence also emerges from some testimonies. Some acts of torture (in some cases leading to death) were done for the purpose of extracting confessions of rape. In fact, in Misrata, rape figures among the most frequent accusations against men from Tawergha.[28]

HRW documents the detention of women and children by militias and by the new Libyan authorities. Some of these women told that they had been tortured in prison,[29] but HRW does not discuss sexual violence targeting black female migrants and Libyan women suspected of supporting the regime. It heard from a black woman in Tripoli that "armed men frequently have raped women in the camp", but did not interview any of the alleged victims. Should this absence of first-hand testimonies of rape by women suspected of aligning with the former regime mean that the rebel forces did not rape (or raped considerably less)? Or does the lack of evidence signal underreporting due to the social conditions that HRW referred to in order to justify the small number of first-hand testimonies of rape that it could gather? Rape quite often features among the forms of

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(http://www.hrw.org/features/libyas-forgotten-civilians and 12 photos by Muscati (http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/06/23/libyas-forgotten-civilians).

[24] "Libya: Opposition Arbitrarily Detaining Suspected Gaddafi Loyalists. Respect Due Process Rights", http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/06/05/libya-opposition-arbitrarily-detaining-suspected-gaddafi-loyalists. See also: "Libya: Opposition Forces Should Protect Civilians and Hospitals. Looting, Arson, and Some Beatings in Captured Western Towns" (July 13, 2011), http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2011/07/13/libya-opposition-forces-should-protect-civilians-and-hospitals; "Libya: Contact Group Should Press Rebels to Protect Civilians. Attacks on Government Supporters Raise Concerns" (July 15, 2011), http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/07/15/libya-contact-group-should-press-rebels-protect-civilians

[25] For example: "Libya: All Sides Obligated to Protect Civilians. National Transitional Council Should Protect Vulnerable Sites and Groups, Not Seek Revenge" (August 22, 2011) http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/08/22/libya-all-sides-obligated-protect-civilians.

[26] The inhabitants of Tawergha, black Libyans, who apparently descend from slaves, were regarded as loyal to the regime. The town was used as a center for military operations against Misrata and became a site of intense fighting. The population was expelled and abused by anti-Gaddafi militias. Today it is a ghost town and its former inhabitants are living in camps in other parts of the country.

[27] For example: "Libya: Militias Terrorizing Residents of 'Loyalist' Town. Beatings, Shootings, Deaths in Detention of Tawerghans" (October 30, 2011), http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/30/libya-militias-terrorizing-residents-loyalist-town, "Libya: Bolster Security at Tawergha Camps. Survivors Describe Fatal Attack" (March 5, 2012) (http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/05/libya-bolster-security-tawergha-camps).

[28] The final report of the HRC corroborates the information collected by HRW: forced displacement and abuse of the inhabitants of Tawergha (accused of having raped women in Misrata), racist and derogatory nature of language reported during the abuses (HRC, 2012b: 11-12).

[29] See, for instance: "Libya: Cease Arbitrary Arrests, Abuse of Detainees. Thousands Arrested Without Review in Tripoli" (September 30, 2011) (http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/09/30/libya-cease-arbitrary-arrests-abuse-detainees).

violence that HRW described in the pattern of attacks against suspected pro-Gaddafi communities: looting, physical violence, torture, forced displacement, revenge, ethnicized enemy that is accused of rape, militia groups acting on their own without responding to a central official authority.[30] Insufficient data prevents any sort of conclusion on this issue at this stage of the research: are we facing an example of underreporting wartime rape or are we confronted with a pattern of political and ethnic persecution that did not include sexual violence?

"THE FACE OF THE ANTI-GADHAFI MOVEMENT":[31] THE POLITICAL FRAMING OF RAPE NARRATIVES

The victims of sexual violence referred in the documents authored by HRC and HRW cannot be understood as a homogeneous category: they are female or male, Libyan or foreign, minor or adult, politically close to one of the sides or not identified with any of the forces in combat. There is nonetheless a slightly ascendant pattern: adult, female, and part of the Libyan population that is suspected of not aligning with the regime. As we will see, this category tends to become exclusive in the hegemonic media: CNN is an emblematic example of emphasizing it while ignoring other types of victims.

Luc Boltanski's reflection on the politics of pity (Boltanski, 1993; 2000) are very helpful in understanding CNN's process of signifying al-Obeidi as *the* rape victim of the Libyan war and turning her into an emblem of the rebellion against Gaddafi. Drawing on Hannah Arendt's assumption that pity as a central political argument requires a "distinction between those who suffer and those who do not, between the unfortunate and the happy", i.e. a spectator as a "happy person, not immediately concerned with, and at a distance from the one who suffers", Boltanski claims that the sufferings "must be collected and represented, must become the object of a pathos, so as to make more fortunate people sensitive to the problem and to gather them around a cause" (Boltanski, 2000: 5-6). Representation becomes a key factor: "the sight of seeing is only legitimate when it leads to action" (*ibidem*: 6); the discourse must incorporate at the same time "the object of representation, i.e., the sufferings of the unfortunate, as well as the feelings of pity, indignation, revulsion, etc. felt by the one who is exposed to this representation" (*ibidem*: 7). According to Boltanski, the engagement between the parties involved in the suffering at a distance may occur through three topics: the topic of denunciation (i.e. the breeding of feelings of indignation regarding the suffering and, most important, concentrating on the persecutor and selecting him from various possible candidates), the topic of sentiment (a

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[30] Consider, for example, Bosnia, Eastern Congo, Gujarat in India, among many others.
[31] Kyle Almond on al-Obeini in "How one voice can tell the story of an entire movement" (CNN, April 1, 2011), http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/meast/04/01/arab.unrest.faces/index.html.

topic that is related to the demand of urgency – some action must be taken to help the victim – but deals as well with "feelings of gratitude that the benefactor's intervention inspires in the victim", Boltanski, 2000: 10) and the topic of aesthetic order: "that of the artist capable of showing how the victim's suffering possesses something sublime" (*ibidem*: 12). Influenced by Adam Smith, Boltanski stresses that the suffering at a distance relies heavily on imagination, i.e. on everything that gives us access to the inner life of those who suffer. Smith pointed to literary works, and Boltanski adds films, news reports, and television dramas (Boltanski, 1993: 80). In that sense, fiction becomes an important strategy to foster the suffering at the distance. We will see now how these various elements from Boltanski's analysis emerge in CNN's reporting on al-Obeidi.

Chance and individual agency may have played a major role in the configuration of al-Obeidi as *the* rape victim for CNN: if she had not decided to speak out and if she had not succeeded in getting to the foreign journalists, sexual violence might probably not have been an issue of major interest in the media coverage of the war.[32] Boltanski noted that a central problem in the politics of pity is "the problem of the excess of victims. There are too many of them, not just in the order of action, which requires the construction of a hierarchy and a setting of priorities, but also in the order of representation." (Boltanski, 2000: 13). Al-Obeidi's act gave a face to the victims of sexual violence and made it possible for the media to mediate rape as a crime deeply affecting a concrete person, whom the public could relate to (and not merely abstract statistics and medical descriptions of psychological and physical injuries). CNN made a heroine of her and put her at the center of the conflict, following her situation with the same eagerness it reported on the combats and the political developments. As *the* exemplary victim, she is the protagonist of a tele-event, in the sense given by Ramonet (1999): an event that would not have got the importance it did if the television had not seized it and reported on it daily during a given period of time. There were three peaks in the coverage of her case: between March 26 (marking her appearance in the hotel and subsequent arrest by forces of the regime) and April 12, news focused on her whereabouts and the dangers she might be facing in Tripoli. The second peak was in May, after her escape to Tunisia (May 8). After May 17, her case was mentioned as evidence in news about the ICC's investigation on the possible use of rape as a weapon of war and on allegations of troops being supplied with Viagra to fuel gang-rapes. A third peak followed her deportation from Qatar (June 2) and stressed the dangers she faced back in Libya. Her case was also invoked in news about cell-phones recordings showing soldiers raping women (after June 16).

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[32] See, for instance, Syria. In reporting the events there, the Western mainstream media appeared to be supportive of the opposition. In spite of the fact that agencies such as the HRW gathered credible accounts of wartime rape, by November 2012 these had not yet triggered an intense mediatic coverage. This marks a clear difference with the way in which the Lybian case had been reported.

Therefore, CNN's coverage of al-Obeidi's case reveals, on one hand, an emotional narrativization of her life (the aesthetic topic that Boltanski stressed), representing her as a heroine in need of rescue (the three peaks), and, on the other, an understanding of her case as emblematic, i.e., as evidence for broader allegations of sexual violence (ICC's investigation, Viagra claims, etc.).

The narrativization of her life portrayed her as a "woman in danger", with a plot (her rescue) and some key-actors (the heroine, her family, and the villains), i.e., the model-reporting on her adopts a structure that is characteristic of works of fiction. During the first peak, CNN reported on her situation on a daily basis, playing a pro-active role in monitoring her case,[33] and relentlessly denouncing contradictory efforts by the Libyan authorities to deal with the situation (whether by discrediting her – claiming she was mentally-ill, a prostitute, a traitor – or by alluring her to change her testimony). In "Government: Libyan woman who alleged rape to journalists released" (March 28, 2011),[34] the government's spokesman's attempt to depoliticize the case (presenting it as a "criminal case" under investigation) is openly challenged: "CNN's Nic Robertson […] cautioned against taking Ibrahim's statements as fact, noting that "oftentimes what he says doesn't match reality."[35] Al-Saadi Gaddafi's (one of Gaddafi's sons) mediation to have her interviewed by CNN on April 6, and his positive comments on her may be seen as part of the government's efforts to "control damage" abroad. CNN stressed, however, that Al-Saadi acted "against the explicit wishes of the Libyan government" and that the transmission was delayed for 18 hours because of interference by the Libyan authorities. It also accused Al-Saadi of demanding to have al-Obeidi's support for the opposition removed from the interview. CNN framed the interview not to soften the image of the regime (certainly Al-Saadi's own intention) but, on the contrary, to stress its dictatorial nature. During this first peak, al-Obeidi is presented as a woman who needs urgent protection since the thugs who abused her continue to enjoy impunity and the regime is trying to silence her. It is not by chance that reports on her always include footage from the hotel in Tripoli: a woman in tears with unkempt hair surrounded by menacing men trying to hide her from the international press. In this "first chapter", al-Obeidi is the fragile heroine in danger, while Gaddafi and his forces appear as the menacing villains. The language is usually incisive, mostly short sentences, giving a sense of urgency and conveying graphic images of the brutalized victim, while affiliating her with the rebellion. Boltanski's topics of denunciation (indignation and identification of the persecutor) and

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[33]   See, for instance, "Where is Eman Al-Obeidi?" (March 30, 2011), http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/bestoftv/2011/03/29/exp.ac.libya.eman.alobeidy.cnn.
[34] http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/03/27/libya.beaten.woman/index.html.
[35]   See also "Libyan government denies rape allegations" (June 18, 2011), http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/06/18/libya.rape.index.html?iref=allsearch. The text is constructed to contradict the government, by pointing to the evidence of rape.

sentiment (sentiment of urgency) are clearly framing the mediation of her story, as we can see, for instance, in this example from March 27:

> […] a desperate Libyan woman burst into the building frantic to let the world know she had been raped and beaten by Moammar Gadhafi's militia. Her face was heavily bruised. So were her legs. She displayed blood on her right inner thigh. She said her name was Eman al-Obeidy. She was well-dressed and appeared to be a well-to-do middle-aged woman. She spoke in English and said she was from the rebel stronghold of Benghazi and had been picked up by Gadhafi's men at a checkpoint east of Tripoli. She sobbed and said she was held against her will for two days and raped by 15 men. "Look at what Gadhafi's brigades did to me," she said. "My honor was violated by them." […] the journalists [...] had witnessed Gadhafi's firm and pervasive grip on Libyan society. A woman who dared to speak against him was quickly silenced. Journalists who dared to tell her story paid a price. It was one tale that perhaps went a long way in illuminating the need to protect Libya's people.[36]

This first peak coincides with the beginning of NATO bombardments.[37] The first targets of the Allied military intervention were precisely the armored units south of Benghazi (al-Obeidi's hometown) and the Libyan air-defense systems. Her testimony reminded the Western public of the dangers that the rebel town would face if Gaddafi was allowed to launch an attack. While she could be identified by the public with the people Resolution 1973 meant to protect (it was passed to prevent a blood bath in the city), the forces that were being bombed were associated with her attackers (armed forces fighting for the regime). The discourses on protecting her are interconnected with the broader picture of the protection of her hometown and hence with NATO's actions. Boltanski pointed to the importance of choosing the persecutor among different candidates: CNN openly challenges the regime's spokesman version (individuals acting independently of the regime) to pick al-Obeidi's words ("Gadhafi's brigades") and point directly at Gaddafi. This step is crucial since it enables the rape of al-Obeidi not to be regarded as a *fait-divers* (a civil case), but as a political event. And that is precisely the core of the politics of pity in our modern democratic societies: "[...] arguments from pity for the victims or for the

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[36] "Libyan woman bursts into hotel to tell her story of rape" (March 27, 2011), http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/03/26/libya.beaten.woman/index.html.

[37] On March 25 NATO Allied Joint Force Command in Naples took command of the no-fly zone (French forces had started the attacks on March 19) and on March 28 President Obama addressed the American people in Libya. Al-Obeini burst into the hotel in Tripoli on March 26.

sufferers are utilized mainly as political arguments to justify and legitimate government actions, whether domestic decisions or foreign interventions." (Boltanski, 2000: 12).

By relentlessly associating al-Obeidi with the Libyan people, CNN helped to turn her face alongside the face of Gaddafi as the most well-known images of the war, with her standing for the opposition and he for the fierce dictatorship.[38] CNN coverage of her story communicates not only despair and helplessness, but also defiance against the dictator (another important element in the narrativization of her life embedded in emotions): "Alleged Libyan rape victim's mother would slap Gadhafi if she could" (March 29, 2011), "Accuser's mom would 'strangle' Gadhafi" (March 30, 2011), "I'm not afraid of Gadhafi" (March 30, 2011).[39] On the phone with CNN ("Al-Obeidy reconnects with mother", April 6),[40] al-Obeidi calls the spokesman of the regime a liar and her mother, assuring her that the Arab States are with her, says "May God defeat you Gadhafi, you are an oppressor and may God not let you live".

A process of gendering Libya can be observed through al-Obeidi: she, a fragile woman (not the armed opposition, nor the male demonstrators), stands for the people who defied the dictator. One can perceive here an ancient and widespread gender construction: the vulnerable woman and her masculine protector. As Gaby Zipfel notes (2012: 32), this pair not only serves the male self-image of heroism, which reduces the female person to the status of victim and object, but also serves the legitimation of violence. Through al-Obeidi, Libya becomes an entity in need of protection by the international community.[41] On May 9, al-Obeidi had just crossed the border to Tunisia with the help of Libyan officers, but Nic Robertson presents French diplomats as her real saviors:

> Freedom never tasted so good. Outside the safe-house diplomats are helping secure her safety. [...] Since she arrived [*at the French embassy*] a diplomatic protection team is helping her and President Nicholas Sarkozy has taken an intimate interest in her every movement. The lady who came to symbolize the Libyan struggle is now getting for the first time the help she so long craved.[42]

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[38] She becomes a symbol of the opposition and is compared to the most emblematic figures of protests for democracy in the Middle East. See, for instance, "How one voice can tell the story of an entire movement" (Kyle Almond, CNN, April 1, 2011),
http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/meast/04/01/arab.unrest.faces/index.html.
[39] http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/03/29/libya.rape.case/index.html?iref=allsearch,
http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2011/03/30/sayah.libya.mother.rage.cnn,
http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2011/03/30/sayah.libya.eman.rape.cnn?iref=allsearch.
[40] http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/04/21/libya.rape.case/index.html?iref=allsearch.
[41] The gendering of conquered nations and territories is a widespread strategy. In the case of Africa as well as of the Orient, the methaphorization of the land as a woman to be seduced or to be protected is a commonplace in colonial and imperial discourses.
[42] "Alleged rape victim flees Libya" (May 9, 2011),
http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/05/08/libya.rape.case/index.html.

Though the word "alleged" is often used to refer to al-Obeidi as a rape victim, thus suggesting that CNN is adopting a "neutral" tone by indicating that her claims are not independently proven, the configuration and other forms of wording of the news are openly meant to stress the veracity of her claims. See, for instance, how Anderson Cooper introduces an interview with her on April 6: "we know her name and we can not turn away from her plight [...] we want you to hear her voice, she wants you to hear her voice, everything else has been taken away from this woman, the least we can give her is listen to her voice".[43] The engaged approach by CNN relies heavily on the construction of an emotional response to her case by building proximity and making the public feel responsible for her. Once again, Boltanski's theory is useful in stressing the importance of the imagination and of elements that can give access to the inner life of those who suffer at a distance and hence foster the engagement of the spectator.[44] The several interviews with her mother and especially the broadcasting of part of the conversation between mother and daughter on the phone play no informative role at all; they are merely a strategy of appealing to the public, creating intimacy and introducing in the narrative of the "woman in danger" a familiar element that the average public can relate to: "mom suffering for her child". We hear al-Obeidi crying and the uncomfortable silences when she sobs, we hear her asking for help, denouncing Tripoli as a prison, saying she fears for her life and for her parents' health, thanking CNN and the international response. Other details are also of key importance in fostering sympathy: photos of her as a happy child and as a pretty and successful student who dreams of going to France; footage of her family (her old supporting parents, the many children of the broader family), suggesting this is a respected conservative middle-class Muslim family.[45]

Her image as a "normal" well-educated Muslim girl could not be more distant from the configuration of the women of the "other side". CNN hardly gives attention to the fact that there were women supporting and fighting for Gaddafi, but, on June 30, David McKenzie reports on a training center for women in Bani Walid.[46] These women project defiance and strength, they are corpulent, of a certain age (mothers and grandmothers, have jobs) and talk with confidence to the cameras about defending their country and liking guns. One woman dressed in a military outfit says "Do not underestimate any woman in Libya, whether old or young. The woman is still able to perform more than you think". McKenzie

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[43] "Al-Obeidy: Tripoli is a prison" (April 6, 2011),
http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/bestoftv/2011/04/05/exp.ac.alobeidy.tripoli.prison.cnn?iref=allsearch.
[44] See, for instance, titles such as "Al-Obeidy: Please don't forget me" (April 12, 2011)
http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2011/04/11/ac.alobeidy.update.cnn.
[45] See, for instance, "Alleged rape victim's family defiant" (April 1, 2011),
http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/international/2011/04/01/bs.sayah.libya.obeidy.cnn.
[46] "Libya's Gadhafi calls for volunteers, women answer" (David McKenzie, June 30, 2011),
http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/06/30/libya.unrest/index.html?iref=allsearch.

frames these testimonies to project bewilderment and mistrust. He questions the gender roles adopted by these women: "These are people's sisters, mothers, grandmothers, but in Moammar Gaddafi's Libya they are a fighting force". MacKenzie comes from a country where women can join the military. Would he report on these terms on women fighting in the US army? Or is his bewilderment due to the fact that these are Muslim women? One woman (mother of 4 children) also reiterates the duality: "I forget my role as a woman, my role is now to fight". Implicit are two conceptions of women: a traditional role within the patriarchal family (mothers, sisters, grandmothers) and a militarized role as actors of violence. While McKenzie seems to consider the first one as "natural", he has a difficulty in taking the second one seriously. He informs that women and girls were used to military training in Gaddafi's Libya and recalls the proven lethal force of the dictator's female bodyguards, but notes simultaneously that most of the women on screen seem unfamiliar with their rifles and also induces a hint of suspicion on their free will ("the volunteers were bused up by the government to meet us"; the camera also catches men pushing women to the camera). The sound of the video report also contributes to discredit these women: the public is confronted with a deafening noise of female vociferation and shouting overwhelmed by shots of guns, leaving a sense of hysteria and femininity gone astray. Finally, the discrediting of these women is further fostered in the text that accompanies the video,[47] which includes paragraphs about rape by Gaddafi's forces: ICC's efforts on the issue and al-Obeidi's story. CNN hence opposes those female fighters to the other examples of Libyan women, whose courage was directed not towards defending the regime with guns, but towards denouncing its misogyny and violence with words and pleas to the outside world. Gaddafi's female fighters had aligned with *the* persecutor of CNN's narrative and therefore could hardly become "victims that matter" (once again, a concept by Boltanski). That "role" had been attributed to al-Obeidi.

Back to her story: While in the first peak the "them" in the formula "we have to save her from them" refers to the regime and its thugs,[48] in the second peak it becomes more diffuse. The news suggest that al-Obeidi was violently deported from Qatar with the connivance of the NCT because she had refused to campaign in the TV channel of the opposition (she claimed they were using her). CNN refers to dangers posed by Gaddafi loyalists in areas under the control of the opposition, but seems to imply as well the Arab/Muslim culture. Now the urgency is to take her away from Libya, a country that is

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[47] "Women appear to be armed and fighting for Gadhafi" (June 30, 2011) http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2011/06/30/women-appear-to-be-armed-and-fighting-for-gadhafi/.
[48] "Al-Obeidy in exile: 'My soul is liberated'" (Nic Robertson, May 18, 2011) is a kind of first "happy end". In an interview in Doha, she thanks all those, specially the Americans, who stood by her and takes her story as having changed Arab perceptions of rape victims. http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/05/16/libya.obeidy/index.html.

presented as bad for brutalized women, and bring her to a safe-haven: the US.[49] News about her heading to Romania and later to the US are permeated by a sense of relief, a sort of "happy ending" feeling.[50] In this sense, the CNN coverage can be regarded as a variation of the old formula "our enemies rape women, we protect women" referring here not only to "our women" but to "their women" as well, an adaptation embedded in the long tradition of Orientalist discourses about "saving the women from the Third World".[51]

While the mediatization of al-Obeidi must be assumed as an important praiseworthy step that probably prevented the regime from harming her, the benefits of this coverage are more questionable regarding the broader victims of sexualized violence. CNN never confronted the new authorities with the broader problem of wartime rape and never asked them about support to the victims in Libya, i.e. it never went beyond one specific story and never actually engaged with the survivors living in the country. Furthermore, CNN never addressed the issue of the policies of asylum, i.e. it never engaged in a discussion on whether situations of rape like al-Obeidi's could and should be considered as a basis for being granted refugee status. In other words, CNN reported on a victim without addressing the structural problems that were framing the fate of that woman, namely the situation of survivors of sexual violence in post-war Libya and US's asylum policy. What we have in the CNN report is an individual story offered to the public in a sensationalist way until the rescue was successful, thereby giving the public a sense of catharsis. This configuration results from the way the politics of pity were put in motion here: the suffering at a distance was mediated as a fiction enclosed by a narrative that comes to an end. Since the focus had always been al-Obeidi's fate, her exile puts an end to the chapter on her sexual abuse. Hence the spectator does not need to suffer anymore: now she is safe.

