WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE MUSLIM WORLD: RECONSIDERING RIGHTS OF THE "COMMONS"

MÜSLÜMAN DÜNYASINDA KADINLARIN GÜÇLENDİRİLMESİ: "ORTAKLAR"IN HAKLARINI YENİDEN DÜŞÜNMEK

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ABSTRACT

The crucial question arises how today's modern-liberal life can bridge the gap between what is and what can be, while respecting the gap and its uncertainty and figurality? How can today's modern-liberal life accommodate ambiguity while remaining faithful to the women's empowerment project? In the wat to explore responds to these questions, this study will try to develop a secular-liberal constellation that radically opens up what women's rights in Muslim world are, and what it can mean for the compassionate concern for Muslim women's empowerment regarding their rights as being the commons of Muslim society. Thus, this study examines the interaction among women's rights and empowerment, Islam and Western liberalism. As for the liberal approach, complex issue regarding rights for the commons of the secular society, including Muslim world, pose a series of questions regarding many aspects such as fundamental human rights, gender equality, freedom, secularism, current modernism, contemporary mentality, education, rule of law, moral, ethics, culture, and civil society pertinent to revolutionary movements. As seen, many policy-making topics arouse as much contention as those at the nexus of women, Islam and Western liberalism.

Keywords: Woman, Islam, Liberalism, Muslim Society, Rights and Empowerment

ÖZET

Günümüzün modern-liberal yaşamında boşluk olgusu ile onun belirsizliğini ve nesnelliğini düşünürken, "nedir" ile "ne olabilir" arasındaki boşluğu nasıl birleştirebiliriz üzerine önemli bir soru mevcuttur. Kadınların güçlendirilmesi projesine sadık kalarak bugünün çağdaş-liberal yaşamında bu boşluğu nasıl doldurabiliriz? Bu sorulara cevaplar arama yolunda, bu çalışma, Müslüman dünyasında kadınların haklarının neler olduğu ve Müslüman toplumunun ortakları olarak haklarını güçlendirmek üzere gösterilecek şefkatli kaygının ne anlama gelebileceği üzerine seküler-liberal bir tartışma geliştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, kadınların hakları ve güçlendirilmesi, İslam ve Batı liberalizmi arasındaki etkileşimi incelemektedir. Liberal yaklaşıma göre, Müslüman dünyası dahil, çağdaş toplumun ortaklarının haklarını kapsayan karmaşık konu, temel insan hakları, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği, özgürlük, laiklik, mevcut modernizm, çağdaş zihniyet, eğitim, hukukun üstünlüğü, ahlak, etik, kültür ve devrimci hareketlerle ilgili sivil toplum gibi birçok konuda bir dizi soru ortaya koymaktadır. Görüldüğü üzere, birçok siyaset-üretme konusu, kadın, İslam ve Batı liberalizminin bağrındakiler kadar çekişme yaratmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın, İslam, Liberalizm, Müslüman Dünyası, Haklar ve Güçlenme

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"Women do two thirds of the world's work ... Yet ... women earn no more than one tenth of the world's income and own less than one per cent of the world's property." – (UN Doc, Para 59)

INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest problems for women participation to life itself lies in the representation issue. If there is a gap about your participation, then it means there is a wrong side about your consideration. The persistent, and in some cases growing, gap between indicators of women's political empowerment and those of women's social and economic development must surely be one of the most significant development puzzles of our time. Women's inclusion in the state is a widely noted outcome of political liberalization, evident in two significant developments. In the bureaucratic arena, the creation of gender machineries from the late 1970s fostered the idea of women as a constituency for policy-makers to consider. More recently, women's political access to parliaments around the world has been facilitated by the use of deliberate strategies ranging from formal and informal quotas to reserved seats.

Yet, while women have gained significant access to state bureaucracies and legislatures, particularly in developing countries, access and inclusion do not appear to have delivered the kinds of equality outcomes that many would like to see. Feminist scholarship remains confounded by the question of how and when claims for gender equality are facilitated and or constrained by engagement with the state. Put another way, why has the apparent redistribution of power not resulted in a redistribution of goods? This is not to suggest that no gains have been made through the strategies of engagement thus far; political empowerment and formal equality is not an insignificant achievement by any means. Rather, it is the catalytic effect of political empowerment that appears to be missing - that is, the translation of institutional access to political voice, and from political voice to policy outcomes (Hassim, 2009: 1).

