THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN:
A VISION FOR HUMAN SECURITY

O EMPODERAMENTO DAS MULHERES:
UMA VISÃO PARA A SEGURANÇA HUMANA

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ABSTRACT:

The main objective of this paper is to analyze the insertion of women in education, new technologies of information and telecommunication, as well as in employment, breaking out the patriarchal structure especially in the Muslim world. It rests in the fact that in a relatively short time, women and their advocates have transformed the way-gendered-based violence is understood, and have promoted international documents and treaties that recognize women's rights to live free of discrimination, violence and fundamentalists concepts. Theoretically, it focuses on the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000). Women's experiences in Latin America, Asia and Africa are highlighted and show that the implementation of new paths for the insertion of women have changed some articles of the Civil Code, the High Council of Judicial Development for the revision of the Civil and Family Code, together with the Presidential Center for the Participation of Women for the implementation of the Project for the Reformation of the Women Comprehensive Legal and Judicial System so that women can step forward acquiring all the necessary abilities to insert themselves in a world free from the ravages of violence perpetrated by religious fundamentalists. This movement has been challenged by non-fundamentalist women who are claiming equality in society. The basic structures of society cannot be changed overnight, but each step in the ongoing effort to eradicate violence puts more pressure on those who condone the violence and education prohibitions and allow it to exist. This is the moment for a renewed commitment to build on the achievements of the last decade and find the resources for meaningful action. Without this commitment, much of what has been achieved may be lost. That would be a tragedy for all of us, since, as we have learned, women's security is tied to global security

Keywords:

Gender equality and empowerment; digital democracy; electoral politics and civic engagement; ict new developments; efence feminist movement.

Resumo:

O objetivo principal deste artigo é analisar a inserção da mulher na educação, nas novas tecnologias de informação e telecomunicações, bem como no emprego, rompendo com a estrutura patriarcal principalmente no mundo muçulmano. Assenta no fato de que, em um tempo relativamente curto, as mulheres e seus defensores transformaram a forma como a violência baseada em gênero é entendida e promoveram documentos e tratados internacionais que reconhecem os direitos das mulheres de viverem livres de discriminação, violência e conceitos fundamentalistas. Teoricamente, concentra-se na Plataforma de Ação de Pequim (1995) e no resultado do Vigésimo Terceiro Sessão Extraordinária da Assembleia Geral (2000). As experiências das mulheres na América Latina, Ásia e África são destacadas e mostram que a implementação de novos caminhos para a inserção da mulher alterou alguns artigos do Código Civil, do Conselho Superior de Desenvolvimento Judiciário para a revisão do Código Civil e de Família, juntos com o Centro Presidencial de Participação da Mulher para a implantação do Projeto de Reforma do Sistema Jurídico e Judiciário Integral à Mulher para que as mulheres possam avançar adquirindo todas as habilidades necessárias para se inserirem em um mundo livre dos estragos da violência perpetrada por fundamentalistas religiosos. Este movimento tem sido desafiado por mulheres não fundamentalistas que reivindicam igualdade na sociedade. As estruturas básicas da sociedade não podem ser mudadas da noite para o dia, mas cada passo no esforço contínuo para erradicar a violência coloca mais pressão sobre aqueles que toleram a violência e as proibições à educação e permitem que ela exista. Este é o momento para um compromisso renovado de construir sobre as conquistas da última década e encontrar os recursos para uma ação significativa. Sem esse compromisso, muito do que foi alcançado pode ser perdido. Isso seria uma tragédia para todos nós, pois, como aprendemos, a segurança das mulheres está vinculada à segurança global.

Palavras-chave:

Igualdade de gênero e empoderamento; democracia digital; política eleitoral e engajamento cívico; novos desenvolvimentos das TIC; movimento feminista islâmico.