The shortcomings of CNN's reporting on al-Obeidi are even more striking since it generalized her rape to the whole conflict: her case was not presented as a crime by some individuals who happened to be linked to the regime; it was signified as proof of the

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[49] See, for example, "Qatari expulsion of alleged Libyan rape victim upsets U.S." (Nic Robertson, June 3, 2011) http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/06/03/libya.rape.case/index.html?iref=allsearch, "Help Obeidy out of Libya" (Bill Frelick, June 5, 2011), http://edition.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/06/04/frelick.liba.obeidy/index.html?iref=allsearch, "Alleged Libya rape victim arrives at refugee facility in Romania" (June 6, 2011), http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2011/06/06/alleged-libya-rape-victim-arrives-at-refugee-facility-in-romania/?iref=allsearch, "Alleged Libyan rape victim comes to the U.S. to stay" (July 29, 2011) http://articles.cnn.com/2011-07-29/us/us.libya.al.obeidy.relocates_1_eman-al-obeidy-cnn-producer-moammar-gadhafi?_s=PM:US.
[50] After the war, CNN has a few reports on her: "Alleged victim rape speaks out" (December 13, 2011) http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2011/12/09/nr-eman-al-obeidy-sot.cnn?iref=allsearch, "Alleged Libyan rape victim struggling to start anew in America" (Suzanne Malveaux and Moni Basu, December 13, 2011), http://edition.cnn.com/2011/12/13/us/libya-rape-interview/index.html?iref=allsearch; "A symbol of defiance in Gadhafi's Libya, Eman al-Obeidi just wants to be left alone" (Moni Basu, April 9, 2012), http://edition.cnn.com/2012/04/08/us/colorado-libyan-rape-victim/index.html.
[51] There is a large academic literature on possible intersections between perceptions of female victimhood in Muslim and Third World countries and imperialism in some Western feminist discourses. See, among many others, classics on the topic such as Mohanty, 1984; Yeğenoğlu, 1998: 95-120.

use of rape as weapon of war.[52] But, instead of promoting a discussion of the situation of survivors of rape in post-war Libya, it only served to indict the regime and to prove its inhumanity.[53] Therefore it should come as no surprise that findings on the ground that questioned precisely the allegations of systemic rapes and the use of rape as a weapon of war were simply ignored by CNN.[54] By the same way, references to victims who do not fit in the category of "persecuted by the regime" are scarce and framed in a way that does not allow those cases to challenge the dominant narrative. See, for example, the sexual abuse of black migrants. CNN mentions it in a report about refugees arriving in Lampedusa, but the rapists are identified solely as Gaddafi's forces. Sexual abuse of black migrants, which is presented by HRW as a diffuse phenomenon in Libya, is meant to function in CNN as a proof of the perversity of the regime.[55]

Another example of framing divergent testimonies can be found in "Harbor sanctuary for Gadhafi's migrants" (Raja Razek and Libby Lewis, September 8, 2011),[56] which is probably the most detailed report by CNN on the attacks on blacks that were being denounced by human rights agencies at the time. The abuse of black migrants and the practice of racial profiling in the mass arrests of blacks by the anti-Gaddafi forces are explained (and somehow justified) by the fact that Gaddafi hired Sub-Saharan mercenaries. The suffering of black migrants is reported with distance[57] and even accompanied by exculpatory arguments and doubt. CNN says it could not verify HRW

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[52] Al-Obeidi told journalists that there were other abducted women when she was raped: "Rape suspects accuse woman of slander" (March 29, 2011),
http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/bestoftv/2011/03/29/exp.libya.rape.victim.slander.cnn. Her case is repeatedly brought up in the news about the claims of Viagra and cell-phones. See, for example: "ICC to investigate reports of Viagra-fueled gang-rapes in Libya" (May 18, 2011)
http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/05/17/libya.rapes.icc/index.html; "Rape as a weapon of war in Libya" (May 17, 2011),
http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/bestoftv/2011/05/17/exp.nr.robertson.libya.rape.cnn , "Psychologist: Proof of hundreds of rape cases during Libya's war" (May 23, 2011),
http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/05/23/libya.rape.survey.psychologist/index.html; "Libyan rebels say captured cell phone videos show rape, torture" (June 17, 2011),
http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/06/14/libya.rape.hfr/index.html.
[53] See also the sexualized abuse of one female journalist, in "Freed New York Times journalists thought they would die in Libya" (April 1, 2011),
(http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/03/31/libya.ac360.missing.journalists/index.html).
[54] I'm referring to the HRC's first report (June 1, 2011), which stated that it found no evidence supporting the Viagra and the mass-rape claims. By the same time, Amnesty International and HRW were also unable to provide evidence for such claims. See, for instance, Patrick Cockburn, "Amnesty questions claim that Gaddafi ordered rape as a weapon of war", *The Independent*, 24 June, 2011,
http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/amnesty-questions-claim-that-gaddafi-ordered-rape-as-weapon-of-war-2302037.html.
[55] "Lampedusa's boat people: One man's story" (Ivan Watson, June 1, 2011)
http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/europe/06/01/italy.lampedusa.boat.people/index.html?iref=allsearch.
Lampedusa emerges here as a safe haven for abused migrants. No word about Italy's previous cooperation with Gaddafi in policing the border and deporting migrants.
[56] http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/09/08/libya.africans/index.html?iref=allsearch.
[57] There is one exception: Shweyga Mullah ("Gaddafi's nanny"), an Ethiopian domestic worker who was severely burnt by one of Gaddafi's daughters-in-law. Her case made headlines across the world and she got sympathy from world leaders. CNN presents her case not as unique but only in relation to the family of the dictator (without addressing the broader problem of abuse of domestic workers in Libya and other countries of the region).

denunciations of mistreatment of detainees when it visited one detention facility. There are six references to the existence of mercenaries, while only three to the claims of rape of black women. The use of mercenaries is presented as a proven fact (CNN had interviewed some), but the allegations of sexual abuse are referred to as "dark tales of women being dragged away in the middle of the night to be raped by armed gangs". Furthermore, the text apparently suggests that blacks do not belong in Libya and are another example of Gaddafi's political aberrations: "They are the people who don't historically have roots in Libya." Gaddafi's pan-African ambitions surely contributed to the fact that "Up to one-fifth of Libya's six million population are migrants" but this is only one part of the broader picture. The existence of black Libyans (who were also being targeted at the same time)[58] and the geographical situation of Libya at the core of migration routes to Europe are strategically omitted in a report that is intended to ultimately blame Gaddafi for abuses that were being committed at that time by his objectors.

In the process of mediatizing sexual violence, CNN amplified al-Obeidi's case, while dismissing and almost ignoring claims of rape that did not involve Gaddafi's forces. The narrativization of al-Obeidi framed the problem of wartime sexual violence in Libya in a way that ended up by excluding many others types of victims. It that sense, it exemplifies the shortcomings of the need to select the "victims who matter" and the "true persecutors" in the politics of pity described by Bolstanski. As we saw, that process of selection materialized in a political frame that was beneficial for NATO. As such, CNN reiterates the role of rape in traditional propaganda war discourses, where victims stand for their role as emblems of the victimized community and/or as evidence of the brutality and immorality of the enemy, while the cases that do not fit the picture tend to be ignored.[59] In the present, although important steps have been taken to improve the legal protection and the empowerment of rape victims, CNN's coverage of wartime rape in Libya shows us that the tendency to address rape as a defining mark of the enemy is not over. In an epoch where

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[58] CNN refers briefly to the abuse of dark-skinned Libyans in "Libyan detainees describe abuse and torture" (Moni Nasu, October 2, 2011), but the report has a positive tone by referring to MacCain's comments on the political will of the new authorities to tackle the problem of torture. See also "NCT will investigate allegations of crimes against pro-Gadhafi forces, official say (October 30, 2011) http://edition.cnn.com/2011/10/30/world/africa/libya-militias/index.html). A comparison with a report by BBC on Tawergha makes the indifference of CNN more explicit. The BBC journalist interviews inhabitants from Misrata who recall their many sufferings during the war (and accuse Tawergha of rape and murder), but he also gives the people of Tawergha a chance to describe their misery as losers of the war: "Cleansed' Libyan town spills its terrible secrets" (Tarik Kafala, December 12, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16051349).

[59] There are numerous war scenarios corroborating this definition of traditional propaganda war discourses. WWI is a well-known example attesting to the efficacy of rape stories in nationalist discourses. The "rape of Belgium" (concept that was used as a metaphor but also in its literal meaning) worked as an efficient propaganda tool for the Allies (see, for instance, Horne and Kramer, 2002). Rapes of French women by Germans also became a propaganda trope to demonize the enemy (see Harris, 1993). In the early 20s, Germany initiated an international propaganda campaign to protest the French use of colonial soldiers in occupied Rhineland, claiming soldiers from French-African colonies were engaging in mass rapes and creating a generation of mixed-race children (the so-called "black shame" [*Schwarze Schmach* or *Schwarze Schande*]) (on the topic, see, for instance, Wigger, 2009).

women's rights play an important role in defining "Western" values, rape can function as an effective tool to make public opinion sensitive to the problem, call for international engagement, and discredit "enemies", since it tends to be regarded as a form of illegitimate violence.

The coverage of wartime sexual violence by the BBC emerges as less sensationalist. It has fewer reports on the topic and, contrary to CNN, which used foremost al-Obeidi to address it, most BBC reports are not about her,[60] but on broader allegations of the use of rape as a weapon of war. The first peak of the news on the topic is May 23, when a BBC reporter interviewed two pro-Gaddafi fighters in detention, who said that they had been ordered to rape in Misrata. The second peak is after June 8 and focuses on the efforts by the ICC to collect evidence on the use of rape as a weapon of war by the regime. BBC's coverage discusses how far the cases reported indicate that rape in Libya is being used as a "weapon of war" that could be included in the indictment against senior representatives of the regime. It is assumed by BBC that cases of wartime rape always occur, the question now is to know whether it is systemic in Libya. That is to say, BBC focuses on the legal framework in the context of international law. Contrary to CNN's narrative of "the woman in danger", BBC's coverage is framed by the "script" "rape: a weapon of war?" In this sense, BBC emerges as more "up-to-date" since it connects more directly with academic and public debates of the last years that consider that rape cannot be regarded merely as a byproduct of warfare, but should be addressed as well as a structural part of it, i.e. as a possible strategy to dominate and defeat a collective enemy.[61]

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[60] BBC reports on al-Obeidi are also quite supportive of her. In "Parents say Libyan rape claim woman held in Tripoli" (April 1, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12941142), the public sees photos of her as a child and as a young adult during an interview with her distressed parents. In December 28, she was nominated one of the Faces of the year 2011.

[61] In her influential book *Against our Will*, Susan Brownmiller defended that wartime rape was actually a functional tool in warfare: "Defense of women has long been a hallmark of masculine pride, as possession of women has been a hallmark of masculine success. Rape by a conquering soldier destroys all remaining illusions of power and property for men of the defeated side. The body of a raped woman becomes a ceremonial battlefield, a parade ground for the victor's trooping of the colors. The act that is played out upon her is a message passed between men – vivid proof of victory for one and loss and defeat of another" (Brownmiller, 1975: 38). Such premises gained visibility and were developed in subsequent research on wartime sexual violence and became central in the context of the "new wars", namely in the 90s when the rapes in the wars leading to the disintegration of Yugoslavia were perceived not as random cases (as a byproduct of war), but as part of a strategy to destroy the enemy's community. The possible interconnection between patriarchal values, ethnicity, nationalism and sexual violence were stressed by feminist campaigners in the process of lobbying to include rape in the indictments of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Researchers such as Chyntia H. Enloe (see, for instance, Enloe, 2000) have given increasing attention to the use of rape as a strategy and human rights organizations like Amnesty International (AI) were able to popularize the concept of rape as a weapon of war, thus making it "mainstream". AI's 2004 report *Lives Blown Apart: Crimes against women in times of conflict: stop violence against women* has a chapter precisely on "rape as a weapon of war" (Chapter 3), where it is defined as follows: "As a weapon of war, rape is used strategically and tactically to advance specific objectives in many forms of conflict. It is used to conquer, expel or control women and their communities in times of war or internal conflict. As a form of gender-based torture it is used to extract information, punish, intimidate and humiliate. It is the universal weapon employed to strip women of their dignity and destroy their sense of self. It is also used to terrorize and destroy entire communities." (http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ACT77/075/2004/en/944d7605-d57f-11dd-bb24-1fb85fe8fa05/act770752004en.pdf). Media coverage of this report includes titles such as "How did

The focus is on the nature of the crime, and only indirectly on the nature of the regime. The reports on sexual violence privilege elements that may attest to the use of rape as a weapon of war: the voice of possible perpetrators (who could disclose if there were orders), claims about the use of Viagra to fuel abuse, cell-phone evidence, and Ocampo's declarations about a possible rape campaign.[62] Ocampo stresses that the ICC is not actually looking at sporadic individual cases, but at evidence tracing a chain of command pointing to orders by Gaddafi himself.[63] Gita Saghal, women's advocate and prior campaigner for Amnesty International, also notes in an interview that the specificity of the allegations of rape in Libya being investigated by the ICC have to do with the concept of "weapon of war": they are looking to see whether there is a chain of command that would make the leaders (and not only the rapists themselves) accountable for the crime.[64]

It has to be stressed that the BBC's "script" ends with a question mark, i.e, it does not impose a reading of the rapes as a weapon of war; it discusses it. It provides evidence for and against the main claim. See, for example, the reports by Andrew Harding on the two detainees who confessed rape.[65] Harding claims that the two testimonies about soldiers being ordered to rape to punish the population of Misrata are credible (e.g. he saw no evidence that the detainees had been forced to confess). But he also acknowledges that there might be a propagandist interest behind the disclosure of such stories and notes that individual acts of violence may not be proof of a systematic campaign. In the report "Libya denies 'rape as weapon' claims" (June 9, 2011),[66] Harding highlights the difficulty of getting to the truth in this issue: "UN teams in Libya are saying both sides have carried out human rights abuses although most have been carried out by the Gaddafi's regime. But for now the full truth is being obscured by chaos, propaganda and the familiar fog of war." Harding reiterates that the testimony of the detainees he had interviewed seems credible, but recognizes that both sides are engaged in demonizing the other. International official responses are also contradictory: while Ocampo takes the allegations of a campaign of mass rapes very seriously, Cherif Bassiouni, who was leading a UN rights inquiry into human rights abuses in Libya, is more cautious: "People are accusing each other of a

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rape become a weapon of war?" (Laura Smith-Spark, BBC, December 8, 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4078677.stm).
[62] See also the intervention of the pro-opposition Libyan historian Faraj Najem in the program *Daily Politics* (June 13, 2011) claiming that Gaddafi was using gang-rape as a weapon of mass destruction: "Libya: Historian on Gaddafi troops in gang rape claims", http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-13749709.
[63] "Libya: Gaddafi investigated over use of rape as weapon" (June 8, 2011) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13705854.
[64] "Rape is used as a weapon of war" (June 9, 2011) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13707445; See also "Libya: Clinton condemns rape as weapon of war" (June 17, 2011), http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13803556.
[65] "Gaddafi troops face rape allegations" (May 23, 2011) http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9493000/9493814.stm); "Libya: Forced to rape in Misrata (Andrew Harding, May 23, 2011) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13502715.
[66] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13720434.

policy of rape, people are accusing mercenaries and foreign fighters of engaging in rape. I would like to say at this point is more of a hysterical social reaction. We have no evidence of it."

BBC also interviews guests who dismiss as propaganda the claims of rape as a weapon of war. In the program *Question time*, the writer, academic, and journalist Germaine Greer is asked about whether Britain should commit ground troops to Libya in light of the rape threat. Invoking a perception of wartime rape as a universal phenomenon framed by militarism ("all soldiers in certain circumstances will rape regardless of whether they are ours or theirs"),[67] she ironically suggests that the claims of Viagra are possibly nothing more than "legends about the hated enemy": "what's wrong with the Libyans? Everyone else manages without!"

BBC's script "rape: a weapon of war?" inevitably privileged coverage of aspects that could attest to the use of sexual violence as a military strategy and hence focused on rape allegations by the forces of the regime. This approach still leaves room for a broader spectrum of victims, namely for individual cases of rape that do not fit the "script". But, while the allegations of rape as a strategy are at the core of several reports (as indicated by the titles of the reports), the other rape allegations in the war are consequently scarcer and never really the focus. Allegations of rape by the anti-Gaddafi forces are always referred to in the context of other abuses.[68] In one report about abuses of prisoners by the anti-Gaddafi forces, UN human rights chief Navi Pillay is quoted as saying "There's torture, extrajudicial executions, rape of both men and women."[69] In one of the reports on the waves of racism and the ill-treatment of blacks, a first-hand testimony of a rape victim is included: a 16 year old black Sub-Saharan girl, who was gang-raped by six armed men when her father, suspected of being a former mercenary, was arrested.[70] Her case is not ignored, but it does not make headlines, it is framed as complementary evidence of abuse.

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[67] Greer echoes Susan Brownmiller's classic work *Against our will*, a landmark in the feminist approach to rape as a crime framed by patriarchate and militarism. See, for instance, "Rape flourishes in warfare irrespective of nationality or geographic location" (Brownmiller, 1975: 32).

[68] There is only one report on rape that addresses sexual violence regardless of the origin of the perpetrators. In "Libya rape victims face 'honour killings" (June 14, 2011), Mr. Jamal, the UNHCR's emergency coordinator for Libya, is quoted as saying that they "have also seen evidence that would seem to suggest that rape has been carried out by both sides, but we cannot say on what scale", http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13760895 .

[69] "Libya prisoners make new torture allegations" (January 28, 2012), http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16771372.

[70] "African migrants living in limbo in Libya" (9 January, 2012), http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16465272. BBC looked at the situation of black migrants in Libya even before the war. It had reported on the issue when human rights organizations denounced cooperation with Italy. It also looked closely at the implications of the uprising for Europe's stance on immigration: see, for example, "Libya protests: EU condemns violence and fears influx" (February 21, 2011), http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-12525155. During the war, in the series "African viewpoint", BBC posted an opinion text by the African journalist Farai Sevenzo, which is a fierce denunciation of official European relations with Libya regarding illegal immigration: "Dying to leave Libya" (May 24, 2011 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13510380).

BBC's coverage may not be propagandist, but it nonetheless favors invisibilities on the question, or rather a sort of hierarchical categorization that may prevent a complete and sophisticated picture of the crime within this conflict. BBC looks predominantly for one type of rape, while potentially downplaying situations of sexual violence that occurred for other reasons (opportunistic, by common criminals who could benefit from the chaos, sexual abuses in the continuation of pre-war ill-treatment of blacks, etc.). Even the concept "rape as a weapon of war" was addressed only from one perspective, namely in regard to women and their victimization in the context of social conservative patriarchal structures that equal female sexuality with "honor". However, as we can see in AI's above mentioned definition (footnote 61), even in publications for the broader public, the concept refers not only to sexual violence as a form of "controlling women and their communities", but also to the use of gender-based torture to extract information from prisoners. As we have seen, both the HRC's reports and the documents authored by HRW on the war in Libya documented cases that could attest to both uses of rape. However, BBC focused only the first one. Does it signal a greater awareness of women's rights and/or a "militant" attitude against conservative patriarchal mentalities that aim to control female sexuality? Or can it be the case that BBC favored a perspective more prone to othering rape rather than engaging with a subject – sexual torture of prisoners to extract information in war – which ultimately could oblige our Western societies to engage in a discussion about methods used and condoned during much of the "war on terror"?

"SHE'S BEEN TWICE HURT, ONE BY HER FAMILY AND ONE BY GADHAFI'S TROOP[S]"[71]
THE CULTURALIZATION OF RAPE VICTIMS

By calling attention to accusations associating blacks with wartime rape, especially in the context of the siege of Misrata, the reports by HRC and the documents authored by HRW point to an ethnicization in perceptions of sexual violence in Libya. Some cases of abuse and torture of people suspected of being Gaddafi's fighters were precisely framed by suspicions of rape. CNN and BBC paid little attention to this form of ethnicizing sexual violence and made scarce references to the racial and xenophobic tensions expressed in such discourses.

CNN and BBC engage in another form of othering sexual violence, not in reference to the perpetrators, but in the context of the suffering of the victims. HRC and HRW suspected that they were facing a case of underreporting of rape, motivated by the cultural and political context in Libya: a conservative society that sees female sexuality as

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[71] A psychologist from Benghazi talking about a girl who had been raped by Gaddafi's forces "Psychologist: Proof of hundreds of rape cases during Libya's war" (May 23, 2011), http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/05/23/libya.rape.survey.psychologist/index.html.

essential to family honor and where an inadequate legal system does not grant rape victims protection and even paves the way to further persecution. Western media coverage tended to stress the damage inflicted on women because of their cultural background, thus presenting those women as simultaneous victims of a political system (Gaddafi's dictatorship) and of their own culture (a conservative Muslim society). CNN emphasizes this perception with frequent references to Islam and the Arab background to stress al-Obeidi's courage.[72] This perception is fundamental for understanding the configuration of the second peak of the narrative "woman in danger", namely the urgent need to get al-Obeidi out of Libya because of Libyan attitudes towards rape. Al-Obeidi herself, her mother and many other Libyan witnesses (like the psychologist mentioned before) corroborated this perception of traditional Libyan culture as hostile to rape victims.[73]

This subtext echoes in the final report on al-Obeidi, which dates from several months after the official end of the war: "A symbol of defiance in Gadhafi's Libya, Eman al-Obeidi just wants to be left alone" (Moni Basu, April 9, 2012).[74] While, at the beginning of the war, she played a fundamental role in gendering Libya as a female entity in need of protection, this last text on her has nothing to do with efforts to justify NATO's actions. The text identifies her once with her country ("But like Libya itself, al-Obeidi is struggling to reconcile past and present"), but on the whole it postulates an increasing gap between her and her culture of origin. "Her heroism [*was*] a source of inspiration for men and women fighting a longtime tyrant", but now "her fellow Libyans are her harshest judges." The article informs us about her difficulties in the new country (the US), her problems with depression, her financial and professional hardships, her struggle with the language, her rootlessness, but points as well to the promises of freedom in her new existence. Her photo (no veil and smiling) seems to suggest it: a possibility of starting a new life away from the constraints of her culture and past. This is backed up by certain bits of information in the text: she no longer eats Halal, she has barely contact with other Libyans in the US, she broke the engagement with her fiancé in Libya, she does not intend to go back. The information about her childhood signals her character as unique, as different

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[72] There is at least one dissonant voice here: the freelance Egyptian-American journalist Mona Eltahary, when she was invited to discuss al-Obeidi's case in CNN. While sharing the concerns over al-Obeidi's safety in Tripoli and denouncing the shaming of rape victims in Libya, she always uses the word "conservative" (not Muslim) to discuss the problem and refers to the legal framework. She also compares al-Obeidi's courage with the determination of many other women *and men* in the uprisings and calls attention to efforts by women in countries like Saudi Arabia who claim Islam is not the force that oppresses them. "Libyan woman claims rape by militia men" (March 30, 2011) http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/bestoftv/2011/03/30/exp.am.intv.eltahawy.cnn.

[73] See, for example, "Psychologist: Proof of hundreds of rape cases during Libya's war" (May 23, 2011), http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/05/23/libya.rape.survey.psychologist/index.html, "Help Obeidy out of Libya" (Bill Frelick, CNN, June 5, 2011. Frelick is the refugees' director at HRW http://edition.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/06/04/frelick.liba.obeidy/index.html?iref=allsearch.