We have to conceptualize women's rights in order to be able to pose all debates on universality of women in the right path. Liberal study can help us to pave the way in this conceptualizing. As for the liberal study, rights for the commons in Muslim World pose a series of questions regarding many aspects such as fundamental human rights, gender equality, freedom, secularism, current modernism, contemporary mentality, education, rule of law, moral, ethics, culture, and civil society pertinent to revolutionary movements. As seen, many policy topics arouse as much contention as those at the nexus of women, Islam and western liberalism. Contemporary public debate postulates its own set of beliefs about what constitutes liberalism and what Islam represents. Because women's rights in the Muslim societies have been under scrutiny for some years.

Within this debate, the status of women in the Muslim communities all over the world has become a key indicator of difference with respect to the human rights. Localized issues in specific Western communities have been merged with issues from other Muslim communities around the world into an imagined whole, giving the discussion the tenor of a global, interlinked dilemma. A focus on the status of women also appears to make concrete a set of beliefs (both about liberalism and about Islam) that in reality

are fairly nebulous. Yet there is a religious component. Although many of the most difficult challenges mainly facing the Muslim societies -such as growing instances of polygamy and honor violence- are cultural rather than religious, because they are justified in the name of religion. However, liberal tradition recognizes a host of important values, the most important of which is liberty, the freedom to choose how to live. Thus, the currents of Islam and the context of liberalism form the backdrop to the present-day situation. For Muslim women, these are not abstract theories but living questions, the details of which this study will deal with by analyzing the issue.

The question arises how today's modern-liberal life can bridge the gap between what is and what can be, while respecting the gap and its uncertainty and figurality? How can today's modern-liberal life accommodate ambiguity while remaining faithful to the women's empowerment project? In answering these questions, this study will try to develop a secular-liberal constellation that radically opens up what women's rights in Muslim World are, and what it can mean for the compassionate concern for Muslim women's empowerment regarding their rights as being the commons in the Muslim society. Thus, this study examines the interaction among women's rights and empowerment, Islam and Western liberalism.

1. Conceptualizing Women's Rights: A Debate on Universality

1.1. Liberal Islam vs. Classic Islam

We should explore first how liberal Islam should better consider on the women's rights, and how it should better conceptualize that. In recent years, the focus of research and public perception has been on liberal, moderate, and modernist Islam. Liberal Islam advocates liberal solutions to the problems of religion and society, namely, interpretations of Islam that have a special concern for democracy, women's rights and empowerment, freedom of thought, and other contemporary issues. Its adherents also forcefully assert that liberal Islam is authentic, not just merely a western creation, and therefore genuinely reflects the true Islamic tradition. In addition, they claim that the ummah (for us, the Muslim world in general, but Muslim women in particular [in this study]) should think and act in terms of adoption, reconciliation, and accommodation vis-à-vis the West to solve its problem of continuing underdevelopment.

In contemporary times, several trends have emerged in the Muslim world (e.g., liberalism, modernism, revivalism, and secularism) that seek to solve its complex problems. Their proponents claim that liberal and modernist solutions to the problems of religion and society are important and receiving popular support. In addition, many Muslims are said to adhere to liberal principles. The resulting liberal and modernist interpretations of Islam deal mainly with democracy, feminism, secularism, women's rights and empowerment, and similar current concepts. Thus, they advocate liberalism, modernism, and humanism. Furthermore, they are supposed to enable Muslims and non-Muslims to benefit from such liberal reforms that, eventually, may lead to a more open society. Finally, they assert rather forcefully that liberal or modern Islam is authentic, not merely a western creation, and thus genuinely reflects the true Islamic tradition (Hourani, 1962; Binder, 1988).

Liberal Muslims begin their discourse by proposing that the Muslim women are facing western modernity, modernization, globalization, information technology, and many other external challenges. Given the ensuing assertion that it lacks the power of science and technology, they stress that the Muslim women should focus on overcoming these

challenges and that Muslims should interact with the developed West and take from it whatever is good and applicable. In other words, they are led to think and act in terms of adoption, reconciliation, and accommodation. Thus, Islam and modernity are compatible.

