



For activists and academics — and everyone in between

Who Said This?

"There is no benefit for you my girl nor advantage for a man to separate your potentials. You should rise and be his help and his associate for you will be a good mother as much as he will be a good father; you will be a good citizen as much as he will be one. You will be if you want a doctor, a teacher, an engineer, a lawyer, like him. You will be an enlightened and educated woman capable of establishing a home, creating a society, and building a nation."*

Saniyya Habboub
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AMEWS Members Discuss Regional Crises in the Middle East, BDS at WOCMES

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Opportunities

Call for Papers

Columbia University Conference:
*Radical Increments: Toward New
Platforms of Engaging Iraqi Studies.*
New York, 27-28 February, 2015.

Abstract Submission Deadline:

November 25, 2014. Click [here](#) to know more about the conference.

Call for Papers & Posters

The Transitional Justice Institute, and the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences at the University of Ulster, invite proposals for a one-day postgraduate symposium on *Occupation, Transitional Justice and Gender* to be held on May 8, 2015.

Abstract Submission Deadline:

December 31, 2014. Click [here](#) to know more about the symposium.

Race, Gender and Rescue: Reading News about Palestine, Iraq, and Syria

It was supposed to be about the women. When the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, Westerners were exposed to a media and US administration propaganda campaign that had us believe that Iraq was responsible for the events of September 11, 2001. Proponents of the war argued that the invasions of both Iraq and Afghanistan were justified by those events and that both states were suffering under the rule of militant Muslim men whose intent was to control and limit not only the

women of Afghanistan as they were presently doing, but, as Laura Bush claimed, also had imperialist intentions and would next similarly oppress Western women (CNN.com, 2001). As the Western media and US administration would have it, through invasion and subsequent occupation, the Western coalition was "saving brown women from brown men (Spivak, 1988)." Western militaries, were thus positioned as the rescuers of Muslim women whether they wanted or needed saving.

As effective a public relations or media campaign it was, the US invasion and occupation did not

work. Western troops did not rescue women in either Afghanistan or Iraq. On the contrary, the lives of women in Iraq deteriorated as soon as American troops arrived and worsened as the invasion of Iraq was followed by the insurgency and then incessant waves of internal fighting (Khouri 2014, Al Ali 2009). Rescue narratives play an important role in upholding the believed supremacy of Western masculinity, and they appear and disappear depending on strategic necessity. In Palestine for example, this narrative was not invoked because it could not further US and Israeli interests. Still rescue narratives are strategically deployed again and again in other contexts as competing masculinities are at the heart of most armed conflict.

Even though the US has refused to see itself as anything but a savior in the region, the Western media and government have essentially looked the other way while hanging on to the rhetoric of rescue as thousands of Palestinian and Syrian women continue to be endangered and killed. In the *Washington Post* in the Fall of 2013, conservative pundit Michele Bernard tried to rally support for US involvement in the war in Syria by suggesting that Syrian women were in need of rescue. No one listened and Syrian women remained invisible in the West. In the Summer of 2014 in contrast, Westerners began to be exposed to a barrage of images of suffering Palestinian women who wept on the pages of newspapers, on

websites, on the TV news and in magazines over the deaths of their family members by Israeli bombardment. No compulsion to rescue, however, was articulated. One would be tempted to believe the rescue narratives had disappeared but subsequent remarks by Barack Obama about Iraq prove that this is not the case. Rather, the politics of US involvement in the Palestine Israel conflict rendered the government and media temporarily speechless on the topic of saving women. That is, it is trickier to rescue women upon whom American made bombs are dropping. When the bombardiers are our closest allies in the region, we go silent.

Similarly, in spite of persistent reports that ISIS is particularly brutal towards women, stories about brutality towards women have been buried inside larger stories about the threat of ISIS generally or altogether ignored by Western media. Women in Syria and Iraq have been reportedly killed, maimed, raped (Gledhill, 2014), sold into slavery on the one hand (Esfandiari 2014, Ahmed, 2014), blindly offered for recreation for ISIS fighters or recruited virgins and widows who would marry other Islamic State fighters (Sridharan, 2014, Tanzeem, 2014) on the other. As the logic of transnational sexism would have it, some of these women are victims, some are duped, still others are brainwashed.

