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MUSLIM WOMEN'S AGENCY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND IN INTEGRATION POLICIES

The Role of Empowerment in promoting peaceful and pluralistic societies

HOW TO DO RESEARCH IN ACADEMIA?

▸Find a topic you feel passionate about

▸Read lots of scholar work on that topic

▸Find a question that has not been asked or has not been yet successfully answered (literature gaps)

▸Find a strategy to answer it

▸Work on a research project (Research Question, Research Hypothesis, Theoretical Framework, Research Methodology)

▸ Ground your arguments on existing knowledge

WHERE TO FIND YOUR SOURCES?

▶Legal: A- Proxy (university software to access academic journals online), B- Library, C- existing reports and articles in Google Scholars (use keywords and filters)

▶Illegal: Scihub (shhhhh)

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STATE OF THE ARTS

▸ **Contextual Framework and Literature review**: Framing the issue within the theoretical literature regarding the thematic areas of **Human Rights, Integration , Gender studies and Sociological studies of Islam in Europe.**

▸ **Research Question and Hypothesis**:
Questions:1-How do different integration policies conceptualize agency and empowerment and how does this effect Muslim women's agency? 2-What impact do programs want to achieve on the integration of youth as indirect beneficiaries of the policies?
Hypothesis: Policies of the assimilation model aim to promote secular liberal identities and will keep youth as a real target of the policy. Policies of the Multicultural model, developed through a gender lens, will have a better impact on m.w. agency.

▸ **Methodology:** Why a two case studies approach? Which public policies? Explanation of the decisions made regarding the elements of the public policies taken into consideration (The kind of policy, which part of said policy, implemented at which governmental level, the agenda process and the cycle of these policies, the actors, the problems in adoption ,the decision making, ect) Why Berlin and Bruxelles?What research methods will be used?(qualitative, semi-structured interviews with programs' staff and some beneficiaries)

1- **Freedom of thought, conscience and religion**- Art 18 ICCPR, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief ("the Declaration on Religion"), the Concluding Document of the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting of Representatives of the Participating States of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the "Vienna Concluding Document"),[15] and (4) the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities ("the Minorities Declaration").

2- **Freedom of Expression**- Art 19 UDHR, Article 19 of the ICCPR, Article 10 of the ECHR, Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights and Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

2- **Freedom of Association**- article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, articles 20 and 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work by the International Labour Organization also ensures these rights

3- **Minority cultural rights**- Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

4- **Right to education**- Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, the 1981 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Article 2 of the first Protocol of 20 March 1952 to the European Convention on Human Rights. Article 10 of the European Social Charter guarantees the right to vocational education.

5- **Right to family life**- Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Art 17 ICCPR: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation."

6- **Women's rights**- Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women- CEDAW (1967)

➤ **Defining integration** : Esser identifies four spheres that allow for a migrant full integration into the receiving society: a phase of placement, a phase of cultural integration, a phase of identity redefinition and a phase of social interaction.

➤ Existing European models of integration have been categorized on the bases of their approach to **legal and cultural integration**, or the combination of the two. Models categorized on the basis of **citizenship access** have been identified as pluralist or multicultural, ethnic or differential-exclusionary, and assimilationist. Models combining both the **cultural and legal sphere** of integration have been classified as multicultural, individualist, cosmopolitan and assimilationist

➤ **National models**

➤ **Standardization of Integration**: Eu member states apply two standardized new measures: **Civic integration** courses for newcomers and **anti-discrimination** measures for existing ethnic and religious minorities.

➤ While **Civic Integration** is seen as primarily a form of assimilation and anti-discrimination as a form of diversity policy, the two can a more differentionalist or integrationist tendencies.

➤ A country tendency towards multiculturalism can be assessed by the **MPI** which looks at some indicators: state founding of ethnic or religious schools, founding for the education of mother-tongue language, exemption to dress codes, institutionalization of multiculturalism, accommodation of religious or ethnic organizations, affirmative action and media representation.

MUSLIM WOMEN DISCRIMINATION

➤ **Muslim women discourse in the West:** Orientalist discourse surviving from colonialism, western superiority of secular values, eroticization of their bodies, seen as static symbol of Islamic tradition rather than regional and cultural differences in competencies and skills. No voice

➤ Islamist discourse and claim of women's body as identity politics

➤ visual representation of clash of civilizations, gender violence and segregation, female disempowerment.
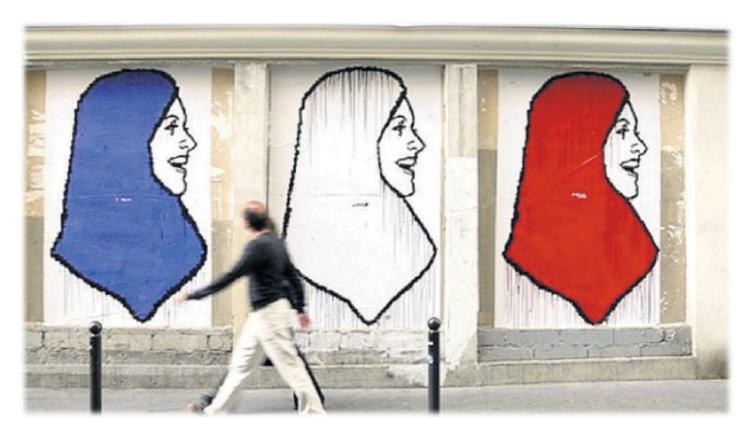
EMPOWERMENT AND AGENCY

➤ **Empowerment**: Bystydzienki 1992- "Empowerment is understood to be the process by which oppressed persons take some control over their lives while taking part with others in development of activities that allow people increased involvement in matters that effect them directly."

