

## Islamic Feminist Discourse in the Eyes of Egyptian Women: A Fieldwork Study

Hana'a El-Marsafy<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

---

This paper discusses the Egyptian Islamic feminist discourse (2012-2014) as viewed by Egyptian professors and students whether they are Muslims or Christians, Activists or non-activists, Islamists secular or Islamic feminists or conservatives/ as Salafis and Muslim Brotherhood. Anthropological method is applied with its main tools: in-depth interviews and focus group. The reaction to contemporary Egyptian Islamic feminist discourse varies in the eyes of this diverting spectrum according to various Islamic feminist issues. This Egyptian discourse has molded some new Islamic terminology with secular feminist ones to give it new justification through what they called Gender Jihad. Most of the issues dealt with in this discourse such as, gender equality, patriarchal dominance, women submission to men, women as God's Caliphate, Domesticity and women's private space, veiling and freedom of the body, progressive mandate legislations, and woman *imamah* in congregational prayers, are discussed in this paper. The focus group was chosen to affirm or refute the Islamic feminist discourse as a kind of evaluation to the data derived from the in-depth interviews. When this Islamic feminist discourse was analyzed, the researcher discovers that Egyptian women have developed the global discourse and created a local one that is a mixture of Islamic and secular feminist discourse. The aim of this study is to teach students of the last year Anthropology how to analyze universal issues as those of Islamic feminism and render it problematically.

---

### Problem

This study analyzes Islamic feminists' discourse depending on the two Islamic Feminists: Margot Badran and Omaila Abu Bakr, displaying their influence on Egyptian university professors and university students. This study aims at exploring the degree of women's awareness of their rights and equality as explained in Islamic feminism.

---

<sup>1</sup> 118 Merghani street, Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt.

The research main interest in Islamic feminism in Egyptian society is mainly because it represents an Islamic community; where progressive and traditionalist currents live and coexist.

This paper aims to discuss Islamic Feminist discourse from the point of view of female Egyptian professors and students on a crucial period of change:(2012-2014)the rise of the rule of Muslim Brotherhood and their downfall. The fieldwork started in 2012 before the Muslim Brotherhood's rule, where the sample chosen at this step were mostly with the 2011 revolutionists and/or the Islamic activists. The second step of the fieldwork started 2013 after the ousting of the Muslim Brotherhood President Dr. Morsy al Ayyat. In this second step the researcher concentrated on a Christian professor and two Muslim conservative Professors: a Salafi who does not share in politics, and a Muslim Brotherhood/Sisterhood who shares in politics as part of her religious mission, to give the fieldwork a wider dimension. The third step, analyses the point of view of female students specialized in Anthropology concerning Islamic feminism. The researcher as a professor in Women College has chosen a focus group as representatives of the new generation.

Although Feminism and Gender studies have been known in the nineties of the last centuries, by the turn of the century new voices have appeared claiming that feminism has varied voices that should be defined as feminisms (Postmodern feminism, Lesbian feminism, Black feminism...and others). One might claim that "Islamic feminism" is one type of feminisms articulated through International Conferences and Cyber-net. By 2005 Islamic feminism started to flourish in an International Conference of Islamic Feminism in Barcelona, where Muslims and non-Muslims participated in these events, followed by annual universal International Conferences

As to Egypt, "Islamic feminism<sup>1</sup> has been introduced," through Margot Badran and Omaira Abu Bakr. Margot Badran, Oxford-educated American historian; whose Ph.D. dissertation focused on Egyptian feminism; studied in al-Azhar the most global Islamic Institute in the Islamic world, presented a substantial number of works on Contemporary Islamic Feminism. Badran, in her writings and interviews, has differentiated between secular and Islamic feminism in Egypt. She saw that both are branches of radical feminism that use different discourses; the former deals with national discourse while the latter takes Quranic ethos as its reference (Badran, 2013).

The second pioneer in Islamic feminism in Egypt is Omaima Abu Bakr, a Caren Professor who is known of sharing in NGOs activities and writings and lectures on "Islamic feminism" in Egypt. Her works stress that Islamic Feminism is a social discourse rather than a religious one. She shared in many conferences and interviews on Islamic feminism.

Though this school of thought began and emerged outside Egypt, specifically in Persia, Badran and Abu Bakr and others ...as Leila Ahmed<sup>ii</sup> believe that its roots go back to the early days of Islamic female Activists (Ahmed, 1992: 169-234, Badran, 2000). Badran explains that Islamic feminism is a branch that takes Islamic interpretation as a discourse that defends "women equality with men." Islamic feminists consider that their achievement is in rereading the Islamic Text and interpreting it as a kind of "Islamic Jihad" to reach a current Islamic jurisdiction equivalent to past one.

This study tries to analyze the point of view of diverse female voices to see how far this discourse is applicable to Egyptian society in such a crucial period of change. Thus, the research attempts to answer the following questions: To what extent do contemporary Egyptian women believe that "Islamic Feminism" is applicable to the Egyptian society? And to what extent do they agree or disagree with universal trends? This paper traces the path of contemporary Islamic feminism in Egypt rendering it problematically in the view of the educated middle class youth to interpret and foresee the articulation of future Islamic feminism in Egypt.

## **Methodology**

This study depended on the anthropological method with its two main tools: in-depth interviews and focus group; performed in three steps as in figure (1). Firstly, the interviews were conducted (2012) on female university professors and their disciples interested in Islamic feminism before the rule of Muslim Brotherhood. Secondly, the study proceeded to conduct interviews (2013) after the ousting of the Muslim Brotherhood President Dr. Morsy al-Ayyat. The researcher interviewed a Secular feminist professor, Samia Qadri a Christian female. The researcher was also interested in non-feminists' views, so interviewed two female Conservative Muslim professors: a Salafi and a Muslim Brotherhood/Sisterhood.

Thirdly, the fieldwork ended the fieldwork with a focus group (2014) applied on last year anthropology students of Woman College to fill the gaps and comment on the results of the previous interviews, and to know the view of the future generation and how far they refused or accepted the Islamic feminist discourse.