1. Introduction

The main objective of this paper is to analyze the insertion of women in new technologies of information and telecommunication, which are essential tools for the consolidation of micro-entrepreneurs and high-level careers in the private sector and in public governmental institutions. Major development plans have been done by countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa, including

in the Islamic Republics, since the 1990's, identifying and elucidating the problems and difficulties of women offering appropriate solutions to the related organizations and working eagerly in their implementation. The Ministry of ICT and Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs as well as the Presidential Center for Participation of Women (CPW), in the Republic of Iran, in Kuwait, in Indonesia, are institutionalizing the gender approach and its incorporation into the Fourth Development Plan of education, cultural affairs, economic participation, women legal affairs, expansion of women non-governmental organizations (NGOs), encompassing all the points of Platform of Action, an agenda for the development of women and its insertion into the objectives of the Millennium Development, as well as paving for Islamic countries the way to join the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), not limiting the efforts to remove hurdles so that women achieve highest levels of development and insertion into the formal economic system. The research establishes interrelated issues that question the concepts of social capital, empowerment, freedom, violence, and gender discrimination.

2.   GENDER RELATIONS, INCLUSION AND EQUALITY IN LATIN AMERICA AND ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

Women's experiences in Latin American, Asia and Africa are highlighted and show that the implementation of new paths for the insertion of women have changed some articles of the Civil Code, the High Council of Judicial Development for the revision of the Civil and Family Code, together with the Presidential Center for the Participation of Women for the implementation of the Project for the Reformation of the Women Comprehensive Legal and Judicial System so that women could step forward acquiring all the necessary abilities to broaden their expertise in IT and ICTs, including Islamic countries. Governmental authorities are dedicated to the empowerment and the advancement of women in business, academic activities, international telecommunications and politics.

As main results, technological advancement and the rise of new media will expand the access to political information on a large scale and will lead to innovations in democratic structure

and functioning across the globe. Inserting women in political causes, will diminish gender and economic inequalities, promoting their participation in civil society activities. Along with the analysis of major challenges and perspectives, it offers policy recommendations based on major initiatives being taken by Asian countries.

According to the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (2005) the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as a tool for development has attracted the sustained attention of the United Nations over recent years. Strategic partnerships have been developed with donors, the private sector and civil society, working groups and task forces have been established to enhance interagency collaboration throughout the United Nations system.

In 2000, the Economic and Social Council adopted a Ministerial Declaration on the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based economy (UN, 2000, para. 6). In 2001, the Secretary-General established a high-level Information and Communication Technologies Task Force to provide overall leadership to the United Nations on the formulation of strategies to put ICT at the service of development. The Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000 underscored the urgency of ensuring that women should achieve progress across regions and countries, in truth the Platform for Action have not been fully achieved and implemented, and further actions and initiatives are necessary to ensure that commitments for gender equality, development and peace are fully realized.

Although significant achievements have been made on many of the MDG targets worldwide, progress has been uneven across regions and countries, leaving significant gaps. Millions of people are being left behind, especially the poorest and those disadvantaged because of their sex, age, disability, ethnicity or geographic location. Targeted efforts will be needed to reach the most vulnerable people.

Women continue to face discrimination in access to work, economic assets and participation in private and public decision-making. Women are also more likely to live in poverty than men. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the ratio of women to men in poor households increased from 108 women for every 100 men in 2017 to 117 women for every 100 men in 2018, despite declining poverty rates for the whole region. Women remain at a disadvantage in the labour market. Globally, about three quarters of working-age men participate in the labour force, compared to

only half of working-age women. Women earn 24 per cent less than men globally. In 85 per cent of the 92 countries with data on unemployment rates by level of education for the years 2017–2019, women with advanced education have higher rates of unemployment than men with similar levels of education. Despite continuous progress, today the world still has far to go towards equal gender representation in private and public decision-making.

3.   CONTEMPORARY CHANGES OF ISLAMIC FEMINISM

Focusing on women's continuous progress, this essay will point out the necessity of changing the ancient patterns that condemn women to ignorance, invisibility and gender-based violence, especially on fundamentalists Islamic countries.

Our knowledge of women's lives and the danger they live with informs of countries, villages, towns and cities where women are voiceless living with fundamentalists laws, and those men who are in favour of maintaining the patriarchal structure in the Muslim world. Most of these men are afraid of Islamic Feminism, a time-changing movement. However, the Islamic Feminism is not unique or uniform. The movement is quite the opposite and there are many voices. Even the Muslim women themselves can be afraid of the outcome of reshaping the actual order and structure of the Muslim society. Nevertheless, this topic focus on the fundamentalists as the primary response to the given question.

