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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY ALGERIA:
A GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Question: How do political structures within the current Algerian government make it difficult to report and resolve incidences of violence against women (VAW)?

My thesis is a contemporary study that investigates how political structures within the current Algerian government make it difficult to report and resolve incidences of violence against women (VAW). I first address the ways in which the Algerian government handles VAW. I examine its legislative constructions to reveal a consistent failure to support women's equal access to justice. I then nuance experiences of VAW through an analysis of how women interact with the legal system, as well as when informal pressures dissuade them to do so. I expand on these experiences to uncover the state of rule of law (RoL) for Algerian women, and address the progress of the past thirty years. Using English and French legal and literary documents, sources of modern news, and scholarly articles, I analyze where the breakdown of RoL occurs in order to identify at which scale the Algerian regime does not uphold women's rights.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the departure from Rule of Law (RoL) as it pertains to violence against women (VAW) in the social and cultural policing of gender in contemporary Algeria. I attempt to answer the question: *How do political structures within the current Algerian government make it difficult to report and resolve incidences of violence against women (VAW)?* I examine the gap between formal laws and informal practices that dissuades women from seeking justice, as they are constitutionally entitled. Using both English and French sources of modern news, scholarly articles, and select works of Algerian feminist literature, I analyze where the breakdown of RoL occurs in order to identify at which scale the government and civil society do not observe women's rights. I have selected Algeria because this country has undertaken a considerable crusade toward gender equality in the wake of its distressing contemporary history. The status of women in the state of Algeria has been complicated since its 1962 founding.

This thesis focuses on the contemporary period, which I define as 1990 through the present. The Algerian Civil War endured throughout the 1990s. During this period of "femicide", the government blatantly ignored the "systematic and widespread rape and sexual enslavement" of women, which came to be known as "The Black Decade of Violence" (UN 2007). In its wake, Algerian women courageously fought back against the institutions that treated them as spoils of conflict, sparing them neither their public nor private rights. The Algerian feminist movement, though it had been active since Algeria's independence from France in 1962, gained tenacity. "What emerged from fighting to eradicate discrimination and violence was a network of women and men dedicated to realizing equality and equity" (UNFPA 2005). Political and religious

traditionalists continue to resist this new wave Algerian feminist movement, as it has been influential and provocative by Algeria's conservative standards. These traditionalists insist upon suffocating the feminist movement and maintaining the limited status of women by upholding certain political structures, most notoriously the Family Code. In the following chapters, I will examine how state legislation and discourse impact the experience of VAW in Algeria.

OUTLINE OF THESIS

Chapter 1: Legislation

In the first chapter, I address the way in which the Algerian government observes women's protections. I examine the existing government constructions in an effort to reveal how they consistently fail to support women's equal access to justice in practice. I explore the operations of Algerian women's rights institutions.

Chapter 2: The Legal System

In the second chapter, I investigate the active tenets of Algerian Sharia Law, exposing the chasm between constitutional law and Family Code through an institutional and discursive study of the jurisdiction and powers of both. I discuss women's experiences in courts, as well as legal developments in the provincial town of Hassi Messaoud.

Chapter 3: The Reporting Process

In the third and final chapter, I discuss the reporting process. I investigate the reasons that some women do not report and the experiences of those that do, including an analysis of the resources and services available to them. What do their experiences imply in terms of the effectiveness of RoL regarding the issue of VAW in Algeria? I examine VAW in literature,

specifically in Algerian feminist novels, as literary works can represent some of the most honest and profound reporting.

I will now detail the broader issues of legal contradiction, enforcement, and reporting in dealing with VAW.

BACKGROUND

Before I move forward, I must confess that I cannot leave my biases at the door. Certain qualities may be inextricable from my perspective, explicitly that I am female who is also a millennial, upper-middle class, white, Jewish, survivor of sexual violence. This subject is problematic for me in that I cannot come to it dispassionately, however my personal philosophy has fueled my research. In order to minimize interference from my situated knowledge, I attempt to align myself with Islamic scholars, both male and female, who share my position on this issue. I call on the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as my guiding principles, their very existence underwriting the concept that international conventions are useless without implementation and accountability.

Tom Matyok, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, explained the following to me in a 2014 interview at the US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI):

No other class of worker has more protections than international merchant seafarers, but international merchant shipping is no different today (for the seafarer) than it was in the 17th century. So why is that? There is no enforcement mechanism. Everyone in the UN passes these laws, conventions, and agreements because there is no mechanism to enforce them. We cannot just pat ourselves on the back for creating this legislation when there is no one for the

seafarer to go to when they do not get paid, when there is an assault on the vessel, or when there is a shortage of food. There has to be the rule of law, there has to be access, and then there has to be an enforcement mechanism. This is where we always fail. We complete the first two, and then there is no enforcement. This is analogous to the problem that we face when we talk about violence against women.

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines VAW as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”(1993). There are several varieties of gender-based violence. According to Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung, who is often credited as the principal founder of peace and conflict studies, there are three types of violence: cultural, structural, and direct, all of which are interconnected and follow a pattern (1969). He defines structural violence as a civil institution that, on the basis of prejudice such as sexism, prevents people from meeting their basic needs. The structures of certain regimes contribute to a pattern of cultural conditions that can facilitate and enable patterns of direct violence.

The UN Declaration recognizes that, “VAW is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men, and to the prevention of the full advancement of women.” It distinguishes that “VAW is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men”(1993). This document has been in existence for twenty-two years and women remain victims of structural violence worldwide. Much of this problem is rooted in a clash between constitutional laws and private cultural practices. The Western construct of RoL is so concrete that it even holds kings accountable for their actions.

The king, historically, is the individual to whom the law does not apply. The West debunked this line of thinking with the concept of *rule of law* versus *rule by law*. Certain popular interpretations of Sharia¹, utilize rule by law to validate various behaviors that qualify as unacceptable crimes against women under international standards as stated by the United Nations. These interpretations directly contradict the only universal commonality of the Abrahamic faith², which is to treat others as you would treat yourself- a principle based upon the dignity and worth of every human being.

Certain Islamic groups use faith to substantiate repressive political ends. Take Boko Haram, the notorious kidnappers of 276 Nigerian schoolgirls in Spring 2014, for example. This radical fringe religious movement turned systematized military force has waged a brutal insurgency under the premise that, “Western education, (and implied: culture,) is Islamically forbidden”. Their very name translates from the Hausa language of northern Nigeria to state this objective. That which is forbidden includes everything from female education, to “Western” forms of dress, to voting in elections- all methods of sociopolitical control that reach far beyond the boundaries of individual freedom. This phenomenon is by no means new or unique to the Islamic faith.

Religion as an instrument for the exertion of power is observable countless times throughout history. To make use of a classic example, the Crusades called upon religion to solve a political problem in England. A religious imperative was the perfect way to disguise and

¹ Sharia is an anti-secular derivative of the Qur’an written during the seventh and eighth centuries, when female oppression, honor killings, and slavery were commonplace. “Some interpretations of Sharia are used to justify cruel punishments such as amputation and stoning, as well as unequal treatment of women in inheritance, dress, and independence. The debate is growing as to whether Sharia can coexist with secularism, democracy, or even modernity, an idea that is being tested by several countries in the Middle East in the wake of popular uprisings and civil wars” (Council on Foreign Relations).

