

Women, Islam and Globalization in the Twenty-First Century

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Edited with an Introduction by

Nilgün Anadolu-Okur

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS

P U B L I S H I N G

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This book first published 2009

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-1309-5, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-1309-9

To My Anatolian Grandmothers

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PREFACE

In the post-9/11 world, one of the most intractable socio-political and cultural issues for the twenty-first century is the turbulent relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. The reality which shaped the public opinion globally soon after the terrorists' attacks was a natural outburst of old, deep-seated feelings such as distrust and suspicion of Muslims in the Western world. With the attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the world had witnessed the dawn of a new era in global terrorism whose main actors were Muslims. Thereafter, the hatred and stereotypical depictions targeted not only the Muslims as a homogeneous religious group, but the Islamic faith, its traditional values, and its Prophet. A war was in progress.

Muslims had to endure an offensive legacy for generations to come. One could only wish that such a terrifying polarization between the East and the West should never have taken place. Due to extraordinary circumstances there seems to be no human solution to the lack of trust between the two sides.

After almost a decade of prolonged religious and cultural stigmatization, the anti-Muslim sentiment still exists, accompanied with a blend of fear, conceit and crippling effects of miscommunication between the East and the West. Despite considerable international diplomacy the adverse effects of anti-Muslim propaganda persist. Meanwhile, new wars are waged in order to bring an end to anti-democratic governments and eradicate terrorist organizations which have nestled in some Muslim countries. As human casualties and material losses multiply on both sides, old hostilities are re-kindled and "democracy" waits yet to be delivered. In fact, restoring peace, building bridges and initiating harmony among disenchanting nations takes considerably longer than initiating long-distance wars.

Whereas Muslim tradition as a whole is not much different than Jewish or Christian faith—whose monotheistic roots and its systems of operations share more similarities than differences—Islam, in practice, does not have a homogenous character. Diversity among Muslim countries has always outweighed similarities in religious practice as it has been in structuring of governmental systems. Moreover, Islamic tradition and teachings of the Qur'an had already been subject of inquiry by Muslim scholars, from within, particularly with regard to women's rights and roles in Islam.

Since each Muslim country had developed its own set of values determined by a particular perspective on life and culture—through its legislative and executive systems which organized its rules of conduct and operation—women's rights issue remained a highly-debated argument. Additionally, international campaigns targeting human rights issues in Muslim countries initiated numerous studies in a legitimate effort to bring clarification to misunderstandings, or help resolve social conflicts in a particular society. In this respect family systems, education, women's roles and rights were examined widely in a deliberate effort to clarify the confusion and myths commonly held in the West about Islam. The counter-argument holds a multitude of axiological and etymological negations about Muslim identity which need to be further investigated.

Our research would not have come about without the multi-disciplinary reaction developed in response to stereotypical depictions about Muslim women both in the Muslim world and in the West. Through an interdisciplinary approach this study aims to serve a dual purpose. First, it aspires to capture the individual character of a group of Muslim countries with eight representative essays. Secondly, it intends to rescue Muslim women from stereotypical and reductionist depictions initiated by Muslim men with reference to their association with and understanding of women's rights issues in a global arena.

In this respect, the study seeks to be an original work, whose ultimate goal is to see Muslim women freed from dogmatic demarcations. In our respective conclusions, we propose to provide a constructive meaning to Muslim identity, but essentially to Muslim womanhood. The focus is on assessment of civil and political rights, family laws, educational opportunities, participation in civil life, historical struggles for emancipation and suffrage, opportunities of representation, property ownership, religious traditions and professional lives of Muslim women in a wide range of countries where Islam is not only the established faith of the land but a principal way of life either governing or balancing additional spheres of an individual's life. In an assemblage of eight interdisciplinary essays, a social drama, and an interview conducted with the dramatist, this study reveals varying aspects of Muslim womanhood in Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Lebanon and Morocco. It also provides a much-needed understanding of a crucial contemporary dilemma faced by Muslims who live in European countries such as France, Germany and in the United States. The contributing authors hope to improve understanding, foster dialogue and breed tolerance among the readers.