This answer is based on the perspective of the fundamentalist men seeking for one specific identity inside the Muslim World. However, this movement has been challenged by non-fundamentalist women who are claiming equality in society. This is a clear conflict of interest between these two distinct groups. As exemplified by Mernissi (2009, p. 207) "if fundamentalists are calling for the return of the veil, it must be because women have been taking of the veil". This statement comes across with the argument defended by this essay of the fundamentalist as those who are afraid of Islamic Feminism as an external force to undermine their identity vision of the Muslim world.

To address the given question properly, this unit will be structured in three subsections. The first will be dedicated to discussing how Islamic Feminism is challenging the classical view of the religion according to some important scholars, such as Fatema Mernissi and Amina Wadud. This unit also will address the message of equality extracted from the interpretation of the Quran and how it challenges the patriarchal Islamic society. The following section will be used to discuss why Islamic Feminism is perceived as a threat by the fundamentalists and those who are in favour of maintaining the male-dominated patriarchal structure. The last section will use a recent empirical case to explain and support the original claim. The aim here is present Malala, who clearly challenged the Taliban's role and rules and was shot in the head by a member of the fundamentalist group in Pakistan.
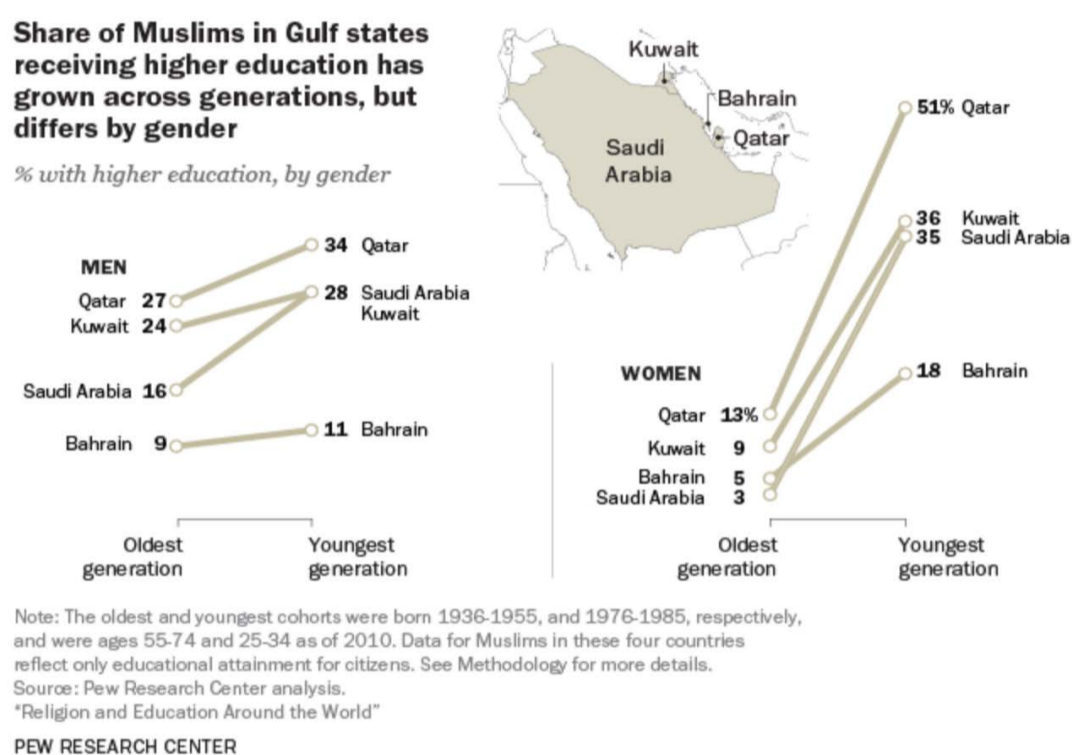
4. CHALLENGING THE CLASSIC VIEW OF THE ISLAM

In order to understand how Islamic Feminism is challenging the classical view of the religion, first it is necessary to clarify who are these two distinct groups which this essay will exemplify and bring them into context: fundamentalists and women. They emerged in the post-colonial period. Both are youth having the same range age and similar privileged access to educational institutions. However, the main difference is, the men are seeking for power through religion and enforcement of the beliefs and they came from the newly urbanized area and middle and lower-middle-class backgrounds. On the other hand, are the unveiled women, from in their majority, from urban areas and middle-class backgrounds (MERNISSI, 2009, p. 207).

