

Doves of Fire

Women, Gender and Resistance in Western Sahara and Equatorial Guinea

Joanna Christian Allan

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies

September 2016

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

© 2016 The University of Leeds and Joanna Christian Allan

Acknowledgements

Firstly, to everyone who gave up their time to share their (sometimes very difficult) stories with me in interviews, or less formal conversations, thank you. I am in your debt. Many of these 'interviewees' also offered me hospitality, support and friendship, and continue to inspire me.

At Leeds, I thank my supervisors Professor Manuel Barcía Paz and Professor Richard Cleminson for their encouragement, direction and support over the last three years, their comprehensive and constructive feedback on my work, their valuable suggestions and their always sound advice. I feel very lucky to have had you both as supervisors. Thanks also to the rest of the staff at Leeds Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies for their support, and to the Arts Faculty, the School of Modern Languages, and the Leeds for Life Foundation for their financial support. Thanks to Karen Priestley, for the support she has given to me and indeed all the modern languages postgraduates.

In Western Sahara, I would like to give special thanks to Hamza Lakhali, without whom one chapter of this thesis would look very different, or perhaps wouldn't have existed at all. Thanks also to Nooni and our two mutual friends for getting me in. In the camps, thanks to Mohammed Saleh, Khalihenna Mohammed and the rest of the SCAP team, to Limam Mohammed and his family in Auserd camp, and indeed to the POLISARIO for facilitating my research in the camps. Many Saharawis took real risks to help me and a colleague in Morocco. Thanks is not enough for you. Thanks to Kristina Andrea Nygaard for keeping me sane during a challenging time.

I would like to thank Trifonia Melibea Obono Ntutumu, who went out of her way to help me with interviews in Malabo. There are several other women in Malabo who deserve a special thanks, not only for helping me with the project in various ways, but also for showing great kindness. Most of them have to remain anonymous. Thanks to all at the Spanish Cultural Centre, especially Agueda, and also to Kike in Madrid.

Thanks to Alice Wilson, Enrique Martino, Wilf Wilde, Hamza Lakhali and my parents for their detailed readings of chapters of this work. Their constructive comments, suggested revisions and encouragement helped me greatly to improve my work. Thanks also to Rosa Medina

Doménech for hosting me at the University of Granada, to Cristina Martínez Benítez de Lugo for her hospitality, and to Igor Cusack, Agustín Velloso and Nieves Muñoz García for the initial contacts, without which it would have been difficult to envisage including Equatorial Guinea in this project. Igor also helped me greatly by generously posting hard-to-find publications on Equatorial Guinea my way. Thanks to Cate Lewis and Jacob Mundy for their valuable advice on fieldwork.

Thanks to Helios, Frances, Ian and my parents for putting up with me. Thanks to all at WSRW and WSC for inspiring me.

Thanks to a dear family in El Aaiún for the wonderful memories.

My thesis does not reflect the views of any people mentioned here, and any outstanding errors in the work are mine alone.

Abstract

My thesis focuses on indigenous women's intersectional resistance in Western Sahara and Equatorial Guinea, from the onset of Spanish colonialism until the present day. Resistance has received scant academic attention and is under-theorised. The gendered aspects of resistance are even more deeply in shadow. Furthermore Spain's former African colonies are themselves often ignored in Hispanic Studies. Taking these gaps as a starting point, I query, in this thesis, the relationship between gender and resistance to oppressive regimes. I focus on constructions of gender and how they influence both the tactics of resistance that women employ and the punishments dealt to activists. I also look at how women's participation in resistance activities challenges hegemonic gender norms. Drawing on Spanish government colonial archives and fieldwork conducted in Equatorial Guinea, the Saharawi refugee camps in Algeria and the occupied zone of Western Sahara, and amongst the Saharawi and Equatoguinean diaspora in Europe, I argue that not only is gender central to understanding resistance to dictatorial regimes and colonialism, but also that scholars of authoritarianism must consider gender when assessing how such regimes maintain power. Secondly, I contend that globally hegemonic constructions of gender and particularly of 'gender equality' are essential to the international geopolitics that allow the continuation of the Obiang dictatorship in Equatorial Guinea and the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Abstract	5
Table of Contents	6
List of Figures	8
Introduction	10
Chapter One. “Imported ideas?:” counter hegemony, resistance, gender and a feminist-informed methodology	26
1.1 Hegemony, domination and resistance.....	27
1.2 Everyday resistance and subaltern studies.....	29
1.3 Integrating hegemony with theories of everyday resistance and hidden transcripts.....	33
1.4 Definitions.....	39
1.5 Understanding gender.....	45
1.6 Analytical framework.....	46
1.7 Data collection methods.....	48
1.8 Interviews	52
1.9 Participatory observation.....	55
1.10 Archival work.....	56
1.11 Other documentary sources.....	57
1.12 Spelling and transliteration.....	59
Chapter Two. Spanish Sahara, <i>fangistas</i> and gendering Subaltern Studies	60
2.1 Spain arrives in Western Sahara: gendering a territory.....	61
2.2 Enslavement and resistance.....	63
2.3 Resisting patriarchies: Saharawi women’s challenges to male domination and the Francoist housewife model.....	67
2.4 “[W]e mustn’t forget that a Party exists now and, worse still, an idea exists:” The emergence of Saharawi nationalism.....	83
2.5 The pro-independence protests begin: Zemla and the formation of the POLISARIO.....	87
Chapter Three. Women’s resistance and gender in Spanish Guinea	103
3.1 Resistance against (colonial) patriarchies.....	106

3.2 Resistance to colonialism and women’s participation in the struggle for independence.....	118
3.3 Intersectional resistance: fighting the racism, sexism and colonialism of the Spanish Women’s Section.....	129
Chapter Four. Women, gender and resistance in Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara.....	138
4.1 The invasion: tortured mothers and a disappeared father.....	140
4.2 The war years in the Occupied Territory.....	146
4.3 “Back from a kind of hell that bears no name:” the ceasefire and intifadas of the nineties.....	153
4.4 “A woman is stronger than our state:” A mother as a martyr and the 2010 Gdeim Izik protest camp.....	156
4.5 Female demonstrators and male prisoners: the gendering of protests and custodial punishment.....	162
4.6 “Prolonged and repeated sexual torture is the most traumatising human experience of all:” Resisting gendered torture.....	168
4.7 Saharawi feminism? Challenging gender inequalities in the Occupied Territories.....	177
4.8 The future of the struggle: resistance and gender across borders.....	183
Chapter Five. Constructions of gender in the nationalist discourses of the Obiang regime.....	188
5.1 Obiang, the predestined leader.....	188
5.2 Gender equality in Obiang regime discourse.....	193
5.3 The construction of gender roles in regime discourse.....	198
5.4 Ideological function.....	203
5.5 Oil and (in)opportunity?.....	214
Chapter Six. “A poor woman selling snails and arguing with a policeman who is trying to tax her is fighting too:” Gender, resistance and <i>ngueismo</i>.....	220
6.1 “The government was so powerful that even the sun hid behind the clouds:” Macías takes the presidency.....	221
6.2 “Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown”: gender and the violence of the Obiang regime.....	228
6.3 Women’s resistance to the regime.....	239
6.4 Anti-authoritarianism and feminism?.....	247

Conclusions: gendering resistance and oppression, and the West's role in undermining 'gender equality'	251
Bibliography	257
Appendix: List of personalities	305

List of Figures

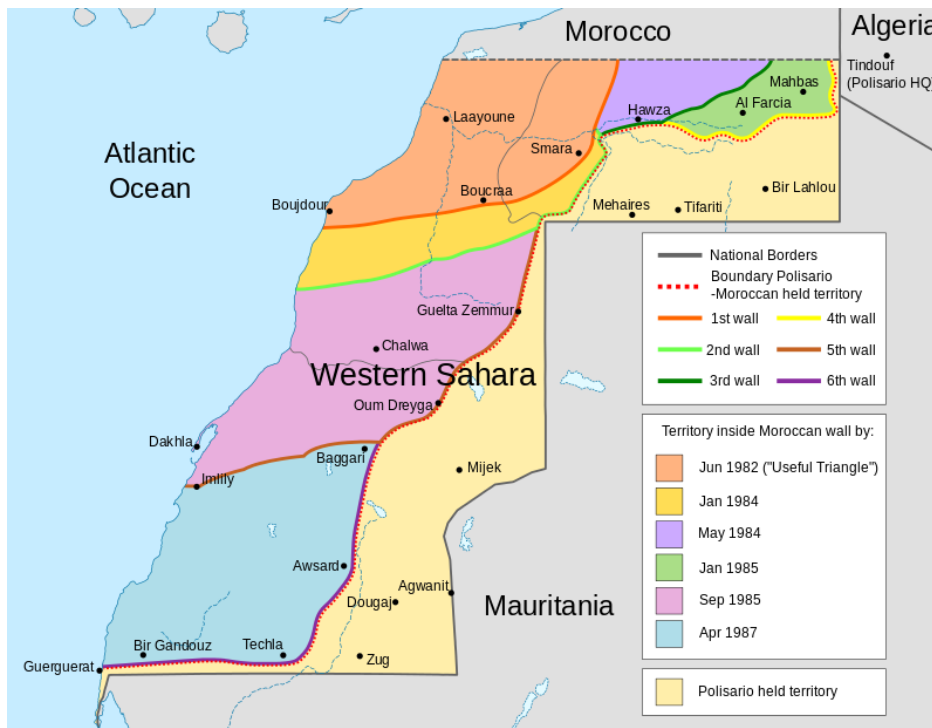
Figure 1 , Map of Equatorial Guinea.....	9
Figure 2 , Map of Western Sahara.....	9
Figure 3 , Illustration of Tekbar Haddi's campaign poster.....	184

Figure 1



2016 US Government map of Equatorial Guinea

Figure 2



2011 map of Western Sahara made by Wikigraphique user, using the official UN map of the territory, but incorporating all six military walls.

Introduction

Sultana trembled. The two policemen had muscled her into the back of the ambulance. She looked down, horrified, at her own eye swimming in a gloop of nerves and blood, all cupped in her right palm. She tried to keep balance, a struggle with cuffed wrists, as the wailing vehicle lurched and zigzagged through early evening traffic. Her fellow passengers, the police duo, were arguing over where to take her next. "Lets go to *el garaje*," said one, turning his head to spit on her. *El garaje*, Castilian for "the garage," is the nickname given to a secret detention centre in Marrakesh used specifically, Sultana tells me, for sexual forms of torture. "No. She's going to the Commission," argued another, before bringing his truncheon down on the back of Sultana's head once more.

As she was dragged across the internal courtyard, her feet ploughing the scab-yellow dust and congealed blood on the floor, Sultana could hear the clots of tourists outside chattering and laughing, spectators to Marrakesh's most famous square. Red poured from her empty eye socket. Another blow to the head, then darkness.

In the cell, Sultana recognized twenty or so of her fellow Saharawi classmates, men and women, scattered on the bare floor like leaves in Autumn. Some cried, some moaned, some were woefully silent. All had been stripped naked. Coloured bruising, lit by a single light source, patterned the prisoners' flesh. Above their heads, dozens, hundreds, it sounded like thousands, of pairs of feet pounded by. All arteries of Marrakesh lead here.

It is easy to miss the architectural understatement of the low-rise, beige Police Commission that sits anaemically in one corner of the Djemaa el Fna square. The building's ability to merge blandly into the background is opportune for the Moroccan regime, which shows a heavily made-up face to the country's visitors. The Anglophone guidebooks are an ally to Morocco. They make the best of the story of how the Djemaa el Fna (Assembly of the Dead in English) got its name: 'heretics' and 'criminals' were tortured here centuries ago, says Lonely Planet. If the hint of a scream was today to escape from the Commission, it would have to fight for attention with the hammers of souq ironmongers, the clashing brass cups of the water-carriers, the squeals of dancing monkeys or the supernatural drone of the snake charmers hypnotizing the guidebook writers. Incidentally, the mouths of many charmed cobras are sewn shut.

Sultana Khaya is a Saharawi, native of Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara. If we know little of her country, there is a reason for our ignorance. If her tale of the dungeon in the much-loved Marrakesh square bewilders, there is a reason for our surprise. If the guidebooks told us nothing of Africa's last colony, there is a reason for their silence. Indeed, how our mental pictures of the world are formed, what is told and untold in their formation, and why such pictures are painted in the first place, are key themes in this thesis. The significance of Sultana's torture, and its invisibility to the tourists all around her, will become clear in later chapters. For now, in order to learn more about her country, let us go back to the afternoon of her capture.

On the day that her right eye was beaten out of her head, 10 May 2007, Sultana, then a student of French, had been attending a peaceful demonstration in favour of Western Sahara's independence at the University of Cadi Ayyad, Marrakesh (there are no universities in occupied Western Sahara, hence why Sultana was studying in Morocco).¹ With her classmates and compatriots, she sat on the floor at the entrance of the halls of residence and made a "v for victory" sign with her fingers. Minutes later, amongst the confusion of police tear gas, Sultana was dragged outside and into the back of the ambulance.²

10 May was not just any date, but the anniversary of a key benchmark in the Saharawi nationalist struggle. On 10 May 1973 Saharawis formed the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO), the national liberation movement struggling for the independence of Western Sahara. Spain, the colonial power, sold Western Sahara to bordering Mauritania and Morocco in 1975. Whilst the POLISARIO defeated Mauritania by 1979, the resource-rich part of Western Sahara remains occupied by a brutal Moroccan regime.

Spain's other ex-colony in Africa also faces a heavy-handed regime. According to one group of activists against the Equatoguinean dictatorship, the story of Equatorial Guinea is one of "tragedies and deaths, too many deaths."³ Personal sacrifice scars the lives of Saharawi and

¹ There is, however, a university in POLISARIO-controlled Western Sahara. The University of Tifariti hosted its first research seminar in March 2016.

² Sultana Khaya, personal interview, Zaragoza, 26 November 2014.

³ Translated from Castilian. All translations from documents are mine, and from Castilian, unless otherwise stated. Luis Ondo Ayang, Bokesa Camó, Anacleto and Liniger-Goumaz, Max, *Nguemismo*:

Equatoguinean anti-regime activists, yet oppression is met with defiance despite the risks. Says Clara Nsegue Eyi, who was imprisoned for her involvement in the *Popular Protest Movement* and leadership of the *Democratic Party for Social Justice in Equatorial Guinea* (PDJS), “[I feel] morally very strong and content.”⁴ Nsegue Eyi opposes the bloody regime of Teodoro Obiang Nguema, who has ruled over his country since 1979 when he assassinated the previous dictator, his uncle Francisco Macías Nguema, who had been elected upon the Spanish exit in 1968.

Nsegue Eyi is a rare woman in Equatorial Guinea. The leadership of the other (estimated 30) opposition parties are male-dominated, and the historically uncommon, but increasingly frequent, political protests have been largely masculine environments.⁵ On the other hand, in occupied Western Sahara, public protests against Moroccan, and before that Spanish, colonialism have generally been attended by more women than men. It is precisely this contrast in the respective genders of Saharawi and Equatoguinean anti-authoritarian organised resistance movements that inspires my PhD research. How do gender norms facilitate or restrain resistance? Why do women dominate public protest in occupied Western Sahara? Do Equatoguinean women have their own (invisibilised) ways to resist the Obiang regime and the Macías and Spanish regimes before that? How does women’s participation in resistance to authoritarian regimes transform constructions of the (feminine) gender? Does such resistance also encourage challenges to oppressive gender norms? How is gender (and gender equality) imagined in Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara and what ideological functions do their imaginations have? How – and Sultana’s story is at the heart of this question as we shall see - do authoritarian regimes and their partners use gender (equality) to consolidate power? All these are sub-questions to my principal research question: what is the relationship between gender and resistance?

This work builds on the thesis of my Masters by Research (MRes).⁶ This focused on the Saharawi state-in-exile, which the POLISARIO declared on 27 February 1976, in the refugee

33 años de auto-golpes y torturas, corrupción nacional e internacional (Switzerland: Editorial Tiempos Próximos, 2002), 8.

⁴ Espacios Europeos, “La activista guineana Clara Nsegue Eyi, Lola, continua todavía en Mongomo (Guinea Ecuatorial),” http://espacioseuropeos.com/la-activista-guineana-clara-nsegue-eyi-lola-continua-todavia-en-mongomo-guinea-ecuatorial/?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter, 2013 (accessed 16 October 2013).

⁵ Human Rights Watch, “Well Oiled: Oil and Human Rights in Equatorial Guinea,” New York, 2009, 11.

⁶ Joanna Allan, “Representations of Gender in Saharawi Nationalist Discourse(s),” (University of Leeds, 2008).

camps of neighbouring Algeria. I move now to the under-researched context of occupied Western Sahara. This PhD project takes the conclusions of my MRes research as a foundation and, at times, as a basis for comparison with the Equatoguinean case. For these reasons, it is worth summarizing its conclusions. In the MRes, I analysed constructions of gender and gender equality in the nationalist discourses of the POLISARIO, and attempted to comment on the extent to which these constructions reflected the lived experiences of Saharawi women in the state-in-exile. I found that the POLISARIO constructed gender equality as intrinsically Saharawi. Saharawi women were ‘always’ ‘liberated’ and ‘empowered,’ until Spanish colonialism corrupted society. POLISARIO discourses claim to have re-created a sexism-free utopia in its state-in-exile.

In the MRes, I argued that POLISARIO used orientalist discourses of Muslim, Arab ‘backward’ attitudes to women strategically, in order to differentiate Saharawi society from such depictions and foster allies in the West. The ideological functions of such constructions of gender equality also helped to recruit Saharawi women to the cause in the early years, to draw a cultural border between the Sahara and ‘misogynist’ Morocco, and added coherence to POLISARIO’s socialist, revolutionary rhetoric. Nevertheless, without wishing to diminish the admirable achievements of the POLISARIO in the field of women’s rights, the importance of maintaining this image of gender equality has also led, I argued, to a lack of engagement with some manifestations of sexism.⁷

My hypothesis in this thesis is that there is a profound, but complicated, relationship between gender and resistance, and that gender is central to understanding resistance and authoritarian oppression. I expect that certain constructions of gender and gender equality are mobilized by the Obiang regime, as an oppressive movement, with specific ideological and political functions in mind. Based on the conclusions of my MRes, I predict that there is not necessarily a proportional relationship between women’s participation in anti-authoritarian resistance and challenges to sexism. However, by moving my focus from the Saharawi state-in-exile to occupied Western Sahara, and comparing the Saharawi case with

⁷ It is worth noting that Elena Fiddian has subsequently written a book with a similar focus and conclusions. One main difference is that Fiddian emphasizes the importance of POLISARIO’s use of orientalism and promotion of gender equality for securing international aid, whilst paying little attention to its role in mobilizing women, to drawing a border with Morocco culturally and adding coherence to the revolutionary discourses. Elena Fiddian-Qasimiyeh, *The Ideal Refugees. Gender, Islam, and the Sahrawi Politics of Survival* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2013); Allan, “Representations of Gender...” See also Joanna Allan, “Imagining Saharawi Women: the Question of Gender in POLISARIO Discourse,” *Journal of North African Studies* 15, no. 2 (2010).

the Equatoguinean one, new insights are possible. Finally, although a superficial look suggests that resistance to Obiang and previously to Spanish colonialism is/was male-dominated, I hypothesise that if we look at forms of resistance outside of the traditional pillars of party politics and street protests, we will find that women have their own ways of challenging the political status quo.

Chapter One explains the theoretical framework that forms the skeleton of the thesis, and the methodology used to collect data. My methodology borrows a range of tools from the social sciences and draws inspiration from feminist (anthropological) philosophies. Whereas, throughout the thesis, I will use flexibly some of postmodernism's deconstructive tools to illuminate how various discourses, particularly nationalism, intersect to create the Saharawi and Equatoguinean models of gender, I will simultaneously employ feminist theories in order to understand the effects of these discourses on women.

Taking into account my feminist interests and concerns, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with its emphasis on how discourse serves to maintain power structures and creates and supports discrimination,⁸ and the fact that it "allies itself with those who suffer political and social injustice" is the most well-equipped analytical tool with which to craft the "data" collected through my field research.⁹ My discourse analysis strategy is influenced by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe who argue that all social practices are meaningful and therefore ripe for analysis.¹⁰ I understand discourse as texts, and by texts I mean not just written material but also social practices, organisations, institutions, historical events and so on, which function to "foster common perceptions and understandings for specific purposes" and to make uneven distribution of power and resources seem natural.¹¹

The concept of hegemony elaborated originally by Antonio Gramsci, where various ideologies or discourses come into conflict until one "wins" and is propagated through society at all levels, is central to this understanding of discourse. The hegemonic ideology or

⁸ Meriel Bloor, and Bloor, Thomas, *The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis: An Introduction* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2007).

⁹ Ruth Wodak, de Cillia, Rudolf, Reisigl, Martin, and Liebhart, Karin, *The Discursive Construction of National Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 8.

¹⁰ Ernesto Laclau, and Mouffe, Chantal, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985).

¹¹ David Howarth, *Discourse: Concepts in the Social Sciences* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), 3. See also Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (Essex: Longman Group Ltd, 1995).

discourse governs people's behaviour, to the point that its ideological character is hidden and appears as common sense or natural. Hegemony is power in camouflage. No physical force is needed to ensure that individuals submit to the ideological system.¹² What a critical discursive approach provides us with are the tools to unravel the constructed character of meanings to show that categories such as 'femininity' are not essential and uniform across time and space. Rather, they are constructed identities that differ according to their discursive context.

Resistance, eloquently defined by Stellan Vinthagen as "acts of defiance or opposition by a subordinate individual or group of individuals against a superior individual or set of individuals,"¹³ has received scant academic attention and is under-theorised.¹⁴ In this thesis, I am more preoccupied with non-violent resistance than the military coup d'états of Equatorial Guinea, or the guerrilla warfare tactics of the POLISARIO in the Sahara. I use a mix of theories to make sense of the concept of resistance with reference to my two case studies. Laclau and Mouffe's neomarxist understanding of hegemony is of great use in understanding how discourses can inspire resistance. I also draw on the Subaltern Studies School, in particular James C. Scott's theory of hidden transcripts, given its usefulness for reading everyday forms of resistance.¹⁵ His work has helped scholars to illustrate the existence of resistance where it might have otherwise remained hidden, and thus written out of history.

I argue in this thesis is that there is a profound, but complicated, relationship between gender and resistance, and that gender is central to understanding resistance and authoritarian oppression. In Chapters Two and Three I explore this relationship in the context of Spanish colonialism in the Sahara and Guinea. The violent dictatorships that followed Equatorial Guinea's independence were preceded by centuries of European colonisation. Although Europe's conquest of Africa did not officially and diplomatically begin

¹² If force were necessary, this would be domination, not hegemony. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, (Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith eds. and translators), London, 1971.

¹³ Stellan Vinthagen, "Political Undergrounds: Can Raging Riots and Everyday Theft Become Politics of Normality?," draft paper available at https://www.academia.edu/658457/Political_Undergrounds_Can_Raging_Riots_and_Everyday_Theft_Become_Politics_of_Normality, 2006, (accessed 23 May 2016), 5.

¹⁴ Susan Seymour, "Resistance," *Anthropological Theory* 6, no. 3 (2006): 305.

¹⁵ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985); James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Michigan: Yale University, 1990).

until 1884-5 with the Berlin conference, as Ruth First points out, “the slaver, the trader, the fortune-hunter and the missionary had all come before the imperial army, each in his turn or all together softening up the continent for conquest.”¹⁶ From 1472, when the Portuguese first landed on the shores of Bioko island (formally Fernando Po) and Annobón island until its liberation from Spain in 1968, Portuguese, Dutch, British and Spanish colonisers ruled over Equatorial Guinea. Whilst the initial Portuguese colonisation was virtual rather than physical, since there were very few Portuguese stationed in the territory, the Dutch exploited Bioko from 1642 to 1648 for trafficking slaves. Later, from the 1820s, Britain used the same island as a base for its challenges to the slave trade. In the 1800s, Spain began to exile Spanish and Cuban political prisoners to Bioko, effectively transforming the island into an open jail. From 1958, the Spanish began to colonise, in earnest, the mainland part of Equatorial Guinea, known as Rio Muni.

As Justo Bolekia Boleka asserts, the Spanish colonisation of Equatorial Guinea was, at least in the first few decades, more “religious and agricultural than commercial and industrial”.¹⁷ Spanish Sahara was quite the opposite. The colony was used as a basis for trade and fisheries, and the Spanish, at least until the fifties and sixties when the full economic potential of the territory became clear and thus Saharawi workers were needed, attempted to leave Saharawis to their own devices to some extent. These differences in the two colonial projects would have important consequences, as we shall see later. However, one important similarity in Spanish Guinea and Spanish Sahara was the arrival of the Spanish Falange party’s Women’s Section, which attempted to impose its own model of fascist femininity on its colonial ‘daughters’.

In Chapters Two and Three, I respectively analyse how Saharawi and Equatoguinean women resisted Spanish fascist models of patriarchy. I also argue that these women’s resistances can be considered as intersectional, that is, challenging various overlapping oppressions at once.¹⁸ Women fought a combination of Saharawi/Equatoguinean and Spanish patriarchal norms, as well as contributing to the nationalist, anti-colonial opposition. Indeed, for the title of this thesis I borrow the nickname given by Equatoguinean Author Maria Nsue Angüe

¹⁶ Ruth First, *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d’État* (London: The Penguin Press, 1970), 28.

¹⁷ Justo Bolekia Boleká, *Aproximación a la historia de Guinea Ecuatorial* (Salamanca: Amarú Ediciones, 2003), 70-71.

¹⁸ K.W. Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: a Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” in *The Politics of Law: A Progressive Critique*, ed. D. Kairys (New York: Pantheon, 1990).

to her fictional character, Nnanga. In the novel *Ekomo*, Nnanga finds herself sandwiched between the misogyny of colonialism and the sexism of her Fang society. In response, she adopts the alias “Dove of Fire,” and draws on this enraged, resistant identity each time she decides to duel with a discriminative norm that blocks her path.¹⁹

Also in Chapters Two and Three, inspired by the Subaltern Studies School of historians whose philosophy is outlined below, I chart women’s contributions to the emerging nationalist struggles. In the case of Equatorial Guinea especially (in Chapter Three), I hope to challenge the invisibilisation of women in the country’s history: Although a superficial look suggests that resistance to Obiang and previously to Spanish colonialism is/was male-dominated, if we look at forms of resistance outside of the traditional pillars of party politics and street protests, we will find that women have their own ways of challenging the political status quo.

In Chapter Four I focus on the period after the Spanish exit and analyse the gender of Moroccan oppression and Saharawi resistance. At this point, some historical background is necessary. In October 1975, Spain contravened the UN call for self-determination of the Saharawi people and carved up Western Sahara between Morocco and Mauritania in exchange for profits from the Sahara’s phosphate mine and access to the Sahara’s rich fisheries. Morocco proceeded to invade the territory, bombing the terrified Saharawi population with napalm and white phosphorus ahead of the ‘Green March’ of 350,000 Moroccan civilians seeking to ‘reclaim’ the Sahara in a bid of fervent patriotism. This jingoism emerged from a desire to recover a ‘Greater Morocco,’ of which Western Sahara was allegedly just one limb severed from the historic sultanate by a colonial dagger. Mauritania, and parts of north-eastern Mali and south-western Algeria, were the other butchered body parts. Hassan II master-minded and orchestrated the nationalist fervour. It was a risky but final chance to breath oxygen into his ill regime, which suffered from chronic social inequalities, constant political challenges and general dissent. The king painted the ‘re-claiming’ of the Sahara as an anti-colonial endeavour and a symbol of the nation’s strength.²⁰ And indeed, it brought a sense of national unity, increasing his popularity and the stability of his position as ruler.

¹⁹ María Nsué Angüe, *Ekomo: Au Coeur de la forêt guinéenne* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995).

²⁰ Tony Hodges, *Western Sahara: The Roots of a Desert War* (Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1983), Chapter 17.

Upon the invasion, those Saharawis that could fled to an abandoned, barren corner in neighbouring Algeria's desert, where the POLISARIO declared a state-in-exile, named the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). The remaining civilian population faced the violent excesses of the invasion, whilst POLISARIO guerrilla fighters, vastly outnumbered, fought against Mauritanian and Moroccan forces for their beloved desert land.²¹

By 1979, the POLISARIO was moving towards a checkmate, forcing Mauritania to retreat (Mauritania has since formerly recognised the SADR) and pushing Morocco into a small corner: the resource-rich 'Useful Triangle' in the north. Yet, with the concealed help of its main allies France, the United States and Saudi Arabia, Morocco continued in its colonial aspirations, driving back POLISARIO fighters by constructing a large barrier commonly known as the "berm" that bisects Western Sahara.²² This berm consists of 2,700km of defensive walls three to four meters high, is patrolled by 130,000 Moroccan soldiers, and is surrounded by minefields for its entire length. It is the longest active military wall in the world, dividing the Saharawis who did not escape during the 1975 invasion (approximately half of the residents included in a 1974 Spanish census) from both the Saharawi territories liberated by the POLISARIO and from those who now live in exile in the refugee camps of the Algerian desert.²³

Currently, the Saharawis remain a people left out in the cold by the international community. The POLISARIO does control a strip of Western Sahara, although it is speckled with landmines. Were the refugees to move there, they would risk bombings from Morocco, thus, whilst some Saharawis spend Spring shepherding their cattle in the oases of the "liberated territories," the POLISARIO is reluctant to resettle the refugee population.

At the time of writing, 47 states recognise the SADR. Sweden came close to being the first Western state to do so in October 2015, but the need to export flat-packed furniture unscrewed the deal. Morocco counter-threatened to cancel the scheduled opening of the first IKEA on its soil and thousands of its citizens protested against the Nordic country's embassy in Marrakesh. IKEA ushered in its first Casablanca customers in March 2016. No state in the world recognises Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.

²¹ Jacob Mundy, "Autonomy & Intifada: New Horizons in Western Saharan Nationalisms," *Review of African Political Economy* 108 (2006).

²² *Ibid.*, 256.

²³ Pablo San Martín, and Allan, Joanna, "The Largest Prison in the World: Landmines, UXOs and the Role of the UN in the Western Sahara," *Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos (GEES)*, Madrid, 2007.

POLISARIO, recognized by the UN as the official representative of the Saharawi population, will accept no less than its legitimate right (endorsed by the UN since 1964 when the Spanish Sahara was added to the list of Non Self-Governing Territories) to a self-determination referendum with the option of independence for its people, but King Mohammed VI of Morocco has declared that, "Morocco, its king and its people, will never accept anything other than autonomy."²⁴ Indeed, Morocco claims that Western Sahara has always been part of its territory, referring to it as its "Southern Provinces." Morocco took this claim to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1975, requesting an Advisory Opinion that would help consolidate its invasion legally. However, Morocco had scarce evidence for its assertions and the ICJ did not issue the opinion that Morocco hoped for. The Court's view on the matter was as follows:

[...] the Court's conclusion is that the materials and information presented to it do not establish any tie of territorial sovereignty between the territory of Western Sahara and the Kingdom of Morocco or the Mauritanian entity. Thus the Court has not found legal ties of such a nature as might affect the application of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) in the decolonization of Western Sahara and, in particular, of the principle of self-determination through the free and genuine expression of the will of the peoples of the Territory.²⁵

Nevertheless, Morocco continues to ignore the ICJ, the UN Charter and numerous UN Security Council and UN General Assembly Resolutions, which have all stressed the non-existence of pre-colonial sovereignty links between the Saharawi tribes and the Moroccan Sultanate and the current international status of the Western Sahara as a Non Self-Governing Territory.

Today, pro-Moroccan positions on the conflict still focus on the historic existence of a Greater Morocco, in which the peoples that today call themselves Saharawis pledged allegiance to historic Moroccan rulers. To comprehend this position, one should bear in mind that notions of nationhood in the Islamic world prior to colonialism were different to those of Europe, and indeed to today's hegemonic understandings of nationalism. In pre-

²⁴ Union of Saharawi Writers and Journalists (UPES), "Saharawi Government Firmly Condemns the "Obstinate" Position of the Moroccan King," *Union of Saharawi Writers and Journalists (UPES)*, 2007.

²⁵ International Court of Justice, "Western Sahara: Advisory Opinion of 16 October 1975," (1975).

colonial Morocco, the sultanate drew sovereignty from tribal allegiance to it, and was built on the foundation of a religious bond of Islam. A key task of the sultanate was to collect taxes from allied tribes.²⁶ Some nomadic *qabā'el* whose ancestors today call themselves Saharawi did indeed form temporary allegiances with the Moroccan sultanate, in exchange for goods or assistance against enemies. However Tony Hodges asserts that such pledges “were both exceedingly rare and of very little and short-lived practical significance” and “[n]o attempt was ever made by even the strongest of Moroccan rulers to administer or tax these tribes...”²⁷ Contrary to this, Antonio Pazzanita finds that some Tekna *qabā'el*, including the Ait Oussa (who today reside in southern Morocco but who identify as Saharawi), did indeed pay taxes to the Moroccan sultan at one time.²⁸

Both Morocco and Mauritania cited cultural and ethnic ties with the people of Western Sahara when attempting to justify their 1975 invasion. With regards to the Moroccan claims, philologist Harry Norris argues that there were such ties between the Saharawi *qabā'el* that ventured as far north as the Draa river in southern Morocco and the berber tribes that lived there. Nevertheless, he also reasons that Mauritania’s claim of cultural and ethnic ties between its citizens and Saharawis were far more convincing than Morocco’s.²⁹ Hodges eloquently manages to recognise these links whilst simultaneously delineating an ethnic and cultural distinctiveness for Saharawis:

...as men of the desert, great camel-herding nomads and speakers of the Hassaniya dialect of Arabic, the Saharawis did, in a broad cultural sense, regard themselves as a very different people from the predominantly Tashelhit-speaking sedentary or seminomadic Berbers to their immediate north, in the Noun, the Bani and the Anti-Atlas. The Saharawis were, of course, only a branch of the *beidan*, the Hassaniya-speaking nomads of mixed Arab, Berber and black African ancestry who lived in the vast desert expanses between the Noun and the valleys of the Senegal and the bend of the Niger; but they had a certain distinctiveness, and the *Ahel-es-Sahel*, the

²⁶ Tara Flynn Deubel, "Between Homeland and Exile: Poetry, Memory, and Identity in Sahrawi Communities" (University of Arizona, 2010), 79.

²⁷ Hodges, *Western Sahara: The Roots of a Desert War*, 26.

²⁸ Pazzanita cited in Deubel, "Between Homeland and Exile: Poetry, Memory, and Identity in Sahrawi Communities," 80.

²⁹ Harry T. Norris, *The Arab Conquest of Western Sahara* (Beirut: Longman and Librairie du Liban, 1986), 135-39.

people of the Atlantic littoral, an especially arid zone whose *qabael* had never been subservient to either the sultans of Morocco or Mauritanian emirs to the south.³⁰

Those today in favour of a Moroccan Sahara argue that Saharawi nationalism is the daughter of Algerian ideological mechanisms and funding. Algeria, of course, would benefit from an allied, independent Western Sahara, which could loan it a route to the Atlantic and counter-balance the power of its regional enemy Morocco. Indeed, many Moroccans see the conflict as a power struggle with an Algerian rival, and thus the Green March lives on in the nation's memory, serving as a rallying point for Moroccan patriotism.³¹ Algeria has provided arms and exile for the POLISARIO. However, the leading scholars of Saharawi nationalism (San Martín, Mundy and Hodges) find that its genesis was organic and Saharawi-led, and decry the exaggeration of the Algerian role. As will become clear in later chapters, my own research likewise finds little role for Algeria when delineating the factors that push Saharawis towards nationalist activism and sentiment.

Supporters of the Moroccan position draw on *realpolitik* to justify their position. The loss of the Sahara could destabilise the Moroccan regime, and thereby the entire Magreb region. Furthermore, a Saharawi state would be a failed one – Saharawis have no real experience of rule. Yet Saharawis have attempted to discount such arguments not only in rhetoric but also in practice: the refugee camps are extremely unusual in that they have never been administered by aid agents, but always by refugees themselves. The latter have, over the last four decades, shown their ability to run a state-in-exile in harsh climatic conditions, with very little financial resources. Likewise, the 2010 Gdeim Izik protest camp (discussed in Chapter Four) was, said one camp inhabitant,

an experience through which we showed the world that we could rule ourselves. Saharawis can govern. We can lead a country. Because just us, without the POLISARIO, without educated people who practice politics in government, we created a small country. It was disciplined; everyone had his or her rights. We had our own police in the camp. We had medical centres. It was a small country. It was magnificent.³²

³⁰ Hodges, *Western Sahara: The Roots of a Desert War*, 149-50.

³¹ Deubel, "Between Homeland and Exile: Poetry, Memory, and Identity in Sahrawi Communities," 87.

³² Hamza Lakhel. Personal Interview. El Aaiún. 21 August 2014.

At the time of writing, the diplomatic drain blockage continues. An ineffective UN has been unwilling to impose a solution on the ground.³³ It is paralysed first and foremost by Morocco's closest friend France, but also by Spain, which is threatened by Morocco's ability to open the gates of 'fortress Europe' as well as tensions over Ceuta and Melilla,³⁴ the US, which works with Morocco in its 'war on terror' and, to a lesser extent, a handful of African states that are offered 'development assistance' for supporting Morocco's position on Western Sahara.³⁵ Morocco has taken advantage of the stagnant waters of UN diplomacy in order to alter the make-up of the occupied zone politically, economically and demographically, as well as illegally exploiting the territory's immense natural resources – Western Sahara is left beached and barnacled as its treasures are stolen.

Saharawi nationalists persist in their struggle against the colonial pirates. Their approach today is largely non-violent, but the response is not. Morocco smothers protesters with brass-knuckled gloves and hundreds have faced torture, death and forced disappearance. In Chapter Four, I look at how Morocco takes advantage of gender norms when punishing Saharawi nationalists. I also attempt to explore why women dominate the frontline of the anti-occupation movement, that is to say, how gender norms make public protest a feminine activity, and how orientalist, Western constructions of Muslim, Arab women and men impact upon the shape of resistance in occupied Western Sahara.³⁶

In Chapter Five I move to focus on state constructions of gender and gender equality, the ideological purposes of these, and how they can be harnessed to quell resistance. The principal focus of this chapter is the case of the Obiang regime. However, I also refer to my previous work on POLISARIO's ideological employment of gendered nationalist discourse, so that the ways strategic constructions of 'gender equality' can serve both authoritarian and resistance movements become clearer through contrast.

³³ For more on the role of the UN in the conflict see Andreu Sola-Martin, *Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution in Western Sahara* (Ceredigion: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006a); Andreu Sola-Martin, "Lessons from MINURSO: A Contribution to New Thinking on Peacekeeping," *International Peacekeeping Journal* 13, no. 3 (2006b); San Martín, 2007.

³⁴ These are Spain's North African possessions, which Morocco claims.

³⁵ US Embassy to Morocco, "Wikileaks Cable: Moroccan Relations with Sub-Saharan African Countries - A Survey," Rabat, 3 June 2008.

³⁶ I realise "Western" is a contested concept, but it is useful to describe, in general terms, the political and economic power divide between North America, Europe and others on the one hand, and Africa, Latin American and parts of Asia on the other.

Whilst the POLISARIO has arguably made efforts to further gender equality to match the external ‘progressive’ image that it relies on, the same cannot be said of Obiang. Indeed, in this chapter I apply the concept of *genderwashing* to the actions of Obiang and his partners. Genderwashing is an idea developed from the better-known environmentalist concept of *greenwashing*. This is the process by which green marketing is used deceptively to promote the perception that a company’s policies, products or aims are environmentally friendly. Take Nestle’s “ecobottle,” for example. Nestle gives its plastic bottle a green-sounding name to attract environmentally-conscientious consumers. However, their bottled-water industry damages the environment globally through watersheds, depriving indigenous communities’ access to drinking water sources, and plastic to landfill. I argue that Obiang (and to some extent Mohammed VI, as we will see in Chapter Four) and his Western corporate and state partners use so-called “gender equality” in much the same way: they abuse women’s rights and yet simultaneously convince us that they are promoting women’s empowerment in order to attract investment and increase legitimacy abroad.

It is important to state here that the Equatoguinean economy has, since 1995, relied on oil. By 2005, the country had become one of sub-Saharan Africa’s leading energy exporters and was selling more oil per capita than Saudi Arabia.³⁷ Over the last few years though, falling oil prices globally have accompanied a steady decline in Equatorial Guinea’s oil and natural gas production. In 2013, as the country’s oil and gas fields matured resulting in negative production, Equatorial Guinea’s GDP began to fall, and has continued to do so year on year. This has resulted in further cuts to public spending, which was anyway meagre thanks to huge levels of corruption.³⁸ In Chapter Five, I link Obiang’s genderwashing to the oil industry. Also in this chapter, since I argue that constructions of gender equality and this oil economy are intimately linked, I also look briefly at the impact of oil on women’s socioeconomic realities.

In Chapter Six we stay in Equatorial Guinea, and focus on the post-colonial dictatorial regimes of Macías Nguema and Obiang Nguema. The two are regularly described by international critics as amongst the worst human rights abusers in Africa.³⁹ Their form of rule

³⁷ Leif Wenar, *Blood Oil: Tyranny, Resources, and the Rules that Run the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 68

³⁸ International Monetary Fund (IMF), “Republic of Equatorial Guinea: IMF Country Report,” No.15/260, (Washington, D.C., September 2015).

³⁹ Jon Lunn, “Equatorial Guinea: a Quick Introduction,” ed. UK Parliament (London: House of Commons Library, 2011), 2.

is known by their opponents as *ngueismo*. The reign of terror of Macías, which persisted from the country's independence until 1979, oversaw the collapse of the country's economy, the attempted genocide of the Bubi people and the executions of thousands of Macías' opponents. A third of the Equatoguinean population fled to exile. In her play *Antigone*, a modern version of the Greek classic, Trinidad Morgades Besari models her tyrannical President on Macías:

PRESIDENT: What does God matter to me? They offended me. To death with the wellbeing of the people! What they want is power. I have power now, they won't have it. Me, only me, I'm the blessed one, I'm the chosen one, I'm the great one, I'm the father. I will conserve power like my life. They will take my life if they want power. They have to obey me. I am authorised to have power.

ANTIGONE: The people have given you power to do good for the people.⁴⁰

Macias' nephew staged a coup and took over power in 1979. For a short while, he was the fools gold of the many Equatoguineans that hoped for a better future. Feminist Trifonia Melibea Obono Ntutumu describes the mentality of Equatoguinean women upon the 1979 Obiang coup d'état:

At first, the 1979 coup d'état awoke a spectacular interest and a lot of hope for many women; it was thought that both political repression and sexist discrimination had come to an end. But the wait became eternal; the majority of traditional customs that had for years restricted the individual and civil rights of women are still being conserved. The system is maintaining its hold.⁴¹

Obiang has proved little better than his uncle. Whilst theoretically, the country is a multi-party democracy, elections have generally been considered opaque and Obiang, along with his close family and friends, maintains almost complete control over the political and economic life of the country, funded by the sales of oil to foreign multinationals.⁴²

⁴⁰ Trinidad Morgades Besari, "Antígona," *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 8, no. 1 (2004).

⁴¹ Trifonia Melibea Obono Ntutumu, "Acerca de la Mujer Guineana. Un Largo Camino por Recorrer," ASODEGUE, <http://www.asodegue.org/marzo0809.htm>, 8 March 2009 (accessed 23 May 2016).

⁴² For more see Human Rights Watch, "Well Oiled..." 2009.

To borrow Clifford Geertz expression for pithily describing Saudi Arabia, Equatorial Guinea is nowadays “a family business disguised as a state,” or a state of family *caudillismo*, in which suspected political opponents are subject to arbitrary arrest and torture.⁴³ In Chapter Six, allowing comparisons with the Moroccan regime, we explore how the two dictatorships of Equatorial Guinea have made use of certain hegemonic constructions of gender to maintain power. Again making comparisons with the Saharawi case, we look at how women have resisted the regimes that oppress them, and if and how this resistance overlaps with feminist resistance.

Sultana Khaya works, today, from Boujdour, occupied Western Sahara. She is President of the Saharawi League for Natural Resources and Human Rights. Since I began this PhD in October 2013, her young cousin 17 year old Elfayda Khaya has also had her eye damaged by Moroccan police. She was protesting against Texas-based energy company, Kosmos, at the time. In December 2014 Kosmos, along with Edinburgh-based Cairn Energy, became the first companies to drill for oil in Western Sahara’s waters, joining a host of British corporations that invest in the Moroccan occupation. Also since I began this PhD, British Gas has entered Equatorial Guinea, becoming yet another sponsor of Obiang’s terrifying regime.

It is hard to exaggerate the oppression that exists in Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara. Both countries have made the NGO Freedom House’s latest top ten “worst of the worst” list of the least free places in the world.⁴⁴ Whilst there are scant studies of Western Sahara and Equatorial Guinea published in English, we cannot deny that Britain, and as consumers of plundered produce British citizens, hold a stake in the fates of the peoples of both countries. I hope therefore that this thesis can make a small contribution to lifting the invisibility cloak that shrouds the oppression of Saharawis and Equatoguineans in my country. In the next chapter, I outline the methodology used to collect stories like Sultana’s, and the theoretical and analytical frameworks I use to make sense of them.

⁴³ Clifford Geertz, “What is a State if it is not Sovereign?,” *Politics in Complicated Places* 4, no. 5 (2004): 579.

⁴⁴ Freedom House, “Freedom in the World: Anxious Dictators, Wavering Democracies,” Washington, 2016.

Chapter One. "Imported ideas?:" counter hegemony, resistance, gender and a feminist-informed methodology

Trinidad Mba is an Equatoguinean feminist. She feels frustrated at her compatriots' accusation that her feminism is merely an amalgam of "imported ideas," a type of white neo-colonialism of the mind that is not welcome in Equatorial Guinea.⁴⁵ Lehdia Dafa faces similar charges from Saharawi society and indeed from the Spanish solidarity movement. Although Lehdia is herself Saharawi, some European women have told her that her complaints concerning women's position in Saharawi society are born of her own "lack of understanding of Saharawi culture."⁴⁶ Feminists elsewhere in Africa note the same problem,⁴⁷ and indeed, in her review of the literature on African feminism, Peggy Gabo Ntseane finds a central theme is "questioning features of tradition without rejecting the African culture."⁴⁸ In a context of on-going battles against colonialism, neo-colonialism and racism, Minna Salami notes that one of the key issues for African feminisms is the unpopularity of criticising "African traditions." The challenge, she argues, for African feminisms is to "enable tradition to adapt to its times so that rather than stagnate, it can enrich society." In the mean time, though, she laments that African feminists face charges of imposing Western culture.⁴⁹ For M. Bahati Kuumba, the problem goes further. She finds that in some postcolonial African societies, challenges to Western cultural hegemony have resulted in a re-assertion of practices that curb women's rights.⁵⁰

How can theory be used to 'undo' the accusation of "imported ideas"? We can start by understanding gender as a constructed and dynamic concept, as plasticine shaped by hegemonic struggles, rather than as a fossil of 'national culture' that must be conserved, by women, at all costs. Indeed, the ideas of hegemony, and of gender as a social construct, are

⁴⁵ Trinidad Mba (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 16 June 2015.

⁴⁶ Lehdia Dafa, personal interview, Madrid, 28 November 2014. Dafa's compatriot Aminetou Errer Bouzeid makes similar complaints about academics who deny what Bouzeid sees as the difficult reality of women in the camps. Aminetou Errer Bouzeid, "Sexismo en la sociedad saharai actual: Un acercamiento a la sociedad saharai desde el trato a sus mujeres. Propuesta de intervención" (University of Zaragoza, 2015), 16.

⁴⁷ See for example Dzodzi Tsikata, "Women's Organizing in Ghana Since the 1990s: From Individual Organizations to Three Coalitions," *Development* 52, no.2 (2009): 187.

⁴⁸ "Culturally Sensitive Transformational Learning: Incorporating the Afrocentric Paradigm and African Feminism." *Adult Education Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (2011): 315.

⁴⁹ Minna Salami, "7 Key Issues in African Feminist Thought," *Ms Afropolitan*, <http://www.msafropolitan.com/2012/08/7-key-issues-in-african-feminist-thought.html>, 16 August 2012 (accessed 23 May 2016).

⁵⁰ "African Women, Resistance Cultures and Cultural Resistances," *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 68, (2006): 191.

central to my thesis. In this chapter, I outline the theories that help to untangle the role of gender in mobilising resistance and my methodological approach.

First I explain my understanding of resistance, drawing on Laclau and Mouffe's development of Gramsci's theory of hegemony. I also use insights from Scott's ideas on everyday acts of resistance and lessons from the Subaltern Studies school in order to develop a theory of why and how resistance arises. Secondly, I outline my understanding of the term 'gender' and defend my use of the category 'woman.' Finally, I give an overview of the analytical methods and data collection tools employed.

1.1 Hegemony, domination and resistance

Mouffe and Laclau found in Gramsci a form of non-reductionist Marxism that offered theoretical tools for understanding the new social movements that were emerging in the sixties and seventies.⁵¹ I use Laclau and Mouffe-inspired theories of hegemony, combined with ideas borrowed from Subaltern Studies, to map the diverse world of Saharawi and Equatoguinean resistance activities, which span from the subtle, 'everyday' acts and hidden transcripts, to nonviolent but highly organised resistance.

As Laclau has pointed out, deconstruction must be combined with a theory of hegemony.⁵² If deconstruction reveals the lack of essential meaning or truth in any social structure, hegemony provides us with the decision taken with respect to the assignment of meaning and truth when placed in such decentred terrain.⁵³ Certain discourses, when hegemonic, can

⁵¹ Chantal Mouffe, and Laclau, Ernesto, interview by Ian Angus, published by Illinois State Education Website, <http://english.illinoisstate.edu/strickland/495/laclau2.html>, 1998 (accessed 18 January 2014).

⁵² Deconstruction, a concept developed by Jacques Derrida, is (in short) a critique of how Western knowledge is formed. Derrida argued that all Western thought is based on the idea of a *Centre*: there is always an origin, a fixed point, an essence or a god, which guarantees all meaning. He criticised *logocentrism*, the idea that truth is the voice, the word or the expression of an essential, absolute cause or origin. The issue with centres, according to Derrida, is that they push the *Other* to the sides. The longing for a centre results in the formulation of binary opposites (masculine/feminine, civilised Spanish coloniser/barbaric native) in which one term is central, natural and privileged whilst the other is marginal and repressed. The binary system attempts to "freeze the play" of meaning by fixing one term as the centre. Derrida's deconstruction is a tactic of *decentring*. It temporarily subverts the hierarchy and shows that the marginalised term could just as well be the centre.

⁵³ Simon Critchley, and Marchart, Oliver, "Introduction," in *Laclau: A Critical Reader*, ed. Simon Critchley, and Marchart, Oliver (Oxford: Routledge, 2004); Ernesto Laclau, "Deconstruction, Pragmatism, Hegemony," in *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Routledge, 1996).

advance patriarchy, racism and capitalism. Yet the work of a hegemonic discourse is never complete. It is unstable, and permanently haunted by the possibility of resistance from external, outsider discourses. Resistance for feminist, anti-racist and working class movements therefore depends on the deployment of counterhegemonic discourses.

Gramsci uses the concept of hegemony to describe how power relations work. With hegemony, Gramsci explores the interplay between consent and coercion, and, just as Foucault did later, asserts that there are intersecting forces of power at play between unequal parties.⁵⁴ For Gramsci, where force has to be used, domination exists. In this sense, Morocco holds domination, not hegemony, over Saharawis. This concept of hegemony – where various ideologies or discourses come into conflict until one ‘wins’ and is propagated through society at all levels - is central to my understanding of how gender discourses work. The hegemonic ideology or discourse governs people’s behaviour, to the point that its ideological character is hidden and appears as common sense or natural, and no physical force is needed to ensure that individuals submit to the ideological system. On the other hand, if force were needed, this would constitute domination.⁵⁵ Laclau and Mouffe elaborated this Gramscian concept of hegemony in a way that allows its application not only to class, but also to the understanding of racism, gender regimes, colonialism and other structures of power.

Laclau and Mouffe do not envisage resistance to subordination or power as something inevitable and inherently human. Subordination, for them, is “when an agent is subject to the decisions of another” and a “combination of different positions between social agents.”⁵⁶ Oppression, on the other hand, is when relations of subordination are transformed into an antagonism. This, according to Laclau and Mouffe, happens when an external discourse interrupts the discourse of subordination. For example, feminist discourse has allowed many women to view their lot vis-à-vis men as one of oppression, whereas others who do not access feminist discourses may see their position of subordination as natural. Once an external discourse (such as a feminist theory) facilitates the conceptualisation of subordination as oppression (such as the oppression of women by

⁵⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 1984).

⁵⁵ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* ed. Quentin Hoare, and Nowell Smith, Geoffrey, trans. Quentin Hoare, and Nowell Smith, Geoffrey (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

⁵⁶ Ernesto Laclau, and Mouffe, Chantal, *Hegemonía y estrategia socialista: hacía una radicalización de la democracia* (Madrid: España Editores, 1987), 172.

patriarchal organisation of social life), a social antagonism exists around which a social movement can organise. Laclau and Mouffe's work therefore helps us understand how counter-hegemonic discourses can foster the emergence of social movements.

1.2 Everyday resistance and subaltern studies

*If the owners and managers of farms endeavour to loyally comply with contracts so that the manual labourers have no rational reason to complain, then we shall have a very important base of colonial prosperity. We hope that the use of the word "rational" is noted, since we are well aware that the complaints of workers are usually unfounded, and are not therefore worth resolving.*⁵⁷

Were, as the Claretian monks quoted here imply, the complaints of black manual labourers working Spanish plantations on the island of Fernando Po merely unfounded and irrational rumblings, or could another meaning be implied? Are these the signs of resistance to colonialism that have hitherto been invisible in histories of Equatorial Guinea? Scott points out that until quite recently, academics have ignored much of the active political life of subordinate groups because it takes place at a level that is rarely recognised as political.⁵⁸ Scott takes Foucault's understanding of power as something which is dispersed and present everywhere, and relations of power as unstable and reversible as far as they are unequal, and looks at more localised, 'everyday' power interactions.⁵⁹ Scott's "everyday forms of peasant resistance" refer to the, at first sight, innocuous acts undertaken by peasants such as foot-dragging, arson, sabotage, slander and feigned ignorance. Such actions often avoid direct confrontation with the authority and also make use of the implicit understandings and networks amongst peasants. According to Scott, these actions are significant in that they require little or no organisation and yet, through them, peasants are more likely to achieve their goals than by way of more dramatic, mass mobilisations.

Scott asserts that whilst subaltern peoples act in public in ways that seem to endorse and embrace their own subordination (he calls this the *public transcript*), once they are

⁵⁷ Banapá Mission of Claretians, "El problema de los braceros," *La revista de la Guinea Española*, 1903, 4.

⁵⁸ Scott, *Domination...*

⁵⁹ Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure...*; Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self as Practice of Freedom," in *The Final Foucault*, ed. J. Bernauer, and Rasmussen, D. (Boston: MIT Press, 1988); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1991).

“offstage” and out of the sight of the dominators, the former will mock, badmouth and ridicule their oppressors and the culture that places them as inferior (the *hidden transcript*). Yet dominant peoples also have parts in this play. They too, when in public, must act out their role of oppressor, even if they are grateful to let the mask slip once they step out of the spotlight. Taking the colonial male as an example, as Ann Laura Stoler highlights, the colonial gaze looked not just on the colonised but also on the European colonisers themselves. Colonial men’s vigilance with regards to acting according to racial and sexual norms in public was key to the colonial project.⁶⁰ To use Scott’s terminology, the colonialists were required to maintain a *public transcript* that emphasised and continued dominance along raced and gendered lines. Meanwhile, the colonised, in public, could resist this transcript by parodying it to the point of covert mocking, or acting in accordance with it in the hope of gaining the ear of the colonialist with respect to certain grievances. In Foucault’s terms, the colonised were actors in a “strange theatre” in which they dressed up according to the rules of the public transcript in order “to be paid attention to” on the “stage of power.”⁶¹

Scott has influenced, and in turn been inspired by, another school of thought that guides this thesis: Subaltern Studies. If we look at conventional histories of the colonial world, of slavery or of women’s historical condition, we might be led to believe that subordinate peoples accepted their lot like tamed animals. Works of the Subaltern Studies project, on the other hand, initially adopted a “history from below ethos” and attempted to unearth ‘lost’ voices of resistance from history.⁶² This is not to say that all authors of the Subaltern Studies group claim to convey the ‘true’ voice of the subaltern. Rather, they attempt to show that

⁶⁰ Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

⁶¹ Michel Foucault, “The Life of Infamous Men,” in *Michel Foucault: Power, Truth, Strategy*, ed. Meaghan Morris, and Patton, Paul (Sydney: Feral Publications, 1979), 88. This idea has interesting parallels with Deniz Kandiyoti’s thoughts on how women bargain with, rather than oppose, patriarchy (Deniz Kandiyoti, “Islam and Patriarchy: A Comparative Perspective,” in *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, ed. Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Gilmartin, Christine, and Lydenberg, Robin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). It also overlaps with Cindi Katz’s theories on how subalterns sometimes show resilience in the face of, or rework and bargain with, the discourses that oppress them rather than mounting outright, public resistance: Cindi Katz, *Growing Up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children’s Everyday Lives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

⁶² David Arnold, “Rebellious Hillmen: The Gudem-Rampa Risings 1839-1924,” in *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. Ranajit Guha (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Partha Chatterjee, “Agrarian Relations and Communalism in Bengal, 1926-1935,” in *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* ed. Ranajit Guha (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Ranajit Guha, ed. *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Ranajit Guha, ed. *Subaltern Studies VI: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). The Group borrowed the term “subaltern” from Gramsci, whose work has been one of the inspirations of their writings.

elite historiographies are not the only version of events and that such elites have made invisible the roles and resistance of subaltern peoples.

Subaltern Studies, and the works of Scott, help us to bring to light acts of resistance that might otherwise be overlooked. These lessons are immediately useful for the study of Equatoguinean resistance under Spanish colonialism. However, in the case of Western Sahara, where hundreds of activists openly protest despite awareness of the high risk of repercussions, Scott's assertion that "the greater the disparity in power between dominant and subordinate and the more arbitrarily it is exercised, the more the public transcript of subordinates will take on a stereotyped, ritualistic cast"⁶³ does not ring true. He argues that public resistance (petitions, strikes, demonstrations and so on) are the preserve of western liberal democracies, whilst communities that are unable to publically protest safely use what Scott calls *infrapolitics* (hidden transcripts, everyday acts of resistance and dissident subcultures).⁶⁴ Scott argues that we will only see a rebellion when "the pressure [of indignation] rises or when there are weaknesses in the "retaining wall" holding it back."⁶⁵ This explanation works for many cases of subordinated peoples, so why does it not fully account for Western Sahara? Although *infrapolitics* are used by Saharawis, there is also ever greater public resistance despite continued violent oppression. Scott might argue that the level of indignation at the Saharawi's oppression has tumbled the balance and therefore the hidden transcript has become public, however the *strategic need to perform resistance to an audience* (and thereby further disseminate a counterhegemonic discourse) is also important in the Saharawi case.

A civilian-led, non-violent resistance movement has complemented POLISARIO's diplomatic push for independence since the late eighties. This movement focuses on delegitimising Morocco and its allies in front of external *onlookers*, as well as on recruiting international supporters. Therefore, the movement's actions *must* be public, no matter how tough the repercussions. Scott's works point a necessary spotlight on acts of resistance that may otherwise be missed. However, we should also consider the subordinates' perceived need to consciously perform resistance to an external audience, or indeed to an internal one who could be inspired to support the resistance. I therefore modify his theory. I suggest that the

⁶³ Scott, *Domination...* 3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 197.

hidden transcript storms the public stage in the presence of one or more of the following factors:

- 1) following Scott, mounting indignation on the part of the oppressed peoples;
- 2) again following Scott, a reduction in the practice of discipline and punishment by the dominant; and
- 3) when performing resistance before an (internal or external) audience could bring strategic benefits

This third point highlights rational thinking and strategy: the oppressed take a *decision* to make resistance open and public. Here, studies of *contentious politics*, as developed by Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, can help us to understand why and when such strategic decisions are made. By contentious politics, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly mean:

episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants.⁶⁶

Contentious politics cannot form the backbone of my theoretical framework, since the theory does not easily encapsulate the everyday acts of resistance that are so key to understanding the Equatoguinean and Saharawi cases, nor resistance against axes of power other than governments, such as patriarchy or racism. Furthermore, as Karen Stanbridge has pointed out, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly have paid limited attention to the role of culture and ideology, concepts which are fundamental to understanding how gender affects resistance. Nevertheless, within the school of contentious politics, the idea of *political opportunities and constraints/threats* is helpful.⁶⁷ Political opportunity structure is the framework in which people decide whether or not to mobilise. It “refers to features of regimes and institutions (e.g., splits in the ruling class) that facilitate or inhibit a political actor’s collective action and to changes in those features. It emphatically includes not only opportunities but also

⁶⁶ Doug McAdam, Tarrow, Sidney, and Tilly, Charles, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5.