There are many thinkers in the Islam world today, who strongly reject these perceptions, ideas and approaches. For example, Mumtaz Ali contends that the liberal perception and prescription are unrealistic and imaginative, that they contain inherent weaknesses, and that the liberal prescription is irrelevant to the ummah's development (Mumtaz Ali, 2007: 44). [Although we do not agree many sides of it, we made use of many ideas in this valuable essay, but adopting them into our thinking, ideas and beliefs. Anyway, we still thank to Mumtaz Ali for creating our inspiration while writing this essay.]

However, we totally contend that an in-depth exploration and analysis reveals that this perception lacks both depth and accuracy. In fact, we posit that those claims by Hourani (1962) and Binder (1988) seem to be realistic and unimaginative, for it is the result of the profound influence of such ideologies as modernity, realism, pragmatism, and secularism. Furthermore, we strongly contend that secularism and the liberal perception has caused more goodness to the Muslim women than any external impacts have. Internal impacts were national leaders who were born in the dark sky like a brilliant star that had brightened the Muslim women's future. One of the most prominent of those national leaders was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who founded today's modern, secular and democratic Turkish Republic.

Therefore, we intend to examine the views of liberals and modernists concerning the threat of external challenges and the need to borrow and adopt from the West. This examination will reveal the inherent strong sides of secularism and of liberal perception and prescriptions show that the secular-liberal prescription is directly both relevant and useful to the Muslim women in the way of total development, comprising mental and physical, spiritual and corporeal, concrete and abstract, contemporary and secular. Some thinkers, however, adopts views the same as Mumtaz Ali that the liberal prescription is neither relevant nor useful to the ummah's development (See, for example, Rahman, 1982; Arkoun, 1984). Therefore, the perceptions of a nation's leaders and intellectuals play a fundamental role in any nation's rise and fall. By this view, we should make our best critical analysis of these issues in order to prevent the fall of Muslim women not anymore.

1.2. Liberal and Modern Perceptions and Prescriptions: An Analysis

Who is responsible about this undesirable state of affairs for the whole Muslim women all around the world today? Our investigation shows that the existing intellectual and political leadership is to blame for this pathetic predicament. Any sincere and objective observer can see that for the last six to seven decades, the secularized and modernized leadership has ruled the Muslim women and claimed that it can lead the Muslims further along the path of development. To assist this leadership, liberal, moderate, and modern intellectuals have developed a discourse that is said to be a giant collaboration and a master plan for the masses' welfare. According to them, the Muslim women cannot overcome their present undeveloped and backward situations in the society unless it responds to the above-mentioned collectively.

Our assessment, however, reveals that the Muslim women's incline in progress and development are mainly caused by internal challenges. This is fully supported by the

fact that for at least the last seventy years, the modernist and secularist leaders at both the political and intellectual levels have led the Muslim women. We thank to God (Allah) for that. Their prescriptions and programs were very effective and useful, for the majority of Muslim women remain intellectual, wealthy (See for detail, Smith, 1984: 37-50), and able to understand the true reasons for their lack of development. The following analysis will illustrate and judge the soundness of our assessment.

Since the end of the 19th century, when the Muslim women began their political disintegration, lack of social and political participation, being poor, getting more illiterate and having a strong socially and morally collapse and decline, some concerned Muslim leaders and intellectuals observed that it was suffering more from the growing threat of wrong interpretations of Islam, refusing being contemporary, modern and secular and internal reactionary and bigot forces than any external threat. Therefore, they realized that the political, cultural, and ideological challenges posed by those internal reactionary and bigot forces were the real ones. They adopted an illusion that the West had brought rapid and unprecedented change to the world. They refused this crystal-clear fact. Because actually they were not aware of the fact that they were refusing science, modernity, modern society, modern world, a secular thinking and life style in the real manner. For many of them, the largely unresolved problem was how to bring about social change (Hopwood, 1998: 1), for they argued that any change that is not integrated smoothly can disrupt society, dislocate values, and hasten further decadence.