The time seems particularly ripe for renewed interest in Muslim women's issues. By illustrating the boundaries that circumvent the female

Muslim identity under mounting scrutiny of globalism we hope to illuminate the ramifications of a future quandary that will be charting its course throughout the next decades of the twenty-first century.

As the editor of the volume, I want to assert that the views reflected by the authors of the following chapters are not necessarily mine. Neither the CSP, nor I concede any responsibility (legal or ideological) about their content. Original in perspective, they represent individual reviews and should be treated as such. However the binding factor for the contributing scholars, besides tackling a contentious subject with insight and clarity remains the same: Muslim women's rights and roles need to be re-evaluated concerning their relationship to Muslims and non-Muslims alike as they stand susceptible in the cross hairs of culture, upbringing and politics in a new century.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank the contributing scholars who have been unvaryingly patient in responding to my numerous appeals for assistance during the editing process.

I am most grateful to Professor Michael McGaha for his thorough review and valuable input. Dr. Heon C.Kim took time from his own research to read this manuscript. I have profited throughout by their incisive and stimulating criticisms.

I thank my students at Temple University's College of Liberal Arts. Through our dialogues we were able to comprehend the pressing issues about women's rights, equality and justice. During our stirring class discussions on global matters, including prejudice, racism, discrimination and stereotypes we were educated collectively. Brent Olson, of Columbia University, provided assistance at different stages of my research.

I would like to thank our editors at Cambridge Scholars Publishing, particularly Amanda Millar, Carol Koulikourdi and Soucin Yip-Sou for their genuine support and understanding throughout the project.

I am indebted to my son, Ali Murat Okur, for his encouragement and meticulous technical assistance which expedited the completion of the index and formatting. I want to acknowledge my brother, Professor Dr. Yücel Anadolu, of Ankara University, who generously devoted his time during an extensive search for cover images around the historic Kale and Çikrikçılar district in Ankara.

Above all, I owe a very special debt of gratitude to my Anatolian grandmothers—women of grace, patience and peace—whose formative influences I want to acknowledge and to whom I dedicate this book.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
November 10, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world with an estimated 1.5 billion followers. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, reactions to discriminatory practices in non-Muslim countries have led to further reinforcement among Muslims and even non-Muslim sympathizers, globally. Nevertheless among Muslim nations men embrace varied perspectives about the status of women and generally undermine their roles. This is more prevalent in countries which are governed by clergy who receive their support directly from the state. In such societies women's liberties, dress styles, veiling, *hijab* and *tesettur* are dictated and controlled by men, rather than by women. As Muslim states' rules and regulations are fostered by governmental policies which range from religious theocracy to rigid fundamentalism, the precincts differ far and wide among Muslim countries.

Restraints on women's liberties have been usually introduced and fortified by men. In relatively secular societies, where women's rights are governed and protected by *constitutional* decrees, debates on women's liberties still exist, though on a different plane. In such societies insular administrations occasionally attempt to override women's rights by bringing alterations to the constitutional system. Even worse, in a gesture to *please, obey or defend* men, specific groups among women may choose to forfeit their rights and change their images from secular to conservative in accordance with policies advocated by men in power. In some cases women even go further to support and adopt ideologies contrary to their upbringing. Certainly, with regard to emancipation and civil liberties, women's perspectives vary; there is no one singular form or a standard *modus operandi* that can summarize or categorize women's choices and desires.

Our volume purports to articulate, through interdisciplinary essays, Muslim women's struggles, challenges, preferences and needs as they practice their rights of womanhood and motherhood at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Through a contemporary analysis of Muslim women's lives in Pakistan, Iran, Lebanon, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Morocco we aim to provide a positive subtext to Muslim identity, essentially to Muslim womanhood. Whether Islam or the Islamic law, as a set of established guidelines, is utilized to govern a Muslim society's

operational modes—including societies where interpretation of the Islamic law is currently going through a *transition*—Islam is *the* established faith throughout the entire Muslim world. It is adopted and practiced as a principal way of life governing numerous spheres in a devout Muslim's life. This fact is unanimously held by the authors who contributed to this volume.