[74] http://edition.cnn.com/2012/04/08/us/colorado-libyan-rape-victim/index.html.

and out of place in her country: "Even as a young child, she had broken down barriers". The reasons: she went hunting, she liked football, she refused to wear dresses until a certain age, she liked wrestling with her brothers, climbing trees, riding bicycles, she wanted to learn foreign languages and to travel abroad, i.e. she refused the "cultural differences between boys and girls" that her family tried to impose on her and she constantly challenged gender roles characteristic of Libyan society. As an adult, she would not submit to the restraints imposed by her culture: the way she talked about rape was "unprecedented" in Libya, given that "conservative Muslim families can blame a woman for bringing dishonor and shame upon them". In this sense, the decision to leave the country emerges as an obvious outcome: "If I leave, I have a chance to live". Libyans emerge as oppressors and exploiters; Americans as saviors: while the NCT just wanted "to exploit her pain to further their cause", "without media coverage and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's deep interest in the case, she might still be behind bars somewhere in her homeland." In the US she is also a case apart among immigrants: "Usually, new refugees find solace in their compatriots. But al-Obeidi did not want to mix with Libyans. Understandably so, Shalaan says. Half the Libyans here still call her a liar, he says." So, she felt betrayed by her homeland.

This report reinforces a subtext that was there from the beginning of the war: Libya is not a good place for rape victims and emancipated women. The article essentializes as "Libyan" certain gender roles that it wants to discredit, in favor of a modern concept of femininity embodied by al-Obeidi, and which, according to the text, apparently can only exist openly outside the country. However, CNN reports on situations and allegations that inevitably make us question that essentialization of the "Libyan culture". The fact that it was actually Libyan men aligned with the NCT who got al-Obeidi out of Libya is minimized in the narrative about her rescue. Then there are the female fighters in the war, Libyan women who took arms and were themselves agents of violence, i.e. women whose actions would inevitably question the definitions of Libyan coming from such reports. CNN reports once on women fighting in the pro-Gaddafi forces, but, as we have seen, adopts a derogatory tone by suggesting inability to fight and lack of agency (male manipulation). Needless to say: after the war CNN never tried to know about the fate of those women as the defeated of the conflict, in a country that CNN presented as not good for women.

A closer look at al-Obeidi's story also questions monolithic perceptions of "Libyan culture". It is not only the fact that, by bursting into the Rixos hotel (a "nest" of the regime) to implicate directly Gaddafi in her gang-rape,[75] she made proof of a tremendous courage, given the dictatorial nature of the regime and its terrible record of human rights abuses. The reactions in Libya are also worth noticing. Firstly, there was public support for her in

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[75] She did not accuse soldiers of raping her; she said "Gaddafi's brigades".

towns under the control of the opposition, including marches to demand her release. In the interview on April 6, when she was still in Tripoli under the control of the regime, she said: "many people here in Tripoli greet me in the streets and recognize my name and say they stand by me and do not believe what they say about me. People here in Tripoli are sympathetic with me."[76] The unconditional support of her conservative family (not only her mother, but also her father, other relatives and her fiancé) require a more sophisticated reading of Libyan cultural conservatism. Surely the decision to speed up the engagement ceremony and the public support of her family are clearly framed by conservative perceptions of female sexuality and by norms of family and female honor that promote the stigmatization of rape victims. But, at the same time, these acts are intended to oppose the social isolation of one particular rape victim. A similar pattern can be observed in allegations about a commander in Misrata who ordered the destruction of cell-phone evidence of rape to protect the "honor" of the victims and their families,[77] as well as in the claims that some rebel fighters had offered to marry rape victims.[78] These acts do certainly reinforce perceptions that attach shame and vulnerability to rape survivors and deny them justice, but at the same time such moves also suggest a certain degree of nonconformity with those traditional perceptions in the context of revolutionary resistance. These traits of nonconformity are surely distinct from feminist approaches to wartime rape. They will probably be unable to support victims, nor empower or give them any sense of dignity, and they might probably vanish the moment sexual violence ceases to be framed by warfare propaganda. Nonetheless, such actions reported in some Western media channels challenged the monolithic and essentialist perceptions of Libyan masculinities/femininities and Arab/Muslim culture that were being put forth by channels like CNN.

BBC also stresses the conservative nature of Libyan society, which attaches shame to rape victims and their families, but its reports suggest a more differentiated perception of Libyan social struggles. See, for instance, the report: "Libya rape victims face 'honour killings" (June 14, 2011)[79] This report on the dangers faced by raped women who get pregnant confirms the perception of Libya as a bad place for rape survivors: due to the shame attached to sexual abuse and the extreme conservatism of some parts of the country, the victims risk being murdered by their own families. But the text also informs on efforts undertaken by Libyans themselves to denounce the situation, to prevent it and to

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[76] http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/04/21/libya.rape.case/index.html?iref=allsearch.

[77] "Libyan rebels say captured cell phone videos show rape, torture" (Sara Sidner, June 17, 2011) http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/06/14/libya.rape.hfr/index.html.

[78] BBC reports on these claims: "Gaddafi troops face rape allegations" (May 23, 2011) http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9493000/9493814.stm. HRC also hints briefly at this practice: it mentions an "organization which has developed a program to marry victims of rape with volunteer men, as well as to marry men disabled from the conflict with volunteer women" (HRC, 2012a: 139).

[79] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13760895.

support the victims. Firstly, the denunciations are being done by Libyan aid workers (namely by female aid workers), who are also supporting victims with medical care and HIV tests and offering to pay for abortions.[80] These efforts do not come only from those regarded as progressive from some Western perspectives, but also from religious sectors. Some "fatwas - Islamic clerical rulings - have already been made, which sanction abortion in circumstances such as rape". Furthermore, the text also reports on the actions by the charity World for Libya engaging "imams across the border in Tunisia to preach that rape is not the victim's fault".

A similar hint at agency is to be found in a report after the war: "Libyan women battle for empowerment" (Caroline Hawley, December 13, 2011).[81] While describing Libya as a deeply conservative, male-dominated society, it sheds light on the emergence of an "assertive new generation of women's rights activists". The report informs about a street protest outside the interim prime minister's office: "Dozens of women covered their mouths with tape, to symbolize the silence with which rape victims were greeted by the interim authorities." One of the protesters says what they want from the government: "The women who also suffered during the conflict should be cared for too. They need psychological help. And we need awareness programs so people know that it's not their fault that they are victims of a crime." Referring to rape-motivated suicides, another woman says: "We are trying to change that." This report certainly confirms on-going perceptions on the huge difficulties faced by raped women, but it also reveals nonconformity. Perhaps the video report on the same subject is more revealing: what we see and hear are self-confident women, full of optimism and assertive in their demands for more political power and for a change in society's approach to rape.[82]

FINAL REMARKS

We could praise the media coverage of the war in Libya for not silencing sexual violence, for putting it at the core of reporting, for allowing some rape victims to make their voices heard, for echoing a greater awareness of women's rights. However, when one compares the media coverage with findings by HRW and HRC, one is confronted with a process of selection, especially if we consider CNN's reporting: some claims by these organizations were picked and amplified, while others were understated or even ignored. Hence we are able to disclose a kind of syntax of wartime time, i.e, a structure in some Western

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[80] See also the above mentioned interview with Gita Saghal. She says that while allegations of rape tend to be investigated only much later because victims are afraid, in Libya they are being investigated while emerging because "women have been speaking out and many in the population have been supporting them." "Rape is used as a weapon of war" (June 9, 2011) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13707445.
[81] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16160671.
[82] "Libya's women hope to find their voice", 13 December, 2011 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16164664.

hegemonic discourses on sexual violence, and to highlight the existence of a non-assumed frame which integrates some elements and rejects others and which can contribute to an understanding of the way the hegemonic media represents some parts of the world.

Political agendas and some interests may explain why certain rapes made the cut, while others were ignored or were given less attention. The case of al-Obeidi is emblematic. It got an international projection that hardly matches any other wartime rape case: she was included in BBC's list of "Faces of the year 2011" and she was granted asylum with the support of Hillary Clinton. Gang-rape is experienced by many women in war, but it is also a recurrent experience for illegal female migrants in Libya and in many other parts of the world. Just think of the Mexican border with the US. So, it can hardly be disputed that the media attention and the international recognition awarded to al-Obeidi had not so much to do with her status as a rape victim as with her potential to be used as an icon against Gaddafi.

Orientalist stereotypes (the cultural configuration of the Muslim as inherently different), prejudices towards Muslims, strategies of othering Arabic cultures (at the same time the target of fierce attacks by some political sectors in the countries leading the international military intervention, like the UK and France) may partially explain certain discursive configurations of these rapes. In addition, there has been often in the press an uncritical appropriation of the concept "rape as a weapon of war" for every context of apparent widespread sexual violence, as if the rapes of each war were episodes of the same story. To be sure, this is done with the best intentions, namely to call attention. However, such a quick approach may potentially ignore a great part of the cases of wartime sexual violence (including in scenarios where it exists also as a weapon of war). There is additionally a suspicion sometimes that strategies of othering are going on under the radar in these approaches: it tends to be used to refer to regions and forces regarded as extremely patriarchal and traditionally associated with barbarism and backwardness. One would hardly suggest that claims of widespread sexual violence inside the US army against its female personnel might indicate a strategy or a weapon of warfare.

The process of culturalizing/etnicizing the suffering of rape victims from Muslim backgrounds has been documented in other parts of the world.[83] Underlying it is not only the conviction that Islam is oppressive of women and that non-European women (especially from a Muslim background) are "inevitably" vulnerable and need "our" protection. Such forms of culturalizing rape also presuppose an opposition between them (Muslims who are uncivilized and barbaric because they do not support their women) and

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[83] See, for instance, Gabriela Mischkowski's (1999) analysis of the German press' coverage of the wars in Yugoslavia.

"us" (who respect women's rights and are, therefore, modern). Such perceptions have been exacerbated in the post-9/11 wars, as women's rights have become an intrinsic part of war legitimation and propaganda. Women's rights were granted increasing centrality as defining factors of Western identities and policies both abroad (the war and occupation of Afghanistan is an emblematic case) and at home (e.g. prescriptive definitions of Europeanness meant to control and contain immigration and the rights of "non-ethnic" Europeans). Hence, discourses aiming at emancipation may end up serving as sources of xenophobic rejection. The media coverage of the war in Libya occurs precisely against this background.

A final note: This paper avoided the biggest challenge posed by the war in Libya on hegemonic perceptions of wartime sexual violence: male rape and sexual torture, both widely documented by HRC and HRW, but almost absent from the hegemonic media coverage. The latter focused cases involving women in order to construct a gendered Libyan identity as a female in need of protection (CNN) and/or to explore the concept of rape as a weapon of war as a product of the submission of women in a patriarchate (BBC). But in how far can the silencing of sexual violence against males and the representation of wartime sexualized violence as a "problem of women" grasp the wide range and complexities of sexual violence in armed conflict? Answering these questions is for another time.

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PARA ALÉM DA ORTODOXIA NACIONALISTA TIMORENSE: A ESTÓRIA DE BI-MURAK

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Resumo: Neste trabalho submeto a um questionamento feminista crítico e multidisciplinar algumas expressões dominantes do nacionalismo timorense contemporâneo no final da primeira década de independência política. Pretendo colocar em evidência a plurirracionalidade e o caráter disjuntor e problemático de algumas das memórias, tanto daquelas que parecem estar a ser esquecidas, como das que se têm vindo a constituir como princípios geradores da narrativa nacionalista hegemónica.

O que poderá ter de produtivo para uma nação que se proclama a si mesma como possuindo uma identidade que designa timorense, usar outras narrativas e outras memórias dos acontecimentos fundadores, tidos como um património partilhado? Neste artigo argumento que a partir de narrativas de mulheres timorenses, sobre si e sobre as suas vidas, se poderá (re)conhecer *outra comunidade imaginada* que permanece em disputa, ainda que de uma forma subalterna, com a ortodoxia nacionalista timorense.

Palavras-chave: Timor-Leste, feminismos, nacionalismos, pós-colonialismos, memórias.

> Não vi mas parece que vi o cadáver mais vivo de sempre. Era o dela, o de Bi-Murak, que as ondas levavam e traziam de volta à praia, à vista, de perto. Mas vi. Ela queria saltar para a praia ao encontro de alguém e a imagem dela nas ondas cristalinas era como um espelho de um quadro no cais do porto de Lecidere.[1]

INTRODUÇÃO

O ano de 2012 marcou uma década sobre a restauração da independência de Timor-Leste, interrompida por 24 anos de guerra com a Indonésia e três de tutela internacional. Durante estes dez anos o país foi, repetidamente, apresentado como o primeiro do século XXI, aquela nação que acedeu à sua soberania no nascente do milénio. Esta prerrogativa em muito se transmutou na ideia de que era possível começar uma nação novíssima, renascida da materialidade trágica das cinzas da destruição que marcou o

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[1] Descrição feita pelo senhor Basílio Martins no Espaço por Timor em Lisboa, no dia 25 de fevereiro de 2012 e transcrita por mim.

final da guerra e da ocupação indonésia em setembro de 1999. Simetricamente, por outro lado, a nação timorense tem conjugado esta sua originalidade com a imaginação da própria ancestralidade que provém da partilha de um tempo comum tão longínquo como feliz – *uluk sai diak*.[2] Neste jogo peculiar de convocação do novo e do velho, Timor-Leste tem vindo a elaborar a sua posição e ficção nacionalista que se realiza tanto na sua ambição de modernidade e de ser par entre pares, como se ancora profundamente num substantivo comum de antiguidade e diferença.

Como já analisei em trabalhos anteriores (Amal, 2006; Cunha, 2007; Cunha, 2010a e b; Cunha, 2011a e b), a dinâmica da presente construção nacionalista timorense está imbricada numa racionalidade profundamente patriarcal e guerreira. Ela assenta, de muitas maneiras, na rememoração contínua dos feitos dos heróis viris das guerras, especialmente aqueles que, vivos ou mortos, tiveram parte na guerra contra a recente ocupação indonésia. Este movimento de recuperação cultural da guerra e dos seus protagonistas é conseguido pela centralidade dada aos guerreiros *asua'in*,[3] mas também pela hipervisibilidade de uma certa posição das mulheres timorenses nesta paisagem social matricial. Ora pelo silenciamento das suas versões da experiência desse período, ora através da repetição da sua condição de vítimas, de provedoras de um sofrimento necessário mas suficientemente discreto no contexto global da luta pela independência, elas são parte deste jogo, porém sem que (devam) possam aspirar a arbitrar as regras ou desafiar uma ideia de nação onde as mulheres sejam muito mais do que paisagens e lágrimas.

Neste trabalho tenho como objetivo principal colocar sob um questionamento feminista crítico e multidisciplinar algumas expressões dominantes do nacionalismo timorense contemporâneo no final da primeira década de independência política. Pretendo colocar em evidência a plurirracionalidade e o caráter disjuntor e problemático de algumas das memórias, tanto daquelas que parecem estar a ser esquecidas, como das que se têm vindo a constituir como princípios geradores da narrativa nacionalista hegemónica.

O meu ponto de partida é uma pergunta que, em seguida, se desdobra em outras interrogações complementares:

– Que textos, narrativas, imagens, subjetividades e mitos estariam a ser produzidos se esta nação timorense se fundasse em memórias faladas e ouvidas através de outros alinhamentos de palavras, uma outra hermenêutica de vida exemplar,[4] tensa e problemática de uma mulher valente (Cunha, 2011b)?

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[2] Sigo a ortografia da Língua Tétum de Luís Costa: 2000.
[3] Palavra em Tétum que quer dizer destemido, corajoso.
[4] Utilizo ao longo do texto o termo 'exemplar' não no sentido de ser um arquétipo de bondade a ser seguido mas sim como uma experiência que em si mesma convoca e resgata muitas experiências similares: 'vida

O que poderá ter de produtivo esta pergunta para uma nação que se proclama a si mesma como possuindo uma identidade que designa como timorense? Poderei afirmar que, usando outras narrativas e outras memórias dos acontecimentos fundadores, tidos como um património partilhado, terei acesso a uma outra versão, embora subalterna, deste nacionalismo? Conterá esta narrativa de mulheres, sobre si e sobre as suas vidas, forças epistemológicas ao ponto de poder reconhecer nelas sinais (Santos, 2002a) de um paradigma de agregação política que pode ser uma outra coisa que não a ortodoxia nacionalista timorense?

Este artigo é organizado e apresentado em três partes. Em primeiro lugar interessa-me esclarecer e situar o debate teórico onde ancoro a minha análise. Examino os conceitos que me parecem ser os mais operativos na literatura sobre memória, nação e identidades sexuais e que configuram um quadro teórico que dá suporte compreensivo à parte que se lhe segue e que é a narração escrita da vida de Bi-Murak.[5] A segunda parte deste trabalho é, afinal, um metatexto pois é constituída pela interseção de relatos orais de várias pessoas que, em vez dela, contam a sua vida e a sua morte. Tive acesso também a acervos fotográficos, fontes bibliográficas, e outros registos escritos que me permitiram situar melhor esta narrativa biográfica. Parece-me substantivo sublinhar que a narrativa que apresento só é possível porque partilho a autoria dela com Bi-Murak. Ela discorre e narra a sua estória comigo através dos portais que as memórias dela e sobre ela abrem com as palavras, as imagens, as recordações, os silêncios, as frases e as lágrimas efusivas ou suspensas que estiveram presentes em todos os diálogos que esta pesquisa envolveu. Na terceira parte do texto busco fazer uma análise crítica alimentada pelas minhas perguntas iniciais e as teorias que me coadjuvaram sobre aquilo que pode estar em causa se, no centro da minha reflexão e proposta teórica, colocar uma vida como a de Bi-Murak.

PARTE I – NAÇÃO, MEMÓRIAS, GUERRAS, NARRATIVAS E MULHERES

Existe um consenso estável na academia sobre a ascendência moderna e ocidental da ideia de nação (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 15-16). Este entendimento de nação constitui-se, entre outras coisas, na convicção da sua anterioridade radical, o que, nas palavras de Eduardo Lourenço, se mostra na capacidade de mobilização de um conceito "que nos define antes que nós o definamos". O autor chama a atenção também para a

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exemplar de Bi-Murak' não é para ser repetida ou seguida mas sim porque ela epitomiza, em muitos sentidos, aquela que foi a vida de muitas mulheres timorenses.
[5] Respeitando o desejo da família de Bi-Murak todos os nomes das mulheres e homens timorenses são pseudónimos.

singularidade da relação que é criada em torno da nação e que "consiste em outorgar ao amor ou à perpetuação dessa diferença um estatuto 'mítico' segundo a qual todos os outros, povos ou nações, não seriam mais do que imperfeitos ou lamentáveis esboços" (1999: 185). Reinterpretada e reapropriada de muitas maneiras e por variadas ordens e desordens de razão, a ideia de 'nação'[6] transporta consigo múltiplos aparatos de construção da sua pretendida originalidade e manutenção da sua ambicionada peculiaridade. Não admira pois que a alteridade seja para a nação uma disfuncionalidade que o nacionalismo procura resolver através de uma cultura de homogeneização.

Os trabalhos e a teorização de Benedict Anderson (2005) mostram que, para além dessa espécie de mítica igualdade ontológica, a nação é, antes de mais, uma 'comunidade imaginada' una e durável, mas afastada do real e das contingências de que é, afinal, constituída. É essa desvinculação da realidade sincopada e contraditória que lhe permite recriar, com tanta eficácia, a sua metamorfose numa continuidade temporal e uma hermenêutica linear do seu nascimento e história. Esse apartamento é de tal natureza forte e frágil que, para existir, tem que ser narrado (*ibidem*).

Ao fixar a origem de uma nação através de uma narrativa, ela transforma-se numa entidade estável e provedora da constância necessária à sua transmissibilidade através dos livros de história, de uma iconografia preenchida por monumentos e ruínas, da ritualização de espaços e acontecimentos ou de muitas outras tecnologias de repetição e rememoração. A afirmação de Walter Benjamin de que a memória é épica por excelência (2011: 100-101) conduz-me à ideia de que a nação precisa do heroico e do maravilhoso tanto para os lembrar como para os esquecer. A memória, no sentido em que Benjamin a tematiza, aproxima-se daquela do contador de estórias (*storyteller*) pois não está fixada na impressão do papel como estão os tratados da história ou mesmo os romances e novelas. A memória é alguma coisa que se pode transmitir não apenas pelas narrações feitas de palavras escritas e faladas mas também por contextos, práticas e lugares. Esta comunicação das memórias envolve os vivos e os mortos através de pórticos que ela mesma abre e fecha. Como Pierra Nora (2011: 440) afirma, a memória é plural e a sua força advém também da capacidade de oferecer uma orgânica de identidade aos indivíduos e aos coletivos. Ela surge e é exercida em nome das sociedades vivas e por isso o trabalho de memória (Cooper e Stoler, 1997; Ally, 2011) é o processo através do qual a rememoração rompe, reconstrói, enterra, revive, se textualiza e se transforma. Por oposição à história, Maurice Halbwachs (2001: 141-142) teoriza que a memória é um conseguimento coletivo e não uma empresa objetiva para a qual apenas alguns têm

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[6] Utilizo neste ensaio uma distinção entre nacionalismo e nação que é importante esclarecer desde já: o nacionalismo distingue-se da nação por ser uma ideologia que se apoia na preferência de uma sobre as outras e reforça o desejo à exclusividade da pertença ou funda a reivindicação a uma diferença que justifica a sua independência política.

competências e capacidades de interpretação. A memória é lembrar intencionalmente, é um desejo de criação e por isso memória e nação (Akoma, 2000) estão tão inerentemente ligadas. Os silêncios da memória não são vazios mentais ou simbólicos mas ativamente produzidos e criadores de imaginários. São, como os designa Anderson, "amnésias escolhidas" (2005), que possibilitam exercer o poder de optar e eleger o que fica ou não no acervo corrente e operacional da narrativa, de modo a lidar com tensões, contradições ou simplesmente ter que conviver com assassinos e traidores (Buckley-Zistel, 2006). Neste sentido, os lados mais violentos e sangrentos das memórias nacionais são memorizados para serem ou meticulosamente esquecidos ou relembrados. Não admira, pois, que o trabalho sobre a memória que envolve conflitos violentos e guerras necessite de ir buscar corpos e rostos concretos para, com cada um deles, reconstruir o tecido rasgado das lembranças (Apa, 2010). Contudo a prevalência da narração do sofrimento em modo de vitimização tira muito do protagonismo possível a quem dele participou, convocando, sobretudo, o reforço ritual da condição de mártir (Schramm, 2011). Sendo o ato de narrar uma produção conjunta entre quem fala e quem ouve, aqui está inscrita uma relação de poder que é, por isso, um laboratório de autoridade e força (Chizuko e Sand, 1999). Procurar e ouvir as memórias narradas pelos grupos oprimidos faz perceber que não são apenas os detalhes que diferem, mas a racionalidade da própria discursividade, os seus termos, objetivos e definição da interlocução (Akoma, 2000).

As narrativas nacionais são, comummente, formuladas em termos epopeicos e parecem precisar de biografias sanguinárias, nas quais o sangue jorrado das feridas e na morte se constitui em signo e significado dos martírios exemplares e necessários. Do mesmo modo, a ideia contemporânea da nação de Timor-Leste repousa na memória grandiosa das guerras que conduziram, de uma maneira ou de outra, à sua independência política[7]. Nesta paisagem, o sangue, o suor e as lágrimas são, sobretudo, e quase só, dos heróis viris: os guerreiros incansáveis, os reis temidos, os descobridores iluminados, os soldados condecorados e até os que ficaram 'desconhecidos' mas que continuam a resgatar os mais profundos e sublimes pesares coletivos (*ibid*em). Esta trans-narrativa da virilidade violenta da nação é poderosa, pois tem tido a capacidade de se impor e transformar numa espécie de moeda política usada para governar e dominar (Buckley-Zistel, 2006; Ally, 2011).