Hence, during 19th century, the major question was how to bridge the gap between Islam and modernity. "*Other, more moderate, Muslim thinkers still struggle with the concept of modernity and the need to integrate the Muslim world. To them a Muslim has to coexist with modernity.*" (Hopwood, 1998: 9) As a result of their "realistic" observation, they started to present what they considered realistic and pragmatic solutions based on the principle of expediency. Therefore, they sought to offer Islamic responses to European modernization. As a result, Islamic liberalism and modernism emerged and provided an ideological framework for the "enlightened" western-oriented reformist actions taken by Muhammad Ali (d. 1849) in Egypt and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (d. 1938) in Turkey. Within a very short time, many such Alis and Kemals mushroomed all over the Muslim world. These were the historic moments when women's spiritual, physical and conscientious realms could let off the reins of those reactionary and bigot forces in Islam societies because of these liberal and modern leaders and intellectuals, who, based on their conceptual and epistemological conceptions, demonstrated to the whole world the possibility of the issues of reinterpretation, reconciliation, and the compatibility of Islam with modern western thought and values. For example, Ameer Ali's *The Spirit of Islam* (1935) is devoted to "proving" that Islamic and western values are spiritually the same. William Montgomery Watt asserted that this book "was essentially a presentation of Islam and its founder as embodying all the liberal values admired in Victorian England (Watt, 1988: 64).

Hence, we conclude that this mentality is the major cause of much of Muslim women's freedom, liberty and development (Smith, 1979). We believe that this assumption is correct. Because we state clearly and honestly that the key to better development is to be found in a change of mentality – one of the most difficult things to achieve. Without this effort, much of the Muslim women will not only remain undeveloped and utterly

dependent on male-dominated culture. All of these supposedly moderate, liberal, modern, and enlightened interpretations of Islam finally took the form of a secular and western-oriented discourse advocating the separation of religion and politics. The establishment of western-style modern secular nation-states was welcomed, and western-style political, cultural, and economic models of development were adopted. Initially, the adherents of these discourses blamed the Muslim women's decline on the masses' blind and unquestioned clinging to the past and the Muslim world's inability to respond to modernity effectively. They stressed internal reform through reinterpreting Islam and internal self-criticism.

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897), Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905), Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898), and other intellectuals rejected the passivity, fatalism, and otherworldliness of popular Sufism. However, facts remain facts. All of them, being liberals and modernists, were basically responding to the demands of modernity. They attempted to interpret Islam in terms of modernity and developed several doctrines (e.g., public interest in terms of utility and consultation in the context of parliamentary democracy). They called for a reworking of Islamic thought to include western science, democracy, and constitutional government. *"The liberals called for the adoption of the modern Western outlook in its totality."* (Elmessiri, 1997) Their acceptance of the West and adoption of western ideologies did not force them to neglect the development of original political, educational, and economic theories based on the Islamic worldview. These intellectuals were so obsessed with modernity. Its main reasons were: (1) they believed that Islam was a modern religion and compatible with modern society, science and times; (2) they asserted that medieval thought, medieval theology, and philosophy were unscientific in nature. As a result, they have had no hesitation about adopting western political and scientific theories (Maoussalli, 1999: 35).

Adopting the modern secular education system, science, technology, and models of economic and political development are the best empirical examples and undeniable evidence of this outlook. Eventually this adoption caused them to catch an important fact: The development of new theories, thoughts, and skills is absolutely necessary for development. Moussalli concludes that we must understand that the modernists' main goal has always been to bring the West and the East together, both scientifically and religiously. This is why liberals and modernists never shied away from western adopting ideas (Maoussalli, 1999: 33). They were so overwhelmed by the desire to integrate modernity. So they could see that new knowledge, science, and even technology are products of a particular worldview.