⁶⁷ Karen Stanbridge, “Review of Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, Paradigm Publishers, 2006,” *Canadian Journal of Sociology Online* November-December (2006).

threats...”⁶⁸ Political opportunities and threats help us to understand the ebb and flow of a resistance movement, or, in the Saharawi case, why activists moved from using Scott’s “weapons of the weak” to mounting outright intifada.

Returning to Scott, from a feminist point of view, his rejection of Marxian false consciousness and Gramscian and neomarxist theories of hegemony is unhelpful.⁶⁹ In Britain, for example, many women accept (sometimes enthusiastically and other times with resentment) their own subordination, since they view it as entirely natural, ‘common sense,’ inevitable and determined by biology. Scott’s view that subordinate peoples see their condition as natural and inevitable only in the most “draconian” conditions of total domination does not, therefore, seem easily applicable to the condition of women in patriarchal societies.⁷⁰ Gramscian understandings of hegemony are far more helpful in understanding why some subordinated peoples accept their inferior position. Further, it is Laclau and Mouffe’s theory of hegemony that allows an understanding of the power of identity and discourse in fuelling resistance. The Saharawi’s sense of collective identity as Saharawi and their position in Morocco as the inferior half of the Moroccan/Saharawi binary, is what gives them the power to formulate strategies for nonviolent action. Although Scott rejects hegemony, his ideas become far more applicable if combined with Laclau and Mouffe’s version of this concept, which I attempt to illustrate below.

1.3 Integrating hegemony with theories of everyday resistance and hidden transcripts

*...the terms the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms. [...] [The native] knows he is not an animal; and it is precisely at the moment he realizes his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapon with which he will secure his victory.*⁷¹

⁶⁸ Charles Tilly, and Tarrow, Sidney, *Contentious Politics* (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), 49.

⁶⁹ Both of these theories share similarities with Steven Lukes’s “third dimension of power” and Pierre Bourdieu’s “habitus” in their concern for how subalterns are persuaded that their subordination is natural. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, Second ed. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). I have elected to use Laclau and Mouffe’s theory over these other similar ones since Laclau and Mouffe’s shows clearly the potential for resistance created through the deployment of counter-hegemonic discourse and their logic of equivalence is interesting to cases of multiple oppression and therefore multiple resistance (as is the case of Saharawi and Equatoguinean women).

⁷⁰ Scott, *Domination...* 70-107.

⁷¹ Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Classics, 2001), 32-33.

Franz Fanon suggests here that it is only when the “native” rejects the colonialist hegemonic discourse that defines him as a barbaric animal, and instead begins to identify as a human subject, that he will resist. There must have been something that triggers the “native’s” change in identification. This “something” was a counterhegemonic discourse. Scott indicates that whenever subordinate subjects are treated unjustly but are “unable, except at considerable cost, to respond in kind, they can be expected to show signs of aggressive behaviour as soon as the opportunity presents itself.”⁷² To my reading, Scott sees a sense of injustice as innate to subordinated peoples. Therefore, his theory does not easily account for the moment of realisation indicated by Fanon. However, if we combine Scott’s ideas with Laclau and Mouffe’s theory of hegemony, their applicability is wider.

I propose that Scott’s “hidden transcript” and “everyday acts of resistance” be read as counterhegemonic discourses. Such practices arise thanks to the agent’s positioning with a counterhegemonic identity (‘rape survivor,’ ‘undervalued worker’ or ‘exploited slave’ rather than ‘drunk slut,’ ‘insolent serf’ or ‘racially inferior servant’), which is what allows for the ‘sense of injustice’ and the consequent act of resistance. If a subordinated person has no access to counterhegemonic discourses and the alternative identifications that the latter makes possible, she will not resist. However, if she is, for whatever reason, submerged, one day, in another community with very different cultural norms, the hegemonic discourses that before seemed ‘natural’ might suddenly be put into question. Whilst some scholars see everyday resistance and hidden transcripts as “less-than-revolutionary” acts of resistance,⁷³ I see them as key to revolution. They are the channels and networks where ideas travel amongst subalterns, ideas that challenge the status quo and imagine a new world.

In the same vein, Lehdia and Trinidad, with whom I opened this chapter, both celebrate increased access to the internet as a positive development for the women and girls of their countries. This is not because they presume that women suffer less discrimination elsewhere. Trinidad and Lehdia do not want to “import white ideas.” Rather, they believe that the knowledge, brought by the internet, of different gender norms helps to defy the strength of hegemonic gender norms in their own communities. Seeing that elements of ‘womanhood’ are practiced in entirely different ways (not necessarily better, just different)

⁷² Scott, *Domination...*, 213.

⁷³ Uday Chandra, “Rethinking Subaltern Resistance,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 45, no. 4 (2015): 566.

elsewhere illustrates that certain repressive gender norms are not 'biological' imperatives, 'natural' or inevitable.

On the other hand, Scott makes an important observation that highlights the limited scope of Laclau and Mouffe's work in explaining why people resist. Scott notes that if domination is viewed as inevitable and irreversible, resistance will never be practiced openly.⁷⁴ Indeed, Scott's point leads us to observe something which Laclau and Mouffe do not address in their work: why in many cases, despite engagement with counterhegemonic discourses, people do not resist.

Whilst the presence of counterhegemonic discourses opens up the *possibility* of resistance amongst subaltern peoples, this does not mean that it will happen. In Equatorial Guinea, for instance, whilst many people may privately concur with counterhegemonic discourses that deny Obiang's claim that he is the rightful, sacred ruler of Equatorial Guinea and father to his beloved people, they do not resist. This may be due to apathy or to a lack of a political engagement culture (a lack which may, of course, have been engineered by the regime). People may see the overthrow of Obiang as so hopeless and unlikely that resistance is not worth risking sanctions for (arguably a type of *domination* in Gramscian terms). In this case, open resistance is not prevented through hegemony, through discursive power over the subaltern's hearts and minds (submission), but through actual force and/or fear of force (oppression). Where there is domination, people may practice disguised resistance as Scott shows, but they may also submit to the regime through 'everyday acts of compliance.' They may bargain with it or seek to rework aspects of it from the inside, or they may even actively collaborate with it in the hope of reward. Of course, an individual may comply, collaborate, resist or show apathy at different times.⁷⁵ Indeed, the 'colonised' and the 'colonisers' is rarely a simple dichotomy. This brings me to raise a significant point on how I use Scott in this thesis. Scott's theories were developed to apply to the cases of peasants. I use his work more widely, to apply to colonised peoples, and it is worth bearing in mind that such colonised peoples were not homogenous: some enjoyed certain advantages over others.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁷⁵ For more on such "grey areas" between support and resistance of a dictatorship, see Claudio Hernández Burgos, *Franquismo a ras de suelo. Zonas grises, apoyos sociales y actitudes durante la dictadura (1936-1976)* (Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada, 2013). Others that look at the role of co-optation and fear in ensuring complicity with a dictatorship include Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*; Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action: Parts 1-3* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973); Tilly, *Contentious Politics*.

Key texts in resistance studies have attempted to outline the factors upon which an individual's collaboration with the regime depend. Lukes cites Charles Tilly's checklist of reasons why subordinate peoples do not rebel:⁷⁶

1. The premise is incorrect: subordinates are actually rebelling continuously, but in covert ways.
2. Subordinates actually get something in return for their subordination, something that is sufficient to make them acquiesce most of the time.
3. Through the pursuit of other valued ends such as esteem or identity, subordinates become implicated in systems that exploit or oppress them. (In some versions, no. 3 becomes identical to no. 2)
4. As a result of mystification, repression, or the sheer unavailability of alternative ideological frames, subordinates remain unaware of their true interests.
5. Force and inertia hold subordinates in place.
6. Resistance and rebellion are costly; most subordinates lack the necessary means.
7. All of the above.⁷⁷

As we can see, point 1 summarises Scott's argument, point 5 nods to Gramsci's notion of domination and point 4 hints at Laclau and Mouffe's theories (this is also the point that Lukes himself develops). The remaining points serve to explain why subordinates may not resist even if they disbelieve hegemonic discourses. Gene Sharp, too, has looked at such factors, which I summarise as follows:

- 1) habit
- 2) fear of sanctions
- 3) Moral obligation to do so (the individual has absorbed the customs, ways and beliefs of the society. He may also believe that obeying the ruler is for the common good, or that the ruler has superhuman qualities)
- 4) Self-interest (economic benefits, prestige)
- 5) Psychological identification with the ruler

⁷⁶ Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow are the founders of the "contentious politics" school of thought. Although their work is a source of inspiration for many scholars of resistance studies, it is not central to my theoretical framework since, according to my reading of their work, Tilly and Tarrow focus little on the construction of ideologies and identities, which, as will be clear, are a central interest of mine. Tilly, *Contentious Politics*.

⁷⁷ Tilly cited in Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 10.

6) Indifference

7) Absence of self-confidence among subjects⁷⁸

Sharp and Lukes show why some subordinates do not resist even in the absence of total domination and the presence of counterhegemonic discourses. Individuals (or even collectives) are capable of acting rationally, making choices regarding participating in resistance or collaborating with a regime depending on their own perceived interests.⁷⁹ So far we have missed one important factor, however. Saharawi singer Aziza Brahim tells us,

...hope can be a trap, but if you haven't hope you can't grow, because you fall into pessimism. Me or my people can't allow that. I want to project this sense of hope as a strategy of resistance.⁸⁰

Brahim, by raising the concept of "hope" as the firewood of her resistance, highlights a key, but often overlooked, aspect in explaining why resistance to authoritarian regimes is mobilised or quelled: emotion. Feelings of pride, fear, hope, shame, anger, love and so on are key to explaining why individuals may opt for open resistance despite oppression, or, on the contrary, may decide to comply with a regime despite their private rejection of hegemonic discourse. Indeed, in recent years, scholars of resistance movements have begun to incorporate the study of emotions into their work, although it remains a largely marginalised road of inquiry.⁸¹

How can we sew these diverse ideas on resistance together and make a useful analytical quilt? I propose we think of all these elements – everyday resistance, (counter)hegemonic discourses, political opportunities and emotion – as an ecosystem, where each factor impacts upon the other. Just as a plant cannot grow without sun and water, and the ladybird would die without its plant to feed on, there would be no hidden transcript if it were not for

⁷⁸ Sharp, *...Nonviolent Action...* See also Hardy Merriman, "Theory and Dynamics of Nonviolent Action," in *Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance in the Middle East*, ed. Maria J. Stephan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

⁷⁹ For more on rationalist analyses and the rational actor approach see McAdam, *Dynamics of Contention*, 21. or M. Bahati Kuumba, *Gender and Social Movements* (Walnut Creek and Oxford Altamira Press, 2001), 55.

⁸⁰ Aziza Brahim, interview by Steven Johnson, available at <http://www.musicomh.com/features/interviews/qa-aziza-brahim>, 2014 (accessed 19 February 2014).

⁸¹ Gavin Brown, and Pickerill, Jenny, "Space for Emotion in the Space of Activism," *Emotion, Space and Society* 2 (2009); Rosa Medina-Doménech, "Sentir la historia. Propuestas para una agenda de investigación feminista en la historia de las emociones," *Arenal* 19, no. 1 (2012).

a counterhegemonic discourse that challenged subaltern oppression as ‘the natural way of things,’ no public transcript if there was no hope that change was possible, and/or an external event (a political opportunity) that made certain risks worthwhile.

Finally, it is my thesis that how gender and gender equality are constructed is a key determinant in a resistance movement’s ability to mobilise participants against authoritarian regimes.⁸² It is one more component of the ecosystem, necessary for its energy flows and cycles. While related subjects such as gender and nationalism,⁸³ gender and conflict,⁸⁴

⁸² Of course, other lines of power such as race, ethnicity and tribe intersect with gender.

⁸³ Nadjé Al-Ali, and Pratt, Nicola, “Between Nationalism and Women’s Rights: the Kurdish Women’s Movement in Iraq,” *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 4, no. 3 (2011); Jill Benderly, “Rape, Feminism and Nationalism in the War in Yugoslav Successor States,” in *Feminist Nationalism*, ed. Lois A. West (London: Routledge, 1997); Cherifa Bouatta, “Feminine Militancy: Moujahidates During and After the Civil War,” in *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, ed. V. Moghadam (London: Zed Books, 1994); Joyce M. Chadya, “Mother Politics: Anti-colonial Nationalism and the Women Question in Africa,” *Journal of Women’s History* 15, no. 3 (2003); Doria Cherifati-Merabtine, “Algeria at a Crossroads: National Liberation, Islamization and Women,” in *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, ed. V. Moghadam (London: Zed Books, 1994); Jessica Greenburg, “Nationalism, Masculinity and Multicultural Citizenship,” *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 3 (2006); Elissa Helms, “Gendered Transformations of State Power: Masculinity, International Intervention and the Bosnian Police,” *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 3 (2006); Andrea Khalil, “Tunisia’s Women: Partners in Revolution,” *The Journal of North African Studies* (2014); Zengie A. Mangaliso, “South Africa: Gender and Nation-Building in South Africa,” in *Feminist Nationalism*, ed. Lois A. West (London: Routledge, 1997); Alan McPherson, “Rioting for Dignity: Masculinity, National Identity and anti-US Resistance in Panama,” *Gender and History* 19, no. 2 (2007); V. Moghadam, “Introduction and Overview,” in *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, ed. V. Moghadam (London: Zed Books, 1994); Valentine N. Moghadam, “Nationalist Agendas and Women’s Rights,” in *Feminist Nationalism*, ed. Lois A. West (London: Routledge, 1997); Pauline L. Rankin, “Gender and Nation Branding in ‘The True North Strong and Free,’” *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 8, no. 4 (2012); Melanie Richter-Montpetit, “Empire, Desire and Violence: A Queer Transnational Feminist Reading of the Prisoner ‘Abuse’ in Abu Ghraib and the Question of ‘Gender Equality,’” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 9, no. 1 (2007); Rosemary Sayigh, “Gendering the ‘Nationalist Subject’: Palestinian Camp Women’s Life Stories,” in *Subaltern Studies X: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. Gauthi Bhadra, Prakash, Gyan, and Tharu, Susie (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999); Cécile Stephanie Stehrenberger, “Folklore, Nation and Gender in a Colonial Encounter: Los coros y danzas de la Sección Femenina de la Falange en Guinea Ecuatorial,” *Afro-Hispanic Review* 28, no. 2 (2009); Norma Stoltz Chinchilla, “Central America: Nationalism, Feminism and Revolution in Central America,” in *Feminist Nationalism*, ed. Lois A. West (London: Routledge, 1997); Nayereh Tohidi, “Modernity, Islamization and Women in Iran,” in *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies* (London: Zed Books, 1994); Lois A. West, “Introduction: Feminism Constructs Nationalism,” in *Feminist Nationalism*, ed. Lois A. West (London: Routledge, 1997); Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage Publications, 1997).

⁸⁴ Nadjé Al-Ali, and Pratt, Nicola, *What Kind of Liberation? Women and the Occupation in Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Gary Barker, and Ricardo, C., “Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence,” Washington, 2005; Elin and Melander Bjarnegård, Erik, “Disentangling Gender, Peace and Democratization: the Negative Effects of Militarized Masculinity,” *Journal of Gender Studies* 20, no. 2 (2011); Cynthia Cockburn, “The Continuum of Violence,” in *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, ed. Wenona Giles, and Hyndman, Jennifer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004);

gender and anti-colonial discourses,⁸⁵ the role of women in revolutionary movements⁸⁶ and the sustainability of gender roles post revolution⁸⁷ have been well explored, there has been little emphasis on the role of constructions of gender as factors in provoking the emergence of, and sustaining, resistance or indeed collaboration with regimes. Although constructions of gender have been used to explain the recruitment of men to the military⁸⁸ or to fascism⁸⁹ for example, a focus on how gender, and the constructed concept of gender equality, is used more widely to recruit and sustain, or indeed prevent the recruitment, of women and men to the (non-violent) ranks of resistance is lacking. It is my intention to begin to address this here with the Saharawi and Equatoguinean case studies.

1.4 Definitions

Gender and 'gender equality' are contested concepts, whilst the use of the category 'woman' is questioned even by feminist theorists. Defining what 'gender equality,' or indeed the related concept of 'women's empowerment,' mean is problematic. Issues such as the equality versus difference debate within feminism and the problematisation of the

Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives* (London: Pandora Press, 1988); Laura J. Shepherd, "Veiled References: Constructions of Gender in the Bush Administration Discourse on the Attacks on Afghanistan Post-9/11," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8, no. 1 (2006).

⁸⁵ Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A Most Masculine State: Gender, Politics, and Religion in Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Cherifati-Merabtine, "Algeria at a Crossroads: National Liberation, Islamization and Women"; Suad Joseph, ed. *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000); Suad Joseph, "Women and Politics in the Middle East," in *Women and Politics in the Middle East*, ed. Suad Joseph, and Slymovics, Susan (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Suad Joseph, and Slymovics, Susan, ed. *Women and Power in the Middle East* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2001); Tohidi, "Modernity, Islamization and Women in Iran."

⁸⁶ Bahati Kuumba, *Gender and Social Movements*; Bouatta, "Feminine Militancy..."; Samia Errazzouki, "Working-Class Women Revolt: Gendered Political Economy in Morocco," *The Journal of North African Studies* 19, no. 2 (2014); Vilma Espín, de los Santos, Adela, and Ferrer, Yolanda, *Women in Cuba: The making of a revolution within the revolution. From Santiago de Cuba and the Rebel Army, to the birth of the Federation of Cuban Women* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 2012); Karen Kampwirth, *Women and Guerrilla Movements: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002); Julie M. Peteet, *Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Julie M. Peteet, "Women and the Palestinian Movement: No Going Back?," in *Women and Power in the Middle East*, ed. Suad Joseph, and Slymovics, Susan (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

⁸⁷ Nadje Al-Ali, "Gendering the Arab Spring," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5 (2012); Bouatta, "Feminine Militancy..."; Chadya, "Mother Politics..."; Reem Mohamed, "Women and the Arab Spring: Tough Choices to Make," <http://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/reem-mohamed/women-and-arab-spring-tough-choices-to-make>, 25 October 2013 (accessed 26 May 2016).

⁸⁸ Maya Eichler, *Militarizing Men: Gender, Conscriptio, and War in Post-Soviet Russia* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁸⁹ Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

notion of (eurocentric) 'equality' are salient here.⁹⁰ In this thesis, then, I understand both concepts in a similar way and in a very wide sense – as the disruption of discourses that facilitate the subordination of those who are identified as women, or, put more simply, as challenges to sexism.

Neither Saharawi women nor Equatoguinean women are homogenous groups and, likewise, the views of Saharawis and Equatoguineans that call themselves feminists are far from unified. In order to transmit the multiplicity of feminist voices in the two cases, I find it more useful to draw on a flexible mix of feminisms rather than situating myself squarely within one feminist 'band.' The boundaries of such feminist groupings are blurred in any case.

Whilst postmodern feminism helps me to deconstruct gender and therefore gender hierarchies, and cultural feminism is useful in illustrating how Saharawi and Equatoguinean women revalue 'the feminine' as a form of resistance, so-called Third World feminisms and black feminism, which have criticised the ethnocentricity and racism of white feminism, are also key inspirations.⁹¹ I follow Ranjoo Seodu Herr in recognising that anti-imperialism is a core value of Third World feminist activism and that for many feminists or indeed feminist nationalists the achievement of self-determination is more urgent than overcoming internal gender discrimination. Yet I simultaneously heed Seodu Herr's observation that Third World feminists also face a fight against what she calls "patriarchal nationalists" that attempt to authorise the continued subjugation of women by framing struggles against gender discrimination as "inauthentic."⁹² Indeed, one of the challenges of my thesis is to simultaneously ally myself with women who have very different (and often conflicting) views and priorities.

⁹⁰ For equality versus difference debate see Jill Vickers, "Bringing Nations In: Some Methodological and Conceptual Issues in Connecting Feminisms with Nationhood and Nationalisms," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8, no. 1 (2006), 101. For Eurocentric equality see Samuel Huntington, "A Clash of Civilisations?," *Foreign Affairs* Summer (1993).

⁹¹ bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (London: Pluto, 1982); Chandra Mohanty Talpade, Russo, Ann, and Torres, Lourdes, ed. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

⁹² Ranjoo Seodu Herr, "Reclaiming Third World Feminism: or Why Transnational Feminism Needs Third World Feminism," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 12, no. 1 (2014): 8.

I use patriarchy, (or, as some Zimbabwean feminists have nicknamed it, “Patrick”),⁹³ as a tool of analysis. With the decline of grand, structural social theories and spread of postmodern ideas in an era of neoliberalism, the use of patriarchy as a conceptual tool has been questioned. Butler has rightly criticised universalist and transcultural ideas of patriarchy.⁹⁴ However, patriarchy is, if used as a name for a collective of historical and context-specific discourses and resulting practices that ensure male domination, useful for feminist activism. Patriarchy is to many feminist activists what colonialism and capitalism are to the mobilisation of race and class consciousness respectively. It is a conceptual tool that allows us to *politicise* gender norms. Indeed, if unpopular amongst postmodernists, patriarchy remains a lens of analysis still widely used by many Middle Eastern and African researchers with an interest in feminism and especially by African activists.⁹⁵

I understand patriarchy not as an essential structure or monolithic entity that has propped up sexist societies in the same way throughout all of history, but as a discursive web of unequal power relations that changes shape from community to community, ensures heteronormativity and feminine submission, and, as discourses develop and adjust, morphs its form across time. It is always linked to other systems of power such as racism, ableism and colonialism, is culturally specific and is in a constant state of instability: where a feminist or anti-racist intervention might chip away at one manifestation of patriarchy, another discourse on gender (for example, an orientalist one) may obtain hegemony and thereby create new patriarchal ways of living and seeing the world. We will see in Chapter Three how the Spanish colonial intrusion further entrenched some Fang and Bubi patriarchal norms, as well as introducing new sexist practices. These morph to form a *postcolonial patriarchy* that constitutes a steeplechase for today’s Equatoguinean feminists. Suad Joseph and Susan Slyomovics describe a similar state of affairs in the Middle East and North Africa,

⁹³ See Nana Darkoa, “Standing on African Feminist Land: Personal Reflections on the 4th African Feminist Forum,” AWID, <http://www.forum.awid.org/forum16/posts/standing-african-feminist-land>, 2016 (accessed 8 May 2016).

⁹⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 2006), 5-6 and 47-48.

⁹⁵ I found that Equatoguinean feminists, in particular, made great use of the concept when explaining the gender dynamics of their societies to me in interviews. Also see for example Al-Rasheed, *A Most Masculine State..*; Salami, “7 Key Issues...”; Sisonke Msimang, “African Feminisms II: Reflections on Politics Made Personal,” *Agenda* 17, no. 54 (2002); Valentine Moghadam, *From Patriarchy to Empowerment* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007); Kola Eke, “Responses to Patriarchy in African Women’s Poetry,” *Matatu*, no. 41 (2013); Anindita Ghosh (ed.), *Behind the Veil: Resistance, Women and the Everyday in Colonial South Asia*, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

where “contemporary patriarchies are products of the intersection between the colonial and indigenous domains of state and political processes.”⁹⁶

I should clarify that, throughout this thesis, I use the term ‘feminist’ to describe women and men that identify themselves as such. However, when it comes to actions or practices, I use the term more broadly, to describe acts that challenge sexism, even if the agent does not necessarily identify herself as feminist. For example, in Spanish colonial times, women may not have held any ‘feminist consciousness,’ yet some of their everyday acts challenged sexism. I do not call such women feminists, but do indeed describe their acts as feminist.

“Saharawi” also needs some definition, and I follow Alice Wilson in recognising the controversial nature of the term.⁹⁷ Of course, ‘Saharawi’ national identity, like all national identities, is an imagined, constructed and historically dependent one. Its emergence in opposition to Spanish and Moroccan aggressive nationalisms has been exceptionally well documented by political scientist Pablo San Martín.⁹⁸ From an anthropological point of view, ethnic Saharawis derive from not only Western Sahara but also south Morocco, Mauritania, southwest Algeria and sometimes further along the Sahara caravan routes. Indeed, as mentioned above, Morocco’s vision of a “Greater Morocco,” which would incorporate not only all of Western Sahara, but also Mauritania, western Algeria and north-western Mali, is partly based on claims to cultural and ethnic ties with the peoples of these Saharan countries.⁹⁹ Some who today identify as Saharawi derive from enslaved sub-Saharan Africans. Morocco’s attempted provincialisation of Saharawi culture, in which Saharawi clothes, language and way-of-life is subsumed into a patchwork of identities that make up the wider Moroccan national identity, further complicates matters:¹⁰⁰ some second generation Moroccan settler colonists now refer to themselves, at least to foreign visitors, as “Saharawi” on the basis that they were born in Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara.

⁹⁶ Suad Joseph, and Slyomovics, Susan, “Introduction,” in *Women and Power in the Middle East*, ed. Suad Joseph, and Slyomovics, Susan (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 10.

⁹⁷ Alice Wilson, “Elecciones Transterritoriales: los Votantes Saharauis en los Campamentos de Refugiados y Más Allá,” in *Sahara Occidental: 40 Años Después*, Isaías Barreñada and Raquel Ojeda (eds.), (Madrid: Catarata, 2016), 69, footnote 4.

⁹⁸ Pablo San Martín, *Western Sahara: The Refugee Nation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010).

⁹⁹ John Mercer, *Spanish Sahara* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1976), 231.

¹⁰⁰ See Deubel, “Between Homeland and Exile: Poetry, Memory, and Identity in Sahrawi Communities,” 139-42.

Not all Saharawis are nationalists. Tara Deubel's work showcases the plethora of Saharawi political opinions, from those that are staunchly pro-Moroccan (such as some members of the Ait Oussa tribe in Assa, who fought for Morocco's independence from France and today identify simultaneously as members of the Ait Oussa tribe, as Saharawis and as Moroccans), those who have little interest in politics and do not identify as explicitly pro-POLISARIO or pro-Moroccan, those who privately hold pro-independence, nationalist views but express pro-Moroccan views in public in order to avoid trouble with police, and those who are actively and publicly pro-independence.¹⁰¹ It is also worth noting that not all nationalists are pro-POLISARIO, and that there are (as in any political movement) factions and disagreements within the POLISARIO itself, sometimes forged along tribal lines. Whilst POLISARIO, in an attempt to collapse inequalities and unite the Saharawi population, banned the mention of tribal affiliation at the outset of its nationalist project,¹⁰² Alice Wilson has shown how the social structures of, and tensions between, the *qabīla* have not only resurged, but are also today essential to the ability of the SADR to govern the refugee-citizens.¹⁰³ Likewise, Sebastien Boulay has shed light on the situation of the *ralliés*. These are ethnic Saharawis that are officially presented by Morocco as 'escapees' of the refugee camps in Algeria. In return for upholding this image of themselves as 'escapees,' swearing allegiance to Mohammed VI and recognising Morocco's right to the 'southern provinces,' the *ralliés* are offered economic benefits such as housing, civil service jobs and/or a minimum monthly allowance of around 180 euros, and some are awarded high profile political positions.¹⁰⁴

Recognising, therefore, that some Saharawis are in favour of integration with Morocco, it is however impossible to know precisely what proportion of Saharawis worldwide support the independence cause, at least without the realisation of the self-determination referendum. Pondering this question, Matthew Porges has tentatively concluded, "virtually all available evidence suggests that an overwhelming majority of Sahrawis living in the occupied territory

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² San Martín, *Western Sahara...* See also Isidoros for a nuanced reading of the 'banning' of tribes Konstantina Isidoros, "The Silencing of Unifying Tribes: The Colonial Construction of Tribe and its 'Extraordinary Leap' to Nascent Nation-State Formation in Western Sahara," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* (2015).

¹⁰³ Alice Wilson, *Sovereignty in Exile: A Saharan Liberation Movement Governs* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

¹⁰⁴ Sébastien Boulay, "'Returnees' and Political Poetry in Western Sahara: Defamation, Deterrance and Mobilisation on the Web and Mobile Phones," *Journal of North African Studies* 21, no. 4 (2016): 668.

favor independence from Morocco.”¹⁰⁵ Likewise, San Martín estimates that, at least in the camps, he would not be able to find a single Saharawi who would not vote for independence. Expanding his view to Saharawis globally, he states “[i]f [a self-determination referendum on independence] ever takes place, no one is in any doubt about the result of a just and fair consultation.”¹⁰⁶ Whilst acknowledging that some Saharawis are pro-Moroccan, my ten years’ or so experience of researching and working on the Western Sahara issue leads me to the same tentative conclusion as Porges and San Martín. In this thesis, I use “Saharawi” to describe Saharawi nationalists, whether they are from Western Sahara, the camps, south Morocco or elsewhere.

As is already evident, I refer to the Moroccan-administered part of Western Sahara as occupied rather than as disputed. This is because “occupied” is the legally correct way to describe the territory.¹⁰⁷ Stephen Zunes has highlighted how France and the USA have gradually altered mainstream understanding of Western Sahara as from “occupied” to “disputed.”¹⁰⁸ Morocco seeks to accelerate this progressive change. For example, in 2016 it expelled MINURSO peacekeepers in retaliation at Ban Ki Moon describing the territory as “occupied.”¹⁰⁹ The gravest issue with such a change in language is the legal implications. A “disputed” territory is not subject to all the clauses of Geneva Convention treaties and protocols that an “occupied” territory is. For example, as Zunes says, in a “disputed” Western Sahara it would not be illegal for Morocco to move settlers into the territory, or for Morocco to sell the territory’s natural resources.¹¹⁰ The recent (21 December 2016) case of the POLISARIO versus the European Union (EU) in the Court of Justice of the EU found that EU-Morocco trade agreements that include Western Sahara are illegal, thus underlining once again that Western Sahara is legally “occupied,” rather than “disputed.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Matthew Porges, and Leuprecht, Christian, "The Puzzle of Nonviolence in Western Sahara," *Democracy and Security* 12, no. 2 (2016): 66.

¹⁰⁶ San Martín, *Western Sahara...* 10.

¹⁰⁷ Eugene Kontorovich, "Economic Dealings with Occupied Territories," *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* 53, no. 14-46 (2015): 611-12.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Zunes, "Western Sahara, Resources, and International Accountability," *Global Change, Peace and Security* 27, no. 3 (2015): 290.

¹⁰⁹ Middle East Eye, "Ban Ki-Moon Demands Western Sahara Mission Be Fully Restored," <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/ban-ki-moon-demands-western-sahara-mission-be-fully-restored-1606934184>, 19 April 2016.

¹¹⁰ Zunes, "Western Sahara, Resources, and International Accountability," 290.

¹¹¹ Court of Justice of the European Union, "Appeal - Agreement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco concerning liberalisation measures on agricultural and fishery products," in *Case C-104/16 P*, ed. Court of Justice of the European Union (curia.europa.eu/juris: InfoCuria, 21 December 2016).

1.5 Understanding gender

Ifi Amadiume's research on the Igbo peoples of Nigeria suggests that prior to the colonial intrusion, sex and gender were divorced from one another: a 'biological' female could be a husband or son.¹¹² I follow Amadiume in her assertion that gender has no 'natural, biological' underpinning, but I am also inspired by Butler, who argues that biology itself is gendered. In her seminal work *Gender Trouble*, Butler builds on Foucault, who argues that sex is produced through a regulatory economy of sexuality (where "sexuality" is a historically specific organisation of power and discourse),¹¹³ to assert that as much as gender is culturally constructed, so is sex.¹¹⁴ The binary masculine/feminine frameworks of gender are "regulatory fictions that consolidate and naturalize the convergent power regimes of masculine and heterosexist oppression."¹¹⁵ Dual understandings of gender, which are applied to biological sex in order to gender it, are constructed fictions that are often used to practice misogyny and homophobia and to enforce compulsory heterosexuality.¹¹⁶ Following Butler's understanding of gender and sex, and Monique Wittig's rejection of justifying the man/woman binary on the basis of biological sex, my starting assumption is that I am not objectively a biological 'woman.'¹¹⁷ However, acting as if the biological category of "woman" objectively existed, I, for the most part, play out my femininity according to what UK society's discourses direct white, able-bodied femininity to be.

Inspired by feminist, queer and postcolonial theories of intersectionality, I understand gender as a fluxing category that is influenced by, and dependent on, other classification systems such as race, sexuality, age and ability.¹¹⁸ In this thesis, nationality and ethnicity are especially important in considering the construction of Saharawi and Equatoguinean notions of gender respectively. Identity is never singular and unified, but fluid, constantly changing and constituted by its context. Similarly, an individual may experience oppression due to

¹¹² Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* (London: Zed Books, 1987).

¹¹³ Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure...*

¹¹⁴ Butler, *Gender Trouble...*; Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure...*

¹¹⁵ Butler, *Gender Trouble...*, 44.

¹¹⁶ Anne Fausto-Sterling's work on the damaging and often violent effects of enforcing a binary understanding of biological sex are also important. Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough," *The Sciences* 20, no. 4 (1992).

¹¹⁷ Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992).

¹¹⁸ Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991); A. Styhre, & Eriksson-Zetterquist, U., "Thinking the Multiple in Gender and Diversity Studies: Examining the Concept of Intersectionality," *Gender in Management* 23, no. 8 (2008).

several aspects of her identity. For example, racist and sexist discourses may intersect to oppress a black woman, and indeed racism and sexism are mutually constitutive systems.¹¹⁹ In brief, an intersectional approach to gender requires an understanding of the category's multiple and fluid nature, and a capacity to think in many different dimensions simultaneously.¹²⁰ Femininity is raced, classed and constituted by infinite aspects of identity.

In this thesis, I outline how gender is imagined in the Saharawi and Equatoguinean contexts, and how the participation of (those who identify as) women in resistance activities impacts on, and is shaped by, constructions of gender. By drawing on two comparable national case studies, I am better able to establish the relationship between gender and resistance. Of course, assuming a trans-historical and cross-cultural natural unity between the women of Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara would be problematic given the distinct factors that contribute to constructions of gender in the two countries. However, that is not to say that patterns can't be found between the oppression and resistance of women in different contexts. Throughout this thesis, I attempt to illustrate where continuities exist and why, without losing sight of the particularity of each case.

The category of woman is a constructed one, but those who identify, or are identified by others, as women and/or as feminine suffer consequences because of this identity due to the patriarchal society in which we live. However, recognising that 'woman' is not an essential, objective fact, does not mean that we need to move away from using the identity of 'woman' as a rallying point around which to organise feminist activism.¹²¹ I use the category 'woman' throughout my thesis despite my awareness that it is a constructed one.

1.6 Analytical framework

I use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to interpret data collected through my fieldwork. CDA, which is rooted in theories of hegemony and the relationship between discourse and power, marries well with a theoretical framework informed by feminism and subaltern studies.¹²²

¹¹⁹ K.W. Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," in *The Public Nature of Private Violence*, ed. M. and Mykitiuk Albertson Fineman, R (New York: Routledge, 1994).

¹²⁰ Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection..."; Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins..."; Styhre, "Thinking the Multiple..."

¹²¹ By "activism" I mean extraordinary action to bring about social, cultural and/or political change.

¹²² Gramsci, *Selections...*

The concern for the social and the political intentions of CDA,¹²³ as described below by Van Dijk, make it particularly attractive for a feminist project:

...critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit sociopolitical stance: they spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aims, both within their discipline and within society at large. Although not in each stage of theory formation and analysis, their work is admittedly and ultimately political. Their hope, if occasionally illusory, is change through critical understanding. Their perspective, if possible, that of those who suffer most from dominance and inequality. Their critical targets are the power elites that enact, sustain, legitimate, condone or ignore social inequality and injustice. That is, one of the criteria of their work is solidarity with those who need it most.¹²⁴

The principle unit of analysis for CDA is text. Following Laclau and Mouffe, I understand 'text' to be not just written texts and speeches and the contexts in which they are produced, but rather all social practices, in that discourses as discursive practices are synonymous with social relations.¹²⁵ All actions and social practices are understood here as text and as being meaningful, and their meanings are understood as a product of historically specific systems of rules. With reference to my PhD project, this means that the social practice of bridewealth is a 'text' just as much as a speech by President Obiang denouncing homosexuality.

CDA involves establishing the context of the text under analysis, including why it was produced, by whom and - crucially - in what sociopolitical, cultural and historical setting. Several other factors should be taken under account according to the genre and the format of the text. For example, with a Equatoguinean state news report, grammar features and rhetorical and literary features may be important. Such reports, as well as written transcripts of interviews with activists (see below), can be coded thematically. Once texts are broken down in this way, I interpret them using the feminist framework outlined above.

¹²³ Bloor, *The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*; Teun A. Van Dijk, "Contextual Knowledge Management in Discourse Production, a CDA Perspective," in *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis: Theory, Method and Interdisciplinarity* ed. Ruth Wodak, and Chilton, Paul (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005); Ruth Wodak, and Chilton, Paul, ed. *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis: Theory, Method and Interdisciplinarity* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005).

¹²⁴ Teun A. Van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse and Society* 4, no. 2 (1993): 252.

¹²⁵ Howarth, *Discourse..*; Laclau, *Hegemony...*

1.7 Data collection methods

In the field, I drew flexibly on qualitative social research methods, and took inspiration from the philosophies behind feminist anthropology, afroepistemology and afrocentric feminist epistemology. Lessons from these fields concerning reflexivity, the questioning of the “objective,” and the value of rich details can be applied to the methods of social sciences, cultural studies and history. Also relevant is feminist anthropology’s favouring of a focus on women, power relations and sexual asymmetry, and its philosophy that the primary purpose of research should be to counter women’s oppression.¹²⁶ Below, I outline these principles in more detail and defend the first person perspective used throughout the thesis. I then give an overview of the practical details of my fieldwork.

Feminist afroepistemology demands that knowledge be produced to liberate, empower and foster resistance.¹²⁷ Research for research’s sake is not acceptable – it must have an emancipatory aim. Knowledge production must take into account an ethics of care. Emotion is central to the research process: if an interviewee feels that a researcher *cares* about her plight and feels *compassion*, she will share her experiences more openly.¹²⁸

Feminists urge researchers to incorporate their own subjective experiences of oppression into their research projects.¹²⁹ Indeed, subjectivity is favoured over attempts to be ‘objective’, which are, in any case, viewed as futile and the fruit of patriarchy.¹³⁰ Self-conscious reflections on one’s experiences in the field, and on how the fieldworker makes sense of the data, are encouraged in afrocentric feminist research (and in feminist research more generally), as is the use of the first person perspective and authorial voice, whilst the language of science (‘objective’ and involving ‘evidence’) is viewed as oppressive.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Stanley R. Barrett, *Anthropology: A Student's Guide to Theory and Method* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

¹²⁷ Gabo Ntseane, “Culturally Sensitive...,” 313; Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought...*; Ama Mazama, “The Afrocentric Paradigm: Contours and Definitions.” *Journal of Black Studies* 31, no. 4 (2001).

¹²⁸ Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought...*

¹²⁹ Barrett, *Anthropology...*

¹³⁰ Martyn Hammersley, and Atkinson, Paul, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1983); Elvi Whittaker, “Decolonizing Knowledge: Towards a Feminist Ethic and Methodology,” in *The India-Canada Relationship*, ed. J.S. Grewal, and Johnston, Hugh (New Delhi: Sage, 1994).

¹³¹ Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research for the Social Sciences* (Boston: Pearson Educational Inc., 2007); Hammersley, *Ethnography...*; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, (New York: Routledge, 1990); Thomas Hylland Erikson, and Nielsen, Finn Sivert, *A History of Anthropology* (London: Pluto Press, 2001); P. Golde, *Women in the Field:*

The use of the 'I' also highlights the epistemological impossibility of interpreting another's culture or representing another's voice. Therefore, a reflexive approach at least "make[s] it clear whose viewpoint is being represented."¹³² In light of the feminist rejection that a researcher can be neutral, or that research can ever be embarked upon for a politically neutral reason, the use of the first person perspective and personal biography is used in order to give the reader a greater understanding of why certain questions were investigated and why others were left out.¹³³

A reflexive approach on the undertaking of fieldwork also makes the reader aware of the researcher/research subject dichotomy (indeed, the feminist researcher should ideally do her utmost to eliminate this dichotomy, turning subjects into agents who construct knowledge in partnership with the researcher,¹³⁴ although the feasibility of such an ideal has been questioned)¹³⁵ and therefore illuminates how power relations may have skewed the data.¹³⁶ Therefore, I take a self-conscious approach whilst describing my methodology, not to be self-indulgent, but in order to shed light on how my conclusions were reached. As Geertz points out, ethnography "is above all a rendering of the actual [...]they are the describer's descriptions, not those of the described."¹³⁷ When deconstructing text, the author chooses which bricks to remove and what meanings to apply to the undone text. At the same time, through this process, the writer constructs something new of her own design, which can never be completely free of political motives.¹³⁸

One's subject position in the field is important and must be considered when analysing data. As Bourdieu reminds us, the researcher's

...particular relation to the object of his study contains the makings of a theoretical distortion inasmuch as his situation as an observer, excluded from the real play of

Anthropological Experiences (London: University of California Press, 1970); Sarah Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography* (London: Sage Publications, 2001).

¹³² Patricia Zavella, "Feminist Insider Dilemmas: Constructing Identity with Chicana Informants," in *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, ed. Diane Wolf (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), 142.

¹³³ Berg, *Qualitative Research...*

¹³⁴ Whittaker, "Decolonizing Knowledge..."

¹³⁵ Barrett, *Anthropology...*

¹³⁶ Haraway, *Simians...* 111; Diane L. Wolf, "Situating Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork," in *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, ed. Diane L. Wolf (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996).

¹³⁷ *Anthropology...* 42. See also Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis...* 128.

¹³⁸ See also Sara Mills, *Michel Foucault* (London: Routledge, 2003).

social activities by the fact that he has no place (except by choice or by way of a game) in the system observed and has no need to make a place for himself there...¹³⁹

I am external to Equatoguinean and Saharawi society, which effects how I interpret them. Indeed, several researchers have detailed how their identities in the field have affected how they develop knowledge.¹⁴⁰ The privileges (my whiteness, middle class position, cisgender, holding of EU citizenship and so on) that my subject-position afford me cannot be ignored. They affect the way I interpret data and the way my subjects of study view me, and may also make me blind to prejudices and biases in my own writing. An Edward Said quotation is illuminative:

...for a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disdaining the main circumstances of *his* actuality that he comes up against the Orient as a European or an American first, as an individual second. And to be a European or an American in such a situation is by no means an inert fact. It meant and means being aware, however dimly, that one belongs to a power with definite interests in the Orient...¹⁴¹

As a white European woman studying two (post)colonial cases, it is important to bear Said's warning in mind. Likewise, my 'informants' are aware of my external position, which, as I found whilst carrying out fieldwork, impacts greatly on what they tell me and choose to hide. The concept of latency as understood by András Kovács as the phenomenon by which people avoid expressing their own views on certain issues in public contexts is important here.¹⁴² For example an Equatoguinean opposition politician may avoid expressing sexist views in front of a feminist researcher, even though he privately holds such views. On the other side of the coin, some Equatoguinean interviewees may express opinions concerning the regime that are not 'their own' but which they nevertheless voice due to the risk of repercussions for those who do not maintain the official pro-Obiang discourse.

¹³⁹ Bourdieu, *Outline...* 1.

¹⁴⁰ David Morgan, "Men, Masculinity and the Process of Sociological Enquiry," in *Doing Feminist Research*, ed. Helen Roberts (London: Routledge, 1997); Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography*.

¹⁴¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1995), 11.

¹⁴² "The Role of a Public Identity Code in Defining the Boundaries of Public and Private," in *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis: Theory, Method and Interdisciplinarity* ed. Ruth Wodak, and Chilton, Paul (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005).

My status as a 'Westerner' affected the freedom of movement I was afforded by authorities during fieldwork trips to Western Sahara. My first fieldwork trip to Western Sahara, in April 2014, was made impossible when I was deported by Moroccan authorities at a checkpoint on the outskirts of El Aaiún city. After having been left over 600km north near Agadir, Morocco-proper, I was able to spend two weeks in Agadir, Marrakesh and Rabat to interview Saharawi activists. However, as I was under 24-hour police surveillance, I was reluctant to meet with any Saharawis that were not already being followed by the authorities. Furthermore, police broke up interviews conducted on private property, which further reduced the number and depth of interviews possible. During my second fieldwork trip I was able to enter El Aaiún only by dressing as a man and being smuggled across the border off-road by Saharawis. I did not leave my host's house for the entirety of the trip and avoided going near the windows. Again, these conditions limited the number and depth of interviews. Nevertheless, being spied-on, avoiding having stolen goods placed on my person by police and being threatened by a number of Moroccan citizens was a useful learning experience on the extent of the Moroccan regime's oppressive network.

The issue of cultural relativism is also salient here. Laura Zahra McDonald summarises the debate well for feminists: on the one hand, feminism is "eroded by a relativist trend guilty of condoning misogyny for the sake of inclusivity; or through an embracing of diversity," but at the same time "[a]ll too often the feminist academy has failed to divorce itself from racist Orientalism."¹⁴³ A relativist approach has the advantage of avoiding ethnocentrism as it assumes that there are no 'good' or 'bad' cultural practices, and therefore the researcher should not judge another culture according to her own moral standards.

However, attempting to be value-free and condoning all cultural practices in order to avoid the charge of ethnocentrism brings its own problems. In the words of Deniz Kandiyoti, this could potentially involve condoning "all manner of patriarchal excess under the banner of cultural difference."¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, as Stanley R. Barrett points out, "[d]riven by relativistic principles, more often than not [anthropologists] have criticized their own cultural values and celebrated those elsewhere, to the point of romanticizing them."¹⁴⁵ The result can be the uncomfortable situation described by Dafa in the opening to this chapter: Western

¹⁴³ Laura Zahra McDonald, "Islamic Feminism," *Feminist Theory* 9, no. 3 (2008).

¹⁴⁴ Deniz Kandiyoti, "The Politics of Gender and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Old Dilemmas or New Challenges," in *Gendered Peace: Women's Struggles for Post-War Justice and Reconciliation*, ed. Donna Pankhurst (London: Routledge, 2008), 155.

¹⁴⁵ Barrett, *Anthropology...* 42.

women telling a Saharawi woman who regularly calls out sexism that she does not understand her own culture. Furthermore, whilst some Saharawi women students have told me they feel pressured to ‘tone down’ their criticisms of what they see as sexism in their society in order to avoid ‘hanging the dirty washing in public,’ my subject-position as an outsider gives me a greater (privileged) freedom to write openly. For these reasons I have rejected a totally relativist approach. Instead, I have tried to ask myself why sexism (and I am aware that most of the criticisms I make about Equatoguinean, Saharawi and Spanish societies in this thesis could equally be made about my own) exist. This has allowed me to see the intersections between gender-based discrimination, colonialism, authoritarianism and orientalism more clearly. Indeed, anthropological criticisms of Resistance Studies are illuminating in this regard. Sherry Ortner, for example, criticises existing studies of historic and current anti-colonial resistance movements for making invisible the internal politics, power hierarchies and discriminations within such movements, especially when it comes to gender.¹⁴⁶ She finds that scholars tend to brush over such issues for fear of being accused of reproducing colonial discourse. However, Ortner rightly argues, no amount of internal discrimination, inequality or violence in pre-colonised societies would justify the horrors inflicted by European colonisers. But our reluctance to deal with the internal politics of resistance movements serves to “thin” resistance studies research and render it inadequate.¹⁴⁷

Finally, I should underline that the interpretation of women’s ‘reality’ that I offer here is just one reading of the situation, not *the* definitively ‘correct’ viewpoint.

1.8 Interviews

Limam Boicha’s father was born in the year of the Camel’s green teeth.¹⁴⁸ When his mother was about to give birth, her family’s herd fell down with a mysterious dental infliction, hence the name of the year.¹⁴⁹ This is how older Saharawis mark time, with events instead of Christian years. Likewise, Saharawis have had their own ways of recording history through

¹⁴⁶ Sherry B. Ortner, "Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 1 (1995).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ So says his poem “Mitología”, available at <http://literaturasaharawi.blogspot.co.uk/2008/04/los-versos-de-la-madera-limam-boicha.html> (accessed 30 April 2016).

¹⁴⁹ Limam Boicha, personal interview, Madrid, 6 February 2008.

epic poems and sagas passed from grandparents to little ones, without ink ever meeting a page. As these traditions fade, and the older generations pass, Saharawi history erodes. For the historical parts of my thesis, then, talking to older people becomes a source as rich as any archive, and a privileged and disappearing one.

When in the camps and occupied Western Sahara, I waited for appointments. Sometimes for hours, sometimes for days. Whilst waiting, I talked to people who had been waiting a lot longer, for whom time, which stretches out in order to contain the hope that is needed for forty years of patience, is elastic. These unlimited and unrushed conversations are precious for a researcher, and thus I draw here on unrecorded informal interviews and conversations (conversations held in the knowledge that they would inform this thesis and with permission to include the conversations as data) with activists, refugees, 'ordinary' citizens, political leaders and government officials (these are cited as "personal conversations") and email exchanges ("personal communications").

I also carried out recorded discussion groups, re-used some data collected for my BA Hons and MRes dissertations and conducted recorded semi-structured interviews, (these latter are cited as "personal interviews"). All interviews with Equatoguineans were conducted in Spanish, with the exception of one in English. With one exception, I avoided interviewing opposition activists in Malabo for safety reasons (these took place abroad, or by Skype or telephone). There, I interviewed feminists, older people that remembered the Spanish period, and poorer women that I met by chance. In Western Sahara and Morocco, I interviewed nationalist activists. This constituted a risk for the activists involved. They commented: "everything has already happened to us" or "anything that will happen to us because of meeting you will happen anyway." That is to say, activists were so used to violence and other forms of regime punishment that they did not perceive additional risk in meeting a foreigner, and/or they no longer felt fear. In both Western Sahara and Equatorial Guinea, although I did select some interviewees based on my previous knowledge of their work, most interviewees were found via the snowball method, based on convenience.

Interviews with Saharawis were conducted mostly in Spanish, some in English and some in Hassania with the assistance of an interpreter. Interviewees are given a pseudonym, except in the cases of those who stated that they preferred their real name to be used and gave their express consent for this.

As well as semi-structured interviews focused on specific topics, I also used interviews to collect oral histories.¹⁵⁰ The advantages of oral histories are multiple. We can ‘rediscover’ women without the filter of the colonial administration, and hear memories with all the (meaningful) emotions and silences that accompany them. On the other hand, the reader receives only my own interpretation of interviewee’s words.¹⁵¹ Plus, memories are invariably partial and on occasions contradictory and inaccurate.¹⁵² Yet, it is possible to crosscheck factual information between several interviewees and, where available, written documentation. In any case, as Alicia C. Decker points out, ellipsis and ‘errors’ can still reveal how women remembered and experienced particular historical events, revealing the subjective aspects of history as meaning.¹⁵³

I use, at times, a narrative style of writing. Timothy Pollock and Joyce Bono argue that storytelling - crafting a narrative and giving it a human face - helps academics to make our theoretical ideas and analysis have greater influence.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, storytelling can serve political purposes, as research that calls itself feminist should. Kay Shiffer and Sidonie Smith highlight the importance of narrative accounts in attracting the attention of international global community, as well as encouraging others to share their stories and thereby challenge dominant oppressive narratives.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, the emerging fields of public ethnography and public sociology carry similar political and social aims, and see storytelling as the best communication method to those ends.¹⁵⁶ Here, I use anecdotes from women’s lives where their telling serves to illustrate my arguments and analysis.

The dates and locations of interviews (and the position of the interviewee when they were interviewed in a professional capacity) are listed in the bibliography.

¹⁵⁰ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

¹⁵¹ On top of this, power relations exist between interviewer and interviewee. Although, following the spirit of feminist scholarship, I attempted to mitigate these, I am doubtful mitigation is fully possible when a white, middle class European is interviewing a woman in a still colonized country or a Western-backed authoritarian dictatorship.

¹⁵² For more on this, see Chapter Five of Thompson, *The Voice...*

¹⁵³ See the introduction of Alicia C. Decker, *In Idi Amin’s Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2014).

¹⁵⁴ Thomas G. Pollock and Joyce E. Bono, “Being Scheherazade: the Importance of Storytelling in Academic Writing,” *Academy of Management Journal* 56, 3 (2013).

¹⁵⁵ Schaffer and Smith cited in Annie Pohlman, *Women, Sexual Violence and the Indonesian Killings of 1965-66* (Oxford: Routledge, 2015), 50.

¹⁵⁶ Herbert J. Gans, “Public Ethnography; Ethnography as Public Sociology,” *Qualitative Sociology* 33, 1 (2010).

1.9 Participatory observation

I carried out the following periods of fieldwork:

- Agadir, Marrakesh and Rabat in Morocco: 16 – 28 April 2014
- El Aaiún, occupied Western Sahara: 18 August – 1 September 2014
- Malabo, Equatorial Guinea: 13 June – 1 July 2015
- Boujdour and Auserd camps, Saharawi state-in-exile, Algeria, 8 – 15 December 2015
- Notes from fieldwork diaries written in the Saharawi refugee camps (Smara), the liberated territories and Mauritania in 2006 for the purposes of my BA Hons dissertation, and in the refugee camps (Smara and Rabouni) in 2008 are also considered.

Participatory observation complements semi-structured interviews well, since, as Stephen P. Bogdewic highlights, through this practice “[d]ifferences between real and verbal behaviour are made apparent.”¹⁵⁷ As is the norm for researchers practicing participant observation, I kept fieldwork diaries and took extensive notes. However, due to a range of limitations on the ability to conduct fieldwork in the three territories my stays were short. I believe I have overcome this shortfall by using other methods and data sources.

My one-year stay as a Visiting Researcher at the University of Granada, Spain, served as a useful basis for meeting Saharawis and Equatoguineans living in exile. It is also worth mentioning that I have worked with Saharawis through various solidarity groups since 2007 and that I am a feminist – both of these experiences no doubt bear on my interpretation of the data.

¹⁵⁷ “Participant Observation,” in *Doing Qualitative Research*, ed. Benjamin F. Crabtree, and Miller, William L. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1999), 49.

1.10 Archival work

Using archives has the advantage of making less intrusions on the lives of Saharawis and Equatoguineans. I draw on the following archives:

1. *Revista de la Guinea Española*, media publication by the Claretian missionaries in Equatorial Guinea (all issues 1903-1969), available online.¹⁵⁸
2. Works written by Spaniards living in, or visiting, the African colonies during the colonial period held at the Spanish national library in Madrid.
3. All available documents of the Women's Section of the Falange in Guinea and the Sahara, held at the Archive of the General Administration (AGA), in Alcalá de Henares, in its "Africa" section, but also in its "Culture" section. It was somewhat difficult to navigate the documentation and, whilst there were duplicates of some documents kept in different files, there also seemed to be lacunae. Furthermore, there were several envelopes of documents that cannot be opened until a future date due to data protection laws.¹⁵⁹
4. Documents from the personal archive of Luís Rodríguez de Viguri y Gil, known as the *Fondo Documental del Sahara*. Viguri y Gil was the last Secretary General of Spanish Sahara. The archive is currently held at the *Fundación Sur* in Madrid. I understand that the documents held are currently being catalogued and are inaccessible. I have had access to some of these documents thanks to photocopies made by Francesco Correale and passed to me by Enrique Bengochea. Others can be found as an annex to Claudia Barona Castañeda's doctoral thesis (see point 7 below).
5. Further documents from the AGA, including papers of the Spanish *Patronato*, which was responsible for justice for the 'natives' and letters from Equatoguineans to the

¹⁵⁸ At <http://www.bioko.net/guineaespanola/laguies.htm> (accessed 3 February 2016).

¹⁵⁹ The difficulties of navigating the AGA archives are studied in more depth by Jesús Gaité Pastor, "El Sistema de Archivos de la Administración Central Española," *Revista General de Información y Documentación* 9, no. 2 (1999).

Governor General. Enrique Martino has usefully digitalized these documents and uploaded them to Open Source Guinea website.¹⁶⁰

6. Documents from the British Consul in Santa Isabel (capital of Spanish Guinea) from the UK National Archive (TNA), digitalized on Open Source Guinea.
7. Documents of the General Government of the Sahara Province and the Territorial Police, attached to the digitalized PhD thesis of Claudia Barona Castañeda, "Sahara Al-Garbia (1958-1976): Estudio sobre la identidad nacional saharai," Autonomous University of Madrid, 1998.
8. Articles on Spanish Sahara and Spanish Guinea published between 1948 and 1957 in the *Cuaderno de Estudios Africanos* (African Studies Journal) of the *Instituto de Estudios Políticos*, (Political Studies Institute), a public agency founded in 1939 and linked to the Falangist faction of the Franco regime. Articles available online.¹⁶¹

1.11 Other documentary sources

While I draw on several documentary sources (reports, websites, testimonies and so on) throughout the thesis, in this section I note only those that were reviewed in a systematic way.

1) Documents authored by the Equatoguinean regime were the key source for Chapter Five. I reviewed all articles and documents published by the Equatoguinean government's Press and Information Office on their website, guineaecuatorialpress.com, between September 2009, which is when the oldest stories available on the website are dated, and June 2014, when I began work on Chapter Five. Since June 2014, I have also drawn on all subsequent stories mentioning British companies active in Equatorial Guinea.

The Information and Press Office effectively serves as the regime's main propaganda channel externally (although the state funds and controls several newspapers, television and radio stations, only one television station is easily accessible outside of the country), which is why I picked this source specifically. Indeed, the Office belongs to the wider Ministry for

¹⁶⁰ www.opensourceguinea.org (accessed 25 May 2016).

¹⁶¹ At <http://www.cepc.gob.es/publicaciones/revistas/fondo-historico> (accessed 16 May 2016).

Press, Information and Radio, which is charged with, “being the speaker of the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.”¹⁶² In the words of Igor Cusack, scholar of the evolution of Equatoguinean national identity,

In considering what to include on national websites, governments have to abstract what they believe to be the essential components of their national identities and cultures. These websites are therefore good places to start when looking for what the ruling elites consider to be the important facets of national culture [...] the Equatoguinean website [is] a good example of this.¹⁶³

2) I reviewed all Equatoguinean government submissions to the UN’s Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (Committee). The Committee monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which is often described as an international bill of rights for women. It consists of 30 articles in which it defines what constitutes violence against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. Countries that have ratified CEDAW, as Equatorial Guinea did in 1984, are legally bound to put its provisions into practice and to submit national reports on measures they have taken to comply with their obligations under the treaty.¹⁶⁴ Equatorial Guinea’s submissions to CEDAW therefore serve as an example of the discourses on gender equality of those regime spokespeople best placed to speak on the subject: the Ministry of Social Affairs and Promotion of Women (MINASPROM, previously known as Ministry of Women’s Affairs). Other sources for Chapter Five include public speeches made by Obiang, the website of the Equatoguinean government’s Horizon 2020 Agency, and an interview with a civil servant working at Director General level within a ministry. I have also used secondary sources, mainly news websites reporting on laws made by the regime, and have reviewed Equatoguinean state television reports uploaded onto YouTube.

¹⁶² Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, “Ministry of Information, Press and Radio,” <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=129>, 2014 (accessed 9 June 2014).

¹⁶³ ““Equatorial Guinea’s National Cuisine is Simple and Tasty:” Cuisine and the Making of National Culture,” *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 8 (2004): 136-37.

¹⁶⁴ UN Women, “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Overview of the Convention,” <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>, no date (accessed 3 June 2014).

1.12 Spelling and transliteration

For proper nouns, I use English spelling (e.g. the colonial capital of Spanish Guinea, Fernando Poo in Spanish, becomes Fernando Po in English). The first exception is for the names of Saharawi and Equatoguinean liberation movements, for which I use the transcriptions and abbreviations that are in common use in Britain and Spain e.g. *Harakat Tahrir*, POLISARIO and MUNGE. The second exception is for institutions of Spanish creation such as the *Djema* in Spanish Sahara and the *Patronato* in Spanish Guinea, for which I use Spanish spelling. The third exception is place names in Western Sahara, for which I use Spanish spelling. European colonial place names in Western Sahara are still highly political, and the UK follows the French, not Spanish, place names for towns there (e.g. Laayoune instead of El Aaiún). When Morocco invaded Western Sahara, Spanish road signs were changed to French. Spanish language, and the Spanish colonial heritage, is a ‘border marker’ between Saharawis and Moroccans, which Morocco would like to erase. Saharawis challenge that, and also aim to constantly remind Spain of its debt of responsibility towards the Saharawi people – legally speaking, Spain is still the *de jure* administrative power. The use of Spanish spelling for place names is therefore a political act for Saharawis. I act with them. With regards to other words from Hassania language (not including the aforementioned *Harakat Tahrir* or *Djema*), I use Hans Wehr transliteration system for Arabic, except for letters unique to Hassania.