Todavia, a análise de Pateman (1988) traz para esta discussão um elemento de complexidade, a meu ver, central quando defende que o contrato social moderno que

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[7] Dando particular relevo à guerra contra a Indonésia são regularmente resgatadas nos discursos e nas memórias narradas outras guerras que são interpretadas como fundadoras da resistência ao ocupante estrangeiro, como a guerra de Manufai de 1912, a revolta de Viqueque em 1959, ou ainda a resistência contra a ocupação japonesa durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial, entre outras.

subjaz à ideia de nação e nacionalismo pressupõe e se baseia num outro mais atávico e mais duradouro que é o da dominação das mulheres pelos homens. Não admira, pois, que, para a ideia de nação, o chamado espaço doméstico, onde se devem confinar as experiências e contributos das mulheres, tenha que ser regulado e submetido à esfera pública onde se congregam e decidem os homens. Nesta linha de pensamento, a minha análise é que, em Timor-Leste, de uma maneira recorrente e digo politicamente esmerada se exaltam os contributos e o sofrimento das mulheres durante a guerra sem contudo os elevar ao estatuto público da heroicidade dos comandantes e combatentes homens. O reconhecimento e os agradecimentos são feitos nos discursos oficiais, os quais são, em boa verdade, apenas uma metonímia de obscurecimento daquilo que foram os seus sacrifícios mas também os seus feitos (Cunha, 2007; 2011a). A nação timorense, em múltiplos sentidos, tem-se servido de dois predicados morais e epistemológicos para se imaginar e narrar tão moderna quanto as demais: a violência bélica e o sofrimento dos seus heróis viris e narcisistas que, no outro lado do espelho, refletem a imagem inversamente proporcional dos sofrimentos domesticados e feitos silenciosos das suas mulheres.

Com o artifício axiológico e normativo da guerra como fundamento da nação política e da ação dos homens naturaliza-se e justifica-se a regulação e a menorização dos corpos das mulheres, os seus movimentos, as suas capacidade e habilidades, as suas relações e até, se necessário for, as suas próprias subjetividades (Chakrabarty, 1997; Stoler, 1997: 203; Cunha, 2007. Para elas, restam-lhes aqueles atributos que tão precisos quanto necessários são à configuração masculina do poder político. Elas são transformadas, quando é necessário, em 'guardas de fronteiras' (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 23) da nação com o papel de preservar, com os seus trabalhos e corpos, todo o tecido material e simbólico no qual repousam alguns dos símbolos mais poderosos da inventada permanência das nações: as línguas, os costumes, as cerimónias, a descendência.

Porém, e aumentando a resolução da lente analítica, se, por um lado, esta dinâmica de cooptação e subalternização das mulheres parece ser evidente e dominante, o tempo longo das relações sociais mostra que a realidade é mais complexa e que nela existem mais processos de resistência e oposição do que a aparente dominação nacionalista masculina totalitária parece pressupor. O trabalho de Ann Laura Stoler e o seu conceito de 'fronteira interior' (1997: 199) revela-se muito interessante para esta análise. Embora a autora use esta categoria num contexto de oposição anti-imperial, ela serve-me para compreender algumas das tecnologias de resistência das mulheres que fazem da consciência das suas experiências, memórias e conhecimentos diferentes *ethos* de dissenso e de confronto. A *fronteira interior* é uma marca de diferença, de consciência dessa diferença que independe do grau de submissão a que se está obrigado. A *fronteira*

interior, neste sentido, pode ser entendida como uma alteridade que não se verga, apesar da violência e da dominação. Deste modo, ao reforçar a minha atenção sobre uma lógica outra, onde o excêntrico não é marginal e onde o tempo é complexo, dinâmico e longo, estou em condições, do meu ponto de vista, de identificar outras lógicas de coesão, outras ideias de congregação política que resistem ao totalitarismo da racionalidade singularmente sexista e exclusivista da ideia dominante de nação moderna.

É neste sentido que entendo que esta busca epistemológica pode contribuir para desafiar a ortodoxia nacionalista de Timor-Leste contemporâneo e a sua distribuição de papéis e estatutos. A memória oficial sancionada pelos discursos políticos, celebrações e monumentos não é única. De par com ela e, muitas vezes contra ela, as memórias coletivas, diversas, dispersas e incontroláveis pelos poderes do estado-nação continuam a processar-se e a reconstruir-se das mais diversas maneiras: os poemas declamados em público, as histórias de família contadas e recontadas atravessando as gerações, os textos orais e escritos que passam de boca em boca, as confidências e os silêncios estrategicamente escolhidos continuam a apoiar múltiplas versões do que está a ser a nação e o nacionalismo timorenses. É nesta ordem de razão que inscrevo o argumento que me permite passar à parte subsequente deste texto.

PARTE II – A ESTÓRIA DE BI-MURAK NO ESPELHO DAS ONDAS CRISTALINAS DO MAR DE LECIDERE[8]

Ao escolher a palavra 'estória' para nomear a narrativa biográfica de Bi-Murak faço-o consciente dos debates sobre a antinomia ou subalternidade que este termo traz consigo relativamente a 'história'. Neste trabalho confiro ao substantivo 'estória' o atributo de uma narrativa coerente e articulada numa variedade de testemunhos diretos dos acontecimentos relatados, fotografias e documentos familiares, a qual não reivindica ser, no entanto, uma descrição exclusiva, exaustiva e tida como a 'verdade indiscutível' acerca da vida de Bi-Murak e da sua família mais próxima. Nesta estória estão interligadas diversas memórias selecionadas e faladas por várias pessoas muito próximas de Bi-Murak e outras que estão muito para além do seu círculo familiar ou comunitário. Estas memórias em modo de discursos foram sendo inscritas em livros, relatos de reuniões públicas e cerimónias, na poética da nomeação da heroicidade transversal das e dos timorenses e são repetidas, de uma maneira ou outra, como parte da narrativa nacionalista timorense, porém subalterna. Nesta estória existe a intensidade das subjetividades para as quais a memória dela e de tudo o que cercou a sua vida é demasiado importante para ser esquecida. Os silêncios que também rodeiam a vida e a

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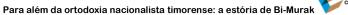[8] Lecidere é um bairro da cidade de Díli junto ao mar.

morte desta mulher têm sido cuidadosamente preservados pelas famílias envolvidas mas também por pessoas de comunidades próximas ou longínquas; não são olvido, esquecimento, ou uma simples amnésia traumática gerada pela atrocidade das experiências. Foram e são um recurso de proteção dos descendentes e uma recusa consciente de transformar a memória dela numa qualquer moeda política no contexto da independência do país. Neste sentido, esta memória é uma expressão nacionalista contraépica, pois é essa sobriedade que tem mantido o nome de Bi-Murak tão profundamente lembrado, como mostra a epígrafe poética deste texto. O respeito pela vida e pelas escolhas dela são mais uma razão para que a sua vida e a sua morte sejam, pacientemente, tecidas como uma herança coletiva que permanece politicamente indisputável. É um caso muito interessante de rotura quase paradigmática da pretensão nacionalista dominante de subjugar o privado ao público. A presente ortodoxia nacionalista timorense não tem tido qualquer poder sobre Bi-Murak nem sobre a sua vida e a sua morte pois, como diz Basílio, ela continua a ser um dos mais *vivos cadáveres* da nação de Timor-Leste.

Esta amnésia estrategicamente escolhida, que resulta num jogo de luzes e sombras, é, sem dúvida, um laboratório de força e poder das mulheres da família e de todas as outras que, de uma maneira ou outra, têm contado a estória de Bi-Murak para contar a sua própria vida e dar significado à independência, à liberdade e às suas próprias aspirações de emancipação.

Escolho começar com o relato de Bi-Kela sobre o lugar, a casa e atmosfera da sua infância e como esta memória feita discurso determina o ponto de partida e o sentido do caminho que ela quer percorrer.

Vivi a minha infância numa aldeia junto ao monte de Kutulau. Nas famílias que conheci sempre houve um respeito muito grande pela mulher. Elas assumiam todas as tarefas relacionadas com a gestão do quotidiano da família, nomeadamente a educação dos filhos, a produção dos bens de consumo e a organização de todas as tarefas domésticas. Aos homens cabia-lhes a tarefa de construir habitações, preparar as terras para o cultivo e amealhar algum dinheiro para complementar as despesas da casa. Nas zonas urbanas, em particular em Díli, onde se concentrava uma população constituída na sua maioria por funcionários públicos, empregados de escritório, trabalhadores domésticos e comerciantes, as mulheres já desempenhavam outros papéis, havia enfermeiras, professoras, empregadas de escritório, cabeleireiras e outras.

Em minha casa era a mulher quem controlava a parte financeira. Realmente, a minha mãe, era uma mulher muito particular impondo uma autoridade que o meu pai não recusava, mesmo sendo Liurai[9]. Nós éramos seis irmãs e, à partida, poderia parecer que estávamos destinadas à vida doméstica, mas para a minha mãe qualquer mulher podia ocupar o lugar de Liurai porque todos tinham os mesmos direitos, as mesmas capacidades e, por isso, as filhas tinham que ir estudar. Felizmente, o meu pai impunha a sua autoridade através do diálogo. Mesmo quando a minha mãe se irritava e começava a levantar a voz ele respondia-lhe sempre de uma forma muito calma. Ela era analfabeta, mas conseguia expor as suas ideias com clareza, conquistando a simpatia das pessoas e fazendo com que a nossa casa e a nossa mesa estivessem sempre cheias. Para ela, a mulher tinha de ter o seu papel na sociedade e esforçou-se muito para que fôssemos estudar, algo que em Timor, naquela altura, era uma conquista muito grande. (Amal, 2006: 167-168)

Esta descrição, feita por uma das suas irmãs mais velhas, fala sobre a família onde Bi-Murak nasceu e cresceu e onde ela e as cinco irmãs foram educadas dentro e fora da casa, junto do monte Kutulau. Era esperado que todas elas fossem capazes de assumir as responsabilidades e papéis que lhes fossem trazidos pela vida com uma postura de igualdade perante os homens e a autoridade e competência que aprenderam da mãe. É interessante notar que esta mãe soube interpretar a sua época e as oportunidades de emancipação existentes para as suas raparigas, pois decidiu que todas elas deveriam estudar na escola. Essa decisão implicou saídas e afastamentos de casa e da mãe, que aparecem na memória falada de uma das outras irmãs. Foram experiências difíceis que incluíram tristezas, mas que faziam parte da *endurance* para a qual cada uma delas estava a ser preparada.

Depois disto tive que ir viver com a minha irmã porque tinha que ir estudar, porque lá na vila junto a Kutulau eu não sei se não havia escola ou se havia, da nossa casa para a escola era muito longe portanto eu tive que ir viver com a minha irmã. Aquela coisa é a melhor coisa que eu tenho, que é estar ao pé da minha irmã, mas porque é que eu tenho que separar? E bateu isso na minha cabeça e, e quase que todas as tardes eu chorava, porque estava longe da minha mãe porque, geralmente, as meninas é à tarde que os filhos vão à procura das mães, não é? Eu

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[9] Liurai é uma palavra em Tétum que significa o 'maior da terra' o que o regime colonial português traduziu por rei ou régulo.

não digo o meu pai porque, pronto, eu não ligava muito a ele, era mais próxima da minha mãe. E era sempre da parte da tarde que eu sentia a falta da minha mãe. Porque é uma montanha, na aldeia não há luz eléctrica e então chega aquela hora das seis horas ou cinco e meia e é quando o tempo começa a escurecer, o dia começa a escurecer, é quando as galinhas também se juntam, ou não é? Às mães. E eu era mais ou menos isso. Era a hora em que eu procurava pela minha mãe porque, pronto, já não havia para onde eu ir brincar porque já era quase escuro só queria ir à procura da minha mãezinha. Então, chegava às cinco e meia, seis horas, ia à procura da minha mãe. E isso era sempre a essa hora e eu ficava muito triste e às vezes, até uma vez eu comecei a chorar e a minha irmã perguntou-me: mas porque é que estás a chorar? E eu disse que estava com dor de cabeça e eu não disse que estava triste porque queria a minha mãe. (Cunha, 2011a: 160-164)

Mais tarde, as exigências da escolaridade e da preparação que vinha com a ida para o colégio da Soibada impuseram mais afastamento, mais experiências e mais aprendizagens. As viagens, o convívio com os grupos que as acompanhavam não eram simples deslocações no espaço ou no território. Tudo isso era um modo de aprender a terra, a geografia, o clima, as línguas, experimentar muitas coisas diferentes daquilo que já conheciam na sua casa de família.

Foi no Colégio interno das freiras de Soibada que prossegui os meus estudos. O caminho para Soibada era ainda mais complicado, exigindo que alternássemos o meio de transporte, umas partes de carro e outras a cavalo. Isto exigia que houvesse homens para levar os cavalos, e logo, implicava mais despesas e muito tempo despendido. Não tínhamos outra hipótese porque só havia uma escola oficial em Díli, e as outras eram todas de freiras e padres. Em Soibada havia um colégio de freiras para as raparigas, em regime de internato, e outro, dos padres Salesianos, também em regime de internato, para os rapazes. Foi lá que andaram o Ramos-Horta, o Nicolau Lobato, o Rogério Lobato, e muitos outros que viriam a constituir mais tarde a pequena elite de quadros dirigentes timorenses. As aulas começavam em Outubro, na época de chuvas, e nessa altura, nós fazíamos a viagem em comitivas, parando junto às ribeiras onde dormíamos, e aproveitávamos para beber, comer e também para dar descanso aos cavalos. A comida era feita pelos homens porque, normalmente nestas viagens, as mulheres não nos acompanhavam. O grupo era formado pelo meu pai e pelos moradores que tomavam conta dos cavalos. Para mim, era uma aventura muito divertida porque

íamos parando pelo caminho. Passávamos uma noite em Díli e depois seguíamos para Manatuto, outra etapa complicada da viagem porque a ribeira, nos dias de chuva, se tornava impossível de atravessar. A viagem continuava até Kribas, onde dormíamos ainda uma noite, e, finalmente, pernoitávamos em Pualaka, antes de chegar a Soibada. Em Kribas, sempre que o tempo permitia, o meu pai, não sendo um exímio caçador, aproveitava para fazer uma caçada de veados, embora eu não me lembre de ele alguma vez ter apanhado algum veado. Hoje parece inacreditável, mas demorávamos uma semana na viagem de ida e depois outra semana no regresso. Quando passei para o Colégio de Soibada já não havia propriamente escassez na alimentação, mas a comida era muito má, sempre à base de mandioca e milho cozido sem qualquer outro acompanhamento. Não havia feijão nem hortaliça, era apenas milho com milho! Vivi três anos nestas condições, durante os quais aprendi a pilar o milho, à custa de muitos ferimentos nas mãos. Nós passávamos horas e dias seguidos naquele trabalho, e, a certa altura, eu já tinha as mãos todas em chaga. Ao fim de alguns meses as feridas transformavam-se em calos e só aí deixavam de doer. Na altura, a vontade de aprender a ler e a escrever era tão grande que nós não nos importávamos de fazer estes sacrifícios. (Amal, 2006: 158-159)

Bi-Murak, tal como a irmã, foi para Soibada mas não conseguia comer e acabou por ter de ser enviada para a casa da família antes de terminar os estudos nesse colégio. Porém, sair de casa ainda criança, as aventuras das viagens, a dureza do regime de vida foram para ela, como para todas, uma parte importante da sua meninice e educação.

A tia Bibere conta como aquele rapaz, Fitun, começou a escrever à Bi-Kela, uma das irmãs mais velhas de Bi-Murak. Ele estava interessado nela, em namorar com ela e declarava o seu amor por escrito à sua amada. Fez saber à família dela que "olhava com muita atenção o seu jardim e que havia uma rosa, em particular, que era para ele a mais bonita de todas e que esperava, ansiosamente, o dia em que podia ir até lá e colhê-la para si". Mas aquela rosa não o quis, devolveu as cartas e casou com outro rapaz que era o seu amor. A autodeterminação de Bi-Kela mostrava que os casamentos na sua família envolviam virtuosamente o respeito pelos modos de vida herdados dos avós e uma concreta partilha de autoridade e consentimento num assunto considerado muito importante para todas e todos. A Fitun apenas coube acatar a decisão daquela *flor* mas não desistiu do jardim e, anos depois, escolheu Bi-Murak como a primeira-segunda rosa mais bonita e mais cheirosa. A família e a rapariga concordaram com o casamento que teve lugar em 1972 numa igreja católica e a festa teve lugar na casa da família materna.

Até este ponto, à parte ser de uma família onde as mulheres não só eram respeitadas mas aprendiam a fazer-se respeitar, a vida de Bi-Murak foi bastante comum para uma filha de Liurai em Timor colonizado. Fitun, o jovem e belo marido de Bi-Murak, mostrou-se impreparado para os preceitos de igualdade vigentes entre homens e mulheres daquela família. As irmãs de Bi-Murak dizem que ele era um homem bonito, delicado e elegante à vista de todas, mas souberam também que fora do olhar delas e em certas circunstâncias se tornava agressivo e violento com a esposa. Esse comportamento reiterado valeu-lhe várias e severas repreensões por parte das mulheres da família que foram proferidas em tom de firme determinação de expor a vergonha que aquela sua atitude trazia para a dignidade de Bi-Murak e de todas as mulheres e homens da família. Nesses poucos anos em que viveu estas contradições pessoais profundas, Bi-Murak engravidou do seu primeiro filho.

Em Timor-Leste muitas coisas estavam a acontecer uma vez que, em 1974, a queda do regime fascista e colonial em Portugal permitiu que a pequena elite timorense instruída e urbanizada se envolvesse de forma decisiva e prática na luta pela independência nacional. Durante alguns meses difíceis e conturbados, Fitun participou ativamente na vida política e era um líder respeitado e ouvido enquanto, em casa da sua família, era repreendido e monitorado pelas mulheres. Esta vigilância perseverante não era essencialmente punitiva mas almejava a harmonia, uma ideia e forma de vida tão cara tanto à linhagem familiar como à sua inserção social e política em Timor-Leste. A harmonia coletivamente conseguida no seio da casa-família equivalia, em grande medida, à condição da autoridade e legitimidade públicas. Por outras palavras, a dicotomia entre harmonia pública e privada não fazem sentido e uma é condição da outra. Fitun esteve sujeito a este regime de aprendizagem que as mulheres da sua casa lhe lembrariam amiúde ser uma diferença de fundo que sustentava cultural e politicamente a necessidade da independência política de todas e todos as/os timorenses.

Fitun, ainda muito jovem, foi eleito presidente da Frente de Libertação de Timor-Leste, foi comandante-em-chefe das forças militares e chegou a ser pronunciado presidente da República Democrática de Timor-Leste. Todas estas responsabilidades públicas de Fitun, alcançadas pela sua participação nos combates políticos e na guerra civil de 1975, transferiram de imediato para a sua família um novo estatuto social e, com ele, todos os perigos que isso representava na conjuntura política da época. Bi-Murak passou a ser a-mulher-de-um-revolucionário, de um nacionalista respeitado por uns e ameaçado por outros. As circunstâncias aceleraram e consolidaram este seu tenso estatuto e, em poucos meses, a vida de Bi-Murak rodopiou a uma velocidade inesperada quando a sua primeira experiência de guerra chegou, em Agosto de 1975.

Quando se deu o golpe,[10] nós fugimos para a montanha, não é? Foi uma noite em que o meu cunhado disse: Arrumem as roupas porque nós temos que sair de casa esta noite mesmo. Não podemos ficar, nenhuma pessoa da família pode ficar aqui em casa. O meu cunhado Fitun.[11] Ele disse: Todos, todos nós temos que sair de casa esta noite. Urgentemente. E pronto, nesta noite, a gente sabia lá. Guerra. A minha mãe falava da guerra mas quem é que tinha noção de como é que era a guerra? Saímos de casa, o que nós levámos foram as roupas assim do dia, aquelas assim menos novas. E as roupas novinhas estavam lá todas no roupeiro, guardadinhas. O ouro, por exemplo. Nós não tínhamos ouro mas a outra minha irmã, a Bi-Morin, tinha ouro dela. O ouro ficou lá guardadinho na gaveta. Só levámos a roupa suficiente, sei lá, uns quatro ou cinco vestidos, umas roupas interiores e não levámos mais nada. Foi o golpe foi a 12, foi a 11. Portanto, nós saímos uma semana antes. E nessa noite fomos trepar as montanhas. Eu sabia lá para onde é que nós íamos. Olhe, uma ia de sapatos de saltos altos a subir as montanhas. Olhe, rimos tanto, coitada, a esposa do Karapinha ia com uns saltos assim, coitada da senhora só tinha aquele calçado que tinha levado. Eu não sei como é que eu fui, se eu fui de chinelos ou fui de sapatos, já não me lembro. E nessa noite dormimos, algo emocionados, e no dia seguinte ficámos um dia inteiro sem comer. Então pois foi. Mas também não tínhamos fome. Tínhamos uma banana cozida, só que esta banana cozida estava destinada para o meu sobrinho Fitun Oan. Ele tinha nessa altura uns dois anos e tal. E o rapaz só tinha aquela banana, aquela banana para comer. Nem os pais, nem o próprio Fitun tiveram aquela preparação de, portanto teve aquela coisa de, olhe, pouca comida ou, nada. Isto se vê que nós não tínhamos experiência da guerra, não sabíamos nada, saímos assim. Nesse dia, nós, os adultos, não comemos nada. E depois, ao fim desse dia, tivemos que sair dessa casa e ir para outra montanha porque a UDT estava no cimo dessa montanha em que nós estávamos. Depois deu-se o contragolpe e só depois dali é que regressámos para Díli. O Fitun esteve sempre connosco mas sempre a combater, esteve sempre na linha de fogo. Saía uma semana e depois voltava para ver a família e depois saía outra vez. Ele andava sempre connosco, mas não estava sempre assim agarrado a nós. Era a família do Fitun depois era eu e a minha irmã, cinco famílias, seis famílias. Tinha os meus treze anos. A casa onde nós vivíamos, que era a casa da minha irmã Bi-Morin,

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[10] Ela refere-se ao golpe da *UDT – União Democrática Timorense* – em Agosto de 1975.
[11] Fitun foi morto no final do ano de 1978 e o corpo dele até hoje não foi recuperado pela família. É um dos mais venerados heróis da Nação.

estava destruída. Já não vimos nada, nada, nem panelas, nada, nada disso. Portanto, ficámos com a roupa que nós saímos e regressámos como nós saímos. Depois o tempo ainda era de guerra já estava mais calmo, mas ainda havia guerra. Ficámos numa casa, eu e com as minhas irmãs que fazia parte ali da OMT, que era a Organização da Mulher Timorense e fui para cuidar das criancinhas ali para a antiga Cruz Vermelha. (Cunha, 2011a: 160-164)

Dois meses depois, a cidade de Díli, a capital da nação recém-proclamada independente, foi invadida e tomada pelas forças militares da Indonésia, o que confirmou, decisivamente, que Bi-Murak, além de esposa do presidente da nação, era um alvo a abater tal como toda a sua descendência. Em poucas horas ela foi denunciada, encontrada e fuzilada.

