

Narratives of Islam-Christian and Gender violence in contemporary age. A plural perspective

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Women in post-Islamic Iran. Contrasting state violence through Islamic feminism and social change.

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The paper will analyze state-violence against women in contemporary Iran, tracing the history of the top-down imposition of female ideal types from the Pahlavi era (1925) across the Iranian revolution (1979), until today.

Taking into consideration gender as a social construction, the *antropo-poiesis* of Iranian women has as its own specificity and history the entanglement to cultural influences from western feminist movements on one side, and to the modern re-interpretation of Shi'a Islam, later called "Islamic feminism", on the other.

During the 20th century, women movements for self determination- be they secular or Muslim- have been contrasted by a top-down will to impose female ideal types, according to the political needs and urgencies of the ruling elites.

The end of the war with Iraq in 1988 and the period of reconstruction from 1989 to 1997 offered an opportunity for the demands of an emergent civil society-and, in particular, those of women-to be expressed.

Faced with the Islamic state, which manipulates religion to justify gender discrimination and strengthen the patriarchal system, Islamic feminists and Islamic women's rights activists rejected gender-based social inequalities in the name of this same state religion. Meanwhile, social transformation have deeply changed civil society: 70 per cent of the population is urban; the literacy rate for girls aged six and over is 82 per cent; the average number of children per woman is two; and the number of female students in institutes of higher education is two million, or 62 per cent of the student population. Girls' massive access to instruction in post-revolutionary Iran has led to a rise in the average age of first marriage for women (now 23) and has also increased the proportion of marriages that are based on the free choice of one's spouse.

Two forces, feminism within Islam (or Islamic feminism) and social change are challenging state violence against women and the top down female ideals that have prevailed up to now.