### The Fieldwork Steps and the Characteristics of the Sample of the Research

1 <sup>st</sup> step: Interview with Islamic feminists				2 <sup>nd</sup> step: Interview with Non-Islamic feminists			3 <sup>rd</sup> step focus group(students)
A specialized professor in Islamic feminism	A disciple	Two Activists	A specialized professor in Gender and feminism	A Christian feminist	Conservatives A Muslim Brotherhood	A Salafi	15 participants (Mostly Veiled), A Christian, A Salafi (wearing Nikab) and A liberal
Abu Bakr	Anonymous	Anonymous	El-sadda	Qadry	Anonymous	Anonymous	Anonymous

Participation in the study was voluntary and confidential: participants were informed of the research objective, asked for their oral consent and were assured of the confidentiality of the research. Those who were not specialists asked for anonymity, a request confirmed by the researcher as a participant right.

The first step started 2012 by in-depth interviews with five Islamic feminists: two Islamic Feminist authorities, one of their students and two activists that participated in the Egyptian Revolution 2011. The first authority is Prof. Abu Bakr, who is well-known in Egypt and worldwide, for her innovative lectures, interviews and writings in the cyber net in the international channels on Islamic Feminist discourse. The second authority is a Muslim feminist professor Hoda Elsadda one of the 50 chosen to set the new Egyptian Constitution (2013) after the past Muslim Brothers' Constitution was dissolved. They are nearly the most well-known figures and lecturers in Gender feminism in Egypt, as it was apparent in 2012 at Gender feminist seminars in Cairo University sponsored by the Woman and Memory NGO. Then, interviews were conducted with Islamic feminist followers (two activists and a non-activist). The two activists are new graduate students; the elder is specialized in Folklore and the younger is a freelancer in a newspaper that encourages youth. The non-activist is a graduate student specialized in English and American literature, she is one of Hoda Elsadda's disciples in Cairo University .

The second step started 2013 by an in-depth interview with Professor Samia Qadry a Christian secular feminist.

She was raised in Shobra, a neighborhood of majority of Christians, and went to Sunday schools specialized in Christian socialization and worked as a servant in the service of Angelical Church Association and led a camp of 75 children from 3-12 years old helped with "an army of servants" as she related. Then she studied Feminism and Feminist analysis in Holland, married to a priest, did her dissertation on "Divorce in Coptic society," wrote and gave various lectures and speeches on feminism.

The second step proceeded by in-depth interviews with two female conservative Professors (a Muslim Brotherhood/Sisterhood and a Salafi). Even though the Salafi professor claimed that women should not participate in Politics as dictated in Islam, the Muslim Brotherhood/Sisterhood professor as a political activist has a different approach. The former Salafi Professor who is married to one of her conservative colleagues, had worked with her husband in Saudi Arabia for years. She returned to Egypt so as to look after her children and their education. She considers fundamentalism as the true religion. The latter and her husband went to Tahrir Square and fought for the Muslim Brotherhood's ruling. Her Facebook page is full of posts on beliefs pro-Morsy and the bad experiences of Muslim Brotherhoods and the injuries they have suffered and are still suffering from. One could clearly view the significance of the words of the Muslim Brotherhood Professor, "There is a great difference between true religion and its application nowadays. This is what we teach our students."

The third step took place 2014 in the form of a focus group interview. The researcher tries through the focus group to make participants of the last year in Anthropology major comment on previous interviews by affirming or refusal. This focus group has also a pragmatic cause rather than mere "extensive interpretations as focus of the analysis" (Flick, 2010: 205). The aim of this step is to teach the students, without didactic methods, argumentative, individualistic thinking through liberal, feminist, local and global culture. This step started by a selection of participants to represent the different population subgroups required (Morgan, 1988: 42, Flick, 2010: 203). The researcher selected twenty students of the last year class in Anthropology major; to represent the middle class educated Egyptian females. The participants of the focus group are: a Christian, a Salafi, a liberal, and the rest are of veiled Muslim non-activist students; to reach a generalized view of the current generation and of the future of Islamic feminist discourse.

As the participants should be introduced to the thesis of the research (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011: 218), the researcher tried to build rapport with various participants by presenting the thesis of the research, followed by the following key questions of the research fieldwork guide.

1. What is the participants' background knowledge of Islamic feminism? And to what extent does this trend appeal to them?
2. Do Islamic feminism perspectives match Egyptian societal beliefs and its mandate application on Egyptians: Muslims and non-Muslims?
3. To what extent is Islamic feminism eligible to Egyptian women; conservative Muslims, Liberal feminists and radical Christians?

These above questions were to be discussed and rendered problematically in the interview and focus group. Then, the answers were to be analyzed and written in a report trying to reach a conclusion reflecting the current Islamic feminist discourse and trying to predict its future in Egypt in such a crucial period of change.

### **Literature on the Subject**

Most Literature on Islamic Feminism, especially concerning Egypt, is generally restricted to Muslim World issues. Leila Ahmed's *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*(1992), presents a historical survey showing the earliest Islamic doctrines on women. Ahmed uses analytic tools to answer a broader question which is: To what extent are Islamic societies oppressive to women? Lila Abu-Lughod's<sup>iii</sup> book, *Remaking Woman: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*(1998), explains some implications for women raised by modernization and women's issues in general. Feminist historian, Margot Badran<sup>iv</sup>, the foremost authority on Islamic feminism, has authored many books and articles as well as given numerous interviews on feminism in Egypt. In *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt*(2000)<sup>v</sup>, Badran traces Egyptian feminism across modern Egyptian history. Her article, "Islamic Feminism: What's in a Name?" (Al-Ahram Weekly Online, January 2002), and several other interviews "Islamic Feminism Revisited"(February 10, 2006), "The Course& Future of Islamic Feminism(October 13, 2010) and "This Revolution Challenges Patriarchy" (December 23, 2011) reflect thinking out-of-the-box but not out of an Islamic context.

Some studies that are concerned with other cultures than that of the Egyptians, still reflect a good background on the issues tackled in the Islamic feminist discourse that might be useful to this study. The paper of Huma Ahmed-Ghosh, "Dilemmas of Islamic and Secular Feminists and Feminisms," in May 2009 aims to "explore ways in which a multifaceted understanding of Islamic feminism" contribute to a productive dialogue about the future of Muslim women in both Islamic and secular states.