Because of visibility/invisibility problems of women in these wars (Riley, 2008), Westerners

might not be fully aware of some of the faceless, disembodied women for whom the “war on terror” has meant unwanted notoriety, loss of loved ones, false accusations, displacement from home, and demonization. Contact with the West in the form of government and media attention has meant that the few women who actually have the attention of the Western media—most women don’t - further lose their identity as persons. This lack of identification, misidentification, or renaming has its roots in the history of colonialism, in Orientalism, and in what I call transnational sexism (Riley, 2013). Transnational sexism is the deployment, use, and propagation of ideas about Muslim women to Western audiences through popular culture. Transnational sexism assumes Muslim women oppression, yet it is simultaneously contradictory: it imagines Muslim women to be objects or victims in need of rescue of local patriarchs while also imagining these very same Muslim women to be subjects of terror and fear as suicide bombers or weapons creators. These contrasts hinge on constructions of race, along with the practices of gender such as prescribed dress, masculine and feminine customs, etc . The ideas about gender encompassed in transnational sexism help construct and maintain ideas about masculinity as well as femininity. So in this instance, in order for Muslim women to be victims or dupes, Muslim men must be manipulative, conniving, and misogynist.

The invisibility problem rears its head this time in

that in the buildup to a renewed war in Iraq, women disappear and now it is all about the beheadings. Still, if there is any truth to any of these accounts, and apparently the UN thinks there is or at least has sent a team to investigate it, shouldn’t we be equally outraged about this treatment of women as we are about the beheadings? When James Foley and then Steven Sotloff were beheaded by the group that calls themselves ISIS, outrage within the US was profound. The day after the murder of James Foley, Barack Obama gave a speech in which he drew on Orientalist ideas to outline the contrasts between ISIS fighters and all others. He also trotted out the old rescue narratives of the Islamic threat towards women.

Jim Foley's life stands in stark contrast to his killers. Let's be clear about ISIL (The US government insists on referring to the group as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant). They have rampaged across cities and villages killing innocent unarmed civilians in cowardly acts of violence. They abduct women and children and expose them to torture and rape and slavery. They declare their ambition to commit genocide.

In his speech to the United Nations on September 10, he reiterated: “They kill children. They enslave, rape, and force women into marriage.” Now you see dead women now you don’t. Here women’s well-being is an issue but when Palestinian women were being killed by the thousands, women’s lives didn’t matter. Perhaps James Foley’s life stands in contrast to the actions Obama points to, but certainly the presence of

Western militaries in Iraq has caused or contributed to all the atrocities he mentions (Khouri, 2014). Is it James Foley and Steven Sotloff's maleness and their whiteness that produces such outrage? Does their occupation as journalists mean that the media reacts differently to their deaths? If so what does this tell us about our own morality in the West? Our status as saviors?

The brutality of the beheadings shocks us and keeps us from thinking clearly about gender and war. It is only through refusing this shock and disgust that we might be able to view the beheadings as not ahistorical, as coming out of a tradition and as a reaction to other systemic violences and brutalities. Beheadings have been used as punishment for centuries around the world and are still sanctioned by some states in the region (Khouri, 2014). Other state-sanctioned killings are quite barbaric yet we have no similar reaction to lethal injection or electrocution.

These beheadings can only be understood in the context of transnational sexism, militarized masculinity, and the history of colonialism and perhaps a more recent history of colonialism – the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan by Western forces. So then we must ask if the beheadings represent a return to an earlier version of militarized masculinity - a close up war, two men in the desert, one has a sword - as opposed to drone strikes - so-called “surgical”

killing where the bomber does not literally have blood on their hands? In perpetrating these heinous acts, are the ISIS executioners unconsciously one-upping Western militarized masculinity? Have we in the West become so accustomed to deaths from war occurring in a distant land outside our consciousness of death, destruction, blood and chaos that these killings seem intolerable? Or is this simply once again about competing versions of masculinity? A contest in which women frequently provide the justification and then always pay the highest price -often invisibly.

Robin Lee Riley, Ph.D.

She is Assistant Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Syracuse University. She is author of *Depicting the Veil: Transnational Sexism and the War on Terror* 2013, She co-edited with Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Minnie Bruce Pratt *Feminism and War Confronting US Imperialism* 2008, and *Interrogating Imperialism: Conversations on Gender, Race, and War* 2006 with Naeem Inayatullah.