2. Human Rights As Women's Rights: The Right to Development

Why has gender not been an issue in international law and ideology? Although international lawyers have been forced to confront the challenge made to the traditional canons of international law by developing nations, the deeply gendered nature of their discipline has remained uncontroversial and unexplored (Charlesworth, 1989). And ideology itself, with its thinkers, scholars and socio-political leaders, deepened issue more and more…

Like national legal systems, international law is constructed within a "public" world, although national and international "public" spheres are often differently defined. International law operates in the most public of all public worlds, that of nation states. One consequence of this has been, until recently, the invisibility of individual or group

concerns in international law. The development of human rights law in the second half of this century has altered one set of boundaries between public and private in international law to allow the law to address violations of designated individual and group rights. This development, however, has not challenged the much deeper public/private dichotomy based on gender (See for detail, Byrnes, 1992; Wright, 1992).

Many principles of international law rest on and reproduce a public/private distinction. We focus here on a particular principle of international law, the right to development, and argue that it is an example of how the international legal order privileges a male perspective and fails to accommodate the realities of women's lives. The problematic nature of current development practice for Muslim and Third World women goes of course much deeper than the international legal formulation of the right to development. However, the rhetoric of international law both reflects and reinforces a system that contributes to the subordination of women.

The right to development is of relatively recent legal formulation and its status in international law is controversial (Alston, 1988: 3; Rich, 1988: 39). It may appear odd to place the human right to development on the "frontier" of research on human rights and development, as there has emerged over the past four decades a veritable library of books and articles on the subject. The bibliography of the OHCHR publication *Realizing the Right to Development* covers some 30 pages, including nearly 150 entries on the historical context of the right. (OHCHR, 2013: 505-510. Among major works, see for example: Aguirre, 2008; Andreassen, 1997; Andreassen & Marks, 2010; Barsh, 1991; Baxi, 1998; Bediaoui, 1991). It was an important aspect of the New International Economic Order promoted, ultimately unsuccessfully, in the 1970s and 80s by Third World countries. The proponents of the right present it as both an individual and a collective right which responds to the phenomenon of global interdependence (M'Baye, 1972), while its critics argue that it is vague and unenforceable (Donnelly, 1985: 473; Brownlie, 1988: 1).

The 1986 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (UNGA, 1986) describes the content of the right as the entitlement, in Article 1(1), "…*to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realised.*" Primary responsibility for the creation of conditions favorable to the right is placed on States: States have the right and the duty to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the wellbeing of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom. [See, Article 2(3)]

The right is apparently designed to apply to all individuals within a State and is assumed to benefit men and women equally: the preamble of the UN Declaration twice refers to the Charter exhortation to promote and encourage respect for human rights for all without distinction of any kind such as race or sex. Moreover, Article 8 of the Declaration places an obligation on States to ensure equality of opportunity for all in access to basic resources and the fair distribution of income. It states that "*effective measures should be undertaken to ensure that women have an active role in the development process.*" Such a specific reference to women in a generally applicable international formulation of rights is unusual and indicates an apparent sensitivity to

issues of gender equality. Why, then, is the Declaration nevertheless unsatisfactory from a feminist perspective?

First, the acknowledgement of the need to involve women in the development process is the only token in the context of the Declaration as a whole. Other provisions of the Declaration indicate that discrimination against women is not seen as a major obstacle to development, nor to the fair distribution of its benefits. For example, one aspect of the right to development is the obligation on States to take "resolute steps" to eliminate "massive and flagrant violations of the human rights of peoples and human beings." The examples given of such massive and flagrant violations include apartheid and race discrimination but do not include sex discrimination. [See, Article 5] The lack of attention paid to inequality between men and women as an issue in development is a feature of influential writing on the topic (ICIDI, 1990: 59-62) and of precursor resolutions to the Declaration on the Right to Development (UNGA, 1969; 1974a; 1974b; 1975). Although subsequent United Nations deliberations have given more regard to gender implications of the right to development, [See, for example; UNSECGEN, analytical compilation of comments and views on the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development prepared by the Secretary General UN Doc E/CN.4/AC.39/1988/L.2 paras 59-63; UNSECGEN, Report prepared by the Secretary General on the Global Consultation on the Realization of the Right to Development as a Human Right UN Doc E/CN.4/1990/9 paras 15,42,51,52,59]. These concerns are presented as discrete, soluble by the application of special protective measures, rather than as central to the issue of development. The section of the Secretary General's report dealing with "Obstacles to the implementation of the right to development as a human right", for example, mentions failure to respect the right of peoples to self determination, racial discrimination, apartheid, foreign occupation, restrictions on transfers of technology and the consumption patterns of industrialised countries as serious barriers to the realisation of the right to development, but contains no reference to sex discrimination. [UN Doc E/CN.4/1990/9, paras 27-35. Also compare the detail of Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979 UN Doc A/Res/34/180].