### **Islamic Feminism as a Global Phenomenon**

Islamic feminism could be considered as one branch of radical feminism, as it calls for gender equality and is against patriarchal authority (Badran, 2011). In 1958, feminism was defined as: "the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities: organized activity in support of women's rights and interests"(Feminism-Definition, 1985). It developed by time to reach the pro-women social radical view (1960) that "women are not to be blamed for their own oppression." The Pro-Woman Line evolved out of consciousness-raising and became a significant part of the Women's Liberation movement (Definition of Contemporary Feminism, 2013). So, "what does feminism look like today? It has become nearly impossible to talk about contemporary feminism in a way that doesn't tie it to an historical moment" (Contemporary Feminism, 2013). Though the most basic definition of feminism is the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes, it is rarely ever simply admitted in a straightforward way. Contemporary feminism according to Karen Offen, the well-known feminist who wrote not only on American but also on European feminism, claims that feminism had been recently associated with history, now it was not ahistorical, but also antihistorical sometimes (155). Offen explained that to be a secular feminist was to be "in odd with male dominant culture and society" (152). She went further than this and considered feminism as a new pagan religion known as "Female Pagan religion" that refused all absolutes and called for the sacredness of the female as nature gave her the birth power that did not give the male. That power was derived from the Goddess (Did pagans worship women? 2013).

But Islamic feminism, neither defies religion nor follows the mainstream blindly. According to Abu-Bakr, (2012)

Islamic feminism is misperceived as the struggle between genders ...it is misleading to think that feminism encourages women to challenge men according to a foreign agenda. The main objective ... is to guarantee balance between men and women and preserve the ties between them, thereby creating opportunities for women to learn and work for their own empowerment. The successful woman shoulders responsibilities in general at social, familial, or political levels. She complies with religious principles without being abusive or abused. Thus, she is not submissive to her husband because he is prone to human error.

Certain individuals, in Egypt, who articulate Feminism accept being associated with the term 'Islamist', though they know that Islamic feminism began in Persia among the Shi'ite sect. Egyptian feminists know that Islamic feminism has become a global phenomenon since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and has been incorporated into state-endorsed public policy.<sup>vi</sup> So, Badran and Abu-Bakr who are Sunni, are feminist authorities in Egypt. Although, Badran considers "Islamic feminism a global phenomenon, she stresses that it is not confined only to Muslims" (2002), The secular feminist, Qadry goes to the extreme, and states that "it is not a branch of feminism, it has completely different and separate beliefs and theories than Feminism (i.e. secular feminism)." On the contrary Badran claims that Islamic feminism is a Global Phenomenon for Muslims and non-Muslims and is believed and applied on majority and minority of Muslim communities (2006, 2010). Abu-Bakr takes a middle stand "Though it is global phenomenon the West has also known Christian feminism which is more suitable to them."

### **Islamic Feminism as an Egyptian Trend**

Feminism was firstly known in Egypt, as a secular trend in 1923 and was associated with the modernization process (Badran, 1996:19). It coincided with the call for adopting 'new ideas and practices expressed in social and political life. It was ushered by the upper and middle classes, 'borrowing' from Europe, which gave rise to women's issues in the Egyptian context. Islamic feminism emerged by the late twentieth century (1989), as a kind of "Marriage of Feminism and Islamism in Egypt," those who expounded Islamic feminism discussed Muslim issues, trying to apply important issues of feminism, while rereading Islamic text (Kynsilehto, 2008:9).



"The Islamic modernist strand of foundational secular feminism aimed at activating rights accorded to women in the Qur'an...Central to the project of Islamic modernism, articulated by Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduh of Egypt, widely influential in Muslim world in his day—the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and after..."(29). Those feminists are completely different from this group called "'Islamists,' namely Brotherhood/sisterhood and the Salafi..." as Abu Bakr clarified. However, it is noticed that these divisions are interlaced in the words of the participants of the study, as conservatives, as it is shown in the following.

Most of the participants of the study waver in "feminism conscious" except the conservative professors and students who are against this discourse. The Salafi professor, in Women college, claimed that she had never heard about feminism and exclaimed amazingly "what do you mean of woman's liberty and her equality with man?" and added, "I am against all imported views, this should be the opinion of all Muslims. All Muslims are Salafis in their doctrine (meaning that they should follow their early righteous predecessors (al Salaf al Salih)." The Salafis (the professor and the student in the focus group) used the same statement, when asked, "Are you Salafi?" they answered, "We, Muslims, are all Salafis, aren't we by default?" Contrary to Salafis, the Brotherhood professor in her Facebook page and interview stressed that Muslim Brotherhood are a separate sector. "We are an oppressed minority because we are committed to Islam and refuse to be dragged to foreign thought as in the case of the majority." Her words express her feeling of superiority, "Our role is to guide others to the righteous path of Islam." However, most participants of the research refused this governance, and declared, "All Muslims are equal before God and each one is responsible for his/her own deeds and no minority have the right to supervise over us. We should reread our Holy texts with a current perspective taking into consideration variables of change, and form our own feminism." The Christian secularist feminist Qadri presented a hostile voice to Islamic feminism, "I am specialized in Feminism and I am against Islamic feminism, because it is only a vindication of women rights in Islam, not a branch of feminism." Although Qadri tried to strip feminism from Islamic religious thought, she unconsciously tried to prove that equality of women and men is mentioned in the Bible, "When God tells man that He will create to him a companion, He offered him an equal friend, not a slave or an inferior."

## **Patriarchal Domination, Gender Equality and Social Justice**

Islamic feminist discourse is generically fighting conservatives for gender equality against patriarchal domination. Badran clarified, "Islamic feminism disillusioned the ethos that Islam is calling for patriarchal authority. Islamic feminist discourse and practice derives its understanding from the Qur'an, seeking rights and justice within the framework of gender equality for women and men in the totality of their existence." Islamic feminism advocates "gender equality as part and parcel of the Qur'anic notion of equality of every *insan* (human being) and promotes gender equality in the state, civil institutions, and everyday life." Islamic feminists aim to revive and spread the notion of gender equality originally introduced by Qur'anic revelations into 7th century C.E. patriarchal Arabia given that *Insan*-ic equality and gender equality are considered inseparable(2006). Proponents of Islamic feminism have "the two-fold task to expose and eradicate patriarchal ideas and practices glossed as Islamic" (2006). Islamic feminism is attacked from within by "men who fear the loss of patriarchal privilege and women who fear the loss of patriarchal protection" (2006), and from without by those reluctant to submit to Islamic culture and doctrine. The Salafis'(a professor and a student from the focus group) do not believe in gender equality and specially "women's right to work outside her home, unless her husband approves that she displays a role that suits his conviction, and that working does not conflict with his family rights at home." On the contrary, Badran believes that gender equality reflects one of the sides of social justice preached in Islam, and that Muslims have succeeded in moulding "Western feminism," which was initially secular, and evolving it into a distinct Islamic form. Islamic feminism calls for social justice within the *Umma* (Islamic nation) and equality among people. All humans regardless of their ethnic, religious and gender affiliations are equal to God, and thus Islamic feminism can be applied on every "*Insan* (human)" (2006). But Abu Bakr contradicts her saying that, "Islamic feminism should be only applied to Muslims. It should be confined to Muslims only, since there is Christian Feminism for Christians." In the focus group the conservatives said it bluntly that generally, 'Males know better,' while the liberal student defended her equal right with men.