Looking to the past, women have not been treated as equal to men since the beginning of the Islam in Arabia in early 600s. Despite the Islam says that men and women are equals in the sight of God, access to women are denied in some aspects of Islamic life (Esposito, 2019).

The slight access of women to universities comes during the 1800s (ESPOSITO, 2019) and this movement has been increasing recently. A study conducted by Pew Research shed light on this issue. According to the analyses, the youngest generation of Muslim (born from 1976 to 1985)

have more formal studies compared to the oldest generation (born from 1936 to 1955). Men still are more educated than women in the Muslim world. However, women have made more gains than the men and the gap is lower than was in the past, as per *Figure 1* below.

Figure 1 – The Educational Gap between Men and Women has been reducing in the Muslim World

Share of Muslims in Gulf states receiving higher education has grown across generations, but differs by gender

% with higher education, by gender

Note: The oldest and youngest cohorts were born 1936-1955, and 1976-1985, respectively, and were ages 55-74 and 25-34 as of 2010. Data for Muslims in these four countries reflect only educational attainment for citizens. See Methodology for more details.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis.
"Religion and Education Around the World"

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Source: *Pew Research Center*

Globally, Muslim gender gap in years of schooling has narrowed

Average years of schooling for Muslim men and women across three generations
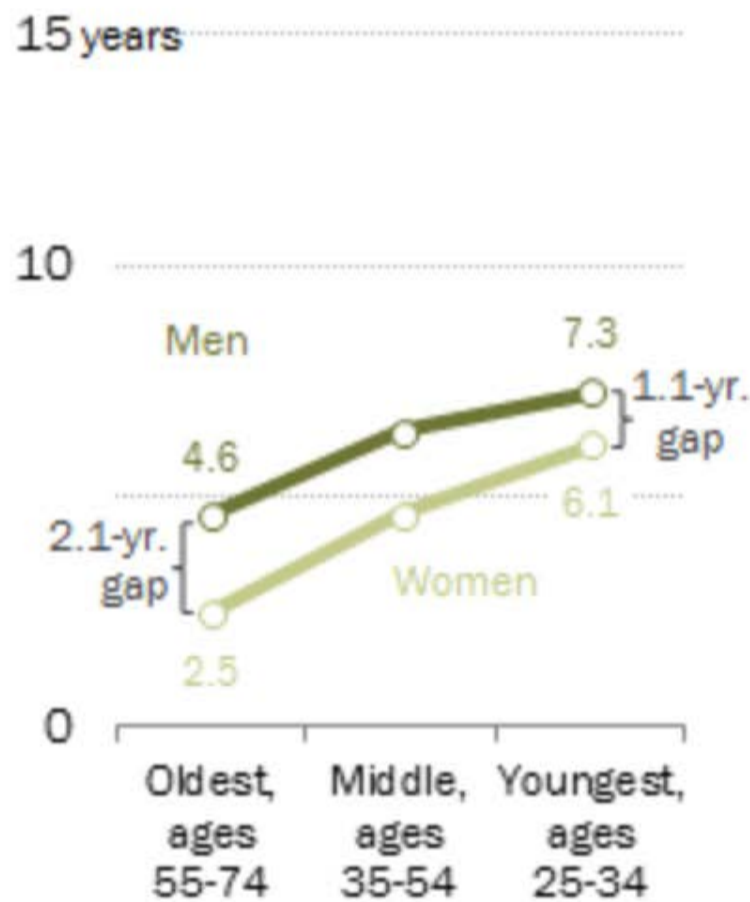
Note: The oldest, middle and youngest cohorts were born 1936-1955, 1956-1975 and 1976-1985, respectively, and were ages 55-74, 35-54 and 25-34 as of 2010. Gaps are calculated based on unrounded numbers.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis. See Methodology for more details.
"Religion and Education Around the World"

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If we look especially to some countries in the Gulf region, such as Qatar, Kuwait Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, more women hold post-secondary degrees than men, reversing the classical gender gap in the Muslim society as shown in **Figure 2**.