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NGO Highlight

The Association Marocaine de Planification Familiale (AMPF)

It is a non-governmental organization established in 1971 in Morocco. The organization promotes a national population policy to highlight the benefits of familial planning. There is also focus on male awareness of gender issues to improve the status of women in Morocco.

Click [here](#) to know more about the organization.

People: A New Feature by Women's Worlds in Qajar Iran

[Women's Worlds in Qajar Iran](#), has launched a new feature: [People](#).

Every person in our database now has a page, displaying all the information we have on that person.

A dynamic visual timeline of relevant events, a biography that may come in both short and long versions, and hyperlinks to related people and items will offer all scholars a clearer view of the world inhabited by the individuals in our archive.

AMEWS Members Discuss Regional Crisis in the Middle East, BDS at WOCMES

On 19 August 2014, AMEWS members gathered for an informal meeting held at the [Fourth World Congress for Middle East Studies \(WOCMES\)](#) in Ankara, Turkey.

Organised by Nadjie Al-Ali (SOAS, University of London), the meeting invited members to speak about issues of concern to the Association, particularly focusing on solidarity statements in relation to the summer's events in Gaza, Iraq and Syria. While AMEWS formally issued two separate statements concerning Gaza ([AMEWS Open Letter on the Humanitarian Disaster in Gaza](#)) and Iraq ([AMEWS Open Letter on the Crisis in Iraq](#)) on 27 July and 16 August, respectively, the meeting in Ankara provided an opportunity for members to discuss how to organise and take action beyond these letters.

During the meeting discussion focused on two significant issues, which have become central to the activist agenda of AMEWS. The first issue raised was how to 'gender' the [Boycott Divestment and Sanctions \(BDS\) movement](#) and make this a feminist issue, in the wake of the decision taken by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to fire [Steven Salaita](#) for his critical view of Israel's July 2014 assault on the Gaza Strip. Members from Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France and the United States relayed their understandings of public debates around Israel-Palestine, and made visible the complexity surrounding individual, organisational

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- Access to the AMEWS E-bulletin
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and institutional actions to support BDS and the [Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel](#) (PACBI). Remaining resolute in our commitment to BDS and PACBI, the assembled members discussed substantive strategies for action to be pursued by AMEWS, from circulating relevant resources by colleagues – such as the recent special issue of ‘feminists@law’ (Vol. 4, No. 1) featuring four articles on ‘[BDS as a Feminist Issue](#)’ – to ensuring a discussion of BDS from a feminist approach during the coming [MESA meeting](#) in Washington, D.C.

The second strand of discussion centred on how AMEWS can and must continue to react to crises in Gaza, Iraq and Syria, where ongoing conflict and violence escalated significantly during summer 2014. As feminist scholars, analysts and activists, members grappled with the questions of *what to call for* and *in what language* as war shatters everyday lives, and communities face increasing persecution. Many of those present described how these queries become personal and political quandaries when faced with a ‘solution’ involving foreign intervention and military action, familiar from campaigns conducted in Iraq by US and coalition forces in the early 1990s and again beginning in 2003. Rather than succumbing to disillusionment, paralysis or silence given the complexities and contingencies of these regional crises, however, members of AMEWS used the meeting as a forum to voice their concerns while at the same time reaffirming a collective

commitment to action. Here members discussed strategies to support colleagues and communities in the region, including donating funds to select organisations and using the monthly E-bulletin as a platform for op-eds that grapple with the complexities of continuing crises.

Through intense discussion, the assembled members of AMEWS demonstrated how the imperative for action remains, even as complex and sometimes paradoxical events create confusion or generate feelings of helplessness – indeed, in these moments collective action may be all the more urgent. Importantly, as a community of feminist scholars AMEWS provides a forum in which admissions of uncertainty can be articulated in a way that galvanises action, rather than contributing to stasis. As Frances Hasso (Duke University) expressed, here we might foster a “confident ambivalent voice” that draws attention to complexity and adds nuance to debates as we challenge the often all-too-certain voices shaping political policy and practice. It is in this community and will to action that many AMEWS members continue to find strength in dark moments – as Mary Hegland (Santa Clara University) wrote in the days preceding the meeting, “the activism of AMEWS has been one of the sources of hope.”*

*AMEWS list e-mail communication from 13 August, 2014.

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Who is She?