## **Private/Public Sphere, Domesticity and Cracking the Glass Ceiling**

"Private sphere as the haven of woman," is Elsadda's unexpected issue stated in her lecture on Gender and Feminism, which was mainly concerned with "Domesticity" in feminism.

Her lecture given 2012 in Cairo University, and sponsored by Woman and Memory NGO forum caused plenty of argument, and was looked at as a debatable issue. Elsadda, in her lecture on feminism, explained that it is a positive right to the woman to have "the private space" as "her home." To the female audiences, this point of view contradicts with women's ambitions propagated by the Western project of modernization. Elsadda expounded, "Woman's private sphere is her home which is woman's kingdom and this is not a negative attitude, don't you think that it is something good to have such a haven?" Elsadda's positive view of "Domesticity," has not hindered her from working as Professor, in Political arena, NGOs, and lately as a member in the committee that is composed of fifty members who have revised the new tentative constitution. Abu- Bakr sees that woman has a double responsibility. It is a hard task, but woman will never feel satisfied and successful unless she reaches a balance between her family of marriage and her ambition as a working woman. She finds that Egyptian woman is lucky because she can depend on her family of procreation especially her mother.

Most of the participants affirmed the importance of the family of marriage as a priority in the life of successful women, but they vary in the degree of their success in cracking the glass ceiling. The disciple, said with regret, "the family and children are the main reason for not being as successful as I wish, till now I have not fulfilled the requirements of the doctoral degree." While the activists are revolutionaries rebelled against the social norms accepted by the elder participants stating, "A Woman should respect her family, but the men of her family of marriage should not stand in her way of success." All the participants agreed that the Egyptian successful woman is that who knows how to balance her family responsibilities with her work outside her home in "the public sphere." Only the Christian feminist, whose husband is an Angelic priest and has additional responsibilities, claimed "My work as a professor, is my first priority, my children and my grandchildren are as third priority even after my personal concerns and work as a member in number of NGOs." One could tell that she believes in her role as a wife to a priest with its responsibilities as part of her role in the private sphere.

She clarifies, "Despite my responsibilities as a servant in the church, if I have a prayer and work in the public sphere, the first priority is to work."

The Salafis (the student and the professor) confined women with "the Private Space," while they gave males the right of "Public Space."

The Salafi student stated bluntly, "It is man's right is to keep his wife at home and not let her go to work outside, if she fails to make a balance between her family (especially her children) and her work." While the rest of the focus group shouted and rebelled against these words saying, "After all the work, effort, studies done, you will stay at home and do not work!! The Salafi student answered back, "man knows better. What if it is dangerous for women to work?" Thus, these words might be considered a reassurance against the Salafi views. Moreover, the Salafi Professor specified just some professions for women, "Women should not work in Politics, they might work as teachers and nurses as was the case in the Prophet's early days, or they might work in equivalent professions as doctors and professors in our days if needed."

However, "Submission of women to men in staying at home and not working in public sphere" is refused by the majority of the focus group. Although most of them believe that women should work outside, they still give men the privilege of being the head of the family, who should be consulted in family matters. Amazingly enough all the focus group, are against submission to males at work, but they all agreed that the opinion of their family males is important concerning how they dress at work, and half of them clarified that even males who are younger in age know better in this concern.

### **Islamic Feminists' Dress between Freedom and Seclusion**

The ideal type of Egyptian woman attire differed in Egypt from time to time (Leila Ahmed, 1992; Badran, 2000). "All Muslims agree that the Prophet told his daughter that the Muslim female, after her puberty, should only expose her face and hands to any foreigner (meaning any person she can marry)." This is the story told by conservative Islamist women: who are mainly the Salafi and those who belong to the Muslim Brotherhood. They wear similar attire, with slight difference to the ideal they claim, clear to the thorough observer. The main difference is that most Salafi Women cover their face, and wear *Gilbab*(wide dress) and an *Isdal* which is a cover to the head that extends to cover all through the breast and the back till the waste.

Still some of the Salafi women do not cover their face as in the case of the participant who said, "I negotiated the issue with my husband of not covering my face. Really, the Prophet's wives used to cover their faces, but the 'niqab'(the face cover) is a 'fadle' merit not 'fard' an obligation." This is the same excuse that most of women of the Muslim Brotherhood rely on for not covering their faces, while their dress or skirt and shirt cover the whole arms and legs. But the secular feminists wear a completely different attire which is the same as Europeans. Nawal al Sadawi, as an example of secular feminists, puts on the European dress as it seems to them as the international dress. In the meantime, feminists whether, secular or not, believe that, "Every woman is free to wear as she wants, what suits her or what agrees with her beliefs." The Egyptian youth, and most Islamic Feminists consider wearing the European "international dress," and covering or uncovering their hair a matter of freedom, personal choice and an individual right. Thus, feminist freedom in Egypt acquires a different concern, which reflects Egyptian feminists' interests as members of a society having different beliefs from European Feminists. Their aspiration is completely different from freedom of the body demanded by Western Feminists. This was clear in Elsadda's cunning smile and her assurance that, "In Egypt, even when we use the Western terminology such as 'freedom of the body' our concerns are completely different. However, she added still, I think all feminists have something in common." Elsadda meant that although feminists in each community demand different rights when speaking about freedom of the body, they all agree that women are free to deal with their bodies as they like. In "Feminism and the Politics of Appearance", Amy Winter writes that:

In the last decade, it's also become very difficult to discuss issues of personal appearance, in fact, any issue of "personal choice" at all, within feminist and lesbian communities. The second-wave feminist emphasis is on a woman's right to body autonomy... ( Winter, 2004).