To conclude this chapter, I should ask: did I achieve my aim of conducting a feminist research project? Although the intentions were feminist, the methods are only questionably so. It would be naïve to assume that the feminist ideal of researching *with* (Saharawi and Equatoguinean) women rather than *on* them is achievable in a single-authored PhD thesis. Similarly it would be patronising to claim I am ‘giving women a voice’ through my own words and selected quotations of Equatoguineans and Saharawis. The risks that Saharawis in the Occupied Territories and Morocco took to help me with my research project are also problematic. The ethical justifications that I had welded together so convincingly for the purposes of the university Ethical Review and my own conscience suddenly seemed rusty to the point of snapping once I was in the field. To repay this ‘debt’ in some way I used fieldwork periods in these regions as well as in the camps of Algeria to further my work with two Saharawi solidarity networks, Western Sahara Campaign UK and Western Sahara

Resource Watch, the latter of which I chair at the time of writing.¹⁶⁵ Realistically, the present thesis represents no one's voice but mine.

Chapter Two. Spanish Sahara, *falangistas* and gendering Subaltern Studies

When asked of her past, Tawfa Saleh smiles and wipes away a tear. She never got the chance to tell her husband that she had found his hidden POLISARIO pamphlets or that she too was secretly a member of a POLISARIO cell. After her partner died on the frontline, Tawfa refused to re-marry. She lives today in Auserd camp with Silka Bilaal. Silka was also a nationalist activist. She recalls "those days," meaning those of the late sixties and early seventies, those that were marked by studies with the Spanish Falange's Women's Section and an initiation into political activism, as "a fantastic period in [her] life."¹⁶⁶

This Chapter focuses on "those days" from a gendered perspective. I draw on the archives of the Spanish Falange Party's Women's Section, intriguing as a record of how female colonialists attempted to impose a Falangist model of womanhood on Saharawi women and girls, to reveal a plethora of resistance tactics, from the everyday to organised politics. From the perspective of Western Sahara studies, an analysis of the gender dynamics of the Spanish colonial period reveals new insights. Perhaps most importantly, it illustrates that Saharawi women not only resisted colonialism and colonial patriarchies, but also Saharawi patriarchal elements, and, in the case of women and men of sub-Saharan origin, slavery. This, I argue, makes a small but significant contribution to correcting a common omission in Subaltern Studies: the invisibility of, and resistance to, oppressions that have roots in practices not necessarily imposed by colonialism and how these interacted with the colonial axes of power. Also, the evidence of these resistances sheds new light on the inspiration behind POLISARIO-constructed nationalist discourses that emphasised gender equality and eradication of slavery. Studies to date, including my own, have neglected to focus on the role of Saharawi women in inspiring the feminist, emancipatory discourses formulated by

¹⁶⁵ I further discuss this activist/scholar approach, and the ethical complexities of conducting research in contexts of violent oppression, in a paper: "Risks, 'White Lies,' and the Academic as Activist: Attempting Feminist Fieldwork in Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara" (paper presented at the Sixth European African Studies Conference, The Sorbonne, Paris, 10 July 2015).

¹⁶⁶ Tawfa Saleh, personal interview, Auserd camp, 11 December 2015; Silka Bilaal, personal interview, Auserd camp, 11 December 2015.

POLISARIO leaders, as well as on the effects of these in inspiring (women's public participation in anti-colonial activities during the Spanish period.

2.1 Spain arrives in Western Sahara: gendering a territory

The borders of Spanish Sahara were demarcated between Spain and France in 1900,¹⁶⁷ following the Berlin conference of 1884, in which the European powers sliced up and dished out Africa as if it were a cake.¹⁶⁸ “[P]oor Cinderella, still licking its wounds from the war of independence” in the Americas, Spain was delighted to have new colonial “children” in the Sahara.¹⁶⁹ However, it took several decades before Spain could establish itself there due to the considerable resistance mounted by Saharawi tribes.¹⁷⁰ For example, Diego Saavedra y Magdalena, ex-commissioner for the Spanish possessions in Western Africa, describes an attack on the Spanish settlement at Villa Cisneros (modern day Dakhla) in 1885 in which “the rapacity of the indigenous” caused the death of several Spaniards.¹⁷¹ Julio Cervera’s account of his 1886 expedition to Western Sahara is similarly painted as an ordeal.¹⁷² As well as Saharawi men kidnapping his expedition members and attempting to rob their camels and luggage, the unfortunate Cervera suffers the “demands and curses” of the Saharawi women.¹⁷³

Spain could only find a foothold in Western Sahara by gradually negotiating with Saharawi tribal chiefs. For example, as the colonial bureaucrat Francisco del Río Joan notes, the founding of Villa Cisneros was only completed thanks to a local tribe. The latter was given

¹⁶⁷ Spanish and French states, “Convenio entre España y Francia (Africa Occidental – Costa del Sahara, Golfo de Guinea), 27 March 1900,” (Paris: Gaceta de Madrid, 30 March 1900).

¹⁶⁸ For more on the expeditions of Spaniards to what was to become Spanish Sahara, see the introduction of Hermenegildo Taberner Chacobo, *Legislación de A.O.E.: Recopilación legislativa, por orden cronológico, de África Occidental Española (Territorios de Ifni y Sahara)* (Madrid: Selecciones Gráficas, 1947).

¹⁶⁹ Diego Saavedra y Magdalena, *España en el Africa Occidental (Río de Oro y Guinea)* (Madrid: Imprenta Artística Española, 1910), xxxiii.

¹⁷⁰ Taberner Chacobo suggests 1934 was the year the Spanish finally took possession of Ifni (Taberner Chacobo, *Legislación...*), whilst Sola suggests 1942 for Western Sahara. See Emilio Sola, *Sahara Occidental: viaje al país de la esperanza* (Madrid: Editorial Molinos de Agua, 1981).

¹⁷¹ Saavedra y Magdalena, *España en el Africa Occidental...*, 5.

¹⁷² Cervera was undertaking an exploratory mission to the Sahara.

¹⁷³ Julio Cervera, “Viaje de exploración por el Sahara Occidental. Estudios geográficos,” (paper presented at the *La reunión ordinaria de 2 de Noviembre de 1886, de Boletín Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid, Tomo XXII, Primer semestre de 1887*, Madrid, 1886), 10. For more on Saharawi resistance led by the legendary Malainin and later by his son, El Hiba, see Belkacem Hacene-Djaballah, “Conflict in Western Sahara: A Study of POLISARIO as an Insurgency Movement” (The Catholic University of America, 1985).

twenty houses in return for its support building a fort, the purpose of which was to protect the Spaniards from the frequent raids of other Saharawi tribes.¹⁷⁴

Apart from Cervera's grumblings at the psychological resistance mounted by the Saharawi women in whose camp he was forced to stay, the majority of the colonial pioneers describe Saharawi resistance in stereotypically masculine terms. Río Joan sees the Saharawis encountered during his attempted "commercial and military penetration" (itself a masculine sexual metaphor typically used by European colonialists, as McClintock has highlighted)¹⁷⁵ of Western Sahara as "hostile, war-mongering and ferocious."¹⁷⁶ Saavedra y Magdalena sees "the indigenous" as "strong, vigorous... sober... [and] maintaining a hatred of Christians"¹⁷⁷ whilst Soler describes them as "virile, tough, even hostile."¹⁷⁸ The geographical territory, on the other hand, was seen through the orientalist eyes of the colonialists as an enticing and exotic woman: "...the dune is welcoming, hospitable, with feminine softness and tenderness, smooth even when the soft wind caresses her crests..."¹⁷⁹

Even once their hold on the territory was established, the colonialists were cautious about interfering with the political and social structures of the Saharawi tribes until the late fifties, after which Spain began to exploit the territory economically in earnest.¹⁸⁰ Thus, increased political control was needed and the sedentariness of the Saharawi population, drawn by

¹⁷⁴ Francisco del Río Joan, *África Occidental Española (Sáhara y Guinea): memoria elevada al Excmo. Señor Ministro de Estado por el Comandante de Ingenieros D. Francisco del Río Joan* (Madrid: Ministerio de Estado, Sección Colonial, 1915).

¹⁷⁵ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁷⁶ Río Joan, *África Occidental Española...*, 258.

¹⁷⁷ Saavedra y Magdalena, *España en el Africa Occidental...*, 41.

¹⁷⁸ Bartolome Soler, "Cien días en el Sahara Español," in archives of the Institute of African Studies (Spanish National Library, Madrid), Madrid, 14 January 1953, 44.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 55. If the colonialist writers saw Saharawi resistance as masculine, their views on the relative empowerment of Saharawi women vary. Saavedra y Magdalena observes that the Saharawi woman "enjoys much freedom and works little" (1910, p.50) and Cervera concurs, observing that Saharawi women do as they please, unburdened with domestic tasks or other types of work thanks to their "black slaves" (1886, p.10). An ethnography undertaken with Saharawi nomads finds women "enjoy great freedom" (see page 62 of Attilio Gaudio, "Apuntes para un estudio sobre los aspectos etnológicos del Sáhara Occidental. Su constitución básica," *Cuaderno de Estudios Africanos* 19, no. July-September (1952): 261.) Yet Soler depicts a different view: "[Saharawi women's life] is interminably passive, constantly absent, reduced, if you like, to a relic, hidden, shut up in a tent" (1953, p.56). A full analysis of Spanish constructions of gender equality and how the state used them to justify their colonial project are outside the scope of this thesis, but the cursory look here reminds us of their significance in Western Sahara's history. For more on the various possible readings of the Sahara's pre-Spanish history in gender terms, see pages 11-13 of Joanna Allan, "Gender Equality and the Politics of Representation in the Western Sahara" (University of Leeds, 2006).

¹⁸⁰ Sola, *Sahara Occidental...*, 25. On the caution taken by the colonialists to avoid interfering in Saharawi political structures and also religion, see also Río Joan, *África Occidental Española*, 276.

jobs in the fisheries, and later phosphate, sectors, facilitated this.¹⁸¹ Even then though, the Spanish were cautious about attempting to interfere with Saharawi cultural norms. As well as the worry of further conflict with Saharawis should they try too hard to impose Hispanic culture, the colonial merchants and officials had not enjoyed the benefit of a missionary presence to colonise minds. Indeed, the strong missionary presence and enforced catholicisation in Spanish Guinea and its lack in the Sahara is a key difference between Spain's colonial practices in the two countries.

Another indicator of the different levels of enforced acculturation in Guinea and Sahara lies in the field of colonial education: by the end of the colonial period in Equatorial Guinea, over 90 per cent of children were in Spanish schools. In 1975 Spanish Sahara, on the other hand, just 3640 Saharawi pupils (of which, tellingly, only 575 were girls) were in the Spanish schools.¹⁸² This was a small proportion, given that the adult population according to the Spanish census of 1974 was 74,000. Most controversially, the Spanish policy of 'non-interference' included actively tolerating Saharawi enslavers.¹⁸³

2.2 Enslavement and resistance

In Spanish Sahara, says Saharawi writer Larosi Haidar, slavery was an "accepted practice" and the Spanish authorities "did not even lift a finger to attempt to eradicate it."¹⁸⁴ The 1974 Census, which avoided publicly demonstrating Spanish complicity in slavery by creating the category "adopted children and poor relatives" under which to lump slaves, found that four per cent of the population lived in this state.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ Spanish Sahara became a province of Spain in 1958, with El Aaiún as its capital. At that time, the city had only 1000 inhabitants. Once the exploitation of phosphates began, the city grew immensely. In 1970-2, the national mining company FOSBUCRAA created blocks of housing for its Saharawi employees. However, even Spanish architects described the housing as "poor." See Juan Luís Dalda, Martí Ares, Carles, and Pau Coromines, Lluís, "Dossier Forming Part of the Exposition, "Aaiun 1939-73, formación de una ciudad española en el Sahara Occidental," study carried out in El Aaiún," Girona, 1977.

¹⁸² Igor Cusack, "Being Away from 'Home: The Equatorial Guinean Diaspora," *The Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 17, no. 1 (1999): 30; General Government of the Sahara Province, "Censo escolar," El Aaiún, 1975, 2. Document available as an annex to Claudia Barona Castañeda's PhD thesis, "Sahara al Garbia (1958-1976)" (Autonomous University of Madrid, 1998).

¹⁸³ We should bear in mind that forced labour of the indigenous population characterised Spanish Guinea. Enrique Martino, "Colonial Economies of Forced and Contract Labour in the Bight of Biafra (1926-1979): Imperial Figurations, Atlantic Constellations" (University of Humboldt, Forthcoming).

¹⁸⁴ Larosi Haidar, "Prólogo," in *La Esclavitud en el Sáhara Occidental*, ed. Pablo Ignacio de Dalmasas (Barcelona Ediciones Carena, 2012), 11-12.

¹⁸⁵ Pablo Ignacio de Dalmasas, *La Esclavitud en el Sáhara Occidental* (Barcelona: Ediciones Carena, 2012), 157.

Sophie Caratini, a French anthropologist who lived amongst Saharawi nomadic tribes in 1975, describes the status of slaves of sub-Saharan origin in the Saharawi society at the end of the colonial period: “The slave is a prisoner for life. His capacity to work belongs to his owners who use it at their convenience and hold his right to live or die.”¹⁸⁶ According to contemporary accounts collected by Journalist Pablo Ignacio de Dalmases, men and boy slaves were used to shepherd animals and gather firewood, whilst women and girls were used to perform domestic chores, and/or were sexually exploited by their owners.¹⁸⁷ As Delores Walters has pointed out, the extent of the sexual exploitation to which black women have been subjected in slaving societies is often bypassed in discussions of slavery and resistance, and unfortunately I lack the data to shine further light on the abuses suffered by black women in Saharawi society.¹⁸⁸ However, we do know that, in a further show of sexual abuse, some enslavers would force their male and female slaves to marry, in order to produce slaves who could be exploited or sold.¹⁸⁹ Some wealthy Spaniards employed slave women as maids in their homes, in the full knowledge that the totality of their wages were passed on to their owners, a pattern which was replicated for slaves working in the Nomadic Troops unit of the army, fisheries and phosphate mines.¹⁹⁰

If there was not an outright slave rebellion, contemporary accounts suggest that this was due to a combination of harsh discipline (would-be escapees could be killed or tortured until disabled)¹⁹¹ and the propagation of a mix of racist myths and religious indoctrination that painted black slavery as natural, inevitable and the will of Allah.¹⁹² However, the latter of these two tools worked considerably less well on captured slaves, which illustrates the importance of Laclau and Mouffe’s modification of Gramsci’s theory of hegemony in explaining when and why resistance arises. If hegemony, for Gramsci, is to make power over

¹⁸⁶ Caratini quoted in Dalmases, *La Esclavitud...* 50.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁸⁸ Dorothy M. Walters, “Introduction. Re(dis)covery and Recreating the Cultural Milieu of Margaret Garner,” *Gendered Resistance: Women, Slavery and the Legacy of Margaret Garner*, edited by Mary E. Frederickson, and Walters, Delores M., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013, 15.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 68-69.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁹² In his study of contemporary sources comprising of testimonials and writings by Spanish residents of the Sahara and research by European anthropologists, Dalmases finds that Saharawi slave-owners attempted to justify the enslavement of black people by stating that it was permitted by the Prophet and Allah. He also cites myths and folktales recorded by Sophie Caratini that attempt to assert the naturalness of slavery and are sometimes mixed with religion. Writs by religious leaders were also used to attempt to defend the practice. The Spanish authorities saw slavery as part of Saharawi “politico-religious” and “legal-religious” customs that should not be interfered with. *Ibid.*

others seem inevitable and “the natural state of things,” Laclau and Mouffe imply that exposure to counter-hegemonic discourses is a necessary precursor to resistance. As opposed to those who were born slaves, and were therefore indoctrinated from birth into a social discourse that justified their position, captured slaves were of course more easily aware of discourses (from before their capture) that conflicted with the hegemonic ones, and saw no natural link between blackness and enslavement. A quotation of Caratini illustrates this well: “Escape attempts are mostly carried out by recently acquired captives. Those born in the camps are totally acculturated given that they use the language and respect the customs of their owners, to whom many are sincerely bound.”¹⁹³

Indeed, as well as attempted escapes, slaves showed resilience and everyday resistance in the face of their plight, as examples from the contemporary literature collected by Dalmases illustrate. The “ear bite” was one such strategy of resistance. An unwritten law amongst Saharawi slave owners said that, should a slave injure a free person, the owner of the slave must pass the latter to the injured party as a form of reparation. Some slaves used this law to their advantage. If they had a particularly violent owner, and met others who treated her or him relatively well, they might injure the ear of the person they wished to become their owner, thus ensuring their own transfer to the property of that person.¹⁹⁴ In a situation of domination, slaves showed resilience with this strategy, finding a way to improve their lives when outright freedom seemed impossible.

A 1935 account from Spanish resident Anicleto Ramos Charco-Villaseñor in Villa Cisneros clearly illustrates the existence of a public and hidden transcript:

moors and blacks live, apparently, in perfect harmony, but in their conversations, involuntary perhaps, they show their deep feelings. And upon naming each other, respectively, the scorn of the moor, considering himself superior, is concentrated upon saying, black man! Such scorn is only comparable with the hatred of the black man who, seeing himself humiliated, expresses it when he says, moor!¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Caratini quoted in *ibid.*, 124.

¹⁹⁴ Dalmases gives two examples of such cases. *Ibid.*, 121-22.

¹⁹⁵ Charco-Villaseñor quoted in *ibid.*, 150.

Similarly, in 1975 Caratini noted the disparaging opinions of black slaves voiced to her in confidence. One slave said of his owners, “they are very racist, very savage and filthy.”¹⁹⁶ In the relative security of offstage privacy, slaves voiced their thoughts (the hidden transcript of resistance), but, when onstage, they had to maintain the public transcript and show deference to their owner in order to avoid retaliation. At times, when individual slaves could take no more, the hidden transcript stormed the public stage. There are examples of slaves murdering their owners,¹⁹⁷ and of enslaved children crying and fighting back when they were mistreated.¹⁹⁸ Others made use of the Spanish population, some of whom were willing to break the official policy of non-interference with what the Spanish authorities called Saharawi “politico-religious customs.”¹⁹⁹ Some Spaniards bought slaves from their enslavers, in order to afterwards grant them freedom. Such Spaniards did not escape sanction though. A Spanish pilot was re-assigned out of Western Sahara in 1929 when his superior found out he had not only been purchasing slaves to free them, but also harbouring fugitives in the aerodrome. Other slaves hid their Spanish-paid wages from their owners to later buy passage on a ship to the Canaries,²⁰⁰ or to pass to a third party who would buy then free them.²⁰¹

Indeed, slaves found room to manoeuvre and space to resist throughout the Spanish colonial period and, as the POLISARIO nationalist revolution progressed (at its initiation some POLISARIO members were still enslavers), the perseverance of such a racist institution seemed abominable to the revolutionary movement inspired by the anti-colonialist, anti-racist and negritude-influenced currents of the times. As delineated in previous research, the eradication of slavery was another necessary part of the nationalist revolution.²⁰² Tolerance of slavery was to become something distinctly ‘unSaharawi’ and the Spanish acceptance of the practice was one more reason decolonisation was urgent. In the next section, we look at resistance to gender inequalities in the colonial period, which, coupled with the resistance of the slaves, helps to illustrate how Saharawi women’s anti-colonial struggles were intersectional, fighting various axes of power at once.

¹⁹⁶ Caratini quoted in *ibid.*, 153.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 73.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 147-48.

²⁰² Allan, “Imagining Saharawi Women...”

2.3 Resisting patriarchies: Saharawi women's challenges to male domination and the Francoist housewife model

Anne McClintock argues that colonialism cannot be understood without a theory of gender power.²⁰³ Colonialism has traditionally been regarded as a male pursuit, in which white women were excess baggage accompanying their adventurous husbands. Some scholars have begun to address this, illustrating that Western colonial women's attitudes ranged from complicity and support to resistance and opposition to wider colonial projects.²⁰⁴ Either way, women's orientalism deserves further academic attention. Both Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara prove important studies in this regard, since, in both cases, Spain exported its Women's Section for the gendered indoctrination of female colonial subjects by female colonisers. The latter therefore were not mere appendages to male imperialism, but active colonisers. In this section I ask: how did the Spanish colonialists try to impose their model of what Saharawi femininity should be? Did Saharawi women resist, and if so, how?

The Women's Section of Francisco Franco's Falange party arrived in El Aaiún in 1964, six years after Spanish Sahara officially became a province of Spain. Its overarching mission was "the promotion of the Saharawi woman,"²⁰⁵ through "raising awareness of the primordial purpose women have in this life ordered by God: to be a wife, mother and educator of children."²⁰⁶ In practice, this meant moulding a role for Saharawi women on the model of the Francoist housewife. Thus, Women's Section activities formed part of the wider Spanish cultural project of coercing the 'natives' to replicate the colonisers. They were the banner-carriers of what Enrique Bengochea has called "banal imperialism;" the everyday face of the Spanish colonisers.²⁰⁷ This fostering of a sense of belonging to the Spanish motherland, as

²⁰³ McClintock, *Imperial Leather...*

²⁰⁴ See for example Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation* (London: Routledge, 1996); Nupur Chaudhuri, and Strobel, Margaret, ed. *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); McClintock, *Imperial Leather...*

²⁰⁵ Women's Section, "Informe que presenta la delegada provincial de la Sección Femenina, de los hechos ocurridos en el taller escuela a este Gobierno General de Sahara," El Aaiún, January 1974, 1. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.

²⁰⁶ Concha Mateo, "Primer plan previo de enseñanzas y actividades," El Aaiún, April 1964. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.

²⁰⁷ Enrique Bengochea Tirado, "Políticas imperiales y género: la Sección Femenina en la provincia de Sahara (1961-1975)," PhD Thesis in Contemporary History, University of Valencia, June 2016, 98.

Andreas Stucki has argued, was meant to maintain Spain's influence beyond independence in order to establish preferential industry, commercial and financial relations.²⁰⁸

We should be careful not to exaggerate the reach of the Women's Section, or indeed of the Spanish education system and its other propaganda mechanisms more generally. Konstantina Isidoros is right to point out that the extent of coerced Saharawi sedentarisation has been exaggerated. She illustrates that the wage-earning opportunities offered by the Spanish administration were, for many of the Saharawis that took them, only temporary responses to droughts and the colonial constraints that inhibited traditional solutions to such crises.²⁰⁹ Nevertheless, although the numbers of Saharawi women that came into contact with the Section were relatively small, the archives of the Women's Section give us a window on an almost all female site of colonial power and indigenous resistance.

By "Saharawi women," Women's Section generally meant only women of non sub-Saharan origin, since, in line with the wider colonial policy of the ostrich, the Section made few efforts to challenge the institution of slavery. The archives show but one incident in which Spanish Section staff advocated on behalf of slave women, and even then it was conditional upon the latter's "good behaviour." Describing the first year of the Domestic School in El Aaiún, Concha Mateo (the first representative of the Women's Section to arrive in El Aaiún and its subsequent leader for most of the colonial period) notes:

There were two black slaves in this group. The owner of one of them forbade her from attending half way through the course, the other one came every day and never missed a single class. At the end of the year we brought this problem before the General Governor, promising economic support to achieve the freedom of those slave women whose moral behaviour was good.²¹⁰

We can see, then, that at least one black slave woman managed to maintain a public transcript of surface-level collaboration with the Section, and thereby secured her own

²⁰⁸ Andreas Stucki, "The Hard Side of Soft Power: Spanish Rhetorics of Empire from the 1950s to the 1970s" (paper presented at *Rhetoric of Empire: Imperial Discourse and the Language of Colonial Conflict*, Exeter University's Centre for War, State and Society), 9.

²⁰⁹ Konstantina Isidoros, "The Silencing of Unifying Tribes: The Colonial Construction of Tribe and its 'Extraordinary Leap' to Nascent Nation-State Formation in Western Sahara," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* (2015): 173-74.

²¹⁰ Concha Mateo, "Informe de la labor realizada en la Escuela de Hogar para nativas: 18 Mayo - 18 Julio 1964," *El Aaiún*, 1964, 4. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.

‘freedom.’²¹¹ She appropriated the colonial structures to resist the racism of Saharawi society that enslaved her and Spanish society that allowed it. We shall pick up on this apparent paradox in Chapter Three, where we see that Equatoguinean women attempted to take advantage of the colonial structures in similar ways.

Domestic Schools aimed at adult women initially offered embroidery, cookery, general culture, literacy, machine sewing, hygiene, baby care and ironing classes.²¹² The first was to open in El Aaiún, followed later by schools, or at least “ambulant teachers”, in Villa Cisneros, Argut, La Guera, Smara and Daora. Other initiatives led by the Women’s Section included schools for girls, activities circles for girls (members were accompanied on days out to the beach, for example) social workers and health visitors in the major towns, workshops and a special school for girls with learning difficulties.²¹³

Whilst most Saharawis, anthropologists such as Caratini and indeed some colonialist accounts completely contradict this view of historic gender roles, Mateo claimed that, whilst Saharawi women were responsible for sewing the *āḥiām* and looking after the children, it was men who did the majority of the cooking and cleaning (Gustau Nerín has highlighted that Women’s Section staff also claimed that Equatoguinean men were responsible for cooking and childcare, a conclusion which, he finds, bared no relation to reality).²¹⁴ Such a conviction was convenient of course, since it made the case for Women’s Section intervention, with its initial focus on housework.²¹⁵ The Spanish staff therefore felt that a tough job was on their hands in guiding women towards “their natural purpose.”²¹⁶ Indeed, staff were particularly proud of one of their first “great successes”: ensuring that their pupils

²¹¹ What requires more research is how ex-slaves coped with new found freedom. There is no record, in the Women’s Section archives, of any support being accorded to ex-slaves.

²¹² Concha Mateo, “Cultura del plan general: profesorado de la Escuela Hogar,” El Aaiún, April 1964. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.

²¹³ Elisa Monreal, Curto, Maria Jesus, “Informe general de la labor realizada en la promoción de la mujer saharai durante el primer semestre de 1973,” Unknown (Western Sahara), 1973, 1. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.

²¹⁴ Gustau Nerín, *La Sección Femenina de la Falange en la Guinea Española (1964-1969)*, (Valencia: CEIBA, 2006), 8.

²¹⁵ Concha Mateo, “Notas para la conferencia de Teresa: situacion de la mujer saharai,” Unpublished, 1966, 1. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 242.

²¹⁶ Teresa Loring, “Notas para la presentación en el Instituto de Estudios Africanos.” Madrid, 1967, 5. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 242.

“knew how to clean and iron their respective husbands’ suits, if the latter dressed in the European fashion.”²¹⁷

Seemingly blind to the inequalities suffered by Spanish women under the regime they represented, the Spanish staff of the Women’s Section did not view Saharawi women’s position in society with envy.²¹⁸ In a brief study on the latter for the central Women’s Section office in Madrid, Mateo stated that Saharawi women “had served, throughout their entire history, as nothing more than as gifts for men.”²¹⁹ Of course, as Bengochea points out, such a negative assessment was used by the Women’s Section to dubiously justify its colonial intervention in the Sahara.²²⁰ It was an early form of genderwashing, an attempt to make an ugly colonial intervention look selfless and progressive. Colonialism was necessary in order to promote ‘women’s empowerment.’

Mateo lamented various perceived gender inequalities surrounding the marriage of girl children to men two to three decades older,²²¹ restrictions on women’s freedom of movement (in particular, once girls reached puberty, it was not seen as proper for them to continue to take part in sports and other extra-curricula activities whilst there were very few Saharawi girls compared to boys registered at non-Women’s Section, and therefore non-sex-segregated, schools)²²² and unequal custody rights over children after divorce.²²³ Nevertheless, in the face of this, Mateo noted the constant ability of Saharawi women and

²¹⁷ Concha Mateo, “Informe correspondiente al curso 1964-65, Escuela Hogar de nativas,” El Aaiún 1965, 1. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.

²¹⁸ Of course, their personal views may be different to what the archives imply.

²¹⁹ Mateo, “Notas...,” 1966. Her statement seems to be based on the practice of the husband-to-be giving a bridewealth to the father of the girl to be wed.

²²⁰ Enrique Bengochea Tirado, “Las mujeres saharauis a través de la Sección Femenina, un sujeto colonizado,” *Arenal* 19, no. 1 (2012): 152.

²²¹ Reports and communications of the Women’s Section repeatedly draw attention to the staff’s difficulties in engaging with teenage women, since most were married (and, in many cases, therefore not able to go to school, although there is a report of one married and heavily pregnant 13 year old child attending class, and Silka, too, was married when she attended class) aged 12 or 13. See for example Concha Mateo, Letter to María Nieves Sunyer in Madrid, El Aaiún, 16 March 1966, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 240; Concha Mateo, Letter to Soledad de Santiago in Madrid, El Aaiún, 17 March 1966, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 240; Provincial Director of the Training and Youth Participation Department, “Cuestionario de actividades de los círculos de juventudes,” El Aaiún, 27 September 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237; Provincial Director of the Training and Youth Participation Department, “Actividades para la Juventud del Sahara, Curso 1974-75, Trimestre Primero,” El Aaiún, October 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.

²²² On the scarcity of girls in ‘normal’ (non-Women’s Section) schools and the Spanish perceived reasons behind this see Mateo, 17 March 1966 and Maria Angeles Mozaz, “Actas de reuniones celebradas recientemente con mujeres nativas, ex alumnas de los Centros de Sección Femenina,” El Aaiún, 24 October 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.

²²³ Mateo, “Notas para la conferencia de Teresa...,” 1966, 1.

girls to negotiate their position, taking advantage of what they could and resisting male domination in their own ways. After listing the problems faced by women, she commented, “it could seem, because of all this, that the woman has no influence in the life of the Sahara. Well she does. Subterfuges are valued: she pretends to be ill, she escapes, she acts... and so she usually gets her own way sometimes.”²²⁴ These levers of influence that Mateo identifies are what Scott would call “weapons of the weak,” the subtle acts of everyday resistance that are often most opportune for the oppressed in situations of domination, such as was the case for women living in a patriarchal society.²²⁵

A Women’s Section Social Worker highlighted another case that illustrates Saharawi women’s capacity to ‘play’ the traditional and colonial patriarchal systems to reach their wished-for ends. The El Aaiún-based Social Worker observed:

...in the month of March, the Captain Chief of the Local Office of this city sent us a week-old girl who had been abandoned by her mother. The father, who was very old, couldn’t look after the baby.

For 5 days she was kept at the local Domestic School, until the mother came to collect her because she had just made an agreement with her husband before the Sharia judge: the ex-husband would have to give her 1500 pesetas every month, so that she could bring up the girl on artificial milk since natural milk wasn’t possible. Once this problem had been solved she told us that she had left her daughter because she saw this as the only way that she could get the money she needed.²²⁶

Whilst Spanish colonialism altered the political landscape in the Sahara, unlike in Equatorial Guinea, it barely touched the local Islamic judiciary system (legal issues between Saharawis were left for Saharawis to resolve).²²⁷ The Saharawi woman quoted above knew how to manage the two powers. Although the Saharawi mother was economically dependent on her ex-husband thanks to traditional patriarchal gender norms reinforced by the Spanish colonial system, she was nevertheless able to make use of colonial structures just as, as we

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ Scott, *Weapons...*

²²⁶ Anonymous Social Worker, “Informe del primer semestre de 1974,” 30 July 1974, 3, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.

²²⁷ Barona’s comprehensive PhD thesis covers how the Spanish instilled political and legal control in Spanish Sahara. Barona “Sahara al Garbia...”

have seen above, black Saharawi slave women did, to ensure the protection of her baby until she had sought legal justice through the Saharawi judge. Furthermore, she presumably knew the latter would be likely to support her cause since in Islamic law the father must provide *nafaqa* (support) for children in cases where the mother takes custody.²²⁸ She used her knowledge to her own advantage as women in other hassanophone contexts (namely Mauritania) have done. As Majhula Cheikh el Mami told me in an interview, the only schooling she had in Spanish Sahara was in Quranic verse, and yet it “stood [her] in very good stead.”²²⁹ Knowledge of the Quran was and is well-valued for both girls and boys in hassanophone societies, and mothers, as Corinne Fortier has pointed out with reference to the Mauritanian context, instil in their daughters a strong awareness of their rights with regards to family law.²³⁰

In other cases, when escaping an unhappy situation was all but impossible, there are nevertheless signs that Saharawi women harboured resentment of patriarchal norms and challenges to the same. Coerced marriage is a good example. Although, in Saharawi society of the sixties, a woman would have more freedom in choosing her second husband if she got divorced, her parents would play a stronger role in selecting her first husband. That is not to say that all women were content with this arrangement. Some begrudgingly married their parents’ choice of husband, but showed emotional resistance by harbouring secret lovers, and shared their desires and forbidden love stories with friends.²³¹ Some reacted more openly. A 12 year old Mariam Hassan (who would become one of Western Sahara’s most celebrated revolutionary singers) for example ran away on the day of her wedding when her parents attempted to marry her to an “older man.”²³² Mariam was in hiding for three months, her persistent absence eventually pushing her parents to relent. They returned the bridewealth and Mariam escaped the compromise.²³³

²²⁸ Alice Wilson, personal communications, December 2015.

²²⁹ Majhula Cheikh el Mami, personal interview, Auserd camp, 12 December 2015.

²³⁰ Corinne Fortier, “The Right to Divorce for Women (khul’) in Islam: Comparative Practices in Mauritania and Egypt,” *Droits et Cultures* 59 (2010).

²³¹ For example, an anonymous woman cited by Nicoletta Gandolfi tells such a story of her best friend (a Saharawi woman forced into marriage but who fell in love with a cousin). Gandolfi, “A propósito del Sáhara Occidental: testimonios de los canarios que allí residieron durante el periodo colonial,” *Oriente Moderno*, 1989.

²³² Alfonso Lafarga, “Mariam Hassan, la voz que cantó la lucha del pueblo saharai por el mundo,” <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/08/mariem-hassan-la-voz-que-canto-la-lucha-de-pueblo-saharai-por-el-mundo/#more-6172>, 24 August 2015 (accessed 25 May 2016).

²³³ *Ibid.*

Mariam managed a positive outcome for herself but some parents may have ostracised such a rebellious daughter.²³⁴ We should not forget that patriarchal society (and the Saharawi patriarchal gender norms were reinforced by the colonial ones, as well as by the wage labour economy introduced by the Spanish) made many women somewhat dependent on their male relatives and/or spouses for survival. Outright rebellion in the cases of coerced marriage could mean exclusion by those who provided her sustenance, and so “everyday resistance,” quiet and disguised acts such as complaints to a female friend and the cherishing of secret loves, were the best resistance tactics for some women facing coerced marriage. Linked to this, Caratini states that, in Saharawi society of the early seventies, before marriage all girls would have undergone genital cutting and some would have been fattened in order to ameliorate marriage prospects, practices which the POLISARIO later (and the Spanish never) fought.²³⁵

I should briefly qualify my observations here. I argue that Saharawi patriarchal norms were reinforced with those of Francoist patriarchy to make women dependent on their male kin and husbands. It is also important to highlight that Saharawi interpretations of Islam influenced (and influences) their demands for patriarchal practices. In Saharawi society, unlike some other Islamic societies, the *mahr* (bridewealth), is paid by the groom not to his bride but to her father. Nevertheless, as Alice Wilson points out, Saharawi Islam also ensured certain protections for (married) women. Saharawis practiced the Islamic concept of *rhīl*, a marriage gift for the new bride. Through the *rhīl*, the Saharawi nomadic family would give their daughter some camels to take with her when she moved to live with her new husband. Thus, if the woman got divorced, she would have the camels (which remained exclusively hers, not the property of the couple), thereby avoiding her total economic dependency. Similarly, unlike women living in some other Islamic and Maghreb contexts where a woman who uses her right to inherit property at marriage simultaneously foregoes her right to protection from her natal family in the case of marital dispute, Saharawi women (like their sisters in other Hassanophone contexts) could inherit property at marriage whilst also maintaining the right to protection from her brothers if needed.²³⁶

²³⁴ Parental authority was and is important in Saharawi culture, for both women and men.

²³⁵ Sophie Caratini, “La prisión del tiempo: los cambios sociales en los campamentos de refugiados saharauis,” *Cuadernos Bakeaz* 77 (2006): 7.

²³⁶ Wilson, December 2015. On Maghreb inheritance practices and their roots (outside of) the Quran, see Germaine Tillion, *The Republic of Cousins: Women's Oppression in Mediterranean Society* (London: Al Saqi Books, 1983), 28-29.

Returning to the subject of resistance, attendance of the Women's Section itself also represented a space for challenge of patriarchal norms for some women. Whilst Khadijatou Mokhtar attended Spanish schools with the full support of her family, she simultaneously notes that, being a girl, her case was rare. She explains:

If the sedentary families didn't tend to send their children to Spanish schools, it was even less common for nomadic ones. And it was far, far less usual for girls to be sent to school. I was an exception because, firstly, my father is a man with quite an open mind...²³⁷

Tawfa's case was different to Khadijatou's. She had heard about the Women's Section through female friends and wanted to go to learn "how to write, how to cook, how to speak Spanish."²³⁸ "I wanted to work. I didn't want to remain in a stagnant situation that involved being silent and staying at home," she adds.²³⁹ So, in 1972 at the age of 17, she defied her parents' wishes in order to begin classes. She explains why many girls like her were not allowed to go to Women's Section or other schools:

We lived under a patriarchal system [...] We girls had the intention of learning more, but at the same time, our fathers were working to preserve values and traditions. They worked for the family and for the girls to protect those values and that system. So my father used to keep a strict eye on me. Men would offer girls all they needed but girls had to stay at home. So, at that time, it was difficult for women to go out and about unless they got married.²⁴⁰

Although Tawfa highlights patriarchy as the reason why she was not allowed to go to school, it is possible that families that prevented both girls and boys from attending were resisting colonialism. Indeed, a Saharawi informant of Caratini told her "[colonial] school means submission."²⁴¹ While Tawfa feels that her parents' initial refusal to allow her to attend school was due to patriarchal norms, we cannot assume that this was the case for all women.

²³⁷ Khadijatou Mokhtar, personal interview, Auserd camp, 13 December 2015.

²³⁸ Saleh, 11 December 2015.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Sophie Caratini, *Hijos de las nubes*, (Madrid: Ediciones del Oriente y del Mediterráneo, 2008), 129.

To summarise then, Saharawi women challenged sexism in their society through a spectrum of resistance tactics: from the everyday resistance mounted through subterfuge, evasion and trickery, to seeking recourse through traditional Islamic legal channels and co-opting colonial structures for their own benefit, to the most quiet and disguised resistance at the intimate and emotional level. Saharawi women were to use similar modes of resistance in the face of the Women's Section itself.

Reports on Women Section activities throughout the eleven years in the Sahara illustrated that Saharawi women were generally resistant to the classes related to good housekeeping, often refusing to attend,²⁴² making minimal effort,²⁴³ or mocking the teachers.²⁴⁴ Girls, too, resisted the Falangist indoctrination. Mateo describes the significant difficulties the Section had during the first year of their girls school in El Aaiún: "Indiscipline, envy, lies, indolence, the most total superficiality, resentment, have been the causes of the tremendous difficulty of giving classes."²⁴⁵

On the other hand, cultural and literacy classes were popular.²⁴⁶ By 1972, there is evidence of Women's Section schools dropping domestic classes in favour of more literacy ones, in response to the demands of Saharawi women.²⁴⁷ Similarly, the methods by which the Women's Section claimed to achieve its aim of "promoting the Saharawi woman" were widened from teaching them to be good mothers and housewives to stimulating the "intellectual development" of women and girls.²⁴⁸ The long-term effect of this was that, towards the end of their time in the Sahara, Women's Section's understanding of what success meant had changed. The highlights of annual reports sent back to Madrid no longer focused on how many women could iron or sew, but rather on intellectual successes. For example, in 1974 they celebrated first prizes for their students in the provincial theatre

²⁴² See Mateo, "Informe de la labor...", 1964, 1.

²⁴³ See Mateo, "Informe correspondiente...", 1965, 1.

²⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, 2. Mateo explains that the Spanish teachers have learnt how to tell when the natives "are taking the mick. At least we realise it and know where to attack."

²⁴⁵ Mateo, "Informe de la labor...", 1964, 4.

²⁴⁶ Women's Section, "Informe y evaluación de actividades," Villa Cisneros, October 1972, 3, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237; Women's Section, "Informe e evaluación curso 1972 – 1973," Villa Cisneros, 8 June 1973, 2, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237; Women's Section, "Junta quincenal de directoras de departamento," El Aaiún, 20 March 1975, 2, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.

²⁴⁷ The 1972 report from Villa Cisneros, for example, describes that it was difficult to run the jersey-sewing classes, and so literacy classes were favoured, in response to the request of the students. Women's Section, "Informe y evaluación...", October 1972.

²⁴⁸ Concha Mateo, "Proyecto de nuevo edificio para escuela de primera enseñanza de patronato de Sección Femenina," El Aaiún, 4 May 1971, 1, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 240.

competitions and a first prize in Spain's 10th National Literary Competition for the sonnet dedicated to Smara town penned in Spanish by 11-year-old Fatma Ahmed Abdsalem.²⁴⁹

In contrast to the centralised Women's Section policies on nurseries, which deemed their use to be "undesirable," justifiable "only in a pure emergency" since the Francoist women's key role was child-rearing (as Aurora Morcillo has pointed out in her study of Catholic womanhood under Franco, by the sixties Women's Section discourse in Spain had incorporated the idea of a professional woman, but women were nevertheless expected to leave their jobs once a husband or child arrived),²⁵⁰ by the end of the colonial period, most of the Domestic Schools in the Sahara had their own nursery, as did the artisanal workshops.²⁵¹ This provision was most likely in response to Saharawi women's pressure on the Spanish provincial Government. Indeed, even at the very end of the colonial period, there is documentation of Saharawi women's lobbying efforts for more nurseries, as well as for the Spanish government to subsidise learning materials for women.²⁵²

Saharawi women's Islamic beliefs were tolerated to some extent, with Quranic and classical Arab classes included in the syllabus of Women's Section's schools for adults and children.²⁵³ This too presented a break from one of the main stated aims of Franco's Women's Section: to indoctrinate women to be active Catholics.²⁵⁴ On the other hand, as Bengochea has pointed out, colonial 'respect' for Islam was a piece of the wider (self-)image of 'benevolent coloniser' that Spain attempted to cultivate.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁹ Headmistress, Smara Domestic School, "Informe de las actividades realizadas durante el Curso 73/74 en la Escuela Hogar de Patronato de Sección Femenina de Sahara," Smara, 30 June 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 240.

²⁵⁰ Aurora G. Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood: Gender Ideology in Franco's Spain* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), 104.

²⁵¹ Heliodoro Manuel Pérez Moreno, "La Sección Femenina de la España de Franco (1939-1975) y sus contradicciones entre "perfil de mujer" y medios educativos," *Cadernos de história da educação* 7, no. January/December (2008): 84.

²⁵² General Government of the Sahara Province, "Actitud alumnas Sección Femenina," Villa Cisneros, 24 January 1975. Document annexed to the thesis of Barona, "Sahara al Garbia..."

²⁵³ Arabic language was also taught, along with Islamic art and history, the history of Arab Spain, and Saharawi dance and music. Headmistress, Smara Domestic School, "Informe de las actividades..." 30 June 1974.

²⁵⁴ Pérez Moreno, "La Sección Femenina..."

²⁵⁵ Enrique Bengochea, "La 'Sección Femenina' dans la province du Sahara Espagnol (1961-1975)," presented at *La question (irrésolue) du Sahara Occidental : quels enjeux pour quelles recherches en sciences humaines et sociales?*, Sorbonne, Paris, 2-3 June 2016.

As the mid-seventies approached, Saharawi women, by which time many were fluent in Spanish, began to make explicit nationalist and feminist demands on the Women's Section. In October 1974, the Section held meetings with former and current students of the Domestic School to research the views of young Saharawi women on their role in society. In one such meeting Embarca Mahamud, Arbía Mohamed Nas and Fatima Taleb (who was, at the time, working for the Women's Section) asked Mateo and her Spanish colleagues why it was that the Spanish Government had only just begun to take an interest in providing educational grants and employment opportunities to Saharawis. They also criticised the *Djemaa* (a Spanish orchestrated puppet 'autonomous government' set up in 1962)²⁵⁶ for having approved a new Teacher Training school without having consulted any women, highlighting the sexism of this all-male Saharawi governing structure controlled indirectly by the colonialists. It should be noted that Taleb herself was an exceptional case: she was to become the first Saharawi woman to graduate (from Granada University, Spain) in medicine in 1981 then later played a leading role in establishing the acclaimed health system that now exists in the camps.²⁵⁷ She would have been conscious, in 1974, that very few women were benefitting from the scarce opportunities granted to Saharawis to study in universities abroad.

After raising their socio-economic points, the three Saharawi women then redirected the meeting to raise pro-independence demands. The minutes of the meeting record the following intervention by the three: "...they proceeded to tell us that they wanted absolute Independence [...] They expressed their wish for women to vote in the referendum..."²⁵⁸ In a second meeting with a similar aim, Saharawi women once again redirected the proceedings. Khadija Abdelmajib said women (including herself) wanted to study but that their families would not let them, and asked how the Women's Section planned to address this barrier; Fatimetu Abdelahay asked for legislation to prevent parents from marrying off their

²⁵⁶ Spain stole the term *Djemaa* from a Saharawi term that denoted the leading decision-making assembly within a tribe. In 1974 some of its members became part of an all-male puppet political party set up by the Spanish, known as the *Partido de Unión Nacional Saharaui* (PUNS). We can see parallels between Spanish colonial policy (with regards to co-opting some Saharawis through the *Djemaa* as well as tolerance of Islam) with Portuguese colonial policy in Guinea Bissau and Mozambique. See Mário Machaqueiro, "Ambiguities of Seduction: Photography and the "Islamic" Policy of Portuguese Colonialism," *Anthropological Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (2015).

²⁵⁷ Lehdia Dafa, "En el Día de la Mujer, recuerdo y homenaje a las pioneras de la sanidad saharai," http://lehdiamohameddafa.blogspot.com.es/2015_03_01_archive.html, 7 March 2015, (accessed 1 May 2015).

²⁵⁸ Emphasis in original. Maria Angeles Mozaz, "Actas de reuniones celebradas recientemente con mujeres nativas, ex alumnas de los centros de Sección Femenina," *El Aaiún*, 9 October 1974, 1, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.

daughters “and shutting them away in the house” before the age of 18, not at 13, which was the standard age; Embarka Mohammed complained that there was no point in the Women’s Section encouraging Saharawi women to engage with the *Djema*, since men had no interest in listening to women’s political views.²⁵⁹

The overarching goal of the Women’s Section was in theory to promote Saharawi women. For the latter, this should have meant fighting for social and political rights, not merely literacy classes and certainly not just the promotion of good housekeeping. In this way, by challenging the colonials for their lack of action on sexism, Saharawi women’s resistance could be interpreted as intersectional. It was simultaneously feminist and anti-colonialist. Tawfa’s explanation of why the POLISARIO movement placed so much emphasis on gender equality backs up this view as well as highlighting how important such Women’s Section students, who had challenged (Saharawi and Spanish) society’s construction of women’s role, were for the success of the POLISARIO’s project:

When I saw the Spanish women working in offices and schools and as nurses, I felt like a guest. I didn’t accept this situation. It gave me a lesson... motivation. I raised this issue with my husband, my father, my brother. I told them that I would like to be like the Spanish women, or even surpass them. [...] Women developed a sort of confidence. If her husband got sacked from his job, she would go and claim his rights. If her father were sacked, she would do the same. [...] And without those women that had studied under the Spanish, the POLISARIO would not have reached the level that it did. It was the women who studied under the Spanish colonialists that later on became nurses, teachers and professionals.²⁶⁰

Women’s Section made at least some socio-political efforts that favoured individual women (bearing in mind that, in its latter years, the “Women’s Section” and “Saharawi women” importantly cannot be considered a dichotomy, since the latter began to be incorporated into employment positions in the former). It bent the rules to provide financial support to at least one woman without means or family,²⁶¹ negotiated an educational grant for a girl child

²⁵⁹ Mozaz, 24 October 1974.

²⁶⁰ Saleh, 11 December 2015.

²⁶¹ Women's Section, “Informe general, catedra de Smara, 13 Enero a 13 Junio,” Smara, No date, 2, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.

that had survived sexual exploitation,²⁶² personally visited the parents of several hundred girls and young women to convince them to allow their daughters to study,²⁶³ and, in its later years, shifted its focus away from domestic chores towards attempting to provide professional-orientated education for women (albeit a heavily gendered and classist one, with training focused on typing, social work, hairdressing, cleaning and health assistance),²⁶⁴ in direct response to the demands of Saharawi women themselves, especially those left in a precarious financial situation, such as “those divorced and aged over 30,” that is to say, significantly, those without a man.²⁶⁵

When the Women’s Section was notified that the government would be shutting down its dressmaking Workshop, it reacted with anger.²⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the Section had converted the Workshop into a cooperative, which meant that all funds left in the bank upon its liquidation would have to be divided equally between the twelve Saharawi employees rather than going back to government.²⁶⁷ Women’s Section had further battles with other colonial bodies. For example, the Section had spent time persuading Saharawi families to allow their daughters to apply for a National Identification Document (D.N.I.), which would give them the right to apply for jobs. Nevertheless, the Section complained that the Administrative Office responsible for preparing D.N.I.s claimed “not to have time” to prepare them for all Saharawi women that requested one.²⁶⁸ Another is that of the state-owned company EMINSA, later Fosbucraa, which, after several confrontations with Women’s Section, was finally persuaded to employ just one Saharawi woman as a cleaner. The reticence of Fosbucraa’s management was due to their racist opinion of Saharawi women: “these women are unreliable, irresponsible as workers and above all they are not properly

²⁶² Women's Section, “Informe general de la Escuela Hogar de Villa Cisneros, Curso 1973-1974,” Villa Cisneros, 1974, 1, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.

²⁶³ Mateo, 4 May 1971.

²⁶⁴ Women's Section, “Nota informativa sobre las actividades que la Sección Femenina realiza en el Sahara,” El Aaiún, December 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.

²⁶⁵ Monreal, 1973, 2.

²⁶⁶ Maria Angeles Mozaz, Letter to Soledad de Santiago in Madrid, El Aaiún, 17 May 1975, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239. Indeed, Mozaz wanted the government’s actions to be recorded in the archives. In the letter she writes, “[a]s I already explained on the telephone it’s very important that these documents are archived in our National Archive.”

²⁶⁷ Maria Angeles Mozaz, “Liquidación que se presenta a gobierno del Taller-Escuela “Confecciones Sahara,”” El Aaiún, 15 April 1975, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.

²⁶⁸ Maria Angeles Mozaz, “Informe motivado de los cursos que esta Delegación Provincial de Sección Femenina de Sahara imparte a la mujer nativa con cargo al Fondo Nacional de Protección al Trabajo,” El Aaiún, Estimated 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237. See also Women's Section, “Informe general, catedra de Smara...,” No date, 2.

trained.”²⁶⁹ Women’s Section pressured Fosbucraa, with help from their complaints to the government, to change its approach. Indeed, in many ways the single and assertive leaders of the Spanish Women’s Section staff broke the mould of the Francoist submissive housewife model.²⁷⁰ Aurora Morcillo makes the same observation of leaders of the Women’s Section on the Spanish mainland. In her words, “Falangist women developed a public persona very different from the private motherly Christian figure their discourse promoted.”²⁷¹

Indeed, it is worth directing the reader to the work of other researchers in this area. Bengochea has highlighted that some Spanish ex-residents of Western Sahara believe that the Women’s and Youth Falangist sections may have inadvertently inspired Saharawi nationalism, a view that Mateo herself also held.²⁷² However, he crucially explains the dark nature of this ‘inspiration:’ Spanish Women’s Section staff inculcated Saharawi women in Spanish nationalism, but simultaneously forever refused to talk of Saharawi women as Spanish: they were merely “natives” or “Muslims.”²⁷³ Stucki, as well as Amalia Morales Villena and Soledad Vieitez Cerdeño (who have carried out interviews with ex-Women’s Section leaders), also argue that Women’s Section provoked a Saharawi nationalist sentiment in some ways.²⁷⁴ Indeed, my quotation of Tawfa above indicates that such Spanish women fed her desire for a life outside of the domestic sphere, which is quite the opposite of what the Falangists originally set out to do. The insufficient efforts of the Spanish government to support her with these aspirations fuelled Tawfa’s nationalist sentiments.

To summarise, Spanish colonialism brought new challenges for Saharawi women. While Saharawi women already had their own ways of bargaining with the patriarchal elements of Saharawi society, Spain imported its own brand of patriarchy. As well as trying to transform Saharawi women into model Francoist housewives, sedentarisation and wage labour

²⁶⁹ Anonymous Social Worker, “Informe del primer semestre...,” 30 July 1974, 3.

²⁷⁰ Although some women further down the ranks were married to Spanish soldiers, most of the leaders were single.

²⁷¹ Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood...*, 108.

²⁷² Enrique Bengochea Tirado, “Mujeres, nacionalismo y políticas coloniales en la provincia de Sáhara (1958-1975),” <http://diasporasaharai-es.blogspot.co.uk/2014/07/mujeres-nacionalismo-y-politicas.html>, 2014 (accessed 13 May 2015), 1 and 19.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁷⁴ Bengochea Tirado, “Mujeres, nacionalismo...”; Bengochea Tirado, “Las mujeres saharauis a través de la Sección Femenina...” Stucki, “The Hard Side of Soft Power...,” 12; Amalia Morales Villena, and Vieitez Cerdeño, Soledad, “La Sección Femenina en la «llamada de África»: Saharauis y Guineanas en el declive del colonialismo español,” *Vegueta. Anuario de la Facultad de Geografía e Historia (Universidad de Granada)* 14 (2014).

brought new, gendered problems, not least increasing women's dependency on male relatives and spouses. Nevertheless, Saharawi women bargained with the Women's Section, taking advantage only of the classes that interested them, demanding more of these, and challenged the staff for their lack of political struggle for women's rights to study, work and participate in politics. During the period that the Women's Section was in the Sahara, Saharawi women resisted both indigenous Saharawi and Islamic patriarchal elements and the new Francoist form of patriarchy that the Section initially tried to impose. The emerging POLISARIO revolutionary discourses attempted, at least partially, to make a break from these patriarchal elements.

With regards to wider theoretical arguments, these examples illustrate the problem of focusing solely on *colonial* domination in subaltern histories. As Spivak has pointed out, the subaltern is gendered, and yet Subaltern Studies is not generally informed by feminist theory.²⁷⁵ Similarly, Sumit Sarkar highlights the dangers of focusing on Edward Said inspired frameworks whilst attempting to write subaltern histories. Focusing on colonial domination alone (as, Sarkar argues, the Saidian frameworks for colonial discourse analysis tend to) risks making invisible other axes of power, and therefore resistance. Sarkar finds that "indigenous or precolonial roots of many forms of caste, gender and class domination are generally ignored" in Subaltern Studies.²⁷⁶

A welcome exception is a collection of essays on women's resistance in colonial South Asia edited by Anindita Ghosh. The focus of these essays is on resistance to colonial and indigenous patriarchies, rather than on women's nationalist resistance.²⁷⁷ Another exception is the work of Samita Sen on women and labour in the jute mills of late colonial India. She highlights how jute entrepreneurs were able to draw on existing ideologies of gender and "pre-capitalist" gender inequalities to exploit Indian women, and furthermore shows how women organised for interests specific to women workers, as well as workers more generally, in their resistance of the colonial entrepreneurs. How women resisted sexual

²⁷⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The New Subaltern: A Silent Interview," in *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, ed. Vinayak Chaturvedi (London: Verso, 2000).

²⁷⁶ Sumit Sarkar, "Orientalism Revisited: Saidian Frameworks in the Writing of Modern Indian History," in *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, ed. Vinayak Chaturvedi (London: Verso, 2000). Women's Studies and other disciplines have arguably made more headway in this respect. For example, Suad Joseph and Susan Slyomovics point out that patriarchy oppressed women across the Middle East and North Africa before the arrival of European colonialism. Now, precolonial and postcolonial patriarchies intersect in the nation-building projects of the region. Joseph, *Women and Power...*

²⁷⁷ *Behind the Veil...*

inequalities is not the main focus of her research, however.²⁷⁸ My argument thus far attempts to add to Sen and Ghosh's valuable work by illustrating that subaltern women, on top of anti-colonial struggles, resist sexual and racial inequalities that have their roots in indigenous gender and racial norms. Later in the chapter I follow Sen in attempting to illustrate how women fought for common interests (in this case the Saharawi nation rather than the Indian working class) as well as, again following Sen, women-specific interests that were not necessarily fruit of pre-colonial sexual oppression.

As well as patriarchy and racial axes of power, Saharawi women also resisted the colonial administration. They challenged the Women's Section, encouraging it to fight for what could be described as feminist demands, and indeed they enjoyed some successes in these challenges: on a number of occasions, the Spanish Sahara's Women's Section broke with Franco regime discourse and policy in favour of Saharawi women's interests, but only due to pressure from their colonial subjects. It is also worth noting that by the seventies, a small number of Saharawi women formed part of the Women's Section, and as the example of Fatima Taleb illustrates, they were vocal on the rights of Saharawi women along both gender and nationalist lines. This begs the question (hinted at by Sarkar) whose full response is out of the scope of this thesis: to what extent do subalterns themselves shape and influence colonial constructions of gender and gender equality?²⁷⁹ Whilst the Women's Section Spanish staff may have arrived in their African province with a clear idea of what they aimed to turn Saharawi women into, they no doubt left with a different image of what Saharawi women were, had been and could be. Did their experiences in Spanish Sahara, and Saharawi women's feminist and nationalist protests, affect the Women's Section staff with regards to their attitudes to gender inequalities back in their Spanish homelands? Such a question is worthy of further research.

Cynthia Enloe has warned political scientists of the dangers of ignoring women's anti-sexist resistance when analysing the global political economy. Doing so paints proposals for women's rights as the exclusive brainchild of male 'modernising' elites.²⁸⁰ In this section, I have tried to apply Enloe's warning to Saharawi history. I argued in previous research that POLISARIO nationalist discourses made gender equality and the eradication of slavery aims

²⁷⁸ Samita Sen, *Women and Labour in Late Colonial India: the Bengal Jute Industry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²⁷⁹ Sarkar, "Orientalism Revisited..."

²⁸⁰ *Nimo's War, Emma's War*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010): 25.

and indeed necessary components of the independence revolution. I argued that these aims were inspired by other revolutions in which the position of women changed for the better and racist hierarchies were vilified. I also have argued previously that such discourses served several internal and external ideological functions, one of which was to mobilise women politically against Spanish and later Moroccan colonialism. However, our historical focus here, which has brought to light how Saharawi women and slave women and men subtly resisted gender and racial inequalities allows new insights into the formation of POLISARIO discourse. It suggests that (black) women did not only react to POLISARIO nationalist discourses, but they also actively shaped it. Everyday feminist resistances observed as early as 1964 (i.e. before the nationalist movement developed) by the Women's Section suggest that it was perhaps *not only* external anti-colonial movements in Algeria, Guinea Bissau and so on that inspired the (all male) POLISARIO leaders with regards to gender equality, it was also Saharawi women themselves. And it was precisely because of Saharawi women's feminist wants that POLISARIO's pro-women rhetoric was so attractive to the former. The result was the mass presence of Saharawi women and girls, as well as some enslaved peoples, in open resistance to Spanish colonialism, detailed later in the chapter. First, in the following section, we look at why POLISARIO's predecessor independence movement was born in 1969.

2.4 “[W]e mustn't forget that a Party exists now and, worse still, an idea exists:” The emergence of Saharawi nationalism²⁸¹

Amongst the most well off of the Saharawis under the Spanish were those working for the colonial administration, including in the Nomadic Troops (the Saharawi unit of the army) and the Territorial Police. Of course, being 'well-off' was relative. The Houses of Stones suburb of El Aaiún, where many Saharawi soldiers, police and their families lived, had an “almost total lack of drains and running water [and a] lack of an organised rubbish collection service.”²⁸² The existence of enslaved families was marked by poverty to an even greater extent. A Spanish soldier describes how the family of an enslaved colleague in the Nomadic Troops lived:

²⁸¹ This is a quote from the Spanish colonial government report on *Harakat Tahrir*, written shortly before the Zemla protest. General Government of the Sahara Province, “Informe sobre el partido saharauí clandestino denominado “Organización Avanzada para la Liberación de la Saguia el Hamra y Rio de Oro,”” El Aaiún, 12 June 1970, 9. Document available in Barona, *Sahara Al-Garbia...*

²⁸² Sahara Section of the General Government of the Canaries, “Motivos de descontento en el barrio llamado “Casas de Piedra,”” El Aaiún, 14 January 1975, 1. Document available in Barona, *Sahara Al-Garbia...*

They usually carry a stick, they are badly dressed and almost semi-naked. Contemplating them reminds us of the olden days, giving the sensation of living in biblical times.

