

“... Women’s studies as a course and a discourse in the Middle East could benefit from the vast literature produced by Western feminists, without being either daunted or swamped by it or being lured into imagining that feminists anywhere have found the solution to all women’s problems. It would be wrong and misguided to assume that Western feminism only applies to the West. Nor is post-modernism invented by and is exclusively for the West. ... it is essential for Middle Eastern women to find their own solution to their own problems. Despite all our differing priorities, still, sisterhood is global. But at the same time possibilities, priorities, and strategies are different in every country and every region. What feminism in the next century will need, and what we need to offer the students that we educate for the movement in the future, is to have tolerance and understanding and the wisdom not to be lured by prejudices, be they Western or Eastern, or by the mere tools of academia, which include grant theories. Feminists have to learn to mend and make alliances where and when they can.” (Haleh Afshar, *Cairo Papers in Social Science* vol. 20, No. 3, p. 57)

“The creation of a women’s movement in each Arab country, capable of mobilizing the women in every home, village, town or city, of drawing into its ranks the illiterate peasant woman, the female factory worker, the educated professional woman, will mean that the Arab movement for democracy, progress and socialism is capable of reaching every woman, and is attaining the stage where it is a real mass movement and not just the instrument of a specific class.” (Nawal El Saadawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, p. xvi)

“In the ongoing debate about how to build a democratic society of equal citizens the WSP contributes to gender awareness and to the development of policies that address the social, cultural, economic, and political issues confronting Palestinian women. Various tools have been identified that are useful in accomplishing these goals. One is gender planning training of government officials, and of members of nongovernmental organizations and international agencies. ... Another tool is the organization of workshops and seminars on policies affecting Palestinian women ... Yet another tool is the use of local mass media to circulate information for strategic importance to women and other marginalized groups. Finally, the WSP established a scholarship fund to support needy female students in an attempt to draw women from poorer segments of the society to higher education. (Eileen Kuttab, *Muslim Women and the Politics of Participation: Implementing the Beijing Platform*, p.99)

“Prospects for the future whether adoption of the Egalitarian Code or simply the implementation of reforms,

cannot be separated from the political realities of the Maghreb. The repressive character and poor human rights records of all three governments make it unlikely that the struggle to protect women’s rights will succeed; fundamental rights continue to be denied in most other spheres. Even if the government appears to join forces with women, as in Algeria, or to observe silently, as in Morocco, the ever-present menace of political Islam in the region makes women’s rights the most suitable area in which governments can make concessions to Islamists without paying a political price. The elusiveness of a political solution to the conflict in Algeria has gone unremarked by its neighbors, who have followed dual policy of repression and concession in an effort to avoid igniting internal conflicts of their own.” (Fati Ziai, *Muslim Women and the Politics of Participation: Implementing the Beijing Platform*, p. 81)

“... definition of a network ... Any group of individuals or organizations who, on a voluntary basis or for professional reasons, organize themselves to share knowledge and other resources, exchange information or undertake joint activities around specific interest areas so that they empower themselves, individually or collectively, to reach their social objectives or to meet their professional goals.” (*Women’s Information Services and Networks: A Global Source Book*, p. 22)

“Women’s Studies owes its existence to the movement for the liberation of women ... The uniqueness of Women’s Studies has been and remains its refusal to accept sterile divisions between academy and community, between the growth of the mind and the health of the body, between intellect and passion, between the individual and society ... Women’s studies ... is equipping women not only to enter society as whole and productive human beings, but to transform the world into one that will be free of all oppressions.” (*National Women’s Studies Association Constitution*, p. 84-85)

“The women’s movement has my soul and my spirit. We have a right to have our opinion matter. When I think feminism, I close my eyes and I think of laughter. Women’s laughter cuts through everything. For me, feminism is equality in the eyes for the law, and of employers; it is a broad notion of family protection in the community. Do I like a lot of the languages and style of feminism? Not always. But if I was defining myself by my actions, bloody right I’m a feminist. My daughters are feminists. I know because of their language and their relationships, their anger, their sense of moral outrage.” (Erika Muhammad, *Ms. Magazine*, December 2000/January 2001, p. 79)