A second, more fundamental, objection to the Declaration is that the model of development on which it is built exacerbates the inequality of Third World women. While the formulation of the right to development does not rest on a simple economic model of development, and includes within it a synthesis of all recognized human rights, redress of economic inequality is at its heart. An assumption of the international law of development is that underdevelopment is caused by a failure to meet the model of a capitalist economy. Development means industrialization and westernization.

Three major paradigms dominate theories of the causes of underdevelopment: shortages of capital, technology, skilled labor and entrepreneurship; exploitation of the wealth of developing nations by richer nations; and economic dependence of developing nations on developed nations. Modernization is assumed to have the same impact on women as on men. The domination of women by men within the family and in society generally does not enter the traditional development calculus: "development" as economic growth above all is not concerned with the lack of benefits or disadvantageous effects this growth may have on half of the society it purports to benefit (Charlesworth, 1989: 194-197).

3. Women, Representation Gap and Policy Influence: Some Key Hypotheses

3.1. Modernization and Gender Equality

Benjamin Constant once noted that rights are not natural, but are created. However, for Muslim women some rights may indeed be more natural than others. The current and ongoing debate in the 'Muslim' world on defining women's right is implicated in the crosscurrents of several compatible discourses and ideologies, where the utility of definitions and assumptions of key concepts like equality, agency, and freedom create a profound disconnect for a global movement that erases the socioeconomic and political context of the living realities of women around the world. Modern debates on determining women's rights are conflated with the idea of human rights complicating the mishmash of paradigms within which feminists, women's activists (Majid, 1998), and ordinary women already work (Arif, 2015).

The persistent, and in some cases growing, gap between indicators of women's political empowerment and those of women's social and economic development must surely be one of the most significant development puzzles of our time. Women's inclusion in the state is a widely noted outcome of political liberalization, evident in two significant developments. In the bureaucratic arena, the creation of gender machineries from the late 1970s fostered the idea of women as a constituency for policy-makers to consider. More recently, women's political access to parliaments around the world has been facilitated by the use of deliberate strategies ranging from formal and informal quotas to reserved seats.

Yet, while women have gained significant access to state bureaucracies and legislatures, particularly in developing countries, access and inclusion do not appear to have delivered the kinds of equality outcomes that many would like to see. Feminist scholarship remains confounded by the question of how and when claims for gender equality are facilitated and or constrained by engagement with the state. Put another way, why has the apparent redistribution of power not resulted in a redistribution of goods? This is not to suggest that no gains have been made through the strategies of engagement thus far; political empowerment and formal equality is not an insignificant achievement by any means. Rather, it is the catalytic effect of political empowerment that appears to be missing - that is, the translation of institutional access to political voice, and from political voice to policy outcomes (Hassim, 2009: 2).

The modernization hypothesis is the most dominant explanation for women's access to political power and decision-making. However, this hypothesis manifests itself a variety of ways that one could classify as being on a continuum from 'strong' to 'weak'. In its strongest form, proponents of modernization assume that economic growth and affluence lead to the expansion of opportunities for women; concomitantly, higher levels of education and participation in the paid labor force erode inequalities in access to political Office (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). As women gain representation and voice, they put forward new claims on the state that lead to shifts in the allocation of public resources. Secularization increasingly displaces religious arguments in favor of gender inequality, gradually building a new and more egalitarian culture that buttresses women's gains in the public sphere with greater power in the private sphere. If (and when) gaps in representation persist, whether in terms of numbers of women in elected office, or particular allocations of public budgets to women, the strong modernization hypothesis posits two explanatory factors. Women may choose not to run for political

office, preferring other activities to politics. Moreover, budgets may not take account of women's specific needs because it may not be evident that gender is a key variable in access to resources. In this view, then, gender equality is directly linked to the level of economic development (Hassim, 2009: 3-4).