Why are these data so important to address the original statement given to this essay? Because, in the past of the Muslim world, knowledge and universities were restricted to the men of the elite. The mass access to the universities reveals a shift of distribution, management and utilization of knowledge and information. Mernissi emphasizes "And knowledge is power" (MERNISSI, 2009, p. 209).

Detailing these data, this essay intends to argue that access of the women to education is one the main preoccupation of the fundamentalists since places such as schools and universities are the main source of feeding knowledge of feminist to criticize and change the actual male-dominated structure. The education of women reshaped the traditional concepts, definition of space and sex roles (MERNISSI, 2009, p. 210). A new moment that, perhaps, not all the fundamentalists know how to deal with it and possible would call it as *fitna* (disorder) or would portrait the well-educated generation of women as the enemies of the Islam.

This access to knowledge also has been giving to women another possibility, which has been unexplored before, of reinterpreting the Qur'an. Wadud (2006, p. 202), for instance, goes deep in a qur'anic interpretation by deconstructing the idea of the Holy Book being gendered. Using Qur'an as her primary source of argument, she defends that Arabic grammar carries out gender marks which could potentially lead to a misinterpretation of gender attribution in the Qur'an. Wadud also offers enlightening interpretations by affirming that the Qur'an foresees women the right to inheritance, independent property, divorce, right to testify and prohibits the violence against women and girls (WADUD, 2006, p. 202).

However, the views presented by Wadud (2006) and Mernissi (2009) are not unique and uniform in the Muslim world. Islamic Feminism is complex and cannot be considered as an only-one-voice movement. There are several interpretations. If we consider the Egyptian activist, Zaynab al-Ghazali, she would argue that the debate is useless and it is only serving to give munition to the historical enemies of Islam, especially the Jews, and to divert the attention of the primary concern of the Muslims, which is to develop the *umma* (in Arabic: community) (HATEM, 2019). The point here is to show how divided the Islamic Feminism can be inside the Muslim world and a woman

also can be against the movement. Nonetheless, emphasis will stick with the original claim of the Muslim women reinterpreting the Islamic traditions and history, such as Omaima Abou Bakr. In her works, she proposed as, in order to struggle in favour of equality and to be meaningful, it needs to be used in a discriminating way to those who both, at the same time, criticized the Islamic tradition and created solutions based and inspirited by the Islamic values (HATEM, 2019). Abou Bakr shows her faith in Islam through the words and gives also an answer to the gender inequality found in her own religion, as follows:

> I thank God profusely for being a Muslim. Islam is a religion of truth, justice, equality and compassion. It does not sanction injustice or falsehood in the public level, in the social sphere, or even inside the family, at the individual level or in personal interactions. I also thank him for bestowing his blessing on me so that I am capable of reading his words, reflecting on and contemplating their glories, . . . for giving me a mind that understands, ponders and weighs thoughts and a heart that is full of his love and is desirous of his approval. . . . (HATEM, 2019).

This passage shows, explicitly, how the interpretation of Islam through the feminist perspective is done. Abou Bakr is not trying to get rid of the religion. Is quite the opposite. She starts thanking God for being part of the Muslim community, as a sign of reaffirmation of her faith. The following sentence justifies the origin of Islam as an answer to inequality reminding the real meaning of the religion. Hence, the next words are dedicated to showing how proud she is to be capable to understand, reflect and put into practice Allah's words. This approach could be extremely valuable to interpret gender perspective and understanding religious text from a Muslim woman's perspective (HATEM, 2019).