In a case-study developed through interviews conducted in the Southern province of Sindh, Aslam focuses on male-instigated suppression against women in Pakistan. She outlines the present status of women according to "Pakistani-Islam", which is akin to "a force that 'legalizes' submission of women by granting divine legitimacy" to constraints, abuse and violence committed against them. Aslam also evaluates the standard of "morality" and its "evolution" through Darwin, Spencer, Stephen, Kant and Durkheim's views on moral consciousness in a society. She compares and investigates the background to specific ideologies which have led to concepts such as *moral* or *immoral* as these value systems actually influenced and determined the status of women in Pakistan. She also documents the rationale behind what is called the "*morality-construct*" on the lives of Pakistani women. Consequently, as she warns, women are categorized as "evil, unchaste or immoral," which justifies any degree of collective violence, including "honor-related" crimes committed against them. Her findings imply that there is much to be improved about Pakistani women's status, especially in rural areas where honor killings are a threat for those people who do not comply with the dictates of the Shari'a doctrines.

Anadolu-Okur's discussion of the beginnings of the Turkish women's movement illustrates the significance of Ataturk's reforms for the advancement and longevity of women's emancipation in Turkey. Without the state-sponsored constitutional reforms and the Turkish Constitution, women would not have achieved legal rights, nor could they have been able to keep the freedoms that they had been exercising since the 1930s. One of the greatest ideals of Mustafa Kemal was to advance Turkey "to the level of contemporary civilizations", and he saw no end to advancement.¹ In February 1937 he had six principles written into Article 2 of the Turkish Constitution, which included: *Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Revolutionism, Secularism, Etatism* (also *Statism*). Currently secularism is challenged by skeptics in Turkey who attempt to portray it as "anti-Islam." They dismiss the fact that Mustafa Kemal **did** include Islam in the reform ideology as he remarked: "Islam sanctions freedom of religious opinion."² Furthermore he asserted:

The government is obliged to respect freedom of thought and freedom of conscience. So long as mankind's thinking with regard to religious questions is not freed from myths and is not illuminated by the light of knowledge there will be historians everywhere who act out religious comedies.³

Additionally, Mustafa Kemal stated that sovereignty was indivisible for a nation whose very existence depended on its people's past sacrifices and heroism. Modern statesmen are expected to acknowledge these facts and remain truthful to the makers of that history. In this respect individuals who risked their own lives in order to revive an "ailing nation" (a eurocentric term which refers to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire) under Western occupation deserve recognition. Any historian who understands and appreciates the formidable history and the founding principles of the Turkish Republic, from a Turko-centered perspective, unmistakably comprehend that the Turkish women's movement owes its birthright to the abolition of the old order of Shari'a and the caliphate system. Democracy and citizenship are crucially connected to past and current debates about identity, nationalism, sovereignty and women's rights.

Reza focuses, from a critic's perspective, on Iran's strict allegiance to Shari'a law in interpreting women's rights. As power and public discourse in Iran are dominated by men, who are mostly ayatollahs, women have no say in the affairs of the state. Moreover, those who attempt to express their opinions are viciously silenced. Addressing a major controversy in the Iranian legal system, Reza asserts that Shari'a laws on the rights of women were codified solely through the legal verses of the Qur'an, rather than through verses which recognized and fostered equality of men and women in dignity and honor. However, the old values lost their validity over time and clashed with the new circumstances: "The laws pioneered by the Qur'an and considered appropriate then have had a negative impact on women's rights today." Moreover, as Reza remarks, Muslim women's status suffered largely due to "male-oriented discriminatory laws and rules in almost every public and private domain of human life." The Cairo Declaration (1990), which was fashioned after international human rights documents, and bore a resemblance in format and terminology, actually restricted women's freedom and afforded no liberties other than what is already contained in traditional decrees of Shari'a. Furthermore, in Iran's legal system, which appears to be equally accommodating (for example Article 19 addresses the principle of equality for all people regardless of their *color, race, and language*), there is no provision to include "gender". Additionally the constitutional articles have been formulated in specific

ways which abide by Shari'a laws' limitations imposed upon women. Thus any article needs to be interpreted according to these standards which are profoundly discouraging for women's rights activists.