² Abrahamic religions are monotheistic faiths that include, but are not limited to, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

validate the political goal of restoring western access to distant territories. Pope Urban II sent knights to help the Orthodox reclaim Jerusalem. Kings told their men that they could take whatever they found, and keep that which they could transport back, that they would be absolved of all past and future sins, and, most importantly, that they were doing this for the divine purposes of the Roman Catholic Church.

From any angle, Islam does not oppress women. People oppress women. Keep in mind that adopting a secular system is not in the interest of the Algerian Old Guard, who have punished and made “disappear” women who stand for their rights. It is important to ponder the most effective method of enacting change in this precarious situation whereby local religious customs often override RoL. The difficulty with institutionalized laws is that they reintroduce the “international merchant shipping industry” conundrum cited above. Laws are worthless in the presence of manipulation and/or the absence of follow through, both of which we see in Algeria. Dr. R. Scott Appleby, professor of religious history and director of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, explains that religion is the sacred ambivalent; it sits inanimate on the table until human beings animate it (2000). Those who wish to oppress and subordinate women often animate Islam in the absence of intrinsic requisite from the religion. Benazir Bhutto, twice Prime Minister of Pakistan and subsequent leader of the Pakistan People’s Party, epitomized the role of an empowered political female in an Islamic country, until radical groups assassinated her. Her career and eventual tragic demise epitomize the conflicting mentalities of those who peacefully believe and those who distort Islam as a political tool.

The Algerian Constitutional Council accepts the UN Declaration as an appropriate guideline to minimize human rights abuses. The Algerian Constitution maintains that there

should not be VAW. We must now ask, at what point does political Islamic ideology undermine legislative law and order? How can insisting upon the enforcement of RoL and addressing private cultural practices that do not uphold women's rights help alleviate VAW in contemporary Algeria? This study will respond to these questions, as well as the difficulty that comes with reporting VAW.

A wrong cannot be made right if it is not reported. I recently watched a TED Talk entitled "Find Your Voice against Gender Violence" featuring a moving discourse on the importance of speaking out against gendered violence. A brilliant young woman named Meera Vijayann speaks of the considerable dishonor associated with reporting VAW in her home country. Overcoming the fact that she herself suffered sexual violence several times, she assumes the responsibility of improving the status of women everywhere. She won the 2013 CNN IBN Citizen Journalist Award for her insightful, evocative coverage of the Delhi rape case. She explains to the audience that the only way to adopt sustainable change for women is to disregard the stigma and feelings of helplessness that constrain speaking out.

Let us fight the shame and talk about it. You see, no one ever tells you that true empowerment comes from giving yourself the permission to think and act. Empowerment is often made to sound as if it is an ideal or a wonderful outcome. When we talk about empowerment, we often talk about giving people access to materials, giving them access to tools. But the thing is, empowerment is an emotion. It is a feeling. The first step to empowerment is to give yourself the authority, the key to independent will, and for women everywhere, no matter who we are or where we come from, that is the most difficult step. We fear the sound of our own voice, for it means admission, but it is this that gives us the power to change our environment (Vijayann 2014).

She bravely and eloquently emphasizes that there exists an incredibly difficult necessity to overcome the taboo of sharing experiences in climates of high VAW, such as in Algeria.

THE CASE OF VAW IN ALGERIA

The contemporary prevalence of violence against women cripples Algerian attempts to progress as a modern state. Algeria's history of patriarchal policies has been problematic to women's advancement. Algerian women have gained several victories over the past two decades, including the right to politically organize in 1988, representing a pivotal triumph for the Algerian feminist movement. In 2008, Algerian women achieved gender equality in the legal system with constitutional amendment Articles 29 and 31. The Constitution thus granted women the same civil and political rights as men, as well as the status of citizens. Informal or non-secular law, most notoriously the Islamic Family Code, undermined what then appeared to be gender equality in formal law. The Algerian women's movement suffers because it works at cross-purposes with the informal state system governed by Islamic politics. This informal system creates an environment that sustains both the institutional and the discursive gender inequities that underlie VAW.

Feminists and religiously moderate organizations condemn Algeria's very strict Family Code, which has systematically restricted women's rights since its 1984 enactment. Article 31 states that, "The aim of the institutions is to ensure equality of rights and duties of all citizens, men and women, by removing the obstacles which hinder the progress of human beings and impede the effective participation of all in the political, economic, social and cultural life." It is, therefore, imperative to address these non-secular "obstacles", as their existence violates the RoL of Article 31. The Algerian government has facilitated equal access for women to all levels of education, and improved rights in work, marriage, and divorce. Even in the face of improvements in certain capacities, we still see drastically underreported incidences of VAW in

Algeria, with only the most extreme making it to the level of the judicial system. In general, the Constitution only informally addresses VAW and the Family Code justifies it. Common examples of this include mediation amongst family members and conflict resolution by religious leaders, which continually result in neglect of women's needs. Faced with this circumnavigation of the law in a country where women are increasingly educated, we ask: what prohibits or discourages them from seeking help through state institutions?

The Algerian Constitution declares Islam as the official state religion, and over 99 percent of Algerians identify as practicing Sunni Muslims. The Islamic religion validates the state Family Code. Caroline Sakina Brac de la Perrière, Algerian-born Psychologist and trailblazer of the women's movement in the Mediterranean region, holds that the Constitution guarantees gender equality, but the 1984 Family Code treats women as minors under the legal guardianship of their husbands and fathers. She asserts that the Family Code is based largely upon interpretations of Sharia, and eloquently states that,

The restriction of women's personal freedoms under the law has served to reinforce women's inferior status within society. A large number of women's NGOs work to promote women's rights in Algeria; however, the movement's strength declined in the 1990s due to death threats from fundamentalist groups. For this reason, laws under the Family Code serve to reinforce the domination of men over women, contradicting Article 29 of the Algerian Constitution, which declares, "All citizens are equal before the law. No discrimination shall prevail because of birth, race, sex, opinion or any other personal or social condition or circumstance (Brac de la Perrière 2005).

There is a point of contention between Article 29 and Article 2 of the Constitution. Different constituencies use Article 2, which declares Islam as the state religion, as an excuse to preserve practices that are harmful to women.

The Algerian government has been more responsive to calls for reform in the wake of the civil war that lasted from December 26, 1991 through February 8, 2002, but it still adheres to Article 2 of the Family Code. As evidenced by the conflict between Articles 2 and 29, the

government vacillates between approving progressive legislation and refusing to amend or even abide by new laws due to relentless scrutiny from non-secular actors. The contradictory objectives of formal and informal Algerian laws complicate legislative establishment, enforcement, and perceived legitimacy, all of which I dissect in this study because they obstruct women's advancement.

