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**Afghan Women Resistance and Struggle in Afghanistan and diasporic communities**

**Introduction**

**This paper<sup>1</sup> challenges a number of important issues. First the perception of Afghan women in the West as passive victims of the Taliban regime, awaiting to be liberated by the West. Second, the role of Afghan Women in diaspora which has either been neglected or perceived as being liberated in the West. Third, the claim that Afghanistan under invasion is going through a process of reconstruction, women's liberation and democracy.**

In Part one, I will argue that during the period of the civil war (1992-1996) and violent conflict sexual violence against women escalated to an unprecedented level. The Taliban rule sought the solution in drastically restricting women's movement in order to put a stop to women being raped and being engaged in sex work. The Taliban persecuted women for the violation of its rules, but women courageously and imaginatively resisted those restrictive social norms. Women of diverse ethnic and religious groups worked together, through their secret schools. Their secret activities laid the foundation for the building of social capital, by creating networks of trust and reciprocity they gave cohesion to their communities and had great hopes for the future.

Throughout the period of Russian invasion of Afghanistan in early 1980s and the following civil war (1992-1996) and Taliban period (1996-2001), seven million Afghan

were forced to leave their country and live in diaspora, mainly in Iran, Pakistan and other neighbouring countries and also in the West. In Part two, I will discuss how, despite the persistence of religious and ethnic associations and divides, exile has forced them to think about Afghanistan as a nation.

**In diaspora, Afghan women have been weaving together the threads of the past and present, Pakistani / Iranian / American / British and Afghan cultures and have been negotiating a milieu where they could overcome their alienation. Despite racism and Islamophobia they hoped to return to their homeland and build Afghanistan as one nation.**

Following the attacks on New York on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, Washington, supported by London, used this as partial justification for a bombing campaign against Afghanistan. Thousands died in carpet bombing. **After the fall of the Taliban women were promised peace, security, development, democracy and liberation. US policy makers characterised gender relations in Afghanistan in ways that legitimated their action. They made an analogy between the defeat of the Taliban and Al-Qaida and women's liberation. In part three, I will argue that today, as under the Taliban, women in Afghanistan feel alienated as they face patriarchy and a lack of security and social and economic structures. Moreover they have now found their culture under attack from an alien regime. Their world is full of anxiety as the social conditions which existed under the Taliban are being re-constituted and reproduced.**

**Despite daily tragedies, Afghan women know how to struggle for their rights. They refused the gender identities that the Taliban attempted to impose and now**

**they are refusing to conform to those imposed by invading forces. In their own way and according to their own culture, religion and ethnicity, they have been resisting the social control that the family and community try to impose on them.**

Finally in conclusion, I will argue that the domination and oppression which Afghan women face is as much imperial as patriarchal. I therefore, challenge Western Feminisms for their passive stance against neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism who have co-opted the rhetoric and the language of feminism to mask global misogynist practices and to justify war and imperial domination.

### **I. Under the Taliban**

**Poverty in Afghanistan is predominantly the result of war and the collapse of the economic activity. Even middle class and educated women experienced poverty. They worked in their homes, teaching, knitting, sewing, producing, and exchanging goods and services. Had they not done this, they would have been in the streets begging. Many poorer women with fewer skills were begging and some became sex workers. Networking and group solidarity enabled these women to survive and help those women who lived under extreme forms of poverty who possessed few skills or who lost their male head of household and had often no choice than to become beggars or sex workers. As the basis of their daily coping strategies, these poor women relied only on women's support networks to meet their bare necessities. Organising in this way was an empowering process. Women's secret organisations and networks in Afghanistan were the only functioning organizations which were trusted by the community. Despite the horrors of war and violent conflict, women in**

**Afghanistan emerged empowered from such circumstances. They became aware of their own capacities to organise and found ways to survive.**

Some women's experiences of conflict resulted in their learning skills and obtaining social, economic and political exposure and strength. In effect, conflicts extended beyond the battlefield and into the domains of everyday life. A great many women school and university teachers were engaged in teaching girls, young women, and some boys in their neighbourhoods. **Some taught between ten and 60 students over a period of time, offering them different courses according to their skills. Some taught as many as 100-800 students at different times.** The homes of these women and others with specific skills became community homes, mainly for girls and women, but also for boys, and were financed and managed entirely by women. It was by word of mouth that women and girls spread the news about the secret schools to their peers. They hid their books, notebooks, pens, and pencils under their *borqa*, and risked their lives by going to the secret schools every day. **Here, many young women and girls, as well as some boys, not only received basic literacy and numeracy training, but also studied different subjects at various levels (biology, chemistry, engineering, English, German, Arabic, Quranic Studies, cooking, sewing, knitting, hair dressing and other skills).**