After the passing the *haimas* of their owners, you can see behind a type of raised tent with some sticks and a ragged piece of cloth. It's the home of a family of slaves.²⁸³

The Women's Section observed that Saharawi women were conscious of the luxuries (such as large houses and washing machines) that Spanish women had and wished for the same. Nevertheless, Saharawi women found it hard to obtain the smallest luxuries on their wages: "they work in order to have the money necessary to survive."²⁸⁴

In Spanish Sahara, Saharawis provided a cheap labour force for resource exploitation, created artisanal shops to cater for the few Spanish tourists, and others had jobs in the lower echelons of the colonial administration, mostly with bad pay and few rights. Indeed, Saharawis were well aware that, even if they held the same qualifications, their pay was not the same as a Spanish worker.²⁸⁵ The Spanish authorities themselves recognised the profound racism of most of the Spanish population towards the Saharawis. A government study of the situation of Saharawi youth notes the perspective of the Spanish towards "the natives:"

There is an almost total segregation of the native who is not held in much regard and a true racism, especially on the part of the Spanish from the peninsula; the Canary Islanders are much more integrated and accepted by the natives.²⁸⁶

Even if Canary Islanders integrated with Saharawis, they too noted that the Saharawis were at the bottom of the social pile. One Canary Islander that lived in Spanish Sahara describes his perspective:

²⁸³ Alejandro García Llinás quoted in Dalmases, *La Esclavitud...* 75.

²⁸⁴ Monreal, 1973, 2.

²⁸⁵ Concha Mateo, "Informe sobre la actitud política de la mujer saharai," *El Aaiún*, October 1974, 13. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 235.

²⁸⁶ (First name unknown) Murillo, paper letterheaded with the Falange logo, "Informe sobre la situación actual de Sahara," *El Aaiún*, 7 June 1974, 8. Document available in Barona, *Sahara Al-Garbia...*

I felt close to the Saharawis because I'm from the Canaries. Ultimately, we were a type of colonised people too, albeit in a different way. I used to like going to their houses, those of the older kids from school, to take tea amicably. It was well accepted, I felt good with them, better than with the Spanish. In those days Spanish society was extremely closed and hierarchical, and the wives of the non-commissioned officers gave up their places in the queue for the wives of the captains, and the same at church. Just imagine what happened when a Saharawi woman didn't give up her place in line for a Spanish *señora*...²⁸⁷

These discriminations fed tensions beneath the deceptively calm surface, which were to bubble over with increasing frequency in the seventies, as we will see in the next section.

Meanwhile, anti-colonial fervour was spreading throughout the African continent, and Western Sahara would not escape the trend. Inspiring news from as far away as Vietnam was reaching Western Sahara via radio waves, and Mohammed Sidi Brahim Bassiri, a Saharawi intellectual recently returned from years of study in Syria and Egypt and a period working as a journalist in newly independent Morocco, was on site to help weave these anti-colonial triumphs into a nationalist discourse capable of inspiring resistance.

Bassiri was a moderate nationalist well versed in pan-Arabism and the socialist, anti-colonial currents flowing through Africa at that time. Under the guise of his day job as a (well-known and highly respected) teacher in a Quranic school in Smara, he fostered the spreading of such political discourses amongst the Saharawi population. Women played an important role supporting such efforts. Khadijatou Mokhtar explains,

Fundamentally, women's job was to provide logistical support and to change the opinion of the people in meetings, at homes... their job was to convince their families, not only women but men, their parents, their husbands, to align with Bassiri's embryonic movement.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ Anonymous man cited in Gandolfi, "A propósito del Sáhara Occidental..." It should be noted that not all Saharawis felt discrimination. Khadijatou Mokhtar, for example, says she never felt any sense of this at all (13 December 2015). On the other hand, Susan Martin-Márquez has made a strong argument concerning the astute construction, by Saharawi nationalists, of a fraternal and historical friendly relationship between the Spanish and the Saharawis. See Susan Martin-Márquez, "Brothers and Others: Fraternal Rhetoric and the Negotiation of Spanish and Saharawi Identity," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 7, no. 3 (2006).

²⁸⁸ Khadijatou Mokhtar, personal interview, Madrid, 28 November 2014.

The revolutionary zeal that these women promoted was further stoked by rumours that Western Sahara would be annexed by Morocco. This was, after all, the fate of the ethnic Saharawi-dominated region of Tarfaya. The Tarfaya Strip was ceded by Spain to Morocco in 1958 following the war, in which Morocco invaded the area.²⁸⁹ Under Moroccan rule, Saharawis living in the Tarfaya Strip suffered intense brutality (pillage, robbery, rape and summary executions were common practice).²⁹⁰ As such, it is not by chance that Bassiri as well as subsequent leaders of the Saharawi nationalist movement came from this region. Morocco's violent form of government there only served to feed a Saharawi nationalist sentiment, whilst Spain's ceding of Tarfaya reinforced the fear that the rest of the Sahara might be next. Announcements in the Spanish national press of possible upcoming agreements between Spain and Morocco that would allow the latter a share in Fosbucraa profits cemented this fear.²⁹¹

The Moroccan spectre, the African revolutionary currents and Bassiri's teachings contributed to the erosion of some traditional forms of nomadic social organisation based on kinship in place of a new *national* sense of collective identity.²⁹² As a 1973 Spanish population survey found, the Saharawis no longer identified themselves along tribal lines, or at least not in a way that the Spaniards could comprehend.²⁹³ Instead, they joked that all Saharawis belonged to a low-caste tribe and paid tribute to the Spanish.²⁹⁴ The combination of these factors became the placenta for a pro-independence movement.²⁹⁵

²⁸⁹ The war began as a joint effort of some Saharawi tribes and Moroccan berbers to liberate their lands from colonialists (although Morocco was officially "decolonised" by this point, it was still occupied by French forces). However, after a series of betrayals, the episode turned into the first step on the road to Morocco's colonisation of Saharawi lands and ended in violent clashes between Saharawis and Moroccans in Tarfaya. For a full description of the war and its consequences, see San Martín 2010, 66-73. For an analysis of Spanish military perspectives on the war, see Francesco Corrales, "La 'última guerra colonial' de España y la literatura militar entre memoria y conocimiento." At *Seventh African Studies Congress*, (Lisbon, 2010).

²⁹⁰ Ahmed Baba Miské, *Front Polisario: L'ame d'un peuple* (Paris: Editions rupture, 1978), 116.

²⁹¹ General Government of the Sahara Province, "Recopilación de informes y documentos de interés relacionados con el O.A.L.S. y los incidentes del 17 de Junio de 1970," El Aaiún, 22 October 1970, 3. Available in Barona, *Sahara Al-Garbia...*

²⁹² Pablo San Martín, *Western Sahara: The Refugee Nation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010).

²⁹³ Isidoros has argued that Saharawi nationalists did not reject 'tribalism' (indeed she rightly questions the use of the term 'tribe'), but rather the Spanish-imposed repressive model of the 'tribe.' For me, official POLISARIO discourses of the seventies call loudly for a social revolution that would see the traditional forms of social organization completely reimagined. Nevertheless, bearing Isidoros' insights in mind, perhaps there was an official, public perspective and a simultaneous "behind the scenes" effort to work with traditional tribal leaders. Isidoros, "The Silencing of Unifying Tribes..."

²⁹⁴ San Martín, *Western Sahara...* 55.

²⁹⁵ San Martín, *Western Sahara...; Sola, Sahara Occidental...*, 27.

The next sections look at these movements. I begin with a narrative of the Zemla protest. This is a key event in the Saharawi nationalist history and yet women's experiences of Zemla remain unwritten. It is therefore worthwhile telling the story of Zemla through the memories of women who were there. I move on to look at the emergence of the POLISARIO, women's roles in its cells, the creation of the National Union of Saharawi Women (UNMS), and the parallel feminist and nationalist demands of women activists.

2.5 The pro-independence protests begin: Zemla and the formation of the POLISARIO

On the evening of 16 June 1970, a lizard ran for cover as yet another tyre spat rubble in all directions along the main thoroughfare of *Las Colminas* suburb, El Aaiún. Tawfa and Silka had had been listening curiously to the rumble of Land Rovers all afternoon.²⁹⁶ Peeking through the doorway of their home, Tawfa noticed "a lot of women on board." She could see that the arrivals were being welcomed by local families. Tawfa called out to a passing neighbour to enquire.

It turned out the convoy had come all the way from the holy town of Smara, meandering through the desert like a black-green serpent. "Don't go to the General's demonstration!" Tawfa recalls her neighbour warning. "There's to be an alternative demonstration – all Saharawis should go." The two girls, aged 15 and 12 respectively, listened to their neighbour's arguments regarding the importance of the counter demonstration and exchanged a smile. They would attend. Tawfa explains that this is how most Saharawis in El Aaiún came to join the protest: "it was spontaneous." But the apparent spontaneity was only possible thanks to the widespread dissatisfaction at inequalities described in the section above – Saharawi ears by now welcomed nationalist arguments with the hospitality typical of their culture.

The next morning, the dust of Zemla, a barren square in downtown El Aaiún, was awoken early and agitated into the air by people mounting five *āḥīām* (plural of *ḥāīma*) and what Tawfa describes as "a tower of rocks and stones." As the sky hoisted the sun up to its full height, 5000 Saharawis gradually gathered in traditional dress, creating a carpet of lapis

²⁹⁶ Bilaal, 11 December 2015; Saleh, 11 December 2015; Khadijatou Mokhtar has similar memories, 13 December 2015.

lazuli and banded onyx in their gold-fringed, blue or white *ādrārī*²⁹⁷ and new moon black *āmlāḥaf*.²⁹⁸ The atmosphere was expectant, like the warm, close breeze that arrives before thunder.

The colonialists had long been planning a pro-Spain demonstration for the 17 June (the “General’s demonstration,” as Tawfa recalls), and had invited international press to come and witness its puppet party’s public show of loyalty in a bid to ease the increasing UN pressure to decolonise. Therefore, the much larger and passionate counter-demonstration made Spanish forces panic. They surrounded Zemla square and set up checkpoints in an effort to prevent Saharawis of neighbouring districts from joining the protest. But, as Ahmed Baba Miské observes, “[t]he militants and above all the women, found a thousand tricks to bypass or make it through the checkpoints.”²⁹⁹

The Saharawi protesters were led by the Vanguard Organisation for the Liberation of the Sahara, also known as *Harakat Tahrir* (Liberation Movement), founded the previous year by Bassiri and friends. The protest was a culmination of longer, behind-the-scenes and thus far futile attempts at negotiations with the Spanish. Zemla was a chance for *Harakat Tahrir* to reach a wider audience and, through informal networks, Saharawis were persuaded to boycott the General’s demonstration and head to the counter protest – there were many that were, like Tawfa’s neighbour, spreading the word amongst trusted friends.

In the square, all eyes were on the bearded young leader as he delivered his speech from the summit of the tower of stones. Tawfa and Silka recall feelings more than words, illustrating once again the importance of emotions in fuelling resistance. Bassiri left the crowds effervescent, they tell me. The electric atmosphere lit up a celebration, and Tawfa and Silka were as eager to party as everyone else. They joined dancers, marking rhythm with their fingers, hips and shoulders, emptied their lungs with the revolutionary lyrics of the poets, and feasted on the camels sacrificed in honour of the occasion, in one of the five fizzing and bubbling *āḥiām*.

²⁹⁷ Plural of *derrā’a*, the tunic worn by Saharawi men, in sky blue or white with gold trim around the neck.

²⁹⁸ Plural of *melhfa*, a single piece of cloth that covers the whole body worn by women, traditionally in black but today in multicolours.

²⁹⁹ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario*... 126.

Meanwhile, *Harakat Tahrir* had prepared a petition in favour of gradual independence, to be negotiated with the Spanish colonisers, and asked the Governor General to receive it.³⁰⁰ The latter came, but requested that the crowd disperse. Yet, says Tawfa, “the people stayed where they were: enjoying being in the *āḥīām* and singing.”³⁰¹ Two hours later, the crowds still there, Spanish police began to arrest some of *Harakat Tahrir’s* leaders. In response, Saharawis ran to the tower of stones and grabbed its building blocks, ready to pelt the colonial officers. This unwelcome confetti of rubble further angered the Spanish police, who called on the Legion to exert some discipline. Silka, at this point, was enveloped in the relative safety of the *ḥāīma*, but Tawfa was peaking out of the northern entrance, unsure whether or not to venture out. She recalls seeing a Saharawi woman strike a Spaniard on the neck, then a legionnaire firing three warning shots into the sky. The next moments were a blurred sandstorm of shrieking and pushing as bullets pierced through the skin of the *ḥāīma* and ricocheted inside it, like zigzagging mosquitos. There was a woman on the floor. And at least two men. There was the orange glow of angry flames and the creeping of smothering smoke. Silka and Tawfa made it outside. They wound around injured bodies, pushed through groups of Saharawis and Spanish clashing horns, and, like hunted gazelles, leaped away. The two women remember this as “the Zemla massacre.”

Over the following days, severe oppression of Saharawi nationalists ensued. Many were beaten, some arrested, and others still fled the country. The exact circumstances of Bassiri’s fate are unknown. He simply vanished. A Spanish provincial government report on *Harakat Tahrir* dated 12 June 1970 indicated a plan to disappear Bassiri even before the Zemla protest, since Spanish spies were already aware of the “dangerous” nationalist ideas he was spreading. “He should be detained in secret and moved to somewhere outside of the territory and held incommunicado until the situation is normalised,” argued the report.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Isidoros, analysing the conciliatory tone of a letter sent by Bassiri to the Spanish Governor in early June, concludes that Bassiri’s movement, at this stage, desired only autonomy and a re-defined system of Saharawi political representation still under Spanish rule. However, such a tone is, as we have seen, common amongst subaltern peoples, and Alicia Campos’ work on the “double language” of the Equatoguinean pro-independence activists discussed in more detail in Chapter Three is illuminating in this regard. It is my view that Bassiri was maintaining a polite public transcript in his attempted negotiations with the Spanish. Indeed, the testimonies of Bassiri’s comrades collected by Juan Carlos Gimeno Martín and Juan Ignacio Robles Picón illustrate that independence was an aim from the outset. Isidoros, “The Silencing of Unifying Tribes...” 177. Gimeno Martín and Robles Picón, “Ambivalencia y orden colonial español en el Sahara Occidental (1969-1973),” *Revista Andaluza de Antropología* 5, September 2013.

³⁰¹ Saleh, 11 December 2015.

³⁰² General Government of the Sahara Province, “Informe...,” 12 June 1970, 8.

Since the Moroccan invasion, hundreds more Saharawis have joined Bassiri in that dark void of the disappeared. Part of the intended horror of forced disappearance is aimed at those left behind: the not-knowing, the expectancy and the eternal waiting. When there is no definitive truth on offer, people find their own truths. In 1970, rumours abounded, but all nationalists hoped Bassiri would one day return. Some thought he was in a Moroccan prison. Other Saharawis said Bassiri had escaped, and was safe and sound in exile, deciding what card to play next. The consensus today, amongst most Saharawi nationalists, is that Bassiri was kidnapped in the early hours of 18 June from the home of his (male) cousin. Some anonymous Spanish officers have suggested Bassiri was then locked up for six weeks before his final execution. Bassiri's last experiences, according to the officers' truth, would have been the warm July sand under his feet, the cold gaze of legionnaires on his back, the Atlantic's waves whispering in the distance and milky moonlight spilling all around.³⁰³ This desert site of execution and burial was somewhere along the stretch of dunes that lie between El Aaiún city and El Aaiún beach.³⁰⁴

Khadijatou, who had been a resident of Auserd refugee camp for forty years when she died there in November 2015, offered a different truth. Her friends recounted to me the story she had cherished telling throughout her forty years in the camps.³⁰⁵ After giving his speech from the tower of stones, Bassiri skipped the feast and went to Khadijatou's house. He waited there for the Spanish to come for him, ignoring the pleas of Khadijatou and others in the house to hide, or to let himself be smuggled to Mauritania. But Bassiri was resolute. Others had made sacrifices that day. Some were injured. Died even. He would not resist the Spanish. As night drew close, Bassiri wrote a few final letters, making them a shelter for his memories, and entrusted them to Khadijatou. El Aaiún was sleeping by the time the knocks on the door finally came. They were slow and loud and regular, like a clock sounding the hours.

Khadijatou visited Bassiri in prison every day for weeks. She would take him homemade food, clean clothes, conversation. One day he asked her to bring a razor. He shaved his face and washed, then handed her a pile of clothes, which he said he would no longer need. She cried as they hugged goodbye.

³⁰³ Tomás Bárbulo, *La historia prohibida del Sáhara Español*, (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino S.A., 2002), 66-68.

³⁰⁴ San Martín, *Western Sahara...* 81.

³⁰⁵ This story was recounted to me by Tawfa and Silka. Majhoula Cheikh el Mami also confirmed that Bassiri was kidnapped from Khadijatou's house.

As San Martín has noted in his excellent account of the emergence of Saharawi nationalism, for the Saharawi activists, Zemla meant that the armed, revolutionary struggle was the only route to independence from Spain.³⁰⁶ What does Khadijatou's story mean? If factual, it means the constructed feminine role of carer and nurturer extended into the prison space, becoming a type of resistance. It means these women, in Auserd camp, have found a way to connect themselves, via Khadijatou, to the celebrated nationalist martyr. The memories meant other things to Khadijatou, no doubt. The way her friends recounted her story gave me goosebumps. Imagine what emotional power it could carry for a Saharawi activist. Indeed, the role of histories, stories and even of rumour in resistance will be further teased out in Chapters Three and Six, where we will meet Equatoguinean women who, like Khadijatou, pushed the love of a home-cooked meal through the prison bars.

After Zemla, the Francoist regime put its repression tactics into a higher gear. On 1 September 1971 the Spanish created the new "Domestic Policy Headquarters for Information and Control of the Territory."³⁰⁷ In practice, this meant increased spying, and reflected the growing fear felt by the colonialists as a pro-independence sentiment became palpably more apparent amongst the Saharawi population. Indeed, Bassiri had become the stuff of legend for Saharawis. His photograph was to be seen in the houses and *āḥiām* of most Saharawis. Spain's actions at Zemla would forever be held against it.³⁰⁸ Four years later Concha Mateo recalled being told by Saharawi women, "[t]he historic moment was 17 June 1970. We can't trust you any more..."³⁰⁹

As Tawfa and Silka's singing at Zemla indicates, culture became a womb for resistance. Since protest songs in public spaces were banned by the Spanish, in the early seventies Saharawi women disseminated defiant lyrics by singing anti-Spanish songs and poetry at wedding celebrations and clandestine political meetings.³¹⁰ Mariam Hassan for example, the girl who we met earlier in the chapter who avoided a forced marriage, was singing at such a meeting

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Enrique Bengochea Tirado, "La movilización nacionalista saharawi y las mujeres durante el último periodo colonial español," *Revista Historia Autónoma* 3 (2013): 119.

³⁰⁸ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario...* 129.

³⁰⁹ Mateo, October 1974, 8.

³¹⁰ Saleh, 11 December 2015. See also Tara Flynn Deubel, "Poetics of Diaspora: Sahrawi Poets and Postcolonial Transformations of a Trans-Saharan Genre in Northwest Africa," *Journal of North African Studies* 17, no. 2 (2012): 307; Violeta Ruano Posada, and Solana Moreno, Vivian, "The Strategy of Style: Music, Struggle, and the Aesthetics of Sahrawi Nationalism in Exile," *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 5, no. 3 (2015): 44.

in 1973.³¹¹ When Spanish police broke in, she escaped out of the window, maintaining her freedom to keep singing revolutionary songs through the final days of the Spanish presence, the exodus to Algeria, and up until her death in 2015.

Mariam, Tawfa and Silka's singing activities constituted an intersectional challenge to gender norms as well as colonialism. The work of Vivian Solana helps me to explain why. Solana highlights how women activists have challenged the *ḥishma*, a set of social codes associated with modesty. In the pre-revolutionary period, explains Solana, it was considered a sexual provocation for women to dance, sing, show their bodies or raise their voices in front of older men or men who were not blood relations.³¹² Women nationalists challenged the *ḥishma* in the early seventies, and doing so was crucial for the independence cause. Tawfa remembers the motivating effect of songs like Mariam's: "they incited us. This was the way to raise awareness in, let's say, a fashionable way."³¹³

Shortly after the massacre and inspired by Zemla and the extinguished *Harakat Tahrir*, a group of young, male Saharawi university students who had been studying abroad formed the *Frente Por la Liberación de Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro* (POLISARIO), led by the charismatic El Uali Mustapha Sayed. Thus the armed struggle began. At first, El Uali and his comrades travelled under cover around the territory to recruit supporters. The recruitment efforts included the establishment of clandestine schools for women. Many trainees were high school students from El Aaiún and other major towns, as well as nomads. Several joined the militant wing of the POLISARIO, the Saharawi Popular Liberation Army (SPLA). Women were also empowered, somewhat ironically, by Francoist constructions of politics as a male-only arena. Therefore, it was easier for women to move freely and hide incriminating evidence under the folds of their *āmlāḥaf*.³¹⁴ POLISARIO member Leila Khaled recounts her early experiences:

I was contacted by militants to organise, with others, Saharawi women. I participated in the creation of the first POLISARIO women's cells. Given the impossibility of holding general assemblies, due to the presence of the Spanish, each militant was responsible for a district or a street. We'd meet with women in the

³¹¹ Lafarga, "Mariam Hassan..."

³¹² Vivian Solana Moreno, "'No somos costosas, somos valiosas.' La lucha de las mujeres saharauis cuarenta años después," in *Sahara Occidental: 40 Años Después*, eds. Isaías Barreñada and Raquel Ojeda (Madrid: Catarata, 2016): 83.

³¹³ Saleh, 11 December 2015.

³¹⁴ Allan, "Imagining Saharawi Women..." 198.

houses of families that could be trusted. The pretext was making jerseys or participating in housework. Discussions always started with the difficulties of daily life, the salaries of our husbands, ill health, the illnesses of our children... And departing from the personal problems of each of us, we'd arrive together at the source of all the misfortunes we had in common: Spanish colonialism.³¹⁵

Khaled's testimony illustrates how the POLISARIO, prior to the Moroccan invasion, was able to create a chain of equivalence in which the conflicts and grievances of all Saharawis acquired meaning as different expressions of the Spanish colonialist enemy (as is discussed in greater detail elsewhere, after the Moroccan invasion, POLISARIO discourse replaced Spain with Morocco as the single oppression facing all Saharawis).³¹⁶ For the women attending a meeting organised by Khaled and coming into contact with POLISARIO discourses, their children's health complaints and low salaries were no longer 'just the way things were' and could no more be explained away by patronising colonial discourses. Women's problems became politicised and recognised as the fruits of oppression, and POLISARIO offered both a way to resist and a brighter horizon.

POLISARIO influence sent tremors that were increasingly felt by the Women's Section. In January 1974, for example, Saharawi women employees of the dressmaking workshop openly protested for labour rights. When the Spanish decided to reduce the lunch break of the 14 employees from half an hour to 15 minutes in order to promote "better efficiency" as well as to punish the women for their apparent lack of "discipline," eight walked out immediately, six of whom informed their ex-employers that they would be seeking a lawyer.³¹⁷ The remaining six demanded a pay rise and inclusion in Spain's social security system.³¹⁸ One month later, not just the 14 women but all Saharawi workers were accorded the right to social security.³¹⁹

Events like the women's walkout made Spain tremble. Tawfa used to buy Spanish newspapers (*El Diario* or *Cambio 16*) every day. There was always a story about the independence movement. She would read in the taxi on the way to work. One day, whilst

³¹⁵ Leila Khaled cited in Bengochea Tirado, "La movilización nacionalista saharauí...", 124.

³¹⁶ Allan, "Imagining Saharawi Women...".

³¹⁷ Women's Section, "Informe que presenta la delegada provincial de la Sección Femenina, de los hechos ocurridos en el taller escuela...", 2.

³¹⁸ Women's Section, "Informe sobre la situación en el taller-escuela "Confecciones Sahara,"" El Aaiún, 6 February 1974, 2, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.

³¹⁹ Anonymous Social Worker, "Informe...", 3.

nationalist songs blasted out through the speakers, Tawfa thumbed through the sheets to find El Uali's face staring back at her. She recalls:

There were three pictures [...] in one photo [El Uali] had closed eyes, in the second he had half closed eyes, and in the third he had open eyes. Each one was subtitled in Spanish. And each one represented something: in the beginning that people haven't become conscious yet, the second that the people are growing in consciousness, and when their eyes are open it means the people are aware.³²⁰

The Spanish media was hysterical when it came to the POLISARIO. Their fear gave Tawfa assurance and drive. As POLISARIO grew more confident, so did its activities.

One of the first direct actions of the POLISARIO was to hit Spain where it would hurt most: economically. On the night of 19 October 1974, a group of guerrillas sabotaged two stations of the Fosbucraa conveyor belt.³²¹ Women, too, were beginning to take direct action. On 20 November 1974, for example, 25 women gathered outside the Spanish local government building in El Aaiún, where the *Djemaa* was holding a meeting. The women proceeded with a nationalist protest. When police tried to disperse them, Arahma Hadir Mohammed and Mina Omar Jilali threw stones, and were consequently arrested. The remaining women headed to a Spanish hotel, and from a height, threw stones at the Spanish cars passing below, resulting in six more arrests.³²²

1974 saw the creation of the UNMS. The small-cell organizational structures of the UNMS, formed from the groups of women activists that supported Bassiri's *Harakat Tahrir*, and the two other Unions created by the POLISARIO (the Saharawi Union of Students and the Saharawi Union of Workers) became the principal means through which the guerrilla movement recruited supporters.³²³ As we observed in the previous section, Women's Section (ex-)students had told the Spanish management that they wished for a referendum on independence, and that women should be included in the voting lists. Concha Mateo did further research. In October 1974, she compiled the findings of a research trip around

³²⁰ Saleh, 11 December 2015.

³²¹ Concha Mateo, Letter from Concha Mateo to Soledad de Santiago in Madrid, El Aaiún, 22 October 1974. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 235.

³²² Esteban Carvallo de Cora y Romero, Territorial Police, "Informando sobre disturbios ocurridos en el día de hoy," El Aaiún, 20 November 1974. Available in Barona, *Sahara Al-Garbia...*

³²³ Anne Lippert, "Sahrawi Women in the Liberation Struggle of the Sahrawi People," *Signs* 17, no. 3 (1992): 640.

Western Sahara, investigating whether women (and, to a lesser extent, men) of different ages, marital status and education levels had a political conscience, and if so, what their views were.

Almost without exception, Mateo found women of all backgrounds claimed a right to vote and were supportive of a referendum on independence, rejected any sort of integration with Morocco or any other country, held a strong consciousness of the richness (fisheries and phosphates) of Western Sahara and a view that, under Spain, this wealth had not been shared with the Saharawi people. However, equally as salient as the nationalist demands were the feminist ones. Concha Mateo summarised her research:

The constants that are repeated in all conversations are the following:

- Women have 50% of the votes in her hands.
- Women should vote from the age of 14 upwards since they get married before this age
- The Sahara should be independent
- The people of the Liberation Front represent the true Sahara³²⁴
- We have to fight for the liberation of women in order to:
 1. Be able to work and study without negative pressure from our families
 2. Exercise our own choice when we get married, and to do so at the age that we wish
 3. To be able to divorce
 4. To take part in decisions and assemblies
 5. To access jobs and studies with equal opportunity
 6. To access positions of responsibility.³²⁵

Saharawi women's demands for self-determination were woven together with their own feminist goals. They held the hope that in an independent Saharawi state, the socio-political rights that had been denied to them by traditional Saharawi society and the Spanish administration alike would at last be theirs. Such hopes are not surprising. Women's equality was a key aim in the emerging nationalist discourses of the POLISARIO.

³²⁴ "People" is translated from the original "los chicos," which I assume refers to both women and men.

³²⁵ Mateo, "Informe...", October 1974, 5.

Point 3 in the above quotation deserves attention. In Saharawi culture and in accordance with Saharawi interpretations of Islam, a woman may initiate divorce by requesting a divorce from her husband (something which scandalised Mateo when she first arrived in Spanish Sahara: in her native Spain, ending one's marriage was almost impossible and carried stigma for women). There was no stigma for divorced Saharawi women (she can remarry) but only a man can realise the divorce. If he refuses, she has recourse to the Islamic judge. If he too refuses, she is stuck. Some Saharawi women today argue for equal divorce rights in the Saharawi state-in-exile.³²⁶ I would therefore estimate that the women interviewed by Mateo either wished for the right to realise divorce, or for more pressure on their husbands to accept women's requests.

The views on early and forced marriage expressed in the report are also worth special attention. Whilst women demanded action to help delay marriage (indeed in 1976 POLISARIO was to discourage marriage before the age of 16),³²⁷ they simultaneously – and no doubt with the nationalist goal in mind – reminded the Spaniards that teenagers, once married, were regarded as adults in Saharawi culture. Thus, argued the Saharawi women, they should have the right to vote. An end to early and forced marriage was the ideal aim, but, ever practical and realising that the Spanish were unlikely to reverse their policy of non-interference with Saharawi family law, Saharawi women simultaneously raised the demand of enfranchisement for all married girls.

Overall, for the women interviewed by Mateo in 1974, I would conclude that independence meant progress for women's rights. Similarly, black women and girls' support of the POLISARIO depended on its anti-slavery discourses (which were also most likely shaped by the slaves themselves, who, as we have seen, always found ways to resist their oppression on racist terms) as well as its fight against a colonial power that had actively tolerated slavery. In other words, women's resistance was intersectional, fighting the unequal power relationships bred of colonialism, patriarchy and slavery. Dalmases, a journalist in Spanish Sahara, recalls finding 10 year old Marrashina, a girl enslaved by the father of one of his Saharawi colleagues, at an anti-PUNS (the Saharawi National Union Party, a Spanish-backed pro-Spain party created in 1974 in the face of growing Saharawi nationalism) rally in winter 1975:

³²⁶ Dafa and Bouzeid argue in this vein in written publications, but several Saharawi women (and men) also debate this on social media.

³²⁷ Allan, "Imagining Saharawi Women...", 191.

I found her in the crowd, hidden behind a *melhfa* that was too big for her but with which she tried to cover her face, whilst, with her little hands, she hoisted the flag of the POLISARIO, surreptitiously extracted from beneath her clothes.³²⁸

As male members of the POLISARIO militant cells began their attacks on Spanish military targets, other cells were organising demonstrations in favour of self-determination across Western Sahara. Tawfa, Silka and their husbands joined such cells, but secrecy was a key principle of the POLISARIO. They never informed each other of their political activities. Tawfa recalls her husband arriving from work late:

he used to tell me he had been playing cards with his friends, but I imagined he was discussing politics. [...] As for me, my cell used to meet on the beach on Sundays, and I'd go without my husband knowing about it. [...] If we went to a protest, I'd keep a change of clothes in another place, demonstrate, change clothes and then go home.³²⁹

For many women, such clandestine political activities marked a break with established gender norms. Whilst married and divorced women had more freedom of movement than unmarried Saharawi women, in line with Saharawi interpretations of Islam the husbands still remained the head of the families and the lead decision-makers, at least in theory. Silka, for example, asked her husband's permission before joining Women's Section in 1972, and yet two years later, in line with the POLISARIO secrecy rule, sought the approval of no one before embarking on her political work.

Despite the strict rule of secrecy, there were subtle (gendered) clues between Saharawis to know who was with POLISARIO. Men wore the ends of their turbans with frayed edges, whilst POLISARIO women would tend not to wear make up or henna at weddings (as Saharawi women traditionally do), but adorned a bracelet or earrings coloured with the red, green, white and black of the POLISARIO flag.³³⁰

³²⁸ Dalmases, *La esclavitud...* 15-16.

³²⁹ 11 December 2015.

³³⁰ Bilaal, 11 December 2015; Saleh, 11 December 2015.

By the time Tawfa joined her POLISARIO cell in 1974, she had completed her studies and was working as a Lab Technician in El Aaiún hospital. Making use of her role, she would smuggle out syringes and medicines to send to the POLISARIO soldiers. Indeed, each woman made use of her skills and resources to contribute to the nationalist cause. Silka, who had studied in the Women's Section's more practical workshops, was responsible for making uniforms and preparing goat skins for carrying water, whilst Leila Sidi Mahmoud, who joined the first POLISARIO cells in El Aaiún in her early twenties, recalls that literate women would graffiti the walls with slogans such as "Viva POLISARIO."³³¹ What the Spanish Falangist Women's organisation had taught these young Saharawis was put to a use that the former had never envisioned. I do not mean to suggest that Women's Section empowered Saharawi women. Rather, Saharawi women, in the face of colonial horrors, knew how to take advantage of the smallest of opportunities to empower themselves. Tawfa and Silka joined Women's Section *post Zemla*, after all. They wished to learn new skills, to train, and they did so with their future independent country in mind.

POLISARIO convened the largest nationalist demonstrations to welcome the UN Visiting Mission, 12-19 May 1975, which had been sent to determine the will of the Saharawi population vis-à-vis independence. Thousands of Saharawi women – wearing the traditional Saharawi all black *melhfa* – and men lined the streets in all major towns of the Sahara waving Saharawi flags and POLISARIO banners, chanting "Spain out, Morocco out, Mauritania out" and stuffing letters attesting to their support for independence into the hands of the UN Mission staff. Silka and Tawfa emphasise how important the protest was for the Saharawis: "I left my five-month-old son at home in the morning and didn't return to him until after the protest!" says Silka. Tawfa recalls: "all the men – workers, students – joined in the demonstration. And from 8 in the morning until 4 in the evening, no one cared about his mother, his sister, his relatives." For one day, and for the nationalist cause, women halted their gendered role as nurturers and men their role as protectors of their female relatives.³³²

The Women's Section noted the absences in their classes over the few days of the UN visit. It remarked:

³³¹ Leila Sidi Mahmoud, Personal Interview, Auserd camp, 12 December 2015.

³³² Bilaal, 11 December 2015; Saleh, 11 December 2015.

During the days of the UN visit there was practically no attendance given that all the women were out demonstrating, although we had a group of 4 or 5 that showed up. All this year it has been clear that in all the riots and demonstrations that happened it was women that performed the most important role, so she has moved from not coming out of the house and being ignored to being the most visible figure of this movement.³³³

Women's Section marvelled at what they perceived as a revolutionary change in women's role in Saharawi society. This illustrates the success of the gendered nationalist discourses, which, as Khadijatou Mokhtar told us, Saharawi women were responsible for transmitting, but also how much the Section had underestimated Saharawi women and Saharawi society more generally.

The Women's Section observations also attest to the great extent to which women were the public face of the pro-independence movement, organised political actors resisting colonialism and the potential of a new foreign occupation, publically. As we have seen (and Mateo's report backs up the early POLISARIO discourse on this point), it was feminist concerns as much as nationalist ones that mobilised women.

As for Saharawi men, Spanish authorities suspected that their less visible presence was due to worries about losing employment. Indeed, as we shall see later in Chapter Four, Saharawi (and, in the colonial period, Spanish) constructions of gender that assign the role of breadwinner to men continue to shape the gendered demographics of anti-occupation protests.³³⁴ In any case, the women-dominated demonstrations of 1974 to 1975 were a coup for the Saharawi nationalists. The UN report concluded:

...the Mission was able, despite the shortness of its stay in the Territory, to visit virtually all the main population centers and to ascertain the views of the overwhelming majority of their inhabitants. At every place visited, the Mission was met by mass political demonstrations and had numerous private meetings with representatives of every section of the Saharan community. From all these, it

³³³ Women's Section, "Informe correspondiente a la labor realizada por el Departamento de Promoción el 1er semestre de 1975," El Aaiún, June 1975. AGA, *Fondo de Cultura*, Caja 2877.

³³⁴ Spanish Administration, "Nota informativa al Gobierno General de Sahara," El Aaiún 7 July 1975. Document from Fondo Documental del Sahara (Luís Rodríguez de Viguri y Gil), currently held at *Fundación Sur*.

became evident to the Mission that there was an overwhelming consensus among Saharans within the Territory in favour of independence and opposing integration with any neighbouring country³³⁵

Students, too, were involved and protests, strikes and walkouts became common in schools, even at primary level.³³⁶ In October 1974, a 15 year-old schoolgirl gathered together all her female classmates to plan a break-time protest against the Spanish presence in the territory. In the view of the girls, the Spanish had done nothing in the territory apart from “discovering phosphates” and “taking them away.”³³⁷ Another example is the strike of students across three schools in January 1975. The strike was organised in solidarity with three young Saharawis who had been detained due to their pro-independence activities. Spanish police took it as a sign of the students’ desire for Spain to leave the territory. 70 students met with the Head of Education and refused to return to classes until the following demands were met: a new library, more study grants, Arabic language classes even at primary level, and more professional training courses for women.³³⁸

Protests continued throughout 1975, up until the Spanish exit. Spanish authorities commented on “the absolute presence of women and children”³³⁹ at such demonstrations, which were often organised to ensure a synchronised attendance in several towns. 6 July 1975, for example, saw protests and “violence” in Villa Cisneros, Aargub, Guera, Auserd and Birnzaran.³⁴⁰

Women simultaneously pursued more formal means of resistance, writing letters to the colonial government or appearing in person to present their demands,³⁴¹ which included more, and better equipped and financed, centres for women’s training and education, day

³³⁵ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), ““Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Spanish Sahara, 1975” in The Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,” 1975, 59.

³³⁶ Mateo, “Informe...” October 1974.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

³³⁸ Carvallo de Cora y Romero, Esteban, Territorial Police, “Informe sobre reunion con estudiantes,” El Aaiún, 30 January 1975.

³³⁹ Spanish Administration, “Nota informativa...,” 7 July 1975.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ On 18 January 1975, for example, 13 Saharawi young women appeared at the Government office of Villa Cisneros with complaints concerning the quality and scope of Women’s Section courses, and the disrespect shown to them by the Spanish teachers. Spanish Government South Delegation, “Nota informativa a Delegación Gubernativa Sur,” Villa Cisneros, 24 January 1975. Document from Fondo Documental del Sahara (Luís Rodríguez de Viguri y Gil), currently held at *Fundación Sur*.

care centres for mothers that wished to study, respect from the Spanish teachers (which they found lacking) and better conditions for *frigān* [collective of *āḥīām*] and “shacks” surrounding El Aaiún, which were marked by shortages of “provisions, water, health assistance etcetera.”³⁴² Such women who openly complained of conditions or lack of good quality study opportunities were often spied on, which many times revealed they also pursued clandestine nationalist activities. For example, after she made complaints about the Women’s Section, Spanish authorities found out that Suelka Labor Azman had been holding meetings in her house in which “topics of a subversive character” were discussed.³⁴³

By making hegemonic nationalist discourses that put a spotlight on gender equality and women’s empowerment, the POLISARIO mobilised women politically, and, as these events of the seventies show, they did so with overwhelming success. Women led walkouts at their places of work, threatened legal action, lobbied, in letters and in person, for social and labour rights, hosted and participated in clandestine meetings supporting men to arrange acts of sabotage, and organised and led mass protests and demonstrations. Saharawi girls, too, led protests as well as organising strikes.

Sadly though, bar gaining the admiration and sympathies of many Spaniards, the Saharawis’ resistance did not influence the final act of betrayal of Spain.³⁴⁴ To end her report on the political opinions of Saharawi women, Concha Mateo reminded her Sahara and Madrid-based Spanish readership of Spain’s promise to the Saharawi people: “the Spanish would always be there to defend them from the appetite of any neighbour.”³⁴⁵ One year later, in October 1975, King Hassan II announced his intention to launch the Green March and claim Western Sahara for Morocco.³⁴⁶ On 2 November, King Juan Carlos, Head of State after

³⁴² Saharawi Women, Document Addressed to the Spanish Colonial Government Signed “Mujeres Saharaui,” El Aaiún, 12 October 1975. AGA, Fondo de Cultura, Caja 2877.

³⁴³ Spanish Government South Delegation, “Nota informativa...,” 24 January 1975.

³⁴⁴ Interviewees recall individual cases of Spaniards acting to support the Saharawi nationalist struggle that range from reporting to Saharawis on the secret Tripartite Agreements, writing pro-Saharawi editorials (Tawfa claims that a Spanish colleague of hers was imprisoned for such an ‘offense’) joining in nationalist protests, refusing to treat members of the PUNS that had been beaten by Saharawi nationalists, raising the Saharawi flag and defecting to the POLISARIO. As for the Women’s Section, interviewees say that the latter remained fervently pro-Spanish colonialism. Nevertheless, Khadijatou Mokhtar, now leader of the UNMS’ external engagement, has come across some of the former Women’s Section Spanish teachers at UNMS conferences held in Spain. Reportedly, these formerly Francoist women have told her that they are now supportive of Saharawi independence.

³⁴⁵ Mateo, “Informe...,” October 1974, 14.

³⁴⁶ Moroccan forces had in fact already invaded the North East corner of Western Sahara, ahead of the Green March. See Jacob Mundy, “How the US and Morocco Seized the Spanish Sahara,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 2006.

Franco fell into a coma, travelled to El Aaiún and solemnly promised to defend the Sahara against Moroccan aspirations. 12 days later, back in Madrid, he signed the illegal Tripartite Agreement (also known as the Madrid Accords), in which the Sahara was handed over to Morocco and Mauritania in exchange for fishing rights and a share of Fosbucraa's profits for Spain.³⁴⁷

Back in El Aaiún's Women Section office, scribbled notes from 23 October reveal the worries of the Spanish women of the threat "coming from the north." Their plan for the 1975-76 school year, in which Saharawi women had been named to take over all roles, would never be put into action.³⁴⁸ One woman has listed the names of all Spanish staff, next to each one indicating what each woman planned to do: whilst some were determined to stay no matter what, the remainder were (tellingly) "leaving because her military husband is obliging her to."³⁴⁹ By the end of the month, all Spanish civilians had been evacuated.³⁵⁰ Its promise broken, Spain – but for a handful of Spanish-born women and men who stayed and joined the POLISARIO – left its former colonial subjects to the darkest of fates.³⁵¹

In conclusion, looking at the last years of the Spanish colonial period, when a half-hearted attempt was made to influence Saharawi culture (the Spanish colonisation of Equatorial Guinea was a cultural one to an infinitely greater extent than that of Western Sahara), allows us to observe that Saharawi women mounted feminist resistance (both "everyday resistance" as well as recourse to colonial structures) to Saharawi and Spanish patriarchal norms long before Bassiri's movement and the creation of the POLISARIO. The same is true for sub-Saharan slaves. This offers new insights into the formation of POLISARIO discourse: it is possible that women's feminist, anti-racist demands influenced the integration of gender equality and slavery eradication as revolutionary aims in its nationalist discourses. Later,

³⁴⁷ Baba Miské, *Front Polisario...* 196-97. The Spanish state continued to receive royalties from the phosphate mines until 2006.

³⁴⁸ Women's Section, "Informe que presenta la Delegación Nacional de la Sección Femenina sobre las actividades con especial relieve," Madrid, July 1975, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 236. Even if Spain had not given the Sahara to Morocco, the government did not react well to Women's Section suggested Saharawi staff, since all were seen as pro-POLISARIO.

³⁴⁹ Women's Section, No title [handwritten notes on plane paper], El Aaiún, 23 October 1975.

³⁵⁰ The planned evacuation is outlined in The Provincial Delegate, Communication regarding the closure of the Women's Section, El Aaiún, 29 October 1975. AGA (3) 51.10 Caja 241.

³⁵¹ Montse Escorbe (also known by the name Hurria, given to her by Saharawis as an honour), Gurutze Irizar (a.k.a Fatimetu) and Ana Gaspar for example, joined the Saharawis in their struggle. For their testimonies see Carlos Martín Beristain, and González Hidalgo, Eloísa, *El oasis de la memoria: memoria histórica y violaciones de derechos humanos en el Sáhara Occidental. Tomo I* (Bilbao: University of the Basque Country, 2012).

these hegemonic nationalist discourses served to mobilise women politically, and we see in this period how women's resistance was often intersectional, both feminist and pro-independence, challenging Saharawi patriarchy (often reinforced by colonialism), colonial patriarchy and racist colonialism itself. This illustrates how important it is to analyse inequalities that were not solely a result of colonialism as well as the new imperial power axes, when embarking on any Subaltern Studies project. This argument is progressed further in the next chapter on Equatoguinean women's resistance during the Spanish colonial period.

Chapter Three. Women's resistance and gender in Spanish Guinea

According to official Spanish sources, it is said that the school system in Spanish Guinea achieved all that the colonizers expected of it. It produced the required Africans who loved Spaniards more than the Spaniards loved themselves, but it produced no opponents of the colonial regime. It is difficult to believe the truth of such an assertion; and the Spanish took good care that no one from outside got wind of what things were like in the small Spanish colonies in Africa.³⁵²

This is what Walter Rodney said of Equatorial Guinea in his famous work *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. In the chapter outlining the anti-colonial movements that emerged in various African countries, Rodney regrets finding no evidence of opposition in Equatorial Guinea, yet rightly argues that this was a result of the zealous colonial shrouding of the very real resistance. Fortunately, some writers such as Eugenio Nkogo Ondó,³⁵³ Gustau Nerín,³⁵⁴ Donato Ndongo,³⁵⁵ Enrique Okenve,³⁵⁶ Ibrahim Sundiata,³⁵⁷ Cristina Dyombe Dyangani,³⁵⁸

³⁵² Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1982), 274.

³⁵³ Eugenio Nkogo Ondó, "La Guinea Ecuatorial: reminiscencia histórica, experiencia de las luces y de las sombras de un proyecto político" (paper presented at *Between Three Continents: Rethinking Equatorial Guinea on the Fortieth Anniversary of Its Independence from Spain*, Hofstra University, 2009).

³⁵⁴ Gustau Nerín, *La última selva de España: antropólogos, misioneros y guardias civiles* (Madrid: Catarata, 2010).

³⁵⁵ Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo, *Historia y tragedia de Guinea Ecuatorial* (Madrid: Cambio 16, 1977).

³⁵⁶ Enrique Okenve, "Equatorial Guinea 1927-1979: A New African Tradition" (School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, 2007).

³⁵⁷ Ibrahim Sundiata, *From Slaving to Neoslavery: The Bight of Biafra and Fernando Po in the Era of Abolition, 1827-1930* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996).

³⁵⁸ Cristina Dyombe Dyangani, *Identidad cultural ndowe* (New York: Ndowe International Press, 2008). Pages 41 to 45 of this book looks at the contributions of Ndowe men to the fight for independence.

Adolfo Obiang Biko,³⁵⁹ Alicia Campos³⁶⁰ and Enrique Martino³⁶¹ have now revised the colonial histories to begin to tell the story of the Equatoguineans that challenged colonialism. Nevertheless, bar Cécile Stephanie Stehrenberger who hints at the use of mimicry amongst Equatoguinean women dancers,³⁶² and Rosa Medina-Doménech who illustrates how Equatoguineans (women and men) demonstrated resistance through mockery and irony to patronising colonial psychological tests,³⁶³ Equatoguinean feminists regret that much of the work of documenting women's resistance to Spanish colonialism has yet to begin.

"Our streets are named after a whole host of heroes from the anti-colonial struggle, but there's not one street named after a woman," complained one feminist interviewee.³⁶⁴ "If you ask any young person to tell the story of pro-independence activists, they'll tell you about several men, but none are capable of naming a woman," said another.³⁶⁵ Francisca Sale, a teenager upon independence, laments that, although women played an important part in the anti-colonial struggle, "there is little information about them [and] [...] they have not been taken into account."³⁶⁶ Equatoguinean women so far remain passive victims to their fates in the history books. As Gayatri Spivak says, "[i]f, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow."³⁶⁷ The aim of this chapter is to begin to address this gap.

³⁵⁹ Adolfo Obiang Biko, *Equatorial Guinea: from Spanish colonialism to the discovery of oil* (New York: O.Writers, 2010).

³⁶⁰ Alicia Campos, "The Decolonization of Equatorial Guinea: The Relevance of the International Factor," *Journal of African History* 44 (2003).

³⁶¹ Enrique Martino, "Clandestine Recruitment Networks in the Bight of Biafra: Fernando Pó's Answer to the Labour Question, 1926-1945," *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (IRSH)* 57, no. Special Issue (2012).

³⁶² Cécile Stephanie Stehrenberger, "Folklore, Nation, and Gender in a Colonial Encounter: Coros y Danzas of the Sección Femenina of the Falange in Equatorial Guinea," *Afro-Hispanic Review* 28, no. 2 (2009): 238-39.

³⁶³ Rosa Medina-Doménech, "Scientific Technologies of National Identity as Colonial Legacies: Extracting the Spanish Nation from Equatorial Guinea," *Social Studies of Science* 39, no. 1 (2009): 96.

³⁶⁴ Veronica Mayo (pseudonym), personal conversations, Malabo, 29 June 2015.

³⁶⁵ Mba (pseudonym), 16 June 2015.

³⁶⁶ Francisca Sale (pseudonym), personal communication, 28 May 2015.

³⁶⁷ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Colonial Discourse and Post Colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams, and Chrisman, Laura (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1994), 82-83. On the domination of the lives and deeds of white men in history, see also Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It* (London: Pluto Press, 1975); Padma Anagol, *The Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850-1920* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2005).

A focus on feminist resistance is just as important as revealing women's resistance to colonialism. Indeed, a criticism made of Western feminist authors is that they have ignored the history of women elsewhere of resisting patriarchy. Mary Daly, for example, has been criticised for representing European women who suffered witch-burnings as strong and powerful despite the terrible tortures of patriarchy, whilst simultaneously representing Indian women as weak and helpless in the face of similar patriarchal excesses such as the suttee. Ignoring the history of resistance of Indian (and, in the case of this thesis, African) women is a form of orientalism and posits Western women as the leaders of global feminism.³⁶⁸ We have seen that Saharawi women found ingenious ways of resisting patriarchy during the Spanish period. In colonial accounts of Equatoguinean societies,³⁶⁹ and even in contemporary histories of the country, Equatoguinean women are imagined as passive and pitiable, meekly resigned to their status as subordinate to colonial and Equatoguinean men.³⁷⁰ A second aim of this chapter is therefore to explore how Equatoguinean women have resisted patriarchies.

Other researchers have given an in-depth analysis of the oppressive racial, class and gender norms established in Equatorial Guinea by the Spanish.³⁷¹ In this chapter, I turn my attention to what women *could and did do* in the face of such injustices. Firstly, I focus on women's resistance to patriarchal norms, and simultaneously point to those norms that have persisted and become the hardest challenges for Equatoguinean feminists today. I am inspired, in this first section, by the following view put forward by an Equatoguinean feminist concerning women's condition today:

...there is a marriage between Women's Section and our ethnic cultures. The repression of women that existed during Francoism, you will find it in our culture, so

³⁶⁸ Joanna Liddle, and Rai, Shirin, "Feminism, Imperialism and Orientalism: the Challenge of the 'Indian woman,'" *Women's History Review* 7, no. 4 (1998): 512.

³⁶⁹ See for example Julio Arija Martínez de Espinosa, *La Guinea Española y sus riquezas* (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1930); Antonio Aymemí, *Los Bubis en Fernando Poo: colección de los artículos publicados en la revista colonial "La Guinea Española"* (Madrid: Galo Sáez, 1942).

³⁷⁰ See for example Ballano Gonzalo, *Aquel Negrito...* Ballano's very well researched historiography of the colonial period paints a grim picture of the lives of Equatoguinean women, but draws little attention to how they resisted discrimination. Similarly, Nerín's ground-breaking work of gender relations during the colonial period highlights the extremely negative (and long-lasting) impact of colonialism on Equatoguinean women's lives, but their agency receives relatively little attention. Gustau Nerín, *Guinea Ecuatorial, Historia en Blanco y Negro* (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 1998).

³⁷¹ Medina-Doménech, "Scientific Technologies of National Identity as Colonial Legacies: Extracting the Spanish Nation from Equatorial Guinea."; Nerín, *Guinea Ecuatorial.*; Mayka De Castro, "El colonialismo franquista en Guinea Ecuatorial: una lectura crítica en clave decolonial" (University of Granada, September 2013).

those powerful women that govern us today are ideological daughters of the Women's Section. And then you have our Bantu culture, well [the women rulers] drink from that, and there's a double repression. A double patriarchy.³⁷²

I move in the second section to women's role in the anti-colonial fight for independence. Thirdly, to foreground the arguments of Chapter Six on Equatorial Guinea post independence, I briefly look at why Equatoguineans voted for Macías. Finally, I analyse women's resistance to the Spanish Falange party's Women's Section's efforts in the territory, which, I argue, best illustrates how Equatoguinean women's resistance was intersectional, attacking several axes of power at once.

3.1 Resistance against (colonial) patriarchies

The first wave of Spanish settlers in Spanish Guinea, the Claretian missionaries, swept onto the shores of Bioko island in the 1850s.³⁷³ Whilst colonialism in Western Sahara was delayed and focused primarily on economic profit-making rather than on transforming a 'backward' culture, the colonial project in Equatorial Guinea was a socio-cultural affair almost from the outset. For the Claretian missionaries of Fernando Po, successful colonialism, or rather a successful "divine mission [...] making the sun of civilisation shine in the countries enveloped in the dense fog of ignorance and error," meant hispanicisation in every sense of the word: linguistic; cultural; social; and moral.³⁷⁴ They paved the way for the Spanish State and economic interests, which at first exploited the local population to labour their cocoa, wood and coffee industries.

³⁷² Mba (pseudonym), 16 June 2015.

³⁷³ The Catholic Claretians dominated the missionary scene in Equatorial Guinea from the 1850s until the Spanish exit. By the time of the First World War, they had a post in Annobón, five along Rio Muni's coast and seven in Fernando Po. The Claretians were hostile to the (mostly British) Protestants that had preceded them. The English Baptists left in 1958. In 1920, there was one American Presbyterian station in Rio Muni, five English Methodist posts on Fernando Po and one French Roman Catholic mission in Bata on the continent. Foreign Office of the British Government, "Spanish Guinea," *Peace Handbooks* 20, no. 125 (1920); William G. Clarence-Smith, "Spanish Equatorial Guinea, 1898-1940," in *The Cambridge History of Africa: From 1905 to 1940*, ed. Arthur D. Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Available online at <http://www.opensourceguinea.org/2015/10/great-britain-spanish-guinea-handbooks.html> [accessed 4 May 2016].

³⁷⁴ Banapá Mission of Claretians, *La revista de la Guinea Española*, 12 January 1904.

From the latter part of the nineteenth century onwards, the Spanish plantations of Fernando Po did well. But they were in desperate need of labourers.³⁷⁵ Once the local population had been “decimated by disease and forced labour,” the Spanish turned to British-ruled Nigeria.³⁷⁶

The colonialists of Fernando Po came to rely on Nigerian labourers, who, by 1968, numbered around 100,000.³⁷⁷ The horrendous working conditions, little different from slavery, were well known across Africa and Europe. Fernando Po became known as “hell’s island” or “brutal island.”³⁷⁸ The male Nigerian labourers resisted the draconian conditions through everyday acts of resistance such as stealing from the plantation owners,³⁷⁹ self-harm³⁸⁰ and slow-working, more organised forms such as petitioning the British Consul (this had been set-up in Santa Isabel in order, allegedly, to protect the rights of Nigerian workers, who were regarded as British subjects) and writing to newspapers.³⁸¹ But Nigerian women, too, challenged the colonial pitchforks of “hell’s island.”

The Spanish did not encourage Nigerian women to go to Fernando Po for plantation labour, but they were ‘accepted’ there as wives for their kinsmen. Indeed, to travel from Calabar to Fernando Po, women were supposed to carry documents to prove their marriage to a Nigerian Labourer. Nevertheless, some single, divorced and unhappily married women wished to travel to the island to try their luck and look for work. Some got there

³⁷⁵ David Aworawo, “Decisive Thaw: The Changing Pattern of Relations between Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea, 1980-2005,” *Journal of International and Global Studies* 1, no. 2 (2010): 92.

³⁷⁶ Martino, “Clandestine Recruitment...” 40.

³⁷⁷ René Pélissier, *Los territorios españoles de Africa* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1964).

³⁷⁸ See for example Lola Martins, “Journey to Hell’s Island: How it All Started,” *Express*, Lagos, 21 February 1962; Peter Pan, “The Brutal Island,” *Sunday Times*, Lagos, 18 February 1962; Isaac Pepple, “Free Ticket to Hell,” *Drum*, Lagos, April 1957.

³⁷⁹ An observation from the British Vice Consulate in Fernando Po helps to underline that robbery specifically opposed the Spanish plantation owners, since labourers did not tend to rob each other. In a letter back to the Commissioner of Labour in Lagos, the Vice Consulate said, “[i]t seems that the saying that there is honour amongst thieves is very apt in this case, for whereas all labourers seem to consider robbing their employers as all in a day’s work, they do not rob each other with the same monotonous regularity.” W.M. Bradley, “Labour Report to the Honourable Commissioner of Labour, Lagos, No.3 for the period 1st of October to the 31st December 1949,” Santa Isabel, 11 January 1950, TNA CO 554/169/1.

³⁸⁰ The British Vice Consulate reported cases of Nigerian Labourers cutting themselves in order to encourage the Consulate to take action against Spanish plantation owners. See for example W.M. Bradley, “Labour Report to the Honourable Commissioner of Labour, Lagos, no.1 for the period 1st January to 31st March 1950, British Vice Consulate,” Santa Isabel, 31 March 1950, TNA CO 554/169/2.

³⁸¹ Martino, “Clandestine Recruitment...” 56.

independently, side-lining the bureaucracy altogether.³⁸² Others forged papers. A rather fed up British Vice Consulate wrote from Santa Isabel back to the Labour Commissioner in Lagos in 1950 regarding the letters he kept receiving from “irate husbands” demanding their Nigerian wives be sent back. The Consulate found “upon investigation” that “nearly always” the said wives had been thrown out by their husbands and thus travelled to Guinea in search of livelihood.³⁸³

Some of these women accomplished what they set out to. The observations of the British Vice Consulate, though most likely overly optimistic, indicated that many found work “collecting coffee and sewing together tobacco leaves,” earning, according to the Consulate, more than double the average weekly earnings of a Nigerian male wage labourer.³⁸⁴ We see, therefore, that Nigerian women found ways to circumnavigate the colonial rules that sought to limit their role in Equatorial Guinea to that of wife. On the other hand, as in Spanish Sahara, other women appropriated the colonial structures themselves to create opportunities, especially when attempting to avoid individual situations of hardship.³⁸⁵

The Claretian Missionary church was one such body. For example, Antonio Aymemí, a Claretian missionary resident in Fernando Po from 1894 until his death in 1941, has recorded the case of a Bubi woman who, facing the death penalty (for adultery, says Aymemí), managed under the cover of night to free herself and run to the missionaries for sanctuary.³⁸⁶ Similarly, in 1945, the Missionaries of Nkue, a settlement in the north of modern-day continental Equatorial Guinea, came under increasing pressure from Equatoguinean village authorities for offering shelter to Equatoguinean women fleeing their

³⁸² Saheed Aderinto’s research into Nigerian migrant sex workers/prostitutes in colonial British West Africa is illuminating with regards to the spectrum of agency at one end, to outright trafficking of girl children for sexual exploitation at the other. Saheed Aderinto, “Journey to Work: Transnational Prostitution in Colonial British West Africa,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 24, no. 1 (2015).

³⁸³ Bradley, “Labour Report...,” 11 January 1950.

³⁸⁴ Bradley, “Labour Report...,” 31 March 1950.

³⁸⁵ Women have a history of taking recourse to the colonial apparatus in various colonial contexts. British India is a famous example. See Padma Anagol, “From the Symbolic to the Open: Women’s Resistance in Colonial Maharashtra,” in *Behind the Veil: Resistance, Women, and the Everyday in Colonial South Asia*, ed. Ghosh Anindita (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

³⁸⁶ Aymemí, *Los Bubis...* 49. Although this case is fascinating, we should approach it with wariness: Aymemí states that the woman’s crime was unfaithfulness. However, the death penalty for disloyalty to one’s husband was very unusual in Bubi culture. Perhaps Aymemí had exaggerated the story to fuel the genderwashing of colonial pursuits. On the other hand, it was indeed common for missionaries to take in women escaping abuse and coerced marriage.

husbands. Indeed, the church was also under fire from the Spanish government authorities, due to the tensions caused between Equatoguineans and the colonials.³⁸⁷

Officially, the Missionaries were only allowed to welcome single women who wished for a Christian marriage, or married women that had been given permission to separate from their husbands by their respective village authorities. However, the Father Superior of Nkue showed little regard for the rules and welcomed several escaped women, letting them live in the Mission's boarding school. When their husbands or male relatives tried to process complaints via the colonial administration in an attempt claim 'their' women back, a civil servant writing to the Governor General of the territory complained that the Father gave only "vague and imprecise answers without making [the women] appear at the Summons."³⁸⁸

Enrique Okenve's history of the Spanish colonial period, which involved collecting the oral histories of some 80 older Fang citizens living throughout Equatorial Guinea, suggests that the Father Superior of Nkue's actions became the normal course of action for Claretian missionaries. This 'mission-as-refuge' model provided opportunities for women that had, before then, little room to manoeuvre at the bottom of the Fang social hierarchy, argues Okenve.³⁸⁹ The aim of the missions was to convince the women to convert. Most (but not all) missions also encouraged such women to find a converted husband. When women fleeing unwanted marriages came to them, the missionaries facilitated divorce.³⁹⁰ This, finds Okenve, was used as a bargaining chip by women, and "gave them stronger rights vis-à-vis their husbands."³⁹¹ If women were treated badly, they could threaten to leave. Women did not necessarily live up to the missionaries' hope that they would convert and find a Christian husband, but they knew how to make use of the missionaries for their own ends.