Chapter 1 Legislation

Section I: The Algerian Constitution

The Algerian legal system combines French civil law and Islamic law that reflects both its own culture and its colonial heritage. Recent 2008 revisions to the Algerian Constitution have improved female constitutional rights and political participation. The Constitution interdicts unfavorable treatment based upon birth, sex, race, belief, or any other social or personal condition, and treats women as citizens. Article 8 protects the “fundamental liberties of the citizen and the social and cultural progress of the Nation”; Article 34 forbids “any form of physical or moral violence or breach of dignity”; and Article 39 reinforces that “the private life and the honor of the citizen are inviolable and protected by the law” (Algeria-UN.org 2005). A literal interpretation of the Constitution’s word clearly prohibits VAW as reprehensible by law. 2008 revisions also promoted female advancement by amending Article 31 to establish modest quotas for female political representation at the local, regional, and national levels (Sabra 2012).

The Constitutional Council is composed of various public officials, including several Supreme Court justices (CIA World Factbook 2014). Under Article 163, the Constitutional Council “is instituted to see to the respect of the Constitution” (The American Journal of IL 1996). Its members review laws, treaties, and regulations, in order to uphold the values envisioned by the Constitution. “The Constitutional Council is not part of the judiciary, but it has the authority to nullify unconstitutional laws. The Constitution prohibits torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment” (“Encyclopedia of the Nations”). Since the Constitutional

Council has never used its nullification power to reverse family laws that allow torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of women, subnational organizations and women's rights activist groups have developed other strategies to counter the Family Code over the past ten years. In 2006, the Delegate Ministry for the Family and the Status of Women created a National Commission against VAW to integrate all ministries and civil institutions dedicated to this cause. The resulting coalition enacted a national strategy to fight VAW, active 2007-2011, stating in 2008 that gender-based violence inhibits the promotion and integration of women in Algeria (Uneca.org). The National Commission utilizes treaties and international agreements to shift from the national scale. These agreements allow international and subnational institutions to diversify the domestic discourse.

Section II: Treaties and International Agreements

The Information and Documentation Centre for the Rights of Women and Children informed the UNHCR that Algeria must retract its reservations to Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Algerian Representative to the UN Ms. Louisa Chalal challenged several CEDAW articles, however her rejection of Article 2 represents the largest generalization of Algeria's dissent. The Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria bluntly declares that it will comply with CEDAW if and only if "it does not conflict with the provisions of the Algerian Family Code" (2009). Should the government accept Article 2 without reservation, all other articles would follow. Algeria also does not consider itself bound by Articles 15, 16, and 29, (among others). Algeria disputes Article 15, the right of women to choose their residence and domicile, because it contradicts

Chapter 4, Article 37 of the Family Code. It disputes Article 16, that men and women have equal rights in all matters relating to marriage, both during marriage and at its dissolution, for contradicting tenets of the Family Code. The Family Code states that a woman cannot submit a dispute to arbitration or to the International Court of Justice without permission from a male guardian, so Algeria also rejects CEDAW Article 29, paragraph 1³ (CEDAW 2009). The acting governments of Sweden, Portugal, and Denmark notified the UN Secretary-General that they consider Algeria's reservations to CEDAW upon accession "as incompatible with the object and purpose of the said Convention and, therefore, prohibited by virtue of its Article 28" (CEDAW 2009).

Section III: Institutional Representation

In order for any institution to meet in Algeria, the Algerian authorities must approve of its intentions and its methods. Algeria restricts the privileges of human rights organizations and observers, and "violates in many ways the right of Algerian human rights organizations to operate freely" (AI 2014). Authorities frequently refuse visas to international human rights NGOs, and encumber operations of Algerian human rights organizations domestically. All other members of the Arab Maghreb Union have, since 2011, allowed human rights intervention with few hesitations, yet Algeria remains obstinate in not following through on its promises. In 2012, Algeria introduced Law 12-06, prohibiting sub-state institutions from engaging in international

³ CEDAW Article 29, Paragraph 1, states that that any dispute between two or more parties concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention, which negotiation cannot settle, requires the request of only one party to be submitted to arbitration or to the International Court of Justice (CEDAW 2009).

agreements and from receiving foreign funding. This law minimizes international cooperation that could undermine domestic legislative conservatism or spread nonconformist ideology.

Algeria joined the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in January 2014, yet continues to deny and constrain access inside its borders to human rights organizations. On March 8, 2014, International Women's Day, the local authorities of several provinces refused to authorize Amnesty International (AI)⁴ Algeria to operate. Algiers declined several requests to permit AI to work in the field, forcing leaders of the NGO to hold its April 2014 General Assembly on its own grounds. Philip Luther, Director of AI in the Middle East and North Africa, stated that: "As a member of the UN Human Rights Council, Algeria has pledged to cooperate with regional and international human rights organizations. Yet, the Algerian authorities have not agreed to visits by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, despite their repeated requests" (2014). Other international organizations do not believe that Algeria should continue to sit on the Human Rights Council if it does not intend to uphold its most basic standards. These powerful organizations include: the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint program of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH); the World Organization against Torture; and the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN). Michel Tubiana, President of the EMHRN, told Amnesty International that, "All of our organizations have submitted several official requests to visit the country in 2013 and before, but Algerian authorities either refused, did not respond, or imposed conditions for access that would not have allowed us to conduct a research mission freely" (2014).

⁴ Amnesty International (AI), founded in London in 1961, is a non-governmental human rights organization (NGO) with more than 7 million global members. It endeavors to eradicate human rights abuses by pressuring governments to comply with international standards and by encouraging civic action in nations with abusive governments.

Chapter 2

The Legal System

Section I: Sharia Law

Algeria is a member of many international organizations, such as the United Nations and the African Union, but its membership most significant to VAW lies within the Arab Maghreb Union⁵. This union is composed of Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, and Mauritania. Three of these countries (Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco) have mutual histories and societal structures, with approximately 98% of their populations upholding Sharia- traditional Islamic religious law (Uneca.org). The Sharia legal framework presents an enduring challenge for women's rights, as it undermines women's constitutional freedoms. Algerian civilian courts exclusively utilize Sharia, meaning that all cases of "private" violence fall under traditional religious jurisdiction. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's African Centre for Gender and Social Development (ACGSD) asserts that "physical violence against women occurs in numerous forms and women receive little protection in their private or professional lives" (Uneca.org). Sharia enables this phenomenon of direct violence because its principles validate polygamy and put women's safety at the mercy of their husbands at home and male superiors in the work place. Article 4:34 of the Qur'an says, and thus Sharia upholds that:

“Men are the managers of the affairs of women for that God has preferred in bounty one of them over another, and for that they have expended of their property. Righteous

⁵ Several North African nations founded the Arab Maghreb Union in 1989 upon a commercial political and economic agreement aimed at increasing collaboration to uphold member nation's common values and to protect their natural resources.

women are therefore obedient, guarding the secret for God's guarding. And those you fear may be rebellious admonish; banish them to their couches, and beat them."

Sharia councils can adopt conservative readings of the Qur'an that defines private as extending beyond the family home, allowing men to "manage" women at work and in public settings.