There are several critiques of these arguments. It has been pointed out that economic wealth is not correlated to increases in women's political access in many countries, most notably in the Middle East (Moghadam, 2005). Furthermore, even advanced democracies, which did experience the favorably combined conditions of economic growth, expansion of literacy, increase in women's labor force participation and liberal democracy, did not see a correspondingly significant increase in women's representation or automatic attention to the relationship between private and public inequalities (UNRISD, 2005).

3.2. The Challenges of Political and Economic Liberalization

All variants of the modernization hypothesis have been challenged by late 20th century developments in capitalism, which have resulted in contradictory processes of liberalization. Political liberalization has opened spaces in the state, enabling women's participation at the highest levels of political decision-making. However, inclusion has ambivalent aspects, being both seductive in its promise of power and also implicating women in the operations of power; institutions trail their historical legacies of hierarchy and authority and are not easily permeable to new modes of operation. This is not to suggest that institutions cannot be changed, of course. Rather, as Waylen notes, the outcomes may be unpredictable; *"Often, institutional layering – new institutions added in to existing ones…- or institutional conversion, for example if new groups are incorporated, takes place."* (Waylen , 2009: 247)

All too often women representatives find the equality agenda appropriated and mutated into mechanisms of governance and regulation, losing the ambition of transformation of gendered relations of power. Thus, for example, feminist ambitions to transform decision-making institutions through the strategy of gender mainstreaming were thwarted by the reduction of this approach to technical checklists (Manicom, 2001). In some cases, inclusion masks relations of power; there is a superficial redistribution of places in the state but the underlying inequalities of power remain intact. In many respects, the institutionalization of feminist politics has been inimical to project of democratization. It has limited the notion of democracy to inclusion into existing institutions, and marginalized more radical demands for reconfiguring the ways in which power is organized. The democratization of the spaces of power (political parties, legislatures, and the civil service) has been difficult to achieve, at best, and neglected at worst. At best, then, pursuing strategies of inclusion into formal politics has produced contradictory outcomes for feminists.

Changes in the environment of policymaking also affect directly on poor people's movements. The locus of economic decision-making in many parts of the world has shifted away from nation-state level and stifled 'sovereignty' and democratic decision-making as far as economic policy-making is concerned, in what Mkandawire calls "choiceless democracies" (Mkandawire, 1999). In highly indebted countries, policies may be shaped more directly by global prescriptions and lender conditionality than by contestation between different constituencies of citizens and the state. The emphasis on cost-recovery through user fees has fueled, at least in Africa, a crisis of social

reproduction where households are unable to provide core needs and where the state has retreated from earlier post-independence commitments to drive development. Women's responsibilities for social reproduction are increasing as social institutions are overburdened by the failures of states to provide the basic infrastructure for care (health, welfare, education). The ideology that the provision of care should be only, or primarily, located in the family has not change the skewed distribution of the costs of and responsibilities for social reproduction (Razavi & Hassim, 2006).

The social and political effects of state weakness are significant for women, as citizens continue to rely on traditional networks of reciprocity outside of the formal political sphere. In the absence of strong collective organizations of women that are able to articulate women's gender interests, dependence on those networks may undermine struggles for equality. Despite the seeming dominance of liberal political models, several commentators point to a crisis of representation that is not gender-specific: that is, a distrust of political parties, weak civil society activism and relatively low membership in trade unions (Harriss, 2002). In many developing countries, political parties have done little to inspire faith in poor people, being accused of corruption and appropriation of public resources. In Africa, particularly, few political parties have successfully transformed themselves from nationalist movements into democratic vehicles of representation (Salih, 2005). Although women's political access has increased as a result of quotas, the emphasis on formal inclusion has led to a weakening of oppositional women's feminist movements, so the capacities for holding representatives accountable – the capacities for substantive equality - are weak. Where the political demands of gender equality were posed in earlier periods as a central challenge to the relations of power, in the late twentieth century processes of democratization, the gender-equality agenda has been co-opted and turned into a technical project while more thoroughgoing feminist demands for transformation of power relations have been marginalized.