E depois, e depois é que deu a invasão. No dia 6, à noite, o meu cunhado disse: agora aguardam aqui em casa, que eu vou para o quartel e depois já vos mando buscar. Portanto, ficámos essa noite à espera que alguém nos fosse buscar, mas depois já não apareceram, até que, quatro e meia ou cinco da madrugada desceram pronto, ficamos ali nesta casa, debaixo do pó. Nós ficámos lá, nós não saímos, ficámos aí durante esse dia, durante esse dia de 7 de Dezembro tivemos que abrigar-nos debaixo da cama. Nesse dia não comemos, mas também não sentimos fome. A nossa casa foi brutalmente bombardeada, porque os Indonésios estavam próximos, quase em cima de nós e os nossos, lá das montanhas, mandavam as morteiradas e iam cair tudo em cima da casa. As janelas todas destruídas. E depois ficámos aí nesta casa, foram três dias? E depois nós tivemos que sair porque alguém da família pensou que nós tínhamos que sair daí, porque era perigoso nós continuarmos aí. E então nesse dia nós saímos e quando nós fomos e encontrámos os Indonésios ali em frente ao hotel Timor, estava lá um campo de concentração. Os indonésios mandaram-nos juntar a essas pessoas e foi ali quando eles vieram buscar a minha irmã Bi-Murak e depois passados uns minutos só ouvimos uns tiros e pronto e disseram que pronto, a Bi-Murak já está morta. Ela tinha o filho no colo dela, é muito difícil. Pronto. Este dia é, eu não consigo, já passaram muitos anos mas naquele dia eu não consigo lembrar aquele momento já foi há tantos anos, tantos anos, aquele, aquele momento é difícil de esquecer, não é? (Cunha, 2011a: 160-164)

Bi-Mesak, a irmã mais nova de Bi-Murak, descreveu esse penoso jogo de não querer lembrar e não querer esquecer - e aqui a dupla negativa do discurso dela é uma poderosa semiótica da tensa amnésia escolhida – e que fixou esse momento como um luto familiar e um martírio consagrado à libertação nacional de Timor-Leste. A irmã mais velha refere outros detalhes sobre aquelas horas trágicas, os quais são da ordem de uma analítica dos acontecimentos e contribuem para a génese de um mito que nasce com esta mulher que, sem o dizer, nomeiam de valente. Bi-Morin não faz apenas uma descrição emocional do momento da prisão e fuzilamento dela no cais da alfândega de Díli. Ela escolhe os detalhes e, com eles, elabora um discurso que já é sobre uma heroína nacional e não uma mera esposa morta. Neste sentido, não é indiferente que se sublinhe a diferença religiosa, pois Bi-Murak, além de esposa do presidente da nação, era católica ao contrário dos invasores indonésios que eram muçulmanos. Ela pagou com o seu sangue, o seu martírio e a sua morte a sua lealdade nacionalista enquanto que outros a traíram e, cobardemente, renegaram a sua filiação à nação de Timor.

> No resto do dia 7 ficámos em casa. Os morteiros choviam e a maior parte das janelas ficaram em estilhaços. Bi-Murak tinha medo porque estivera a costurar uma bandeira da FRETILIN e ainda a tinha em casa. Decidimos ir para a casa do Bispo e depois para a casa de um parente, para dali partirmos para as montanhas. Estavam cercados pelos indonésios. Os indonésios mandaram-nos ficar nesse jardim. Havia alguns membros da APODETI connosco no jardim. Parece que um deles apontou para Bi-Murak aos indonésios como sendo a mulher de Fitun. Agarrou as mãos de Bi-Murak. Para interrogatórios, disse. Eu responsabilizo-me, eu responsabilizo-me, repetia e levou-a ao comandante indonésio. Bi-Murak estava vestida com um sarong e quando o enrolava à volta do corpo para se levantar, Fitun Oan passou para o meu colo. O comandante entregou-a a dois soldados. Ela ajoelhou com as mãos numa posição suplicante, pedindo misericórdia. Levaram-na para o cais e ouvimos o tiro. Não assistimos aos seus últimos momentos porque o edifício da alfândega estava entre nós mas os dois criados contaram que antes de a terem morto, ela pediu para rezar e eles deixaram-na. Depois mataram-na a tiro, ela caiu para a frente no cais e os soldados empurraram-na para a água. Cá fora, quando ouvimos o tiro, chorámos juntos. (Jolliffe, 1989: 102-103)

O corpo nunca foi devolvido à família e, por isso, não foi sepultado. Essa circunstância traumática é devolvida pela memória de uma maneira poética por Basílio

que não estando lá nem sendo da família, repete contundentemente, uma memória que já é coletiva:

Não vi mas parece que vi o cadáver mais vivo de sempre. Era o dela, o de Bi-Murak, que as ondas levavam e traziam de volta à praia, à vista, de perto. Mas vi. Ela queria saltar para a praia ao encontro de alguém e a imagem dela nas ondas cristalinas era como um espelho de um quadro no cais do porto de Lecidere.

A estória de Bi-Murak não termina com a sua morte em DÍli no dia 8 de Dezembro de 1975. Por um lado, o seu filho, Fitun Oan, sobreviveu porque foi escondido por uma das suas irmãs que assumiu de imediato a respetiva maternidade impedindo que a morte da descendência se consumasse. Por outro lado, a morte de Bi-Murak foi seguida pela do marido três anos depois durante um combate armado contra a tropa indonésia.

No entanto, nesta trágica continuidade da morte dela pela morte dele há diferenças primordiais na forma como a memória está a ser passada e narrada. Fitun está nas placas das avenidas, nos livros de história, no nome de lugares importantes. Ele tornou-se num símbolo criado e alimentado pelas gerações de guerrilheiros e de governantes que procuram nele razões épicas para serem um estado-nação independente. Esta ritualização da memória do herói em que Fitun se transformou mumificou-lhe a vida e reduziu-a apenas aos poucos anos em foi o 'presidente'. Com Bi-Murak, as dinâmicas da memória são orais, sentimentais e usufruem de uma imaterialidade que parece indestrutível e não a reduzem ao momento do seu fuzilamento. Muitas mulheres e homens timorenses, de diferentes idades e lugares, continuam a falar dela e a dizer que ela também deveria ser parte da memória nacional coletiva. Lembram-se, ou assumem como suas as lembranças de alguém, das bandeiras bordadas por ela, do filho que lhe saiu dos braços, da sua beleza, dos seus vestidos, da sua voz, das suas observações, das suas mágoas e, até, de algumas das suas nódoas negras. A humanidade persistente de Bi-Murak confere-lhe o poder de ser menos mito e, por isso, mais resistente à erosão do tempo e à disputa política. Ela é um símbolo da nação timorense mas, certamente, em outros termos.

A terceira e última parte deste texto é a mais ensaística do trabalho, consistindo num deslocamento deliberado do olhar epistemológico, porque nela quero tematizar, de um ponto de vista feminista, as perguntas que esta estória me coloca.

III – PARA ALÉM DA ORTODOXIA NACIONALISTA TIMORENSE

Às estratégias de assimilação cultural que acompanharam toda a guerra movida pela Indonésia as e os timorenses opuseram narrativas de diferenciação que resultaram na hegemonia de um mito fundador da nação de Timor-Leste. Esta narração tem vindo a ser o *kerigma* narrado e repetido através da metafórica viagem da criança no dorso de um crocodilo. Tornou-se de tal forma inquestionada que se tem transmutado em epígrafes, títulos, contos e poemas através dos quais é retomada e atualizada, perpetuando e garantindo a sua eficácia histórica. A força desta pequena e encantadora alegoria tem sido tão arrebatadora que outras explicações e outras narrações mitológicas parecem desfazer-se no ar ou, então, simplesmente, são desativadas. É o caso do relato mítico sobre uma família de doze golfinhos que viveu naquele mar de Sonda num tempo impossível de determinar. Como contam os mais velhos de Com, no extremo leste da ilha, eles são os verdadeiros avós de todos os timores. Não espanta, pois, que o golfinho, e não o crocodilo, seja, nesta versão fundadora, a entidade primordial à qual todas as linhagens e todas as descendências da ilha devem o mais sagrado e ancestral respeito (McWilliam, 2007). No presente, não há qualquer disputa entre estes dois textos instituidores, porque a hegemonia parece estar entregue e consolidada. Mas os golfinhos continuam a nadar em grande famílias naquele mar do Norte da ilha e as velhas e os velhos têm muitas outras histórias para contar, tão belas, tão atávicas e tão constitutivas como a do crocodilo. É nesta pluriversalidade que procuro encontrar mais sentidos e mais prefigurações, tanto do passado e presente, como daquilo que pode ser o futuro de Timor-Leste, tomando a exemplaridade de Bi-Murak como lugar de enunciação.

Fazer este exercício e escrevê-lo é um risco que vale a pena ser corrido, porque o que está em causa, em primeiro lugar, é desafiar o monopólio da interpretação do ideal de nação de Timor-Leste. Esta minha proposta epistemológica é presidida por uma racionalidade próxima da do contador de estórias (Benjamin, 2011), o que lhe possibilita uma incompletude que se abre a mais elementos de discussão, a mais protagonistas e a mais centralidades. Em terceiro lugar, quero ensaiar uma racionalidade feminista que, ativando um outro horizonte de escolhas, tem a força para problematizar a dicotomia insidiosamente sexista do privado *versus* público e considerar que aquilo que tem sido confinado a uma obscuridade designada de doméstica é, afinal, uma narrativa de grande densidade política. Por fim, pretendo ainda mostrar e afirmar que a nação timorense tem múltiplos recursos de memória, tanto discursivos como narrativos, que podem, a qualquer momento, ser mobilizados e integrados no seu acervo de comunidade imaginada no presente e para o seu futuro.

A consciência dos perigos da produção de uma simetria invertida e os limites dos meus instrumentos cognitivos e discursivos são as ferramentas que uso para me manter

vigilante sobre o que pode ser uma mera substituição de centralidades. Todavia, na minha determinação e esforço epistemológicos da busca da pluriversalidade já está inscrita a possibilidade de um outro texto no qual quero acionar disjuntores do imaginário nacionalista guerreiro viril timorense.

A SÓBRIA VALENTIA

A valentia de muitas mulheres timorenses tem sido relacionada com a sua capacidade de enfrentar as consequências das suas escolhas em circunstâncias difíceis. Contudo, o imaginário dessa valentia é comummente doméstico, familiar e, por isso, tem podido ser descartado como virtude ou habilidade política e pública. Bi-Murak bordava bandeiras da FRETILIN.[12] Ela sabia que se fosse apanhada a bordá-las ou em posse delas, em tempo de guerra, as consequências podiam ser fatais para ela e para a família. Fazia-o, porém, repetidamente com a discrição necessária. Esse bordado não era um qualquer e há vários motivos para pensar que não era um gesto de submissão. Ela conhecia os riscos, ela sabia o que fazia, para quem e para que bordava. Considero que este detalhe é muito mais do que um pormenor narrativo sem importância ou um detalhe sobre as suas prendas domésticas. Pelo contrário, prova, a meu ver, que Bi-Murak estava envolvida na luta pela liberdade, que também considerava sua, mas de uma outra maneira. A sobriedade dos atos desta mulher e de muitas outras que bordaram bandeiras que consideravam símbolos de uma identidade que partilhavam com os seus homens, guardando-as com os seus corpos, a sua inteligência e astúcia têm ficado, discretamente, arrumadas numa ideia de uma domesticidade instrumentalizada pelos ideais nacionalistas. Atrevo-me a discordar e a ver nesse trabalho e no consentimento em o fazer a valentia de uma escolha difícil e com desfechos que podiam ser, e foram muitas vezes, trágicos. Considero que, sem alarde nem ruído mediático, foram co-comandantes do protagonismo político necessário que construiu um ideal de emancipação coletiva. As consequências políticas desta assunção podem ser perturbadoras pois multiplicam os atos imprescindíveis ao nascimento de uma nação e elevam a não-violência ao estatuto de constructo estrutural de uma agregação política livre.

O SANGUE DAS VAGINAS DAS MULHERES: FUZILAMENTOS, NASCIMENTOS E VIOLAÇÕES

Bi-Murak teve um filho, Fitun Oan. Um nascimento de uma criança implica sempre sangue escorrido da vagina e do útero da mãe que pare. As mulheres apressam-se a dręná-lo para que não infecione, mas o sangue continua a correr pelas coxas da mulher por vários dias, às vezes semanas. Esse sangue dos nascimentos nunca é invocado,

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[12] Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente.

como tal, no imaginário nacionalista. É um sangue que parece ter adquirido uma existência ontológica subalterna, pois nele não se reconhecem pertinentes nem o sofrimento do parto nem o devir do nascimento. Os nascimentos no imaginário da nação são estilizados e lavados de todo o sangue que vem com eles. De um modo semelhante, os sangues vertidos pelas vaginas violadas das mulheres, e que continua a escorrer fétido e pútrido, às vezes por toda a sua vida, são lembrados mas, da mesma maneira, esterilizados dos cheiros, das cores, da profundidade do crime inscrito para sempre no corpo e na mente das mulheres estupradas e escravizadas, como sempre aconteceu em Timor-Leste durante as guerras. O sangue de Bi-Murak derramou-se no cais do porto da alfândega de Díli quando foi fuzilada. Sobre esse sangue a memória disponível é traumática e diz-se através de analogias poéticas como a do senhor Basílio. Não encontrei testemunhos, mas apenas memórias desse sangue de Bi-Murak e das outras tantas pessoas que, como ela, foram fuziladas nessa manhã no mesmo lugar. O que importa neste trabalho é trazer para a discussão sobre as memórias fundadoras da nação os sangues que são invocados pela estória de Bi-Murak: o nascimento de um filho que já é o futuro e que garante que se sabe de onde se vem e o do fuzilamento que se misturou com o sangue de outras pessoas e se diluiu na quintessência da água salgada do mar para onde os corpos foram arremessados.

Certamente, o sangue da morte dos guerreiros no campo do combate é mais suportável à virilidade porque, ao contrário do nascimento ou do estupro, ele não sobrevive, para de correr, fixa-se, coagula e torna imóvel o corpo. Depois da morte o sangue não é mais do que uma representação do sofrimento mas não é o sofrimento incarnado. Ao contrário, a invocação destes sangues de mulheres fortalece a comunidade imaginada com a resistência dos corpos golpeados porém vivos e em movimento que prestigiam e engrandecem os sacrifícios e os sangramentos que são oferta insubstituível de vidas inéditas e subjetividades novas que garantem a sucessão vívida do coletivo.

NÓS: A PESSOA NO PLURAL

Amina Mama (2001) faz uma reflexão muito interessante sobre o facto de as mulheres fazerem uma aprendizagem da diversidade muito mais eficaz e profunda do que os homens. A razão é que elas são socializadas para saírem da sua família através do casamento e, assumirem doravante, a família do marido como sendo a sua. Sou sensível a estes argumentos e às virtualidades de tais experiências que parecem proporcionar conhecimentos aprofundados sobre negociação, o exercício de hermenêuticas plurilógicas necessárias à tradução entre culturas e modos de vida, o conhecimento de várias línguas e habilidades importantes para lidar com as tensões da diversidade. Bi-

Murak, como a maioria das mulheres timorenses, ao casar com Fitun, que era natural de uma aldeia junto a Soibada – localidade bastante longínqua da aldeia junto ao monte de Kutulau e onde se fala uma outra língua –, adotou uma nova pertença familiar. É necessário notar que o trânsito para a nova família, a do marido, não significou renúncia ou repúdio da sua. Pelo contrário, adquiriu mais uma camada de identidade onde se processam mecanismos de lealdade que não são individuais, mas sim entre as duas comunidades familiares. Do ponto de vista das mulheres, e isso percebe-se muito bem na estória de Bi-Murak, trata-se de um prolongamento do *nós* e não de um corte de exclusividade entre *nós* e *eles*. Tanto isso é evidente que, em situações limite como as más criações do marido, ela tinha a sua proteção familiar de origem intacta e foram esses recursos que foram ativados para resolver a situação. A cumplicidade amorosa das irmãs é também manifesta no momento em que elas são apanhadas na sua fuga para Motael donde decorre a prisão e o fuzilamento de Bi-Murak. É uma irmã que recebe Fitun Oan nos braços quando a mãe é levada pelos soldados indonésios e os informadores timorenses. Ela assume a sua maternidade e, com esse gesto, resguarda-o do seu anunciado assassinato. Não se tratou de defender um menino, o seu menino, mas um menino que era tanto seu como da família do pai e da família em que se transformou um povo em luta pela sua libertação. Encontro nesta lealdade familiar alargada e não exclusivista uma exemplaridade que transporta uma lógica de matrimónio, de laço, da consideração da bondade do que é coesivo para além das diferenciações pessoais e coletivas que cada ser carrega. Esse movimento de vai-e-vem facilita uma compreensão mais complexa da realidade e também equipa as pessoas e as comunidades com mais utensílios de resolução negociada dos conflitos, a qual pode preservar a dignidade das pessoas e das comunidades. Pode significar também um duplo controlo sobre as ações das mulheres, pois ao ficarem ao alcance de duas famílias, aumentam os seus recursos, mas também se ampliam as possibilidades de regulação e dominação. No entanto, o casamento para as mulheres timorenses não se traduz, sobretudo, num contrato civil ou romântico. Dos casamentos nascem filhas e filhos e essa forma de disseminação das linhagens por via dos nascimentos pode ser pensada como uma hibridação constante que resulta em redes mais fortes e mais duradouras de apoio, consolo, refúgio, sobrevivência, lealdade. Neste sentido, é minha convicção que a diversificação dos meios de ação potencia mais efeitos positivos do que negativos. Como já argumentei em outros trabalhos, uma nação fundada nesta experiência incarnada da diversidade e da lógica do matrimónio abre espaço social e epistemológico para pensar uma solidariedade substantiva transversal em clara disputa com o simples princípio abstrato da igualdade formal.

O CORPO PERFORMATIVO DAS MULHERES

A ortodoxia nacionalista, como argumentei em cima, não se esquece das mulheres nem das suas diferenças. Pelo contrário, identifica e cataloga todo o seu potencial de trabalho e compromisso e transmuta tudo isso em valor acrescentado para o seu ideal masculinizado de nação. A estória de Bi-Murak, como a de muitas outras mulheres, parece contar-nos alguma coisa de semelhante: ela deu à luz um filho que era tanto seu como um dia seria da nação independente; ela bordava bandeiras do partido do seu marido, ela foi morta porque a sua condição de esposa era também uma ameaça pública e política. No entanto, a minha proposta analítica é que há mais complexidades e dissemelhanças a ter em consideração e que nos permitem ver para além de mais uma mulher sobredeterminada pela causa nacionalista do seu marido.

Bi-Murak foi uma mulher poliglota, capaz de falar e escrever em pelo menos quatro línguas: Tokodede (a língua da casa materna), o Tétum (a língua de Díli onde viveu), o Português (a língua oficial da época e aprendida na escola) e ainda a língua materna da sua mãe, Mambae. Isso fez dela uma especialista em tradução e interpretação não apenas do que era falado mas também dos universos materiais e simbólicos onde cada uma dessas línguas ganhava significado e identidade próprias. Não me parece desajustado afirmar que Bi-Murak, como aliás a maioria das mulheres timorenses, adquirem esta competência crucial para um entendimento mais complexo e mais cosmopolita do mundo, do seu mundo, desde que nascem. Admitindo que a escala do potencial de cosmopolitismo de Bi-Murak seria limitada às suas interligações familiares numa escala territorial muito pequena, não deixa de ser assinalável a polirracionalidade inscrita, *per se*, nesta capacidade de lidar, simultaneamente, com várias línguas faladas e escritas e os seus sistemas materiais e imateriais. Parece-me apropriado afirmar que, quando, hoje em dia, pensamos em pessoas cosmopolitas, mudamos talvez a escala do espaço e do tempo, mas o espectro de aptidões fundamentais pode ser considerado equivalente. Deste modo, o que pode parecer uma virtude imposta pelo destino obscuro de uma esposa qualquer emerge como uma virtude cognitiva e de alto valor político, pois habilita as comunidades com intérpretes experientes que facilitam todo o tipo de trocas e intercâmbios, sustentam os diálogos e encontram os equivalentes necessários para que traduções interculturais se possam processar. Ao contrário do que é defendido em muita literatura da especialidade, eu contra-argumento que os grandes tradutores entre culturas não são os religiosos, os administradores ou mesmo os linguistas, mas sim as mulheres. Vistas e nomeadas como seres da retaguarda discreta do espaço doméstico, as mulheres têm sido quem mais exercita, em múltiplos espaços, escalas e tempos, o ato político de saber traduzir para dialogar e negociar, ou então, declarar hostilidades. A nação timorense que eu vejo suscitada por Bi-Murak poliglota e especialista em tradução

é uma agregação política capaz de descobrir, em si mesma, muitas razões para coexistir em relações dinâmicas e positivas com a sua diversidade e com a diversidade com que se encontrar no decurso da sua posição num mundo globalizado. A intolerância à diversidade é, de certo modo, uma insuficiência epistemológica, ou se se quiser, uma ignorância ativada pelo medo do que se desconhece, mas também pelo medo de não saber lidar com as possíveis incomensurabilidades. A estória de Bi-Murak diz, sem usar muitas palavras, que a nação não precisa de recear o que desconhece, porque pode sempre aprender e aprender é renunciar à imobilidade do medo.

SOMOS APENAS MÃES MAS NUNCA APENAS MÃES

Com diferenciações de estilo, escala, ou discurso, a figura da 'mãe' tem sido um agente simbólico central na visão moderna e canónica da nação viril. Ela é, de múltiplas formas, apresentada como a imagem e o exemplo da generosidade e do sacrifício incondicional pelos filhos. Esta imagética da 'mãe' também está incluída no sistema de símbolos da nação de Timor-Leste já que cada herói tem ou teve uma mãe, respeitosamente silenciosa e abnegada.

No caso de Bi-Murak, a sua mãe é a pessoa que articula a história da família. Ao ser descrita como a *Liurai feto* ela emerge na sua autoridade própria, na sua capacidade de tomar decisões por ela, para ela mas também pelas outras pessoas da família. Admirada, mas também temida, a exemplaridade que pode ter esta mãe *Liurai feto* manifesta-se em três coisas caras às mulheres. A primeira é que a educação enquanto conjunto de competências estratégicas para elaborar uma visão de futuro não é igual a escolarização. Como defendo num outro meu trabalho (Cunha, 2011a), a ideia de que escola, no sentido moderno e ocidental, é a mais eficaz ferramenta de emancipação das mulheres esconde o quanto de recursos de educação, formação, aprendizagem e instrução estão imbuídas as sociedades também elas indispensáveis a qualquer projeto de libertação das mulheres e dos homens. No caso de Timor-Leste, como em muitas outras, a escrita e a escola como projeto de educação fundamental e dominante são invenções recentes, frágeis e ainda pouco radicadas na sociedade. A mãe destas cinco mulheres era uma pessoa com ideias próprias e com um sentido de oportunidade que não a tornou insensível às múltiplas e diferentes oportunidades que estavam em presença e soube articular as suas tradições culturais com a necessidade de inovação que a escola representava para as suas filhas naquele tempo naquela terra. A segunda prende-se com a sua intolerância para com a violência contra as mulheres. Parece estar fora de questão que isso fosse pensado como alguma coisa que pudesse ser transigido. Não só porque ela intervém duramente quando isso pode estar na eminência de acontecer, mas também porque a filha é clara quando diz que, além de não conhecer na família casos desses, ela foi criada

num ambiente em que o respeito pelas mulheres era intocável. A terceira ordem de razão é que, apesar da sua autoridade firme, a sua ligação emocional com as filhas mantinha uma proximidade desejada e intacta. Por outras palavras, a sua forma vigorosa de mandar não se virilizou no sentido de romper ou fazer divergir a ternura com a instrução e a educação.