To challenge the classical view and traditions of Islam, the women or feminist activist go beyond than just getting access to the knowledge in universities and schools or Qur'anic reinterpretation of the Holy Scriptures. This process also involves recounting the history from a different perspective as, for instance, Aisha's biography, the Prophet's favorite wife. She is emphasized by the Islamic Feminists as having a major role as the army general during the famous Battle of the Camel (WADUD, 2006). Another important aspect is given by the fact that the Prophet Muhammed was also resting in her lap when received the Revelation (WADUD, 2006). The importance of Aisha may be not well highlighted by the men, especially the patriarchists and the fundamentalists. To the

Feminists, this is not randomly and the different representations, discourses and discussions about Aisha's role were part of a deconstructing process in order to achieve alternative definitions to the role that Arab women had in the past in the Islamic history (HATEM, 2019).

The debate and questions brought up by the feminists also target deep the occupation of public and male-dominated spaces. Amina Wadud was an example of how well-educated and empowered feminist may shake the given structures inside of the Islamic society. In an unprecedented move, in 1994, she delivered the Friday *Khutbah* (sermon) in Cape Town, South Africa. This role is traditionally done by men (Islam & feminism, 2019). By justifying this landmark changing, which generated widespread criticism for breaking the patriarchal rules, she said: "The *Qur'an* never says that the *imam* cannot be a woman and must be a man. Whenever there is a difference in the *ijtihad* (interpretation) of the Holy Books we must use our intelligence to understand the real meaning of Islam" (MERINGOLO, 2019).

The occupation of spaces, before dominated only by men, whether in politics, as head of states, in universities, school or in mosques, as Amina Wadud did, is a central issue of the feminist struggle. Mernissi (1997, p. 238) also conceptualized the idea of space by exemplifying the issue as saying that the women are disturbing as soon as they appear where they are not expected. And no one expects to see them in the place where decisions are made. And some men may resist sharing their power, and, at the same time, they are efenceless since this ongoing process is happening within the legitimate dominant culture (ASK; TJOMSLAND, 1998, p. 62). This movement may be considered as *fitna* (disorder), to the fundamentalists, and a source of threat for those who are holding power, as this essay is going to explore in the next section.

5. WHY IS THE ISLAMIC FEMINISM PERCEIVED AS THREAT BY THE FUNDA-MENTALISTS?

To start the discussion in this section, first, it is vital to understand who the fundamentalists are and what are their goals. The fundamentalists are present in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, India, Iran, Pakistan, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Algeria, Sudan and Palestine, where some organized groups have emerged, as a reaction to humiliation experienced by Middle Eastern societies under

the imperialism domination or influence of superpower (MOGHISSI, 1999, p. 67). This religious-political movement felt threatened by the destruction of traditional beliefs and practices in their society and the increasing cultural influence of the Western countries (MOGHISSI 1999, p. 68). As a solution, the supporters of this wing attempted to mobilize the Muslims against these external forces.

In generic terms, the fundamentalism is an approach towards the past. However, not a general past, but a specific and ideal past, which contrasts with the present. This retrieves to the past can be achieved by going back to an original text or by reformation of society to be built in a copy of the idealized past (MOGHISSI, 1999, p. 69). To save and reform this society, the fundamentalists seek to establish a truly Islamic society based on an interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and model that was vigorous after the initial Islamic states under the Prophet Muhammad and the four godly khalifs (MOGHISSI, 1999, p. 69). The fundamentalism anchors its views on the Islam as a totalizing force that rules all aspects of the human life in private and public spheres and, hence, are anti-modernity, anti-democracy and anti-feminism (MOGHISSI, 1999, p. 70).

From this point, it is possible to foresee a collision course of ideal between the fundamentalists and the Islamic feminists. As naturally anti-feminist, between fundamentalists, there is a common sense to perceive a threat from the changes in gender relations, triggered by the spread of capitalism and feminism. To control women and establish the authority of the patriarchal family are the primary goal in the fundamentalist utopia (MOGHISSI, 1999, p. 72).

The Islamic feminist movement is doing quite the opposite by questioning and facing the patriarchal structure in the Muslim world. The threat is posed to the fundamentalists also by the fact that the movement is more vocal and more willing than ever to discuss and reform the identity (WADUD, 2006, p. 204). The feminists, at some degree, are also looking for answer and solutions in the past, but to overcome the inequality in the past and shed light to build a prospective future. Whereas, the fundamentalists are revisiting the past to impose it to present and to keep it to future, denying any possible further development regarding gender, democracy or modernity. Revisiting the past, the women are endeavoring to remove the moorings imposed by centuries of patriarchal interpretation and practices (WADUD, 2006, p. 204).