Indeed, in many new democracies, women's organizations have become 'development partners' and have transmuted from being political movements to acting as NGOs. This role should not to be downplayed, of course. Women's NGOs have played a vital role in ensuring that political rights are implemented. They are central to ensuring that women are given support to enable them to access grants and other natural resources, and to tackle gender-based violence and address the impacts of HIV/AIDS. As advocates of poor women, NGOs can possess a remarkable capacity to incrementally increase budgetary allocations to poor women and to ensure that poor women have a voice in policy formulation. However, on their own women's development NGOs are constrained by organizational factors such as small staff complements that are funded by donors only for specific projects, and limited resources to articulate radical demands. As they often operate at the local level, conservative, traditionalist forces may be seen as more viable, more autonomous and even more legitimate as a form of local representation. This can act as a further brake on feminists' ambitions to leverage the state (Beall, 2005; Todes et al., 2006; McLean, 2003).

As Molyneux and Razavi have pointed out, it is evident that the increased emphasis on human rights and equality comes at a historical moment when there are significant shifts in economies and in governance systems (Molyneux & Razavi, 2002). Yet arguments for representation rest on an older democratic model of nation-state, with fairly bounded and 'sovereign' processes of decision-making determined primarily by the coalescence

of interests in political parties contesting openly in elections. The emphasis on access and inclusion as the central lever for advancing a feminist agenda tends to assume that the necessary institutions can be created relatively easily through political forces, underestimating the impact of weak and fragile institutions. The extension of this model to parts of the globe where the institutions of participation and representation are weakly developed thus produces new tensions in the operations of democracy and new questions for feminist political activism. In considering why inclusion has contradictory outcomes in so many new democracies, then, we have to take into account that women may find themselves occupying 'empty' spaces. Along with other marginalized groupings, women have relatively little power to shape the allocation of resources. Indeed, the reality that limited power is seen to reside in these spaces may be one explanation for why men have been willing to concede formal political space to women. Despite these caveats, the emphasis on increasing women's representation is a significant new aspect in discussions of gender equality, and new forms of modernization-based arguments can be detected in the global demand for quotas for women. These demands are modern in the sense that they emphasize the importance of political institutions and assume that there is a clearly-defined set of policy procedures that women can either direct to the aims of equality, or change where there is clear male bias (Hassim, 2009: 6-8).

CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, we assert that development is achieved by those civilizations that make the best use of their members' faculties of seeing, listening, and perceiving, regardless of whether their people believe in God or not. A civilization that produces new knowledge is blessed with development and prosperity. Given this, one can deduce correctly that unless the Muslim women gets rid of man-dominated, religion-oriented, bigotry and reactionary mentality and create their own knowledge, by following very famous saying of Immanuel Kant; "*Sapere aude* [Follow your mind]", there is no possibility of them ever becoming underdeveloped. Every member of Muslim women should stand for creative and innovative productions in each area of life. Muslim intellectuals need to develop their own models and structures for Muslim women that not only differ from the existing ones in the "developed world," but they must also be superior to those existing models in providing all rights to for Muslim women's empowerment. All of the Muslim women's energies, therefore, must be directed toward creating this sense of mentality, creativity, innovation, and excellence.

To achieve this target, the Muslim women need to create an environment that values hard work and personal excellence in its societies and institutions. In these institutions, those who are serious and creative in finding the ways to make Muslim women utmost robust, powerful, independent and free must be acknowledged and rewarded. To create a culture of knowledge and excellence, the Muslim women must understand that new liberal knowledge and a liberal culture of excellence cannot develop unless the existing mentality is replaced by committed and courageous people at both the political and the intellectual levels. No violent or secret activities should be accepted in Muslim societies. Thus, fair and free opportunities must be guaranteed to all social groups and sections that are ready to work within the country's constitutional framework. No party should be banned, and all print and electronic media should have an equal chance to cover important parties at the national and state levels. Any government that denies these rights for Muslim women should be considered illegitimate. Healthy criticism

must be taken as a source of consensus for obtaining something good for society. Governments should not only talk about transparency, but should generate a real transparent culture. Every move to make government more open and accountable should be accepted as a principle of good governance. If the Muslim women fail to accept this challenge, then no one can change their fate of continued injustice, exploitation, and oppression (See for detail, Mumtaz Ali, 2007: 44-70).

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