Another excerpt from the same section 4:34 focuses on conjugal affairs. It considers the union between a husband and wife sacred, despite the fact that the husband may have several wives, thereby significantly stigmatizing public intervention in civilian affairs. It states that:

"Husbands should take full care of their wives, with [the bounties] God has given to some more than others and with what they spend out of their own money. Righteous wives are devout and guard what God would have them guard in the husbands' absence. If you fear high-handedness from your wives, remind them [of the teaching of God], and then ignore them when you go to bed, then hit them. If they obey you, you have no right to act against them. God is most high and great."

Islamic Scholar Ruhul Ma'ani explains that a conservative reading of this verse promotes VAW in four ways: for refusing to beautify themselves for their husband, refusing their husbands sexually, refusing to pray or perform ritual cleansings, and leaving the house without a valid reason or permission (Spencer). The fourth stipulation of this interpretation epitomizes the power of discursive law, because Algerian women have legally attained freedom of movement and free access to public space. Despite the fact that the 2005 revisions to the Family Code allow women to move about the public space without permission from their husbands or guardians, the traditional interpretation that this behavior requires punishment remains and is often upheld by legal institutions.

The government frequently defends Sharia laws such as these with the notion that, if women obey, they will not have to worry about punishment. This fundamentally flawed logic requires women to be obedient, thus it inherently constitutes abuse. As eloquently described by a member of the Algerian feminist movement in an interview for “Women’s Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress amid Resistance”, within the private sphere, “women escape the protection of the law and men escape the sentence of the law” (Marzouki).

Sharia stresses female honor. If a woman *is believed to* have dishonored her family, she is harshly punished. A woman can bring about dishonor in many ways, including by losing her virginity before marriage or by entering a sexual relationship with someone other than her husband. “The honor of the family depends largely on the conduct of its women; consequently, women are expected to be decorous, modest, and discreet. The slightest implication of impropriety, especially if publicly acknowledged, can damage the family's honor (Metz). Men are traditionally bound to punish their wives violently for transgressions of this nature.

Sharia does not criminalize conjugal violence and spousal rape, and upholds that neither constitutes grounds for divorce. Although there has been no comprehensive research to support this, human rights organizations believe that spousal abuse is commonplace (“2008 Human Rights Report: Algeria”). According to Islamic scholars writing for OnIslam.net, the concept of marital rape does not apply in Islamic marriages because Islam teaches both the husband and wife to diminish their reluctance to respond to their spouses' sexual desires. “Unless there are really serious reasons concerning, for example, health or mental difficulties, they should not refuse such a demand” (AAI Editorial Staff).

The revised penal code tackles inter-generational domestic violence, but does not consider spousal violence to be within the jurisdiction of the law. “The penal code allows for

more severe penalties when violence is perpetrated against children or against parents, but does not consider violence committed by a spouse as an aggravating factor” (ONCHR 2011). Meriem Belaala, President of SOS Women in Distress, stated that abusive husbands commonly stop their wives from being able to file complaints, and that the police and the gendarmes tend to reject arbitrating domestic disputes because they are matters of private life (SOS Femmes en Détresse 2006).

Should a woman exercise her right to divorce, she must justify her reasons for divorcing her husband to a judge. Court-recognized reasons for divorce include: if the husband does not uphold his financial obligations to the family, is missing for more than a year without explanation, or refuses to sleep in the matrimonial bed for longer than 4 months. If the judge conditionally approves her request, she must either pay a significant fine or obtain consent from her husband. Should she remarry or leave the marital home, she loses custody of her children. If, however, she did not produce children, she has no right to the marital home or inheritance. In 1995, Assia, an Algerian teacher of French in her early 40s, recalled that she “suffered from the family law in all its horror”, when her very wealthy husband divorced her and left her with nothing. She would have been homeless had she not had the option to live with her parents. She explained, “If I had been able to benefit from housing rights and if I had received alimony, I would not have gone through all of these difficulties”(Rachidi). WeNews Correspondent Ilhem Rachidi explains that many women in Algeria are much less fortunate than Assia when facing divorce, even post the 2005 legal revisions. He says that, “Unlike her, many women in Algeria end up homeless and living in the street, often after their husbands suddenly decided to exercise their right to divorce” (2007). In 2006, there were 540 cases of divorce in which husbands chose to exercise their uncontested right to divorce, leaving their former wives and in some cases their

children as well, homeless. This leaves women who are already heavily stigmatized for being divorced and/or not having children, “vulnerable to homelessness and violence” (Souhil). A husband never needs to justify himself, receive consent, pay a fine, or worry about losing custody of his children in requesting a divorce.

This Islamic system influences, but does not categorically explain VAW in Algeria, for women’s status is ultimately decided by state ideology. With reservation, the judicial system has become more progressive in the past 20 years. The 1980’s introduction of the multi-party system paved the way for the rise of women’s movements. In August 2000, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika headed an initiative to restructure the judiciary in an effort to eradicate corruption and extremism that contributed to the atrocities of the preceding decade. He mandated amnesty for anyone who fought against the government in the FIS’s Islamic Salvation Army, unless convicted of rape or murder. This very public criminalization of rape was a huge step in fighting against the social taboo that women are guilty for and sullied by being victims of rape.

Earnest in his intent to reform, Bouteflika proceeded to remove 80% of the heads of the 187 lower courts and all but three of the presidents of the 37 higher-level courts. By the end of 2001, women unprecedentedly sat at the head of 26 courts (“Encyclopedia of the Nations”). Even with these adjustments, women’s rights associations faced (and continue to face) significant obstacles and limitations on their capacities to implement change. Some of the hurdles include lack of finances, tight regulation by the Ministry of the Interior, and division between social classes and degrees of religiousness. In 2005, women’s organizations put pressure on Bouteflika to revise the Family Code. The revisions that were passed allow women the right to transfer citizenship to their children, require men to obtain the consent of the first wife in polygamist marriages and of the prospective bride in arranged marriages, and grant women new freedoms in

marriage, conjugal relations, and limited divorce (Moghadam). The reform included a clause that “women are no longer legally required to be obedient to their husbands.” It left in place, however, another clause upholding the principle of *wali*, “that an adult woman remains under the lifelong tutelage of a male guardian”(Gray). This is one of the main reasons that the majority of women’s rights organizations continue to labor against the amended code despite its concessions, as clearly it is still reticent to facilitate legitimate parity. President Bouteflika responded to the efforts of activists as well as female politicians in a March 2005 speech: “You have obtained vested rights today. Do not demand more” (Rachidi). Despite this statement’s apparent reservations, it is somewhat remarkable that as of 2006, 25% of judges in Algeria are women, whereas Sharia law still prohibits women from holding judicial positions in several Arab nations (Dahlerup).