A nação de Timor-Leste, como a mãe de Bi-Murak, estaria pronta a ser maternal e firme se a seguisse como exemplo constitutivo. Não evitaria as contradições e os problemas – veja-se que, mesmo assim, Bi-Murak foi ela mesma vítima de violência doméstica e de desrespeitos. Contudo, essa triste experiência não se naturalizou. De maneira idêntica, recorrendo a esta mãe exemplar, a dominação das mulheres pelos homens, mesmo que estes sejam seus maridos ou mesmo *Liurais*, não poderia ser sinal de força, modernidade, decência ou inevitabilidade. Esta mãe não torna a nação num substantivo feminino qualquer, mas num lugar de fortíssimos signos de respeito por todas e quaisquer mulheres e, nesse sentido, é revolucionária.

AS MORTES QUE NÃO SÃO RUÍNAS E AS RUÍNAS QUE NÃO SÃO MORTES

A experiência da devastação e do aniquilamento têm sido, recorrentemente, utilizadas na narração nacionalista timorense como o culminar de um sofrimento inigualável do qual renasceu a nação, doravante *ukun rasik a'an*, capaz de se governar a si mesma. Como se percebe pela memória relatada sobre a vida e morte de Bi-Murak, as casas onde ela viveu na montanha e na cidade foram destruídas e até o chão de terra foi queimado.

O que a estória de Bi-Murak acrescenta ao texto nacionalista do fogo, da destruição e do extermínio, através dos quais a nação encontrou a sua liberdade, é que nas ruínas se pode ver muito mais do que o martírio e a extinção. Nas fotografias de família, a casa que ombreia o monte de Kutulau está preservada na memória tanto naquelas onde ela se avista com a sua varanda branca, o jardim, a casa onde se recebiam as visitas como naquelas em que já só se vislumbram plantas e árvores, arbustos e flores. Os olhos veem para além do fogo e do padecimento, a entrada, onde estão as janelas e onde a mãe se sentava nas horas mais frescas do dia. O olhar e a visão são tanto sentidos físicos aparelhados de órgãos e sistemas biológicos como são sentidos de reconstrução e da lembrança que recompõem e resgatam o que está para além da fatalidade e do que parece estar vazio.

Afirmar que a casa e tantos outros lugares sobrevivem na memória dos que os amaram é demasiado simples, ou melhor, faz sentido se a dimensão do tempo for puramente linear como tende a ser a temporalidade histórica das nações. Numa epistemologia heterodoxa do espaço e do tempo mais complexos, o fogo, as casas, as memórias, as ruínas, os escombros, as mortes, tudo pode estar vividamente no presente

e, com isso, fazer da nação um espaço-tempo onde não são os martírios sangrentos que prevalecem mas a inigualável energia do *mata dalan*, aquela ou aquele que vê o caminho.

"O pior, quando uma casa é queimada, não é perder a casa. O pior é quando a chuva vem, as ervas crescem e nós podemos não encontrar o lugar dos nossos avós", dizia um velho com quem falei em setembro de 1999 em Timor-Leste para me fazer compreender que as ruínas em Timor-Leste só são morte se nos fizerem perder a noção de onde se vem.

CONCLUSÃO

Afirmei, desde o início deste texto, que pretendia participar na disputa pelo poder de perguntar e de escrever sobre nação usando um questionamento feminista e multidisciplinar sobre as expressões ortodoxas do nacionalismo timorense contemporâneo, no final da sua primeira década de independência.

Na primeira parte procurei fazer uma revisão da literatura curta mas suficiente sobre nação, memórias, narrativas e identidades sexuais, situar teoricamente a minha base epistemológica e preparar a segunda parte em que apresento uma narração escrita da vida de Bi-Murak. Na terceira parte do texto, procurei fazer uma análise crítica imbricando as minhas questões numa teorização que procura pensar-se a partir de um outro ponto de vista até aqui subalterno e obscuro.

Neste texto defendi quatro teses centrais para uma compreensão dos conceitos de nação e de nacionalismo. A primeira é que uma nação enquanto comunidade imaginada se cria através de limites, fronteiras de exclusividade, reforçando e alimentando a intolerância à diversidade interna e externa, o que é comum a Timor-Leste contemporâneo. Se fosse a estória de Bi-Murak o mito fundacional da nação, reconhecer-se-ia a escala do cosmopolitismo interno da comunidade como uma ferramenta crítica para lidar, compreender, traduzir e negociar as diferenças. A experiência dos casamentos exógenos das mulheres produz também habilidades e tecnologias sociais e de conhecimento para multiplicar os laços, reforçar a coesão, ainda que a partir de contextos e sistemas diferentes.

Em segundo lugar, relevo que as biografias das nações são violentas, invocam o sangue derramado no martírio ou na guerra como matéria constituinte do trauma coletivo que as fundam e as justificam. Considerando com maior atenção a estória de Bi-Murak, o sangue é plural, são sangues. Entre eles está o sangue do parto do seu filho que precisa de ser visto e cheirado, já que anuncia descendência, mais vida e mais devir. A nação de Timor-Leste que a estória de Bi-Murak discute é aquela que não desperdiça nenhuma

gota de sangue e coloca o passado e o futuro no presente da dignificação de todas as valentias.

A terceira tese é que a nação só pode ser imaginada quando é narrada. A forma de narrar pode ser diversa mas recorre sempre à memória que é um ato deliberado de criação, escolha, escondimento, olvido e rememoração. Bi-Murak não fala diretamente naquela que denominei a sua estória. São as lembranças e os esquecimentos intencionais de familiares e outras pessoas que a compõem. Ainda que não se encontrem fotografias de Bi-Murak a não ser nos acervos familiares bem resguardados, isso não significa que o seu rosto, o tom da sua voz, a sua forma de fazer as coisas e de andar se tenham extinguido. Ela é substantivo, identidade, conhecimento, ela é razão suficiente para que a memória persista sem precisar de monumentalização. Será isto um ideal de nação sóbria mas consciente de que o manejo da sua memória pertence a todas as subjetividades que nela encontrem o apaziguamento da falta ou da espera.

Por último, argumento que o nacionalismo moderno dominante em Timor-Leste vive da hipervisibilidade do sofrimento das suas mulheres naturalizando, persistentemente e através dele, a subalternidade delas. Ao entretecer a estória de Bi-Murak percebem-se as suas alegrias e as suas aprendizagens, entende-se a diversidade de assuntos e coisas que sabia. Compreende-se também que, apesar da sua concreta realidade junto a uma montanha de Timor-Leste, ela e muitas outras mulheres são capazes tanto de se oporem como de pensarem e se proporem fazer coisas diferentes.

Ao contrário de uma comunidade imaginada e narrada através dos dois predicados morais e epistemológicos que são a violência e o sexismo, a nação timorense inspirada por esta estória seria, do meu ponto de vista, uma versão de autoridade partilhada (Santos, 2002b) e, sem perder a ternura, o seu texto constitucional começaria pela inalienável condição de plena igualdade entre mulheres e homens.

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CONCERNING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A FANONIAN ANALYSIS OF COLONIZING THE FEMALE BODY

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Abstract: This paper explores various manifestations of violence against women in the United States through a Fanonian analysis of colonizing practices. It argues that the hostility towards women which has been so evident in American public policy over the past year can be understood as a large-scale, abstract version of more concrete applications of social control still pervasive in interpersonal relations. Understanding misogyny and objectification of women through Fanon's theory of colonization shows us that the philosophical basis of American attitudes about gender roles and gendered public policies is not the "pro-life" orientation promoted in political rhetoric, but the deliberate application of a politics of fear.
Keywords: violence, colonization, public policy, women's well-being, intimate partner abuse.

The rhetoric of American exceptionalism typically functions to exalt the United States by casting all other societies as "Other," that is, as lesser. In the case of contrasts with developing nations, exceptionalist pretensions often cast these other societies as less capable of constituting and maintaining effective forms of social organization. When explaining the sense in which the United States is exceptional as an advanced economy, however, the other states – European nations in particular – are depicted as less committed to values the articulator of exceptionalism assumes to be necessary conditions of human flourishing. U.S. superiority is asserted inconsistently, and usually without any sign of awareness that it is inconsistent, as a commitment to hyper-individualism and as a commitment to greater inclusion of all people on the grounds of their social value and a deeply-rooted tradition of communitarianism.[1] Even where there is no explicit contrast

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[1] "America is a great place because there's a fantastic fusion of two forces: individualism and community. When you look at communities where there's been a natural disaster or where there's been a terrible terrorist attack, what you see is Americans running towards each other, not running away […] And I don't think there's anywhere on the Earth quite like it," says Martin Bashir (2012), opinion show host for the cable television news network MSNBC. See

being made with other nation-states, this implicit claim that the United States is a society more respectful of the moral value of all of its inhabitants dominates the public-sphere discourse. We see this distorted national self-perception in the newly-adopted cliché used by politicians to express support for marriage equality – that you are American "no matter who you love"[2] – a long overdue attempt to leap out of more hateful elements of homophobic and heteronormative discourse through American exceptionalism's characteristic appeal to ahistoricity. What this rhetoric obscures (in addition to those past decades in which sexuality was rigidly policed and whom one loved mattered very much) is an obsessive discursive focus on a stereotypical "mainstream" that is fast becoming a demographic minority – the white middle class – and a deliberate inattention to people who do not fit that stereotype: people of color and people too economically disadvantaged to lay claim to membership in the elastic category, "middle class." My intention in this article is to show that the "xenophobic manipulation of women's rights" that is the thematic focus of this issue appears in American life both as a violence of abstraction at the level of public discourse and as a dismissal of women's security needs and bodily integrity at the level of everyday individual lives. I see this application of abstract (attenuated) violence in discourse and concrete violence in marginalized communities as similar to the distinction Frantz Fanon makes in *The Wretched of the Earth* concerning the differential treatment of the "settler" and the "native" in colonized communities, and I shall therefore argue that the logic of colonization is a fruitful tool to illustrate uneven or contradictory responses to gendered violence in the United States.

At the level of public policy-making and national discourse, there is a stated commitment to defending selective rights that women are deemed to have: not reproductive rights, but the right to be safe from violence. But this discursive defense of women's right to a life free of violence is coupled with an assumption that this protection will cover a particular type of victim, the middle-class woman who, despite her gender, is enough like the nation's lawmakers that she can be seen as deserving – indeed, that she can be seen at all. The cornerstone of legal safeguards against gendered violence, the Violence Against Women Act (abbreviated VAWA), is a piece of federal legislation that mandates recognition of domestic violence and sexual assault as crimes in all of the states, territories, and tribal lands within the United States and provides funding for programs to combat violence (National Network To End Domestic Violence – NNEDV, 2013). As is sometimes the case with federal legislation in the United States, VAWA – first

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http://info.msnbc.com/_news/2012/08/16/13319372-martin-bashirs-new-lean-forward-ad?lite.
[2] For example, in a commencement address given to graduates at Barnard College, President Barack Obama spoke of "that brilliant, radically simple idea of America that no matter who you are or what you look like, no matter who you love or what God you worship, you can still pursue your own happiness" (May 14, 2012). See: https://barnard.edu/headlines/transcript-speech-president-barack-obama#overlay-context=headlines/citation-evan-wolfson .

passed in 1994 – bears the quirk of an expiry date, such that it periodically needs to be reauthorized. The recent controversy surrounding reauthorization demonstrates how difficult it can be, in this political environment, to extend protection to women who are not part of the social mainstream. Reauthorization was effected in both chambers of the Congress without incident in 2000 and in 2005, but in 2010 it ran headlong into an ideologically polarized legislature during an election year (National Domestic Violence Hotline, n.d.; Harper, 2012). The significant stumbling block was disagreement between the upper and lower chambers of the legislature – the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively – that had resulted in two distinct versions of the reauthorization bill. The Senate version proposed extending protection to three groups of women who had previously been either excluded or inadequately recognized – Native American women, undocumented immigrants, and members of LGBTQ communities – whereas the House version sustained the inattention to some of these groups that had marked previous incarnations of the Act (Harper, 2012). In essence, the House reauthorization bill was a declaration that some women deserve to be protected from violent crime, and others do not.

VAWA's continued legal authority is crucial precisely because it is a piece of legislation that has an undeniably successful track record in achieving its goal of reducing gender-based violence. Government reporting outlets and independent advocacy groups differ somewhat in the exact figures they put forth, but they agree that there has been an increase in both charges filed and arrests made in the areas of domestic violence and sexual assault since VAWA was first introduced (whitehouse.gov, 2013; NNEDV, 2013). They report reductions in intimate-partner homicides ranging from 34 percent to 35 percent in cases of female victims and ranging from 46 percent and 57 percent in cases of male victims, in addition to an overall decrease in the rate of non-fatal intimate-partner violence by about 67 percent (whitehouse.gov, 2013; NNEDV, 2013). Federal mandates which direct the states to harmonize their laws with VAWA protections have resulted in reforms to state law that now treat acquaintance rape and spousal rape as seriously as so-called stranger rape, that have made stalking a crime in all states, that authorize immediate arrest of suspected perpetrators by police officers who respond to situations in which they have probable cause to believe domestic violence has occurred, and that attach criminal penalties to violations of civil protection orders (whitehouse.gov, 2013). VAWA also provides federal funding for specialized training of law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges to educate them about domestic violence and sexual assault concerns, coordinates law enforcement responses with social service agencies and community groups, offers housing and immigration status protections to victims, and founded the National Domestic Violence Hotline – which 92 percent of its callers report is

their first attempt to seek help (whitehouse.gov, 2013). Failure to reauthorize the Act would have eliminated funding for investigative and prosecutorial resources in matters of violent crimes against women, provisions for restitution, and the possibility of civil redress for women whose cases were not prosecuted in criminal courts (Harper, 2012).

Although debates about the act have reflected a conservative bias towards the needs of white middle-class women, VAWA's successive reauthorizations have pushed against the discursive trend of focusing attention and resources on the middle class by extending the protections of the 1994 Act to immigrant women whose right to remain in the country might have been jeopardized by leaving an abusive sponsoring partner (2000 reauthorization) and to women living in government-subsidized housing whose decision to leave an abusive partner might have resulted in eviction or denial of housing (2005 reauthorization), a continued commitment to inclusiveness that has arguably been part of the long delay in a reauthorization process originally scheduled to take place in 2010 but only signed into law by President Obama in 2013 (National Domestic Violence Hotline, n.d.). The need to protect other groups of women – Native American women, undocumented immigrants, and members of LGBTQ communities – is as evident as the reluctance of some legislators to acknowledge them as worthy of the shelter the law has to offer. Native American women, for instance, suffer a homicide rate that, on some reservations, is as much as 10 times higher than the national average, and statistics compiled by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) suggest that roughly 39 percent of these women will suffer violence in the home (NCAI, 2012). The protection that was proposed in the Senate bill and objected to in the House version will now make it possible for them to bring charges against non-Native American abusers in tribal courts – a vital protection when one considers 2000 Census statistics showing that 56 percent of Native American women are living on tribal lands with non-Native American spouses or domestic partners (NCAI, 2012). Until this added protection was included in the 2013 reauthorization, Native American women seeking legal redress could not get it from the courts governing tribal lands, who were prohibited from trying non-Native offenders (*Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe*, 1978). They had to appeal to federal or state prosecutors in distant communities who declined to prosecute 52 percent of cases involving violence against Native American women (NCAI, 2012). Despite the very specific need of Native American women for legislative protection, VAWA provisions giving them the right to press charges against non-Native partners in tribal courts for violence or abuse committed on tribal lands have been dismissed as special treatment to which they are not entitled by many of the white male lawmakers who represent electoral districts containing tribal lands – even by one of the two Native men who represent such districts in the Congress (Bogado, 2013).

The debate on what protections should be in the 2013 reauthorization of VAWA is illustrative of two distinct theoretical constructs that I see as providing parallel explanations of the hostility and inaction that movements to end gender-based violence must confront: first, the violence of abstraction that is the public policy, public sphere mirror image of everyday marginalization that peace studies theorists, following Johann Galtung (1969), have labelled "structural violence," and second, the colonial structures theorized by Frantz Fanon in his landmark analysis *The Wretched of the Earth*. The notion of a violence of abstraction is developed by phenomenologist Jonathan Wender in his book *Policing and the Poetics of Everyday Life* as a particular type of dehumanization that results when those in authority view human beings in crisis as problems to be solved (Wender, 2008: 90). Reflecting on the ways this "logic of problematization" asserts itself in the daily work of the law enforcement officer, Wender contends that "the most discomforting aspect of the police bureaucracy is not its power of physical coercion but its ability to encipher a human being into an abstract assemblage of data" (*ibidem*: 107). Reduction of people to data, to statistics, to percentages is a devaluing erasure of their complexity that is made possible through abstraction – in much the same way that troubling histories of racism, sexism, and homophobia in the United States are erased by the ahistorical rhetoric I noted in my introductory comments about the putative equality of all Americans, "no matter who you are, […] no matter who you love" (Obama, 2012). Violence of abstraction depicts women solely as victims, in need of protection by men and by putatively masculine institutions like rule of law. In offering this critique, I do not mean to suggest that the law ought to overlook crimes and injuries that might be committed against persons of either gender. What I am contending is that debates about which women *deserve* to be protected begin from an assumption that women, as a class, *need* to be protected by others – which is to say, following Marx, that we cannot protect ourselves.[3] This assumption of diminished capacity replicates the structural inequality we find in Fanon's analysis of the colonial state – women are less capable than men – and invites us to see women as inherently inferior, rather than seeing the reality of a society that subjugates women through application of random, yet pervasive, acts and threats of violence against us.

Colonialism, Fanon tells us, is characterized by pervasive violence – both by the state and by the settlers set up as the colony's elite against the marginalized natives – and characterized by governing institutions that construct and preserve inequality (Fanon, 1963: 29-30). Ruling others, demanding that they serve your interests to the exclusion of their own, can only be achieved through application of violence. And keeping the people

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[3] What Marx said, about the peasant class most economically marginalized in nineteenth-century France, was that "[t]hey cannot represent themselves, they must be represented" (Marx, 1994: 200).

you have colonized subservient is most likely to be successful if you can convince them that they are, objectively, of lesser value than the group who rule. Fanon asserts that colonized natives – first conquered, then exploited and simultaneously made to feel inferior by the colonizing settlers – are governed by the naked force of colonial institutions such as checkpoints and police brutality in contradistinction to the veiled force of education and acculturation that shapes the lives of the settlers (*ibidem*: 31). *The Wretched of the Earth* concerns itself with both the logic of colonization as it is practiced by colonizing settlers who use violence as a dehumanizing force to break the community relations – the solidarity – of the colonized natives and the psychology of colonization as it breaks down the confidence and sense of self of the native. Because of this, Fanon's analysis seems to me to provide the most fruitful theoretical bridge between the violence of abstraction that allows legislation guaranteeing women's bodily integrity to become a political football and the structural violence that marks the everyday lives of women (and their male allies) who survive and resist the gendered violences of sexual assault and intimate partner abuse.

While it might be tempting to read my connection of gendered violence to Fanon's analysis as a metaphorical adoption of the concept of colonization, I intend my deployment of the concept to be understood literally. As I read Fanon, his deconstruction of colonization and his development of a theory of decolonization are grounded in an analysis of power relations that is as applicable to gender as it is to conquest of foreign territories. He draws together political dominance, economic exploitation, and a program of psychological destabilization that convinces the conquered of their incapacity to resist. To speak of the gender dominance that others theorize as patriarchy using the language of colonization helps me to see the commonalities in how violence is transmuted into power in various contexts that would otherwise be separated into distinct categories of gender relations and geopolitical concerns.[4] Notably, reading gender violence in the United States through Fanon reveals the normalization of violence against women that is presented to men – it's just the way of the world, something that happens, rather than something that some people (statistically, mostly men) do to other people (statistically, mostly women) – as an analogue of the normalization of violence against natives that settlers in colonies live with as a matter of fact. Even as I see this colonial attitude surfacing at the macro level of society in policy discussions of how to address violence against women, I see it also at the micro level, in the lives of individual women, in the

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[4] My insistence on linking imperial conquest and patriarchy is grounded in philosophical endorsement of bell hooks' argument that patriarchal domination is not the foundation of all oppression and would not lead necessarily to an end to violence against women and gender subordination. Instead, hooks contends, patriarchal domination is one manifestation of a more pervasive "politics of domination" that is learned in the home through exercise (and often, misuse) of parental authority, a phenomenon that women participate in "as perpetrators as well as victims" (hooks, 1989: 20).

pervasiveness and diversity of control mechanisms that continue to structure women's lives as dependent upon men and dependent, for their safety and well-being, on maintaining attitudes of passivity towards the world. Why does the dominant message transmitted to women and girls stress their value as sexual objects, rather than, say, their value as scholars, athletes, or even sexual *agents*? And what connection does this sexualization of women have to violence against us?

In part, the explanation for reducing women's value to our reproductive capacities and sexual attractiveness lies in the history of patriarchal political institutions, the usefulness of compliant women to a system that Adrienne Rich (1986) has theorized as "compulsory heterosexuality." The commentary Rich offers on Kathleen Gough's eight characteristics of male power elaborates many violent tactics – from rape to genital mutilation – that serve to convince women of their vulnerability and the futility of adopting any attitude other than passive acceptance of male authority (from "The Origin of the Family," quoted in Rich, 1986). Rich's elaborated examples of Gough's inventory of characteristics range over strategic sexual terrorism, exploitation of women's production and reproduction, withholding of education and information that might allow women to see themselves as autonomous agents, and promotion of cultural values that inculcate female inferiority and male superiority. The blend of calculated application of violence and indoctrination of distorted self-evaluations and worldviews that we find in Rich's account of the heteronormative society mirrors the colonial structures we find described in Fanon's account of occupation by the rapacious imperial state.

This oscillation between external and internal control mechanisms – between violence and indoctrination – is equally visible in the lives of individual women, particularly when considering how expectations for our romantic and domestic lives shape our experiences. In the United States, understanding of romantic relationships and domestic partnerships has changed over the last few decades in at least two very important ways. First, the increasing influence of feminist thought and theorizing about power relations have given us a greater awareness of dysfunctional relationships, from unhealthy attachment, to stalking, to overt domestic abuse. Systemic abuse in relationships, Nancy Hirschmann suggests, functions like colonization. She contends that:

> the more complete and effective a system of oppression is, the less aware of it *as* oppression its victims are; a truly successful system of oppression will have encoded itself into the worldview of the colonized, become their reality, and constructed their inner visions of themselves, social and political relations, nature, the world. (Hirschmann, 1996: 139)

Second, in fundamentally changing the ways in which relationships are conducted, advances in communications technology like cell phone texting – which effectively eliminates the publicity of conversations taking place in public places, and consequently the ability of bystanders to intervene in conflicts – are blurring the line between external and internal control. The emergence of texting as a means of constant communication in relationships has facilitated its development as a mechanism through which one relationship partner may exert control over the behavior of the other, and may perpetuate systemic abuse in ways that make it more difficult for the abused partner to recognize the communication as abuse.