³⁸⁷ As Nugent has highlighted, although they would not admit it, many colonial regimes settled for less than their envisaged "civilising mission" as they were loath to investing resources in curbing the 'native' dissent that could be provoked. We saw this dynamic strongly in Spanish Sahara, but, to a lesser extent, it was present in Spanish Guinea. Nugent, "States and Social Contracts..." 44.

³⁸⁸ Illegible signature, Letter to the Governor General of the Spanish Territories of the Gulf of Guinea, En Mikomeseng, 15 May 1945. AGA Caja 81/08214.

³⁸⁹ Okenve, "Equatorial Guinea 1927-1979..." 126.

³⁹⁰ Okenve finds that divorce was difficult for Fang women. However, Edouard Trezenem, a French ethnographer who wrote of Fangs living in Gabon in 1936, tells a different story. He finds there were some incidents where women could obtain a divorce. Here, I privilege, in the main text the Equatoguinean historian over the ethnography from colonial times and do so throughout this chapter, but for Trezenem's perspective see Edouard Trezenem, "Notes Ethnographiques sur les Tribus Fan du Moyen Ogooué (Gabon)," *Journal de la Société des Africanistes* 6, no. 1 (1936): 89-90.

³⁹¹ Okenve, "Equatorial Guinea 1927-1979..." 220.

On the other hand, if a woman did convert and procure a Christian marriage, it became (in line with Catholic doctrine) far harder for her to divorce. This norm has not rusted over time. Indeed, Equatoguinean feminists today see negative attitudes towards divorced women as a key challenge. Divorce, even if initiated in an attempt to escape domestic violence, is seen in hegemonic discourse as the woman's fault, and her punishment ranges from labelling her a "failure," ostracisation from her family, community and children, and, if she cannot refund the bridewealth, a prison sentence.³⁹² The colonial disruption of gender norms has far-reaching consequences.

Conversion to Christianity was a new source of power for some Equatoguinean women. Okenve rightly states that, by converting, some women could play a more central role in their communities as well as in villages' religious activities.³⁹³ However, this was not so for all women. Some Fang women had, before catholicisation took hold, formed part of all-female religious cults. The most important of these was the *Mewungo*, which sort to deal with problems faced by women such as infertility, neglectful husbands and child mortality. Since it was feared by men, it could also serve as a counter to male abuses.³⁹⁴

Christianity also eroded religious power for Bubi women. Before missionary catholicisation, Bubi women could be religious specialists in their communities. Such specialists had power over which (male) village leader was chosen, which marriages could be made and dissolved, when war and peace could be declared, and what the punishment would be for those provoking the death of another.³⁹⁵ Furthermore, as Remei Sipi Mayo recalls in an interview with Benita Sampedro, the church actively refused rights to those who were not married, or born of married parents.³⁹⁶ Indeed, we should in no way conclude that the Claretian missionaries empowered women. The clergymen and women had an agenda: to present an image of 'white saviour,' to recruit new Christians and to promote a Spanish Catholic nuclear family model. Equatoguinean women glimpsed opportunities at the missions and exploited

³⁹² Engonga (pseudonym), 25 June 2015; Mba (pseudonym), 16 June 2015; Obono Alogo (pseudonym), 18 July 2014.

³⁹³ Okenve, "Equatorial Guinea 1927-1979..." 220.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

³⁹⁵ Sundiata, *From Slaving to Neoslavery...* 163-64.

³⁹⁶ Remei Sipi Mayo in discussion with Benita Sampedro, "La huella de la colonización española en las mujeres de Guinea Ecuatorial," University of Granada Media (UGR Media), <http://www.asodeguesegundaetapa.org/la-huella-de-la-colonizacion-espanola-en-las-mujeres-de-guinea-ecuatorial-remei-sipi-y-benita-sampedro-ugrmedia/>, 20 June 2016 (accessed 23 June 2016).

them when they could. If there was empowerment, Equatoguinean women empowered themselves.

Guinean women and girls also took advantage of schools run by Spanish nuns, as is recalled by Ana Alogo Mikue. Born in 1945, in a village in what is today the Kié-Ntem province, Ana and her siblings, whose parents were very ill during her infancy, attended the *Casa Cuna*, a nun-managed orphanage. Aged 13, Ana was sent to another boarding school run by nuns in Bata, where she learnt how to use a sewing machine. This would stand her in good stead in her later life, as we will see. According to Ana, some of her classmates at this school had run away from their parents' homes to attend the school. This was because "they wanted to train as maids, because if they could earn a wage as maids they could pay for further education." However, if the young women's intentions were to empower themselves through education (although, significantly, they had to serve in Spanish households in order to afford this), Ana's memories highlight the violent abuse that awaited them at the hands of the Catholic institutions. Although Ana recalls that a few individual nuns did their job well, indeed "they were so kind to [her] that [she] will remember them for the rest of [her] life," in general, the nuns were abusive. "They were seriously bad. Evil. Child abuse was the norm." Ana speaks of one little boy at the *Casa Cuna* in Mikomeseng who was beaten to death by nuns.³⁹⁷

Women also attempted to make use of Spanish judicial authorities, sometimes to challenge sexual abuse. A case brought by a young Bubi woman illustrates this well. She used her better-educated fiancé to represent her. When the guilty (Equatoguinean) man was brought before the colonial authorities in Santa Isabel, they simply warned him "not to do the same thing a second time."³⁹⁸ This punishment amounted to no more than a slap on the wrist.

As for white male rapists, there was impunity. Indeed sexual abuse reached institutional levels. Women prisoners, for example, "were forced by the guards to offer themselves at any moment and especially at nights in the prison house and any woman who refused was completely drowned in beatings, including on her private parts."³⁹⁹ Maria Jesus Ntutumu

³⁹⁷ Ana Alogo Mikue (pseudonym), telephone interview, 22 August 2016.

³⁹⁸ Aymemí, *Los Bubis...* 69.

³⁹⁹ 20 Chiefs of Rio Benito, Letter to the General Governor of the Spanish Territories in the Gulf of Guinea, Bata, Rio Muni (continental Guinea), 9 June 1942, AGA Caja 81/08182.

remembers with horror what used to happen when, in the early sixties, Spanish soldiers came to visit the town of Ebebiyin where she went to school:

The traditional, tribal chief, who had loads of wives, well when the Spanish visited he'd put his wives in a line and let the Spanish captain pick which one he wanted. And the Spanish captain was always accompanied by other soldiers, so they would also... well that would be, I don't know, horrific.

We should add nuance here. Not *all* wives of a polygamist authority would be offered to European partners or commercial soldiers. Furthermore, some of those wives or concubines selected for such a role may have extracted commercial gain. However, as Maria Jesus' emotions of horror indicate, this practice, which still has echoes today,⁴⁰⁰ was often a form of institutionalised rape. Similarly, Gustau Nerín has conducted superb research into the wider hypersexualisation and sexual exploitation of Equatoguinean women by Spanish men (and indeed some Equatoguinean men's collaboration with this system).⁴⁰¹ Again, as we will see in Chapter Six, the racism and misogyny highlighted by Nerín persists today.

Similarly, research by feminists Remei Sipi Mayo and Trifonia Melibea Obono Ntutumu intriguingly looks at how these power relations persist in Spain today: Equatoguinean women and girl migrants practice sex work, they find, because the racist immigration and employment policies of Spain leave them with little other option (a further, and central, factor for Obono Ntutumu is the bridewealth, which, combined with today's extreme economic inequalities, neo-colonialism, and sexism, has come to mean that prostitution is part of Fang woman and girlhood, she argues).⁴⁰² Others still are outright victims of sexual exploitation.⁴⁰³ The racist patriarchal norms of Spanish Guinea still persist as a form of postcolonial or neocolonial patriarchy, nowadays in a cross-border, neo-colonial nexus.

⁴⁰⁰ Some men still practice this form of hyper-hospitality, offering wives, concubines or female relatives in order to strengthen economic or political alliances. See Nerín, *Historia en Blanco y Negro...*

⁴⁰¹ Nerín, *Guinea Ecuatorial...*

⁴⁰² Trifonia Melibea Obono Ntutumu, "¿La Mujer Fang tiene precio?," available at <https://www.scribd.com/doc/92067686/La-Mujer-Fang-Tiene-Precio>, 2012 (accessed 26 May 2016); Remei Sipi Mayo, *Inmigración y género: el caso de Guinea Ecuatorial* (Donostia: Tercera Prensa-Hirugarren Prentsa S.L., 2004).

⁴⁰³ Diario Rombe, "Liberada en Palma una menor Guineana que estaba siendo explotada sexualmente," <http://www.diariorombe.es/liberada-palma-una-menor-guineana-estaba-siendo-explotada-sexualmente/>, 2 May 2016 (accessed 15 May 2016).

Moving back to the colonial authorities, the *Patronato de Indígenas* (Native Law, hereafter *Patronato*) was the main instrument of ‘justice’ for Equatoguineans. It was headed by the church, and ostensibly aimed to defend Equatoguineans from exploitation by planters. However, it also enforced controversial, discriminatory laws on the indigenous population, and attempted to make Spanish morality and culture hegemonic. Spain created the *Patronato* in 1906, although it did not come into effect until 1928, when the categorisation of fully emancipated, partially emancipated and non-emancipated Guineans came into practice.⁴⁰⁴ Non-emancipated Guineans were effectively denied legal status. They could not acquire property and realise commercial transactions. Rather, they remained under the ‘guardianship’ of the *Patronato*.⁴⁰⁵

Importantly, single women could not achieve emancipated status. They could only seek it through marriage to an emancipated man. Amongst the first rules that that the *Patronato* set was the salaries of native workers, which effectively legalised gender discrimination: women were to be paid 50% to 75% less than men for the same work.⁴⁰⁶ Examples from the colonial archives, however, bring to light attempts by women to use the *Patronato* to resist their situations of sexual exploitation and domestic abuse. For example, in 1937, Ayakaba Nzue began fighting for an end to what she described as her “extremely abusive” marriage, in which her husband, Mba Manga, was beating and forcibly prostituting her.⁴⁰⁷ Ayakaba Nzue’s case gives us clues as to what strategies women had to resist and escape. According to Fernando Mbo, Ayakaba Nzue’s uncle, the girl’s (Ayakaba Nzue was only eight or nine years old when she was married) father was in prison when he sent a brother in search of a husband for his daughter, hoping the resulting bridewealth would help him to pay off some outstanding debts. Years later, Ayakaba Nzue finally managed to escape from the conjugal home with her young son, and sought sanctuary in the home of her sister, Isabel Andame. After six weeks there, she approached the *Patronato* to ask for an annulment of her marriage on the basis of the abuse suffered.⁴⁰⁸

Other women followed a similar path. The case of Nchama Esono, who asked the *Patronato* for an annulment of her marriage on the basis of domestic violence, is emblematic of how

⁴⁰⁴ Ballano Gonzalo, *Aquel Negrito...* 188.

⁴⁰⁵ Medina-Doménech, “Scientific Technologies...,” 88.

⁴⁰⁶ Ballano Gonzalo, *Aquel Negrito...* 188-90.

⁴⁰⁷ Ayakaba Nzue, Request from Ayakaba Nzue to the President of the *Patronato* for Separation from Her Husband, Santa Isabel, 12 May 1937, AGA 81/08527.

⁴⁰⁸ Secretary of the *Patronato*, “Comparencia,” Santa Isabel, 8 June 1937, AGA 81/08527.

such women were dealt with.⁴⁰⁹ Several (male) witnesses confirmed that Nchama Esono's own account of how she was abused was true: she was beaten every day and indeed, her husband confirmed for the *Patronato* that he did so. A report from the organisation's Secretary reveals how the colonialists resolved the case:

...the father of the plaintiff should take into account this inquiry and indicate if he agrees with the marriage being annulled. And in this last case he should return the bridewealth and indicate the quantity that was paid for this.⁴¹⁰

Two observations about the conduct of the *Patronato* can be made in the cases of the two women mentioned above and others.⁴¹¹ Firstly, the women's wish for an annulment was not enough for the same to be granted. Several male witnesses were called in each case to testify to the veracity of the women's accusations of abuse. Only if these were proven would there be grounds for the *Patronato* to pursue an annulment, and even then, this would only be granted upon the mutual agreement of the husband's family and the father of the woman, who would have to pay back the bridewealth in full. Secondly, even if annulments were granted, domestic violence and sexual exploitation were not regarded as worthy of punishment, and indeed, neither was the coerced marriage of a girl child.⁴¹²

Likewise, Ana, who we met earlier, became trapped for 16 years in an abusive marriage because of how this justice system operated. After finishing schooling in Bata in 1963, she moved back to the home of her parents, who by then had recovered from their respective illnesses. They proposed a suitor, Roberto.⁴¹³ Ana found out he was already married and, on this basis, refused him. "But my father and uncle wanted the bridewealth so I had to marry

⁴⁰⁹ Secretary of the *Patronato*, "Comparencia," Santa Isabel, 9 June 1937, AGA 81/08527.

⁴¹⁰ Secretary of the *Patronato*, "Comparencia," Santa Isabel, 23 June 1937, AGA 81/08527.

⁴¹¹ Another case a month earlier, that of Mangué Emba, who wrote to the *Patronato* begging for help and fearing for her life at the hands of her brutal husband, is very similar to that of Nchama Esono's. Mangué Emba, Request sent to the President of the *Patronato*, 13 May 1937, Santa Isabel, AGA 81/08527.

⁴¹² There appeared to be a gap between law and practice. The Spanish prohibited the marriage of 'native' girl children in before puberty by Decree in 1928, according to Ballano Gonzalo, *Aquel Negrito...* 356. This Decree, however, did not take into account Fang cultural norms that sort to protect girls from sexual abuse, at least before puberty: although, as in many societies, children were given in marriage to other families (and unborn children were promised), it was taboo to have sex with one's wife before she had her first period. Nevertheless, the girls suffered trauma, as Okenve notes. Okenve, "Equatorial Guinea 1927-1979..." 126. For more on Fang customs in marriage and sexuality, see James W. Fernandez, *Bwiti: an Ethnography of the Religious Imagination in Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

⁴¹³ Pseudonym

him. It was a forced marriage. There's no other word for it." Roberto regularly beat Ana, but she was unable to divorce him: "you can't get out of a marriage unless you return the bridewealth, and I didn't even have a cent, and no one to help me with that."⁴¹⁴

"Next came the babies," recalls Ana. Ana's husband did not provide for their offspring. She could not feed them properly, nor pay medical expenses when they fell ill. Tragically, one child died. After this, Ana's father bought her a sewing machine. She moved to Bata, where she had her own business as a seamstress, and supplemented her income by selling nuts on the street. This way, despite all the hardships she had faced, she managed to save some money. Instead of using it to pay off her bridewealth however, she paid to put her surviving children through school.⁴¹⁵ The *Patronato* would not have helped Ana end her marriage, but her resilient personality, skills as a seamstress and a little help from the machine provided by her father, allowed her to help her children.

Other women approached the *Patronato* to seek custody of their children when Spanish fathers attempted to move them abroad. As Pilar Nyangi recalls of mixed raced relationships in her Ndowe community, "the Spanish sometimes went back to Spain with the children from the marriage, leaving the women with nothing, or perhaps with some form of compensation."⁴¹⁶ Such was the case of the late Raquel Llombé, one of Equatorial Guinea's most celebrated poets. Her father, Raimundo del Pozo, left Raquel's mother, Esperanza Epita of Corisco island, pregnant, and when the child was born, he took Raquelita to Spain. Esperanza, terrified at the thought of losing her only daughter, appealed to the *Patronato* but received no support, only the label of being a woman of 'loose morals' for having birthed an infant out of wedlock. Throughout her childhood, Raquel was told her mother was dead, and it was not until her mid-twenties when she returned to Guinea for her honeymoon that Raquel and Esperanza were reunited.⁴¹⁷ These cases suggest that the *Patronato* offered little justice to Equatoguinean women and girls. It reinforced the patriarchal norms that ensured their abuse. Nevertheless, by appealing to the *Patronato*, and escaping to the home of a female relative in one case, these women and girls showed determination in attempting to resist their fates.

⁴¹⁴ Alogo Mikue, 22 August 2016.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ Pilar Nyangi (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 21 June 2015.

⁴¹⁷ Baltasar Fra-Molinero, "De libros: CEIBA II. Regreso al país natal," *Atanga*, 2015.

Some Fang women also re-appropriated traditional Fang socioeconomic practices to their own advantage. For example, Martino's detailed and nuanced research into how the Fang bridewealth practice altered with the capitalist economy (not least becoming monetised) highlights how some women and their fathers showed resilience to the changing contexts by hoodwinking Spanish authorities into allowing greater sums, thus increasing the wealth of the bride's blood relations.⁴¹⁸ Other women re-appropriated another typical Fang social practice to escape coerced marriage: the *abóm* or in (controversial) Spanish translation, *secuestro* (kidnap). To explore how women used the *abóm*, it is worth drawing on Enrique Okenve's oral history research as well as fiction – specifically, María Nsue Angüe's first novel *Ekomo*.

As I have argued elsewhere, *Ekomo* explores how women dealt with the sexual inequalities bred of (intermixed) Fang and Spanish patriarchal norms. The protagonist, Nnanga, is a woman who loves to dance, and associates dance with mutiny. She calls herself "Dove of Fire" each time she is tempted to resist a patriarchal norm. Nnanga "personifies," as Nsue Angüe herself says, "rebellion."⁴¹⁹

One of Nnanga's many rebellions against Fang and Spanish traditions occurs at her marriage. Despite being promised by her family to Lucas, a Christian convert, Nnanga falls for Ekomo. Bitomo, her friend and sister-in-law, attempts to cajole her through teasing to become the "Dove of Fire" and resist the unwanted marriage to Lucas. Says Bitomo to Nnanga, when the two are alone, bathing in the river:

...red woman, woman of fire, is burning and rebellious, aggressive and thoughtless, wild and indomitable. But you are like a domesticated cat that lets itself be stroked by the hand of man. Your Nnanga⁴²⁰ and your mother are busy putting out your fire, for the good name of your caste. Marry Lucas!⁴²¹

Nnanga hears that Ekomo plans to 'kidnap' her on the night of her wedding to Lucas, which means they could be married. The 'kidnap' is today seen as an emblem of Fang tradition,

⁴¹⁸ Enrique Martino, "Nsoa ("dote"), dinero, deuda y peonaje: cómo el parentesco fang tejó y destejó la economía colonial de la Guinea Española," *ÉNDOXA*, 37, 2016.

⁴¹⁹ Baltasar Fra-Molinero, "El deber de contar y la pasión de escribir: entrevista a María Nsue Angüe," *Abacus*, 10 June 2010.

⁴²⁰ Nnanga is named after her grandmother, but we do not know her surname - Nsue Angüe defies the Fang and Catholic patriarchal systems that see children inheriting their father's names.

⁴²¹ Nsue Angüe, *Ekomo*... 161.

and is acted out symbolically as part of the wedding ceremony: it allows the 'kidnapper' to marry the 'kidnapped' woman if he takes her on the wedding night. But Nnanga cannot stomach what she sees as the passivity of being 'taken:'

...because one thing is not wanting to marry Lucas, and another is letting myself be kidnapped. Do I want to let myself be kidnapped? The question, crept deep inside me. No! No! No! Never⁴²²

Although escaping an unwanted marriage by allowing herself to be 'taken' by another man does not sit well with Nnanga, being kidnapped would prevent the colonial tradition of being coerced, in a Christian marriage, to submit to a man she does not love. In this way, Nnanga uses the tradition to achieve the best outcome that she can manage in the difficult circumstances.

Okenve's research illustrates more specifically how Fang women used the 'kidnap,' or better, following Okenve, the *abóm* (the English and Spanish translations of the word indeed remove all possible agency of women) during colonial times as a form of resistance. He suggests that the *abóm* was a tool used by women in the face of socioeconomic changes brought about by the Spanish (capitalist) intrusion. As bridewealths became more expensive during the onset of a capitalist economy, Okenve finds it became increasingly the norm for only older, wealthy men to be able to get married, and to ever younger women. Yet, as in the Sahara, the clash with colonial culture illustrated to women that gender-based norms were not necessarily inevitable or 'the natural way of things.' Some began to rebel against the gendered practices that they disliked. Okenve finds that it became common for women to challenge coerced marriages, something which had previously been unthinkable. The *abóm*, then, was one form of women's resistance. Women rejected marriages arranged by their fathers and "ran away" in the night with their lovers.⁴²³ Nsue Angüe and Okenve both illustrate the resilience and subtle forms of resistance Equatoguinean women, doves of fire, used to challenge one form of abuse. In the next section, we move on to look at how women participated in the fight against colonialism.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 164.

⁴²³ Okenve, "Equatorial Guinea 1927-1979..." 127.

3.2 Resistance to colonialism and women's participation in the struggle for independence

The official political sphere of Fang, Bubi and Annobonese communities was a male one, although, in some cases, women invaded it in order to make demands. Fang women, for example, would enter the *abbá*, the community meeting place where political decisions would be taken, to reclaim rights accorded to them, especially with regards to marital disputes and rights over children.⁴²⁴ However, the gendering of political space as a primarily male one was extended by the Spanish.⁴²⁵ It is therefore not surprising that, as was the case with the highest echelons of *Harakat Tahrir* and POLISARIO in Spanish Sahara, no Equatoguinean women featured in the leadership of nationalist organisations that emerged to challenge colonialism in Guinea. But that does not mean that they played no role. Below, I sketch (and a rough sketch is all I can offer, when covering over a century of rich history in a short Chapter section) women's contributions to the struggle against colonialism, starting at the point of Spanish colonisation, through the maintenance of an anti-colonial hidden transcript, to their efforts in the nationalist, pro-independence movements of the fifties and sixties.

Nerín has documented Spain's violent military campaigns to gain control over Rio Muni between 1904 and the 1930s, and Fang resistance to these.⁴²⁶ Sundiata has carried out similar work, historicising the resistance of Bubis to colonialism on Bioko island.⁴²⁷ However, perhaps because women's resistance methods were not usually bloody or formally organised, we lack information on their tactics in opposing the efforts of the colonisers. The archives, though, tell a story of women's everyday resistance and hidden transcripts. For a example, a 1904 edition of the Banapá Claretian Mission's magazine published the story of a woman who, despite all the missionaries' efforts, would not convert:

⁴²⁴ Mba (pseudonym), 16 June 2015. However, Mba is keen to emphasise that although Fang women had this space to claim rights as a *wife* or *mother*, there was no such space to claim their rights *as women*.

⁴²⁵ The Fang *abáá*, the Bubi *wedjaa* and the Annobonese *vidjil* were the respective seats of political power in each village. One commonality between the three was the infrequency of inviting women to participate in discussions there. However, I do not presume to suggest that women did not have other, less formal channels of political influence.

⁴²⁶ For more on how the Spanish violently attacked Rio Muni, and the forced labour subsequently practiced there, see Nerín, *Guinea Ecuatorial...* 55.

⁴²⁷ For Bubi resistance to missionaries and the colonials more generally, see Chapter Nine of Sundiata, *From Slaving to Neoslavery...*

...Going back to the subject of the woman, we visited her more than five times to give her the key to heaven, but all our efforts were useless and our arguments crashed against a singular and empty answer, "But, Father, if I am baptised I will live too long and I'll never die; and I no longer want to live."⁴²⁸

It is hard to tell if this old woman was a philosopher, if she wished to mock the unpersuasive missionaries, or if her words reflected a real weariness at life. Whatever her motives, she successfully resisted the proselytisers' persistent advances. Indeed, Yolanda Aixelà Cabré points out that, after years of failure, the (male) Claretian missionaries had been unable to convert Bubi women on the island of Bioko. It was for that reason that they invited nuns to join them hoping that, women to women, they might fare better.⁴²⁹

Neither were the women of Annobón happy with their Spanish lodgers. The missionaries, who arrived there at the end of the nineteenth century, were insulted and threatened, poisoned and had their crops stolen. Annobonese girl children played an important role in this ostracisation of the Catholics. The Spanish nuns, who referred to themselves as "white angels for the black girls" saw their school emptied thanks to a popular boycott by the girls.⁴³⁰

As is usual in the case of subaltern peoples, mockery was a key resistance tool that formed part of the wider hidden transcript of Equatoguineans during colonial times. Women, of course, participated in this systematic mockery of the colonisers, and often led it. The local population had a derogatory nickname for most colonial leaders, and anti-Spanish songs were the order of the day.⁴³¹ The chorus of one popular song went, "The white man is a wimp. We know that, we know that"⁴³² whilst another *sihíri*, a form of Bubi dance and song performed only by women, takes a tone of warning: "The whites have not stopped harassing people/The shark does not usually go back for the scraps."⁴³³

⁴²⁸ Banapá Mission of Claretians, *La Revista de la Guinea Española*, 28 March 1904, 2-3.

⁴²⁹ Aixelà Cabré, "Africanas en el mundo...", 11. For further examples of Bubi resistance to the missionaries, see Aymemí, *Los bubis...*

⁴³⁰ Nerín, *Guinea Ecuatorial...* 57.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴³³ José Francisco Eteo Soriso, *Cancionero Tradicional de Bioko* (Barcelona: Ceiba Ediciones, 2008), 100.

Fang women too, had cultural weapons. One, arguably, was *The White Lady*. This dance, performed only by women, became particularly popular amongst Fangs from the forties onwards, just as pro-independence sentiments were beginning to be incubated in new political organisations and the wider negritude movement was promoting a revalorisation of African cultures and rejection of European colonisation. In the dance, a mask is worn over the head with four faces. The front face smiles, representing the whites' claims of good intentions, but the faces on the sides and back depict anger and sadness, reflecting the true, malevolent intentions of the colonisers.⁴³⁴

The White Lady is an example of women's wider role in fostering pro-independence sentiments throughout the Equatoguinean population. If (educated and elite) men held the leadership roles in the organised pro-independence movements to come, women played an integral part by propagating a counter-hegemonic discourse via cultural tools. Throughout the colonial period, women maintained a hidden transcript through traditional song, dance and re-telling folktales, preserving their own cultures in the face of Spain's aggressive cultural assimilation policies.⁴³⁵

Women also maintained the hidden transcript through attempting to cure loved ones through traditional, rather than Western, medicine (such was the case of Nnanga in *Ekomo*),⁴³⁶ and, as Women's Section archives help us to see, through ignoring Spanish attempts to change their culture even at the level of dining room habits: the Spanish headmistress of a Section girls school in Santa Isabel complained, in 1968, that "with regards to their way of eating, [the girls] have to be continually observed, because as soon as they can, they go back to their primitive customs."⁴³⁷

⁴³⁴ This was how Nsue Enhate (pseudonym) described the dance to me in our interview on 1 April 2014. This is the 'official,' current regime view of the dance, as told in the government-endorsed history of Equatorial Guinea: Rosendo-Ela Nsue Mibui, *Historia de la Guinea Ecuatorial: periodo pre-colonial* (Madrid: Gráficas Algoran, 2005), p.133. Anthropologist James W. Fernandez has a different take on this dance however, and doesn't necessarily attach it to anti-colonialism. For more on this, and other Fang dance traditions, see *Bwiti...* 141-45.

⁴³⁵ Remei Sipi Mayo recalls the tradition of grandmothers and mothers passing on folktales and has begun to document modern women's short stories. See for example Remei Sipi Mayo, "Ribocho. Identidad y encuentro," in *Baiso: ellas y sus relatos*, ed. Remei Sipi Mayo (Barcelona: Editorial Mey, 2015).

⁴³⁶ Nsue Angüe, *Ekomo...*

⁴³⁷ Maria Luisa Iriarte, "Informe del curso 1967-1968," Santa Isabel, 25 May 1968, 2, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 247.

Through these tools, which importantly could speak to large swathes of the local population but which the Spanish could not always understand, women transmitted a counter-hegemonic, anti-colonial political message. And the increasingly hostile atmosphere created by these messages put pressure on Spain. Thus, women's anti-colonial resistance was a true partner to the efforts of the male-dominated organised pro-independence movements that lobbied the UN for Equatorial Guinea's decolonisation. The actions of these movements are delineated below.

As Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo points out, it is not easy to establish the precise dates of the birth of nationalist movements due to "the oral tradition as the only documented testimony and the necessarily clandestine nature of acts of conspiracy."⁴³⁸ Nevertheless, we can say that the initial organised movements emerged in the years following the Second World War, when ideas of freedom were spreading and the UN, along with its Decolonisation Committee, was established.⁴³⁹ Around 1947, Acacio Mañe formed the National Crusade for the Liberation of Guinea (its name was changed, in 1954, to the National Movement for Freedom of Equatorial Guinea or MONALIGE). Mañe travelled around Equatorial Guinea recruiting new members amongst the relatively small, educated elite – almost all the nationalist leaders were amongst the minority of Equatoguineans to hold "emancipated" status. Several of the new affiliates, including the majority of the leaders of the organisation, held a small revolt in the Banapá seminary in September 1951. At least 12 were imprisoned, including Enrique Gori Molubela, who would later become President of the Autonomous Government of Fernando Po (now Bioko). When released, most sought exile in Gabon or pursued studies in Spain.⁴⁴⁰

In 1955, Spain was admitted to the UN. This was a crucial step for Spain's reappearance on the international stage after decades of isolation, but, as Alicia Campos highlights, it resulted in increased pressure to decolonise.⁴⁴¹ Equatoguinean pro-independence activists were aware of this, and acted strategically, expending much energy on lobbying the UN.⁴⁴² Indeed, Spain's desire to participate fully in international society was a key reason in its

⁴³⁸ Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo, "El Gobernador Faustino Ruiz González y el nacionalismo en Guinea Ecuatorial" (paper presented at the Seminario Internacional "Actores coloniales españoles y espacios africanos SS. XIX-XX, University of Alcalá, 2-3 December 2010), 7.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁴⁰ Nkogo Ondó, "La Guinea Ecuatorial...", 2.

⁴⁴¹ Campos, "The Decolonization of Equatorial Guinea..." 101.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 97.

eventual decision to cede independence.⁴⁴³ Another factor was the anti-colonial fervour of Equatorial Guinea's neighbours. As in Western Sahara, the pro-independence discourses that were flowing throughout Africa at the time were reaching the territory and served as inspiration.⁴⁴⁴

On 20 November 1958 Mañé was killed by the Spanish Civil Guard in Bata after denouncing the Decree that made Fernando Po and Rio Muni Spanish provinces, a manoeuvre, as Mañé was aware, by Madrid to avoid UN pressure for decolonization.⁴⁴⁵ This murder of a MONALIGE leader gave further impetus to the pro-independence movements. The youth of Guinea began "to whisper his name in hushed voices"⁴⁴⁶ and, as was the case with Bassiri in the Sahara, his picture was passed clandestinely.⁴⁴⁷ Mañé's face, name and memory became symbols for the hoped-for independence.

Shortly afterwards, on 21 November 1959, Enrique Nvo died in suspicious circumstances in Cameroon, reportedly murdered by Spanish-employed mercenaries.⁴⁴⁸ The clouds that surround Nvo's end allow us to once again draw a comparison with Bassiri. Like his Saharawi contemporary, Nvo became the subject of hopeful speculation. Whilst Saharawis assured themselves that Bassiri was in hiding plotting his next anti-colonial move, some Equatoguineans spread the rumour that Nvo was away lobbying the UN and would be back soon with good news.⁴⁴⁹

On the back of the two martyrdoms of independence, the growing numbers of political exiles in Cameroon, Gabon and Nigeria began to hold meetings, planning how to harness the support of newly independent African states and to sow nationalism in Spanish Guinea. Most of these were male-only affairs, but the 22 June 1959 meeting of all Guinean residents of Gabon in Libreville benefitted from the contributions of a woman known only as

⁴⁴³ Campos argues that it was *the* key reason. *Ibid.*, 114.

⁴⁴⁴ Historian Agustín Nze Nfumu has looked at the effect of other African independence revolutions on Equatoguineans. Agustín Nze Nfumu, *Macias, verdugo o víctima* (Madrid: Herrero y Asociados, 2004), 18.

⁴⁴⁵ Nkogo Ondó, "La Guinea Ecuatorial...", 2; Rosa Pardo Sanz, "La herencia de la descolonización del Africa Española," in *La Décolonisation de l'Afrique Espagnole: Maroc, Sahara Occidental et Guinée-Équatoriale* ed. Olivier Dard, and Lefeuvre, Daniel (Paris: Riveneuve Editions, 2008), 181.

⁴⁴⁶ Nze Nfumu, *Macias...* 18.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁴⁸ Nkogo Ondó, "La Guinea Ecuatorial: reminiscencia histórica, experiencia de las luces y de las sombras de un proyecto político," 3.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

“Madame Pepita,”⁴⁵⁰ whilst later meetings in Nigeria were attended by Emma King Renner, Juliet Lisk and “Keke, Saye and Tuali.”⁴⁵¹ Back in Equatorial Guinea, women such as María Ayekaba⁴⁵² in Rio Muni and Fidela Boneke⁴⁵³ in Bioko fought shoulder to shoulder with men, contributing to the clandestine political meetings held by the relatively well-off Guinean elites in favour of independence. Such women were unusual. Patriarchal norms ensured that organised politics was an almost exclusively masculine arena.

Yet women contributed in other ways. Constanca Balbao recalls that women funded the MONALIGE, prepared food for its meetings and hid wanted men.⁴⁵⁴ In this way, women’s work provided the foundation of nationalist mobilisation. Anita Awaho, a creole woman born in Santa Isabel, owned *Bar Anita* downtown in the same city. Whilst the main bar served as a watering hole as one would expect, she also kept a secret back room used for meetings by pro-independence activists.⁴⁵⁵ Ana recalls the clandestine activities of her aunt, who was part of a wider network of what Ana terms “silent political women.” They collected money, door to door, for exiled pro-independence activists, pretending to sell clothes. They were also responsible for transmitting verbal messages (written letters could blow covers in case of the messengers being searched by Spanish authorities). As Ana pointed out to me, women, rather than men, did such work, due to their relative impunity: the Spanish did not expect Guinean women to involve themselves in ‘political’ activities.⁴⁵⁶

Other older Equatoguineans talk of the integral role that women played in persuading their husbands, brothers and sons to support the movements. Indeed, women’s networks and the influence they held over their menfolk were integral to expanding the anti-colonial sentiment. Although, as Anne Laurence points out, the idea of ‘the women behind the men’ is difficult from an ideological point of view for those who wish to see women on their own terms, in a time and space where women were relegated from traditional political spaces, purveying influence over their male relatives was an important source of political action for

⁴⁵⁰ Obiang Biko, *Equatorial Guinea...* 79.

⁴⁵¹ Nkogo Ondó, “La Guinea Ecuatorial...,” 6.

⁴⁵² Ntutum (pseudonym), 16 June 2015.

⁴⁵³ Remei Sipi Mayo, “Introducción,” in *Voces femeninas de Guinea Ecuatorial. Una antología*, ed. Remei Sipi Mayo (Barcelona: Ediciones Mey, 2015), 10.

⁴⁵⁴ Balboa (pseudonym), 22 June 2015.

⁴⁵⁵ Francisca Sale (pseudonym), personal conversations, Malabo, 25 June 2015; Sipi Mayo, “Introducción,” 10.

⁴⁵⁶ Alogo Mikue, 22 August 2016.

Equatoguinean women.⁴⁵⁷

Whilst MONALIGE was led by Atanasio Ndong, who was forced into exile for his political activities, but often came back clandestinely to meet with colleagues in Guinea, other movements emerged, mostly in exile in order to avoid persecution by the Spanish. These included the Popular Idea of Equatorial Guinea (IPGE), the Pro-Independence Movement of Equatorial Guinea (MPIGE, later absorbed by MONALIGE), the National Movement of Union, the Popular Union for the Liberation of Equatorial Guinea (UPLGE), and the Bubi Union.⁴⁵⁸

Under continued pressure from the UN, Spain announced, in August 1963, its plans to create a system of autonomy for Equatoguineans, which was put to plebiscite. Equatoguineans voted in favour.⁴⁵⁹ As Oscar Scafidi has noted, the historians of the independence process of Equatorial Guinea have tended to focus debate on the efficacy of the domestic nationalist parties versus outside pressure from the UN.⁴⁶⁰ I see this debate as redundant since the UN pressure was fruit of tirelessly lobbying on the UN itself by the Equatoguinean nationalist groups.

New Year's Day 1964 saw the birth of two indigenous-led autonomous governments, one for Rio Muni and another for Fernando Po. Both worked under the 'supervision' of a Spanish Government Advisor and the General Metropolitan Commission which replaced the Governor. Defence, foreign affairs and budget remained under Madrid's control.⁴⁶¹ Enrique Gori Molubela became President of the Autonomous Government of Fernando Po, and Bonifacio Ondó Edú headed up the Autonomous Government of Rio Muni. Both had returned from exile to take up these positions.⁴⁶²

The Movement for the National Union of Equatorial Guinea (MUNGE), which dominated the autonomous governments created in 1964 (Gori and Ondó were both members), was

⁴⁵⁷ Anne Laurence, *Women in England 1500-1760: A Social History* (London: Phoenix Press, 2002), 248.

⁴⁵⁸ Alicia Campos Serrano, "Nacionalismo anticolonial en Guinea Ecuatorial: de españoles a guineanos," *Araucaria* 5, no. 9 (2003): 4.

⁴⁵⁹ Salvador López de la Torre, "El referendúm de Guinea Ecuatorial ha sido un verdadero ejemplo para todos los pueblos de Africa," *ABC*, Madrid, 17 December 1963.

⁴⁶⁰ Scafidi, *Equatorial Guinea*, 24.

⁴⁶¹ Ballano Gonzalo, *Aquel Negrito...* 576.

⁴⁶² Nkogo Ondó, "La Guinea Ecuatorial...", 7.

created at a Congress in Bata on 30 November 1963.⁴⁶³ The Movement's aim was to negotiate, peacefully and gradually, independence from Spain in partnership with the "Caudillo" and recognising "how much Spain had given [the Equatoguinean] people."⁴⁶⁴ Gradual decolonisation was the best option, thought its affiliates, in order to give time to train the population for the new responsibilities that independence would bring. It is unsurprising, therefore, that, as Alicia Campos has highlighted, a strategic "double language" emerged amongst the Guinean nationalists: one used abroad, based on discourses of self-determination and anti-colonialism *de vogue* on the international stage, and one used at home, which emphasised the 'civilising' influence of the Spanish and the links with Spain that would be achieved post-independence.⁴⁶⁵

Following the creation of the autonomous governments, the atmosphere in the country became "extremely tense and difficult."⁴⁶⁶ The most collaborative of the Equatoguinean elites became gradually less popular. Of Abilio Balboa, the Mayor of Santa Isabel, for example, Maria Nieves Sunyer of the Women's Section remarked "he's the most intelligent and most European, but it seems that because of that, the natives don't like him."⁴⁶⁷ Okenve notes that in rural areas clashes between village "tribal chiefs," who, reminiscent of *Djemaa* members in the Sahara, had been selected and imposed by Spain, replacing the more democratic traditional systems of political control. Aware that a Spanish exit would not be in their immediate personal interest, these "tribal chiefs" were amongst the minority that was not pro-independence.⁴⁶⁸

In 1965 the UN, in response to the demands of the Equatoguinean nationalists, asked Spain to give a date for the concession of independence.⁴⁶⁹ The MUNGE began its path to radicalisation. This was particularly so after a strike over conditions by civil servants between 21 and 23 April 1966, by which time it became clear, as Campos argues, that autonomy was

⁴⁶³ MUNGE, "Movimiento de Unión Nacional de la Guinea Ecuatorial (MUNGE), declaración de principios," Madrid, 18 January 1964, 4, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248. For an example Spain's positive lauding of the MUNGE, see Jose Salas Guirior, "Viaje a las sombras de España," *ABC*, Madrid, 7 March 1976.

⁴⁶⁴ MUNGE, "...Declaración...", 18 January 1964, 5.

⁴⁶⁵ Campos, "The Decolonization of Equatorial Guinea..." 102.

⁴⁶⁶ María Nieves Sunyer, "Informe de la inspección a Fernando Poo realizada por la regidora central de juventudes del 4 al 8 de Marzo de 1965," Santa Isabel, 17 March 1965, 2, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁶⁸ Okenve, "Equatorial Guinea 1927-1979..." 285.

⁴⁶⁹ Ballano Gonzalo, *Aquel Negroito...* 590.

not serving the interests of Equatoguineans.⁴⁷⁰ It is important to note that many of the MUNGE's leaders, including Gori Molubela who was imprisoned after the Banapá protest several years earlier, had previously been in trouble with Spanish authorities due to their pro-independence activism. As such, upon seeing that autonomy was not a gradual 'training period' to prepare Equatoguineans to take over all institutions and assume independence as they had expected, but rather a strategic transition to neo-colonial rule, it is not surprising that Gori and others became increasingly pro-independence.

The tense situation in the country by the mid sixties saw many sectors of the population palpably fed up with their lodgers. This was partially thanks to women's efforts to transmit an anti-colonial hidden transcript of resistance through the cultural tools, as described above. By February 1968, resistance to Spanish rule was becoming increasingly violent. Carmen Obón, a Spanish Women's Section teacher wrote from Bata,

...no one is scared here, but in the forest they are. All the white women have left, those ones that had a ticket for before June. There's no tickets left for the boat [...]
In Santa Isabel they've killed two white women...⁴⁷¹

Finally, on 14 April 1968, Spain committed to the international principles of decolonisation and began preparations for an election.⁴⁷² On 12 October 1968, Francisco Macías became President following his successful election campaign. Yet, unlike Bonifacio Ondó or Atanasio Ndong, Macías, a civil servant under Spain and, after provincialisation, Mayor of Mongomo,⁴⁷³ did not have a history of having suffered repression or exile, or, like Acacio Mañé and Enrique Nvo, of risking life and limb for self-government.⁴⁷⁴ Why, then, was Macías the preference of the Equatoguinean people? I argue below that, in some ways, his election indicated the failure of a hegemonic project in Laclau and Mouffe's sense.

For Laclau and Mouffe, a theory of 'equivalence' can help those struggling against an oppressive power. In colonial contexts, a movement struggling for independence often uses the constructed idea of the nation to unite oppressed peoples against the colonialist foe.

⁴⁷⁰ Campos, "The Decolonization of Equatorial Guinea..." 105.

⁴⁷¹ Carmen Obón, Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Bata, 1 February 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.

⁴⁷² Campos, "The Decolonization of Equatorial Guinea..." 111.

⁴⁷³ Juan María Calvo, "Guinea Ecuatorial: La ocasión perdida," (digitalised version available at <http://www.asodegue.org/hdojmc.htm1989>, accessed 2 August 2015), Chapter Five.

⁴⁷⁴ Nze Nfumu, *Macias...* 18.

Each of the struggling parties' complaints is, to use Laclau and Mouffe's terminology, made *equivalent*: women survivors of domestic violence offered no justice by the courts, victims of forced labour and those denied dignity on account of their colour are encouraged to recognise their common concern with independence from the colonial power. An imagined nation – they are all *Equatoguinean* and are all oppressed by *Spanish* - can join their hands. I do not mean to suggest that the idea of 'nation' is universally empowering for colonised peoples. But, in the struggle for hegemony, nationalist discourses are commonly employed to rally support and solidarity in anti-colonial contexts, just as a constructed understanding of womanhood is often used in feminist struggles.

Eugenio Nkogo Ondó, one of the pro-independence activists of the fifties and sixties, argues that Equatoguinean nationalism failed even before independence was achieved.⁴⁷⁵ Steele, who highlights that a grassroots nationalist movement never emerged (we should highlight here the discrepancy between the anti-colonialism of the masses and the lack of non-elite representation in the organised movements), echoes this view.⁴⁷⁶ Similarly, Campos asserts that "fragmentation was a main feature of the Guinean nationalism."⁴⁷⁷ Nze Nfumu explains the face of this fragmentation:

The lack of an objective nationalism, of an effective nationalism, ensured that the Equatoguineans of pre-independence did not speak of a single Country, but of a type of ripping into parts so that each group, along ethnic, regional or other criteria, did its bit for whoever would best serve its interests...⁴⁷⁸

In other words, the pro-independence movements did not create a chain of equivalence to unite the different groups, ethnicities and regions of Guinea. Ndongo argues that Spain created ethnic divisions intentionally. It brought the "spirit" of civil war to Guinea,⁴⁷⁹ he states, and did so by,

presenting the country not as a unity, but as a fragile amalgam of antagonistic tribes, some poorer and more "wild" and others more "civilised" and rich, whose

⁴⁷⁵ Nkogo Ondó, "La Guinea Ecuatorial..."

⁴⁷⁶ Steele quoted in Anne Foot, "A Policy of Plunder: the Development and Normalisation of Neo-Patrimonialism in Equatorial Guinea" (Stellenbosch University, 2014), 49.

⁴⁷⁷ Campos, "The Decolonization of Equatorial Guinea..." 102.

⁴⁷⁸ Nze Nfumu, *Macias...* 130.

⁴⁷⁹ Ndongo-Bidyogo, "El Gobernador Faustino..." 15.

coexistence could only be guaranteed by Spain; the objective was to invoke suspicions and rivalries that had not previously existed...⁴⁸⁰

A letter to Madrid penned by Edmundo Bosio, candidate for the Bubi Union party, and his colleague Ricardo Bolopá illustrates well the effect of Spain's strategy. Their words, scribed shortly before the elections, beg for Spain's intervention in favour of an independent Fernando Po for the Bubis, in order to prevent "slavery [...], civil war and genocide."⁴⁸¹ Bubis, the preferred ethnicity for the colonisers, greatly feared discrimination and violence at the hands of the, until now, less privileged Fangs. Other ethnicities had their own parties that relied on ethnic support bases, such as the Democratic Fernandino Union and the Ndowne Union. It is true that the Spanish attempted the same strategy of division in the Sahara with the creation of the *Djemaa* and the PUNS, structures that 'represented' the 'heads of tribes' and thereby emphasised the heterogeneity of a tribal society. Nevertheless, the POLISARIO arguably had a far easier task in uniting the population, given the pre-independence history of the supra tribal, unifying *āīt ārba'iiin* as well as a largely shared language, religion and culture.⁴⁸²

Returning to the subject of the elections, Ondó Edú was seen as the candidate backed by Spain's barely hidden hand, which damaged his popularity in some communities. Atanasio Ndong, on the other hand, had lived in exile so long that he was not well known by 'the people.' His campaign lacked confidence and he seemed to focus on how he could form a coalition with the winner, rather than ever envisioning himself as the victor. Edmundo Bosio was the product of the ethnic differences discussed above, and, whilst a welcome candidate for many Bubis, for obvious reasons his Bubi Union party had less appeal for the Fang majority and other ethnicities. Macías, the remaining candidate, was not Spain's first choice but one that the colonial power nevertheless felt comfortable with in terms of their future options for influence.⁴⁸³ As Cusack has pointed out, Macías, Obiang and several high members of both their regimes, had been amongst the Equatoguinean elites under the

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Edmundo Bosio Dioco, and Bolopá, Ricardo, Letter, Madrid, 20 June 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.

⁴⁸² The extent to which this history was imagined or "real" is not the main question here, but rather the POLISARIO's ability to make hegemonic its own vision of the nation's history. It seems undeniable, though, that the Saharawi tribes enjoyed several political, cultural, religious and linguistic commonalities that the various ethnicities of Equatorial Guinea did not.

⁴⁸³ Nze Nfumu, *Macias...*

Spanish system and had studied on the mainland.⁴⁸⁴ Furthermore, Macías possessed a natural forte for public relations. As Nze Nfumu points out, he knew Fang culture well and took advantage of this when carving out his public image. He fashioned himself as the people's leader, and indeed this is what he became: he won the democratic election and became President on 12 October 1968.⁴⁸⁵

What happened after October 1968 and the gendered shape of the Macías regime will be subjects for Chapter Six. First, though, we will go back in time again to 1964. In the following section, we take a magnifying glass to look at the resistance of one small sector of the Equatoguinean female population: women that had contact with the Spanish Falange party's Women's Section. As was the case with our focus on Spanish Sahara, the Women's Section archives from Spanish Guinea provide an insight into how Equatoguinean women showed resistance to colonialism, racism and sexism simultaneously.

3.3 Intersectional resistance: fighting the racism, sexism and colonialism of the Spanish Women's Section

The Women's Section of the Falange arrived in Equatorial Guinea in 1964.⁴⁸⁶ This was upon the invitation of Gori Molubela, who was the President of the autonomous Government of Santa Isabel, Fernando Po.⁴⁸⁷ The MUNGE and the increasingly radical Equatoguinean elites associated with the autonomous government envisaged a role for women in constructing a future independent Guinea. For this they needed to train women. Yet, the role would be in line with the *Falangista* model: women would be good housewives and mothers. Unlike the POLISARIO, then, the MUNGE did not incorporate feminist demands into its nationalist rhetoric, even when it radicalised from 1966 onwards.

Unlike in Spanish Sahara, Women's Section staff arrived in Equatorial Guinea fully aware that their destination was set to become an independent country. Their aim, from the outset, was not only to impose the Falangist construction of femininity on the colonised

⁴⁸⁴ Cusack, "Being Away from 'Home'..." Indeed, Obiang studied at the infamous Military Academy of Zaragoza.

⁴⁸⁵ Nze Nfumu, *Macias...* 21-26.

⁴⁸⁶ As Cécile Stephanie Stehrenberger has highlighted, Women's Section dance groups had visited Equatorial Guinea before this date to perform for 'natives' and 'Europeans' alike. Stehrenberger, "Folklore, Nation and Gender..."

⁴⁸⁷ Enrique Gori Molubela, Letter to Teresa Loring, Santa Isabel, 22 September 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 247.

subjects, but also to ensure the longevity of this construction. The Section sought to train 'native' teachers to reproduce Francoist housewives post independence.

As was the case in Spanish Sahara, one of the initial and necessary tasks of the organisation was to genderwash: to justify colonialism by lamenting the 'subordinate and backward' position of the 'native' woman. In a 1964 research report aimed at mapping the situation of the Equatoguinean woman and how the Section could "organise [itself] in benefit of the women of the territories,"⁴⁸⁸ Dolores Bermúdez Cañete finds that "up until now, the woman has been no more than man's slave, and is valued less than any animal. She does all the work, no matter what type."⁴⁸⁹ The Women's Section aimed to 'correct' this. An information leaflet aimed at Guinean women explains the role of the Section: "Our goal is to **train women**, making them essentially feminine and [...] also managing to convert them into wives and mothers that truly are companions to men [emphasis in original]."⁴⁹⁰

The structures installed by the Women's Section in the two provinces of Rio Muni and Fernando Po were much the same as those in the Sahara and in Spain itself: domestic schools for women, primary and high schools for girls, and ambulant teachers to reach out to the rural areas. However, the Women's Section of Spanish Sahara was exceptional in terms of how its curriculum gradually took on a more academic face. In Guinea, apart from literacy classes, the curriculum was entirely focused on exporting Falangist womanhood. Reports sent back to Madrid on the achievements and work of the Section focus on progress made by pupils in flower arranging, setting tables, eating habits and Spanish cookery, cleanliness, personal hygiene, hospitality, house decoration and even the arts of conversing like a lady, laughing delicately and behaving appropriately on various forms of modern transport such as trains.⁴⁹¹ Maria Luisa Iriarte, Headmistress of *Ewaiso Ipola* school, writes in her 1967-68 report of a particular incident that illustrated how far she felt 'her' girls had come in their hospitality skills. When a group of white French students from Cameroon came to stay and one told an Equatoguinean student that she did not much care for the latter's

⁴⁸⁸ Teresa Loring (National Subdelegate to the Women's Section), Letter to Antonio Trujillo (Provincial Delegate for Youth), Madrid, 27 April 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.

⁴⁸⁹ Dolores Bermúdez Cañete, "Informe del viaje de la regidora central de S.E.U. a la isla de Fernando Poo y Rio Muni," May 1964, 2, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.

⁴⁹⁰ Emphasis in original. Women's Section, "Sección Femenina," Santa Isabel, March 1967, 2, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.

⁴⁹¹ See for example Iriarte, "Informe...", 25 May 1968; Women's Section, "Proyecto de curso en regimen de internado para muchachas o señoras casadas, nativas de las provincias africanas," Madrid, December 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.

skin colour, the latter “reacted very well and did nothing but smile.”⁴⁹² Women’s Section students were expected to know their place and accept such racist comments. Indeed, Sipi Mayo, who attended this school, recalls the everyday racism:

...the indigenous girls (that was what we were called in those days) and the European girls wore different uniforms [...] they sat at the front, we sat at the back [...] if we spoke Bubi, we were forced to wear a necklace of foul-smelling snail shells, and we couldn’t take it off until another girl spoke Bubi and then we’d have to pass the punishment on to her [...] on the bus, the indigenous girls sat at the back with no cushions, the whites sat at the front with cushions...⁴⁹³

Women’s Section also attempted to impose on Equatoguinean women and girls the strict sexual controls to which they themselves were subjected in Francoist society. Single Spanish women moving to Equatorial Guinea were only permitted to do so if they could prove they would live in the household of someone that could attest for their “morality.”⁴⁹⁴ They tended to become upset at signs of sexual activity amongst their students: “imagine our displeasement,” Purita García Morales wrote from Bata to her colleague in Madrid, “Irene... was going around with men and in a bad way [...] a great girl, clever, a wonderful presence... and look what she does.”⁴⁹⁵ Sexual activity and being a ‘good student’ were mutually exclusive for the Women’s Section, and so, when selecting which girls would have the opportunity to study in Spain, girls regarded as promiscuous or who had had abortions were overlooked.⁴⁹⁶

The Section always had the aim of incorporating ‘natives’ into its staff, and in 1965, a summer school in the peninsula for 60 Equatoguinean women was proposed as “fundamental” by Maria Nieves Sunyer, one of the leaders of the Section. Selection of the women would be easy. Sunyer proposed simply picking “the wives and sisters of the

⁴⁹² Iriarte, “Informe...,” 25 May 1968, 4.

⁴⁹³ Sipi Mayo, “La Huella del Colonialismo...”

⁴⁹⁴ Nerín, *Guinea Ecuatorial...* 115.

⁴⁹⁵ Purita García Morales, Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Bata, 4 April 1965, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.

⁴⁹⁶ When deciding which girls would go to Spain for the 1964/65 school year, Angeles Mallado precluded girls that had had abortions and who were rumoured to be sexually active from the selection process. See Angeles Mallado, Letter to Dolores Bermudez Cañete, Santa Isabel, 22 June 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.

autonomous government's authorities."⁴⁹⁷ Indeed, as Anne Foot has argued, Spain ruled through a system of patronage that favoured loyal (significantly, mainly ethnic Bubi) Equatoguineans.⁴⁹⁸ The practices of the Women's Section in choosing which women and girls would receive study grants, who could access opportunities for education and work experience on the Spanish mainland and who would be employed back in Guinea are a microcosm of this wider system. Women's Section archives house much correspondence between Section staff and male Equatoguinean autonomous government representatives and civil servants regarding study grants for the latter's daughters and sisters,⁴⁹⁹ and show a preference for women married to autonomous Government politicians when recruiting 'native' teachers.⁵⁰⁰ A quotation of a letter from the Fernando Po Delegation of the Section back to the Madrid office helps to illustrate how things worked:

We also have two *mulatas* that did a few domestic courses for three months in Las Palmas and although they're not much good, since their father is the Secretary of the Police Station, we had to give them a post somewhere.⁵⁰¹

The female elite after independence would be handpicked, though Spain, from amongst the female relatives of the Equatoguinean male civil servants. Yet this female elite, in line with Francoist ideology, would always be kept subordinate to men. The types of studies to which women had access helped to ensure the future of this unequal gender power dynamic. Few were the Women's Section students that were allowed to study a university degree after completely high school. Most were sent to Women Section's own training centres in Spain and the Canary Islands to study vocational courses in traditionally 'feminine' (the

⁴⁹⁷ María Nieves Sunyer, "Informe de la inspección a Rio Muni realizada por la Regidora Central de Juventudes del 4 al 8 de Marzo de 1965," Bata, 8 March 1965, 2, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.

⁴⁹⁸ Foot, "A Policy of Plunder..."

⁴⁹⁹ See for example Soledad De Santiago, Letter to "Mina" ("Auxiliar Central de Juventudes"), Madrid, 27 May 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246; Rafael M. Matala, Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 20 April 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246; Teresa Loring, Letter to Federico Ngomo Nandongo, Madrid, 10 May 1965, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248; Soledad De Santiago, Letter to Carmen Obón, Bata, 29 February 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248; Soledad De Santiago, Letter to Carmen Obón, Madrid, 17 June 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248; Soledad De Santiago, Letter to Carmen Obón, Madrid, 15 July 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248; Soledad De Santiago, Letter to Carmen Obón, Madrid, 22 March 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248. There are no such similar examples from the archives of the Women's Section in the Sahara.

⁵⁰⁰ Dolores Bermúdez Cañete, Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Bata, 8 July 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.

⁵⁰¹ Women's Section, Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 11 March 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.

traditionally Spanish construction of feminine, that is) underpaid and undervalued fields such as home economics, dressmaking or nursing.⁵⁰²

And yet Equatoguinean women, even those handpicked by the organisation to be sent to Spain, resisted Women's Section indoctrination in a number of ways. Academic reports of schoolgirls, for example, illustrate a lack of interest in the syllabus and/or a will to defy the authority of the Spanish teachers. Adela Ntang Nteng, for example, "[did] things reluctantly and always protest[ed],"⁵⁰³ whilst Carmen Eyenga Mba-Oyana, "[was] a very apathetic girl and live[d] her life in the School without making an effort to fit in with School life."⁵⁰⁴ Angela Nefiri Bacale Usuru, who was later to become a Physical Education teacher for the Section, showed "indifference,"⁵⁰⁵ Florentina Ntutumu Nchama showed "apathy" and "evasion" of her duties despite her noted capabilities⁵⁰⁶ and Rosario Tomo Coffi found it "very hard to obey."⁵⁰⁷

These school reports also revealed teachers' concerns that Equatoguinean girls tended to mix with each other exclusively, rather than with their Spanish classmates. But aren't the Women's Section staff right to interpret these reports as Equatoguinean 'bad behaviour'? How can I confidently suggest this is resistance? Scholars of student resistance such as Daniel McFarland recognise jokes, whining and private socialisation as passive forms of everyday resistance and as part of a hidden transcript, and open challenges to the teacher or refusal to work as "active resistance."⁵⁰⁸ Ties in the classroom, or cliques, such as those of Equatoguinean girls studying in Spanish peninsula schools give resistant students a network of support, enhancing their ability to rebel repeatedly in class.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰² Stucki, "The Hard Side of Soft Power...", 13.

⁵⁰³ Women's Section, "Informe Escolar de Adela Ntang Nteng, 1966-67," Castellón, 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.

⁵⁰⁴ Women's Section, "Informe Escolar de Carmen Eyenga Mba-Oyana, 1966-67," Castellón, 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.

⁵⁰⁵ Pilar Ozores, "Informe Escolar de Angela Nefiri Bacale Usuru," Madrid, 5 April 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.

⁵⁰⁶ Women's Section, "Informe Escolar de Florentina Ntutumu Nchama," Las Navas del Marques School, Avila, 11 April 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.

⁵⁰⁷ Women's Section, "Informe Escolar de Rosario Tomos Coffi," Heroínas de los Sitios School, Gerona, 4 March 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.

⁵⁰⁸ Daniel A. McFarland, "Student Resistance: How the Formal and Informal Organization of Classrooms Facilitate Everyday Forms of Student Defiance," *American Journal of Sociology* 107, no. 3 (2001).

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

To use another line of argument, I return to the ecosystem analogy that I introduced in Chapter One. An Equatoguinean wildlife biologist attempting to monitor the endangered drill, a breed of monkey autochthonous to the forests of Bioko, may never spot the animal that she hopes to count. However, by drawing on other signs found in that rainforest ecosystem, she may estimate the movements of drills, how many are hiding in the green, and if they are thriving. She might be confident that a nomadic group of drills is near when she finds mauve hairs clumped onto bark – drills mark territory by rubbing their chests at the foot of trees – or the leftover stones from consumed fruit. Similarly, it is sometimes impossible to know the internal drivers of historical subaltern subjects. And yet, if we can see that the ecosystem is providing a favourable habitat for resistance in the form of anti-colonial counter hegemonic discourses, or that political opportunities (such as UN support) are abundant, then small signs like consistently bad behaviour by school pupils are as much a track of resistance as is a nibbled pine cone for a biologist monitoring the shy red squirrel in my native Northumberland.