Section II: Women in Courts

Women have gained limited power to plead their cases. Once accused, a woman may testify on her behalf, however her testimony is equivalent to half of a male’s, therefore the courts do not consider her as a complete person (Chouraqui). Developments in civilian judiciaries following the Black Decade of Violence now offer women more procedural defenses than ever. “Defendants in civilian courts are afforded a wide range of procedural protections including a public trial, right to counsel, right to confront witnesses, and right of appeal” (“The Encyclopedia of Nations”). Despite these procedural improvements, there are many impediments to their successful execution in practice. Women in provincial areas tend to have limited legal awareness, meaning that they often tend not to know their rights. If they are aware of their rights,

they tend not to declare them through the legal system out of fear of traditional religious mediation that is more pronounced in rural areas. This is most prevalent in cases of rape, sexual harassment, and conjugal violence. Political Scientist Dr. Nadia Marzouki explains that women are reluctant to pursue these claims for a variety of reasons, including the enduring misogynistic attitudes and conventional behaviors prevalent in civil society. She asserts that women suffer from the “real and perceived biases in the law”, as “laws concerning women’s rights are sometimes implemented in an arbitrary manner, especially in cases that pertain to the Family Code. She adds that the substantial financial cost of pursuing a legal case is a primary hindrance for women who are much less likely than men to be economically independent.

The penal code treats women and men similarly in most legal matters that do not relate to rape, sexual harassment, infidelity, and marriage. The penal code defines sexual harassment as legitimate only if indicative of an abuse of authority, both rape and infidelity as attacks on family honor, and marriage as a matter of private life. The hard work of the National Commission of Women Workers and the Algerian League of Human Rights catalyzed amendment of Article 341 to the penal code criminalizing sexual harassment with very light prison sentences (2 months – 1 year). The vague definition of what constitutes sexual harassment, however, makes it difficult for women to identify and respond to it. Article 336 takes the French penal code and changes “viol” (the French word for rape), to *hatkal’ardh* (the Arabic word meaning attacking honor). Should the Algerian judiciary intend to translate this article as intended by the French, they would call it *ightisab*, meaning rape. This terminology is extremely important, as it “alters the character of the crime from a violent sexual offense against an autonomous individual to an offense that primarily affects family honor” (Marzouki). This imprecision allows rapists to elude penalization by rectifying the tarnished family honor, most commonly by marrying the woman. Such

reasoning speaks to the absence of a definition or punishment for spousal rape and abuse, because neither damages familial honor. In further defense of the coveted family honor, Article 279 permits assault and murder by both men and women should he/she discover that his/her spouse is having extramarital relations. Predictably, men tend to be the only ones taking advantage of this clause. Other articles offer the same retributions for men and women, yet come with clauses that allow only men to circumvent punishment. One such article is Article 339, stating that adulterers of both genders are legally required to serve 1-2 years in jail. A man must serve his time if and only if he was completely aware that the woman was married at the time of the affair, and thus aware that his actions reduced her family's honor. Women have not this privilege to plead ignorance, for doing so would damage spousal honor.

Outside of the domestic sphere, where there is the most to be desired in terms of progress towards women's equality, Algerian women are becoming increasingly educated- to the point that women represent more than half of college graduates and more than 65% of earners of passing grades on the high school baccalaureate exam (El Watan 2010). Some of these women have taken to politics to demand improved rights for women. On one hand, certain constituencies in the public torment them, confronting them with mockery and personal danger, but on the other hand, the public is listening like never before. Louisa Hanoune, leader of the far left Worker's Party, represents the only Algerian female party leader, as well as the first woman to ever run for president of the country in 2004. The Constitutional Council confirmed her candidature, however the government and the public gave her a very hard time. She has endured a harsh journey in politics. The Algerian regime has imprisoned her several times for her beliefs, and the public often regards her as a spectacle. (Translation), "Her performance has been welcomed with derision and sarcasm. The media- with the exception of very rare apologetic editorials- prefers to

react to her with caution. A caution that suggests, from time to time, through caricatures in bad taste, the extent of the misogyny in this environment that still arises to combat defenders of the cause of women” (Dridi). For many, Hanoune represents (translation), “a sort of archetype of the woman-man, that one admires for her courage but in which one does not completely have faith” (Dridi). Although she is educated, fierce, and very articulate, masculinizing herself and her campaign may be her way of maximizing its perceived legitimacy to the public- women included. She was one of the first to rise against the Family Code. On March 13, 2010, she demanded the abolition of the Family Code. She says that she will not stop until women can exercise their rights as complete citizens, and overcome the obstacles imposed upon them in all domains (Sadek).

Zohra Drif is another emblematic fighter for the women’s rights movement in Algeria. Now a senator, lawyer, and the Vice President of the National Council, she began her career as a militant fighting for Algeria’s 1962 independence. On September 22, 1957, the police arrested Drif for “terrorism” while fighting for her country, and condemned her to twenty years in prison. After five years, the courts released her in a newly independent Algeria, where she dedicated her career to fighting for women’s rights. In 2011, the National Council voted on female representation in the government, with an overwhelming majority in favor of its limitation. Refusing to accept this, Drif implored the President that the law was inequitable and in violation of the constitutional guarantee of parity in male and female rights (El Watan). As a result, the Popular National Assembly (l’Assemblée populaire nationale (APN)) adopted a mandatory female representation clause stating that women must hold 20 to 40% of government posts. To this day, Drif forces legislators to answer to their prejudices against women, arguing that the

current quota of 33% women represents (translation), “the bare minimum threshold to initiate a dynamic capable of consecrating the principle of parity” (El Watan).

Section IIA: Case Study, Hassi Messaoud

The jury is still out as to the victor in the battle of constitutional versus Sharia law. On July 13, 2001, 300 men attacked rural “infidel”⁶ women in the oil-rich Algerian province of Hassi Messaoud. The women were “infidels” because they worked as secretaries and domestic workers for an infidel company. A sermon in a local mosque radicalized these men, imploring them to eradicate the “evil” infidels. “Yelling “Allahu Akhbar,” they gang-raped, tortured, stabbed, mutilated, buried alive and murdered these women as well as other “evil” women who owned hairdressing salons” (Chesler). The women begged the police to put them in prisons to protect them. The police obliged for the first 95 women and then ran out of space. What is groundbreaking about this case is that some survivors not only pressed charges in non-Sharia courts, but they actually won their cases. It concluded with 20 of the 300 men receiving mandatory jail terms, which seems like a small victory, but changed the legal landscape for women in Algeria.

Three survivors, Rahmouna Salah, Fatiha Maamoura, and Nadia Kaci, wrote a memoir about their experiences and miraculous survival of the atrocities committed in Hassi Messaoud, entitled “*Laissées pour mortes: Le lynchage des femmes de Hassi Messaoud*” French for, “Left for Dead: The Lynching of the Women of Hassi Messaoud”. Salah recounts the story of her initial forced marriage as a child bride, followed by a second very violent marriage and divorce

⁶ The term “infidel” is synonymous with “unfaithful”. Islam utilizes this term to identify as enemies those that doubt, reject, or have divergent religious ideologies.

that left her homeless with three children. She sought work in Hassi Messaoud, where the massive oil exportation business created thousands of job opportunities. She explains how, on that fateful day in July 2001, the local imam of the Al-Haicha encouraged the men to punish the “lost” women, teaching them that women living alone and providing for themselves are daughters of the devil. Her account details a notable reluctance on behalf of the police to assist as the violence was taking place. She and her two coauthors, Maamoura and Kaci, pressed charges against their offenders, hence the 20 convictions. She writes that, (translation) “the hardest part is not the impunity (and light sentences for the offenders), it is the State that has never kept its promises to help us rebuild our jobs and housing. Every time we contact the ministry, they treat us as if we are a plague, as if our presence reminds them of an unbearable reality”(Salah).