One helpful place to start thinking about the kind of intimate partner abuse that blurs the line between violence and indoctrination is Kathleen Ferraro's genealogy of the discourse on domestic violence. This term, she notes, "is a code for physical and emotional brutality within intimate relationships, usually heterosexual" (Ferraro, 1996: 77). She identifies the contemporary "domestic violence" discourse she is concerned with analyzing as emerging in the United States "in the early 1970s, along with the second wave of the women's movement" (*ibidem*: 78). What particularly interests Ferraro about our thinking on domestic abuse is the way it has been taken up and altered, from a progressive feminist discourse concerned with the safety of women into a law-and-order discourse concerning the criminality of domestic assault. "It is possible to oppose 'domestic violence' and at the same time oppose all other efforts to restructure relations of dominance, including women's subordination," she observes (*ibidem*). The originary voice of progressive feminism, which seeks to challenge the male dominance grounding the conservative "family values" worldview, has, she thinks, been drowned out by the crime-control perspective that entrenched itself in the Reagan through Clinton eras as the standard response to social ills (*ibidem*: 89).

It is important, however, to notice that Ferraro is not just engaging in a simplistic left-wing attack on the right. She endorses the view that perpetrators of assault, domestic or otherwise, *should* face the criminal justice system (*ibidem*: 87). The problem she identifies in the law-and-order strand of discourse around domestic violence is that law and order is effectively where the conversation stops. Public policy and public spending are focused on arrest and imprisonment of individual criminals, and far too little attention is given to "the legal structures upholding male-dominated nuclear households" and the needs of women trying to leave abusive relationships: employment at a living wage, safe and affordable housing, affordable healthcare and daycare, and protection of families who have "irregular" immigration status (*ibidem*: 81-82, 89).[5]

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[5] Kimberlé Crenshaw makes similar arguments about the failure of public policy to address the needs of abused women, with particular attention to the ways that women of color are burdened, in "Mapping the

While Ferraro points out the limitations of criminal justice discourse, she also recognizes the ways in which feminist discourse has failed to adequately explain the complexity of these crimes committed in the privacy of the home. "Like other aspects of early second wave feminism," she contends, "domestic violence discourse has been oriented toward the construction of a unified image" (*ibidem*: 78). She explains:

> Although the unidimensional image of "woman" in feminist thought and movement has undergone major revisions in response to critiques from those who felt silenced or misrepresented, the domestic violence discourse has remained moored to assumptions of homogeneity among those who are battered and those who batter. (*ibidem*)

This construction of a "type" of woman who is battered and a "type" of man who is an abuser is a particularly problematic stereotype because it encourages identification among some, at the expense of alienation among others, and with implications for whether and how this social ill is taken seriously.[6] Such divisiveness in turn breeds an attempt to unify that, in its presumed unification, simply perpetuates the alienation of those who find themselves unrepresented. This is yet another instantiation of the violence of abstraction.

Even Ferraro, however, in the course of her very careful analysis, accepts some claims fairly uncritically – notably the idea that because the larger category of intimate partner relationships in which one finds domestic violence includes dating relationships, all intimate partner relationships can be theorized as a single model (*ibidem*). This is a point that needs to be considered much more carefully: there are some important differences between dating and live-in relationships that may well be reasons why women who are being abused by partners they live apart from might not see themselves as being abused. Asserting control and manipulating a partner through text messaging, for example, might not be seen as part of an abusive relationship because it is not overtly violent. Indeed, one of the primary messages about domestic violence that self-help/outreach websites strive to convey is that abusive relationships are fundamentally a matter of control, not violence (Turning Point, 2006).[7] I would argue there is another way to frame discussions of intimate

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Margins" (Crenshaw, 1994: 95-98). This section contains an excellent discussion of the obstacles faced by immigrant women who are – or understand themselves to be – dependent on their husbands for their legal status.

[6] Perceiving domestic violence as a problem among the poor encourages members of the middle-class to disregard its existence in their homes, and permits political silence on behalf of the governing class. On the other hand, outreach efforts that attempt to promote domestic violence as a danger in all families have skewed public service messages and community resources towards middle-class women and neglected marginalized women in poor minority communities. See Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1994) article for this argument.

[7] I cite this self-help/outreach site as one instance of the many such sites that present themselves as accessible resources for people in abusive or controlling relationships. It offers nuanced information about a variety of concerns – dating violence, the power and control mechanisms that counselors offer as warning

partner abuse. Instead of making a distinction between control and violence, and casting "control" as the defining characteristic of these relationships, I think there is more discursive space opened up for critical analysis of this social phenomenon if we see it as part of the social dysfunction that peace studies theorists identify as "structural violence." One theorist in this area, Kathleen Ho, defines structural violence as "the avoidable disparity between the potential ability to fulfill basic needs and their actual fulfillment" (Ho, 2007: 1). Her discussion of structural violence as a human rights violation focuses on questions of poverty, but the claim that social and economic inequalities, because they are avoidable, constitute a systemic violence against those who are disadvantaged with respect to power is applicable to intimate partner abuse (*ibidem*: 4). The relative economic disadvantage of women in American society – evidenced by wage disparity and rates of poverty for female-headed single-parent households – and the social indoctrination that Rich identifies produce conditions of vulnerability for women that result in constrained agency (*ibidem*: 10). The structural violence of normalized abuse, control, and manipulation of women in relationships convinces them of their inability to act – producing conditions of learned helplessness structurally similar to the psychology of colonization Fanon describes – and forms the "lived experience" counterpart to the violence of abstraction that reduces the distinct legislative needs of different groups of women to a singular remedy protecting the stereotypical middle class woman from violence.

To see intimate partner abuse as structural violence, however, is culturally difficult. Inability to even recognize that abuse can take place without the presence of overt violence is particularly acute in a cultural context like the United States, which romanticizes the "take-charge" man and the passive woman. Think, for instance, of the standard reaction of young female movie-goers to the romance depicted in the *Twilight* (2008) franchise: the adoration of Edward Cullen as a loyal and loving partner and the reading of his obsessive interest in Bella as evidence of his romantic character.[8] Just as Edward's intrusive actions – breaking into Bella's bedroom to watch her sleep, for example – are presented as romantic longing, so too the tagline for the first film – "A teenage girl risks everything when she falls in love with a vampire" – conveys a message of heroic sacrifice on Bella's part. The risk she takes is not, of course, presented as the risk a self-sufficient and capable young woman is faced with when she discovers the stalking impulses of the young man who has caught her eye. Instead, the "risk" is whether she can maintain her humanity in a relationship with a vampire, and the sacrifice she

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signs, advice for people thinking about leaving an abusive or controlling intimate partner, how to identify a healthy relationship – which reflect current thinking in the domestic violence crisis counseling community, in a format and language that are easy to understand.
[8] See, for instance, the discussion of popular culture reactions to the film offered by Jonathan McIntosh in his guest blog post "What Would Buffy Do?" (McIntosh, 2009).

appears intent on making at the end of the film is precisely that humanity. She desires Edward so much and values her current self so little that she wants to become like her lover in order to be with him always. Disseminating this willingness to give up her life in order to be a mere part of his as a romantic ideal for young girls plays into the psychological indoctrination on which both patriarchal and colonial dominance depend, and plays into the interests of abusive and controlling men.

In an effort to offer warning signs that one might be in an abusive relationship, some of the self-help and outreach information available on the Internet also interrogates our cultural confusion. Among the "early warning signs" are such actions as "constantly asks you where you are going, who you are with, etc.," "cut[s] you off from friends and family," and "monitors your clothing/make-up" (Turning Point, 2006). These are clearly attempts to control, but "women are taught to interpret [such actions] as caring, attentive, and romantic" (*ibidem*). One complicating factor in making determinations about whether a given relationship is abusive is depicted, but not interrogated, in *Twilight*. The desire to exert control may motivate the actions of abusers, but the abused partner is likely to recognize the relationship as unhealthy or undesirable only if, and to the extent that, she perceives it as constraining her capacity to choose for herself. If, as *Twilight*'s Bella does, she believes herself to be freely choosing the relationship, she will not recognize it, or its mechanisms, as abusive. In the case of "text control,"[9] for example, the communication that is effectively consolidating the abuser's control may well be interpreted by the abused as a means of nurturing the relationship and being available as an emotional resource to her partner.

Nancy Hirschmann's view is that this emphasis on the presence or absence of choice should be central to our definition of abuse. "[I]s not a key element in our labeling [a relationship] abusive the fact that a woman's agency, her capacity to make choices and act on them, is being denied?," she asks (Hirschmann, 1996: 127). For Hirschmann, the capacity for free choices implicates political conceptions of liberty. The difficulty that traditional theories of liberty have in explaining what freedom means in the context of abusive relationships proves we need to do more work building concrete experiences into abstract theories (*ibidem*: 128-129). Where theories of "negative liberty" denote "an absence of external constraints" (law, force, and other forms of coercion), "positive liberty" "attends to what might be called 'internal barriers': fears, addictions, compulsions that are at odds with my 'true' self can all inhibit my freedom" (*ibidem*: 129-130). Negative liberty

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[9] "Text-control" may not be the catchphrase under which this phenomenon eventually becomes widely known to the general public but it is important to begin attempts to label the behavior. In her analysis of domestic abuse, Andrea Westlund cites research showing that "'[d]ate rape' and 'separation assault' name phenomena women know from our own experience, but which remain invisible without names (Mahoney 1991, 68-69)" (Westlund, 1999: 1060). "The naming of such phenomena," she claims, "challenges the norms that make them invisible" (*ibidem*).

would tell students who are being controlled by text messages from their partners "you could always turn off the phone" or "you're not being forced to read and respond to the texts" (*ibidem*).

For the purposes of this discussion, the compelling defect of negative liberty is its failure to grasp the insight drawn from strands of feminist moral philosophy which point to women being socialized into a moral worldview that privileges obligations over rights (*ibidem*: 128). The question of whether a woman "is […] free if she returns to (or stays with) her partner" assumes freedom as the only consideration and discounts the way obligation shapes our lives (*ibidem*: 127). As I suggested above, female students being "text-controlled" might, for instance, not experience a barrage of text messages as oppressive because they are more focused on a need to validate the thoughts and feelings of their relationship partner than on exercising a right to privacy. Indeed, they may be tempted to interpret text messaging technology as conferring upon them a freedom to stay in touch with their partners, rather than seeking freedom from being monitored by them. Positive liberty theories can account for motivations that seem freely chosen but in fact hamper our quality of life by explaining that "the immediate desires I have may frustrate my true will" (*ibidem*: 130). Hirschmann uses the example of eating disorders to explain this phenomenon of "inauthentic" choices that our true selves would not rationally make, and contends that frustrating these desires does not constrain freedom (*ibidem*). "[L]ock[ing] me out of the kitchen to prevent a binge" can enhance my liberty, she argues (*ibidem*). Although "control" is implicated differently in eating disorders and controlling relationships, we can in both cases make a distinction between immediate desires and the long-range desires of the true self. Making students shut off their phones in class might support their liberty by recognizing that the immediate desire to be in caring relationship may make girls and young women vulnerable to manipulation and control. This view understands women in our society to feel a strong incentive to adopt a model of femininity that is passive in the face of male authority. Young women today often deny that they hold this attitude but they nonetheless continue to engage in behaviors seemingly in collusion with this model of passive, sexually available femininity – the colonial attitude Hirschmann describes, an indoctrination of oppression that is so complete one does not recognize it in oneself.

The most obvious defect of positive liberty is its paternalism. In delineating desires that belong to one's true self and those that are "imposed," one is essentially telling a young woman what her true self is – sometimes in opposition to what she will experience as her most heartfelt desires. Both negative liberty's emphasis on "issues of consent, opportunity, and choice" and positive liberty's emphasis "on relationship and community" – developing our capacities to contribute productively to our social networks – are important

to feminist attempts to expand women's liberty in contemporary society, Hirschmann tells us (*ibidem*). "[W]hat domestic violence particularly highlights," she claims, is "that choices are so deeply, fundamentally, and complexly constructed for women that the conventional understandings of liberty and restraint found in the positive-negative debate are inadequate to address women's experiences" (*ibidem*: 136). This complex construction even shapes what is seen as a choice and what is not. In the explicit domestic violence Hirschmann is theorizing about, leaving the relationship – however vulnerable that may make a woman, economically, say, or in terms of immigration status – is a choice the battered woman could make, but her abuser's "impulse" to behave violently towards her is not cast as a choice he makes (*ibidem*: 138).[10] Rather, abusive men, she notes, frequently blame their "bad behavior" on alcohol, workplace stress, and alleged provocations on the part of the woman herself (*ibidem*). By the same token, we need to be careful that any educational outreach we engage in around "text-control" behaviors does not focus exclusively on the woman's "choice" to respond, but also interrogates her partner's choice to engage in threatening and manipulative behavior.

Ultimately, Hirschmann thinks that women's freedom is blocked by "patriarchy […] the social, legal, and economic control" of women by men that is normalized in our culture (*ibidem*: 140). She notes that:

> Depression, feelings of low self-worth and accompanying beliefs that the woman somehow deserved the violence, or guilt and the belief that she provoked the violence, are all too common and may keep women from leaving their abusers. These feelings often coincide with women's holding of traditional values about women's and men's roles and the stigma of divorce. Indeed, women who feel guilt or shame may be reluctant to come forward at all or even to admit to themselves that they *are* battered women. (*ibidem*: 133)

The continual return of feminist thinking on domestic violence and abusive relationships to matters of control – especially Hirschmann's discussion of how an external worldview, imposed upon us, can change our perceptions of ourselves and our environment – invites us to consider the relevance of French philosopher Michel Foucault's writings on power and social control. While Foucault's concern is with the ways institutions shape us into the beings that serve their aims, the interesting thing about linking his description of discipline to Fanon's description of colonization and Hirschmann's observation of domestic violence as an internalization of systems of oppression is how well these accounts work together to

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[10] Kimberlé Crenshaw makes a related point about the ways the burden and blame of domestic violence fall more heavily on abused women than abusing men: the burden is "more readily interpreted as obliging women not to scream rather than obliging men not to hit" (Crenshaw, 1994: 103).

explain how domestic abuse functions.[11] One of the points of convergence we see in both Foucault's theory of discipline and the cycle of domestic abuse is the deliberately early exercise of power so that mere threats can have the same controlling effect later on. Foucault concurs with Beccaria and other reformers of the criminal system that, to be effective, "[t]he penalty must be made to conform as closely as possible to the nature of the offence, so that the fear of punishment diverts the mind from the road along which the prospect of an advantageous crime was leading it" (Foucault, 1995: 104). In the case of domestic abuse, the "crime" in question would of course be any autonomous action on the part of the abused that threatens the abuser's ability to maintain control. Another similarity between social control by institutions and control within a domestic relationship is the use of isolation. Foucault cites the view of 18th century theorists of punishment that, in isolation, the person would turn his or her thoughts inward and "rediscover in the depths of his conscience the voice of good [... in] an exercise in spiritual conversion" (*ibidem*: 122). Clearly, in abusive relationships, it is not "the voice of good" that is intended to guide the abused person's thinking and behavior, but the voice of the abuser. Nevertheless, the principle remains the same: a voice that seems to belong to an authoritative other (be it God, or the abusive relationship partner) is internalized, and the result of internalization appears as a "conversion."

Once someone has internalized the voice of external authority, it can be exceptionally difficult for him or her to even recognize that voice as distinct from the thoughts and desires of the "true self," let alone resist it. Foucault explains this phenomenon by observing that the disciplined individual "becomes the principle of his own subjection"; he or she takes on the role of monitoring his or her own behavior to make sure it conforms to "the rules" and thereby assumes dual roles, both prisoner and jailer (*ibidem*: 202-203). This is an advantage for those who would control an intimate partner because, as a sort of outsourcing from the abuser's point of view, it lessens the amount of power that needs to be exerted. It is, at the same time, a disadvantage for the controlled because any eventual liberation on their part will be experienced as fighting against their own desires. The obvious economy of time and effort that discipline requires of the controller means also that disciplinary powers may be "de-institutionalized," to use Foucault's term; they are easily adapted into methods of control that can be used within families, or exerted through technologies like cell phones, rather than face-to-face (*ibidem*: 211, 215). The reason this adaptation is so easy, Foucault remarks, is that "disciplines [...] bring into play the power

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[11] In her analysis of the links between Foucauldian theory and domestic violence, Andrea Westlund notes that the point about control over women being like Foucault's discipline has also, influentially, been made by Sandra Bartky (Westlund, 1999: 1045).

relations […] as discreetly as possible," through similarity to expected romantic and/or caring behaviors (*ibidem*: 220).

Now that disciplinary principles of internalization and self-monitoring are so pervasive, some readers of Foucault on social control theory interpret him as saying that there is no way out of these systems of control. However Foucault himself points to a possible means of escape in the course of discussing what disciplinary power must suppress in order to be effective. He notes that disciplinary tactics "must neutralize the effects of counter-power that spring from them and which form a resistance to the power that wishes to dominate," and identifies "counter-power" as "anything that may establish horizontal conjunctions" (*ibidem*: 219). This observation suggests that effective resistance – against institutional discipline or a controlling and abusive relationship partner – can be constructed in non-hierarchical networks that promote solidarity and the kind of politically-aware sharing of personal experiences that earlier generations of feminists labeled "consciousness-raising." Foucault commentator Andrea Westlund makes this point also, arguing that "[b]ecause they use a marginalized group's experiences and testimony to destabilize oppressive norms, battered women's shelters and grass-roots anti-domestic violence programs are subversive in their activities" (Westlund, 1999: 1056). "[S]uch anti-domestic violence programs," she concludes, "constitute local sites of resistance, in something very like the Foucauldian sense" (*ibidem*: 1057). I think it is quite possible that these programs might also provide the concrete experiences that Hirschmann calls for as an expansion of political philosophy's theorizing of liberty. Having access to a social space in which one can share stories about what one has experienced and how one has reacted can inspire all of the participants to enlarge their horizons of possibility. That is, such spaces can become sites of shared resistance, revealing not just momentary breaks in the disciplinary power that abuse survivors are manipulated by, but also the solidarity that Fanon argues must be built through collective decolonizing actions by colonial natives if they are to liberate themselves from the violence and inequality imposed by the colonial settlers.

While Westlund characterizes the explicit bullying and control techniques employed by abusers as more consistent with pre-modern, pre-"disciplinary" techniques of power, she does acknowledge that, typically, "[t]he proximity of the battered woman to her assailant allows for a degree of close surveillance not possible in pre-modern relations" (*ibidem*: 1048). It is this surveillance, she says, "which lends to domestic violence a certain resemblance to the type of power exercised in modern disciplinary institutions" (*ibidem*). Westlund's position that overt bullying is "pre-modern" in the Foucauldian sense merely serves to underscore the modern, disciplinary nature of cell phone texting as an exercise of power. Like Ferraro and Hirschmann, Westlund also connects heterosexual battering,

at least in part, to "some of the gender norms that modern institutions themselves inculcate – a particular kind of nuclear family, for example, characterized by a gendered division of labor, roles, authority, and sexual and political identities" (*ibidem*: 1050). The ability of controlling behaviors to mimic, or camouflage themselves among, caring behaviors and gender norms makes it particularly difficult to inoculate people against abusive relationships; everything in our social conditioning reinforces the notion that we should seek relationships in which our partners display interest in our plans and activities, and that we should demonstrate our reciprocal emotional commitments by appreciating their interest in us and fostering our own interest in their lives. Especially when this conditioning is coupled with a belief that men should take charge and/or assume a protective role in their relationships with female partners, it can be very difficult to distinguish growing romantic interest from the warning signs of a controlling personality.

Failure to make this link between the phenomenology of intimate partner violence and the ways that Fanon, Foucault, and the feminist theorists I have been discussing theorize power relations not only makes it difficult to see an unhealthy relationship for what it is when one is in it, but also gives rise to the puzzle so many bystanders are so quick to verbalize – why doesn't she leave? One preliminary response to this question is to stress that leaving is a dangerous and complex process that often requires multiple attempts. As Nancy Hirschmann remarks in her analysis of how theories of liberty need to adapt to accommodate real-world problems like domestic violence, "what may appear to be complicity [… or] internalization of abuse, […] may in reality be a form of resistance, management, or just plain survival" (Hirschmann, 1996: 140). But the fact that individuals appear to choose to stay in relationships that we all know – in abstraction – are not healthy ones does seem to many to be complicity. I think it is this presumption of complicity that encourages people who claim to endorse a "pro-life" politics to be so cavalier about the violence and psychological deterioration that abuse victims face. Staying equals complicity, and complicity collapses into full responsibility, so – in this worldview in which judgment fills the space that empathy and sensitivity to complicating factors might otherwise occupy – the victim brought the misery on herself; she is to blame. And because she is to blame, she does not (entirely) deserve to be protected.

The lack of awareness many bystanders have about intimate partner violence (and other processes of colonization and social control, for that matter) is noted, and cynically exploited by many who direct the political discourse of the United States. For them, the ideal citizen is not inspired by the politics of "life" (as in pro-life) but by the politics of fear. Fearful people are easier to control, so dealing with them (producing them) secures one's grip on power, but one needs credible threats in order to nurture that fear. A widespread culture of violence against women is therefore tolerated by those who might otherwise

legislate protection – because it serves their interests. The only effective way to change this is to deploy the decolonization strategies Fanon recommends to build solidarity among members of society.

This has to be a grassroots policy of building community beyond the truncated public sphere designated as the political space of the nation, much like the consciousness-raising communities and non-hierarchical networks that might liberate us from Foucauldian social control. In essence it refuses colonization, and the hysteria that the politics of fear seeks to inculcate, by doing an end-run around the official, legitimized sphere in which citizens are invited to endorse the existing power structure and instead building more inclusive discursive spaces peopled by supportive community members. My own experiences with this decolonizing, horizontal counter-power revolve are taking place these days on the college campus. They include organizing "Take Back The Night" ceremonies in which each participant offers his or her commitment to specific actions that will end domestic violence and sexual assault; working with male allies in the student population to develop peer-driven bystander intervention education strategies designed to shift the cultural norms to an intolerance for non-consensual sex that is consistent with the values of the university community; providing advocacy and encouragement to female students who are banding together to support each other in the effort to develop healthy body images and a greater sense of self-esteem; and developing a faculty and staff network that portrays a view of feminism that contests the vicious stereotype so pervasive in American culture of the hate-filled, humorless totalitarian who wants to destroy all of the institutions and ideals that comprise American civilization. Other examples of grassroots consciousness-raising and solidarity are increasingly present on the internet – most notably, the creative, provocative, and therapeutic "Who Needs Feminism?" Tumblr (http://whoneedsfeminism.tumblr.com) – and embodied in the global dance party that was One Billion Rising, the February 14 (Valentine's Day) outpouring of human energy to end violence against women. These coalitions of people who choose to see ourselves – and demand to be seen by others – as survivors and resisters, instead of victims, will be the spaces in which we can nurture the movements we will need in every community, in every part of the world, of men and women coming together, rising up to demand an end to gendered violence.