The ideal type of Western secular feminism appearance urges women to appear equal to men in street apparel. Projecting a masculine image is encouraged while high heels and other ultra-feminine items are frowned upon as they reduce women to passive sex objects. "What is common to all feminists, either in the East or the West, is women's refusal to be sex objects," Qadri comments.

Although Islamic feminists do not give the issue of wearing "*Hijab*" a primary importance, they do not consider it as oppressive to women as the Secularists.

The female Islamic feminist, however, discards Islamic dress or veiling in favour of modest "*hishma*" attire, rejecting in most cases a male-like appearance. It is worth noting to point out that *Hijab* is used generically across time and space. In early twentieth century, to the Egyptians, the term "*niqab*," the extremist kind of Hijab that covers the face too, was symbolic of suppressing women's identity and secluding them in the "Private Sphere." "Till now some Muslim Feminists, as Nawal Al Sad<sup>c</sup>awi, regards '*Hijab*' as a means of crippling women," as Qadri commented. Defenders of Secular discourse attacked the *Hijab* rather than Islam itself. Early Egyptian feminists faced censure, when they publicly uncovered their faces, as Hoda Sha<sup>c</sup>rawi relates (Badran, 2000, 25). Thus, rebellion against covering the face and hair represented a kind of revolution against the whole society. This explains why uncovering of the hair is a secular feminist marker. Muslim feminists as Elsadda and Christian feminists as Qadri, wear European or international dress. While Elsadda is not veiled and states that, "Even those who believe in Islamic feminists are not necessarily veiled," Qadri sees that, "As a Christian it is out of question because veiling is a Muslim issue."

Nowadays, many Egyptian feminists do not associate veiling with seclusion, since most working class women wear a kind of covering to the hair. Recently, the veil has gained another significance unrelated to early seclusion notions. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood participant approves that women wear Islamic dress while engaging in political and social activities. Many Egyptian women wear western style dress with a hair cover (describing themselves as 'veiled'), appeared in the debates and champagne of Morsy presidency, publicity of Muslim Brotherhood in Television, and in public. Women in full *niqab* (face cover) do not see themselves as making an anti-social statement in the name of Islam, but consider niqab as means to achieve deeper spirituality. Contemporary Islamic Feminists do not make the Hijab the focus of their debate. However, the Islamic feminists (activists, followers and Specialists), secular feminists view that Muslim women's veiling is considered as one of their personal rights of freedom of dress; thus, the veil represents freedom and equality with men (Woodlock, 2000). The salafi case saw "the importance of tolerance in the dress is in the length of the veil," but clarified, "the Islamic agreed dress should be neither tight (*yasif*) nor transparent (*yufasir*) dress. An activist who is an Islamic feminist stated, "I am not veiled but one day I will be, but everyone is free to do what she wants."

One could sum the case of Islamic feminists' view, in the words of the specialist Abu-Bakr, "not all Islamic feminists are veiled, everyone is free to put on whatever she wants." Elsadda expounded, "It is for theologians to debate whether veiling is a must or not; this issue is not one of Islamic Feminists' concern."

Though the issue of veiling is one of the most controversial issues facing Feminists nowadays in Egypt, Islamic feminists do not consider it one of their main issues. Even the veiled South African American well-known Islamic Feminist Amina Wadud considered it only one of the defining features of Muslim women. She warned against viewing the veil as a pre-requisite for entering Heaven or Hell, "if you think the difference between heaven and hell is 45 inches of material, boy you will be surprised." Nevertheless, Wadud believed that Islamic dress heightens her awareness of her actions. In "Inside the Gender Jihad," Wadud writes,

I do not consider it a religious obligation, nor do I ascribe to it any religious significance or moral value *per se*. It is certainly not the penultimate denotation of modesty, as mandated by the Qur'an, the best dress is the dress of taqwa (modesty).

Over the past several decades, the hijab has been given a disproportionate symbolic significance both within and without Muslim communities. Like a sixth pillar, we cannot discuss Islam and gender without discussing the hijab ... often the single marker determining community approval or disapproval.

Wadud makes a valid point: the hijab does not necessarily grant a woman respect or protection. "Those who reduce women to their sexuality will continue to do so. In reality, the hijab of coercion and the hijab of choice look the same" (Amina Wadud on Hijab, 2010). The elder unveiled activist justifies her choice not to veil stressing that spiritual devotion to God is not conditioned by physical appearance:

I pray and fast; I pray with all my soul...even with more devotion than my husband. When he smells my cooking, he finishes his prayers quickly so that he can give his full attention to the meal. He is merely going through the physical motions, as if he has a task that he ought to do...he's praying with no soul because all he can think about is his lunch...

## Female Submission, Gender Jihad and Jurisprudence

Islamic feminists are now more widely accepted as expressing part of the Philosophy and Politics of the movement of Progressive Islam (2006). Some women are now working in tafsir and jurisprudence. Since Islamic societies and communities believe in jurisprudence as the basis to solve any Islamic dilemma, Islamic feminism has given great interest to tafsir(explanation) of Qu'ranic verses and the Prophet's sayings and tradition in addition to religious interpretation (*ijthad*)(Kynsilehto, 2008: 29) Islamic feminists identify and defend women's rights through these three sources, rereading Holy texts, some radical interpretations, then "ijthad" which they called "Gender Jihad" (Ghandi, Islamic Feminism: In the Shadow of Inequality, 2003). "Gender equality in Islam equalizes all believers," one of the focus group commented, "in doomsday, we are all equals, as stated in the Holy verses...in Islam and Christianity as well." However, this progressive statement when commented on by conservative participants was twisted to suit their goals. The Salafi said, "but men are better through their merits that God has provided some with." The Muslim Brotherhood professor quoted the Prophet words, "Women are men's twin sisters," but added with some stress, "women are fragile glass urns, man should handle them with care, even if they are not equal in every domain, it is men's duty to tend them."

One of the interests of Islamic feminists is to prove that Muslim women's status is not looked down upon. As, "Islamic feminism deconstructs patriarchal authority," Abu Bakr clarified, "Islam does not consider men better than women except under a certain condition, which is mainly to be their provider." The younger activist stressed this point stating, "Yes, only when they are the providers." Elsadda clarified, "Nowadays, where can we find the man who is the sole provider?!!" Abu-Bakr explains that "Islam does not bestow a man with authority over a woman. This is a privilege granted only if God has given a man superior gifts to a woman and if he supports her financially." The elder activist agrees, stating that a man leads only if he is the provider, she adds that even this condition does not necessarily obligate woman to follow man. Despite main consensus that women should follow the provider, both activists point out that nowadays many women are the sole breadwinners and that male as provider is a rarity. Female submission to men under any circumstances was refused by all concerned, except when men have superior mental powers.