While this volume was being prepared for publication, news about Iran's flawed elections erupted violently. In the aftermath of the June 2009 elections the power remained unchanged in the hands of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad despite allegations of fraud. Protests were immediately curbed by a state-sponsored massacre targeting demonstrators on the streets of Tehran. As videos which secretly captured Neda Al Soltan's murder were being circulated on the world-wide web, the face of Muslim women's collective struggle for freedom, democracy and hopes for emancipation was altered globally. Neda, the young activist, was simply "*calling for*" a secular democracy to be instituted in Iran.

Although French President Nicolas Sarkozy denounced the "burka" and called it a "prison" for Muslim women living in France, certainly women are not going to shed their shrouds overnight. Moreover some may find religious subservience convenient. However it would have been a major accomplishment if Muslim women were able to speak up and do as they want without facing opposition by men. Apparently limitations to women's freedom loom larger than life itself even in France.

It should be clear in Jallad's argument that Muslim women's rights and choices throughout the world do not necessarily yield to simplistic interpretations and assumptions. As Deniz Kandiyoti remarked, "Women are full-fledged social actors, bearing the full set of contradictions implied by their class, racial and ethnic locations as well as their gender."⁴ Jallad asserts that Muslims, particularly modern Muslim women, are caught between two different worlds that are simultaneously superimposed upon one another. Women who live in gated communities in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Egypt are faced with constantly having to reconcile their situation as women who actually *belong* to a traditional Muslim environment but *carve out* and *shape* their own private spaces *from* the context of living in a modern, inevitably Western world.

One could argue that these women are—and have to be—simultaneously Muslim and Western, one identity not excluding the other. Naturally their identities are carefully wrought by the entities that they live in, placing their actual world at a peculiar intersection which consists of freedom and modernism enjoyed within a limited perimeter. As gated communities grow in popularity, they provide a contented duality for women who choose to remain Muslim and *western* simultaneously. A Harvard-trained architect, Jallad points out that "overlapping" of identities is closely connected with physical characteristics of space in these gated enclaves.

The traditional “inward looking” characteristics of Islamic architecture are compromised with the “transparent”, and outward-looking architectural styles introduced by western architectural concepts. Jallad’s focus lies on cases where the overlap emphasizes the divergence between the Muslim and the Western worlds as women’s status and their relationship to the outer world is formed by the physical environment they live in.

In her essay about the headscarf controversy Tuzun speculates that Turkey might become “another Malaysia” in future. With the Islamic headscarf widely considered a threat to secularism and gender equality, Turkey’s republican modernism resorted to legal action first in 1982 when the Council of Higher Education banned the wearing of the headscarf in universities. However, the ban was gradually “softened” in 1984 and 1987 during the administration of the centre-right Motherland Party (MP) in which the Islamists “constituted the single most powerful faction in the party organization.” 1989 marked the beginning of a long debate on the constitutional ban of headscarves and the counter-attacks carried out by Islamists.

Tuzun illustrates the history of the headscarf debate in Turkey according to a detailed timeline. The Constitutional Court’s decision which argued that religion is a matter of private conscience and should not be politicized was followed in 1997 with a stricter ban which forced young women with headscarves either to quit their education or remove the headscarf outside the university gates. The grievances of headscarf wearing students added fuel to the political campaigns of right-wing and Islamist parties, further politicizing a religious symbol closely connected with personal civil rights and liberties. Unlike Iran, Turkey’s secular constitution clearly indicated that headscarves or turbans are not compatible with the foundational principles of the Republic. As the rift deepens, Tuzun asserts, Turks are less certain what the future will bring, since Islamist tendencies are on the rise globally. She evaluates the Turkish case within the larger international context and elaborates how the current revivalism of religion as a global phenomenon is assisted by a host of particular theoretical positions, such as cultural relativism, identity politics, and postmodernism.