#### *Solidarity between women and men*

**Despite the horrifying conditions of life under Taliban, Afghan women found a space to exercise autonomy and agency<sup>2</sup>. They broke the pre-defined spaces of confinement and silence and contested the idea that Muslim society is about building barriers to shut women out, condemning them to a life of domesticity and oppression. Afghan men also realized that gender solidarity was essential to their**

survival and the image of male domination which is expected from them by ethnic and religious norms was unrealistic and does not mean that they hold all the power and women are in total subordination. Contrary to popular views in the West, many Afghan men oppose traditional ideologies of male superiority and dominance. Therefore, I contest the common assumption that patriarchal ideologies are embedded much more for Afghan men than they are for 'liberated' Western men.

Of course, many women involved in education were caught by the Taliban. But even though they were persecuted, jailed, and tortured, they continued their bitter struggle. The Taliban's intelligence agency was an extension of the intelligence agency under the communist regime. They employed between 15,000 to 30,000 professional spies as well as having 100,000 paid informers<sup>3</sup>. Some of these spies and informers were women.

Women's mobility depended entirely on *borqa* and *mahram*. Many women used these strategies to continue their secret activities, many men bravely accompanied women to their secret schools and organizations and some were punished, arrested, tortured or killed for supporting women. Sometimes it was not possible to have a *mahram*, for example there was no man in the family, since a woman had to get married to have a *mahram*. Sometimes the Taliban would force the women to get married just for this reason. However, some women bravely and imaginatively invented the phenomenon of hiring a *mahram*. Sima explains:

We paid a man from within the extended family or neighbourhood to pretend that he is our *mahram* and to accompany us in public so that we could go to work. This was also one way for these men to have a job and

**earn money. In these cases, women's secret work allowed men to earn money. But it was risky for both men and women because if the Taliban would have found out we would have been dead.**

In order to understand the gendered nature of Afghan men's experiences of subordination, I asked a number of men whether this was against their masculine identity and they felt loss of respect for being hired by women in order to earn money. Shikeb explains: 'No for us this was a way of supporting our women, family and community. This was not against our masculine identity. We felt loss of respect and insult to our masculine identity when we were humiliated in public during the civil war and Taliban by other men'.

## **II. In Diaspora**

Since early 1980s, between 6-7 millions refugees have settled in Iran and Pakistan and a few hundred thousands in other parts of the region and the West and Australia<sup>4</sup>.

**I focus on Afghans who lived in Iran, Pakistan, the UK and the USA because the majority in Iran is Shi'a and Hazara and the majority in Pakistan is Sunni and Pashtun. However, there are a minority of Pashtun in Iran and a minority of Hazara in Pakistan as well as Tajik, Uzbek, Baluch and other ethnic groups in both countries. The majority in the USA and the UK are middle class and diverse in terms of religiosity and ethnicity. The individuals and groups selected for the study in these countries demonstrate a diversity of religiosity, ethnicity and class positions. They also represent two generations of Afghan women.**

Twenty two years of war and violent conflicts forced seven million Afghans to leave their country. The multiplicity of women's stories in diaspora reveals how varied

experiences were according to ethnicity, religion, age, class, geographical positioning as well as their social-cultural milieu and socio-economic constraint. They have been subject to racism, but collectively remembering **Afghanistan enables them to overcome their alienation. Their experiences of these diasporic communities motivated them to develop a vision of rebuilding a better Afghanistan, Afghanistan as a nation.**

**For many, the feeling of being Afghan first and then Pashtun, Hazara, Tajik, Uzbek, gives them freedom, it is a window of opportunity for them to find a meeting point of different cultures. For them the negative aspects of violent conflicts of the past and the racism of exile societies is an enabling experience to bridge between the present and the past in order to shape their future<sup>5</sup>.**

