



مركز تكامل للدراسات و الأبحاث  
TAKAMUL Centre for Interdisciplinary Research and Studies



*Takamul* Centre for Studies and Research, in partnership with Hanns Seidel Foundation and the Research Laboratory for Multidisciplinary Studies at Ibn Tofail University, Organizes

The Third Annual International Conference on MENA Studies

## **Feminism in the MENA region: Women's Rights in a Post-Globalist World**

*March 20-21, 2019*

*Ibn Tofail Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences- Kenitra, Morocco*

The issue of women's rights and gender equality has always been crucial in the process of democratization and social development. Changes in gender dynamics are often seen as a reliable indicator of political and social change, with the growing empowerment of women considered as an essential component of any effective and sustainable development policy.

It is fair to say that some significant advances have been achieved over recent years in the Middle East and North Africa thanks to the collective efforts of civil associations, women's groups, and political parties, which have campaigned for gender equality. The reform of the family code or the '*Moudawana*' in Morocco was, for instance, an important measure that signaled the readiness of public authorities to pass specific legislation designed to address gender inequality issues. However, civil associations and women's groups still continue to mobilize to ensure that laws pertaining to the rights of women are properly and diligently enforced, or even extended. Other pending issues such as domestic and sexual violence, sexual harassment, and inheritance law, have also been raised and discussed, generating a heated but necessary debate, and underlining the belief among activists that further progress is needed and expected.

Feminism is one of the biggest social movements of this century and it involves various ideological, social and political beliefs. Women in the MENA region have made great strides in the fight for equality, they have been allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia, granted equal inheritance rights in Tunisia and offered legal protection from "acts considered forms of harassment, aggression, sexual exploitation or ill treatment" in Morocco. Indeed, their situation seems to be much better in North

Africa because of culture, the mainstream religious interpretations, the proximity to Europe, and also the colonial experiences. On the other hand, the process of liberation seems to be too lengthy in the Middle East due to cultural norms and tribal culture. However, women in North Africa continue to stare down great obstacles in the fight to achieve true gender equality as the pace of the reforms introduced by their governments just inaugurate a long journey to full equality.

Today the gender situation in the MENA countries is complex as legal provisions do not always apply to all and in all cases nor do they reflect the actual commitment of officials and ordinary citizens. While there is reliable evidence that men and women of all age groups are engaging with changing attitudes and practices, more conservative sections of society are also undermining, with more or less effectiveness, the dynamic towards social change and gender equality. Furthermore, popular perceptions of gender attitudes among people of the region as well as their sensitive character tend to make it more challenging to gauge such a process of change.

This conference aims to bring together researchers and academics to shed light on some of the practices that affect women's status and share their insights into a range of issues relating to feminist perspectives on women's lived experiences and the advocacy struggles initiated. By identifying emerging social trends and practices, and examining specific facets of gender relations, participants will contribute to a better understanding of this strategic area of social life.

### ***Submission Guidelines***

Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for individual papers. **Submissions** are due **January 30, 2019**. Paper abstracts must be no more than **300 words** and submitted as a Microsoft Word or PDF file. The submission must include the title, the presenter's name, affiliation, email address, as well as a short biography. Please submit your abstracts to [takamul.menaproject@gmail.com](mailto:takamul.menaproject@gmail.com). Review results will be communicated via E-Mail by **February 10, 2019**. All abstracts and all paper presentations **must be in English**. Please, do not hesitate to submit your inquiries to [tayebi@takamulcentre.com](mailto:tayebi@takamulcentre.com) or to [belhabibs@gmail.com](mailto:belhabibs@gmail.com).

### ***Notes:***

- Thanks to the support of Hanns Seidel Foundation, Takamul Centre will provide the participants with accommodation and meals.
- Due to the big number of submissions we received last year, Takamul Centre will contact only the accepted applicants this time.
- The accepted applicants must submit their papers by **April 1, 2019**. The papers will be reviewed by Hanns Seidel Foundation's Scientific Committee and appear in the conference proceedings by **November 2019**.

## *Conference Organizing and Scientific Committee*

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