Another advantage held by scholars of African independence movements is that they can talk to surviving activists. During a visit to Malabo, I showed extracts of the above school reports to a woman who had attended a Spanish nun's boarding school. I asked what she thought of the reports. Her response highlights how girls resisted, yet at the same time showed further agency via (maintaining a veneer of) collaboration, in order to create advantageous opportunities:

My reports were like that. I think they show resistance. I got told off for not following orders and things like that, but these nuns were militants! They'd have us doing the laundry, scrubbing the floors all day, and I was in a nun's school but the Women's Section schools were just the same, and we tried to rebel against all that. But me, I won the nuns over because I was clever and nice and I studied hard, so they helped me to get a study grant to go to Spain. So you could say I collaborated. Yes, in a way we collaborated with the system. But it was only to get ahead.⁵¹⁰

Girls who studied in Spain did so under strict supervision. At the discretion of the Women's Section branch where they stayed, girls were or were not allowed to attend functions organised by other bodies and to go on excursions at weekends. Many girls lived in religious

⁵¹⁰ Maria Jesus Ntutumu (pseudonym), personal conversations, Malabo, 19 June 2015.

establishments and, on the occasions that girls were allowed out with friends, strict curfews were imposed. But again, Equatoguineans resisted such regimes, ignoring restrictions on freedom of movement.⁵¹¹

Significantly, as independence drew closer, discipline in the Women's Section schools of Equatorial Guinea, as well as amongst Equatoguinean in Spain, worsened. By late 1967, discipline had become "deficient,"⁵¹² and by February 1968, schoolgirls in Bata openly told their Spanish teachers that, whilst Spain pushed for autonomy, a "war" of independence was imminent, and that therefore Women's Section courses would come to a halt within a matter of weeks.⁵¹³ Post independence, in early 1969, a Spanish Women's Section teacher found her pupils "more difficult," since they no longer felt they needed to show any obedience to their white teachers.⁵¹⁴ The increased 'bad behaviour' of schoolgirls as independence approached speaks of the objects of resistance: efforts to undermine the Spanish teachers and *Falangista* syllabus were as much anti-colonial as anti-sexist.

As well as the classroom disciplinary problems, Spanish Women's Section staff faced added challenges. The adult domestic classes, which were never popular anyway,⁵¹⁵ were increasingly afflicted with a "dying interest" amongst attendees as independence neared.⁵¹⁶ Further more, staff were frustrated when young Equatoguinean women returning from Spain refused to take the jobs that had been set aside for them. Said one staff member, "it hurts me that they behave like this when they are being helped so much in Spain [...] is this what they want for their country?"⁵¹⁷ Despite pressure from Women's Section, some Equatoguinean women took advantage of the training opportunities to pursue life paths of their own design.

⁵¹¹ See for example the complaints of one Women's Section employee about disobedience amongst Equatoguinean students in Madrid, sneaking out, ignoring curfews etc.: María Inés Pineda Barrantes, Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Aranjuez, 28 May 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.

⁵¹² María Luisa Iriarte, Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 6 November 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.

⁵¹³ Obón, 1 February 1968.

⁵¹⁴ Carmen Obón, Letter to Soledad de Santiago (1), Bata, 22 February 1969, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.

⁵¹⁵ Tentor described women as "not very grateful" for the classes (Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 17 April 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246) whilst a report on activities in Rio Muni from September 1965 states, "the women [...] were arriving late for class, an hour late, and for any (small, from our point of view) reason, they would not turn up for class at all" (Carmen Obón, "Informe de las cátedras realizadas en la provincia de Rio Muni por los equipos de la delegación nacional de la Sección Femenina," Bata, September 1965, 2, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 249).

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵¹⁷ Carmen Obón, Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 8 August 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.

Concha Tentor, one of the Spanish leaders of the Women's Section complained that the organisation's locally employed staff did not possess the proper Falangist "spirit."⁵¹⁸ This was despite the efforts, by some of these Equatoguinean teachers, to provide a more varied programme for the Section. Trinidad Morgades, for example, in 1968 proposed and led a study about women's role and position in Equatoguinean society to present at an International Women's Conference.⁵¹⁹ Morgades was one of very few Equatoguinean women who managed to complete a literature degree in Spain despite the racism and sexism of the colonial system. Later to become one of Equatorial Guinea's foremost authors, Vice Rector of the University of Equatorial Guinea and, today, an advocate for Equatoguinean girls' education, in the sixties she worked as Headmistress in a secondary school. Women's Section cautiously noted Morgades' "communist" "political ideas."⁵²⁰ These "subversive" political views had come the fore in a disagreement with Spanish staff member Angeles Mallado in Spring 1964. Mallado had unilaterally decided which girls would be sent to Spain without any discussion with Morgades. An argument "on racial lines" ensued and Morgades, according to Mallado,

attacked Spain, the Women's Section and Jose Antonio [Primo de Rivera] and she even said some things about the Bible [...] she even said I should go to her house to submit myself to what she had to say, since this is Africa and I'm a European...⁵²¹

We can see, then, that, as in Western Sahara, Equatoguinean women that worked for the Women's Section harboured oppositional views. Collaboration and resistance in colonial time were not a dichotomy. Women showed resilience to colonialism and patriarchy by taking advantage of the study and employment opportunities that the colonial administration offered, yet at times they also showed outright resistance to colonialism, as the case of Morgades powerfully illustrates. Furthermore, the focus, in this section, on the hidden transcript maintained by Women's Section pupils, and by those women and girls who refused Women's Section's offers of training in the Francoist housewife model, illustrate the intersectional nature of Equatoguinean women's resistance to Spanish colonialism. Like

⁵¹⁸ Concha Tentor, Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 26 February 1966, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.

⁵¹⁹ Women's Section, 11 March 1968.

⁵²⁰ Soledad De Santiago, "Guion para la visita de la delegación nacional a las provincias de Africa," Madrid, 23 January 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.

⁵²¹ Mallado, 22 June 1964.

Saharawi women, they resisted traditional and colonial patriarchies, as well as (racist) colonialism itself.

One difference between the POLISARIO and the Equatoguinean pro-independence movements is the former's success in linking the grievances of all sectors of Saharawi society (from the black slaves, to women oppressed by patriarchy, to the underpaid workers of the phosphate mines) to colonialism, discouraging the hierarchies and differences between Saharawis that tribalism brought and thereby uniting almost the entire population under one nationalist movement. On the other hand, whilst there was widespread discontent with, and resistance to, colonial rule in Equatorial Guinea, the organised political movements were fragmented, elite-dominated, and never succeeded in mobilising the population behind a unified vision of the Equatoguinean nation. And I highlight nationalism precisely because a nation was the aim of the pro-independence movements, whether it be a Bubi nation on Bioko island, a merge with the Cameroonian nation, or an Equatorial Guinea comprised of all the region of Spanish Guinea.

With regards to women's oppression, unlike the POLISARIO, none of the movements made a real attempt to discursively address women's specific gender-related grievances. This limited the extent to which women could be mobilised, and indeed is emblematic of how the movements failed to rally the masses. Even if many hearts and minds were anti-colonial, they were not united behind one vision of nationalism, but were rather struggling against the spectre of a new domination by a community other than 'one's own.' Furthermore, although women have played a crucial if forgotten role in the fight against colonialism, the failure to envisage a rupture with the colonial-imagined role for women has also had far-reaching consequences even to the present day with regards to women's role in organised political resistance movements, as we shall see in Chapter Six. There, we focus on resistance to the *Ngueista* dictatorships that followed independence. For now, we turn our attention to women's resistance, and gendered oppression, in occupied Western Sahara since 1975.

Chapter Four. Women, gender and resistance in Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara

As the Moroccan army descended on Western Sahara it attempted to clear southern regions of Morocco, which were once part of Spanish Sahara, of suspected POLISARIO sympathisers. Amongst the first to be taken was 24-year-old Fatima Ghalia Leili. Fatima was well known in Tan Tan, her home town. Despite her youth, she had a high-profile civil service job and was a leader of a local women's group. Indeed, it was during her walk back home from the office that she was abducted. As the sun was setting on the cold evening of 8 January 1976, a black, chauffeur-driven Renault 16 came for her. Four men dressed in civilian clothes stepped out and bundled her into the back of the car. She was not seen again for 15 years.⁵²²

Up until her arrest, Fatima's public façade was far from an activist one, and yet she had been secretly pro-independence for years. When the POLISARIO was formed, Fatima became a double agent, collecting information from her place of work and passing it to the Saharawi nationalists as well as training both women and men in techniques of protest.⁵²³ On top of this, she had a brother who had joined POLISARIO fighters. In other words, Fatima had to go.

After Moroccan agents had disappeared Fatima, they came back a month later to disappear most members of her extended family, which was common practice.⁵²⁴ "They also kidnapped her father, her sister, most of her brothers, her mother, her aunt and her uncle" Soukaina Yaya tells me, who, then a small girl in Tan Tan, watched the events of 2 February 1976 from her window with dread. Police broke down the door of the Leili family home and took all who were there, pulling Fatima's father, ill with respiratory problems, from his bed. His crime was having relatives linked to the POLISARIO.⁵²⁵

⁵²² The Moroccan state has a history of using forced disappearance as a political tool. For more information see Susan Slyomovics, *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

⁵²³ Soukaina Yaya, personal interview, El Aaiún, 22 August 2014.

⁵²⁴ Indeed, apparently even infants were a threat to the invading Moroccans, as the case of Embarka Mitmaila and her week-old baby illustrates. Both were disappeared in Tan Tan in the lead-up to the Black March in 1975. *Ibid.*

⁵²⁵ 10 members of the family were taken to a secret detention centre in Agadir, but were later moved to Agdz fort and finally Qal'at M'Gouna. Carlos Martín Beristain, and González Hidalgo, Eloísa, *El oasis de la memoria: memoria histórica y violaciones de derechos humanos en el Sáhara Occidental. Tomo II* (Bilbao: University of the Basque Country 2012), 500. Arso, "Weekly News," <http://www.arso.org/01-e-44.htm>, 5 November 1995 (accessed 25 May 2016).

Yaya, now a human rights activist in El Aaiún, finishes her former neighbour's story: "When she came out of jail, she had suffered a lot. She married, but she wasn't able to have children due to injuries inflicted through torture. They tortured her very, very badly."⁵²⁶ In her short summary of Leili's post-prison life, Yaya emphasises her compatriot's marital status and inability to procreate. In our interview, Yaya explains the fate of one other female friend, the novelist El Bataoul Mahjoub Lmdaimigh. El Bataoul, also known as "the woman with the black pen" due to her refusal to follow the conventions of the Moroccan education system by writing in blue ink, witnessed the kidnap of her father and other relatives.⁵²⁷ Says Yaya of El Bataoul,

[W]hen they took her father and other members of her family, her childhood stopped. This was in 1977. And she decided then that she would never marry, because the regime had taken all the male members of her family, so from then on she would accept males only as friends but not as a husband.⁵²⁸

Again, El Bataoul's marital status is the primordial information given in the brief summary of her life. The role of mother and caregiver in Saharawi society is constructed as feminine in hegemonic discourse, and marriage is a key aspiration for women.⁵²⁹ Yaya, indeed, has given motherhood and marriage central importance in her recounting of women activists' life stories. Whilst Leili is unable to pursue what is seen (in hegemonic Saharawi nationalist discourses) as her role as a woman due to the torture inflicted on her, El Bataoul resists her gender role in the name of the nationalist cause. In this chapter, I aim to further explore the relationship between marital status, compulsory heterosexuality, gender and resistance in occupied Western Sahara.

I attempt to tell the story of Saharawi resistance to Moroccan colonialism chronologically, thereby setting the complicated and nuanced relationship between resistance and gender in its wider historical context. During the period of the Moroccan and Mauritanian invasion, we see how Morocco made use of Saharawi constructions of gender to traumatise its victims. Focusing on the years of war, I illustrate how everyday resistance, the tool so important to Saharawi women resisting patriarchy, and, for black Saharawis, slavery in the

⁵²⁶ Yaya, 22 August 2014.

⁵²⁷ Yaya tells me that Mahjoub Lmdaimigh's stories make references to the Black March and the murder of her father, but these are hidden in order to escape the Moroccan censors. *Ibid.*

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁹ Allan, "Representations of Gender..."

Spanish colonial period, resurfaces as the main arm of Saharawis opposing the Moroccan occupation.

The first major public protest of Saharawi nationalists under Moroccan rule, in 1987, allows us to use and develop Scott's theorisation of when the hidden transcript becomes public. I then use a testimony of a woman disappeared during these protests to develop a theory of Saharawi active maternalism. Moving to the time of the 1991 ceasefire and beyond, I give overviews of the *intifadas* of 1987, the nineties and of 2005. Looking at the 2010 Gdeim Izik protest, the Saharawi feminine construction of motherhood comes to the fore once again. I look at how orientalist constructions of gender used by the Western press affects who resists, who is punished and how. I also explore other ways that Saharawi femininities and masculinities affect who resists and how. Next, I look at how constructions of gender are used during the torture of activists, and how women resist such torture. This leads us to a discussion of Saharawi women's reactions to current gender inequalities in Saharawi society. Finally, I analyse how Saharawi women activists have learned from the Western press' use of orientalism in telling the story of Aminatou Haidar's 2009 hunger strike, by focusing on Tekbar Haddi's 2015 hunger strike.

4.1 The invasion: tortured mothers and a disappeared father

One day in early November 1975, a sweaty Spanish soldier wiped his brow after plunging yet another post into the ground. Fences were to entirely hem the Saharawi suburbs of El Aaiún, their preventative, disciplinary role made more violent by the presence of tanks.⁵³⁰ The colonial government hoped the Moroccan takeover would go smoothly, without incident. From a Spanish perspective, perhaps it did. Most of the troops left the Sahara in time "to spend Christmas at home."⁵³¹

It was a different story for the Saharawis. POLISARIO sympathisers living in the Tarfaya Strip were already disappearing. Indeed, it was November 1975 when a nine year old Aminatou Haidar heard the news that her father was dead. Officially, he was accidentally 'hit by a lorry' somewhere between Tan Tan and Guelmin. Unofficially, he was murdered.⁵³² Back in

⁵³⁰ Mokhtar, 13 December 2015.

⁵³¹ Jordi Negre Rigol, "Sahara: España arria su bandera," *Diario de Barcelona*, Barcelona, 20 December 1975.

⁵³² Tomás Bárbula in Conxi Moya, *Las 32 batallas de Aminatu Haidar* (Madrid: Bubok, 2010), 100.

El Aaiún, as soon as Khadijatou Mokhtar realised that the Moroccans had crossed the Northern border, she fled by car to the east. Tawfa waited a little longer – long enough to receive the certificate confirming the completion of her studies, but also long enough to see her former Spanish colleagues handing over the hospital, her place of work, to Moroccan troops. As the latter and their Mauritanian counterparts trod further into Western Sahara, scores of arbitrary arrests of anyone suspected of involvement with the POLISARIO began “on a massive scale.”⁵³³ The International Federation for Human Rights describes the horrors:

The soldiers of the two occupying countries have butchered hundreds and perhaps thousands of Saharawis, including children and old people who refused to publicly acknowledge the King of Morocco...⁵³⁴

At this time, further members of the UNMS began to join the Saharawi People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). Their roles included guarding prisoners and helping to evacuate and hide Saharawis living in the desert settlements during bomb attacks, and building and securing a life in exile in Algeria for the swelling refugee population.⁵³⁵ In La Güera Saharawi women also served temporarily as combatants in the standoff against the Mauritanian army.⁵³⁶ Others served on the battlefield as nurses.⁵³⁷

Women who tried but did not make it to the frontline or the rear-guard of the camps beyond often suffered a horrific fate. Maayifa Ment Ehseina, for example, was captured and taken to El Msayed military detention centre, near Tan Tan, along with six of her young children. Ehseina, released in 1978, was the only woman ever to emerge from El Msayed. The six children died. Today, fellow Saharawi El Batal Lahbib, disappeared on 27 October 1975 in Lebuerat, is the only surviving ex-captive of El Msayed. Lahbib remembers two large earth trenches, probably dug out by a tractor. One was used for torture and interrogations. The other served the double purpose of the prisoners’ cell and a pit for half-dead bodies. Corpses – Saharawis were shot, stoned, beaten or whipped to death in the first of the two trenches, or dissolved in what Lahbib describes as a “huge iron bucket [...] with something

⁵³³ Amnesty International, “Amnesty International Briefing: Morocco,” London, 1977, 10. See also Amnesty International, “Report of an Amnesty International Mission to the Kingdom of Morocco,” London, 1982.

⁵³⁴ The International Federation for Human Rights quoted in Hacene-Djaballah, “Conflict in Western Sahara...” 186.

⁵³⁵ Lippert, “Sahrawi Women...” 642.

⁵³⁶ Radiotelevisión de Sahara via Radio Argel, “La voz del Sahara Libre,” Algeria, 15 January 1976.

⁵³⁷ Dafa, “En el Día de la Mujer...”

inside that destroyed flesh” - were taken elsewhere.⁵³⁸ Lahbib’s testimony indicates gendered forms of torture. As well as losing his own testicles, he remembers the women and girls being repeatedly gang raped by guards whilst male prisoners were forced to perform sex acts on each other.⁵³⁹ The gendered implications of sexual torture will be further discussed later.

On 27 February 1976, a day after the Spanish officially left the territory and a day before the Spanish military lowered the last Spanish flag at El Aaiún, the POLISARIO filled the political vacuum by declaring the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic.⁵⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Moroccan occupiers were detaining, arresting and disappearing not only women suspected of links to the POLISARIO, but also others selected at random, often, like Ehseina, with their children. The aim was to create a climate of terror amongst the population – anyone could be next.⁵⁴¹ Mahjouba Ment Issa Ould Douega, for example, was arrested in 1976 along with approximately 50 other women, all with their children. Douega witnessed the death, in prison, of her one-year-old daughter Taghla. When she gave birth shortly after being released, the newborn died 24 hours later. Douega’s pregnant sister Khadijatou was also imprisoned. She miscarried following torture.⁵⁴² Over the course of 1976 in the town of Smara, 31 mothers with infants still at breastfeeding stage were imprisoned. Only two of the babies were to survive.⁵⁴³ Moroccan torturers were capitalising on Saharawi women’s role of primary caregivers. The targeting of nursing mothers, the beating of pregnant women and the practice of torturing babies in front of their mothers are gender-based forms of abuse in that they deny women’s gender-ascribed role as carers and protectors of their offspring.⁵⁴⁴

⁵³⁸ Lahbib quoted in Martín Beristain, *El oasis... Tomo I*, 203.

⁵³⁹ Lahbib quoted in *ibid.*, 197.

⁵⁴⁰ The ceremony was in Bir Lehlu, in POLISARIO-controlled Western Sahara.

⁵⁴¹ France Liberté Foundation and French Association of Friendship and Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa (AFASPA), “International Mission of Investigation in Western Sahara,” Bagnolet, France, 2003, 12.

⁵⁴² See also a list of women that reportedly miscarried in Moroccan prisons during the year 1976, POLISARIO, “La opinión de las masas,” *Boletín 4* (1976): 11.

⁵⁴³ AFASPA, “International Mission...,” 2003, 11.

⁵⁴⁴ For example, see the case of Ghalia Ment Baba Ould Sidi, who, whilst in prison, was breastfeeding her baby son when a policeman pulled him from her breast and bashed him against the wall. The baby died a month later. See *ibid.*, 11. T.M. Linda Scholz has also highlighted the gender-based nature of such forms of abuse. See T.M. Linda Scholz, “The Rhetorical Power of Testimonio and Ocupacion: Creating a Conceptual Framework for Analyzing Subaltern Rhetorical Agency,” (University of Colorado, 2007), 79-81. For further examples (from Chile, Argentina and Brazil) of the torture of children in front of their mothers as a gendered see Margaret Power, “Dictatorship and Single-Party States,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 56.

Of the young, able-bodied male Saharawis that escaped capture by Moroccan authorities, most departed their homes to join the SPLA. Some became soldiers. Others were captured on the way. When asked why they are today political activists despite the risks to their lives, Mahfood Dahou and Mohammed Mayara's responses recall these departed men:

I was born here in El Aaiún in 1975. My father, who was a soldier, died in the Saharawi refugee camps. I never met him. He left my mother pregnant. So, like most Saharawis in the Occupied Territories, I've grown up without a father.⁵⁴⁵

...my father was one of four brothers who were kidnapped by the Moroccans and put in jail, and he died there. My cousin also died in prison after torture. So of course I, like all Saharawis, we suffer. We are born into sufferance. At this time, part of my family joined the POLISARIO. And so they fled from the planes and the crimes of that time committed against the Saharawis. Other members of my family were then put in secret prisons and others faced the terror and horror committed by Moroccans. So I want you to see, in a patriarchal society like the Saharawi, growing up in a family where there is no father... the father isn't there... All my cousins, my uncles, were also absent.⁵⁴⁶

Moulay Ahmed Leili, the asthmatic father of Fatima who we met in the opening of this chapter, took it upon himself to wash and pray for the bodies of those who died whilst in detention at the ancient Moroccan forts of Agdz and later Qal'at Mgouna. He was released on 21 June 1991. He died the next day. With his last breaths, Moulay managed a final effort for his former Saharawi inmates: he recited the names of the deceased and the dates and locations of their deaths. He recalled that Heiba ould Mayara, Mohammed's father, passed on 28 September 1977 at Agdz fort.⁵⁴⁷

When asked why they first become involved in activities resisting the occupation, Mayara and Dahou both highlight how the actions of the Moroccan regime have left them fatherless. As Mayara says, Saharawi society is patriarchal, and, as explored in previous

⁵⁴⁵ Mahfood Dahou, personal interview, El Aaiún, 29 August 2014.

⁵⁴⁶ Mohammed Mayara, personal interview, El Aaiún, 27 August 2014.

⁵⁴⁷ Amnesty International, "Morocco: Breaking the Wall of Silence: the "Disappeared" in Morocco," 13 April 1993, 64-66. Saharawi disappeareds have been held at: Qal'at Mgouna, an ancient fort in the picturesque valley of Wadi Dades, popular with tourists; in the ancient fort of Agdz town, Southern Morocco; and remote forts in the mountain triangle between Er-Rachidia, Ouarzazate and Agadir including Qal'at al-Qaid Abdellah, Qsar Ait Chair, Oued el-Male and Oued Ounil.

research, gender roles within the family are binary and clearly defined, each carrying its own importance.⁵⁴⁸ The father is the head of the family, is responsible for providing sustenance for his wife and children, and, once male children approach puberty, must begin playing a greater role in the latter's upbringing. To decapitate a generation of Saharawis boys of their fathers, then, was, for Saharawis like Mayara and Dahou, not just to leave them with the emotional and psychological burden of lost loved ones, but also to take from them what Saharawis see as an integral part of the family unit, strongly structured as it is (in hegemonic discourse) along binary gendered lines. The sense of injustice at such a loss fed Mayara's and Dahou's wills to resist.

A Saharawi man's role, as in many cultures, also encompasses caring for and protecting women. If we go back to Agdz fort, where Heiba ould Mayara was held and died, a testimony from a Moroccan political prisoner helps us to understand how prison guards made use of such constructions of masculinity to add to the suffering of Saharawi men.

Mohammed Nadrani was a politically active philosophy student at Agadir University when he was captured in 1976 and taken to a secret detention centre in Rabat. A year later, with nine other Moroccan political prisoners, he was transferred to a fort in the town of Agdz, a popular tourist destination famous for being, as *Lonely Planet* puts it, "a classic caravanserai oasis with a still-pristine *palmeraie*, ancient mudbrick kasbahs and a secret desert prison."⁵⁴⁹ Nadrani's story is worth quoting his testimony *in extenso*, since, as well as revealing the gendered dimensions of torture infliction, it hints at the lost stories of those men, such as Heiba ould Mayara, who never came back:

We spent two weeks in our first cell, the darkest of the lot... and kept on asking to move to another. Then the Sahrawi women were moved to an annex and we were given their cell, which was cool and infused with an intoxicating smell of women. It made us nostalgic... it represented lust but also the families we had lost. A sort of mother awoke in us all. We felt the women's presence, their sufferings and hopes. They had suffered the same lot as the men. They were there to sustain the men but also to be a source of suffering for them, of torture. Sahrawi men could not accept

⁵⁴⁸ Allan, "Representations of Gender..."

⁵⁴⁹ Lonely Planet, "Introducing Agdz," <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/morocco/agdz#ixzz3UvrpJh2j>, 2015 (accessed 25 May 2016).

the suffering of their women. However, women bear suffering, privations and nightmares well. In prison they are stronger than men. They were beaten and insulted because the guards knew how it hurt the men. We could not bear them to be traumatised and thought of them as our sisters. They had left their first names on the wall. Like us, they had put marks on the walls. These little marks were loaded with significance - it was our only way to keep contact with the world outside. We were afraid of forgetting things and afraid of confusing dates.

[...]

Then they left the door open - we didn't understand, it was the Sahrawis who came to us, it was very warm, embraces, so we mixed with them for about 20 days, there were all classes, peasants, herders, civil servants. They said that 25 people had died in that centre - we didn't understand how people died, we'd been thinking of a trial and then prison, in prison we'd be able to study - and now this was another reality which was completely new. Then we realised that we were outside Moroccan reality - everything they had said about democracy - the reality was worse.

Then five boys and seven girls came - they put them in the same house. They were Sahrawis who had tried to leave Morocco to join the PLO⁵⁵⁰ at Tindouf. The youngest was 15 or 16 years old, Khadijatou [...] ⁵⁵¹

As Nadrani points out, prison guards hurt women *specifically* to cause Saharawi men pain psychologically. Moroccan security officers prevent Saharawi men from fulfilling their masculine role of protecting the women close to them, and, particularly in the case of the sexual torture of female loved-ones, the abuse arguably takes on tones of imperial conquest.⁵⁵² As Libby Tata Arcel points out, the abuse of women in a patriarchal society in a situation of conflict symbolises defeat for men.⁵⁵³ Of course, gender norms aside, the pain of knowing a friend's, loved one's or even fellow human being's intense suffering is also inflicted by such abuses.

⁵⁵⁰ "POLISARIO Liberation Organisation," I presume.

⁵⁵¹ Testimony of Mohammed Nadrani, arrested in April 1976, released on 31 December 1984, Amnesty International, "Morocco: Breaking the Wall...", 44-58.

⁵⁵² Allan, "Imagining Saharawi Women..."

⁵⁵³ Libby Tata Arcel, "Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of Women. Psychological Consequences," *Psyke & Logos* 22 (2001).

Another important point raised in Nadrani's testimony is his description of his situation and that of his fellow inmates as "outside Moroccan reality." Keeping political prisoners in secret detention centres such as Agdz rather than official prisons had, and continues to have, advantages for the Moroccan authorities. Most importantly, such centres do not officially exist, and the detainees are not officially detained. We will return to this detail later in the chapter, as it has shown, since 2010, to have important consequences in terms of gender and resistance.

4.2 The war years in the Occupied Territory

During the war, the words "POLISARIO" and "Saharawi" became publicly unpronounceable. Yaya explains, "if police caught you calling a Saharawi in Las Palmas just for a chat, they'd take you and throw you in jail"⁵⁵⁴ whilst Hamza Lakhel indicates that repression was such that public protest was unthinkable: "You can't even imagine that you *can* protest."⁵⁵⁵ Dahou, too, underlines this sense of impossibility with regards to publicly challenging Morocco, yet he points to the climate of resistance that persisted behind the scenes:

all our work had to be secret. If they saw two or three Saharawis together in the street, they would beat you. We had to do something. There were no mobiles then, no internet. We had to work using the intelligence of the Saharawis.⁵⁵⁶

Scott would see such draconian conditions as ripe for breeding a *hidden transcript*, that is, resistance that "takes place "offstage," beyond direct observation by powerholders."⁵⁵⁷ Under such levels of repression, Scott would argue, the Saharawis had "a vested interest in avoiding any *explicit* display of insubordination" in order to avoid the tyranny of the Moroccan occupiers.⁵⁵⁸ If, in the streets, Saharawis appeased the authorities and avoided trouble, in the relative safety of their homes, more subtle kinds of resistance flourished.

In the offstage privacy of her parents' living room, Sultana Khaya remembers, as a young child, listening to the POLISARIO's news via the radio, buried under a warm womb of blankets to ensure the waves would not reach the ears of informers outside.⁵⁵⁹ Not only was

⁵⁵⁴ 22 August 2014.

⁵⁵⁵ Hamza Lakhel, personal interview, El Aaiún, 21 August 2014.

⁵⁵⁶ Dahou, 29 August 2014.

⁵⁵⁷ Scott, *Domination...* 4.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁵⁵⁹ Khaya, 26 November 2014.

this an example of the everyday resistance that Scott discusses, but it also points us towards the presence, in that living room, of a counterhegemonic discourse.

The Saharawi case illuminates how it was ideology, not an in-built will to resist, that made resistance possible. As we have seen, the POLISARIO had begun to hegemonise a Saharawi national identity long before the Moroccan invasion. Of course, the terrible injustices committed by the occupiers pushed the Saharawis to reaction, to develop a hidden transcript, but it was the nationalist discourse of the POLISARIO (and Bassiri before it), and its reaffirmation of the unspeakable identity of ‘Saharawi,’ that inspired resistance. In Gramscian terms, Saharawis did not see Morocco’s take-over of the Sahara as something ‘natural’ and ‘inevitable.’ If they had done, the Saharawis would not have resisted: the will to resist is not an innate characteristic that subalterns are born with. A Saharawi national identity as distinct to Moroccan was hegemonic amongst the Saharawi population, and being able to listen to the POLISARIO via the radio gave Khaya courage.

Soukaina Yaya also recalls the sound of her nation-in-waiting. After moving to El Aaiún, she would be startled, now and then, by the crash of gunfire in the desert. She knew the POLISARIO was near. This armed her with hope, a key emotion for fuelling resistance as Aziza Brahim taught us in Chapter One. Also inspired by this hope, Saharawis found ways to play out their nationality in public spaces. For example, some teenagers would subtly but defiantly shut their mouths when pupils were called to sing the Moroccan national anthem at school. Other activists were clandestinely distributing pro-POLISARIO information. The most daring took part in what Saharawi youth called ‘operations:’ writing Saharawi slogans and painting Saharawi flags on the walls of Moroccan administrative buildings, swapping Moroccan flags for Saharawi ones and hiding and smuggling wanted Saharawis.⁵⁶⁰

These youths were challenging Morocco’s domination and feeding the idea of an independent nation in the Saharawi social imaginary. Although tremendously risky, as long as the perpetrators were not caught, these activities remained anonymous and therefore preserved some level of safety. So what would it take for these activists to take off their masks and publically challenge Moroccan domination? Scott argues that those who resist will only “storm the public stage” when oppression softens or when conditions are degraded to an unacceptable level. However, as I argued in Chapter One, although it is true that the violent oppression wielded by Morocco has the opposite to the intended effect by fuelling

⁵⁶⁰ Malainin Lakhali, personal communication, 13 May 2014.

the Saharawis' fire, the strategic need to perform resistance to an external audience is another important factor in explaining when and why the hidden transcript storms the public stage.

On 20 November 1987, a joint UN Technical Commission arrived in El Aaiún. Their aim was to evaluate the on-the-ground conditions for organising a self-determination referendum for the Saharawis.⁵⁶¹ Saharawi activists realised that this visit presented an opportunity worth risking everything for. With a public demonstration, they could display Saharawi enthusiasm for self-determination as well as raise awareness of the appalling human rights situation before a key international actor.

Unfortunately, Morocco also saw the opportunity. The authorities advertised the date of the Commission's arrival as one day earlier than it was. Thus when hundreds of Saharawis amassed near the airport to welcome UN staff and illustrate their support of independence, Moroccan authorities could easily spot their targets.⁵⁶² 400 activists, known as the "Commission Group" were arrested and imprisoned, most in the Mobile Intervention Unit Headquarters (PC-CMI), a secret detention centre in El Aaiún.⁵⁶³

The stories of women survivors of the "Commission Group," help to illuminate the relationship between constructions of gender and resistance. For example, Fatma Aayache's testimony of the four years she spent disappeared is striped with a theme of (prevented) motherhood. It is valuable as an example of how mothering activities are dramatically brought to the fore precisely because of their enforced halt.⁵⁶⁴ Mothers, their children, and the metaphorical umbilical cords that link them are constantly present throughout the narrative.

⁵⁶¹ Fernando Orgambides, "La Misión de la ONU Llega Hoy al Sáhara," *El País*, Madrid, 20 November 1987.

⁵⁶² Jacob Mundy, "The Dynamics of Repression and Resistance: Sahrawi Nationalist Activism in the Moroccan Occupied Western Sahara" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, San Francisco, 2011), 8; AFASPA, "International Mission...", 2003, 10.

⁵⁶³ Aminatou Haidar, "The Persecution of the Saharawi: The Testimony of a Human Rights Activist" (paper presented at the *Unilateralism and International Law with Western Sahara as a Case Study*, Pretoria, 2008), 266-67. Despite their being no UN Technical Commission to witness their demonstration, Saharawis were, in some ways, successful in raising international awareness of their conflict through the events of 20 November 1987. For example, the repression that stifled this protest was followed by the first ever EU parliament resolutions that specifically denounced Moroccan human rights abuses in Western Sahara (rather than human rights abuses in Morocco more generally). See Juan Domingo Torrejón Rodríguez, *La Unión Europea y la cuestión del Sahara Occidental: la posición del Parlamento Europeo* (Madrid: Editorial Reus, 2014), 335.

⁵⁶⁴ An earlier version of this testimony analysis appeared in my MRes thesis (2008), pages 48-51.

The text illustrates how the context of war and colonialism have shaped a specific mother's experience, in which her motherhood is actively employed as a source of emotional strength that helps her to bear, psychologically, years of physical and mental torture. Aayache's was a spiritual and emotional resistance, in which she attempted to maintain her dignity and sense of humanity in the face of the torturers' efforts to dehumanise, degrade and destroy her.

Aayache's narrative illustrates firstly the high status that the mother figure has within the family and in wider Saharawi society. The first line of the testimony reads, "My name is Fatma M'barek Mohamed Aayache, born in 1968 in El Aaiún, Western Sahara [W.S.], mother of Lhalla Charafu, 19 years old, and Abdelaziz Elbachraoui, 7 years old."⁵⁶⁵ Thus, amongst the first (and therefore primordial) information that the reader receives about the author is the fact that she is a mother of two, which serves to emphasize the pride associated with her position. A reference to Aayache's own mother also serves to illustrate the sacred status of the mother figure in Saharawi families. When Moroccan police enter Aayache's home in order to kidnap her, they use violence against all her relatives, yet she specifically highlights the abuse of her mother as the single most shocking action, giving "a great fright to all [her] family members."⁵⁶⁶ This abhorrence at the ill treatment of Aayache's mother shows the inviolable respect that mothers enjoy in Saharawi narratives. Furthermore, the constant focus on motherhood throughout the testimony is in itself illustrative of the central importance that this role has in the eyes of the writer. She is much more than a Saharawi nationalist kidnapped and tortured; she is a kidnapped and tortured *mother*, whose fate illustrates the dehumanized nature of a Moroccan aggressor willing to cross all the lines.

Secondly, the testimony illustrates how the bonds between mother and child inevitably become a source of suffering in a context of imprisonment, yet simultaneously a birthplace of powerful resistance to the Moroccan's objective of "minimizing dignity or of being a human."⁵⁶⁷ When Aayache focuses on the personal story of the still disappeared Mohamed Lkhalil Aayache, it is always in relation to the reactions and emotions of his mother Salka. Salka, "who had to endure both her and her son's torment," now suffers serious mental

⁵⁶⁵ Fatma Aayache, "Death was Better than Being Raped!!!," Union of Saharawi Writers and Journalists, 23 June 2007.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

illness due to the disappearance of her son.⁵⁶⁸ Yet at one stage whilst they were in prison, Mohamed gives his mother strength, “[h]is mother was facing his groaning with patience. He was inspiring her and us to cling to resistance and life...”⁵⁶⁹ Aayache gains a similar strength from the thought of her own daughter, “[m]y angel, Lhalla, was helping me endure the torturers’ violence... I was handcuffed, but I was embracing her in my mind, playing with her beautiful hair.”⁵⁷⁰ In this way, Aayache shows motherhood to be intertwined with political resistance. The motherhood of Fatma and Salka Aayache, in the context of resistance to Moroccan colonialism in the Occupied Territories, takes on a revolutionary power.⁵⁷¹

Thirdly, the testimony reveals the power to resist derived from maternal solidarity and support. In the case of Fatima ment Saaid who left behind a baby of two months when she was kidnapped, Aayache writes “[f]eeling sad for her, we took turns sucking her breasts to alleviate the pain that the bursting of milk breasts were causing her.”⁵⁷² Here, the women are united by the maternal action of breastfeeding. Through the emotional bond of empathy, the women suck Fatima’s breasts in order to comfort her, and thus give her the strength to continue resisting.

Aminatou Haidar, the woman who we met earlier that lost her father in 1975, also practised this ‘communal’ motherhood during her second term in prison. Hundreds of Saharawi citizens came to visit her, but the Moroccan police would only allow her two children entry. Haidar refused to see anyone unless she could see everyone, thereby illustrating that in her eyes all Saharawis were her immediate family.⁵⁷³ Eventually the Moroccan police permitted everyone entry. This illustrates Haidar’s use of her role as mother *ideologically*. With such actions Haidar, Aayache, and the other women in prison with them were symbolically showing that the fight was for everyone’s children, not just their individual, own child. In contrast to the (Western) idea of nuclear family, they were socializing motherhood.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷¹ For more on the concept of “revolutionary motherhood” see Jo Fisher, *Mothers of the Disappeared* (London: Zed Books, 1989); Marguerite Guzman Bouvard, *Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* (Lanham: SR Books, 1994).

⁵⁷² Aayache, “Death was better...”

⁵⁷³ Malainin Lakhel, Personal conversations, Algiers, 5 April 2008.

Aayache's text, with its focus on maternity, feminine solidarity, the female body and mother-daughter bonds, can be read as an example of cultural feminism.⁵⁷⁴ It reclaims personal, lived women's experience as intensely important and makes motherhood central to a testimony of political resistance. Her political struggle in the Moroccan jails, which is narrated with metaphors derived not from stereotypical male experiences such as warfare but from motherhood, symbolizes the suffering of a people. The ideological use of her experiences as a mother makes Aayache's testimony a strong example of what Caron Gentry terms active maternalism. Gentry describes her concept further:

[P]olitically active mothers, in this context as dissidents or agitators, are self-identified as mothers. There is a strong history of women whose politicisation is owed to their motherhood, typically because something happened to their children [...] This is an active and claimed maternalist position.⁵⁷⁵

Nevertheless, the Saharawi example is a distinctive form of active maternalism. Unlike the active maternalism of one of Gentry's examples, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who took to the streets to protest against the Argentine military dictatorship following the disappearance of their children,⁵⁷⁶ Saharawi mothers, in their majority (the case of Tekbar Haddi, explored later in this chapter, is a significant exception),⁵⁷⁷ do not cite their status as

⁵⁷⁴ Many cultural feminists highlight the cultural significance of motherhood. Carol Gilligan argues that we have become accustomed "to seeing life through men's eyes" and that women's experiences are systematically side-lined (Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (London: Harvard University, 1998), 6.) Cultural feminists therefore argue for a re-evaluation of the attributes socially constructed as associated with the female. See Maggie Humm, *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), 66; Catherine King, "The Politics of Representation: A Democracy of the Gaze," in *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender*, ed. Frances Bonner, Goodman, Lizbeth, Allen, Richard, Jones, Linda, and King, Catherine (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 137; Alicia Ostriker, "A Wild Surmise: Motherhood and Poetry," in *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender*, ed. Frances Bonner, Goodman, Lizbeth, Allen, Richard, Jones, Linda, and King, Catherine (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 106.

⁵⁷⁵ Caron E. Gentry, "Twisted Maternalism: From Peace to Violence," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11, no. 2 (2009): 237-38.

⁵⁷⁶ For more on the relationship between maternalism and politics, see Marian van der Klein, Plant, Rebecca Jo, Sanders, Nichole, and Weintrob, Lori R., ed. *Maternalism Reconsidered: Motherhood, Welfare and Social Policy in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012). See also Temma Kaplan, "Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The Case of Barcelona, 1910-1918," *Signs* 7, no. 3 (1982).

⁵⁷⁷ Other exceptions are the mothers of the "Oxford Six" who led protests due to their position as mothers after their respective children were kidnapped and disappeared before travelling to a conflict resolution workshop Oxford, August 2009. However, my point is that the majority of Saharawi women enter resistance due to nationalism and experiences of police brutality, not due to their position as mothers. But those who are mothers draw strength from this identity.

mothers as the primary reason for their politicisation, but rather to discrimination along national, ethnic and economic lines.⁵⁷⁸ This is a crucial point. Whereas other women political actors, such as the Argentinian mothers, used active maternalism in order to legitimize their political activism in a culture that may have otherwise rejected such a role for women (but where the link to motherhood made the activism sufficiently 'feminine' as to be acceptable), in Western Sahara, where, thanks to hegemonic POLISARIO nationalist discourses, political activism is as 'naturally' feminine as it is masculine, Saharawi women have no need to find such justifications.⁵⁷⁹ Their maternalism is active and claimed, but neither Aayache nor Haidar state that their activism is 'owed' to it.

In Aayache's story, motherhood is key to her identity as a revolutionary. It is a tool of emotional resistance, and is important to her spiritually. It helps her to mentally survive disappearance. Yet Aayache does not identify motherhood as the trigger for her activism. On the contrary, it is her desire to achieve "self-determination" and the need for "pinpointing and unveiling the flagrant human rights violations daily perpetuated by the Moroccan regime" that explains her engagement.⁵⁸⁰ Similarly, Haidar's motivating cause, despite her socialization of motherhood whilst in prison, is "to contribute to a better society for all; constructive, lawful, nonviolent, and based on principles of equality and equal opportunity."⁵⁸¹ Saharawi mothers could be said to practice an active maternalism in that they are politically active mothers and self-identify as such. Yet, transcending Gentry's definition of active maternalism, motherhood is not named by these women as the seed for their political consciousness. Neither is motherhood always the source of their resistance. Rather, Saharawi mothers' identification as mothers *facilitates* their resistance.

The next section focuses on the *intifadas* that followed Aayache and Haidar's exit from prison. It is mostly narrative, yet is essential to understanding the historical development of the Saharawi resistance movement as a whole, and therefore, in turn, the wider relationship between gender and resistance in the Occupied Territories.

⁵⁷⁸ I do not mean to suggest that discrimination on the basis of national identity and ethnicity and economic inequalities are separable from one's identity as mother, and mother of discriminated children. Rather, I mean to highlight that Saharawi women activists that are also mothers tend to emphasise their radicalization *because they are Saharawi* rather than *because they are mothers*.

⁵⁷⁹ For a discussion of this, see Cathy A. Rakowski, "Women as Political Actors: The Move from Maternalism to Citizenship Rights and Power," *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 2 (2003).

⁵⁸⁰ Aayache, "Death was better..."

⁵⁸¹ Nicolien Zuijdgheest, "Aminatou Haidar: the Sahrawi Gandhi," <http://www.nicolien.com/content/pivot/entry.php?id=110>, 2013 (accessed 3 July 2015).

4.3 “Back from a kind of hell that bears no name:” the ceasefire and intifadas of the nineties

In 1991, the UN brokered a ceasefire between Morocco and POLISARIO, promising a self-determination referendum for Saharawis whose names were included in an updated version of a Spanish 1974 census. Coinciding with this, Morocco released 300 Saharawi prisoners, including surviving members of the Commission Group and Saharawis that had disappeared in the seventies and early eighties.⁵⁸² Adjusting to life outside of prison was hard, not just because the ex-disappeared continued to be monitored and harassed by police, but also due to the physical and emotional scars. Haidar emerged “a shadow of [her] former self, a ghost, a living dead, a young woman back from a kind of hell that bears no name.”⁵⁸³ Aayache faced struggles of her own: her daughter, now five years old, had forgotten who she was, whilst Aayache’s own mother was dying.⁵⁸⁴ Nevertheless, both women continued with their pro-independence struggle, becoming two of the handful of unofficial ‘leaders’ of the resistance, and role models for Saharawi girl activists.

The liberation of these political prisoners helped to inspire greater resistance amongst a younger generation of Saharawis, whilst the new presence of the UN in the territory also gave many activists renewed confidence to go public in their acts of resistance.⁵⁸⁵ As I argued earlier, the strategic need to perform resistance before international actors can encourage activists to take the risk of directly challenging the regime, and Saharawis at that time also hoped that the gaze of the UN would bring protection.⁵⁸⁶

Saharawi activists were proved wrong. MINURSO, the UN mission to the territory, is highly unusual in that it is a peacekeeping mission with no mandate to monitor human rights. This is mainly thanks to France’s threat to veto such a mandate. Nevertheless, protests led by

⁵⁸² This is just a fraction of the total disappeared. As the US Department of State has highlighted, international human rights organisations estimate the total number of forced disappearances is closer to 1500. US Department of State, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Western Sahara 2001,” Washington D.C., 2002; US Department of State, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Western Sahara 1999,” Washington D.C., 2000; US Department of State, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Western Sahara 2002,” Washington D.C., 2003.

⁵⁸³ Haidar quoted in AFASPA, “International Mission...”

⁵⁸⁴ Aayache, “Death was better...”

⁵⁸⁵ Salka Barca, and Zunes, Stephen, “Nonviolent Struggle in Western Sahara,” in *Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance in the Middle East*, ed. Maria J. Stephan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 159.

⁵⁸⁶ Lakhali, 13 May 2014.

Saharawi youths in favour of independence and the release of political prisoners, and against the holding of Moroccan parliamentary elections in Western Sahara, continued to take place throughout the 90s.⁵⁸⁷ During these *intifadas* (much smaller in participation and shorter in time than the more famous *intifadas* of 1999 and 2005, but identified as *intifadas* by Saharawis nonetheless), hundreds of youths were arrested. Some, such as Kelthoum El-Ouanat who we shall meet again later, a young woman caught protesting in Smara during the *Intifada of Three Cities* (Smara, El Aaiún and Assa) in 1992, received 20-year sentences issued by military tribunals.⁵⁸⁸ This context of protests met by heavy repression followed by further protests created a pressure cooker of tension, which was to explode when the political situation changed in 1999.⁵⁸⁹

When the UN originally brokered the ceasefire, both Morocco and POLISARIO agreed that voter eligibility would be based on an updated version of the 1974 Spanish census. Nevertheless, Morocco used a dirty tactic to prevent the realisation of the referendum. Dozens of thousands of Moroccans were encouraged to apply for a vote, and launched appeals when rejected, effectively blocking the referendum for years on end, with the UN unable or unwilling to take action.⁵⁹⁰ By 1999, losing faith in the referendum process, Saharawi frustrations began to bubble over the surface.

In early September 1999, students launched a sit-in in the streets of El Aaiún, raising the issue of student unemployment and the meagre bursaries and transport services. It began with around 300 to 500 protesters sleeping in tents in a smaller-scale, urban precursor to 2010's Gdeim Izik protest discussed below, but grew over the following days as Saharawi workers, including swathes of women employed in low-skilled, underpaid employment and

⁵⁸⁷ For example, 1995 saw the brutal repression of pro-POLISARIO protests (see Amnesty International, "Morocco and Western Sahara. Fear of Torture/Unfair Trial: Ahmed El Kouri, Nebt Ramdane Bouchraya, Arbi Brahim Baba, Cheykhataou Bouh, M'Rabih Rabou Neysan, Abdelhay Lekhal, Mahfoud Brahim Dahou, Salama Ahmed Lembarki, All Male, aged 18-20," 5 July 1995.) In February 1998 in Lemseyed, Saharawi protestors burned Moroccan flags and photographs of the King before setting a public building on fire Amnesty International, "Morocco/Western Sahara. "Turning the Page": Achievements and Obstacles," 3 August 1999, 17. See also Barona for analysis of the 1992 *Intifada of Three Cities*. Claudia Barona Castañeda, "Memorias de una Resistencia. La Otra Historia del Sahara Occidental," <http://emam.revues.org/859>, 1 January 2015 (accessed 3 July 2015).

⁵⁸⁸ Amnesty International, "Morocco/Western Sahara: Kelthoum Ahmed Labid El-Ouanat Prisoner of Conscience," available at <http://www.arso.org/08-12.htm>, 1996 (accessed 14 June 2015). El Ouanat went to prison in 1992 and was released in May 1996.

⁵⁸⁹ For more on the reasons behind the 1999 *intifada*, see Toby Shelley, *Endgame in the Western Sahara* (London: Zed Books, 2004).

⁵⁹⁰ US Department of State, "Country Reports... 1999"

disabled people denied the opportunity to work, gradually joined the students.⁵⁹¹ As well as opposite the Nagjir hotel where UN staff are based, activists erected *āḥiām*, which Saharawis identify as a quintessential and national emblem (i.e. a border marker between Saharawi and Moroccan culture) of their nomadism, in the Maatalla residential district, where the square of Zemla, the first site of Saharawi nationalist uprising, once lay.⁵⁹² The location and symbology therefore drew on the Saharawi collective memory and added historical continuity to the protest.

Police eventually destroyed the camps. Almost 200 Saharawis had been detained and brutalised by Moroccan police by the end of October 1999.⁵⁹³ As Stephan and Mundy have reported, it was this violent repression of a peaceful, organised sit-in that sparked a spontaneous intifada, which saw the protest spread across Western Sahara, and the Saharawi-dominated Tarfaya Strip.⁵⁹⁴

Although the public demands of the 1999 intifada focused on economic issues, students' rights and human rights issues, many activists were involved in clandestine, pro-independence activities, including spreading pro-POLISARIO information. Pro-independence slogans were not used publically, though, since this was seen as too dangerous.⁵⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the protests of the first intifada had seen unprecedented numbers of Saharawis on the streets taking action. After 1999, human rights activism became stronger and stronger, and "people gradually lost their fears. Each generation is more fervent, more patriotic, more nationalist than the last," explains one of the leaders of the 1999 intifada, Malainin Lakhali.⁵⁹⁶ By 2005, activists were ready to publicly raise the banner of independence, this time provoked by woes at the negotiation table of international diplomats.

James Baker, former US Secretary of State and UN envoy responsible for negotiating a peace process in Western Sahara, resigned in Spring 2004.⁵⁹⁷ Baker left his post exasperated by the Moroccan rejection of his Autonomy Plan II, signalling the latest episode in a series of UN

⁵⁹¹ Malainin Lakhali, personal communications, June 2008.

⁵⁹² Malainin Lakhali, personal communications, 2 March 2015.

⁵⁹³ US Department of State, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Western Sahara 2000," Washington D.C., 2001.

⁵⁹⁴ Maria J. Stephan, and Mundy, Jacob, "A Battlefield Transformed: from Guerrilla Resistance to Mass Non-Violent Struggle in Western Sahara," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 8, no. 3 (2006): 12.

⁵⁹⁵ Lakhali, 13 May 2014.

⁵⁹⁶ Lakhali, June 2008.

⁵⁹⁷ Stephan, "A Battlefield Transformed..." 13-14.

failures. Baker's first Plan had envisaged granting the Western Sahara the status of autonomy within the Kingdom of Morocco. Yet this so-called solution was seen as unacceptable not only by the Saharawis but also by the UN Security Council since it did not include a referendum on independence. This contradicted the entire UN discourse on decolonisation. The Plan was scrapped.

Baker's second Plan offered a period of limited autonomy for the Sahara, which would be followed by a referendum with the option of independence in which Moroccan settlers as well as Saharawis would be entitled to vote. In a surprising diplomatic move, the POLISARIO accepted the Plan, yet equally astonishing was Morocco's rejection of it (it has been suggested that Morocco feared its own citizens would prefer POLISARIO rule to the decadent and corrupt Moroccan monarchy).⁵⁹⁸ Baker's resignation, and the diplomatic stalemate that it once again signalled, provided the spark for the explicitly nationalist, pro-independence uprising. This 2005 intifada mobilised thousands of Saharawis across Western Sahara, and the Saharawi-dominated areas of southern Morocco.⁵⁹⁹

In the next section we turn our attention to the 2010 intifada: the huge protest camp of Gdeim Izik and the riots that followed. I argue that the way global constructions of gender, in particular Western discourses on Muslim, Arab woman and manhood, played a role in provoking this intifada.

4.4 "A woman is stronger than our state:" A mother as a martyr and the 2010 Gdeim Izik protest camp

Ask any Saharawi who was present at the Gdeim Izik protest camp, by far the largest Saharawi demonstration since the 1975 Moroccan invasion, about their experience and you will doubtless get an emotional response. Says Hassana Aalia, sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment for 'crimes' associated with the organisation of the camp,

⁵⁹⁸ Mundy, "Autonomy & Intifada..." See also Stephen Zunes, and Mundy, Jacob, *War, Nationalism and Conflict Irresolution* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010).

⁵⁹⁹ For more on the 2005 intifada see Stephan, "A Battlefield Transformed..." One important point concerning this intifada was the use of cameras, telephones and the internet by citizens to communicate (the oppression of) the protests to the outside world. For more on the use of the internet for communicating the Saharawi struggle see Tara Deubel, "Mediascapes of Human Rights: Emergent Forms of Digital Activism for the Western Sahara, *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 5, no.3 (2015).

When you asked me about it, I didn't want to talk about Gdeim Izik camp because all the desire of all the Saharawis comes back to me. Women, children, elders, old men, all smiling, happy in our camp. It was something tremendous, something incredible [...] we'll never forget it, because it was a dream.⁶⁰⁰

To understand the emotions that Gdeim Izik provokes, we should appreciate that, for many of the inhabitants of the camp (I refer to those born after 1975 that have never travelled outside of Western Sahara or Morocco) this was the first time they had experienced life without a Moroccan informer shadow, without everyday discrimination and, at least for the initial days of the camp, without the imminent threat of violence. If Western Sahara is "the largest prison in the world," then at Gdeim Izik, Saharawis were able to become fugitives for one precious month.⁶⁰¹

The camp is now etched in the collective memory of the Saharawis, commemorated in poetry, song and with an annual demonstration each 10 October, which is now *the Day of the ḥaīma*.⁶⁰² Similarly, it has expanded the symbolic power of the *ḥaīma*, that simple and quintessentially Saharawi tent structure made of woman's traditional dress (*melḥfa*) sown together, that can "stand tall throughout the harshest desert storm."⁶⁰³ Whereas before, the *ḥaīma* was a metaphor for traditional Saharawi nomadic existence, now it is also a symbol for intifada and resistance. The Moroccan authorities are aware of this. In their fear, they have prohibited the use of *āḥīām*. Since 2010, Saharawis attempting to camp in the countryside (as Saharawi shepherds tend to) or at the beach (as is common for city-dwellers in the summer months) have been reprimanded and prevented from doing so.⁶⁰⁴ Saharawis have retaliated by pitching their *āḥīām* on the flat roofs of their houses, above the prying eyes of Moroccan police.⁶⁰⁵

The indignation that finally exploded at the Gdeim Izik camp was growing rapidly from 2009 onwards, when an abuse of a Saharawi's rights became relatively major news in a Western country (Spain, although the incident was also widely reported in newspapers in the UK and other countries), which is a highly unusual occurrence. This incident, which Stephen Zunes

⁶⁰⁰ Hassana Aalia, personal interview, Zaragoza, 26 November 2014.

⁶⁰¹ San Martín, 2007.

⁶⁰² Nguia El Haouasi, personal interview, Zaragoza, 26 November 2014.

⁶⁰³ Hamza Lakhal, personal conversations, Norway, April 2015.

⁶⁰⁴ Joanna Allan, and Lakhal, Hamza, "Annex: Human Rights Violations in Western Sahara," Oslo, April 2015.

⁶⁰⁵ Conversations with members of host family, El Aaiún. August 2014.

has highlighted as one of the two key successes of the Saharawis' non-violent struggle, was also a crucial factor in the outbreak of protest at Gdeim Izik.⁶⁰⁶ Most significantly, gender was key in making the case a coup for the Saharawi cause.

On 14 November 2009, Aminatou Haidar was deported from El Aaiún after being detained by Moroccan authorities the day before. Returning from the USA where she had received the 2009 Civil Courage Prize, she referred to "Western Sahara" rather than "Morocco" on her landing card. The Moroccan authorities then confiscated her Moroccan passport and identification card and forcibly flew her to Lanzarote.⁶⁰⁷ With no travel documents, she was effectively bound to the airport. There, on 15 November, she began a hunger strike to protest her right to return home to El Aaiún. Part way through, in a show of solidarity, 11 other Saharawi women residing in Lanzarote joined her in the hunger strike.⁶⁰⁸

33 days later, Haidar was finally allowed to fly back, making both the Spanish state and the Moroccan regime bow to her will in the process: Morocco had initially refused to allow her to set foot in Western Sahara again unless she requested a pardon from the King, whilst Spain offered her refugee status and then Spanish citizenship (as well as a court fine for "disturbing public order", which she refused to pay, and indeed the Spanish authorities' decision to 'let her into' Spain despite her lack of travel documents is suspicious, suggesting a premeditated collaboration with Morocco), stating that it would be impossible for her to return to El Aaiún. Yet with huge media coverage and public outcry in Western Sahara, Morocco and Spain (Spain, desperate, had pleaded for diplomatic help from the US and France and for Ban Ki Moon's mediation) Spain and Morocco ceded to the demands of Haidar, who was finally flown home on a private plane. As Vivian Solana has pointed out, one Moroccan-run blog put it perfectly when it pointed out, with disappointment, that "a woman is stronger than our state."⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁶ The other of the two cases highlighted by Zunes is Aminatou Haidar's 2008 securing of the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation's Human Rights Award. Stephen Zunes, "Upsurge in Repression Challenges Nonviolent Resistance in Western Sahara," *Open Democracy*, 17 November 2010.

⁶⁰⁷ Amnesty International, "Morocco Must Allow Human Rights Activist Aminatou Haidar to Return Home," (10 December 2009). For an excellent, in-depth analysis of the international geopolitics surrounding the strike see Moya, *Las 32 batallas...*

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶⁰⁹ Blog quoted in Vivian Solana, "'A Woman is Stronger than our State:' Performing Sovereignty on the Margins of the State," *Explorations in Anthropology* 11, no. 1 (2011): 66.

Haidar had told newspapers, "I will carry on my hunger strike until the Spanish government accepts its responsibilities and allows me to return to my homeland, where my children live ... or I die."⁶¹⁰ Spanish and other Western newspapers, and celebrity commentators, chose to highlight, repeatedly and emotively, Haidar's status as a *single mother of two*.⁶¹¹ This is significant, bearing in mind orientalist discourses that tend to victimise Arab and Muslim women⁶¹² and wider discourses of conflict and wartime, which tend to paint women as in need of protection.⁶¹³ The image created of a starving and physically weak but morally strong mother, willing to die rather than be kept apart from her children (a feminine archetype in many ways), was an emotionally-provocative one for a Western public. Furthermore, in the Western world, where, as we will explore further in Chapter Five, leaders are pursuing policies to support women in the so-called developing world (or at least widely-publicising their support for such policies), Haidar's case was an attention-grabbing one. The Spanish politicians letting her starve, normally so full of rhetoric regarding their efforts to 'empower' women in 'backward' countries, became hypocrites in the eyes of the Spanish public. In other words, orientalist constructions of gender, as well as Western leaders' deployment of gender equality as an international development priority as will be explored further in Chapter Five, served to create international support for Aminatou. If, as Aayache's testimony teaches us, motherhood *facilitates* Saharawi mothers' resistance, here it was the western press that deployed certain constructions of feminine gender and motherhood to create a sensationalist mother-as-martyr capable of appealing to the emotions of their readership.

The press coverage that Haidar garnered also had an important effect on Saharawis back in the Occupied Territories. Not only were they indignant at the treatment of their heroine, but also, as Carmen Gómez Martín points out, the international press' attention to the conflict after four years of oblivion (events in Western Sahara had barely even made the Spanish press since the 2005 independence intifada) breathed oxygen into the struggle.⁶¹⁴ Protests

⁶¹⁰ See for example Xan Rice, "Western Sahara Activist on Hunger Strike at Lanzarote Airport," *The Guardian*, London, 17 November 2009.

⁶¹¹ This dynamic can be acutely observed in the dozens of newspaper articles, media interviews with Haidar and statements from renowned persons such as Paul Lavery and Ken Loach compiled in Moya's book. Moya, *Las 32 batallas...*

⁶¹² Said, *Orientalism*.

⁶¹³ Lorraine Bayard de Volo, "A Revolution in the Binary? Gender and the Oxymoron of Revolutionary War in Cuba and Nicaragua," *Signs* 37, no. 2 (2012): 424.