Abu-Bakr states:

The Islamic family does not follow the system where capitalists maintain control because they have material possessions ....Even, when man spends money, I do not consider him the Provider that has to be obeyed; it is only God who is the sole Provider. Creatures are not supposed to be put on an equal footing with the Creator, only because they possess some money; Creator and creature should not achieve equal status in terms of domination and submission. Conversely, relations in Islamic households are built on compromises rather than on Marxist theories.

The younger activist explains that, "Islam puts an end to slavery so women's complete submission to men is against monotheism." Similarly, her colleague explains, "commitment should be to God's orders as the core of monotheism." However she asserts that she follows only those with proven mental competence at home and at work. In the meantime, the Christian secular feminist Qadri clarified that also "in the Bible, "The story of Creation," women are created to be a help (Mo'ina) and equal (Nadhira) to man."

The two activists believe that men are abusive to women. The elder commented on the incident where a female revolutionist was sexually abused in Tahrir Square, then blamed for the attack; "This is a male strategy to discourage female participation in public events." The elder activist explains, "While Islamic feminism sees that Islam is the solution, this can be applied only to intellectual people." She mentions that both spouses invoke God during marital disputes, a convenient ploy when divine intervention is needed. All the focus group declared that "No one can make a woman do what she is not convinced to do." Moreover, both El-sadda and the Focus group assured that the mother or an elder female might be a better advisor and might be obeyed more than males.

### **Women Leadership: Imamah in Prayers and God's Caliphate in Life**

Deconstruction of patriarchal system is a debatable issue when it is concerned with women leadership in Islamic rituals. Women's participation in congregational mosque prayers dwindled, with only rare visits to mosques on special occasions.

As Islam resurged, this issue has dominated Islamic feminist debate in an attempt to assert women's rights not only to return to mosque prayers, but even to lead Friday prayers, especially when a female "*imamah*" is better versed in Islam than her male counterpart - an issue now under scrutiny and is even backed by some *sheikhs*.

The Salafis and Muslim Brotherhood participants consider this issue undebatable, since "even a young boy who has just reached puberty can lead men and women in prayer, if he knows how to recite short *Suras* (few verses), and a woman should follow him, even if she knows more verses in Quran."

Elsadda, washed her hands from the whole issue, as a Muslim secular feminist, she comments, "giving or withdrawing women's rights to "*imamah*" is the domain for Islamic theologians to judge rather than sociologists." Abu-Bakr observes that:

In Islamic countries more men have knowledge of the Quran compared to those in Muslim minority societies; for example, the Muslim South African Islamic feminist Amina Wadud<sup>vii</sup> led congregational prayers, because she was better versed in Islam than her male peers. The real problem ... lies in mixing females and males in the rows of prayers, desirable in principle but difficult to apply. The resulting relegation of women to inferior prayer areas has raised some thorny issues such as *imamah*...

Abu-Bakr views Islamic feminism as a reconstruction of authentic Islamic jurisprudence on an Islamic platform rather than the foreign female empowerment model which is unfamiliar to Egyptian societies. Moreover, Islamic feminism applies only to Muslim women because Christian feminists have compromised between feminism and the Church in western societies through negotiations to redefine church teachings. But up till now in Egypt, "Male who are the leader in Prayers in churches." Qadri believes, "Though, The Christian Church and Islamic Institutions should join hands in Arab countries to reach an acceptable form of feminism, Prayers should be led by a priest (a male) for religious matters." It is not enough that some religious institutions are concerned with this issue, but an organized plan should be aimed at.

The activists' point of view was a clear cut that "*imamah*" in congregational mosque prayers are for males.

The younger activist's stance on the "*imamah*" issue was that, "This is an undebatable issue, it is definitely given as right to men not to women. Besides, the elder activist elaborated that the likelihood of women acting as *imam*, in the early days of Islam, was "limited to daily prayers among women at home," as exemplified by Umm Salamah, an early Islamic woman who led prayers at home with female household members. Elsadda adds, "knowledge of the Quran does not necessarily qualify many Egyptian men to be acceptable *imams* and give *khotba* (speech).

In addition to the prayer '*imamah*' issue, another kind of '*imamah*,' namely '*Khilifat Allah*' (God's Caliphate on Earth) is mentioned. The traditional outlook favored that God's Caliphate is man the masculine. However Abu-Bakr comments:

In Islam, every single person is '*Rā'i*' (a caretaker) who is responsible for his '*Rā'iyyah*' (dependents)...and the woman is thus also responsible for her subjects...the woman is God's Caliph on earth as He delegates responsibility to her just as He does with man.

The elder activist asserted that women as well as men are God's Caliphs on Earth. She stated that, "in Islam, women can correct men... comment on men's deeds, or advise them...," thus putting them on equal terms as men...but, according to social traditions, matters are completely different ...." While the Salafi participants denied that, "this Caliphate's proposition has been mentioned in Islam," the Muslim Brotherhood refused the expression of "God's Caliphate on Earth," and added "God delegated some responsibility to man, but Caliphate means predecessor but God does not die and cannot be followed by mortals." The Christian secular feminist assured that women as well as men are God's Caliphates, "Virgin Mary is as sacred, as Christ. The focus group assured, even the Salafi student, "in the holy Book man and women are called to act as a Caliphate on Earth and this is mentioned as a sacred mission in the first Sura in Koran.

## **Islamic Feminism and Muslim Mandate Legislative Beliefs**

Islamic feminist activists and their authority Abu-Bakr saw that the application of Islamic mandate beliefs in legislations has really been the dream of Islamic feminists. However, they were faced by the threat of the Muslim Brotherhood's debating in the parliament to strip the Egyptian women from her gained rights in the name of purifying legislations from Suzan(Mubarak's ousted president)laws. The Secular Christian feminist washed her hands of this issue of personal, family mandate legislations clarifying, "Islamic legislations is not one of their issues, since they follow the church ones; as in the case of marriage, divorce and inheritance." While Muslim Brotherhood debated for the abolishing of Khol<sup>c</sup> (right to have divorce without stating the reason) believing that women have misused this right. Amazingly enough, all the focus group refused the right of women initiating and dissolving marriage recommended by the activists. They stated, "What if a woman calls for khol<sup>c</sup> her husband will think that she wants to remarry another, so he should refuse to divorce her." When they were asked, "how would a man live with his wife in case she is in love with another man," one of the participants answered that, "Stubbornness leads to acting against reason."