Swick explains how Muslim women’s seclusion from public life led to the entrenchment of various patriarchal and un-Islamic traditions. She asserts that during this period of entrenchment initiated by men, women suffered the greatest loss in terms of preserving their rights. In her view, a divide between Islamic Law and International Human Rights Law is superficial, contrary to former claims of some academicians, activists and politicians. Instead, merging the two systems in a compatible method

might help improve the daily lives of Muslim women. Swick notes that despite the centuries which separate them, the two systems can work jointly and combine the *synergy* that emanates in order to create justice and produce healthy dialogue about eliminating dogma as it conveys empowerment to women. Swick argues that the two systems are embraced by the Moroccan government and their simultaneous effects help Moroccan families function more effectively under the Family Law embraced by the King Muhammad VI.

The final section in the volume is dedicated to a play by Bina Sharif, preceded by an interview she gave to Mera Moore about the interrelatedness of an author's identity and her art. The play was included in order to reveal the origins of the current global predicament between the East and the West from the perspective of a Muslim dramatist. Drama *represents*, in its varied forms, what life presents to us as "facts", which may sometimes be hard to bear or live with. Sharif's play provides an alternative look to Muslim women's lives in the twenty-first century. Within the context of globalization, some Muslim women might hope to integrate with, or assimilate their cultural values with those of the Western world. Nevertheless it is a tragicomic endeavor—a basis for deep-seated antagonism and alienation—which often proves futile, because the West might not accept the terms of their existence. In *Fire* Bina Sharif examines the existentialist pursuit of an immigrant Iraqi woman whose life experiences *resemble* those of Muslim women, leading ephemeral lives stuck between two cultures. Their frustrations generate—symbolically—further tension between the East and the West. Bina Sharif brings to her works unique perspectives about multiple identities of Muslim immigrant women who often struggle financially, spiritually and culturally facing internal and external conflicts as a result of the war. The interview by Mera Moore provides further insight into how Sharif's Muslim heritage has influenced her career as a dramatist, as she discusses a number of her plays including *Afghan Woman* and *Democracy in Islam*.

The authors in this volume are critically aware of the negative effects of the divide between the East and the West, Muslims and non-Muslims. However in the post-9/11 world, despite the crippling effects of Eurocentric negotiations on race, ethnicity, religion and culture, they want to renew their faith in peace and remain *centered* in their warm embrace of truth, justice and righteousness. "Dawn invites prayers for the lost relatives in Muslim faith," remarks Moore in her Afterword. When the faithful unite, in the East as well as in the West, hopes for women who live in *war-zones* can be raised and restored to their original dignity. Only then, in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi

Arabia, and in Turkey, can women's voices be heard clear and loud, as that of Neda, in order to address the complex set of issues that confront Muslim women—in the vortex of defeat or hope, surrender or survival.

Notes

¹ Onder Renkliyildirim, trans. *The Speech: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, (Istanbul: Metro Kitap Yayinlari, 1982), 21-22.

² Ibid., 113.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayse Saktanber, eds. *Fragments of Culture: The Everyday of Modern Turkey*. (London: IB Tauris, 2002). 8.

ISLAM IN PATRIARCHAL CULTURES: MORALS, HONOR AND GENDER ISSUES IN PAKISTAN

MALEEHA ASLAM

The present face of Pakistani-Islam resembles a force that “legalizes” submission of women by granting divine legitimacy to several forms of constraints, abuse and violence against them. It is quite common to raise issues of morality, in the name of custom, tradition and most importantly religion, so that women’s rights can be compromised. This essay attempts to understand what it means to be moral or immoral in a local context. Secondly, it seeks to document the impact of a peculiar morality-construct, quite similar to any power-construct, on the lives of Pakistani women. People perceive and categorize women as evil, unchaste or immoral-justifying against them collective violence, including honor-related crime. The research brings forth the existence of other non-Islamic and un-Islamic local practices, for instance, marriage with the Qur’ān that is masqueraded as Islamic. The Qur’ān and Hādith are read like menu cards and randomly selected references, usable for creating gender biases which are promoted by local religious authorities. Finally, this essay establishes Islam as a religion that has been shamelessly exploited by its followers for serving their cultural, economic and political interests.