⁶¹⁴ Carmen Gómez Martín, "Gdeim Izik. A Change in the Struggle Strategies of the Sahrawi Population," in *From Social to Political. New Forms of Mobilization and Democratization*, ed. B. Teferina, and Perugorría, I. (Bilbao: Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco 2012), 10.

were resuming with ever increased intensity, and it was not long before Saharawi youths began attempts to create a new form of protest: the occupation of the *bādīa* (desert countryside), the traditional lands of the Saharawi nomads.

Gdeim Izik followed several unsuccessful attempts at setting up protest camps in the countryside surrounding the Saharawi cities of El Aaiún, Smara, Boujdour, Dakhla and the port of Al Marsa.⁶¹⁵ As Jennifer Murphy and Sidi Omar argue, by moving their protest away from the traditional (urban) space of struggle, Saharawis envisaged taking Moroccan authorities by surprise, avoiding charges of disturbance of “the public order,” occupying a space largely outside of state control and being able to gather their tents in the traditional way (*lefrīg*) to allow for smooth interactions between camp inhabitants and the collective security of all.⁶¹⁶ This was finally achieved on 10 October 2010, in the countryside 15 kilometres from El Aaiún. Whilst during the previous attempts, Moroccan police dispersed the campers almost immediately, in the case of Gdeim Izik, the first campers (who arrived in the middle of the night) went unseen for the first few days. By the time the Moroccan authorities became aware of what was happening, the camp had ballooned to such an extent that a significant military operation would be needed to get rid of it.

Gdeim Izik boasted 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants.⁶¹⁷ As Alice Wilson has pointed out, the current Saharawi population of Western Sahara is unknown, and the latest available UN estimates cite the adult population at (a probably modest) 41,150.⁶¹⁸ As Wilson rightly argues, this helps us to understand the immense size of the camp in proportional terms.⁶¹⁹ Indeed, it isn't for nothing that Noam Chomsky argues this camp was the start of the Arab Spring.⁶²⁰ Wilson's excellent research explores the relationship between the latter movement and Gdeim Izik, illustrating how, despite the Saharawis' perception that their

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁶ Jennifer M. Murphy, and Omar, Sidi M., “Aesthetics of Resistance in Western Sahara,” *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 25, no. 3 (2013).

⁶¹⁷ Sidi Breika, personal interview, London, 31 March 2014.

⁶¹⁸ UN population estimate cited in Alice Wilson, “On the Margins of the Arab Spring,” *Social Analysis* 57, no. 2 (2013): 91.

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁶²⁰ Democracy Now!, “‘The Genie Is Out of the Bottle:’ Assessing a Changing Arab World with Noam Chomsky and Al Jazeera's Marwan Bishara,” http://www.democracynow.org/2011/2/17/the_genies_are_out_of_the, 17 February 2011 (accessed 25 May 2016).

camp held strong similarities with the wider regional movements, the Saharawi uprising has effectively been disappeared by most analyses of the Arab Spring.⁶²¹

Whilst, as we have seen, the 1999 intifada focused on human rights and that of 2005 on independence, Gdeim Izik drew attention to the exploitation of natural resources. As Western Sahara's resources, including fisheries, phosphates, tomatoes, solar and wind energy, and, most recently probably oil, are increasingly depleted, the occupation becomes stronger and richer, and the Saharawi population, suffering unemployment far more deeply than the settler population, do not reap benefits.⁶²² The (illegal) looting of the Sahara's wealth thus became the key demand of Gdeim Izik, and since then, a focus on halting natural resource exploitation has become stronger for the POLISARIO, the UNMS, Saharawis in the Occupied Territories, and Saharawis in the camps alike.⁶²³

As Moroccan forces in El Aaiún were deployed to oppress the camp, the capital city was left largely free of a security force presence. This, coupled with the spreading of rumours in the city that police were committing a massacre at Gdeim Izik (there was no mobile telephone reception at the camp, leading to confusion about what was happening), allowed for a Saharawi uprising that led to the "take back" of El Aaiún. Saharawis in the city took down the Moroccan flags that line the major streets and hoisted RASD ones, defaced the ubiquitous images of Mohammed VI that pepper El Aaiún billboards and began to burn Moroccan buildings of significance, not least the regional office of the Moroccan Office of Hydrocarbons and Mines (ONHYM). Desperate, the limited Moroccan forces that remained in the city drove around the streets of El Aaiún and, with megaphones, called out to the settler population to repress the Saharawi uprising. And their calls were answered enthusiastically by a portion settlers. These, some brandishing swords, began to loot Saharawi homes.⁶²⁴ Meanwhile, police detained hundreds of Saharawis and tortured them, some picking women off the street to rape them in the back of police vans.⁶²⁵ Gdeim Izik ended in tragedy, but it left a defiant mark on the hearts and minds of the Saharawi

⁶²¹ Wilson, "On the Margins..."

⁶²² At the time of writing, oil had been found off Western Sahara's coast, but not yet in commercial quantities.

⁶²³ I analyse why this demand re-surfaced around 2010 and the implication of this in Joanna Allan, "Natural Resources and Intifada: Oil, Phosphates and Resistance to Colonialism in Western Sahara," *Journal of North African Studies* 21, no. 4 (2016).

⁶²⁴ Amnesty international, "Rights Trampled: Protests, Violence and Repression in Western Sahara," December 2010, 6.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

population. Gdeim Izik has also had lasting consequences in terms of gender, which are explored in the next section.

4.5 Female demonstrators and male prisoners: the gendering of protests and custodial punishment

*The reality is that in the occupied zones the women go to protests more than men and that's the end of it. The women go out and fight more than the men. And I am seeing that and you can see in the videos that women are out on the streets more than men.*⁶²⁶

Since Gdeim Izik, women organise a regular protest on the fifteenth day of each month on Smara Street, El Aaiún, demanding freedom for Saharawi political prisoners and an end to natural resource plunder.⁶²⁷ Saharawi men and women may also organise sporadic protests on more specific issues, meaning that there are usually several protests a month. Since the years leading up to the second intifada, internet access and mobile telephones have become more and more available in the Occupied Territories. The younger generations have taken advantage of this. Nowadays, if we search on YouTube, we can find short films of protests by Saharawi-led media organisations (forcibly unregistered by Morocco) that are active in Western Sahara. As the quotation of Hassana Aalia above suggests, we will see, at least in videos of the smaller, regular protests, just a handful of Saharawi men amongst a sea of the brightly coloured *āmlāḥaf* of women.

We know that Saharawi women have been an active presence at demonstrations since the Spanish colonial period. Indeed they dominated the protests of the colonial period. Yet it would be unfair to claim that women dominated the 1987, 1999, 2005 or 2010 uprisings to quite the same huge extent as they have since Gdeim Izik. So what has changed? Izana Amidan explains:

There's a difference between the period following 2005, and after Gdeim Izik [...] Of course, the Moroccan regime still attacked us always, in savage ways. They'd take us

⁶²⁶ Aalia, 26 November 2014.

⁶²⁷ El Haouasi, 26 November 2014. Smara Street holds historical importance for Saharawis. Built by the Spanish, it once led to Zemla Square (now built over to form Maatalla, the centre of Saharawi resistance), the site of Bassiri's protest.

and put us in prison. However, before Gdeim Izik, women and men were treated the same. There were many women political prisoners as well as men. However, since Gdeim Izik there has been a lot of pressure on Morocco from NGOs and the UN about the imprisoning of women. So Morocco has since been more cautious about making political prisoners of women, but that doesn't mean they don't beat us in the street and incarcerate us for short periods of time for torture. But now, when associations and organisations reprimand Morocco for its repression of women, Morocco turns around and says "but we haven't arrested any women." You see?⁶²⁸

Gdeim Izik brought Western Sahara under international eyes once again. Respected organisations with an international reputation such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International drew attention to the atrocities committed during and after the destruction of the camp. Yet, although dozens of women were detained, tortured and kept incommunicado for varying periods of time, few women featured amongst the hundreds of Saharawis that were officially arrested and imprisoned (bar Nguia El Haouasi, Hayat Rguibi and handful of other women, who spent several months in the 'Black Prison').⁶²⁹ The so-called 'Gdeim Izik Group' of 23 political prisoners that remain incarcerated at the time of writing on mostly 20 year to life sentences are all male.

The decline in official custodial punishments for women is linked to orientalist constructions of gender. Once again, we see how the West's construction of Arab and Muslim masculinities and femininities impact upon the lives of Saharawi men and women in the Occupied Territories. Morocco has witnessed the media power wielded by Aminatou Haidar, the PR importance of 'gender equality' in the camps, and 'saving' Muslim women as a key US and British foreign policy priority (the 'victimised' and 'oppressed' Muslim woman is still a legitimate 'rescue project' for the West, just as she was in colonial times).⁶³⁰ Morocco has also felt the weight of pressure from NGOs especially concerned with women's mistreatment. This is in line with – as will be further discussed in Chapter Five – genderwashing policies and funding programmes of governments, which must disguise their

⁶²⁸ Izana Amidan, personal interview, El Aaiún, 22 August 2014.

⁶²⁹ Hayat Rguibi, personal interview. Zaragoza, 26 November 2014.

⁶³⁰ This is not to say that she always is. For occasions when Muslim women are not 'worthy Victims' see Yasmin Jiwani, "Trapped in the Carceral Net: Race, Gender, and the "War on Terror,"" *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition* 4, no. 2 (2011). On the other hand, on the white feminization of victimhood, and how the state uses this, see Cecilia Åse, "Crisis Narratives and Masculinist Protection: Gendering the Original Stockholm Syndrome," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 17, no. 4 (2015). See also Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3.

support for authoritarian regimes by wearing the clothes of ‘modernisation,’ ‘progress’ and ‘women’s empowerment.’

In 2011, Morocco enacted a new constitution for gender equality. It also developed, crucially under the strict supervision of the World Bank, a National Youth Strategy post the ‘20 February’ uprisings (Morocco’s answer to the Arab Spring) earlier that year. This was drenched in the language of gender equality and human rights.⁶³¹ Maria Cristina Paciello, Renata Pepicelli and Daniela Pioppi highlight that Morocco borrows such language from international agencies pushing a Western neoliberal agenda. This marks, they argue, a new strategy for managing political dissent. In their words,

Moroccan authorities were sophisticated enough to parallel pure coercion with a new kind of social policies enshrined in the neo-liberal framework (and inspired by international agencies) that aimed (and at least partially succeeded) at integrating the disadvantaged in the system, without of course questioning, and at times even reinforcing, the unequal system itself.⁶³²

Like Obiang, Mohammed VI has been held up by international organisations as a women’s empowerment champion. The EU, for example, has showcased Morocco as an example of ‘good practice’ when it comes to gender equality.⁶³³ According to the EU, “similar to the European Union, the promotion of gender equality is a political priority for the Moroccan government, and [...] it is very clearly committed to equality.”⁶³⁴ Morocco is the EU’s largest recipient of funding through the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)⁶³⁵ and indeed in 2012, it received approximately €38 million of EU funding, to address sexism.⁶³⁶ Similarly, since 2009, 13 Moroccan ministries have received funding from UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, FAO, ILO and UNAIDS to tackle violence against

⁶³¹ Maria Cristina Paciello, Renata Pepicelli and Daniela Pioppi, “Public Action towards Youth in Neo-Liberal Morocco: Fostering and Controlling the Unequal Inclusion of the New Generation,” Power2Youth project policy document, February 2016, 8.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, 20-21.

⁶³³ See for example European Commission, “Gender Equality: Encouraging First Results of EU Gender Action Plan in Developing Countries,” http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-1557_en.htm, 15 December 2011 (accessed 23 June 2016).

⁶³⁴ European External Action Service, “L’Union européenne appuie l’égalité des genres au Maroc,” http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/morocco/press_corner/all_news/news/2012/20120703_fr.htm, 3 July 2012 (accessed 23 June 2016).

⁶³⁵ European Commission, “European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations,” http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/morocco/index_en.htm, 23 June 2016 (accessed 23 June 2016).

⁶³⁶ European External Action Service, “L’Union européenne appuie l’égalité...”

women.⁶³⁷ It is also noteworthy that the EU has various trade agreements with Morocco that fail to explicitly preclude occupied Western Sahara.⁶³⁸ Although not as blatant as the case of the Obiang regime and its Western allies, my brief analysis here suggests that Morocco relies, to a certain extent, on genderwashing to maintain itself.

By punishing women activists for short periods in secret detention centres, rather than dragging them through the courts and officially imprisoning them for long periods, Morocco strategically attempts to make invisible the mistreatment of women and therefore participate in the collaborative project of genderwashing with its Western allies. Reputation is not such a concern when it comes to imprisoning men. The demonization of Muslim men as terrorists and/or extremists in the West is well researched.⁶³⁹ The proliferation of terrorism-centred Hollywood films that reinvigorate orientalist discourses comes at a time when the Muslim man as the violent and uncivilised Other permeates Western media, domestic politics, religion and foreign policy.⁶⁴⁰ The imprisonment of some disobedient Muslim men in Morocco, a key Western ally in the so-called 'war on terror,' is unlikely to create outrage internationally. He is not a victim worthy of rescue. Although Saharawi women activists know they may face violence and possibly torture in secret detention centres, the knowledge that, unlike male activists, they are unlikely to face long prison sentences is one reason Saharawis give to explain women's proliferation relative to men at demonstrations.

Yet Morocco's gendering of judicial punishment is not the only reason why Saharawi women are more visible at public political demonstrations than men, although it is the key reason for explaining the post-2010 change. Saharawi women's traditional gender role as mothers and carers centred around the *ḥaīma* has facilitated their political participation in very practical terms over the years. On the prominent role of women in protests, Saharawi activist Salaam explains,

⁶³⁷ UN Women and International Development Cooperation of Spain, "Advancing Gender Equality: Promising Practices," New York, 2013.

⁶³⁸ At the time of writing, said agreements are the subject of two legal actions by the POLISARIO and one by Western Sahara Campaign UK.

⁶³⁹ Dhiraj Murthy, "'Muslim Punk' Music Online: Piety and Protest in the Digital Age," in *Music, Culture and Identity in the Muslim World*, ed. Kamal Salhi (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 161; Michelle Aguayo, "Representation of Muslim Bodies in 'The Kingdom': Deconstructing Discourses in Hollywood," *Global Media Journal* 2, no. 2 (2009); Peter Gottschalk, and Greenberg, Gabriel, *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008); Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997); Jiwani, "Trapped in the Carceral Net..."

⁶⁴⁰ Aguayo, "Representation of Muslim Bodies..."

Of course we take part in demonstrations, we must! It is our land as much as the men's. And a lot of the men can't take part because they will lose their job if they are seen at the demonstrations...⁶⁴¹

Salaam's reasoning is just the same as that of the Spanish colonisers. Similarly, activist El Ghalia Djimi, who spent several years in forced disappearance along with Haidar, explains, "[i]t's about the space provided [...] Women stay at home and get more involved; at the same time, men don't want to lose their jobs."⁶⁴² Traditional gender roles, in which men are breadwinners and women take charge of the domestic sphere to practice mothering, allow women to participate in public acts of political resistance such as demonstrations. Many Saharawi men fear losing the employment that sustains their families financially should they be caught publicly demonstrating. This would interrupt their masculine role as breadwinners. If women are not in employment, there is no such danger for them. Furthermore, as Loveday Morris argues in the same vein as Djimi, Saharawi women's role as mothers in the private sphere gives them the time and flexibility to protest very publicly.⁶⁴³ In this way, we see how the traditional gendered division of labour derived from the patriarchal organization of society actually facilitates women's leading role in the resistance.

Djimi also draws on women's historic role in traditional Saharawi society to justify their primordial role in the protests:

The key role of women in the independence movement can be partially attributed to the Sahrawis' nomadic background [...] Until the early 20th century, women were often left to run camps while men traveled, putting the women in control of household finances and community management.⁶⁴⁴

Djimi, here, echoes POLISARIO's hegemonic construction of Saharawi history, which draws a continuum between women's current public, politically active role and her past responsibilities in a nomadic existence. Public politics, whatever its form, is constructed as a natural part of Saharawi femininity, and by no means a transformation in gender roles brought on by the current situation.

⁶⁴¹ Salaam quoted in Nick Jubber, "Salaam's Story," <http://sandblast-arts.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/salaams-story-by-nick-jubber.html>, 2012 (accessed 26 May 2016).

⁶⁴² El Ghalia Djimi quoted in Loveday Morris, "Women on Frontline in Struggle for Western Sahara," *The Guardian*, London, 16 July 2013.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁴ El Ghalia Djimi quoted in Loveday Morris, "In Western Sahara, Women Play Large Role in Forgotten Struggle for Independence," *Washington Post*, Washington, 7 July 2013.

At the same time though, women's participation in public protests also involves some challenges to traditional gender and age hierarchies. Understandably, families often do not wish for their daughters to become activists due to the very real dangers that such roles bring. Says Sultana Khaya, in 2005, when she began to protest publicly "I had problems with my family, because they didn't want the Moroccans to put me in prison."⁶⁴⁵ Similarly, Hayat Rguibi tells me,

conversations within our families always emphasised that we shouldn't talk about [the Saharawis' problems] outside the home. And, why shouldn't we talk about it outside? Because they are afraid of what might happen to us, that we might be detained, disappeared.⁶⁴⁶

Dafa has argued that Saharawi women never come-of-age in the sense that they are expected to obey their parents until they get married, at which point the husband becomes the head of the family (of course, this is a contested view and women's capacity to maintain power through bargaining and "everyday resistance" should never be underestimated).⁶⁴⁷ In the Occupied Territories, we see that women challenge and defy the wishes of their families in order to be able to play active roles in the resistance. Once the women become activists and bear the consequences on behalf of the nationalist cause, they become heroines, and their families feel pride, despite their sufferings. Initially though, some women defy the head of the family in order to attend these protests, and in this way, gender norms are (successfully) challenged by women activists to benefit the fight for independence.

Linked to gender norms that demand female chastity before marriage, most unmarried Saharawi women avoid sharing pictures of themselves online. "My brothers would accuse me of encouraging boys to look at me" explained one Saharawi woman when I asked.⁶⁴⁸ Nevertheless, like Mariam Hassan in the Spanish period, Saharawi women activists today continue to challenge the *hishma* when doing so will further the nationalist cause. Women that have suffered violence brush aside the unwritten rules and publish photographs of injured and bruised heads, limbs, chests and buttocks. With regards to the latter especially, women face a backlash from some sectors of the community who see the sharing of such

⁶⁴⁵ Khaya, 26 November 2014.

⁶⁴⁶ Rguibi, 26 November 2014.

⁶⁴⁷ Dafa, 28 November 2014.

⁶⁴⁸ Joanna Allan, Fieldnotes, Algeria, 8 - 15 December 2015.

pictures as *ḥarām* (forbidden in Islam).⁶⁴⁹ This negative reaction, taking into account the added trauma that survivors of violence can experience if they tell their story and are not supported only underscores the courage of such women. For them, denouncing the brutality of the Moroccan occupiers comes before maintaining gendered cultural practices.

Gender-based discrimination and how Saharawi women manoeuvre around it are further considered later in this chapter. First, though, given how it links to gender inequalities surrounding chastity in Saharawi society and its significance in terms of gender constructions more widely, we must consider what exactly happens to Saharawi men and women when they are detained by Moroccan authorities.

4.6 “Prolonged and repeated sexual torture is the most traumatising human experience of all.”⁶⁵⁰ Resisting gendered torture

*They insulted me with very rude words and told me that they were going to rape me. My husband tried to rescue me, but they hit him too, as well as his friend. They then told us they would take my daughter and rape her too. She was 11 years old at the time.*⁶⁵¹

*I’ve suffered from torture. The police are always beating me and... what can I say? They are trying to make me stop protesting. They beat me in places that, you know, are very fragile for a woman. They... you know what I mean. But it won’t stop me. I believe we will achieve independence one day. [...] When I go to protests I know that I might die, but I don’t care.*⁶⁵²

⁶⁴⁹ When a Saharawi woman shares a photograph of wounds on her buttock, for example, on social media, some activists will support her by sharing her picture as widely as possible (this is her intention – the horror of such an image immediately grabs attention). Yet others leave comments calling her to delete the picture immediately, stating that it is *ḥarām*. Usually there are similar numbers of ‘sharers’ to unsupportive ‘commenters’.

⁶⁵⁰ Tata Arcel, “Torture...” 344.

⁶⁵¹ Mahfouda Lefkir quoted in Joanna Allan, and Lakhal, Hamza, “Acting With Impunity: Morocco’s Human Rights Violations in Western Sahara and the Silence of the International Community,” Oslo, April 2015, 15.

⁶⁵² Yaya, 22 August 2014.

*They started hitting me on my face and all over my body with their batons. And I heard them saying, “we will rape you.” So they took off my pants and they raped me with a baton.*⁶⁵³

*They took off all our clothes and made us lie, face down, on the ground, then the police started to torture us in a very savage way. They raped us with sticks, whilst asking who it was that had painted the UN vehicle. At first, we didn’t tell them anything, but they kept raping us brutally and beating us until finally we all confessed. Police told us that if we continued such acts of protest, they would kill us in the future. They said, “we don’t want to see your faces in any protests, in cafes, or in the street.” Then, the police took us again, three of us in each of the two cars, and dumped us on the Eastern bank of the Red Canal river.*⁶⁵⁴

The four quotations above are all from Saharawi testimonies that describe events that took place in 2014. In recent years, the sexual violence that has been used as a weapon by the Moroccan state since the run up to its 1975 invasion of Western Sahara has gradually become more visible. This increased visibility is thanks to the small but growing number of testimonies of male and female survivors of sexual violence. In this section, we look at gendered experiences and effects of torture before exploring how Saharawis that suffer torture manage to show resistance, both during periods of detention and in the face of the trauma afterwards.

For some individual Moroccan security officers (and it is significant that those implicated in torture are exclusively male – the face of the violent occupation is gendered masculine), the belief that Saharawi political activists are socially inferior to Moroccans loyal to the regime arguably feeds their sense of entitlement to violate Saharawi bodies and minds.⁶⁵⁵ More generally though, Morocco’s systematic use of sexual abuse most likely serves the same purpose as states’ use of sexual torture more generally: to “hurt, control, and humiliate,” to violate the Saharawi victim’s “mental and physical integrity,” and to provoke, in the victim, “an experience of disintegration and *a changed view of the world* [emphasis in original],”

⁶⁵³ Lahweij Rguibano quoted in Allan, “Acting with Impunity...,” 14.

⁶⁵⁴ Mohammed Khar, Khaled Errohi, Aali Saadouni, Hamza Ahl Filali, Nour Eddine Elarkoubi and Emrabih Esaaydi quoted in *ibid.*, 20.

⁶⁵⁵ For more on why state officials use rape as a method of torture and weapon of war see Tata Arcel, “Torture...” Brownmiller argues that rape supports the maintenance of patriarchal society. Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will – Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1975).

which “may, of course, also affect the political identity of the prisoner.”⁶⁵⁶ As well as this, I argue here that Morocco makes use of social constructions of gender in an attempt to further fan the flames of the pain and horror they create through sexual torture.

When I have asked Saharawi women activists in the Occupied Territories about their life stories, the experience of secret detention and torture is ubiquitous. Almost as ubiquitous are their laconic accounts of sexual abuse whilst in detention. When they tell of the nature of the tortures endured, the “threat of rape” might be briefly mentioned, or a woman might say, “you can imagine what happened,” before moving to the next chapter of her story. Sometimes, a friend and fellow listener might fill in some of the gaps. Below is one woman (Izana Amidan) activist’s story of short-term disappearance, followed (in italics) by the comment of our mutual friend:

In 2005, they kidnapped me and tortured me in savage ways. They used a lot of unimaginable forms of torture. For example, they took my clothes off and put me in the “roast chicken” position, in which I was suspended from my knees, with my wrists tied over my legs, and tortured me like that. I think they do this to discourage women from protesting. They think that if women know this will happen to them, they won’t protest anymore. As you know, we are a Muslim society, and we have many values between family members, between women and men, between women and her sons, her society. So these acts of torture, if people know about them, they... you can imagine. So it’s a problem. It’s a problem not to tell my story because Morocco will still torture people in this way. Morocco has done this to a lot of women, not just me. If I don’t tell my story, it won’t stop Morocco from doing it anyway. But if I do tell my story, many women might be discouraged. So it’s confusing. But in the end I decided to tell my story.

There are still some Saharawis that don’t know about politics. I mean, they are all Saharawis, they know we are Saharawis and they want independence for Western Sahara, but they don’t know a lot about politics. And when they find out what happened to me, they tell their daughters not to be friends with me. They do this because of the police, because they are afraid that the same thing will happen to their daughters. And you can imagine the psychological effect of this on me and on other

⁶⁵⁶ Here I quote Arcel, who describes the purpose of states employing rape as a tool against populations more generally. “Torture...” 328.

women that have been abused, but I also know that these Saharawi parents are just scared for their daughters. The Moroccans do many dirty things.

*Izana hasn't told her whole story. They didn't just take her clothes off. She was raped. They put a blindfold on her eyes, she was naked, and they tortured her this way for 3 days without stopping. 3 days!*⁶⁵⁷

The first Saharawi woman to speak out publically about the systematic rape she suffered in detention was Kelthoum El Ouanat.⁶⁵⁸ Kelthoum's brother Mohammed explains how he feels about her breaking of the silence:

My sister said it publically. She is a reference when people talk about the rape of Saharawis and activists, they mention her as an example. And I've always said it's an honour, because they didn't rape her in a bar or in a brothel, they raped her in the Resistance.⁶⁵⁹

Whilst the division of rape survivors into 'good' ones and 'bad' ones is always highly problematic as it builds on the subtle social controls of sexuality that attempt to justify sexual violence, we should take into account here the observations of psychologist and political scientist respectively Carlos Beristain Martín and Eloísa González Hidalgo. The two academics interviewed 261 Saharawis (over half women) as part of a two-volume study of human rights violations. They found that most women do not talk of sexual abuse, due to (in Beristain and Hidalgo's view) the fear of stigma. They further explain:

Whilst people that have been killed are considered "martyrs" or victims of torture can have a status as resisters, there is no similar designation for women that have suffered rape. That is the same for men, where it is considered an attack on their masculinity. In this way, the suffering of the person and the family is not recognised and it can't be validated socially. Also the cultural or religious value placed on "purity" and sexual privacy can make affected women or their families feel especially knocked by this experience...⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁷ Amidan, 22 August 2014. Comment in italics from Hamza Lakhal, who interpreted the interview.

⁶⁵⁸ Martín Beristain, *El oasis... Tomo I*, 380.

⁶⁵⁹ Mohammed Laabied quoted in *ibid.*, 379.

⁶⁶⁰ Martín Beristain, *El oasis... Tomo II*, 115.

In the light of Beristain and González's insights, we can better understand some aspects of Mohammed Laabeid's statement. Women who survive rape in detention should not only not be stigmatised, but rather should be honoured and supported if they decide to share their stories.

Let us return to Amidan's more recent experiences. Amidan painfully highlights the psychological torture that pursues her as a result of telling her story. The public knowledge of her rape has led some to isolate her, although she is understanding of the reason why. Whilst one can easily argue that many loving parents would use any means to discourage their daughter from activities that will likely result in her disappearance, torture and rape, it is significant here that Amidan contextualises her stigmatisation by making references to the important norms surrounding interactions between the sexes in her culture. Parallels can be drawn here with the Algerian and Palestinian liberation movements. In both these cases, women activists that have been imprisoned and tortured have been celebrated as heroes, and at the same time have faced painful challenges when returning home due to compatriots' suspicions about their sexual vulnerability.⁶⁶¹ In Saharawi society female chastity before marriage is idealised. A practical consequence of this in the occupied zone, as well as Amidan's problems with some female friends' parents, is that women who are known to have been raped by Moroccan security officers often face difficulties if they wish to get married since they are no longer 'virgins.'⁶⁶² This is one more factor in explaining Morocco's ubiquitous use of the sexual torture of women activists. Morocco, through rape, maintains Saharawi patriarchal structures that make the non-virgin woman, including the rape survivor, unsuitable for marriage and motherhood. Sexual torture helps to prevent the reproduction of the Saharawi nation.

⁶⁶¹ Sarah Graham-Brown, "Women's Activism in the Middle East: A Historical Perspective," in *Women and Power in the Middle East*, ed. Suad Joseph, and Slymovics, Susan (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 28.

⁶⁶² Amidan, 22 August 2014; Joanna Allan, Fieldnotes, El Aaiún, 18 August - 2 September 2014; Hamza Lakhel, personal conversations, El Aaiún, August to September 2014. Important exceptions to this are many male ex-political prisoners who have married female ex-political prisoners. I am aware that virginity is a constructed concept.

Whilst the rape of women in situations of conflict has, fortunately, begun to receive much scholarly attention, the sexual torture of men is regrettably less well researched.⁶⁶³ Of the four quotations that opened this section, two were from Saharawi men. Sexual torture is still suffered by male political prisoners as well as by men secretly detained for short periods.

As in all cultures, Saharawi men's gendered experiences of rape depend on Saharawi hegemonic constructions of femininity and masculinity, and on what is and is not acceptable in Saharawi culture with regards to sexuality. Despite increasingly open and positive debates, Saharawi society is still, generally speaking and like most societies, homophobic, and this impacts upon constructions of hegemonic masculinity. Sandesh Sivakumaran argues that sexual violence against men is often perpetrated with the purpose of destroying the victim's sense of masculinity, to "feminise" them, and, particularly in cultures where homosexuality is taboo, to strip victims of their heterosexual status.⁶⁶⁴ Inger Agger's research has also highlighted how the torturer plays on hegemonic constructions of masculinity and compulsory heterosexuality in order to maximise humiliation.⁶⁶⁵

As well as humiliation, sexual torture commonly results in severe trauma and long-term sexual problems for both men and women, including, sometimes, a fear of one's partner or spouse when it comes to sex.⁶⁶⁶ These traumatic effects of sexual torture, coupled with the forced sterilisation and forced miscarriages of Saharawi women in detention (we observed, earlier in this chapter, that these were common practices in the seventies, yet unfortunately they remain so to this day)⁶⁶⁷ have important effects when the increased birth rate of the

⁶⁶³ Work by Nayanika Mookherjee is a valuable exception. Nayanika Mookherjee, "The Absent Piece of Skin: Gendered, Racialized and Territorial Inscriptions of Sexual Violence during the Bangladesh War," *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 6 (2011).

⁶⁶⁴ Sandesh Sivakuman, "Sexual Violence Against Men in Armed Conflict," *European Journal of International Law* 18, no. 2 (2007).

⁶⁶⁵ Inger Agger, "Sexual Torture of Prisoners: An Overview," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 2, no. 3 (1989): 313. See also Tata Arcel, "Torture..." 342. Agger explains that beating the genitals of prisoners (as Security Officers do with both men and women, not just in prison but also in the street) is designed to bring the prisoner to associate pain and panic with sexuality. Arcel, whose study focuses on women, describes how survivors of sexual torture often come to fear sex with their long-term, trusted partners.

⁶⁶⁶ Agger, "Sexual Torture..." 308.

⁶⁶⁷ A recent case at the time of writing is that of Lalla Al Mosawi, who was five months pregnant when she was kidnapped on 15 February 2015. After ten hours of torture, she miscarried. Allan, "Acting with Impunity..."

Saharawi population is important for the nationalist cause.⁶⁶⁸ Indeed, it has been argued that the key purpose of sexual violence in situations of conflict is to destroy a population.⁶⁶⁹

In addition to rape, other types of torture used by Moroccan security officers are gendered. Given the importance of nice teeth and long, healthy hair for women in Saharawi culture (every culture and time has its own hegemonic construction of beauty), the practice, by Moroccan security officers, of knocking out women's front teeth⁶⁷⁰ and subjecting them to waterboarding with chemicals and electrical torture (both of which cause alopecia)⁶⁷¹ are noteworthy. The practices are designed to cause women psychological suffering (as well as the obvious physical pain and long-term health problems) by partially destroying their ability to conform to Saharawi notions of feminine beauty. In the case of men, the common method of applying electrical currents to the genitals, which can result in sexual dysfunction and testicular atrophy, seems designed to attack an important facet of a Saharawi man's sense of masculinity through threatening his future ability to reproduce or enjoy sexual pleasure.⁶⁷²

Faced with these situations of imprisonment or incommunicado detention and physical defencelessness against sexual torture, or the threat of finding oneself in such a situation once again in the case of ex-prisoners and ex-disappeareds still living on the Occupied Territories, how could Saharawis possibly resist? We saw above how Fatma Aayache drew emotional strength from her traditional, gendered role of mother. Post detention, Saharawis have developed specific ways of dealing with their trauma. Earlier in this section, I referred to the laconic episodes in women's stories of violence, where instances of rape are implied but not explicitly referred to. Nevertheless, an increasing number of Saharawi testimonies of rape are appearing in written and video formats on the internet.⁶⁷³ I argue here that Saharawis have begun to use testimony-giving as a form of therapy and resistance.

⁶⁶⁸ I researched the politics of reproduction in Allan, "Representations of Gender..."

⁶⁶⁹ See for example Don Couturier, "The Rape of Men: Eschewing Myths of Sexual Violence in War," *On Politics* 6, no. 2 (2012).

⁶⁷⁰ Amnesty International, "Morocco/Western Sahara: Moroccan Authorities Must Respect Freedom of Assembly," 3 April 2013, 2.

⁶⁷¹ Tata Arcel, "Torture..." 342. One case is that of El Ghalia Djimi, who can no longer grow hair on her head due to the damage caused by water boarding with chemicals. Her face is also scarred by dog bites. See Prisca Borrel, "El Ghalia Djimi, militante sahraouie en territoire occupé," *Haut Courant*, <http://www.hautcourant.com/El-Ghalia-Djimi-militante,599>, 8 January 2009 (accessed 26 May 2016).

⁶⁷² Tata Arcel, "Torture..." 342.

⁶⁷³ I have worked with Saharawi solidarity groups since 2006, which gives me the advantage of being able to observe changes over time.

Studies from various different cultures illustrate that both male and female survivors of sexual torture face difficulties in revealing their stories.⁶⁷⁴ Doing so can provoke feelings of shame and guilt and even intensify symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and experience from psychotherapy with torture victims has illustrated that information about sexual torture is not usually disclosed until a late stage in therapy.⁶⁷⁵ Indeed, psychotherapists have found that retelling traumatic stories of rape is not necessarily therapeutic. On the other hand, *reframing* the story has been shown to have therapeutic effects.⁶⁷⁶ The *Testimony Method* is one such reframing method.

The Testimony Method is a form of psychological therapy for survivors of sexual torture. It was originally developed by psychologists A.J. Cienfuegos and C. Monelli⁶⁷⁷ with ex-political prisoners of the Chilean military dictatorship and was later modified by Inger Agger and Søren Buus Jensen for use with political refugees more generally.⁶⁷⁸ It has also been used with Bosniak women survivors of sexual torture⁶⁷⁹ and survivors of the civil war in Mozambique.⁶⁸⁰ The Testimony Method involves victims constructing a narrative of their abuse in order to share their traumatic story with their therapist.⁶⁸¹ Through it, “private pain is transformed into political dignity,” shame and guilt are reframed and “evidence against repression” is created,⁶⁸² which could be used by, for example, international organisations

⁶⁷⁴ Agger, “Sexual Torture...”; Beth Goldblatt, and Meintjes, Shiela, “Gender and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” South Africa, 1996.

⁶⁷⁵ Agger, “Sexual Torture...” 312.

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 314.

⁶⁷⁷ A.J. Cienfuegos, and Monelli, C., “The Testimony of Political Repression as a Therapeutic Instrument,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 53, no. 1 (1983). The written recording of testimonies of other (not just sexual) forms of brutality has been also been used for solely political and feminist purposes elsewhere in Latin America. See Maureen E. Shea, “Latin American Women and the Oral Tradition: Giving Voice to the Voiceless,” *Critique* 34, no. 3 (1993).

⁶⁷⁸ Inger Agger, and Jensen, Søren Buus, “Testimony as Ritual and Evidence in Psychotherapy for Political Refugees,” *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 3, no. 1 (1990).

⁶⁷⁹ Mladen Lončar, Medved, Vesna, Jovanović, Nikolina, and Hotujac, Ljubomir, “Psychological Consequences of Rape in 1991-1995 War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Croatian Medical Journal* 47, no. 1 (2006).

⁶⁸⁰ Victor Igreja, Kleijn, Wim C., Schreuder, Bas J.N., Van Dijk, Janie A., and Verschuur, Margot, “Testimony Method to Alleviate Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms: Community-based Intervention Study with Mozambican Civil War Survivors,” *British Journal of Psychiatry* 184 (2004).

⁶⁸¹ Holly L. Guthrey, *Victim Healing and Truth Commissions: Transforming Pain Through Voice in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste* (New York: Springer Publishing, 2015), 38.

⁶⁸² Agger, “Testimony as Ritual and Evidence in Psychotherapy for Political Refugees,” 115.

fighting for change.⁶⁸³ Sharing testimonies becomes a political act as well as a therapeutic one.⁶⁸⁴

In the Occupied Territories, women have set up an organisation that makes use of methods similar to the Testimony Method described above. The Forum for the Future of Saharawi Women in the Occupied Zone (FAFESA) was founded in 2008 by ex-political prisoners, some of whom had survived sentences of up to 16 years at Qal'at Mgouna and other secret detention centres, as well as younger activists such as Nguia Elhaouasi and Hayat Rguibi who have served several months in El Aaiún's 'Black Prison.' As is the case with most Saharawi-led organisations, Morocco has not granted it permission to register. Elhaouasi explains the purpose of the organisation:

It supports the fight of Saharawi women. It carries the voices of these women to other organisations, to everyone [...] We work to document the human rights violations that we have suffered. Also, each one of us tells the other women about what she has suffered. The idea is to make the burden communal, so that the suffering becomes shared.⁶⁸⁵

Women at FAFESA share their stories with one another as a form of therapy. Furthermore, they work to record each other's testimonies, written or via YouTube, and attempt to disseminate these as far as possible in order to break Morocco's media blockade on abuses in Western Sahara. By speaking out, the survivors nullify the attempts of the Moroccan torturers to destroy them.

Earlier in this section we discussed the gendered effects of surviving rape as a Saharawi woman. If she wishes to get married, she can find difficulties in finding a husband due to the high importance of female chastity in Saharawi culture.⁶⁸⁶ Nevertheless, many well-known women activists that have suffered such tortures whilst in detention remain single and, at least to a foreign public, voice their marital status as an active and political choice. "I don't even think about getting married until the Sahara becomes independent," says Soumaya

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, 315.

⁶⁸⁴ See also Annie Pohlman, "Testimonio and Telling Women's Narratives of Genocide, Torture and Political Imprisonment in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Life Writing* 5, no. 1 (2008).

⁶⁸⁵ El Haouasi, 26 November 2014.

⁶⁸⁶ Allan, "Representations of Gender..."

Taher.⁶⁸⁷ Like Lmdaimigh, the writer that we met at the start of this chapter, Taher, at least to external onlookers, resists assuming Saharawi women's traditional role until the Moroccan occupation ends. Other Saharawi activists state that the discourse on single-by-choice is adopted through pride to hide such women's underlying disappointment at society's rejection of marriage prospects due to their perceived non-"virgin" status.⁶⁸⁸ Nevertheless, such women, in their *public* discourses, turn the sexual double standards that would prevent their fulfilment of women's traditional role on their head. Marriage and motherhood become not fates that are barred from them, but fates that they refuse.

4.7 Saharawi feminism? Challenging gender inequalities in the Occupied Territories

For the most fervent women activists in the Occupied Territories, the nationalist cause comes before everything. Although one can note a latent anger amongst less prominent women activists about gender inequalities and a sense of deep frustration amongst some,⁶⁸⁹ there is no organised women's movement, as such, to challenge gender inequality within Saharawi society. One young woman that I interviewed, unusual in that she studied in Rabat (interviewees explained that it is mostly young men who study in Morocco, and the further north the university, the smaller the proportion of women), expressed some dissatisfaction at gender inequalities, but she did not elaborate: it was clear that she wished to focus our discussions on the "national cause." When I asked her if she considered herself a feminist, she responded, "of course! I am proud that I am a woman and also that I am a Saharawi woman!"⁶⁹⁰ With her statement, she highlights the extent to which women's rights are tied

⁶⁸⁷ Pseudonym. Personal interview. Madrid. 21 October 2014.

⁶⁸⁸ Allan, "Fieldnotes." Of course, another view (but not one that has been raised by Saharawis in my conversations with them) is that, fruit of sexual violence, such women's desire for an affectionate and sexual relationship is diminished.

⁶⁸⁹ The interviews I undertook in Western Sahara and Morocco were largely unstructured: I tried to encourage participants to focus on what they found important, rather than the other way around, and the issue of gender inequality was not one raised by the more prominent women activists. On the other hand, I found that less prominent activists studying in Morocco (the women I interviewed there were not part of any organization, only occasionally joined protests, and played no leadership role in the latter) were more inclined to raise the issue of gender inequalities within Saharawi society. Nevertheless, constant harassment and interference from Moroccan police limited the time and depth of interviews. Unfortunately then, I am unable to draw meaningful conclusions on the existence (or otherwise) of a relationship between the depth of nationalist activism and the perception of being repressed along gendered lines. Nevertheless, I suspect that the most prominent activist in the Occupied Territories are, like the POLISARIO, keen to promote this image to further the Saharawi cause externally. My subject position as a white, European researcher is important here: I am precisely the target of the externally-promoted image of gender equality engineered by the POLISARIO.

⁶⁹⁰ Tag Sayed (pseudonym), personal interview, Rabat, 26 April 2014.

up with the wider Saharawi struggle. Her feminism could be described as feminist nationalist— for her, women’s liberation cannot be achieved whilst the colonial oppression continues.⁶⁹¹

As for the frustrations that other women voice, one can hear complaints about, for example, not having the freedom to dress as one would like (in the Occupied Territories, as in the camps, visitors will note that whilst most men will wear, with pride, their *derrā’a* on occasions, but are just as comfortable in jeans and a T-shirt, most women almost always wear their *melhfa*, indicating once again that women are the cultural bearers of the nation). Another complaint, as one informant put it, is that “men repress [them]” by policing their movements and telling off sisters who are seen, or heard to have been seen, with a boyfriend. The demand for female pre-marital chastity also manifests itself in the ambiguous way that women survivors of torture such as Amidan are treated. Arguably, the voicing of her disappointment at the conduct of others towards her is in itself a form of resistance against the sexist social norms, given that she breaks the custom of maintaining the veneer of ‘Saharawi gender equality’ before the eyes of a foreign observer.

According to Saharawi friends, however, women do find room to manoeuvre amongst the social norms that demand female chastity before marriage *if they want to*.⁶⁹² It is common for Saharawis to have (secret) romantic and sexual relationships before tying the knot and certain practices allow them to do so whilst maintaining the veneer of pre-marital sexual abstinence: some women insist on non-penetrative sex with their partners, (illegal) abortions are not uncommon, and, interviewees told me, operations to insert a false hymen are increasingly becoming the norm for young women before the night of their first wedding. However, given the great expense (and, in the case of illegal abortions, the physical danger) of such operations, as well as the fact that these actions do not challenge the gendered power relations that enforce female, but crucially not male, chastity, I view the procurement of these operations as examples of resilience. That is, ways of showing agency and ‘getting by’ in the face of adversity rather than resistance.

⁶⁹¹ For more on feminist nationalism see Lois A. West, ed. *Feminist Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1997).

⁶⁹² I am not suggesting that sexual relations are necessarily a form of ‘liberation’ for women. I merely wish to highlight that women who wish to have sex have found ways to do so whilst simultaneously avoiding society’s disapproval.

We should take into account here that Saharawis live under Moroccan administration, where abortion is only legal under restricted circumstances and procuring an illegal abortion is often a highly traumatic, not to mention expensive, experience for women. Contraception is legal but sex education in schools and universities is limited to the biology of reproduction. Pre-marital sex is illegal and punishable by a prison sentence, and indeed single, pregnant women are more easily criminalised in the sense that their condition is proof of the act.⁶⁹³ The 2004 Moroccan reform of the *Mudawanna* (Family Law) extended some limited rights to women, such as placing, for the first time, the family under “the joint responsibility of both spouses,” establishing a minimum age for marriage (18) and assigning custody rights to women as well as enshrining women’s right to ask her husband for a divorce into law. However, this last right was already the norm in Saharawi society, and the law stopped short of regulating the unilaterally male rights to polygyny and repudiation.⁶⁹⁴

As for the attitudes of young Saharawi men, friends explained the majority pursue pre-marital sex but would refuse to marry a woman who they did not believe to be a virgin. Women in the occupied zone falling pregnant before marriage also risk a legal punishment as they may do in the camps, and will, in most cases, face a period of ostracisation from their families.

The importance of female chastity highlights the role of women as the vessel for transmitting national culture. In traditional Saharawi society, it was viewed badly for men and women to have pre-marital relations, in line with the community’s Islamic beliefs. Although they should be approached with their colonial perspective in mind and with awareness of the non-homogenous nature of Saharawi tribes, historic Spanish anthropological studies suggest that women’s sexuality was policed to a greater extent than men’s,⁶⁹⁵ with harsh physical punishments for adulteress women, and rituals celebrating the bride’s, but not the groom’s, virginity at weddings.⁶⁹⁶ The aforementioned practice of genital

⁶⁹³ Kai Kreutzberger, “Single Mothers and Children Born out of Wedlock in the Kingdom of Morocco,” *Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law* 14 (2008-2009). Ida Sophie Winter, “Many Moroccan Students Pursue Sex but Few Get Sex Education,” <http://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2015/08/many-moroccan-students-pursue-sex-but-few-get-sex-education/>, 17 August 2015 (accessed 26 May 2016).

⁶⁹⁴ Paciello et. al., “Public Action towards Youth...,” 13.

⁶⁹⁵ Gaudio states that “[i]n the case of adultery, the husband can beat a woman, shut her for up to three days inside or refuse to live with her. A woman discovered committing the flagrant crime of adultery can be stoned publicly by the tribe.” “Apuntes para un estudio...,” 59.

⁶⁹⁶ Angel Doménech Lafuente, “Sahara Español. Del vivir nómada de las tribus,” *Cuaderno de Estudios Africanos* 21, no. January to March (1953): 35.

cutting for girls (today strongly opposed by the POLISARIO and especially the UNMS) is also relevant here.

Whilst, with regards to men, attitudes have changed and pre-marital sex is essential to proving the virility of his constructed (compulsory heterosexual) masculinity, this cannot be the case for women, who, in times of the nation's occupation, are charged with preserving Saharawi traditional culture. This is nothing unusual. Several researchers working on a variety of different national contexts have shown how nationalism places women in the role of cultural reproducers of the imagined community, especially in times of national humiliation.⁶⁹⁷ To use Enloe's words, at times of national crisis, women become "the nation's most valuable possessions; the principal vehicles for transmitting the whole nation's values from one generation to the next; bearers of the community's future generations—crudely, nationalist wombs."⁶⁹⁸

The intersection of the occupation and gender inequality is well illustrated by the issue of coerced and forced marriage. Marriage and starting a family are key aspirations for Saharawi men and women, yet, due to the occupation and the subsequent high unemployment of Saharawis, few Saharawi men are in a position to fulfil their gendered role and provide for a wife and children. There is no space for an alternative to this strictly heteronormative family framework. "I'm single. If you don't have a house, you can't get married," Mahfood Hafdala, who lost his job as a fisherman after campaigning against the EU-Morocco Fisheries Agreement, regrettably tells me in an interview.⁶⁹⁹

Saharawi parents are keen to make a good marriage for their daughter, and in some cases see her future economic stability as more important than her (romantic or other) desires. Furthermore, in a context of poverty and violence, linking a daughter to a trusted family via marriage can ensure extended access to resources, strengthened reciprocal networks and increased social capital.⁷⁰⁰ This is especially the case given few men are able to provide

⁶⁹⁷ Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*; Accad, "Sexuality and Sexual Politics...;" West, ed. *Feminist Nationalism*; Vickers, "Bringing Nations In..."

⁶⁹⁸ Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (London: Pandora, 1989), 54.

⁶⁹⁹ Mahfood Hafdala, personal interview, El Aaiún, 23 August 2014

⁷⁰⁰ Although their research focuses on early marriage rather than coerced marriage of adult women, work by Jane E.M. Callaghan, Yaganama Gambo and Lisa C. Fellin usefully highlights the complex socioeconomic structures that surround marriage practices. "Hearing the Silences: Adult Nigerian Women's Accounts of 'Early Marriages'" *Feminism and Psychology* 25, no. 4 (2015).

economic stability. Significantly, as Hafdala's case illustrates, Saharawi men risk losing their jobs (or never getting a job) if they are politically active. Taking this point into account hand in hand with the difficulties women activists that have survived rape face in getting married, we could almost say that the Moroccan regime is playing on gender inequalities to 'breed out' Saharawi nationalist activism.

When highlighting chastity and modesty and their disproportionate importance for Saharawi women due to the latter's role in culturally reproducing the nation, we cannot forget the impact of another aspect of the occupation: what Saharawis call "moral decay."⁷⁰¹ Fruit of economic inopportunity and discrimination, increasing numbers of Saharawis are developing drug and alcohol addictions. Drugs, alcohol and indeed smoking were unknown in traditional Saharawi society and are still taboo, and Saharawi nationalists are convinced that Moroccan authorities foster these habits in an attempt to 'corrupt' Saharawi society.

Another issue that Saharawis raise in that regard is prostitution.⁷⁰² The Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara is heterosexualised, militarised and masculine. Moroccan military personnel demand prostitutes, leading to large red light districts in Western Sahara's cities. It is worth noting just how militarised the occupation is. According to Zunes and Mundy, no less than one third of the Moroccan population in Western Sahara consists of soldiers. In addition to this third, Zunes and Mundy point out, are unknown numbers of police, gendarmes, Interior Ministry agents, royal secret services, plain-clothes agents and civilian informers.⁷⁰³ Informants see these red light districts as signs of "moral decay" provoked by the Moroccan occupation. They resent these districts and the women that inhabit them. Vulnerable women in prostitution have been stoned by Saharawi activists and humiliated in diaspora news sites. Prostitutes are seen to dishonour Saharawi society. As Enloe has pointed out with reference to an Iraqi wartime context, when women turn to prostitution, some men turn to violence against women in an attempt to restore the gendered order.⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰¹ Hamza Lakhil, personal conversations, August to September 2014.

⁷⁰² I have used "prostitution" and "sex work" depending on the term interviewees and informants themselves use. Although in this paragraph the agency or otherwise of the women concerned was not the consideration of the informants, generally, I found that the latter used "prostitution" rather than "sex work" when they wished to highlight exploitation and coercion, and "sex work" where they wished to highlight women's agency, as was the case with some women from Equatorial Guinea but none from Western Sahara.

⁷⁰³ Zunes, *War, Nationalism and Conflict Irresolution*, 158.

⁷⁰⁴ Enloe, *Nimo's War, Emma's War*, 38.

Linked to the 'moral decay' of the explosion of sex establishments on the scene in Western Sahara is the practice of prostitution amongst a small proportion of Saharawi women. Almost all of these women live far from their families in order to avoid 'scandal'. Poverty – fruit, once again, of economic inopportunity and discrimination – is the primary factor referred to by informants in explaining why such women use their bodies as a resource. Whilst practising prostitution has allowed some women to continue university studies, and illustrates their resilience to extremely tough economic conditions, it comes at a high price: they commonly suffer rape and beatings from their 'clients.'

Of course, such women's situation is fruit of gendered, classed and ethnic power imbalances that cannot be separated from the Moroccan regime. One Saharawi woman who practised prostitution in Agadir said she turned to this due to economic need but only after suffering an extremely violent rape (of course, all rape is violence but in this case the sexual assault was accompanied by grievous bodily harm) and being unable to seek justice: the attack happened prior to the 2014 amendment of Article 475 of the Moroccan penal code, which 'punished' rapists by marriage to their victims. The Saharawi woman identified this incident, coupled with poverty, as the driving factor behind her decision to sell sex. She managed to complete her degree, but her family found out about her work and coerced her quickly into (an abusive) marriage.⁷⁰⁵

Unlike in the camps or elsewhere in exile, there are no organised movements concerning gender equality in the Occupied Territories. Resentment at gender inequalities is (quietly) voiced at an individual level and – in the case of society's stigmatisation of survivors of (Moroccan) rape especially – voices are occasionally magnified during debates on 'the roofs.' Indeed, since Morocco has effectively lowered a portcullis around public space for Saharawi nationalist events, the roofs of Saharawi family homes are today a haven for cultural events, political strategizing and occasionally even socio-political debates. In general though, women get on with the nationalist struggle whilst showing resilience and agency in the face of sexism.

We should understand that the level and violence of Moroccan oppression in the Occupied Territories and the prolonged nature of the national struggle play their role in preventing women's (and men's) ability and propensity to organise a movement for reimagining some

⁷⁰⁵ Allan, "Fieldnotes."

of the gender norms that disproportionately repress women. Furthermore, as we have seen, each manifestation of gender inequality is in some way linked to the occupation. For most women activists in the Occupied Territories, Saharawi feminism is feminist nationalism: independence is the goal and if there are challenges to gender norms, they are mounted to further the nationalist cause.

4.8 The future of the struggle: resistance and gender across borders

The eldest sister in the family that hosted me in El Aaiún in August/September 2014 did not identify as an activist, but had her own ways of opposing the occupation. The house was under constant surveillance by plain-clothes police and Moroccan informers due to the history of activism of her brothers. Spies would attempt to listen at the ground floor window. One morning, whilst folding up her children's blankets, through the bars of the open window, my hostess' eyes met those of a spy, a profession which, she later told me, is frowned upon in Islam. Whilst continuing to fold the blankets, she uttered loudly, for the benefit of the spy, a phrase from the Quran:

...And We have put a bar in front of them and a bar behind them, and further, We have covered them up; so that they cannot see.⁷⁰⁶

The act by the sisters of the house of hosting a foreign visitor was in itself a form of resistance that made use of their gendered roles as homemakers (that is not to say that the sisters did not play roles outside of the domestic sphere, one of them being a secondary school Arabic teacher – another reason for ensuring her resistance focused more on fostering the hidden transcript than on the militant activism of her brothers). As well as feeding and sheltering me, the two eldest sisters, who had their own homes and husbands elsewhere in the Sahara, stayed in the family home with their children for the duration of my stay. During this time, they strategically invited many 'non-activist' female friends over for tea every day. This was to ensure on the one hand that the house was always full and noisy, so that my presence would be less obvious and on the other hand constant visitors helped to obscure the visits of well-known activists, who came to participate in interviews.

⁷⁰⁶ From the ninth verse of Chapter 36, "Surat Ya Sin," in the Quran.

In their outstanding analysis of the irresolution of the Western Sahara conflict, in which they identify the non-violent struggle in the Occupied Territories as the Saharawis' best hope for independence, Zunes and Mundy identify two crucial success factors for the Saharawi activists. One of these is engaging international civil society with their cause.⁷⁰⁷ The acts of Saharawis helping to smuggle and hide foreign journalists and activists in Western Sahara contributes to fostering international awareness, yet efforts also reach beyond the occupied territory and continue to draw on constructions of gender in meaningful ways. Saharawi activists have learnt from the media episode surrounding Aminatou Haidar's successful hunger strike in Lanzarote, which made Haidar into a heroic mother-as-martyr figure, capable of awakening emotions in a foreign public. The case of Tekbar Haddi highlights how this lesson has been learnt and incorporated into subsequent campaigns.

Haddi's son, Mohammed Laimine Haidala, died in February 2015 a few days after having been stabbed in the neck with a pair of scissors by a group of five Moroccan settlers. Moroccan authorities then confiscated the body. Haddi staged her hunger strike in May-June 2015 outside the Moroccan consulate in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, demanding the return of her son's body, an autopsy and an independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death.

Figure 3



Haddi has – unlike Haidar - consciously and explicitly identified motherhood as central to her hunger strike. Unlike Aayache but much like the Argentinian mothers of the *Plaza de Mayo*, motherhood is what inspires her resistance, and ‘mother’ is an active, claimed and political

⁷⁰⁷ The other success factor identified by Zunes and Mundy is the ability to engage Moroccan allies, a subject that I have focused on elsewhere: “Education as Resistance: Saharawi Students Organizing in Morocco,” *Tadween*, 18 November 2015.

position for her. Saharawi and Spanish activists, as well as the UNMS, have worked together in a transnational campaign to support her, and “mother courage” is its slogan. “My son, my heart, justice for Haidala,” reads the campaign poster above. If the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo invented “revolutionary motherhood,” then their solidarity demonstration for Haddi in Argentina on 1 June 2015, and the scores of Saharawis visiting Haddi’s own mother (who was beaten in her home by police during Haddi’s strike) in El Aaiún indicate the practice of a transnational revolutionary motherhood.

The latter visits to Haidala’s mother are significant for another reason. The hoards of visits by Saharawis to Haddi’s mother, and the visits by distinguished Saharawis such as Aminatou Haidar and Hmad Hammad to Haddi in Las Palmas, offer public recognition of Haddi’s sacrifices (both as a mother losing her son and as an individual risking her physical wellbeing) as supreme acts of resistance for the wider cause.⁷⁰⁸ In Western Sahara, Haidala, like all Saharawis killed by Moroccan (settlers or security agents), is now known as a “martyr” and Haddi, like all Saharawi mothers of murdered children, has earned the respected label of “mother of the martyr.”

June saw solidarity protests in most Spanish cities and the involvement of Spanish and public messages of support from celebrities such as Kerry Kennedy, Pilar Bardem and Viggo Mortensen helped to increase the press coverage, ample in Spain at local and national level (and also making the UK press, albeit quietly).⁷⁰⁹ Indeed, the case provoked far more media attention than any other incident post-Gdeim Izik, much as was the case with Haidar’s hunger strike in 2009 after four years of near silence in the international media. If engaging international civil society is key to the success of the struggle in the Occupied Territories, then Haddi’s case builds on that of Aminatou Haidar’s to illustrate the vital importance of deploying certain constructions of gender in ensuring that success.

In Haidar’s case, the press imposed the identity of mother on the latter and played on orientalist constructions of Arab, Muslim women to strengthen the emotional power of its stories, which worked in Haidar’s favour. Haddi, on the other hand, actively claimed the identity of mother, and her supporters used this strategically, helping to ensure that the

⁷⁰⁸ This holds parallels with the Palestinian case. See Julie M. Peteet, “Icons and Militants: Mothering in the Danger Zone,” in *Gender, Politics and Islam*, ed. T. Saliba, Allen, C., and Howard, J.A. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁷⁰⁹ See for example Kerry Kennedy, “Morocco has Pressured UN to Ignore Western Sahara,” *The Guardian* London, 23 July 2015.

press used the same emotionally charged angle as was the case with Haidar. Haddi became the starving and emotionally broken Muslim mother, physically weak but morally inspirational. Whilst, in the Sahara, Haddi is the respected “mother of the martyr”, in Europe she is mother-as-martyr, almost a Virgin Mary archetype of sacrificial femininity as promoted by the Catholic Church, and this provokes passion. The strategic recourse to the traditional (and malleable) Saharawi feminine gender role of mother has, at least in Spain, increased interest in the Saharawi cause exponentially, even if only temporarily. The importance of this interest is illustrated by Morocco’s reactions of fear: as we saw, Haidar’s strike was successful, and Haddi’s family has been offered (a rejected) €90,000 in hush money followed by the (also rejected) offer to return Haidala’s body if the requests for autopsy and inquest were dropped.⁷¹⁰ If mobilising civil society is one of the two necessary arms of the non-violent struggle, then Saharawi mothers have proven to be the point of the blade on two occasions.

But what if international civil society support does not grow enough to constitute a game-changer? The horizon is increasingly one of war. At the start of the documentary *Gdeim Izik*, a Saharawi activist can be seen graffitiing, upon a wall, “the loss of all hope will make us free.”⁷¹¹ If hope in international law and civil society disappears, war, for many Saharawis, will seem the only option for freedom, even if they know that such freedom may take the form of death. The young, jobless Saharawis, without realistic aspirations and under the weight of constant oppression often describe themselves as “buried alive.” As Hamza Lakhali says, “lots of people have big dreams here. But they can’t achieve them because they are Saharawi.”⁷¹² In a recent interview the late President Mohammed Abdelaziz admitted “the pressure to return to war is becoming almost unbearable.”⁷¹³ More and more, although conscious that they would be unlikely to win, are in favour of war.

In this chapter, we have seen that the relationship between gender and resistance is not linear but multi-layered and complicated. Whilst dependent on the idiosyncrasies of the

⁷¹⁰ Haddi held her hunger strike for 36 days, when she was hospitalized. She agreed to pass her hunger strike to internationals, who began a “hunger strike chain,” each person striking for 24 hours before passing the baton to the next in line. This was still ongoing at the time of writing (February 2016).

⁷¹¹ Sahara Thawra, “GDEIM IZIK: Detonante de la primavera árabe,” (You Tube, 2012).