**Afghan women in Iran and Pakistan define gender relations sometimes in the context of greater gender equality and sometimes in terms of their own complex understanding of how gender relates to Afghan identity. This has enabled them to negotiate the relationship between patriarchy and Islam. They do not see wearing the traditional Pakistani dress code, and the Iranian Islamic dress code, including the head scarf as cultural constraints, oppression, patriarchy (concepts used in the West). They define their goal and social relations as an attempt to create a more progressive Afghan society where women have access to health, education and employment. The ideology of the Iranian women's movement and the support that they have received from the women's NGOs in Pakistan has enabled them to challenge male, ethnic, age and religious dominations.**

Fahimeh believed that:

Many young people who have lived in Iran for long years see the women's movement and how women are much better off here than in Afghanistan. They are not going to allow Afghan men to behave the way they behaved towards their mothers. We have witnessed that in Iran; women have been fighting for their rights and have been successful. This is an important experience to take with us to Afghanistan.

**In the UK and the USA, however, where they face systematic attacks on their Islamic culture and identity, they tend to hang on to their Muslimness and to Muslim collective identity. In the UK and the USA, Afghan women's lives have become increasingly confined to resisting Islamophobia and stereotypical representations. They have felt rejected by the West's condemnation of their culture and constantly feel the need to be defensive. In the UK and the USA, however, they have been constantly engaged in mediating between and compromising 'Western' values and their Afghan/Muslim cultural identity. Their life is confined to constantly striving to challenge the West's view of Afghan Muslim women. Therefore, their engagement in this battle has overshadowed their struggle against male domination. In the UK and USA the more alien culture in which the Afghan women and men find themselves, the more they turn to sustain their traditional communal gender relations. In Iran and in Pakistan, within the Islamic context and culture, they have found a space to enrich their collective Afghan identity. Afghan women in Iran and Pakistan have more in common with Pakistani and Iranian women than Afghan women with American and British women. They are better**



prepared to cope with the changes in their lives and their struggles and their resistance to their hostile environment. Afghan women in the UK and the USA have very little space to struggle for their gender rights. They feel a political divide between them and the Western feminists. They feel that for many years Western feminists ignored the suffering of Afghan women as their governments supported the Mujaheddin, Bin Laden and Taliban. Under the pressure of Afghan women, as late as 1997, the Feminist Majority in the US campaigned to change US foreign policy and the UN to non-recognition of the Taliban by lobbying Clinton Administration. But, neither Clinton nor Bush demonstrated any concern for Afghan women until after 9/11 when they used the rhetoric of women's rights to gain support for the war. Eleanor Smeal, leader of the Feminist Majority, supported the war and cheered American and other Western women in every level of the army on their way 'to liberate Afghan women from their *Borqa*'<sup>6</sup>. Ferida describes:

We set up our own women's organizations to work with Afghan women. We tried to discuss with the representatives of the US government, the UN and the feminist groups about Afghanistan and women's issues. However, all they were interested in was the issue of *chaddari (borqa)*. But for us that is not an issue. For us if women have access to education, health and employment it does not matter what they wear. After they attacked Afghanistan they brought a large number of *borqa*'s from Afghanistan, they cut the part where Afghan women wear it on their head and in front of their eyes and they sold it in their meetings in the name of women's liberation in Afghanistan. I was hurt by it; many Afghan friends were hurt by it. It was

insult to Afghan women. I felt that they don't understand our culture and they have their own agenda. In my view, women can wear *chaddari* but also have education and access to employment. Now that Afghanistan is in their hand, they don't talk about why women resort to self-burning and why women still do not have access to health, education and employment.

### **III. Under Invasion**

With the fall of the Taliban, Afghan women expected much from the process of reconstruction. By 2008, any optimism that Afghanistan might have been entering a new era of peace, security and development had been swept away. **The United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank<sup>7</sup> argue that reconstruction and development is urgently needed otherwise this fragile nation could easily slip back into chaos and abject poverty. 39 per cent of the population in urban areas and 69 per cent in rural areas do not have access to clean water. One in eight children dies because of contaminated water. Life expectancy is 44 years; 53% of the total population lives below poverty line. Adult literacy rate is 29% and in some areas less than 1% of the population is literate. Only a few Sub-Saharan nations rank lower than Afghanistan. Very little has been invested in reconstruction. Out of 21,000 kilometres of roads, only 2,793 kilometres are paved. There are 47 airports, but only 10 have paved runways.<sup>8</sup>**