Those practices can also include the coercive use of the veil, imposed by the fundamentalists in some countries. This essay is not arguing that the use of the veil does not represent some source

of empowerment to the women. To some of them, the adoption of the dress does not declare their places as to be at home. But the contrary, it legitimizes their presence outside of it (ASK; TJOMSLAND, 1998, p. 61). However, the focus here is to shed light on legislation and government ruling to make the use of the *hijab* mandatory, such as in Iran, where women are forced upon to harsh legal and extra-legal punishments. In Sudan, the imposition of the Islamic dress was one of the first acts of the fundamentalists, when they assume power after 1989. Women can be intimidated and threatened by Hamas at the Gaza Strip or West Bank if refuse to wear the headscarves. Reports of coercion and intimidation also can be found in Egypt and Jordan (MOGHISSI, 1999, p. 44-45).

The debate also may come accompanied by the idea of the veil as a protecting shield against men' sexual advances towards women. However, Moghissi (1999, p. 45) argues that the veiling and the strict Islamic code for enforcing public morality have never proved enoughto protect women against rape committed, indeed, by some of her Muslim brothers. This argument is put to the fore, by Moghissi (1999, p. 46) who also emphasizes that the justification to the veil or other Islamic practices are inaccurate and politically quite conservative.

There is no consensus in the Muslim world regarding the use of the veil. It can be seen and read as a tool of empowerment to the women to reaffirm their presence or religious beliefs. However, this essay intends to highlight how dangerous the discourse of the veil can be when fundamentalists are rulers and perceive the Islamic feminism as a threat to their goal of bringing back the Islamic practices from the so-called "Golden Age". What this essay assumes is to classify the Islamic fundamentalism as one of the most potent ideological, political and philosophical challenges to feminism, the women's individual autonomy and their right to choose (Moghissi 1999: 46).

To some fundamentalists, the feminism, additionally, can be considered as part of the world imperialist plot to destroy Islamic society and this narrative has led them to impose the women as the central vision in preserving the moral character of the nation (WATT, 1989, p. 115). Therefore, this is the reason why the changes are shaking the foundations of the Muslim world, as argued by Mernissi (2011, p. 185), to the dismay of rigid conservatives desperately worried with the static traditions. This exaggerated attempt to control women can also be dangerous, as this essay is going to explore in the next section.

6.   EMPIRICAL CASE IN THE MODERN HISTORY

Women and the world are at a crossroads. We can move forward towards greater peace and security for women and men at the communities they live in. Or we can go backwards towards lives marred by alienation, extremism and violence (UNIFEM, 2003, p. 15). Perhaps, one of those most important symbols of the recent years in the women' struggle for their rights is the Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai. Publicly critical and vocal against of the Taliban's prohibition on the education of girls, she survived to an attempt of assassination plot of the fundamentalist group in Pakistan (BLUMBERG, 2019), in 2012, when she was 15 years old.

Her history comes across with some concepts explored by this essay in the previous two sections. As an example, this is proven by the fact that the Taliban invaded the Swat Valley, in Pakistan, and started to impose a strict view of the *sharia* law (a religious law extracted from the Islamic traditions) destroying, shutting down and also carrying out suicide attacks against girls' schools. The fundamentalists also banned women from any active role in the society (BLUMBERG, 2019). After a widespread backlash in the country against those measures, in 2009, the Taliban lifted the restrictions allowing girls to attend the school on the condition they wear burkas. However, this reality lasted for a few months until the returning of the fundamentalist violence (BLUMBERG, 2019).