Saniyya Habboub (1899-1983) is the first Lebanese woman Doctor to study medicine abroad and the first Lebanese woman Doctor to open her clinic, in down town Beirut, in 1932. Saniyya Habboub belongs to the generation of our grandmothers who had to fight for their secondary and higher education. Although she did her primary and secondary schooling at the British school and then at the American School for Girls, and then moved to Junior College (presently, LAU), Habboub was not welcome at the American University of Beirut to study medicine. The cloak (*malaya*) which Habboub wore, at the time, was part of the dress code of all Lebanese women, whether Jewish, Christian or Muslim. The battle over veiling or unveiling, broached earlier in Egypt (see, Qassim Amin's *Tahrir al-Mar'a*, 1899 and Malak

Hifni Nasef's *al-Nisa' iyyat*, 1910) was not yet a controversial issue in the Lebanese society and Habboub's generation. Although the dress code was a symbol of separation between public and private sectors, this code was not the reason why she was prevented from studying medicine at AUB. It was a faction of AUB faculty and society who was not ready to accept a female colleague studying medicine on equal terms with male students, which convinced Habboub to leave AUB campus.

Saniyya travelled by ship on her own to the US to study medicine; she received her medical degree from Western College, Cincinnati. She then moved to Philadelphia University where she specialized in Gynecology, and where she enjoyed special attention from the medical school administrators and professors. On her graduation day, as a form of tribute paid to her by the University, Professor Philip K. Hitti, the famous author of *History of the Arabs* (first edition, 1937) and professor at Princeton University was invited to give the commencement address. Hitti was honored to have been invited on this occasion. After graduation, Dr. Habboub showed her gratitude by giving a scholarship in her name, with the sum she had collected after giving lectures at different Universities in the United States.

Dr. Saniyya Habboub opened her clinic at Bab Idriss, in down town Beirut in 1932. She practiced medicine for fifty years and many women of different parts of Lebanon, rich and poor, came to her for child delivery and for medical treatment and advise. Dr. Habboub was also famous for her work with the Islamic Shari'a court, where she used to give medical reports on girls to approve or disapprove of their marriages, in case a girl did not reach legal age for marriage. This was a requirement of the Islamic court, indicative at the time of a policy that is progressive.

Dr. Saniyya Habboub married Muhammad al-Naqqash, a journalist, and they had two daughters, Saniyya and 'Effat, and two granddaughters, Leila, a historian and Zaynab, an architect.

A pioneer in education and the medical field, Dr. Habboub found time to volunteer at the Red Cross and at the boards of Maqasid Hospital and the Islamic Orphanage Home never failing to be an exemplar to Arab women in medicine and society. Dr. Saniyya Habboub was awarded the "Health Medal of Merit" in 1982. A street in Ramlet al-Bayda' in Beirut was also named after her, Saniyya Habboub street.

Hosn Abboud, Ph.D.

Author and lecturer on gender issues in Islam and literature

*The statement is part of a speech addressed to young female University students, published in *An-Nahar* daily newspaper, 1948. See, "Dr. Saniyya Habboub: Death of a Pioneer," trans. by W. Stephen, in *al-Raida*, Nov. 1, 1983, vol.6, no. 26, pp.4-5.

The Hillary Rodham Clinton Center for Women's Empowerment (HCC)

The Hillary Rodham Clinton Center for Women's Empowerment (HCC) at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane (AUI) in Morocco recently received a MEPI (Middle East Partnership Initiative) grant to assess women-focused NGO, create an online portal so that NGO's can share information and ideas and conduct capacity-building workshops.

A second grant from British Council has the goal of mentoring emerging scholars in North Africa whose research focus is on gender, law and social change. Thus the HCC is broadening its scope of activities and will produce applied cutting-edge research on gender issues in the Maghreb.



The HCC team from left: Drs Katja Žvan-Elliott, Amal Idrissi, Nadia Sonneveld, Driss Maghraoui, Doris Gray, Kenza Oumlil



The HCC team from left: Drs. Katja Žvan-Elliott, Amal Idrissi, Nadia Sonneveld, Doris Gray, Driss Maghraoui, Kenza Oumlil (standing)

**credit photos to Jake Warga*

The Women's Learning Partnership

(WLP) collaborates with partner organization in 20 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East to develop culturally adaptable, specific skills-building training curriculum in more than 20 languages. WLP's training materials are meeting a critical need for locally relevant, adaptable material on women's rights and democratic values, and are being used by activists, civil society organizations, universities, and civil servants across the globe to build the capacity of their constituents.