Concerning the debate on children's marriage the conservatives: the Salafi and Brotherhood wanted to pass a law to allow parents to marry their girls at 12 years old. The excuse given by them is that "Bedouins, Felahin and others defy the past law that starting girls' age of marriage is 18." The Salafi and Muslim Brotherhoods see that parents have their ways to defy the law by asking a doctor to estimate the girl's age according to their will to write the marriage contract or sometimes they create a conjugal marriage till the couple are of the legal age and bring children to issue their birth certificate. Accordingly they believe that there should be a law to pass and permit what is forbidden and to make it legal. The focus group reached the conclusion that the real problem facing girls is not the starting age of marriage, as girls are really facing the problem of being spinsters not of marrying underage.

## **Conclusion**

The researcher reached the conclusion after she finished the fieldwork on Egyptian Islamic feminist discourse that the Egyptian society is full of diversities, that though they live and coexist together, at time of coercion and conservative rule as Muslim Brotherhood's,(1/7/2012-3/7/2013) a fear from coercion leads to the revival of feminism that has flourished, and took many facets one of which is Islamic feminism.

Omiama Abu Bakr, one of the Islamic feminists' authorities in Egypt at 2012, declared that Islamic feminism will succeed in uniting Muslims (the Sunni and Shi'is) at that time.

By the end of the fieldwork(2014) it has been clear that feminist discourse has taken in Egypt a new facet by molding some of the secular issues to appear in a new discourse that started in global discourse that not only appeared neither as Persian's Islamist beliefs, nor Egyptian Islamists'(the Muslim Brotherhood's and Salafi's). The Islamic feminism is not even as either pure secular feminist nor as a counteraction to its beliefs.

It was clear from the focus group discourse, as quoted by the Liberal student and approved and assured by the rest of the focus group, "the Egyptian society is a religious society and any message justified by Islam will have a strong influence on the Public." This proves that Islamic feminism even after a considerable time of the end of the Muslim Brotherhood's rule is still defending not the pure Islamic discourse, but mixing it with some of the secular feminist to be applicable to the Egyptian culture. The last Egyptian Constitution (2014) derived from the Islamic ethos, Elsadda who is specialized in Gender and feminism is one of those shared in issuing it. Both Abu Bakr, the Islamic feminist authority, and Qadri, the Christian Secular feminist claim that Islamic feminism does not suit but Muslims. Qadri clarifies that each one should follow the judgments and practices of his religion. Abu Bakr assured, "it goes without saying that Christians will follow Christian feminism and Muslims Islamic feminism." We amazingly find that Margot Badran and the Muslim Brotherhood case see that Islamic feminism that speaks in the name of Islam that suits "every *insan*" humanity and not just Muslims.

Badran wrote on many electronic articles that Islamic feminism has turned into a universal phenomenon for not only Muslims have joined it. Islamists, in Egypt, are conservatives, they are even against all kinds of feminism, or gender equality. What hinders the spread of conservative Islamists, Brotherhood and Salafis, is that while they believe that they are superior to others and should teach them religion because the multitude knows culture not religion, the participants of the research refused this chauvinist attitude stressing that, "Muslims are all equal before God."

Islamic feminist discourse in Egypt uses some Secular English feminist terminology and molds them with some Islamic terminology to justify this discourse. Through rereading of the Holy Book and, what they call, "Gender Jihad," they give new interpretations to some issues concerned with Moslem women.

In the early phase of Egyptian feminist discourse, feminists introduced the western terminology of feminism such as "Private Sphere" and "Domesticity," to describe women's submission and to ask them to revolt against their status quo. The recent study finds that nowadays issues are reconsidered and reinterpreted newly. The Islamic feminists' such as Abu Bakr and the conservatives such as the Muslim Brotherhood and even Elsadda who is a secular feminist do not look negatively at the above terms. They more or less associate them with positive connotations such as 'haven, primary role, and home. However, the Christian secularist feminist and the students of the focus group and the activists, refused to give the Private Place such a special space.

"Submission to the Provider" is not refused by the sample, although such a male provider is rarely found nowadays. Moreover, they saw that men as well as women submit to God the sole provider. While most of the focus group and the Islamic feminist professor clarified that elder women are sometimes more respected and better in advice.

"Mandate legislations" is one of the activists' main interests. They give great care to khol<sup>c</sup> and girl's suitable age for marriage while both conservatives and the focus group refused issued legislations, as belonging to the past.

"Veiling" is one of the debatable issues in feminist discourses. While it is not the most important issue for Islamic feminists, it is one of the most common interests among Muslims in Egypt. Most participants agree that women's dress should not be showy or sexy and that a kind of modesty in dress is required though it varies from Salafis to Muslim Brotherhood to the activists.

As to "the female *imamah* in congregational prayer which is discussed in the States, all Egyptian participants refused it, considering this issue far from the concern of any society with a majority of Muslims. While the activists and the liberal student in the focus find it a good idea that Muslim men, expert in Quran in the Non-Muslim communities, may follow women in Prayers

Accordingly, anthropology on Islamic feminist discourse is more important than studying mere feminism as a theory in Sociology, because it is more important first to probe deep and study the reaction of Islamic feminist discourse on women, second to teach the students of the new generation how a global discourse, like Islamic feminism, can be molded and turned to be local one, third to try to reach a final conclusion depicting the strife between advocates of conservative discourse and of Islamic feminism, and to predict future expectations.

Finally, the research proves that all the participants think highly of religious belief. Thus, any future discourse that might be influential should appeal to religious ethos. However, conservative discourse has only a limited effect on the future generation since, the Egyptian society is ready to be convinced of any innovative issue provided that it does not contradict with any religious values or norms of the society, especially after the failure of the conservative Muslim Brotherhood rule to introduce a discourse that fulfil the expectations of a revolutionary new generation. Islamic feminism as a discourse that is innovative as well as appealing to religion seems to have a considerable opportunity to flourish in the future here to come.