Women are victims of a state that has directed its attention towards militarization rather than housing, health, education, infrastructure and welfare. Three hundred families in Bamiyan live in the caves in absolute poverty at the sides of famous historical Buddha statue which was destroyed by the Taliban<sup>9</sup>. In Kabul, where the US-led invaders are

partially in control, a five-star hotel, the first escalator and a shopping centre with cappuccino bars have been built. The shopping centre displays Apple iPods, the latest mobile phones and giant flat-screen televisions for the Western and Japanese contractors, the international community and a few privileged Afghan customers. Outside the shopping centre, open sewers run through the streets. Day labourers stand from dawn to dusk hoping for a day's work, but none comes, and women queue to be handed a piece of bread by NGOs<sup>10</sup>. There is no economic policy to intervene and provide opportunities for people to participate in the market economy, no policy to allow for distribution of the benefits<sup>11</sup>. The term 'Iraqification' has been used to describe the neglect of reconstruction in Afghanistan and the increase in suicide bombing<sup>12</sup>.

UNICEF has reported that at least one in two girls who should go to school remain at home, one in five children do not survive long enough even to reach school age. Others will drop out of school to join the army of child labour, to support their families<sup>13</sup>. Worsening poverty has forced women into sex work – though it existed before the Taliban, since 2001 it has mushroomed to unprecedented levels. There has also been a dramatic rise in cases of self-immolation by women. **The United Nations' backed Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) has pointed out that economic problems and widespread forced marriages are behind the increasing incidents of women committing suicide, especially in southern parts of Afghanistan where there is growing insurgency and poppy cultivation. Violence against women, including honour killing, is also on the rise<sup>14</sup>. This happens despite the fact that women hold more than 25% of the seats in the Afghan parliament and women's rights activists stand up to protest and defend women's rights, but they often face**

intimidation and violence. Afghan authorities do not investigate women's complaints. Women's rights and women's Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) workers are not being protected and are getting killed. In many ways, this is not surprising as known human rights abusers from the civil war (1992-1996) and Taliban (1996-2001) periods have been appointed as law enforcers. Criminal warlords and commanders are a powerful faction in the parliament and alongside a number of cabinet ministers are deeply implicated in the drug businesses and civil strife<sup>15</sup>.

The International Security Assistance Force, (ISAF), US and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces have no workable strategy to create a stable and peaceful Afghanistan as the devastation continues to worsen – due to large scale drug cultivation, growing insurgency, crime and corruption. The peacekeeping mission of NATO is turning into a full scale war against insurgents. NATO air strikes ruins houses and kill civilians. The Taliban and Al-Qaida are gaining public support due to the failure of the government and its Western allies to provide security and development<sup>16</sup>.

After the fall of Taliban women hoped that they will be able to compensate for their loses and will be empowered to participate in the reconstruction of their country. All these factors, however - the opium economy, poverty and unemployment - have not allowed women to put this change in gender relations into effect. Under the most adverse conditions of the Taliban regime, Afghan women and men relied upon their social relations and networks of mutual support. They built the foundation for creating social capital which was essential for the process of

reconstruction. This was the most important asset through which they kept their families and communities together and enabled them to survive the Taliban regime. With US-led invasion, came poverty, rural to urban migration, uprooting, crime, drug addiction, unemployment, alien culture – where instead of schools and hospitals they have provided internet cafes and pornography. All these factors are leading to the breakdown of their social relations as their basic safety net. Growing hostility to the US-led invaders has driven people to sympathise with the Taliban and Al-Qaida<sup>17</sup>. It is commonly believed that people work for Al-Qaida not because they are terrorists, because they are desperate: ‘If somebody will give me money to put a bomb somewhere, I will do it. That is how it is. My situation is so, that I will do everything that gives me money, and why not join Al-Qaida? At least they will provide me some benefit’<sup>18</sup>. Or: ‘Only because of our manifold problems, Al-Qaida has so many people working for them. But these people are not terrorists; they are doing it out of despair. If there were only jobs and sufficient income and adequate housing, there would be no more terrorism in Afghanistan’<sup>19</sup>.