This more bitter than sweet semi-victory was short lived, for only 9 years elapsed before religious extremists again attacked women identified as living or working alone in Hassi Messaoud. This time, a group of young men descended during the night. They physically, sexually, and verbally assaulted the women for daring to be independent. They raped the women, calling them “prostitutes” and stealing their most valuable belongings. The police easily identified several of the assailants, as they shamelessly used cell phones that they had stolen from their victims, but did not press charges because they believed that the women put themselves in danger by living alone to begin with. A police officer in charge of the case told French publication *La Libération* that they should, (translation) “be happy, because a woman that they raped is now in the hospital. She was raped by 5 of them in succession, leaving her in a state of shock,” and other officers replied to the victim’s claims by asking, (translation) “What do you want us to do? You have to go elsewhere! Go home, you will be more secure. Here, it is dangerous for women like you” (Ayad). While the officers’ words may have been cruel, they

were not wrong. The UN Special Rapporteur on VAW explained that, "divorced women in particular are often regarded as easy prey for unwanted sexual advances, since the perpetrators consider that they lack male protection and have 'nothing more to lose.'" A chairperson of SOS Women in Distress added that "the more a woman is alone, without support from family or others (friends, acquaintances), the greater the risk of sexual exploitation and aggression" (IRB 2011). This bias that the victim catalyzed her assault is widespread in Algeria. A woman is blamed for making herself a target by living alone, and thus does not receive adequate representation or care after she reports the crime. Even a woman who does not live alone is blamed for undermining her familial honor by drawing disgraceful attention herself. A woman who reports must deal not only with violence, but with the legal system and the public that treat her as deserving of her abuse.

Chapter 3

The Reporting Process

A 2006 survey disclosed that most violence occurs in the domestic sphere, with approximately one-tenth of Algerian women reporting frequent or daily beatings and forced confinement within or expulsion from their homes. The police said that 7,400 claims of domestic abuse were filed in 2005, 1,555 more than in 2004 (Uneca.org). This figure has remained relatively consistent over the ensuing years. Seven thousand cases of VAW were reported in 2011, although the International Business Times posits that, “the number is likely far higher because many victims do not report their abuse, and the majority of domestic abuse cases involve husbands as the aggressors” (Ross). Existing legislation does not recognize the social climate of power relations that often involves coercive violence for women not to complain and/or to withdraw preexisting complaints.

Section I: The Social Climate

In a 2005 study, The National Institute of Public Health found that women who report attacks are mostly educated and privileged with a certain degree of financial liberty (Institut national de santé publique). This makes sense intuitively; as empowered women may be more prepared to deal with the adversity that accompanies reporting. The Director of Abu Nawas Algérie⁷ stated that battered women who seek help “may have difficulty integrating into society afterwards” (IRB 2013). This is due to the enormous stigma associated with defying male

⁷ Abu Nawas Algérie is an organization that fights for women’s and LGBTQ rights in Algeria. As a necessary safety measure, the identity of its director is concealed on the Internet.

guardians and/or denigrating family honor by allowing sinful things to happen because of one's body, i.e. through rape. During the Black Decade of Violence, Islamic militants kidnapped a girl named Yasmina while she was walking through Algiers. They forced her at knifepoint to "marry" one or several (unspecified) militants, in a type of "temporary marriage". "Widely condemned by most Sunni Muslim scholars, temporary marriages were nonetheless used by Sunni militants as a pretext for domestic and sexual enslavement" (Jacinto). Yasmina was "one of the lucky ones" because her kidnappers did not murder or permanently mutilate her. After years of repeated rape in captivity, Yasmina returned to her family, who turned her away for disgracing their honor by losing her virginity. In an interview with WeNews Correspondent Leela Jacinto, she says that, "I had lost my virginity"... "In this country, when you lose your virginity, you're absolutely destroyed". She explains how she left for the city of Bejaia, where she began working as a dishonorable "bar girl", and married a client. Shortly after marrying, her husband began to abuse her. She reveals that he called her a whore and confined her to the home. After three years in a painful marriage, her husband departed for France, leaving Yasmina and their two daughters resourceless (2007). Her family could have salvaged her life and spirit, yet they chose to banish her because they selfishly could not bear the stigma of her rape.

Section IA: The Procedure

Article 264 of Algerian penal law dictates that an abused woman must obtain a doctor's note certifying that her injuries are sufficiently severe to prohibit her from working for 15 or more days in order to be eligible to take legal action. She must then present this medical certificate to the police, who forward her claim to a judge that decides whether or not to punish

the perpetrator. Should the judge decide that punishment is in order, the courts sentence the offender to prison for a period lasting two months to five years and/or by paying a fine of 500 to 10,000 Algerian Dinars⁸. If the abuses result in blindness, permanent maiming, the loss of use of parts of the body, the prison sentence increases to a term of five to ten years. If the abuses result in death, the prison term increases to ten to twenty years.

Meriem Belaala, President of SOS Women in Distress, told the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that most victims of domestic violence “do not dare to file complaints against their aggressors because the Family Code does not protect them” (2006). In 2013, her organization helped two women escape forced marriages. These women were dual Algerian-French citizens. She told the story of one of the women, who reached out to the police for help. The police told her that they could not help, so she contacted SOS Women in Distress. The police refuse to mediate forced marriages, which they consider a matter of privacy. She explained that it is much more likely for the police to deny the right to intervene and advise a woman to return to her family, than it is for them to explain her rights. The police will only aid if ordered to do so by a judge, which generally only happens if the woman sustains serious injuries or has proof that her life is in imminent danger. The woman contacted SOS, which telephoned the French consulate. The French granted her permission to relocate to France. President Belaala explained that this operation was successful because the woman held dual citizenship. Had she only been an Algerian citizen, she would have been a child bride (IRB 2013).

⁸ 10,000 Algerian Dinars is equivalent to 5 to 100 USD at the 2015 0.010 Dinars = 1.00 USD exchange rate.

Section IB: Resources and Services Available

CIDDEF⁹ upholds that Algeria has six centers that support battered women: four of which the government manages, and two that are community initiatives (2006). The community initiatives aim to raise domestic violence awareness within the police and gendarme forces. A representative of the Tharwa Fatma N'Soumer Association for women's equality in Algeria stated that these government centers tend to be located in major cities and to be thus inaccessible to women in the provinces where practices are most traditional and require women to always be accompanied by a guardian. Most assistance comes from NGOs; particularly those that have telephone help lines, such as SOS Women in Distress and the Wassila Network. Whereas the government centers are few, far between, generally unorganized, and known to be of little help; the NGOs offer psychological support, legal assistance, and shelter if the accommodations are available (IRB 2013). She added that these NGOs actually accompany women to court, however they survive on donations alone, meaning that they receive no money from the government and thus suffer from a lack of funding. She alluded that government organizations with sufficient funding to continue to operate are not productive, telling an anecdote of a center that she knew where the staff advised women to return to their violent situations. Nadia Marzouki writes for Freedom House that, while the quantity of women's rights organizations has been augmented since 2004, "none of their approaches can be entirely successful as long as the government continues to exercise tight controls on activities in the public sphere" (2010).