Still, in 2009, Malala Yousafzai continued with her advocacy in media outlets, was nominated human rights activist and won the Pakistani National Youth Peace. Three years later, she was shot in the head by a Taliban gunman on her way from home to school. She survived and in 2014 was the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize (NobelPrize.org, 2019). Unfortunately, there are no hard and fast rules for victory, and it is easy in the face of continuing violence to give in to despair, to wonder if anything can stop the onslaught (UNIFEM, 2003, p. 15)

The question to pose here is: why is Malala, equipped with pen, pencil, notebooks, books and knowledge, perceived as a threat by the heavily armed fundamentalist group Taliban? Reflecting on the Moroccan case, Mernissi argues (2011, p. 171) that the schooling of girls and the infiltration of women into classrooms is a wide and radical breach in the traditional system. Perhaps, likewise,

the fundamentalists also were aware of the Malalaian Theory, that education is the best drone to attack radicalization of people in underdeveloped tribal regions (FAZL-E-HAIDER, 2013). Critics of Malala do not want to see "more of her", who challenge the radical and theocratic mindset, emerge as the role models for the young generations in Pakistan. Considering the case of Pakistan, the Taliban openly expressed its views to remake the country accordingly to its interpretation of an Islamic state. A country without space for liberal or secular forces. No room for different opinions or criticism, which could be ending up in a death sentence. A nation where women would be banned from employment and education (FAZL-E-HAIDER, 2013). A similar view shared by the author Muhammad al-Bahi, who dreaded the consequences of the women's economic independence by saying they would avoid family ties, would decide their future husbands, where to live, whether or not have children. Al-Bahi also assumes if the men are not in charge of the women, they would lose the sense of human values and the family entity would be dissolved (WATT, 1989, p. 115). Once more, revisiting the last section, this mindset evokes the fundamentalist's view of the women as the guardian of moral of the nation. Islamic Feminism seeks to liberate women from this fate. Hence, the movement always will be perceived as a threat to the fundamentalist, who are afraid of those structural changes in terms of tradition.

In Malala´s empirical case is possible to find the fundamentalist's mindset explored before. Herself described when the Taliban invaded the Swat Valley -- where she used to live with her family -- and started to broadcast messages to men go outside. Regarding women, they were advised to stay at home, fulfilling their responsibilities and, just in case of emergency, go outside wearing the veil. Malala expressed confusion by this announcement simply because she read the Qur'an and there were not any written that men should go outside, and women should work the whole day (YOUSAFZAI; LAM, 2013, p. 95). Thus, this passage exemplifies, once more, how an empowered Islamic feminist woman can challenge the male-dominated structure of the Muslim world.

7. CONCLUSIONS

As this essay has shown through three units, the fundamentalists are those who are afraid of the Islamic Feminism. The women´s movement has a strong potential to change patriarchal hierarchy imposed in some Muslim countries. The women are perceived as a threat by the fundamentalists since they can be, each time more, able to occupy spaces often, before, dominated by male figures. Fundamentalists also are afraid of the Islamic Feminism because, according to their views, the women can be read as "westernized" and a threat to the Muslim traditions, hence, to the revivalist mindset of rescuing the Islamic "Golden Age".

Education also plays an important role in creating the threat understood by the fundamentalists. The result of the education training and schooling of girls and women is a powerful tool to the feminists face the patriarchal structures. "And knowledge is power" (Mernissi, 2009: 209). Occupying the schools, which in the past were dedicated to the male elite, also is considered as a threat. Reinterpreting the Quranic verses and delivery the Friday Khutbah, as Amina Wadud did, also can be translated as losing territories and power. Or even read the Qur'an as the base to reclaim equality between of the sexes can be interpreted as an affront. Fundamentalists will never see those steps as progress, since for them, the women have their role related to taking care of the house, the family and are seen as the face of the moral values. Any attempt to break this ideology can be translated into *fitna* (disorder).

When a woman tries to get rid of this restricted view of Islam, she can be targeted and having their lives threatened by the fundamentalist men who want to be followed and obeyed, as this essay has shown in Malala´s case. In the end, more than being heard, have equality and occupy spaces dominated by men, the Islamic Feminist struggle is also for power. The same struggle of the fundamentalists who are also seeking power through their religious beliefs. Perhaps the scenario may change when a woman assumes the power as a head of state and, hence, present bright, new and powerful ideas towards the liberation of the Muslim women. This is not an easy task. After all, as described before, not just the fundamentalists are afraid of Islamic Feminism, but also some of their Muslim sisters. However, this is the topic for further discussions.

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