In an effort to explain moral behaviour through classical and contemporary social theories, I will address the factors involved in the human choice for being moral and describe the function that morality performs within a power construct, serving political and economic interests of a society.

Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer and Leslie Stephen among evolutionists argued that morality, like nature, has evolved. Darwin placed the origin of moral sense in the social impulse. He believed that those communities that included the greatest number of the most sympathetic members would flourish best and rear the greatest number of off-springs.¹ Darwin believed this is because man is a “reflective being” fully aware that his impulse is “temporary” but the “social factor is permanent, ever

present and persistent.” This constitutes the difference between the “actual strength” and the “legitimate strength” of an impulse. Eventually, man realises to attach importance to persistent impulses. Stephen, however, argued that during evolution humans generate not Darwin’s altruistic conduct but a type of “character”, an internationalization of an external morality leading from a law of “Do this”, to “Be this.” Spencer also theorised that the “coercion” factor of society diminishes after some time and moral consciousness becomes a natural and smooth process.

For Kant, “will is not moved to act solely by desire or inclination, but rather by reverence for the moral law, which in turn is derived from reason alone.” He characterized “duty” as opposed to “self interest”, unlike Hume and Hobbes who attempted to reconcile the two. Kant made an effort to prove that “pure reverence for the practical law” provides “a *motive* which far outweighs all the worth of what is commended by inclination.”² The rationality argument was maintained for quite some time with Kemp endorsing the same in 1957. According to him, we try to find logical, impeccable proof of the advantages of adhering to moral principles. Living in cooperation with the society is a practical principle as well as a moral principle. It reduces choice, but ensures preservation. To promote one’s self-interest against a particular social interest can also be rational, but not moral.

Among classical thinkers, Durkheim while presenting his *homo duplex*,³ argued that to him “moral” is synonymous with “social” and “individual” stands opposed to “moral” because Durkheim’s “individual” denotes the body’s egoistic passions and sensualities. He concluded that “moral” is a source of solidarity, forcing man to regulate his actions by something other than his own egoism. There is an emotional structuring of an individual’s sensory and sensual being through this collective effervescence that captures the “force” of the “social”. This force binds people to the ideals valued by their social group.⁴

Like Durkheim, Bauman from amongst the contemporary thinkers is critical of Kantian law of duty that gives rationality an importance that undermines the significance of “spontaneous sentiment”. Bauman focuses on the immoral, rationalising impulses of “totalising” social orders. He presents the modern world as a rationalizing world implicated in dehumanizing acts of violence. He argues that people are not made cruel by modernity but modernity invents a way in which cruel acts can be done by non-cruel people—removing them from facing the consequences of their actions. He believes that modernity led to a “forced categorization” of the people, and individuals perceive each other as “the dangerous other in need of elimination”.⁵

Foucault's work is significant in understanding human morality within a power construct. He explains the function moral norms are expected to perform. Both individual and collective potential of human beings is utilized to serve economy in the most cost-effective fashion making society a political target. In other words, the social moral norms are formed to serve political and economic interests of a society. In this set-up, power is not precisely thriving on splendor, but on regulatory and corrective mechanisms. The human body becomes a site of servitude, a system that faces constraints, obligations and prohibitions.⁶ Grouping human beings for being moral or immoral is a dividing practice. Bourdieu, like Foucault, argued that classification and categorization schemes, defining human behavior and interaction, create limitations.⁷

Geographical Area of Research

The research was conducted in Khairpur Mir's, in the southern province of Sindh in Pakistan. Geographically, Sindh stretches between the Punjab plain and the Arabian Sea. The province, along with its district of Khairpur, is an ideal sample to explore issues regarding women, local culture and Islam. Rural Sindh's reputation for having low social development indicators such as grave poverty conditions, established feudal base, powerful religious authorities like *pīrs* and *śūfīs*⁸, severe gender inequalities and a large female population that is powerless and disadvantaged is well-known. Khairpur is in the Upper belt of Sindh, an area considered to be more conservative and unfriendly towards women than Lower Sindh. For generations, a specific cultural trend in Khairpur has allowed denial and violations of women's rights, supported and promoted by the local religious authorities in the region. It is common in Pakistan to hold its colonial legacy responsible for all transgressions within the present day society. In order to avoid the colonial argument, Khairpur as an area that remained independent of British Raj,⁹ suggested an ideal selection. It allowed the researcher to focus on the local hierarchical structure and its role in the creation of a peculiar power culture that is defined through divine sanctions.