Despite the deteriorating circumstances, Afghan women are willing to participate in the process of reconstruction. They still hope that their active agency of yesterday and today will take them into the future.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Afghan women’s and men’s perception of women’s liberation is a world apart from that of the invading forces. The Western perception of women’s liberation and democracy wrongly advocates that Afghan women and men should

simply abandon the repressive practices of their culture and adopt the ‘superior’ Western culture.

Today, Washington’s and London’s imperial agenda is similar to the old imperial agenda. They use the same thesis of Western superiority, to serve their domination of Afghanistan as an important part of their plan for reshaping of the Middle East and Central Asia. However, their typical imperial strategy which was doomed to failure in the past is now doomed to fail in Afghanistan. The US, NATO and ISAF forces, with their military might, cannot force women’s liberation and democracy on Afghan women and men. This does not mean that Afghanistan as an Islamic country is unchangeable, and Afghan women and men are locked into their past, incapable of change.

Afghan women’s vision of how to seek gender equality and what it means to them is crystal clear. As Afghan women in my research constantly reiterated, the domination and oppression which Afghan women face is as much imperial as patriarchal. In their view, socio-economic development, engaging all ethnic groups and religions, is the only way to achieve peace, security and development which can pave the way for change in gender relations. However, instead of development, peace and security, the invaders use the concept of women’s rights, human rights, democracy and humanitarian intervention to advocate imperial domination<sup>20</sup>.

As these women have repeatedly stressed foreign dominations and invasions have always negatively impacted their identity and their struggle for rights and equality. Under Russian invasion they lost faith in secularist ideology and ‘communism’. After two decades of war and conflict, today they are facing Western

invasion of their country. Under these circumstances, the women's movement in Afghanistan can only use the idiom of religion to gain mass support and legitimacy.

Despite many obstacles and impediments on their path, women's rights activists in Afghanistan and in the diaspora believe that the conservative tradition of controlling and excluding women has no place in their Afghanistan and their Islamic culture. Since the late nineteenth century, a reformist tendency within the Muslim world, including Afghanistan, has emphasised women's education. Initially only a minority of intellectual women of upper and middle classes benefited from educational opportunities and in some Muslim societies these opportunities extended to working classes<sup>21</sup>. This is the Islam that they identify with which encourages women and men to be educated. Inspired by Afghanistan's history as a modern, Islamic country with a mixture of European and Asian influences and diverse cultures, they believe that it will be possible to achieve this in the twenty-first century.

In this path they are not alone, there is a rich literature by Muslim and secular feminists who identify with Islamic culture. For decades they have discussed the positive side of Islamic culture and history. Haleh Afshar, Leila Ahmed, Riffat Hassan, Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Fatema Mernissi amongst others. Like the Afghan women in my research, these scholars argue that Islam has given women more rights than any other religious tradition. They criticise the conservative and patriarchal tradition in Islam which has taken away women's rights and continue to subject women to unequal treatment. At the same time they challenge the perception of Muslim women in the West<sup>22</sup>. They have argued that the West's

**simplistic views of women's place in Islam are part of the context of narratives of inferiority and otherness. To advance its imperial domination, the West has conveniently ignores the achievements of women in Islamic societies throughout the twentieth century and until today.**

**The implications of reactions to current practice in Afghanistan and the Middle East demands far more attention from Western feminists who have argued that feminist consciousness and feminist social practices are crucial resource in the fight against violence, war and conflict. The invasion of Afghanistan was facilitated by the rhetoric of gender equality and women's rights and since the invasion these issues are manipulated by both government and NGOs and by gender experts who are able to present an image of Afghan government and international institutions committed to women's rights.**

**Women in the Muslim majority societies and women of Islamic culture in the West have been disheartened by the way in which women's oppression has been used to promote war and conflict in Afghanistan and the Middle East. Mistrust of Western feminisms in Afghanistan now runs deep. Lila Abu-Lughod has argued that the 'very strong appeal of the notion of 'saving Afghan women' justifies American intervention in Afghanistan and that dampens criticisms of intervention by American and European feminists. The hypocritical feminisms of the Republican administration, reinforces a Western sense of superiority<sup>23</sup>.**

**Western feminism has gained academic legitimacy. However, feminists' largely passive stance against neo-liberalism and the erosion of welfare state has meant deterioration of the lives of millions of poorer women and women of colour in the**



West and throughout the world. As violence against women, sexism and the persistence of conventional gender continue, powerful governments and financial and military institutions co-opt the rhetoric and the language of feminism. These concepts are redefined to imply that the West, especially the USA, is civilized while other civilizations border on barbarism. These issues have been manipulated with considerable success and have become tools to mask global misogynist practices and to justify war and imperial domination<sup>24</sup>.