Because Our Cause is Just, WLP's new film on the backlash against women's rights in the Middle East and North Africa region

during this period of political transition, and what is being done in response. This film is bolstering the capacity of civil society organizations, especially those in the MENA, to raise awareness of the critical link between women's rights and achieving true democracies. The film has recently been released in French and Persian, and is also available in English and Arabic.

From Fear to Freedom: Ending Violence Against Women, a documentary film, features leading experts and activists from across the globe discussing the root causes of gender-based



violence, sharing strategies to combat it, and providing inspiring accounts of the important milestones already achieved through the international women's movement. *From Fear to Freedom* has been released with Urdu subtitles, and is also available in English, Arabic, French, Persian, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish.



Leading to Action: A Political Participation Handbook for Women is designed as a learning tool for women to become empowered actors in the political process, as

candidates, organizers, or voters. The content which ranges from practical skills such as media and communications tools, to social and ethical concerns specifically facing women in the political sphere, includes case studies addressing the political context and impact on campaigns for equal citizenship rights and family law reform. This manual has recently been published in Kyrgyz, Turkish, and Urdu, and is also available in Arabic, English, French, Persian, Russian, and Spanish.

Leading to Choices – A Multimedia Curriculum for Leadership Training WLP's multimedia curriculum is tailored for human rights and democracy activists, educators, women leaders, and facilitators who seek to



develop their own leadership skills, as well as women's

capacity for achieving their social, economic, and legal rights. It consists of three videos with accompanying guides. Interactive, scenario-based activities and illustrative examples demonstrate how to create participatory and democratic learning environments, implement successful advocacy campaigns, and develop compelling messages for target audiences. The multimedia curriculum has recently been released in Turkish and Urdu, and is also available in Arabic, English, French, Persian, and Russian.



Yes I Can!: Leadership for Teens, the first publication of the



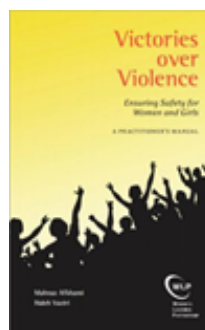
Young Women's Learning Partnership (YWLP) by WLP Bahrain/Be-Free Center, is a



leadership training manual

designed for youth ages 13-17.

The manual includes interactive workshop sessions that emphasize creativity, knowledge-sharing, and building partnerships to help young girls develop greater self-confidence, learn how to communicate effectively, and build leadership skills. The Turkish and Urdu editions of *Yes I Can!* have been recently published, and the manual is also available in Arabic, English, and French.



Victories over Violence: Ensuring Safety for Women and Girls is a practitioners' manual,

comprised of 10 sessions which covers violence at home or in the private sphere, the community

or public space, and the transnational and international arenas. The sessions address a variety of contexts in which gender-based violence occurs, including spousal abuse and workplace harassment, as well as cultural practices such as child marriage and honor killings. Additionally, it includes sections on women's roles in the peace and reconciliation process in international institutions, such as the United Nations. Case studies in each session are drawn from actual events and feature stories set in societies as diverse as Haiti, Malaysia, Nepal and the United States. The manual is available in English, French, and Persian.

****Check the following page to learn more about WLP 2013 and 2014 Curriculum and publications.***

Call for Papers

Symposium on Contemporary Issues in Knowledge Production: Identities, Mobilities, and Social Media organized by the Sudanese Knowledge Society [SKS], 18-19 February, Khartoum, Sudan.

Abstract Submission Deadline: October 30, 2014

Click [here](#) for more information about the Symposium.

Women's Learning Partnership: Curriculum and Publications

Recent Publications:

2014:

Because Our Cause is Just (French Edition), Women's Learning Partnership (2014; Bethesda, MD: Rainlake Productions), DVD.

Because Our Cause is Just (Persian Edition), Women's Learning Partnership (2014; Bethesda, MD: Rainlake Productions), DVD.

From Fear to Freedom: Ending Violence Against Women (Urdu Edition), Women's Learning Partnership (2014; Bethesda, MD: Rainlake Productions), DVD.

Leading to Action: Political Participation Handbook for Women (Kyrgyz Edition). Bethesda: Women's Learning Partnership, 2014.

Leading to Action: Political Participation Handbook for Women (Turkish Edition). Bethesda: Women's Learning Partnership, 2014.