➤ the ability to make choices and gain some degree of control over ones own life. It is the **sum of agency** (the capacity to make that choice, negotiate it or bargain it, within the framework in which one's life takes place) and **resources** (Material resources and social capital).

➤ Western liberal feminism and its historical understanding of empowerment failed to acknowledge that empowerment is the ability to make choices, even if these are religious or cultural motivated choices, and that resources and agency may take different forms in different social contexts based on the intersectional dimension of discrimination

MUSLIM WOMEN AND AGENCY

➤ **Agency for Muslim women**: Religious Identity, Religious education and general education.

➤ Life choices are motivated by religious identity and their desire to be, first of all, a good muslim. Being a good Muslim gives them first of all personal worth and respect in the social context in which they live. **Individualization** of Islam and **new born Muslims**.

➤ **Religious education and education** allows them to be **good mothers**, which is a public role (political motherhood) rather than a private one, and through which they acquire great worth as prime educators of the Umma. It also allows them to **negotiate their spac**e with the men of their families and communities, trough knowledge of pure Islam. It allows them to **take part in empowering activities** such as the **Da'was** or **community oriented women's groups** that give them prominent societal roles but at the same time allow women to redefine their image in the public space.

MULTICULTURALISM AND AGENCY

➤ **Gender roles and empowerment**- if empowerment continues to be defined with a universalistic lens, gender roles will continue to be seen as a limit of women's agency, rather than a strength for religious Muslim women. States will continue to promote policies that aim at changing gender roles rather than accommodate muslim women's needs.

➤ **Multicultural policies** that seem to accommodate the needs expressed by muslim women during these interviews: Religious education and mother-tongue education. Religious clothing in public schools and training environments. Funding for both new and traditional religious and ethnic organizations. More media representation and platforms for intercultural dialogues.

THE ISSUE AT THE EU-COE LEVEL

▶ Overview of the orientation of European Institutions on the issues regarding Integration and Muslim women's human rights (in the context of EU policies on gender equality, on minorities and on integration)

▶ Normative framework and recommendation for women's rights and minority rights

▶ EU guidelines on dealing with cases of intersectionality of rights (in the context of anti-discriminatory approach-prioritization of individual rights over group rights- Prioritization of cultural rights or secularism)

- No common integration policy and tendency to refer to anti-discrimination rather than minority rights.

- 2013 the Common Agenda for Integration was developed further into the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals. First, there is **DG Freedom, Security and Justice**. The second is **DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities**. Equality and anti-discrimination are key concepts (for this reason the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) and its succes- sor the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) were associated with this DG). Target groups include not only immigrants but also ethnic minorities and the disabled.

- Since 2014 the DG FSJ has been split into the **DG Migration and Home Affairs (Immigration, Asylum, and Borders)** and **Justice and Consumers (Union Citizenship, Free Movement, Equality legislation, and Anti-discrimination)**

- **Multilevel Governance**- The incremental Europeanization of this area of policy has been based on two main resources: expertise and cities - Fundings for research programs on policies of integration and best practices and fundings for city networks and local government administration

THE BELGIAN CASE

▸ Context of the Belgian immigration history with a focus on Muslim women

▸ Belgian model of migration and integration management- Differences competencies at federal, communities and regional level

▸ Introducing the Bruxelles context

BRUSSELS CONTEXT

- The **COCOF** is the institution created in 1993 to take on the matters of integration from the French community and IT HAS POWER TO CREATE ITS OWN INDEPENDENT POLICIES
- THE **VGC**- or Commission communautaire flamande (Vlaamse Gemeenschapcommissie, VGC)- is the representative of the Flemish Community (VG) in Brussels. IT HAS NOT THE FREEDOM TO CREATE POLITICS but rather the responsibility to implement policies of the VG in Bruxelles capital region
- VGC finances primarily bottom up organizations of migrants while the COCOF, through the **FIPI**, sponsors programs that aren't created by the migrants themselves.

THE GERMAN CASE

▶ Context of the German immigration history with a focus on Muslim women

▶ German model of migration and integration management- Differences competencies at federal and lander level

▶ Introducing the Berlin context

THE CASE STUDIES

▸Presenting the case studies

▸Presenting the methodology

▸Results

▸Discussion

WHY BERLIN AND BRUXELLES?

▸ From an **administrative point of view** both cities :First of all, both cities are federal capital **'city-states'**. Berlin and Brussels are both capital cities with federal functions, in a case where the capital city forms a genuine constituent unit within the federation.Caroline Van Wynsberghe, "Les capitales fédérales"...

▸ **Multi-level governance**: **Germany** follows a more centralist and institutionalized relation with local administrations on matters of integration and Berlin, even if developed policies before the German state, is in accordance with the German model. **Brussels** integration policies follow the orientation of the French and Flemish community. The increasing specificity of large cities pushes them to be in collaboration with Eu institutions as well.

▸ Wanting to look at the issue from an European prospective, my decision to choose Brussels and Berlin is to look at the **German case** and, through Belgium, not only at the **Belgian case** but also at the **French and Dutch** approaches to diversity management.

▸ The vast majority of people of Islamic faith in Brussels are of **Moroccan and Turkish** origin and in Berlin Turks are the predominant group, followed by a smaller number from Pakistan, Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan. These two case studies will help me identify policy differences based on target groups.