---

<sup>i</sup> While Secular feminism spread in the East and the West through printed word, Islamic Feminism has spread worldwide through the Internet and World Conferences. Although English is the international language of communication, some Arabic terms have been borrowed and entered in the International Feminist discourse (Badran, 2002). Actually, the Internet has easily dissolved the barriers of distance, enabling global accessibility to the World Conferences in Spain through cyber-net.

<sup>ii</sup> Leila Ahmed is an Egyptian Professor of Women's Studies and Director of the Near Eastern Area Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Faculty Associate at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University (1992). She migrated from Egypt to America after the revolution 1952, as a result of family reasons.

<sup>iii</sup> Lila Abu-Lughod, is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Middle East Studies at New York University. She has written widely on women and gender in the Middle East.

<sup>iv</sup> Margot Badran, the Oxford-educated American historian whose PhD dissertation focused on Egyptian feminism, studied in al-Azhar the most global Islamic Institute in the Islamic world has presented a substantial number of works on Contemporary Islamic Feminism.

<sup>v</sup> It is one of her most well-known publications in Egypt, that has been translated into Arabic with an introduction by Dr. Ali Badran, the author's husband.

<sup>vi</sup> This movement was strongly adopted by the Iranian magazine *Zanan*, founded by Shahla Sherkat in 1992. The Saudi scholar Mai Yamani later used the term in 1996 in her book *Feminism and Islam*.

<sup>vii</sup> Amina Wadud, is a South African Islamic Feminist, Professor of Islamic Studies at Virginia Read more on Amina Wadud on Sunday January 31, 2010. Read also <http://cairo.usakaamster.dam.blogspot.com> and on Feb 18, 2005. She was born Mary Teasley in the US "my family descended from African slaves that means Africans-free people-who were brought to the Americas to be slaves." (<http://www.islaminteractive.info/content/%E2%80%98I-want-learn-experienc...>) At the age of 20, she converted to Islam. She received her M.A. in Near Eastern Studies and her Ph.D. in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Michigan in 1988. During graduate school, she studied in Egypt, including advanced Arabic at the American University in Cairo, Qur'anic studies and tafsir (exegesis or religious interpretation) at Cairo University, and philosophy at Al-Azhar University. She worked as assistant professor at the International Islamic University, Malaysia, and Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University. She has authored two books: *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* and *Inside the Gender Jihad: Woman's Reform in (Islam* <http://islaminteractive.info/content/textuality-hijab-leila-ahmed-and-amina-wadud>).

---

## References

- Abu-Lughod, L. (1998). *Remaking Woman: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*. The American University in Cairo Press.
- Ahmed, L. (1992). *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, Yale University Press.
- Badran, M.(1996). *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt*. The American University in Cairo. 2000 ( trans. Ali Badran,) al-Matabi<sup>c</sup> al-Amiriyah, Cairo.
- Badran, M.( 2002). "Islamic Feminism: what's in a name?" On 17-23 January, *Al-Ahram Weekly* Google Online.10:21pm18/10/2011. <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/569/cu1.htm>.
- Badran, M. (2003). *Islamic Voice*, interview in July, MSN Online, 7:00 pm 25/12/2006. <http://islamicvoice.com/July,2003/ats.htm>.
- Badran, M. (2006). *Islamic Feminism Revisited*, interview on 10 February Google Online 6:00 pm 25 June 2012. [www.countercurrents.org/gen-badran100206.htm](http://www.countercurrents.org/gen-badran100206.htm)
- Badran, M. (2010). *The Course & Future of Islamic Feminism*, interview on 13 October Google Online 6:30pm 25 June 201 [www.resetdoc.org](http://www.resetdoc.org).
- Badran,M. (2010). **Islamic feminism in Spain** and beyond. November 12, 2010. In *Gender, State & Society*. Google Online 4:49pm 19 October 2013 [blogs.nd.edu/.../2010/11/12/islamic-feminism-in-spain-and-beyond/](http://blogs.nd.edu/.../2010/11/12/islamic-feminism-in-spain-and-beyond/)
- Badran, M. (2011). *This Revolution Challenges Patriarchy*, interview on 23 December Google Online 6:45 pm 25 June 2012. [www.resetdoc.org](http://www.resetdoc.org).
- Contemporary feminism. (2013). Google Online.10:10 pm 3 October. [Contemporary feminism.com/](http://Contemporaryfeminism.com/)
- Did Pagans Worship women? ( 2013). Google Online. 11:10 am 6 October. <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20081227025944AATj9qk>
- Gramstad, T.(2000) "Pop Culture: Premises of Post-Objectivism," *Free Radical*, no. 40 Google Online 7:00pm 25 June 2012. <http://www.ifi.uio.no/~thomas/po/whatisfeminism.html>.
- Definition of feminism. (1958). Google Online 10:00 pm 3 Octobe 2013. [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/feminism](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/feminism).
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. & Patricia L.( 2006). *The Practice of Qualitative Research* ( trans. By Hanaa al Gohary 2011), The National Center for Translation, Cairo.
- Kynsilehto, Anitta ed. (2008) *Islamic Feminism: Current Perspectives*. Juvenes, Tampere.
- Methods of anthropology. (2013). eHow.com Google Online 9:30 am 1 March 2013 [http://www.ehow.com/facts\\_5439623\\_methods-anthropology.html#ixz22MVf84Rtv](http://www.ehow.com/facts_5439623_methods-anthropology.html#ixz22MVf84Rtv)
- Uwe Flick. (2010). *Introduction to Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications. London.
- Offen, Karen.(1988). *Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach*, *Signs*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 119-157
- Winter, A. 2000. *Feminism and the Politics of Appearance*, November –December. Google Online 6:30 pm 25 June 2012. [www.feminist-reprise.org/fembib.html](http://www.feminist-reprise.org/fembib.html)
- Woodlock, R.( 2000). "Muslim Feminists and the Veil: To veil or not to veil is That the question?" *Islam for today*. Accessed on 2 March 2004 Google Online 9:30 am, 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2013. [http://www.islamfortoday.com/feminists\\_veil.html](http://www.islamfortoday.com/feminists_veil.html)
- Zayid, A. (2002). "The Egyptian Woman Between Liberation Discourse and Reality." In *Zayid and others Woman and Society*, al Amraniyyah lil Ofist, Cairo.