Leading to Choices - A Multimedia Curriculum for Leadership Learning (Turkish Edition). Bethesda: Women's Learning Partnership, 2014.

Leading to Choices - A Multimedia Curriculum for Leadership Learning (Urdu Edition). Bethesda: Women's Learning Partnership, 2014.

Bahrain Women's Association Be Free Center. *Yes I Can! Leadership for Teens Ages 13-17 Years* (Turkish Edition). Bethesda: Women's Learning Partnership, 2014.

Bahrain Women's Association Be Free Center. *Yes I Can! Leadership for Teens Ages 13-17 Years* (Urdu Edition). Bethesda: Women's Learning Partnership, 2014.

2013:

Because Our Cause is Just (English Edition), Women's Learning Partnership (2013; Bethesda, MD: Rainlake Productions), DVD.

Because Our Cause is Just (Arabic Dubbed Edition), Women's Learning Partnership (2013; Bethesda, MD: Rainlake Productions), DVD.

From Fear to Freedom: Ending Violence Against Women (Russian Edition), Women's Learning Partnership (2013; Bethesda, MD: Rainlake Productions), DVD.

From Fear to Freedom: Ending Violence Against Women (Persian Edition), Women's Learning Partnership (2013; Bethesda, MD: Rainlake Productions), DVD.

From Fear to Freedom: Ending Violence Against Women (Portuguese Edition), Women's Learning Partnership (2013; Bethesda, MD: Rainlake Productions), DVD.

From Fear to Freedom: Ending Violence Against Women (Turkish Edition), Women's Learning Partnership (2013; Bethesda, MD: Rainlake Productions), DVD.

Leading to Choices - A Multimedia Curriculum for Leadership Learning (Portuguese Edition). Bethesda: Women's Learning Partnership, 2013.

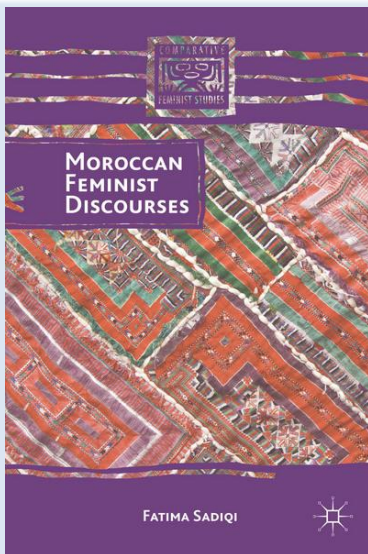
Leading to Choices - A Multimedia Curriculum for Leadership Learning (Indonesian Edition). Bethesda: Women's Learning Partnership, 2013.

Making IT Our Own: An Information and Communication Technologies Training of Trainers Manual (Russian Edition). Bethesda: Women's Learning Partnership, 2013.

Victories Over Violence: The Practitioner's Manual to Ensuring Safety for Women and Girls (French Edition). Bethesda: Women's Learning Partnership, 2013.

Victories Over Violence: The Practitioner's Manual to Ensuring Safety for Women and Girls (Persian Edition). Bethesda: Women's Learning Partnership, 2013.

Highlights



Moroccan Feminist Discourses

Author: Fatima Sadiqi

Year of Publication: 2014

Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan

This book is both scholarly and personal. It is scholarly because it addresses and assesses the current Moroccan feminist discourses, a topic the author has been involved with for almost three decades, and it is personal because it brings along her Berber identity and seeks to reposition it vis-à-vis these feminist discourses. Revisiting the Moroccan feminist discourses in the aftermath of the uprisings in the region which, among other things, brought about the spectacular change in the political status of Berber from an indigenous centuries-long marginalized language to an 'official language' of

Morocco came with serious challenges to the feminist discourses by highlighting the stark absence of Berber, a women-related language, in these discourses. The two recognized types of feminist discourse, the secular and Islamic ones, are not only divergent but suffer from a shortage in scope and discard the rich heritage, knowledge, and art that Berber women bring along to the Moroccan feminist discourses.

Fatima Sadiqi is Professor of Linguistics and Gender Studies and Founder of the Center for Studies and Research on Women at Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Morocco. She is the author of *Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco* and the editor of *Women and Knowledge in the Mediterranean*, *Women in the Middle East and North Africa: Agents of Change*, and *Women Writing Africa*.

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