⁹ In 2002, Nadia Ait Zai, Professor of Family Law at the University of Algiers founded CIDDEF, an independent documentation center for women and children's rights in Algeria. The organization launched its first campaign for the fight against all forms of VAW in 2011.

Section II: Representation in Literature

I move now to a literary analysis. I attempt to use literature to uncover some complexities beyond the surface of VAW in Algeria. Sometimes when we depend only on facts, politics, legislation, and theory, we lose track of the voices that matter most. Subjective stories illuminate reality by illustrating a more complete picture of the problem that allows contradictions to show. The practices and behaviors of human beings are at the heart of this problem, so it is logical that their stories enrich the facts by contributing circumstantial elements that otherwise disappear.

Isma, the narrator of *Vaste est la Prison* or *Vast is the Prison*, by renowned Algerian Feminist Writer Assia Djebar¹⁰, thinks, for a long time, that (translation), “to write is to die, to die slowly” (11). She feels that writing will socially handicap her, bringing her nothing but hardship and mockery, but her distaste for the state of the Algerian woman compels her to write in spite of her fears. She is disgusted by the idea that the Algerian woman must stay a virgin until she is married at a very young age, veiled, isolated, and submitted to every caprice of her enslaver. The women in her entourage teach her that the husband is the enemy, or “l’dou” in Arabic. She explains that this word is (translation), “not of hatred, but more of despair that has long been frozen between the sexes. This word instills in me, in its wake, a dangerous pulse of erasure...”(15). She finds that a woman works like a slave and has no power in her home, as if she is erased from life after marriage. Instead of inhibiting her writing, her pain drives her expression. She comes to believe that silencing herself would be silencing the feminine experience and willingly leaving the narrative to the patriarchy. Isma most likely represents the

¹⁰ Fatima Zohra Imalayen wrote Algerian feminist texts using the pen name “Assia Djebar”. Perhaps the most famous Algerian women’s writer, her novels “are clearly focused on the creation of a genealogy of Algerian women. Her political stance is virulently anti-patriarchal as much as it is anti-colonial” (Hiddleston). In 1996, she won the Neustadt International Prize for Literature. She died in Paris on February 6, 2015.

voice of the author, Assia Djebar. Djebar utilizes this brave young heroine to demonstrate the importance of writing in Algeria, a country so full of taboos that are painful to discuss. Ali Chibani, Writer for *La Plume Francophone*, explains that (translation), “In fact, throughout the narrative, Assia Djebar returns to a legend that creates much fear in Algeria. Married women await the invisible force that she calls a “bride thief” (210), in which they would prefer to offer their virginity, rather than to the husband imposed upon them. That initial physical rupture creates a submissive being, without any power” (2008).

The second half of the novel rewrites historical events in the Maghreb, giving power to women rather than erasing them from history. As the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism augments and accumulates in global popularity, Islamic women are silently included in the guilty party. Isma detests the violent men who destabilize the Arab world, and she feels the need to distance herself from them. She feels trapped and wants to escape, but her only option is to make her voice heard. This is important not only for herself, but for many other women who suffocate from discouragement to speak out. She explains that the violence deeply embitters many women, making it difficult for them to imagine a peaceful world with men in it. Her grandmother declares on her deathbed that (translation), “... Perhaps the solution to our present curse is to no longer see men” (105). Although her situation frustrates and irritates her, Isma nuances it so as never to make such a complicated predicament all or nothing. Unlike her grandmother, she does not wish to live without men, because she has experienced romantic love and knows that it is beautiful. She believes that there must be a way to escape the social malady that creates VAW, and that it begins with women refusing to remain silent.

Section IIA: Perpetuating the Cycle of Violence- Women Oppressing Girls

In some cases, women contribute to female oppression. The autobiographical novel, *Oumelkheir* by Houaria Kadra-Hadjadji explores the way in which Algerian women effect psychological violence. As the protagonist ages, the women in her life instill within her the vicious fear that every encounter with a man could cause her to become pregnant and dishonor her family. The women teach her that her body is source of shame that will create scandal if she does not conceal it. They treat her sexuality as if it is the center of her identity, making sure that she knows what it means to be (translation), “a virtuous and chaste Algerian girl” (Nedjai 197). When her father decides to homeschool her, the women in her entourage reject his decision, insisting that if educated, she will not behave properly. Oumelkheir explains that they (translation), “are struggling to impregnate her with modesty and teach her the shame of her body and to fear the sexuality of men” (Nedjai 190). Their resentment grows as she continues to learn. To retaliate, they use passive-aggressive methods to riddle her journey with mental obstacles that cripple her with anxiety. Oumelkheir believes that a “well-born” girl (translation), “submits to the watch and the command of the elders”, and that she is, “framed by their constant reprimands and obscure allusions, which are always normative, moralizing, and guilt-inducing” (Nedjai 200). The care and teachings of Laaila (her mother), Mazouza (her aunt), Ma Zoulika (the matriarch of her clan), and her neighbors, train her to be obsessed with the sexually forbidden. The concept that she is not sufficiently modest and pure torments her to the point that she views her changing body as a transgression and a burden to her family’s honor. This story reminds us that the misogynistic discourse that is at least partially responsible for the state of women shapes both men and women alike. In many cases, women teach their daughters that they

will lead better lives if they peacefully and complacently accept the social system as it is. If girls are brought up to believe that they are inferior to men, then boys will continue to become men who feel entitled to the submission of women.

Section IIB: Pathologizing the Female Body

Algerian women suffer psychologically from the perception that their sexuality- the entity that is their greatest source of shame- determines their value. It is of the utmost importance that they remain attractive virgins until marriage, at which point they must produce male offspring. Two of these factors, attractiveness and gender of offspring, are completely out of their control. Although sexual function is largely genetically determined, the novel *L'interdite* or *The forbidden* by Malika Mokeddem, tells of distressed women that pathologize their bodies in an effort to satisfy social expectations. Sultana, the novel's heroine, grows up in Algeria. She chooses to use her dual-citizenship to seek exile in France because she cannot stand the way that Algeria treats women. She becomes a nephrologist in Montpellier, where she cares for Maghrebian women who are sick, but not in a typical way. These women believe themselves to be sick in relation to their sexuality. (Translation) "This is a general condition of motherhood in a country subject to fundamentalist violence, obsessed with reducing the feminine to procreation and sex. This disease of femininity has a name: koulchite "(Simon 140). This "koulchite" is a uniquely feminine disease, described as widespread amongst Algerian women. It is an illness created by politics and cultural tradition. It is "symptomatic of feminine distress" as Sultana graphically describes in this excerpt, (translation):

I see an acute koulchite, an inflammation of the soul and the being, in a young woman of sixteen. She just got married. I see chronic koulchite, a silent cry and daily gangrene in a fertile mother, eleven children and the husband still does not want to hear about contraception. I see a terminal koulchite, a heart that churns from the emptiness inside of a clay body. This is a woman of forty without children. I see a hysterical koulchite... I inject Valium for this one and I give medicine to go for the others (Bolzinger).

