

Summaries

Nadje Al-Ali

Women and Gender Relations in Iraq

The article sheds light on the various ways women and gender relations in Iraq have been affected by war and economic sanctions. The discussion of the contemporary situation of women in Iraq under occupation is prefaced by a brief historical background about changing women's roles and gender relations during the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Fatima L. Adamu

Household Politics, Women and Shariah Courts in Sokoto, Northern Nigeria

The central focus of this paper is the expansion of the politics within the household to the public sphere of Shariah courts, particularly, the role of women in the process. Islam plays an important role in shaping household relations in many Muslim societies. However, women as social actors do respond to and negotiate over these relations and the process and arena for the negotiations may extend beyond the household. It is the roles of Muslim women as actors (both as heroines and victims) in the household politics that is the concern of this paper using the Shariah courts as a point of reference. Shariah courts are seen as one of the agents of patriarchal system designed to maintain and perpetuate the existing gender relations. The role of Shariah courts as agents of patriarchal system becomes more relevant with the expansion of Shariah legal system in Northern Nigeria. Shari'ah courts have been the most relevant legal system for the Hausa Muslim women. Issues relevant to women such as marital relations, divorce, child issues are all settled in the Shari'ah courts. What is the role of women in the politics within the household and in the Courts? How is politics within the household affecting Muslim women's utilisation of Shari'ah courts? How would they be affected by the recent expansion of Shariah legal system in the North? Data for this paper is drawn from Court marital records of between 1988 and 1998 as well as observation of court proceedings during the collection of the court records. It was part of a study that was carried out in Sokoto between December 1998 and 1999 before the expansion of Shariah legal system in the state and it was aimed at analysing household politics in a period of economic crisis which involved interviewing and observing married female and male members of some sampled households.

Renate Kreile

Market, morals and headscarves – political Islam and the women's question in Turkey

From other Muslim nations Turkey differs in comprehensive and as yet unparalleled legal reforms with great impact on the emancipation of women. These reforms, initiated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1924 were part of a broader political project of nation-building, secularisation and modernization from above. Islam was then removed from the legislative and broader institutional sphere and the image of the „new woman“ as a modern, publicly visible and equal citizen was created.

2002, several decades after Atatürk's revolution from above, Tayyip Erdoğan's moderate Islamist Party for Development and Justice (AKP) won the parliamentary elections in Turkey, especially by mobilizing support of hundreds of thousands of women activists. The educated woman activist, proudly wearing the headscarf, which is forbidden in Turkey's public institutions, became the symbol of the Islamist movement.

To make sense of this development this paper examines how the Islamists politicize gender relations and shows how Turkey's new Islamist elite attempts to reclassify Islamic symbols like veiling as elite cultural markers. It also considers the contradictions between female Islamist activists trying to carve out new areas of autonomy and male cadres who strive for reinforced traditional female roles.

Gudrun Lachenmann

Female Spaces in Muslim Countries: Comparative Perspectives

West African countries are majority Muslim but secular states. In Senegal, there is the interesting case of the Muslim Brotherhoods and, at the same time, an important Peasant Movement and women's groups who are both acting as forces of Civil Society and negotiating terms of co-operation. Female social spaces exist in many societies whose boundaries are very diverse, which very often dwindle in the course of socio-economic change. The interesting point is to follow how they are linked to the overall system through the public sphere, how is difference maintained, how can and do women nevertheless claim equity in society and the political system, including at the local level. As to the social and cultural embeddedness of women's economic activities, trade as a female activity is often very important. However, WID programmes tend to informalise their economic activities and construct women's role in the family and being vulnerable at the same time.

In public discourse women's rights are important, but it is more and more common, either by referring to „African culture“, sense of „community“ or by religion (meaning Islam) to dequalify debates by women's movements which are silenced

by being Western and feminist. When looking at ongoing debates and negotiations on gender relations in public sphere, identity discourses can be challenged by looking at the constitution of translocal female spaces. Debates on other Muslim countries outside Africa are stressing the importance of diversity instead of dualistic positioning, the instrumentalisation of women for nationbuilding and other processes such as the construction of the „other“. Apart from the usefulness of the concept of civil society, there are new epistemic communities debating on the concept of public spheres and public Islam, embracing societal transformations.

Petra Dannecker

Bangladeshi Female Migrants between Globalisation Processes, Exclusion and Identity Politics

In the last years it is increasingly recognized that migration patterns and movements are gendered, as are the experiences of migrants. The feminisation of migration due to globalisation processes furthermore initiates discourses and negotiations about national identity and cultural authenticity in various translocal and local spaces. In the following article it will be shown how in an Islamic country like Bangladesh the temporary labour migration of women is used by different national as well as transnational actors to constitute a specific identity and to compete for the supremacy of their respective view. The construction of „good“ male and „bad“ female migrants by male migrants is one example which will reveal how male migrants justify the exclusion of female migrants of their transnational networks by references to the national cultural and Islamic identity.