Today Western feminism can benefit from Afghan women's critical adaptation of the ideas of individualism and the values of Westernisation which are not unambiguously beneficial. Afghan women in the USA were critical of the Feminist Majority and became suspicious of their support. These American feminists, instead of understanding Afghan women's struggle and culture, easily fell into the trap of the idea that Islamic culture is incompatible with the Western principle of egalitarian thought, especially in the context of gender equality and democracy. Based on this theory they used Afghan women's criticisms of their own local patriarchal structures to portray Afghan and Islamic culture inferior to Western culture, and later they used this perceived inferiority to justify the participation of Western women in the invasion of Afghanistan. They devalued Afghan culture by presuming that the only way for Afghan women's liberation is to adopt to Western model. Therefore, Afghan women have found Western feminism to be elitist, imperialist and disconnected from the reality of their lives.

Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> . This paper is based on my field research in Afghanistan 2002 and 2005 and in Iran, Pakistan, UK and USA 2004-5, funded by Economic, Social Research Council, UK
- <sup>2</sup> . For discussions on agency and women's agency see Orlando 1999: 139; Stewart and A Strathern 2000: 61 and 122; Long 1992: 5 and 23; Moser and Clark 2001: 13-30; Momsen and Kinnaird 1993; Parpart and Marchand 1995: 3.
- <sup>3</sup> . Rashid 2000: 106.
- <sup>4</sup> . UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2003 and 2004
- <sup>5</sup> . For similar experiences see Stewart and Strathern 2000:277
- <sup>6</sup> . Young 2003.
- <sup>7</sup> . UNDP Report 2005, Afghanistan and World Bank 2006
- <sup>8</sup> . Factbook CIA Report 2005, Afghanistan, [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/af.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/af.html).
- <sup>9</sup> . Pajhwok Afghan News, October 23, 2006, [www.rawa.org/bamyan\\_cave.htm](http://www.rawa.org/bamyan_cave.htm)
- <sup>10</sup> . In 2005-2006 The Guardian Newspaper [www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan](http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan) and The Financial Times [www.financialtimes.co.uk/Afghanistan](http://www.financialtimes.co.uk/Afghanistan) have extensive reports on these issues.
- <sup>11</sup> . Rashid 2006
- <sup>12</sup> . The Financial Times , February 19, 2007
- <sup>13</sup> . UNICEF 2006, [www.rawa.org/UNICEF.htm](http://www.rawa.org/UNICEF.htm)
- <sup>14</sup> . Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, AIHRC 2006, [www.aihrc.org.af](http://www.aihrc.org.af) and [www.rawa.org/wom.ihrc.htm](http://www.rawa.org/wom.ihrc.htm)
- <sup>15</sup> . The Telegraph (UK), February 5, 2006, [www.rawa.org/drugs](http://www.rawa.org/drugs)
- <sup>16</sup> . The Washington Post, May 30, 2006, <http://www.rawa.org>

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<sup>17</sup> . Barakat 2004: 11-15.

<sup>18</sup> Schutte 2004, p24.

<sup>19</sup> . ibid, p25.

<sup>20</sup> . For this discussion see Kerr, Spranger, Symington 2004: 190 and Islam and Hassan 2004: 201-213

<sup>21</sup> . Ahmed 1992: 169-188; Poya 1999: 94-120

<sup>22</sup> . see Abu-Lughod, 2002: 1-1; 2006, [www.asiasource.org/news/special\\_reports/lila.cfm](http://www.asiasource.org/news/special_reports/lila.cfm); 1998 and 1999; Afshar, Aitkin, Frank 2005: 268-273 and 2006; Ahmed 1992, Hassan 2002, Mernissi 2002, 2001, 1997

<sup>23</sup> . See Asia Source interview with Lila Abu-Lughod: [www.asiasource.org/news/special\\_reports/lila.cfm](http://www.asiasource.org/news/special_reports/lila.cfm)

<sup>24</sup> . See Ackerly and D'Costa 2005

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