For administrative purposes, Sindh is divided into 22 districts. Each district is headed by an elected government representative known as a *nazim*. District Khairpur has six sub-districts, called *ta'luqas* and 76 union councils.

Study Sample and Methodology

The findings are based on a qualitative research that was conducted as a multi-method, single-embedded case study having a flexible design. Case study here implies a methodological design of research and not a case in point. The field work in Pakistan spanned over a period of eight months. Data was collected through multiple sources of evidence based on archival and historical documents, interviews, community meetings, direct and participant observations, and focus group discussions.

The research was conducted in the villages of Razlmeman (union council Mudd), Viṣṭivāhān (union council Theṛī), ‘Umarkānhar (union council Nurpur), Laḥī (union council Kahūrah) and Ganvarjonejo (union council Darāzā-Ganmbaṭ). The sample communities were finalized with the help of a local NGO acting as a support-base organization during this research. Some of these communities have a reputation for having a strong culture of *pīrī-murīdī* (master-disciple), whilst others are highly Shari’a-inspired, forming an interesting environment to undertake a study of morality related issues. The area had a high crime rate against women and the local police advised the researcher against taking risks.

The study had two units of analysis: generation and gender. Both were believed to lend different meanings to the concept of morality and therefore they were considered vital for this type of research. Generation groups were formed on the basis of those born before the partition of India in 1947 and those who were born during the post-partition time period. The logic was to study a group of Muslim respondents who had lived and responded to the local culture of a multi-faith Sindh as it was before 1947; a group of Muslim respondents from the first generation of Pakistanis for whom Islam had become an identity issue; and a group of younger generation respondents who were exposed to the forces of modernity. For the pre-partition generation, the sample consisted of men who were thirteen and women who were eight at the time of partition. The post-partition sample was further divided into two groups with the first consisting of middle-aged respondents and the second representing the younger generation. Therefore, the sample constituted of the following:

Table 2-1

	PRE- PARTITION GENERATION PPG	POST- PARTITION GENERATION (I) PPG (I)	POST- PARTITION GENERATION (II) PPG (II)
Age Group (Men)	70 and above	40-69	18-39
Age Group (Women)	65 and above	35-64	15-34

In the beginning, for the purpose of developing a feel for the local moral norms and for forming generational groups, a “morality questionnaire” was introduced in the communities. Low literacy level, especially among women, created difficulty in getting the forms completed. However it did not affect their participation in the community meetings. Though the statistical data of the questionnaire is shared throughout the essay, it must be noted that it is based on a small number of respondents (85 males and 45 females) due to the limitations already explained. Moreover, the research was essentially qualitative and quantitative data is used only to assist the reader in visualizing the local context. Having stated this, as a qualitative researcher, I can confidently state that despite the small number of respondents who filled out the forms, the results have a certain *transferability value*, keeping in mind the closely-knit village communities where people influence each others’ thoughts and are inheritors of a common social history.

Initially in all the five sample communities two formal meetings—each with male and female communities—were planned. Eventually only fifteen such meetings were carried out after considering several factors. In each meeting the turnover among men was 80 to 100, and among women it fluctuated from 35 to 50. Women mostly remained occupied in domestic chores and in attending to children that hindered their participation in formal meetings. Methodologically this was adjusted by increasing the number of informal routine conversations and participant observations. It

also proved to be beneficial for establishing a rapport with the respondents for focus groups that were scheduled for the advanced stage of research.