Surrounded by this epidemic, Sultana loses herself for a while. She pulls herself out of her own depression, using her knowledge and personal strength to help others through her profession, and she writes, which is cathartic for her. She survives with her sanity because she is educated and has the means to withdraw from her situation, but most women are not so lucky. She devotes her life to helping suffering women by identifying with them. Thinking of women back home in Algeria, she movingly declares that (translation), "tell the women that even that I am far away, I am with them" (Bolzinger).

Section IIC: Women Finding Strength in Each Other

Many stories describe victimized, complacent women, neglecting their personal power and the strength that they find in each other. A coalition of female resistance organizes magnificently among the protagonists of the film *Chaos*, directed by Coline Serreau. Malika is a young Algerian woman. When she is a girl, her father violently takes her and her siblings from their mother. She grows up in a home where her stepmother is the stereotypical Algerian wife, essentially a slave that lives to serve her father and brother's every need and desire. She is aggressive with her two stepdaughters, but she is the exception to the rule of female solidarity in

this film. When Malika becomes a teenager, her father attempts to sell her into a forced marriage with an old Algerian man for 20,000 francs. Horrified, she flees, and lives outdoors until she no longer can. A man promises her an opportunity to make money, taking advantage of her naïveté. He tricks her into becoming a prostitute in his brothel. She struggles, but in time finds her way out of her dire situation. She becomes callous, adopting a vehemently independent mentality to push people away. This mentality becomes a fatal problem for her when she needs help but is unable to recognize it, so a woman named H  l  ne forces herself in to save her life. Driven by her victimization, Malika's chaotic individualism reflects that of an animal trying desperately to survive. Luckily, H  l  ne is implacable, and with time, Malika begins to recognize that her intentions are sincere. With H  l  ne's assistance, Malika is able to intervene in her father's forced marriage operation to save her younger sister from facing the same destiny that she had. Had she remained resigned to her militant individualism, she would never have been able to save her sister. The film ends with four women sitting side by side along a bank of the Mediterranean Sea: Malika and her younger sister, H  l  ne and her mother-in-law, all different ages and from separate worlds with unique experiences. They do not speak to each other, but they all wear contented expressions. Each of them faces unique vexations and difficulties in their domestic lives, but together, they feel complete because they take care of each other as a united whole.

CONCLUSION

The definition of VAW provides that a man or a woman can abuse a woman. In the case of Algeria, we ascertain that a government or a state can do the same by validating victimization through deprivation of liberty. This convoluted separation of public and private law is the result of the state of Algeria refusing to adhere to international human rights standards that would protect half of its population from violence. In 2015, Algerian women continue endeavoring to make the rights and role of women a critical concern of domestic Algerian policy. They understand that the humanitarian, social, political, and economic costs of VAW affect everyone. They also understand that the weakest of homes are those in which inhabitants are abused. Due to flawed legislation, informal law, and lack of accountability, Algerian children grow up in homes observing that a woman's sole worth is the sum of the myriad chores that she performs. They do not learn that she merits respect on the basis of her intrinsic value. In this way, the next generation of Algerians will prescribe the same role for women that their parents did before them. They will privilege normative family honor, feminine sexual purity, and male entitlement over female security. History demonstrates that institutional change precedes legitimate shifts in discursive attitudes by generations. Algeria will not know justice until it bridges the gap between formal and informal practices to create consistent, enforceable RoL that will revolutionize female quality of life in Algeria. Today patriarchal institutions and discourse burden Algerian women. Only after institutions change can Algeria begin to move towards nonviolent cultural norms. Then, with time and healing, Algerian women will know life with human rights.

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ACADEMIC VITA

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Majors in International Politics and French, Minors in Geography and International Studies

ACADEMICS

- Intern, United States Department of State (DOS) (Spring 2015)
 - Bureau of Political/Military Affairs, Office of Regional Security and Arms Transfers (PM/RSAT).
- Academic Tutor, Varsity Tutors & Tutors by Base (Spring 2015)
 - Tutoring higher education and military students.
- Research Analyst, Strategic and Global Security Program (Fall 2014)
 - Project: *Strategic impact of instability in rule of law on the violence and discrimination that women face in Algeria*; sponsored by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI).
- Intern, Peace Keeping and Stability Operations Institute, U.S. Army War College (Summer 2014)
 - Conducted an analytical study on the document a *Decade of War*.
 - Researched and beta-tested the database and corresponding program to propose and implement changes to the International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations.
- Participant, National Security Analysis 2014 Summer Seminar (NSAISS) (Summer 2014)
 - Sponsored by the DIA on behalf of the Intelligence Community. Designed to provide top-performing undergraduate and graduate students an in-depth exposure to intelligence analytics. Held in Washington, D.C., Aug 3-15.
- Study Abroad, CIC-SPA advanced Integrated Program, Université Paul Valéry III, Montpellier, France (Spring 2014)
 - Selected to “Geoblog” about experience for PSU and the University of Minnesota.
- Strategic intelligence research intern, PSU Applied Research Laboratory (Fall 2013)
 - Briefed General James Cartwright and presented final project based on Global Trends 2030 at the “Five Eyes” international intelligence conference in Leesburg, VA, Nov 4-9.
- Active member, Strategic and Global Security program’s Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence (SGS/ICCAE) (Spring 2013-Present)
 - National Security relevant education, research, and outreach initiatives.
- English instructor, CIU-10 Development Center for Adults (2013-2014)
 - Tutored in community-based literary service projects and instructed people to ameliorate their English literacy.
 - One-on-one coach for individuals with learning disabilities.
- Teaching intern (TI) for Cultural Geography (GEOG 495B) (2012-2013)
 - Promoted to Senior Intern (2013)
 - Created lesson plans, wrote and graded exams, tutored groups of students.

AWARDS

- French and Francophone Studies Departmental Merit Scholarship Award (Spring 2015)
- Political Science Departmental Merit Scholarship Award (Spring 2015)

- Daniel and Elizabeth Hartnett Cwenar Trustee Scholarship in the College of the Liberal Arts
(2014-2015)
- Schreyer Honors College Discovery Research Grant to support an independent research project to complete in cooperation with a faculty member
(Summer 2014)
- Robert J. Mowitz Award from PSU's Department of Political Science for superior academic record as well as commitment to public service and the non-profit sector.
(Summer 2014)
- Schreyer Honors College Merit Scholarship Award
(2013-Graduation)
- Dean's List for superior academic accomplishment
(Fall 2011-Graduation)
- President's Freshman Award for 4.0 cumulative honors freshman GPA
- STAR (Students That Are Recognized) award for scholastic achievement and philanthropic involvement
(2011-2012)