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@cetera

HOW RACISM PREVENTS THE EMPOWERMENT OF MUSLIM GIRLS AND WOMEN IN GERMANY

IMPRESSIONS FROM A YOUTH CENTER IN BERLIN

Osman Tekin and Lisa Gabriel work at the youth center Manege in Berlin-Neukölln, Germany, an institution situated in a multicultural setting and attended by children and teenagers from a predominantly Muslim background. *e-cadernos ces* invited them to debate the reality they are confronted with in their daily work and discuss the issues of xenophobia and political instrumentalization of women's rights. They spoke about their motivations in joining this educational project, their experiences at the youth center, about the German politics on "integration" and feminism. They introduced their contribution by commenting a poster of the nationalist organization Pro Deutschland.

"Our Women Remain Free": Campaign Poster of the Populist Movement Pro Deutschland in the Summer 2011

Photo by Lisa Gabriel

OSMAN

As someone of no German descent,[1] but an Arab and a Muslim, it has always been very difficult for me to understand German politics. That has to do with the fact that, after 22 years of living here, my family and I still have the status of "tolerated" persons.[2] I feel that we are not wanted, and that influences a lot your thoughts.

When I saw the poster my reaction was "not again...". I'm very worried that we Muslims are the scapegoats of the 21st Century. The poster makes me wonder, for instance, how would the German woman – who exemplifies the freedom of women in Germany – look like? The woman in the poster, who represents a Muslim, wears a black veil and black Kajal around her eyes. The purpose: to erase her character and personality as much as possible. The grid accentuates it. My mother and my five sisters wear the veil and it makes me sad to realize how they are perceived here. Unfortunately, many women from Arab-Turk regions suffered severe oppression in their countries of origin, but that also happens to many German women, even today. If this poster is really about the freedom of the women in Germany, why does it exclude the women from the Middle East? It is also disturbing that the poster depicts a woman, but its addressees are actually men. So you realize immediately that it has nothing to do with women and their freedom and rights. It is only propaganda. Women are simply being used to exclude other societies. A very coward and wicked political strategy!

The poster also accuses me of being an oppressor of women. ALL men from the Middle East are here accused of endorsing the same ideology. Such stereotyping is very intense in Germany nowadays. We talk of integration, when we really should be talking of repression.

LISA

This poster helps me express what I mean by the logic of male domination in our society. All the discussions on feminism and gender oppression that I had with Osman in the last two years were marred by the feeling that my political ideals are familiar to him in the form of accusations, since he is always addressed (attacked) as an Arab, Turk, Kurd or Muslim and not simply as a person. We could not naively discuss gender roles and male dominance. Honestly, I think that we hardly got there in our discussions – the images of the German mainstream society and specially its obvious racist strategies of exclusion

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[1] In the German original "Herkunftsdeutsch" [of German descent]. This concept is used as an opponent to people with a "Migrationshintergrund" [immigration background], i.e., people who were born in Germany, may or may not have a German passport, and whose family/ancestors migrated to Germany after 1949. The latest concept is often used to refer to colored youth in Germany, whose parents came from South-Eastern Europe, Turkey and Arab countries.
[2] "Duldung" (toleration) is not a residence permit in Germany, but only the suspension of deportation for a limited period. It often includes the prohibition of employment and higher education.

always got in the way. The poster of Pro Deutschland is actually only a banal and pale illustration of a much bigger political dilemma. It is sad to realize that the opportunity to talk about gender and emancipation in our societies of origin amounts to nothing as long as we do not understand and solve this dilemma. That makes me furious.

When I think about this poster, I feel really angry and frustrated. Initially this has less to do with its racist message, but with the way in which I, as a woman of German descent, am addressed there. I see the poster this way: you have a German white man speaking with an imagined, undefined, other man. So you open a political space where men negotiate about "their" women and evaluate their freedoms. Therefore I do not exist there as a thinker, as a speaker, as someone who is responsible for herself, as a political actor. The introductory possessive "our" degrades me to a property in quite an ambivalent way: on one hand, my origin, my color and my nationality makes me part of that "we". But, at the same time I, as part of "our women", am not part of the "we" that speaks there. Women remain others, those you talk *about*: there is no "we remain free!" Therefore, my origin determines which man I belong to, it assumes that I have to belong to one man. I refuse to belong to anyone. This is a freedom that you cannot take for granted as part of the majority of citizens of German descent. On the contrary, you have to fight for it constantly. That's why I became a feminist.

Feminism means for me self-determination in a world where decisions and evaluations derive largely from the needs, interests and expectations of men. Feminism is for me also a political project of solidarity. For me, it is a commitment to help other people in their self-assertion against patriarchy. A major difficulty here lies precisely in the deconstruction of the patriarchal, hetero-sexist principle that puts women against each other in competition, that lets them be defined by the men (and their interests) whom they allegedly belong to, and that makes them regard other women as threats. As seducers or as a threat for their own concept of femininity. The poster asks me, a non-Muslim woman of German descent, to delimit myself. I should be proud or happy for an undefined freedom, when compared to other women, who apparently live in *unfreedom* – precisely veiled behind bars. I'm asked to look at her as an image that shows me who I am. The woman in the poster doesn't speak. None of us speaks – I guess the message is that we should not talk to each other. But that is precisely the opposite of feminism and the opposite of solidarity.

The gaze of the silent woman is too familiar for me in my own culture. It is the gaze of the woman as a (sexualized) object, as victim or "muse", who doesn't speak and hasn't got a will. This gaze that excludes us women from the status of full actors is incredibly central in the logic of domination of Western masculinism. Therefore you would never have a poster that says "I will remain free!".

What finally frustrates me in this poster is the distortion of facts, the way history is ignored and feminist struggles obfuscated. The exclusion of women as women from the domain of civil rights and liberties was constitutive of the political project of (European) modernity. The freedoms, or rather the possibilities that I can take advantage of today, were achieved along decades, through small steps, as part of "equality". The slogan "Our women remain free" suggests, however, a given situation without prior history, that you have to defend from others' encroachment. It is very hard to cope with this instrumentalization. For me, it is an affront that a reactionary nationalist organization like Pro Deutschland believes it can adorn itself with the successes of the women's rights movement. The resistance with which the feminist demands have always been confronted, as well as the lack of interest in the very women that the poster intends to depict, are simply hidden. I simply don't believe that this kind of poster has anything to do with our liberation from patriarchal constraints. It is only about male identity and its need to have an enemy. In the end I'm faced here with a caricature of my own utopias: feminism being appropriated for a nationalist project and for racist exclusion.

JUGENDCLUB MANEGE

The Youth Center Manege – in the "Rütli-Ecke Weserstraße" – is situated at an intersection of Neuköllln's social landscape. The Weserstraße has become the epitome of the so-called "gentrification." In the last years, many new shops, cafés and pubs opened there. The demographic has changed as well. As a young international and financially well-off population discovers the neighborhood – bringing an increase of rents – many socially disadvantaged families, who often have a comparatively less privileged migration history, leave the area and move to the suburbs of Berlin. On the other hand, the Manege is situated quite close to the 'Campus-Rütli', also referred to as 'Rütli-Schule', which is at the center of a debate on integration that focuses on the relationship between Muslim youths with an immigration background and the German wider society. The Campus has gained the status of a widely promoted exemplary project.

The youth center Manege is attended mainly by children and teenagers who grew up in the area. Many of their parents migrated to Germany and speak Arabic as their first language. Some families rely on government' welfare payments, have a precarious immigration status, and their environment is regarded as 'unsuitable for education'. The biographies of the children and teenagers in the neighborhood speak of very different migration trajectories, and of social conflicts around poverty, culture, education, societal transformation, and so called 'integration'. Many of them come to the Center every day after school and stay till evening; many can eat there as well. So they spend much of their childhood there, developing close friendships with each other and ties with the staff. The

Manege is a public and open space, but for many of the children and teenagers it is a second home as well.

OSMAN

I regard my work as a social worker at the Youth Center as a form of engagement. I try to be a spokesman, an ambassador, and a role model for the children and teenagers. Since I share with them the same background and I grew up in the area, I've known many of them ever since they were in Kindergarten. It is very important for me to encourage them in terms of their integration and capacity for social and communal responsibility and participation. Many of these kids regard a good school graduation as something out of their reach. A major goal in Manege is to have as many of them as possible finish high school and go to university. But for that you need self-confidence, and our programs are meant precisely to encourage them.
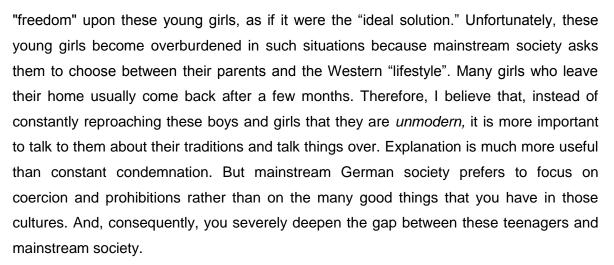
The environment in the Manege has also sparked my political consciousness and engagement. For several years I have been representing the interests of the children and the teenagers in the Neukölln bodies.

REACTIONS TO NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES IN THE PRESS

Teenagers' reactions are quite diverse. Some react aggressively because they are tired of being the scapegoat. Others don't feel addressed at all. All of them were born in Berlin and are third generation immigrants in Germany. And, until now, they have been referred to as "foreigners" and "migrants". This provokes a dissonance between their assigned identities: the one that was given to them by the German society and the one ascribed by their families. They say: "No matter where you go, whether here in Germany where you were born or in Turkey or Lebanon, we are always foreigners". These conflicting expectations damage their individuality and leave them with a sense of homelessness. In addition, they are under pressure to prove themselves – again and again – to both societies. In the Manege we use theater to help them overcome their double exclusion.

Such experiences bring about a strong cohesion among them and enable collective forms of opposition. The "others" in the mainstream society are perceived as enemies and a sense of "we versus them" emerges, although the "we" has no real location, since the teenagers have no identification ground in either society. In their families, they fear being referred as "Germanized", while the German society regards them as "foreigners". The expectations that the German mainstream society has towards them are much worse. It is often assumed that boys oppress their sisters, treat them without respect and forbid them everything. Such attitudes are shaped by the immigration experience and also by the general lack of interest in these young people. German society tries to impose a Western

"freedom" upon these young girls, as if it were the "ideal solution." Unfortunately, these young girls become overburdened in such situations because mainstream society asks them to choose between their parents and the Western "lifestyle". Many girls who leave their home usually come back after a few months. Therefore, I believe that, instead of constantly reproaching these boys and girls that they are *unmodern,* it is more important to talk to them about their traditions and talk things over. Explanation is much more useful than constant condemnation. But mainstream German society prefers to focus on coercion and prohibitions rather than on the many good things that you have in those cultures. And, consequently, you severely deepen the gap between these teenagers and mainstream society.

To learn from another society you have to be able to trust it, too. But, unfortunately, that kind of trust is considered worthless by the German mainstream society.

These young people are being used as a political bargaining tool in the so-called "integration debate". No emancipatory political or empathetic education on specific goals is being undertaken. On the contrary, political education is being understood as pressure to conform/adapt. Teenagers from "migrant families" are not expected to position themselves politically and socially: they are often confronted with the argument "Look at your countries, it is much worse there". Gratitude is immediately demanded from them, while their participation and self-esteem are inevitably subverted.

ON THE "FAILURE OF MULTICULTURALISM"

The German mainstream society and many politicians now talk about the "failure of multiculturalism". I think this "failure" began when the immigration generation arrived. At that moment there was no dignified cultural and social integration project. On the contrary, the legislation on residence opened the door for exclusion: various forms of discrimination in the labor market and public education became apparent. Many parents fled to Germany to escape dangerous and unbearable situations. In their homeland they had no possibility of getting an education and had to start working during their childhood to feed their families. Women were married very young. When they arrived, many got no support from the State, language courses were not provided. Since many had no official permission to work, they were forced to rely on welfare payments. Ironically now, young people who were born in Germany are being offered integration classes. The signs of a "failure of multiculturalism" are determined by mainstream society. The strict political standards applied to immigrant families to evaluate their social integration are not applied to families of German descent. How does the integration of many German families look like, why don't we try to "integrate" them as well?

Marginalization in education cannot be ignored. The multilingualism of most children and young people in Berlin has been admitted as a reality only very recently and very slowly. The older generation and their families tend to live relatively isolated. Until now, many of the parents have felt rejected and unwanted, and willy-nilly, they end up transmitting such experiences to their children with the message "you're not Germans". The parents' reaction is nothing but an attempt to protect their children from a society that marks them as outsiders. This experience is replicated by the young. The German society has high expectations on them. Many of them feel they are expected to be grateful all the time. But none of them knows what for. They were born in Germany and many don't even know their second homeland. The feeling of living conditionally in a country is not very welcoming and having to justify yourself all the time is even worse.

OPPRESSION OF GIRLS AND WOMEN

The failed politics of integration and a general lack of interest in Arab/Turk/Curd women make it difficult to work with these "women migrants" to build trust. Many women from the older generation suffered greatly before coming to Germany with their husbands. Many of them come from rural areas where they had no access to schooling and had no "childhood" at all: they had to marry very young and marriages were obviously arranged. They were supposed to bear many children, who, as adults, would feed the family. Once in Germany, they were either ignored or supposed to embrace "Western freedom". The men, who took on the role of protectors, could do nothing with this "Western freedom" and, in their eyes, they had to protect their women and children from an unknown lifestyle. We should not forget that they are often threatened with deportation.

I really don't get it why multiculturalism is always discussed as a question of immigration, thus assuming there is a homogeneous German culture. We, the members of the Manege-team, share much more socially and politically than each of us shares with his or her society of origin. Besides, "multiculturalism" is always being addressed in discourses about development, in processes that try to define backwardness and progress and assign certain people to various "stages". Therefore, the parents of these young people increasingly understand multiculturalism as nationalism. Since the culture of the "other" is perceived as backward and radical, they are expected to give up their own culture and adopt a new one. There is no cultural exchange, you are always being questioned about the negative aspects of your culture of origin. As a consequence, many of these young people regard "integration" as assimilation and ask why no one discusses the many possibilities of cultural exchange.

Under the circumstances, it is very difficult to work with women and young girls of Middle Eastern origin in public institutions. At the youth center we have as many girls as

boys. This is often not the case, it is actually a great accomplishment. Many of these young girls are the sisters of our male participants and that makes the work much easier for me. If we want to offer girls a "better life" than the life their mothers had I think we have to work *with* the girls and the boys together in a careful, understanding and enlightening way. In the 90s we had to intensively debate the issue of arranged marriages at the Manege but this is no longer the case. I know the parents and I think that much has changed in their lifestyle: today the girls can finish high school and then go to work. These processes require a lot of time and patience, that's the only way to work with them and make life better.

Lisa

I first met Osman three years ago. I was looking for a place for a feminist debate – "Who cares? Queer feminism and economic critique" – and asked him about the possibility of doing it in one of the rooms at the Manege. We, the organizers of that event, were trying to subvert social divisions caused by racism by holding our debates in places that were unfamiliar to us. Therefore, outside university and not at the usual locations of the mainstream German political landscape in Berlin-Neukölln. After some initial hesitation from both sides, that event took place at the Manege. Six months later (in the meantime I had finished my studies in Sociology), I decided to return to the youth center for a practical training. My personal interest in youth subcultures and in working with young people from my neighborhood influenced my decision, and so did my curiosity over the dynamic between racism and feminism. Unconsciously, I guess I wanted to experience what happens when I, a radical feminist of German descent, get in a place like the Manege: how will people react at me, what kind of confrontations will I face? Simultaneously, I also wanted to know what would happen with my thinking, and especially with my language and actions the moment I plunge in this everyday world. I was also looking for inspiration. I was interested in establishing connections where the mainstream discourse only pointed at incompatibilities.

At the beginning I didn't intend to work there for a long time, but now we have two years of close cooperation behind us. This long period of political commitment and resistance were shaped by experiences of racism and the social and political exclusion that affects the children and teenagers at the center. We've had many disputes within the team and with the participants about various social and political issues. We have very tense months behind us, in terms of political engagement, but also of friendship. The topic of women's rights and their xenophobic instrumentalization has been with us constantly.

My colleagues usually describe my role in the Manege as follows: I'm charged with initiating political processes and conflicts, I'm a sort of guide to the German mainstream

society and a discussion partner. In my work with the children and the teenagers I try to establish a culture of dialogue where self-determination, social orientation, as well as political awareness are at the forefront. I don't think that I am a role model for the girls, perhaps for some of the older boys. I know that for many there I, as a woman, represent a contrasting experience in terms of appearance, looks and self-image. Therefore I was often confronted with challenges, questions and exclusion. Especially the girls use the contact with me to define themselves and to explain why they are not like me. These are very important conversations because here they have the chance to describe themselves, to mirror and recognize that not everyone is like them and that this is not bad. These experiences are very close to what I experienced in my youth in the German Western province. Also, among citizens of German descent, my way of being diverges from the representations and norms regulating what a girl/woman should be. My otherness was met in the Manege with much questioning, but never with aggressive exclusion. That was different during my youth.

Oppression of Women

So far I did not witness cases of forced marriages at the Manege. Here we come across above all the sexual division of labor and limitations in everyday activities.

Strict gender roles, oppression of women and violence against women are part of the experiences of almost every teenager, whether from an immigration background or of German descent. But we tend to interpret the forms they assume in relation to geographic and cultural backgrounds. The patriarchal relations and the family structure under which our teenagers and children live are understood in relation with Islam. But I believe that their background is not so much defined by religion but by the traditions and history of their families and by the mafia-like economic structures (ban from working and precarious immigration status for decades) that bring about social exclusion. We should also look at the biographies of the male family members of our boys and see how they, seen as "Arab foreigners", have no alternative role models. Unconscious moments of self-assertion, such as superficial notions of honor, belonging, masculinity, loyalty and strength do not actually derive from religious beliefs; they rather provide unique opportunities for asserting identity and staging "real masculinity" in a context of migration, where an identity of "otherness" is being constantly imposed on them. Although different, the identification of many girls with role models from their communities of origin is also heavily shaped by an opposition to German society. This means that girls stand by their roles and don't like to see them being criticized from outside, even when disadvantages are involved.

At the Manege I came across the issue of forced marriage only once. It was during a conversation with 9 year-old Batoul, who explained to me, without being asked, what a

forced marriage was and that many Germans thought that all Muslim girls married that way. According to her young knowledge of the Islamic religion, forced marriages were *haram*, i.e. a sin. I think that her interest in the issue had nothing to do with any real threat for her, but rather with an assumption that, as a Muslim girl, she should deal with that question and she should distance herself from the potential misrepresentation as oppressed. Astonishing for a 9 year-old.

We surely know that in the wider environment of our children and teenagers there are cases of forced marriages and massive restrictions on their female family members. But we also know that people talk about a "family drama" when a man of German descent kills "his" wife and "his" children, but when the murderer is an Arab, a Kurd, an Albanian or a Turk then people talk of "honor killing". You cannot have a real confrontation with patriarchy and male domination on such terms. On the contrary, you see young people caught up in a debate where different degrees of gender freedom are weighted and used to determine their value as people and their entitlement to participation. This is tragic especially because it becomes almost impossible for these young people to understand the politics behind the pressure on identity, and to develop alternatives. Some manage it, but most of them fall into a situation where they affirm alleged cultural values from their original background, which they assign to Islam. This is a terrible dilemma and deadlocks the educational work, since discussions about gender roles and emancipation cannot be detached from experiences of racist abuse and exclusion. Last summer at the Manege I was in charge of the case of a young mother who, after more than 20 years in Germany, risked being deported to the country of her parents. The official at the immigration office argued that, although the income of her husband (and father of her daughter) was enough for the needs of the family, women work in Germany and therefore, as a proof of a successful integration, she should have an employment and an income to support herself and her daughter. At that time, a law had just been adopted in Germany, which provided for a childcare allowance for mothers who want to raise their children at home – rather than in a nursery – when they reached the age of one: a government subsidy for the return of (German) mothers to the family role outside the labor market. It is precisely this kind of double standards that makes progressive work with girls and boys from Muslim families almost impossible.

I believe in the absolute right of every human being to integrity and personal development, but I know that it makes little sense to try and apply objective standards of emancipation on individuals, since this may differ from their wishes and interest. Feminist practices of support and counseling are based precisely on the basic premise that we should start from the needs formulated by the affected and we should empower them to find out and define what they want and need by themselves. This may be a long process,

since victims of gender violence have often been denied the development of their own will and the possibility of affirming it. Nevertheless, feminist counseling should reject paternalistic forms of advice and intervention in how someone should break from an oppressive situation. That would ultimately undermine the process of liberation and emancipation and deepen external control. This means that we have to accept it if the person concerned identifies her/his self with the collective interests of her/his environment, family, partner, girl/boyfriend and does not think as an individual, even if this may harm her/him. Each individual solves the conflict "individual" versus "cultural collective" differently. It would be unthinkable for us to deny assistance to someone looking for support by invoking his/her cultural specificity, but we do try to favor processes of self-assertion that do not collide with the background of the children and teenagers concerned, because we think that these kind of approaches enable more stable changes. We try to support their education and to strengthen their personality and potentialities through theater, music, craft and art. Abusive comments on girls and women are not accepted, nor are pseudo religious justifications.

THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

The ability of public institutions such as schools to intervene in a sensitive and non-racist way in patriarchal and sexist situations would require that the objective be the emancipation of girls and not any sort of racist integration/adaptation. The German school system would have to commit itself to the tradition of feminist social critique, which ultimately precedes democratic gender programs, so proudly invoked when the differences with Muslim migrants are emphasized. An intensive analysis of the methods of feminist practices of support would also be needed, as well as an examination of anti-feminist tendencies and political forces in the German society. The patriarchal structure of the German family model should be openly discussed, as well as the privileges that are granted to male adolescents. The hypersexualization of female bodies and destructive beauty norms and their social and cultural background should also be questioned. As long as girls in sport and swimming classes have to feel pain and shame under the eyes of their classmates and teachers because of their bodies (too fat, too feminine, unfeminine, always sexualized), I cannot seriously ask a veiled girl to undress herself. Even if I want so much to see her swimming and feeling empowered in a sports competition. Self-assertion among girls and anti-patriarchal emancipation are not European inventions. But schools curricula don't include Islamic feminists; the history of the German women's movement is also barely present there. In my literature classes at high school I only read male authors.

In the construction of Muslims as the "absolute" others, who are measured by degrees of freedom in terms of gender, European society looks at itself in the mirror and sees its actual self: a patriarchal society. It would be extremely helpful to highlight similarities – negative, in this case – and to discuss and change them together, instead of insisting on differences.

OSMAN TEKIN

Osman Tekin, born 1987, looks back on seven years of community work in the youth club Manege and its broader context. Growing up in Berlin right in the neighborhood of Nord-Neukölln he has first-hand knowledge of the issues and challenges concerning the young people visiting Manege. He is an undergraduate student at the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences studying Social Work with a scholarship of the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung.

LISA GABRIEL

Lisa Gabriel, born 1983, moved to Berlin from a small town in West Germany 11 years ago. She has a two majors Master degree in Sociology of the Military and National Economics. She has been working in the Manege youth center since three years. Besides that, she is contributing to the working group War and Gender at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research as a freelancer and plans on starting with her PHD by the end of this year.

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