Through the application of quota sampling, informal detailed interviews were conducted with people attending the shrines and mosques. The details are stated below:

Table 2-2

SITE	MALE RESPONDENTS	FEMALE RESPONDENTS	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Shrine of Dastagīr- Rānīpūr	18	10	28
Shrine of Rožá Dahnnī	8	3	11
Shrine Sachal Sarmast	24	15	39
Mosque Jām‘Tā Ṭheṛī	16	Nil	16
Total			94

Other than collecting police records on recent honor crimes, five complainants and the families of victims of *kāro kāṛī*¹⁰ were interviewed with the help of the district police. The data was documented in a way so as to incorporate “verbatim” to the maximum. Each utterance holds significance as it involves not just a meaning but also an emotion or an attitude and in some cases even a pre-determined judgment. For example, locally there is no word reserved for fornication or adultery. People refer to it as “*na jāizi*”¹¹ that literally means *unjustified*—a harsh verdict!

Research Findings: Women’s “*Morality-Construct*” in the Local Sphere

The Pakistani idea of an ideal woman is that of one who is: *gūngī*, *behrī*, *andhī* (deaf, dumb, blind).¹²

The results of the questionnaire¹³ used for determining social attitudes and opinions reveal that among men, 5 out of 6 (83%) from PPG; 23 out

of 26 (88%) from PPG (I); and 32 out of 53 (60%) from PPG (II) believe that in a moral society, women *must* stay indoors. Among women, 1 out of 1 (100%) from PPG; 15 out of 18 (83%) from PPG (I) and 11 out of 26 (42%) from PPG (II), hold similar opinions. It is worth-noting that the younger generation of both men and women has begun to question domestication of women. There are 21 out of 53, i.e., 40% of men and 8 out of 26, i.e., 31% of women within PPG (II) who disagree with the notion that women ought to stay indoors.

Similarly, the disagreement of 5 out of 6 PPG men over the proposition: “*unrelated men and women must not talk to each other under any circumstances*” to ensure a moral society, is an interesting finding. The PPG men are less conservative than PPG (I) that had 16 out of 26 (62%) individuals in favor of such an attitude. The women from PPG (I) turned out to be more flexible, with only 6 out of 18 (33%) agreeing to the norm and 14 out of 26 (61 %) disagreeing with it. Please refer to Table 3 and 4 below:

Table 2-3

PROMPT: WOMEN MUST STAY INDOORS								
Categories	Total		Agree		Disagree		Unsure	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Pre-partition Generation	6	1	5	1	0	0	1	0
Post-partition Generation I	26	18	23	15	3	2	0	1
Post-partition Generation II	53	26	32	11	21	8	0	7
Source: Author's Field Data								

Table 2-4

PROMPT: UNRELATED MEN AND WOMEN MUST NOT TALK TO ONE ANOTHER UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES								
Categories	Total		Agree		Disagree		Unsure	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Pre-partition Generation	6	1	1	1	5	0	0	0
Post-partition Generation I	26	18	16	6	10	11	0	1
Post-partition Generation II	53	26	24	8	28	14	1	4
Source: Author's Field Data								

This also establishes gender and generation as the two major levels of analysis in any social inquiry.

During community meetings, the respondents were asked to share the norms of their community and to inform about the attributes that they considered a man and a woman of “good” character, i.e., *bā ikhlāq*, should possess. The highlights of the data thus collected are stated below:

Pre-partition Male and Female Generation

Mostly, men believed that anyone prioritizing family ties and relations is essentially of high morals and virtue. In Laḥḥī, the men condemned Shaista Almani stating that she was “characterless” on grounds that she by-passed the boundaries of her cultural traditions, i.e., *rīt-ravāj* and caused feud among blood relatives.

The moral code of conduct for women is often translated as modesty, i.e., *shar'm hai ā*. A Viṣṭivāhān woman from PPG defined the concept:

Bāikhlāq woman is the one who talks less. The *shar'm vālī mā'ī* was the one who cried on her wedding day [...] otherwise people thought her as an immodest and an indecent girl. By being happy, a bride only shows her interest to be with a man—and that is highly immodest. Also, she must not be joyous on leaving her home [...] this is very disrespectful towards her