⁷¹² Lakhali, August to September 2014.

⁷¹³ Kristen McTighe, “Absent from the Arab Spring Limelight, Refugee Youth Consider War with Morocco,” *Global Post*, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/morocco/131111/africas-longest-conflict-western-sahara-refugees-morocco-arab-spring>, 13 November 2013 (accessed 26 May 2016).

Saharawi case –Saharawi constructions of femininity and masculinity affect greatly who resists, why and how, and also determine Morocco’s oppressive response – we have seen that the relationship is simultaneously inseparable from the globally hegemonic western orientalism and its constructions of gender. As for the relationship between women’s resistance to colonialism and patriarchy explored in Chapter Two, we can see now that the difference between the Spanish period and the Moroccan one are illuminating. The anti-racist, mostly intersectional, feminist demands during the Spanish era were key to mobilising women politically for independence, yet, under the terror of the Moroccan occupation, specifically feminist demands have lost weight. If the Saharawi women activists of today are feminists, they are feminist nationalists. They spearhead the non-violent struggle, and the nationalist fight against the devastating occupation is the priority for most fervent activists. In sum, aside from the mobilising role of the (empty or otherwise) promise of gender equality by the nationalist movement, and the challenges to the *hishma* made by some activists for further the nationalist cause, there is not necessarily any relationship between women’s emancipation from traditional patriarchal elements of society and their leadership role in nationalist resistance movements. Yet the wider relationship between gender and resistance is thick, profound, far-reaching and easily manipulated and influenced by internal and external, even global, actors. But to what extent can we generalise these gendered dynamics to other situations of resistance to (colonial) dictatorships? In the final two chapters, we move to Equatorial Guinea since the Spanish exit, to explore the relationship between gender and resistance in another context.

Chapter Five. Constructions of gender in the nationalist discourses of the Obiang regime

Dolores Molubela is an elderly cleaner in Malabo. The establishment where she works is popular with ex-pat oil industry members. Despite labouring all day six days a week, she struggles, on her wages, to feed her orphaned grandchildren. “They say that there is petrol here. Well, the petrol is just for a few people. They fill their stomachs and get fat, and leave the rest of us to starve.”⁷¹⁴

Discourses, understood here as systems of meaning-production, construct a ‘reality’ from a specific socio-cultural perspective. Dominant power groups in a culture exert their power over others by projecting their representation of the world. In this chapter, I deconstruct the images of gender that are projected in the nationalist discourses of the Obiang regime and attempt to explain the ideological functions of such imaginations. This serves to add to my previous research, which I summarised in Chapter One, on how POLISARIO nationalists construct gender and gender equality and why. By focusing on Obiang, I show how an oppressive authoritarian regime employs constructions of gender (equality) to further its own ends.

First, I describe how Obiang came to power and how he has attempted to build a national identity with himself as its foundation. I also explain how the Equatoguinean government is structured. This helps us to establish the extent to which Obiang and government discourse are one and the same. Then, I move on to deconstruct gender and gender equality in regime discourse, before exploring the internal and external functions of such constructions. Finally, taking into account that the oil industry today dominates the economy of Equatorial Guinea, I look at what oil has meant for women’s socioeconomic opportunities.

5.1 Obiang, the predestined leader

Early in the morning of 24 September 1979, thousands of Equatoguinean citizens formed a queue outside the Marfil cinema, Malabo. They were not anxious to catch the latest Hollywood offering, however, but rather to witness the trial of Francisco Macías, the self-proclaimed ‘One True Miracle of Equatorial Guinea,’ and conductor of a miserable orchestra of poverty and terror since winning elections in 1968.

⁷¹⁴ Dolores Molubela (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 21 June 2015.

The first 500 citizens in the queue were permitted entry. The rest spilled out and splashed through the neighbouring streets where loudspeakers transmitted the proceedings. Four days later Macías was found guilty of genocide, mass murder, embezzlement of public funds, material injury, systematic violations of human rights and treason.⁷¹⁵ In the evening of 29 September he was taken to Black Beach prison, the site of the torture and death of some of the more than 50,000 Equatoguineans killed by Macías, where he was shot dead by a Moroccan firing squad.⁷¹⁶

When the Macías verdict was announced through the loudspeakers, the crowds outside the cinema (the condemned dictator had left few functioning state institutions and thus the cinema was used as a courthouse) erupted into spontaneous cheers and applause. Obiang took power. Even though he had ordered deaths and headed the hellish Black Beach prison under Macías,⁷¹⁷ and, once ruler, installed former torturers as ministers in his new government,⁷¹⁸ collective temporary amnesia allowed a climate of elation in Equatorial Guinea and abroad.

Ever since his successful coup, Obiang has put on an annual celebration of Macías' overthrow, thereby reminding Equatoguinean citizens that they are united in their adversity to this past, tyrannical regime.⁷¹⁹ In Laclauian terms, Obiang has positioned himself as the incarnation of the empty signifier of Equatoguinean freedom.⁷²⁰ State media channels maintain that Obiang, "the country's God",⁷²¹ has rescued Equatorial Guinea, "a country whose development grows day by day,"⁷²² and is working hard to end all the grievances caused by Macías and colonialism. That is to say, Equatoguinean national identity is

⁷¹⁵ Alejandro Artucio, *The Trial of Macías in Equatorial Guinea. The Story of a Dictatorship* (Geneva: International Commission of Jurists and International University Exchange Fund, 1979).

⁷¹⁶ Scared by Macías alleged powers of witchcraft, no Equatoguinean dared to fire the shot.

⁷¹⁷ Global Investment Center, *Equatorial Guinea. Company Laws and Regulations Handbook. Volume 1: Strategic Information and Regulations* (Washington: Global Investment Center, 2013), 73.

⁷¹⁸ Robert Klitgaard, *Tropical Gangsters: One Man's Experience with Development and Decadence in Deepest Africa* (USA: Basic Books, 1990), 21.

⁷¹⁹ Cusack, "...Cuisine and the Making of National Culture," 132.

⁷²⁰ Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)* (New York: Verso, 2007).

⁷²¹ Equatoguinean state radio quoted in BBC News, "Equatorial Guinea's 'God,'" <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3098007.stm>, 26 July 2003 (accessed 23 May 2016).

⁷²² Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, "Title Page," <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com>, No date (accessed 12 June 2014). This is the slogan of the Government's official website.

articulated in opposition to past oppressive forces. Equatoguineans are now 'free,' and freedom carries Obiang's face.

Aside from attempting to make a metonymical slide between Obiang and freedom, regime nation-builders have also drawn on other tools to hoist and wave the Equatoguinean flag. Just as the POLISARIO makes use of a constructed history to bolster its current nationalist ideologies, the Obiang regime, as Cusack argues, creates and draws on an ancient history of "the Bantu people and culture of Equatorial Guinea."⁷²³

Equatorial Guinea is made up of different ethnicities. 80 per cent are Fang, a people of Bantu origin, concentrated in the continental region of Rio Muni. 6.5 per cent are Bubi, living principally on Bioko island. There are the smaller groups: Ndowe (also known as playeros and made up of Kombe and Benga) on Rio Muni's coasts and the islands of Elobey Grande, Elobey Chica and Corisco; Bissio, from the coasts of Rio Muni; Fernandinos, living mostly in Malabo and Luba on Bioko island; Krio also living on Bioko; Annobonese on Annobón island; and around 200 Pygmies in the forests of Rio Muni.⁷²⁴

Fang are not only dominant in numbers but they also make up the ruling elite, itself headed by members of Obiang's Esangui clan, based in the town of Mongomo, Rio Muni. Therefore, as Cusack points out, Fang culture, constructed as having roots in the ancient Bantu traditions of Equatorial Guinea, is the model to which other ethnicities are likened, and around which other ethnicities are homogenised. Obiang is the metaphor for the homogenised nation of what Cusack – nodding to the natural resource wealth that funds the regime - calls the Mongomo "nationalist entrepreneurs".⁷²⁵

One key part of the regime myth of a shared and ancient Bantu heritage is the emphasis of the Bantu belief in destiny. In this history/story, Obiang was destined from birth for his role as President and the regime admits that predestination acts as "a brake to [their] intentions of arriving at pluralist democracy."⁷²⁶ In other words, the inevitability of Obiang as dictator is made part of a national belief-system in regime discourse. As noted in Chapter One, the belief that a dictator's rule is inevitable or *destined* is a key barrier to mobilising resistance.

⁷²³ "Nation-Builders at Work: The Equatoguinean 'Myth' of Bantu unity," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 7, no. 3 (2001).

⁷²⁴ Fernando Ballano Gonzalo, *Aquel Negro de África Tropical: El Colonialismo en Guinea (1778-1968)* (Madrid: Sial Ediciones, 2014), 51; Oscar Scafidi, *Equatorial Guinea* (Buckinghamshire: Brandt, 2015).

⁷²⁵ "Nation-Builders at Work...;" "Cuisine and the Making of National Culture."

⁷²⁶ Cusack, "Nation-Builders at Work...," 83.

At the centre of Obiang regime-constructed national identity is the personality cult of Obiang himself, saviour of the Equatoguinean people and deliverer of their ‘freedom.’⁷²⁷ When I arrived in Malabo in June 2015, Obiang’s birthday had just passed. National and multinational businesses working in Equatorial Guinea had hired the many billboards around the capital in order to publicise their messages wishing the President a happy birthday.⁷²⁸ In Equatorial Guinea, as is the case of Mohammed VI in Morocco and occupied Western Sahara, Obiang looks down on his subjects from the walls of every establishment. He, and Mohammed VI in occupied Western Sahara, are ever present watching citizens both symbolically, through said photographs, and literally, thanks to the vast plain-clothes police and civilian informers, the all-seeing tentacles allowing the two dictators to look well beyond their protective shells without having to extend their heads.

The next section of this chapter looks at the articulation of gender within Obiang nationalist discourses, but first, lets consider to what extent the government of Equatorial Guinea can be said to act as a mouthpiece for Obiang. There are three branches to government: Executive, Legislative and Judicial. The Executive is led by Obiang as the Head of State, plus, since 2011, his two Vice Presidents, the Head of Government (the Prime Minister) and his three deputies, and a Cabinet of 86 Ministers, Vice Ministers, Delegate Ministers and Secretaries of State. These cabinet posts, which are numerous for a country with a population of under a million, are well described by Freedom House as “a ready source for patronage appointments.”⁷²⁹

Obiang’s family members enjoy high posts. His sons Teodorín and Gabriel are First Vice President and Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons respectively, his nephew Baltasar Engoga Edjo is Minister of State as is his brother Antonio Mba Nguema.⁷³⁰ Family members also sit on the boards of multinationals active in the country and establish their own individual ‘national’ companies, thereby ensuring their hands remain in the country’s till.⁷³¹

⁷²⁷ For more on the use of the personality cult in articulating national identities see Victoria Clement, “Articulating National Identity in Turkmenistan: Inventing Tradition Through Myth, Cult and Language,” *Nations and Nationalism* 20, no. 3 (2014).

⁷²⁸ Joanna Allan, Fieldnotes, Malabo, 13 June - 1 July 2015.

⁷²⁹ Freedom House, “Freedom in the World: Equatorial Guinea,” <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/equatorial-guinea-0#.U5XWLdzfhg0>, 2014 (accessed 9 June 2014).

⁷³⁰ Correct at time of writing (5 August 2016).

⁷³¹ Stephanie Wolters, “Equatorial Guinea's Web of Wealth and Repression,” Pretoria, 15 July 2014.

Constitutional reform in 2011 limited presidential (seven year) terms to two.⁷³² Obiang did not honour this. On 24 April 2016, after announcing the elections by presidential decree, Obiang was re-elected with 93.7% of the vote, although opposition parties might dispute use of the word “elected.”⁷³³

The Legislative branch is made up of two parliamentary chambers. The Senate has 70 seats, 55 of which are (in theory) directly elected and 15 appointed by the president. The House of People’s Representatives or the Chamber of Deputies holds 100 seats, held for terms of five years by representatives that are (also in theory) directly elected. Obiang’s party, the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE), dominate both. In any case, since the constitution invests all executive authority in the Head of State, Parliament has little power.⁷³⁴

The Judicial branch was until May 2015 formed by the Supreme Court (judges appointed by the President) and the Constitutional Court (five members appointed by the President, two of which are nominated by the Chamber of Deputies). There were also a number of subordinate courts. Judges working on sensitive cases often consulted the President’s office before issuing a ruling.⁷³⁵ In May 2015 Obiang temporarily dissolved the entire judiciary on the basis that it was “corrupt” and a “hindrance to foreign investment.”⁷³⁶

Elections in Equatorial Guinea are neither free nor fair. The country is amongst the most censored in the world, and media censorship reaches new levels ahead of elections.⁷³⁷ In the weeks and days leading up to the April 2016 elections, hundreds of opposition campaigners and supporters suffered illegal arrest and detention, brutal beatings, attacks on their homes

⁷³² Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, “The Government of Equatorial Guinea,” <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=126> 2014; Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.), “The World Fact Book: Equatorial Guinea,” <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ek.html>, 29 April 2014 (accessed 9 June 2014).

⁷³³ For some of the issues with the ‘elections,’ see EG Justice, “Opposition Party Boycotts Presidential Elections,” <http://www.egjustice.org/post/opposition-party-boycotts-presidential-elections>, 18 April 2016.

⁷³⁴ (C.I.A.), “The World Fact Book...”

⁷³⁵ Freedom House, “...Equatorial Guinea.”

⁷³⁶ EG Justice, “Human Rights Annual Report of Equatorial Guinea,” Washington, DC, 2015, 3.

⁷³⁷ Reporters without Borders, “Facebook and Opposition Websites Blocked Ahead of Elections,” <http://en.rsf.org/guinee-equatoriale-facebook-and-opposition-websites-14-05-2013,44618.html>, 14 May 2013 (accessed 9 June 2014); EG Justice, “Equatorial Guinea: Ensure Media Freedom,” <http://www.egjustice.org/post/equatorial-guinea-ensure-media-freedom>, 12 April 2016 (accessed 2 May 2016).

and families (which allegedly involved the firing of live ammunition in one case) and robbery.⁷³⁸

Given the political oppression and nepotism rife in Equatorial Guinea, it is fair to equate 'government' with 'Obiang regime' and I do so throughout this chapter. This is not to say that the regime consistently speaks with one single and unified voice. Indeed, I consider contradictions in how the government articulates gender and gender equality below.

5.2 Gender equality in Obiang regime discourse

In Malabo Central Market, a woman hangs her wares from a wooden rail. The dresses and skirts are emblazoned with the bright colours of the national flag, geometric patterns emblematic of current central African fashions, slogans such as "thank you," and the face of Obiang and his most famous wife, Constanca Mangué. The vendor herself wears a picture of Obiang on her shirt. Another has Mangué's face on a dress, which is also decorated with the words "international women's day," and "thank you." She links Mangué to the struggle for women's rights, and is far from the only person attired this way. Whether they are being sincere, or whether their clothing is a precaution against regime harassment,⁷³⁹ many Equatoguinean citizens choose to silently but openly thank the President's wife for her 'efforts' for gender equality when they get dressed each morning.⁷⁴⁰

We have seen the ulterior motives of state 'feminism,' where states co-opt the language of feminism (often with the First Lady[ies] as the figureheads) for purposes that are anything but feminist, elsewhere in Africa. Amina Mama illustrates how the Babangida and Abacha

⁷³⁸ EG Justice, "Presidential Elections 2016 to Entrench Dictatorship," <http://www.egjustice.org/post/presidential-elections-2016-entrench-dictatorship>, 18 March 2016 (accessed 2 May 2016); EG Justice, "Severe Crackdown on Opposition and Media," <http://www.egjustice.org/post/severe-crackdown-opposition-and-media-0>, 20 April 2016 (accessed 2 May 2016); EG Justice, "Democracy Held Hostage," <http://www.egjustice.org/post/democracy-held-hostage>, 25 April 2016 (accessed 2 May 2016); New Vision, "Africa's Longest-Serving Leader Re-elected," http://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1423403/africas-serving-leader-elected-94-vote, 28 April 2016 (accessed 3 May 2016).

⁷³⁹ As Paul Nugent said of Macías' Equatorial Guinea and other states where fear is key to state rule: "[t]he primary objective of citizens [is] to avoid being noticed by representatives of the state at all. Participating in public veneration of the leader when required to do so [is] the minimum price that [has] to be paid." Paul Nugent, "States and Social Contracts in Africa," *New Left Review* 63 (2010): 56.

⁷⁴⁰ Allan, 13 June - 1 July 2015. For more on the history of politicised dress in Equatorial Guinea, see Alba Valenciano-Mañé, "Vestido, identidad y folklore. La invención de un vestido nacional de Guinea Ecuatorial," *Revista de dialectología y tradiciones populares*, LXVII, no. 1 (2012): 267-96.

regimes in Nigeria used the language of ‘women’s development’ to neutralise the potentially subversive power of women’s liberation and normalise military rule.⁷⁴¹ For these regimes, argues Mama, populist measures that were in theory designed to empower the most underprivileged women in rural areas actually fostered a role for women limited to the home and petty trading that “perpetuated rather than challenged patriarchal traditions.”⁷⁴² Although Mama points out that the two regimes did not seek to win international support with their so-called ‘pro-women’ policies, she does highlight that the latter resonated with the interests of international financial institutions keen to see marginal groups incorporated into capitalist development. Similarly, Dzodzi Tsikata has chartered how the “NGO-ization” of Ghanaian feminism has seen the promotion of national and global neoliberal agendas at the expense of women’s ability to take mass action against gendered discrimination.⁷⁴³

In this chapter, I attempt to add to the work of Tsikara, Mama and others by exploring how the global neoliberal agenda, particularly the thirst for oil, influences the use of state ‘feminism.’ I show how the Obiang regime, so-called gender equality and oil are all tangled together. Crucially, I argue that Obiang and his neoliberal allies work together *as a partnership* in formulating this false state feminism. First, we contemplate the regime-painted picture of ‘gender equality.’

According to the Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, “today, young and mature women excel in all sectors,” and, “[her] presence can already be seen and heard in all areas.”⁷⁴⁴ Likewise, on International Women’s Day 2011, the Minister of Promotion of Women declared that, “[a]t present we all have the same rights.”⁷⁴⁵ When asked to what extent there is gender equality in Equatorial Guinea, one government representative explained, “if I had to give a mark between 1 and 10, I’d go as far as a 9 [...] There’s a level of equality here that’s higher than many countries...”⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴¹ Amina Mama, “Khaki in the Family: Gender Discourses and Militarism in Nigeria,” *African Studies Review* 41, no. 2 (1998).

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷⁴³ Tsikata, “Women’s Organizing in Ghana...,” 187.

⁷⁴⁴ Sarilusi Tarifa King, “Equatorial Guinea Women Make Progress in All Sectors,” Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=1802>, 3 August 2011 (accessed 27 May 2014).

⁷⁴⁵ Eulalia Envo Bela quoted in Clemente Ela Ondo Onguene, “The Chinese Embassy Offers a Special Reception for the International Day of Women,” Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=1400>, 12 March 2011 (accessed 28 May 2014).

⁷⁴⁶ Ignacio Nsue Enhate (pseudonym), personal interview, Brussels, 1 April 2014.

To who do Equatoguinean citizens owe this happy state of (alleged) equality? According to government propaganda, the heroine is the First Lady, Constancia Mangué.⁷⁴⁷ In almost all communications concerning ‘women’s progress’ published by the official government news website, she, and frequently Obiang, are thanked for their great personal efforts towards this cause. Indeed, Obiang’s and Mangué’s role in women’s empowerment is weaved into the nation’s constructed history. In its second and third periodic report to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Equatoguinean government states,

On becoming a sovereign national State, Equatorial Guinea suffered a bloody dictatorship from 1969 until August 1979. Following the *coup d’état* of 3 August 1979, the country experienced true freedom, thanks to H.E. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, the President of the Republic, who recognized women’s rights for the first time in the history of our people.⁷⁴⁸

Officially then, Obiang is the saviour of the oppressed Equatoguinean woman, supported by his wife. According to her government-penned biography, the First Lady is “a fundamental figure for the evolution of women of Equatorial Guinea” and she is, at the time of writing, Honorary Chairwoman of the ruling party’s women’s organization.⁷⁴⁹

Nevertheless, despite the picture of gender equality painted in official government discourse, the regime simultaneously boasts of its numerous efforts to work *towards the achievement* of the same. That is to say, official discourses on gender equality are somewhat contradictory, since there would be no need to work towards an ideal if said ideal had been realised.

So what has the regime done to further gender equality? State news reports describe government-organised events celebrating women and their achievements. These are marches, high-level receptions and round-tables and beauty pageants, the effectiveness of

⁷⁴⁷ Tarifa King, “Equatorial Guinea women...”

⁷⁴⁸ Government of Equatorial Guinea, “Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Second and Third Periodic Reports of States Parties: Equatorial Guinea,” (Malabo, 27 September 1995), 3.

⁷⁴⁹ Maria Jesus Nsang Nguema, “Meeting for Women in the Equatorial Guinean Embassy in Spain,” Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=3607>, 15 March 2013 (accessed 1 June 2014).

which are murky. As the CEDAW Committee has noted, there is no evidence of the results and impact of such events.⁷⁵⁰ Indeed, Equatoguinean feminist interviewees complained of the lack of government action on issues such as violence against women and girls, sexual violence, sexual exploitation and human trafficking for the same, polygyny, teenage pregnancy and homophobia.⁷⁵¹ Said one feminist interviewee when asked her views on the key problems faced by Equatoguinean women today, “there are various. But the main one is that women are overlooked. [...] They are disregarded by everyone, the political parties [...] the institutions.”⁷⁵² Said another, “we have a Ministry that focuses exclusively on gender issues [...] but tell me what we are supposed to do when the political leaders are all sexists? [...] Calls for rights on specific days and events are not enough.”⁷⁵³ Although international rankings are problematic, a cursory look finds Equatorial Guinea at the depressing position of 138 on the UN Development Programme’s (UNDP) Gender Development Index with a mean of only four years of schooling for girls (compared to 7.2 for boys).⁷⁵⁴

If feminists criticised, in anonymised interviews, the government for failing to tackle sexism, their ability to lobby is curtailed by the justified fear of oppression. Indeed one feminist who attempted to lobby (i.e. engage the government with direct and overt criticism and suggested policy changes) received very serious threats to her freedom and wellbeing from cabinet members.⁷⁵⁵ However, feminists push for change in other ways, as is outlined in the final section of Chapter Six.

Let us turn now to the views of key figures on what gender equality means and what barriers to its achievement exist. In her 2012 acceptance speech upon being ‘elected’ Honorary National Chairwoman of the ruling party’s Women’s Organisation, Mangué outlined her ideas for creating a “more just society” with respect for women’s position by “focus[ing] her

⁷⁵⁰ CEDAW, “CEDAW 31st Session. Summary Record of the 652nd Meeting,” (New York, 2004), 8.

⁷⁵¹ Maria Jesus Ntutummu (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 16 June 2015; Trinidad Mba (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 16 June 2015; Constancia Balboa (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 22 June 2015; Alba Engonga (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 25 June 2015; Maria Angeles Adugu Mba (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 30 June 2015.

⁷⁵² Mba (pseudonym), 16 June 2015.

⁷⁵³ Ricardo Soriso Sipi, personal communication, 14 January 2015.

⁷⁵⁴ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), “Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone. Table 4: Gender Development Index,” Published online, 2016.

⁷⁵⁵ In order to ensure the individual’s safety, I cannot give further details.

thoughts on [...] the abandonment of evil vices that stain the image of women.”⁷⁵⁶ Such vices, according to Mangué, include “alcoholism, drug addiction [and] promiscuity.”⁷⁵⁷

If Mangué advocates for women to abandon drugs, alcohol and non-monogamous sex in order to reach full gender equality in Equatoguinean society, her fellow regime mouthpieces on equal rights also see women’s behaviour as the key success factor. Eulalia Envo Bela, when Minister of Social Affairs and Promotion of Women, implied that gender inequality was the fruit of women’s reluctance to overcome “their weakness.”⁷⁵⁸

Then Minister of Women’s Affairs Jesusa Obono Engongo, representing Equatorial Guinea before the CEDAW Committee, blamed women’s lack of political participation on “local custom” and “women’s own traditional attitudes.”⁷⁵⁹ Another government representative explained the low representation of women in government with the assertion that women are “reluctant to [participate] because they [are] clinging to tradition.”⁷⁶⁰ Indeed, the resounding tone throughout most Equatoguinean government submissions to the CEDAW Committee is one that is simultaneously *righteous* and *hopeless*. Righteous since the government has made every effort possible and “there are no barriers as such” to gender equality apart from the obstinate and backward attitudes of the female population,⁷⁶¹ and hopeless since the government can do nothing to change such attitudes. For example, in response to CEDAW Committee’s concerns about the high prevalence of HIV amongst Equatoguinean school girls, the Equatoguinean government representatives’ responses were that “[t]he Government could not possibly do more.” They explained that “[t]ruckloads of condoms had been sent into the countryside; it was not the Government’s fault if the population did not use them.”⁷⁶² It is fair to say therefore that, according to official regime

⁷⁵⁶ Maria Jesus Nsang Nguema, “The Honorary and Executive Chairwomen of the Women’s Organization of the PDGE are Elected,” Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, 21 April 2012, <http://guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=2580&lang=en> (accessed 1 June 2014).

⁷⁵⁷ Maria Jesus Nsang Nguema, “Speech by the First Lady at the 5th Congress of the PDGE,” Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, 21 April 2012, <http://guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=2578&lang=en> (accessed 1 June 2014).

⁷⁵⁸ See Envo Bela quoted in Sarilusi Tarifa King, “End of the Fifth Summit of Women, Gender and Development,” Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, 21 June 2012, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=1693> 1 June 2014.

⁷⁵⁹ CEDAW, 2004, 2.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁶¹ Government of Equatorial Guinea, “Responses to the List of Issues and Questions for Consideration of the Combined CEDAW Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Periodic Reports: Equatorial Guinea,” (New York, 2004), 6.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*

discourse on gender equality, the government has made every effort possible to realise gender equality and as such, if the latter does not exist, the government is not at fault. However, it is hard to identify any meaningful or successful measures led by government to tackle sexism.

5.3 The construction of gender roles in regime discourse

Regime discourse has a dichotomous view of sex and gender. There are “natural biological differences between men and women” and the two sexes are assigned different roles culturally.⁷⁶³ Women should seek marriage and procreation, and strive to support their male partners throughout life. Indeed, in official speeches, Mangué places importance on the role of woman “as mother, wife and companion of man.”⁷⁶⁴ Meanwhile, the members of the Women’s Solidarity Association for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (AMUSPRODEGE) are made up by “the wives of Government members.”⁷⁶⁵ Government-issued news articles on high-profile events tend to report the attendance of ministers and other politicians “and their wives.”⁷⁶⁶ The presence (or otherwise) of the husbands of the few female politicians at such events is never deemed worthy of comment. Woman is articulated as the supporting actor to man’s leading role.

Concordant with their role as mothers, caring duties, as is the case in most parts of the world, fall mainly on the shoulders of women. The status of high-profile women as parents receives attention in government news articles, when this is never the case for men. For example, whilst giving an overview of the professional achievements of Maria Leonor Epam Biribe, former Minister of Social Affairs and Promotion of Women, the government’s Press and Information Office deems that her parental status is also worthy of comment. Introducing an interview with Epam Biribe on the occasion of her receipt of the guineaecuatorialpress.com prize, the publication states, “[f]or many years, this worker, who at the same time is the mother of five children, has fought to offer alternatives and solutions

⁷⁶³ Sarilusi Tarifa King, “Celebration of the World Day of Rural Women,” Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=1989> 18 October 2011 (accessed 1 June 2014).

⁷⁶⁴ Nsang Nguema, “Speech...”

⁷⁶⁵ Sarilusi Tarifa King, “Meeting of the Wives of Government Members,” Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=3795> 15 May 2013, (accessed 1 June 2014).

⁷⁶⁶ Sarilusi Tarifa King, “Celebration of International Women’s Day in Malabo,” Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, 11 March 2014, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=4907> (accessed 1 June 2014).

to the challenges and difficulties of the female population,”⁷⁶⁷ then, amidst a set of questions on her efforts and the fruits of her work for Equatoguinean society, the publication asks, “[in] addition to working and your important professional career, you are a mother. How do you combine both tasks, and especially now, with so many responsibilities?”⁷⁶⁸ These comments, which imply Angue and Epam Biribe’s success in “balancing work and family life” highlights a key gender difference: women politicians must be viewed as attentive mothers and wives (as is the case in many countries of the world). Male politicians’ status as fathers or husbands, on the other hand, is not mentioned in government news articles.

Women should strive to be beautiful and elegant. Coverage of the activities of past and present beauty queens forms a large chunk of the Press and Information Office’s online news coverage. The annual announcements of the winner of Miss Equatorial Guinea regularly makes state television and print news. The notice board of the state Cultural Centre in Malabo is dominated by publicity for young women to sign up to beauty contests. “Beauty is Culture, Culture is Beauty,” said one poster during my visit there in June 2015.⁷⁶⁹ Indeed, at the time of writing, the only woman thumbnail in a montage of interviews in the “People” section of the Press and Information Office’s website who was not *solely*⁷⁷⁰ associated with beauty pageants was Guillermina Mekuy, Minister of Culture. However, the questions of the interview focused, in their entirety, not on Mekuy’s work, but rather on her views on fashion, and features a photograph of her modelling for Dior.⁷⁷¹ By way of comparison, the men who were featured in thumbnails of the same column are interviewed solely about their work (as politicians, diplomats and sportsmen).

Whilst attention is not drawn to men’s physical appearance, marital status or roles within the family, the government neglects to challenge existing hegemonic masculinities, which determine the identities of many Equatoguinean male citizens and serve to entrench gender inequalities. The lack of a discursive effort by government to change said constructions, and

⁷⁶⁷ Maria Leonor Epam Biribe interviewed by Ines Ortega, in Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=2989>, 11 September 2012 (accessed 1 June 2014).

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁹ Fieldnotes, Malabo, 13 June - 1 July 2015.

⁷⁷⁰ Guillermina Mekuy was host of Miss World Tourism in 2012.

⁷⁷¹ Guillermina Mekuy interviewed by Ines Ortega, Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=4844>, 22 February 2014 (accessed 1 June 2014).

indeed their collaboration with the status quo in painting women as beautiful wives and mothers first and foremost, is significant in itself: it raises yet more questions about the dedication of government to promoting equality.

Let us focus on one aspect of hegemonic masculinity: sexuality. Men should be virile heterosexuals. Paying women, including minors, for sex is normalised through state television,⁷⁷² and the unilateral right for men to have multiple wives was included in a draft law in 2002.⁷⁷³ Homosexuality is not tolerated by the regime and there is no protection against discrimination based on sexuality, or indeed on gender identity. Government television has paraded men arrested for ‘homosexual acts’ on air.⁷⁷⁴ In one example of this, state television interviews a detained “transexual [sic]” in the police station. In an attempt to explain his (the programme uses male pronouns) ‘crime,’ the 17-year-old boy states “I need to feed myself. I don’t know. I don’t have anyone that can feed me.”⁷⁷⁵ The fact that the child, selling sex in highly risky circumstances in exchange for food, is painted as a perturbed criminal due to his perceived sexuality reveals the extent to which sexual ‘deviation’ is reprehensible.

Through this construction of those who deviate from compulsory heterosexuality as criminal, the hegemony of binary gender roles and heterosexuality is maintained and enforced through fear and force. Similarly, Obiang’s rule, in more general terms, is maintained through fear: state media broadcasts “observations” such as “[Obiang] has the

⁷⁷² See for example the state television news report, uploaded on the *Diario Rombe* website, of the taxi driver who speaks with indignation after finding the girl prostitute that he has solicited is actually a boy. As *Diario Rombe* observes, an effort is made to block out the face of the taxi driver, but not that of the prostituted child. Discursively, the taxi driver is an everyday man, and his infidelity and solicitation of sex with a minor are made banal whilst the child is the guilty party. State television report uploaded on to *Diario Rombe* website, “La Policía Detiene a un “Homosexual” y Taxista y los Exhiben en la TVA” <http://www.diariorombe.es/la-policia-detiene-un-homosexual-y-taxista-y-los-exhiben-en-la-tva/>, 7 April 2014 (accessed 1 June 2014).

⁷⁷³ *Diario Rombe*, “Descarga los Proyectos de Ley que Regulan el Matrimonio Tradicional en Guinea Ecuatorial,” <http://www.diariorombe.es/descarga-los-proyectos-de-ley-que-regulan-el-matrimonio-tradicional-en-guinea-ecuatorial/> 27 May 2014, (accessed 1 June 2014). This draft law is an initiative of MINASPROM and, as they have lamented in reports to the CEDAW Committee quoted below, it has not yet been passed. It would outlaw the current practice of imprisoning women who are unable to return the bridewealth upon divorce.

⁷⁷⁴ *Espacios Europeos*, “La Policía de Guinea Ecuatorial Detiene a un Homosexual y el Gobierno lo Exhibe en la Televisión como si Fuera un Trofeo,” <http://espacioseuropeos.com/54707/la-policia-de-guinea-ecuatorial-detiene-a-un-homosexual-y-el-gobierno-lo-exhibe-en-la-television-como-si-fuera-un-trofeo/>, 14 April 2014, (accessed 1 June 2014).

⁷⁷⁵ *Diario Rombe*, “La Policía...”

right to kill without anyone calling him to account because it is God himself [sic].”⁷⁷⁶ As Sharp has noted, the fear of sanctions and the belief that the ruler possesses superhuman qualities are two further ways to prevent resistance (another one is patronage, of which, as we have seen, Obiang makes heavy use).⁷⁷⁷ Not only gender norms, but also Obiang’s rule more widely, are maintained through a combination of hegemonic discourses, force and fear. This dynamic of oppressive fear is further explored in Chapter Six.

On the other hand, there are moments when civil servants have subtly criticised the government, most often for blocking or refusing funding for their gender equality initiatives. Said an anonymous author (I should highlight here that one woman who contributed to CEDAW submissions is also involved in the work of a pro-equality NGO) in a report to the CEDAW Committee in 2004,

A draft law designed to regulate customary marriages attempts to provide a legal framework for the dowry, consent, inheritance, widowhood and other highly important matters, which up to now have left women at the mercy of the husband or his family. This text has been in the drafting stage for almost three years and, unfortunately, seems to represent a threat to some men, who are doing everything possible to prevent its adoption.⁷⁷⁸

In the same report, the author describes planned services to support women in prostitution and vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, and comments that “[u]nfortunately, the necessary funds have not yet been provided.”⁷⁷⁹ In another report, the CEDAW Committee is informed by MINASPROM as to why there has been little progress on providing healthcare for women in rural areas of the country. The failure is attributed to “[t]he dearth, or late availability, of funds for the various plans, programmes, and projects, resulting in little or no implementation.”⁷⁸⁰

Wherever a criticism of government is hinted at, it is done from the position of a low and subservient bow: Obiang must be simultaneously flattered and distanced from whatever

⁷⁷⁶ Equatoguinean state radio quoted in BBC News, “Equatorial Guinea's “God.””

⁷⁷⁷ ...*Nonviolent Action*...

⁷⁷⁸ Government of Equatorial Guinea, “Consideration of reports...” 2004, 10-11

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷⁸⁰ Government of Equatorial Guinea, “Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Sixth Periodic Reports of States Parties: Equatorial Guinea,” (New York, 2011), 31.

government inefficiency is under question. The individuals quoted here implicitly wish to take effective action (that is to say, not beauty pageants) to ameliorate the position of women. Although part of the regime themselves, they resist it from within, questioning the lack of funding and sexist government attitudes that make action on gender inequality impossible. The fact that these individuals' criticisms are couched in praise for Obiang do not prevent them from being acts of resistance, nor is such couching unusual in cases of resistance. With reference to peasant resistance to the will of the elite classes, Scott argues,

the success of de facto resistance is often directly proportional to the symbolic conformity with which it is masked. Open insubordination in almost any context will provoke a more rapid and ferocious response than an insubordination that may be as pervasive but never ventures to contest the formal definitions of hierarchy and power.⁷⁸¹

The slightly dissatisfied individuals quoted here are not peasants. They represent the regime, often speak its voice, and are employed by it. Nevertheless, they are still subordinate to Obiang, and indeed, my fieldwork in Malabo suggested that not all high up civil servants work for the regime out of their own free choice. In any case, coerced into employment or otherwise, the few critical voices within the regime use what Scott calls *everyday forms of resistance* to subtly challenge the regime to which they belong without ever criticising the overall hierarchy that their dictator chairs. They are not publicly oppositional or pushing for emancipatory change, but rather, to use Katz' terminology, they attempt to *rework* aspects of the regime from within the system.⁷⁸² This shows that complicity with the regime is not a clear cut, black and white matter. An Equatoguinean citizen may, at times, comply and collaborate with the regime, or even be a part of it. At other times, they may attempt to challenge it, through subtle resistance or otherwise.

⁷⁸¹ Scott, *Weapons...* 33.

⁷⁸² Cindi Katz breaks up previous wide understandings of resistance such as Scott's and breaks them into three levels: *resistance* is consciously oppositional, open and aims for emancipatory change, *reworking* alters the organization of power relations to benefit the weak, but does not challenge the overall polarization of power relations and forms of *resilience* enable subalterns to survive without altering the circumstances in which they must struggle to cope with. Katz, *Growing Up Global...*

5.4 Ideological function

There is much research on how states and nations use certain constructions of gender for a variety of ideological purposes.⁷⁸³ What purposes do Obiang regime constructions serve, internally and externally? So far, I have argued that there is much attention paid in government discourses to the perceived need to empower women and promote gender inequality in Equatorial Guinea. Nevertheless, I have argued, there is a serious lack of meaningful policies and actions to realize these aspirations. The understandings of regime figures of barriers to equality belie the lack of government commitment: backward citizens and jealous and under confident women are blamed for the lack of equality, but the government is accorded no fault or role. It is fair to conclude, therefore, that the focus on gender equality within Obiang regime discourse does not reflect any material commitment on the part of the government. Not only does this keep woman in a subordinate place, it also suggests that perhaps the achievement of gender equality would not serve the regime. Gene Sharp argues that the absence of self-confidence amongst a repressed people is fostered through subordination. This absence of self-confidence in turn prevents efforts at resistance or revolution.⁷⁸⁴ I suspect, therefore, that maintaining women in a subordinate position and fostering their lack of confidence is within Obiang's interests. Conversely, then, feminist activism is perhaps in the opposition movements' interest, an argument that I develop further in Chapter Six.

Gramsci differentiated between hegemony, where the people consent to their rulers, share their world vision and abide by their constructions of identity because they *view the latter as natural*, and domination, where those in power maintain it by force. Since coming to power, Obiang has made use of both in order to sustain his power. His regime has attempted to make hegemonic an Equatoguinean national identity that places his own personality cult at the centre. Obiang is the Equatoguinean people's freedom, Obiang *is* Equatorial Guinea. He propagates the idea that his dictatorship is inevitable, which blends hegemony and domination. It is a hegemonic project, since his rule is painted as natural, yet it is also an attempt at domination, since his rule is not based on winning hearts and minds but rather

⁷⁸³ Evelyn Accad, "Sexuality and Sexual Politics: Conflicts and Contradictions for Contemporary Women in the Middle East," in *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, ed. Valentine Moghadam (London: Zed Books, 1994); Al-Rasheed, *A Most Masculine State..*; Bouatta, "Feminine Militancy..."; Cherifati-Merabtine, "Algeria at a Crossroads..."; Moghadam, "Nationalist Agendas..."; Peteet, "Women and the Palestinian Movement..."; Rankin, "Gender and Nation..."; Tohidi, "Modernity, Islamization and Women..."

⁷⁸⁴ Sharp, *...Nonviolent Action...*

on fear and therefore force. This is a strategy to quell resistance, since, even if Obiang's rule is regrettable, there is no point in fighting something believed to be inevitable. The depiction of Obiang as all-powerful and godlike only adds to this veneer of inevitability, while threats to 'unpatriotic' dissenters is pure domination. The Obiang-orchestrated Equatorial Guinea is a nation in which the imagined community and its 'distinctly' Equatoguinean identity has been forged as a foundation for the moneymaking venture of the dictator's clan and those whose patronage they buy. This venture is supported by external-facing discourse that promotes Obiang's dedication to 'gender equality' as a concept.

At a roundtable debate of feminists held in Malabo, June 2015, the participants and audience laughed with irony as one of the Equatoguinean panellists announced, shaking her head, that Equatorial Guinea had just been awarded an international prize for its efforts towards gender equality.⁷⁸⁵ Others have noted Obiang's attempts to fashion himself as a philanthropist and his penchant for pricey 'prestige projects' such as the new luxury towns built for the 2011 African Union Summit and hosting of the 2015 African Cup of Nations (CAN).⁷⁸⁶ I argue below that so-called 'gender equality' plays a central role in this wider soap opera of Obiang regime affluence, prestige and 'charity' acted before the world.

Simon Anholt describes branding as "a technique for achieving integrity, and reaping the reputational benefits of integrity."⁷⁸⁷ Just as the POLISARIO promotes its policies for achieving gender equality as a 'success story' in order to garner external support, the Obiang regime attempts to brand itself as a champion of gender equality in order to match the current Western trend for supporting, at least in theory, women's empowerment in the 'developing world.' As Reem Mohamed puts it with reference to the discursive focus on gender equality in the late Ben Ali, Gaddafi and Mubarak regimes, "reflecting the image of 'supporters of gender equality' earns the state international praise with little emphasis on

⁷⁸⁵ I have since fruitlessly attempted to confirm the prize giver, yet the ironic laughter displayed by all at the event was telling enough.

⁷⁸⁶ See especially Wolters, "Equatorial Guinea's Web...," 15 July 2014 and Hannah Appel, "Walls and White Elephants: Oil Extraction, Responsibility, and Infrastructural Violence in Equatorial Guinea," *Ethnography* 13, no. 4 (2012). As Appel notes, the 'prestige projects' extend to high-rises that may look imposing but often lack electricity or water, or indeed any inhabitants. She reads these as a type of infrastructural violence built, as they are, whilst Equatorial Guinea has minimal basic infrastructure (decent roads, schools, hospitals and so on).

⁷⁸⁷ Simon Anholt, "Should Place Brands Be Simple?," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 5, no. 2 (2009): 95.

either implementation or budgetary allocation.”⁷⁸⁸ We can succinctly express this image-making and its political objectives with the term *genderwashing*.

Genderwashing, as a concept, is inspired by *greenwashing*. It refers to marketing efforts by corporations to project an image of being ‘environmentally friendly.’ Big businesses co-opt the language and imagery of environmentalism to in order to address the concerns of environmentally conscious consumers without cleaning up their practices, and/or to divert attention for the environmental degradation that they cause. With regards to ‘gender equality,’ states and their corporate partners market their policies and practices in a similar fashion. To quote Corinne L. Mason, who notes that in the last half decade women’s empowerment has been placed at the forefront of US foreign policy in order to justify foreign intervention, genderwashing is “the way that feminist and liberal concerns for equality and women’s rights are co-opted for imperialist projects.”⁷⁸⁹ I argue in this section that we can apply the concept of genderwashing not only to foreign policy, but also to corporate ‘social responsibility’ and its relationship with authoritarian governments, and, to the extent that overseas aid is used strategically to back the business interests of the donating country (and indeed the UK Department for International Development (DfID), under the centre-right Conservative government, has stated that *the key aim* of its aid is to *make a market* for British business abroad)⁷⁹⁰ to foreign aid and international development policies.

As a disclaimer, I should note that not all foreign aid marked for ‘women’s empowerment’ and ‘gender equality’ indicates genderwashing. For example, elsewhere in Africa, especially in southern and eastern Africa, promoting gender equality has formed part of state and funder strategies to tackle the HIV/AIDS epidemic, with significant successes in some countries.⁷⁹¹ In Equatorial Guinea though, despite rising infection rates and the existence of unequal power relations between men and women that increase women’s vulnerability to

⁷⁸⁸ Mohamed, “Women and the Arab Spring...”

⁷⁸⁹ Corinne L. Mason, “Global Violence Against Women as a National Security “Emergency,”” *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 2 (2013): 63.

⁷⁹⁰ Justine Greening, “Investing in Growth: How DfID Works in New and Emerging Markets,” gov.uk, 11 March 2013.

⁷⁹¹ Andrew Gibbs, Tyler Crone, Elizabeth Willan, Samantha, and Mannell, Jenevieve, “The Inclusion of Women, Girls and Gender Equality in Strategic Plans for HIV and AIDS in Southern and Eastern Africa,” *Global Public Health* 10 (2012); Jenevieve Mannell, “Advancing Gender Equality to Improve HIV Prevention: A Study of Practice,” *African Journal of AIDS Research* 15, no. 4 (2016).

HIV, such as high levels of violence against women and transactional sex, and gendered difficulties in negotiating condom use, there has been little donor focus on the HIV/AIDS epidemic,⁷⁹² and a wholly inadequate response from government.⁷⁹³ Therefore, despite the existence of some cases where state discourse on promoting gender equality has been strategic and positive public health response, in Equatorial Guinea's case, I maintain my argument that regime discourse on gender equality has more nocive political purposes.

Some brief background to overseas aid in Equatorial Guinea, historical and current, is also helpful to contextualise the arguments that follow. Equatorial Guinea's reliance on foreign aid peaked in 1989, when it constituted 54% of the country's GDP. This has progressively decreased to 0.5% in 2007.⁷⁹⁴ Put another way, Equatorial Guinea currently receives a 0.1% share of overseas aid donated from OECD members to African states.⁷⁹⁵ The country received just 540,000 in aid in 2014.⁷⁹⁶ Spain has been the main donor to Equatorial Guinea since independence, its funds constituting approximately 31% of aid received. France comes second, followed by the European Commission.⁷⁹⁷

The only systematic, evaluative study of the contribution of overseas aid to Equatorial Guinea has found that, up until the discovery of oil, external aid "fed" corruption, a lack of transparency and the persistent inefficiency of state institutions.⁷⁹⁸ Post the oil boom, the study's conclusions on the effects of foreign aid are equal damning. The latter has

⁷⁹² Overseas aid targeted at tackling HIV/AIDS in Equatorial Guinea has been minimal, bar donations from the Global Fund against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria between 2006 and 2011 and the UN Development Programme between 2011 and 2015. José María Larrú, "Foreign Aid in Equatorial Guinea: Macroeconomic Feature and Future Challenges," Madrid, 2010, 26; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Guinea Ecuatorial: Retomando confianza en la vida con el acceso gratuito al tratamiento de lucha contra el VIH/SIDA," http://www.gq.undp.org/content/equatorial_guinea/es/home/ourwork/hiv_aids/successstories/guinea-ecuatorial--retomando-confianza-en-la-vida-con-el-acceso-.html, 2013.

⁷⁹³ This is partly illustrated by the insufficient actions and denial of responsibility on the part of government mentioned in the sections above, and also to the lack of budget allocation (also see above). In 2004, it was estimated that 3.2% of Equatoguineans aged 15-49 were HIV positive. Now, the estimate stands at 6.2%, an increase that has been described as "alarming" by UNDP "Guinea Ecuatorial: Retomando confianza en la vida con el acceso gratuito al tratamiento de lucha contra el VIH/SIDA".

⁷⁹⁴ Larrú, 2010, 16.

⁷⁹⁵ The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "Development at a Glance: Statistics by Region," Paris, 2015, 8.

⁷⁹⁶ World Bank, "Net Official Development Assistance and Official Aid Received," <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD>, 2016.

⁷⁹⁷ Larrú, 2010, 16.

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

“intensify[ed] the unjust political system and the lack of liberties.”⁷⁹⁹ More specific findings are as follows: there has been questionable direct impact from aid, especially since deadlines and quantifiable outputs and outcomes have not been specified;⁸⁰⁰ foreign aid passes into the hands of the ruling family; aid is channelled into the ruling PDGE party; aid donated to ministries and other ‘official’ entities is appropriated by individuals and/or the PDGE and does not help the wider population at all; places on training courses are reserved for “nguemistas”; educational grants and technical assistance benefit “nguemistas” and the “Mongomo clan”; and corruption is also alleged with regards to money donated to some ‘NGOs’ and churches.⁸⁰¹

Turning to corporates, foreign investments in the mammoth Equatoguinean oil sector constitute “an enormous financial contribution” to Obiang’s military spending,⁸⁰² as well as to his family’s personal wealth. Put bluntly, Obiang’s trade partners are key backers of his regime. As Mario Esteban highlights, for state partners of Equatorial Guinea (principally the US, Spain and France, but lately also and increasingly so, the UK), doing business with, and making diplomatic concessions to, a regime as corrupt and brutal as Obiang’s can “badly effect the popularity of the authorities.”⁸⁰³ Take as an example the furore in the Spanish press and amongst Spanish civil society when news broke that the Cervantes Institute was hosting a reception for Obiang in Brussels in 2014,⁸⁰⁴ and, a year earlier, upon the participation of the Spanish national football team in a friendly with Equatorial Guinea in Malabo.⁸⁰⁵ Indeed, in Spain at least and in the US to some extent, civil society is mobilised against Obiang and thus government courting of Malabo is politically contentious. Through loss of moral authority in the eyes of their politically engaged citizens, Spain and the US risk

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid., 31.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid., 31.

⁸⁰² Ibid., 9.

⁸⁰³ Mario Esteban, “The Chinese *Amigo*: Implications for the Development of Equatorial Guinea,” *The China Quarterly* 199 (2009), 679.

⁸⁰⁴ See for example Ignacio Fariza, “El Instituto Cervantes y la UNED Invitan en Bruselas al Dictador Obiang,” *El País*, 19 March 2014; *La Vanguardia*, “Críticas al Gobierno por la Invitación del Instituto Cervantes y la UNED al Dictador Obiang,” <http://www.lavanguardia.com/contacto/index.html> 20 March 2014, (accessed 1 June 2014), *El Mundo*, “Teodoro Obiang agradece al rey su influencia para participar en un acto en el Cervantes en Bruselas,” <http://www.elmundo.es/espana/2014/04/01/533a997522601dcf748b4572.html> 1 April 2014 (accessed 1 June 2014).

⁸⁰⁵ Human rights organisations and Spanish autonomous governments criticized the team. See for example Raphael Minder, “Spanish Soccer Team Under Fire for Game in Equatorial Guinea,” *New York Times*, 14 November 2013.

diminishing their own soft power.⁸⁰⁶ A loss of moral authority in turn puts their investments in Equatorial Guinea at risk. As one Employee of Stratfor, a company that provides intelligence to several US government agencies, put it in 2011 following a “negative PR spree” on Obiang in US media, “at what point will bad PR affect UK/US oil companies investments[...]?”⁸⁰⁷ If the US, UK and Spain wish to maintain access to Equatorial Guinea’s resources via its gatekeeper Obiang, they must improve the latter’s image in their own media channels. If they succeed, they will suffer less pressure from their own citizens and less damage to their self-cultivated image as ‘responsible international actors.’ I am therefore suggesting that Western states, in support of their corporations (indeed the two act in partnership), *encourage* Obiang to improve his image abroad, including through fashioning himself as a champion of gender equality. This helps the West’s investments to look ‘cleaner’ to the general public. I am therefore suggesting that Western corporates *encourage* Obiang to improve his image abroad. Indeed, as we will see below, some actively invest in his image, which, as we have seen, is one of ‘champion of women’s empowerment.’ When at all possible, I argue below, corporates draw on additional help from state actors. This helps the West’s investments to look ‘cleaner’ to the general public.

Constancia Mangue is personally responsible for stealing millions from her people in oil revenue. For example, in the 2004 American Riggs Bank scandal,⁸⁰⁸ through which around \$700 million from oil companies, mostly ExxonMobil, was paid, in the full knowledge of the bank, into the personal accounts of Obiang and close family members in exchange for access to Equatorial Guinea’s oil, five of the accounts and three of the deposit certificates were in her name.⁸⁰⁹ Nevertheless, her reputed efforts to support the most vulnerable women have earned her an honorary doctorate from the European School of Management (Spain), the Center for the Studies of Popular Democracy (Chile) and the Euro-American Forum of Educational Development.⁸¹⁰ She also received the 2013 Women’s Progress Award from US

⁸⁰⁶ For more on soft power see Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011).

⁸⁰⁷ Email from adelaide.schwartz@stratfor.com to africa@stratfor.com, (Wikileaks, the GI Files), https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/28/2867601_re-africa-equatorial-guinea-uk-energy-ct-uk-accuses-eg.html, 7 December 2011 (accessed 28 April 2016).

⁸⁰⁸ For more on the Riggs Bank scandal see Leif Wenar, “Clean Trade in Natural Resources,” *Ethics and International Affairs* 25, no. 1 (2011); Cecily Rose, “The Application of Human Rights Law to Private Sector Complicity in Governmental Corruption,” *Leiden Journal of International Law* 24 (2011).

⁸⁰⁹ Human Rights Watch, “Well Oiled...,” 23.

⁸¹⁰ Ines Ortega, “The First Lady Receives the Title of Doctor Honoris Causa,” Government of Equatorial Guinea’s Press and Information office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=4529> 27 November 2013 (accessed 1 June 2014).

charity *Voices for African Mothers*.⁸¹¹ This illustrates that regime discourse that constructs Mangué as the engine behind women's empowerment in Equatorial Guinea is indeed used in a bid to increase her legitimacy (and collaterally that of her husband and the wider regime) in Europe and the Americas, at least in some academic and third sector circles.⁸¹² Meanwhile, Obiang continues to garner support in high places in the US.

Obiang was received as "a good friend" by Condoleezza Rice and has posed for photographs with the Obamas.⁸¹³ The US offers friendship to Obiang in order to access Equatorial Guinea's hydrocarbons, which, according to 2015 estimates, count for roughly 90 per cent of the country's economy.⁸¹⁴ Following the events of 11 September 2001, the US was keen to redirect its oil supply from the Middle East to the Gulf of Guinea. Soon, the U.S. became "the largest single foreign investor in Equatorial Guinea."⁸¹⁵ Oil companies, including American Marathon Oil, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Hess and Texaco, have poured billions of dollars into the country. As the US embassy put it in 2009, "we (via U.S. oil companies) pay all the bills - and the EG leadership knows it."⁸¹⁶ Meanwhile, the U.S. state has allowed the quasi-governmental U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) to fund a \$450 million methanol plant (reportedly OPIC's largest Agreement in sub-Saharan Africa)⁸¹⁷ and given permission to Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI), a private corporation, to develop a coastguard to protect Equatorial Guinea's oil fields.⁸¹⁸ A leaked US embassy cable explains the reasoning behind support for the MPRI project:

⁸¹¹ Maria Jesus Nsang Nguema and Reina Ngomo Avomo, "Return of Constancia Mangué de Obiang," Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=3919>, 20 June 2013 (accessed 1 June 2014).

⁸¹² Whether or not she has *succeeded* in increasing her legitimacy is a different question not addressed here, although I suspect not.

⁸¹³ Lawrence Jackson, "President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama Pose for a Photo during a Reception at the Metropolitan Museum in New York with Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and his Wife, First Lady Constancia Mangué de Obiang," (The White House, 2009), William Sands, "Equatorial Guinea: Legitimizing Obiang," Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/equatorial-guinea-president-teodoro-obiang-legitimization-corruption-oil-unesco-eiti-dodd-frank>, 24 April 2012 (accessed 1 June 2014).

⁸¹⁴ IMF, "Republic of Equatorial Guinea..." 7.

⁸¹⁵ Global Investment Center, "Equatorial Guinea. Company Laws and Regulations Handbook. Volume 1: Strategic Information and Regulations," (Washington: Global Investment Center, 2012), 30.

⁸¹⁶ Wikileaks (US diplomatic cables), US Embassy to Equatorial Guinea, "Equatorial Guinea Raw, Paper 6: Refining our Approach," (Malabo, 21 May 2009).

⁸¹⁷ Global Investment Center, *Equatorial Guinea...* 49.

⁸¹⁸ Esteban, "The Chinese *Amigo...*" 673.

Taking away U.S. energy imports from North America (i.e., those from our immediate neighbors Canada and Mexico), we find that over 30% of our imported oil and gas comes from the Gulf of Guinea region -- more, for example, than from the Middle East. The largest portion of the Gulf of Guinea maritime territory belongs to little EG. To ignore the security implications associated with the country at the heart of this key region would leave a gaping hole in the map of our national strategy.⁸¹⁹

The US oil companies themselves have also invested in Obiang, and more importantly, in his image. Mobil made a \$65,000 donation to an organisation set up in Virginia, US, by Obiang to improve his image abroad, whilst Marathon contributes \$13,000 per month to the Equatoguinean embassy in Washington.⁸²⁰ Other companies have sponsored events praising Obiang and the virtues of his government, and funded its lobbying campaigns abroad.⁸²¹ As Mario Esteban points out, Spain has followed a similar pattern to the US, with Spanish oil giant Repsol-YPF encouraging the government to make concessions to Obiang.⁸²² Indeed, June 2014 saw the first visit by a Spanish president to Malabo in 23 years.⁸²³ Thus, we see that (unsurprisingly) US oil companies and the US embassy in Malabo share common interests. We see that they want to keep Obiang in power in order to maintain access to oil. We see that the companies invest in Obiang's image abroad, in order to spin their support for an authoritarian dictator before a domestic audience that could otherwise be critical, whilst the US state has invested in the security infrastructure surrounding Equatorial Guinea's/the Obiang family's oil fields.

The oil companies and the US embassy receive help in their efforts from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). According to the Equatoguinean government, USAID provided support and technical assistance for setting up the country's Social Development Fund.⁸²⁴ This provides substantial funding for MINASPROM, and thus activities in theory dedicated to gender equality but in reality, as we have seen, dedicated to

⁸¹⁹ Wikileaks, US Embassy to Equatorial Guinea, "Equatorial Guinea Raw..."

⁸²⁰ Esteban, "The Chinese *Amigo*..." 673.

⁸²¹ David Wallechinsky, "Dictator of the Month: Teodoro Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea," <http://www.allgov.com/news/us-and-the-world/dictator-of-the-month-teodoro-obiang-nguema-of-equatorial-guinea?news=843015> 25 July 2011 (accessed 2 March 2016).

⁸²² Esteban, "The Chinese *Amigo*..." 673.

⁸²³ Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, "The President of the Spanish Government Will Attend the AU Summit in Equatorial Guinea," <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=5290> 16 June 2014 (accessed 28 April 2016).

⁸²⁴ Government of Equatorial Guinea, "Consideration of reports..." 2011, 9.

painting a picture of dedication to gender equality.⁸²⁵ As the US embassy in Malabo tellingly put it in an internal communication in 2009, US technical assistance would be “effective in giving EG the future we want it to have.”⁸²⁶ That was an Obiang-led future that would avoid, it said, “revolution that brings sudden, uncertain change and unpredictability [and] potentially dire consequences for our interests, most notably our energy security.”⁸²⁷

USAID has also prioritised other projects associated with women’s empowerment, including technical support for the Self-employment for Rural Women Project (PRAMUR).⁸²⁸ This same project has also received technical assistance and funding from the Canadian Cooperation Agency.⁸²⁹ Equatorial Guinea’s two NGOs that focus on promoting gender equality both receive funding from the US and German embassies,⁸³⁰ whilst other projects carried out in partnership with Spain, Morocco and others allegedly focus on promoting women’s empowerment.⁸³¹ In Spring 2013, Washington-based reputation-management firm Qorvis began a PR push on behalf of its client, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea,⁸³² on the so-called outcomes of such programmes and other policies. As such, the story of the Obiang regime’s “aggressive” progress towards achieving gender equality was echoed around relevant US online news circles.⁸³³

The USAID focus on social programmes and especially on projects that promote women’s empowerment reflect a wider trend amongst the Western powers to brand themselves as global leaders in the fight for gender equality.⁸³⁴ As Bruno De Cordier argues, international aid has become part of a wider security and control agenda in which neo-liberal

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.* Up until 2012 at least, almost one third of the Social Development Fund has been ring-fenced for MINASPROM Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), “Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of CEDAW: Equatorial Guinea,” New York, 2011, 9.

⁸²⁶ Wikileaks, US Embassy to Equatorial Guinea, “Equatorial Guinea Raw...”

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁸ Government of Equatorial Guinea, “Consideration of Reports...” 11.

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸³⁰ Fieldnotes, 13 June - 1 July 2015.

⁸³¹ Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 2011, 12.

⁸³² Obiang and Mangué’s son Teodorín, embroiled in several international money laundering scandals, is also a client of Qorvis. Ken Silverstein, “Obiang’s American Enablers,” <http://100r.org/2011/12/obiangs-american-enablers/> 14 December 2011, (accessed 28 April 2016).

⁸³³ For Qorvis’ original press release, see Qorvis Communications LLC, “Equatorial Guinea Reports Progress on Gender Equality, Elimination of Violence Against Women,” <http://equatorialguineainfo.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/equatorial-guinea-reports-progress-on.html> 14 March 2013 (accessed 1 April 2014).

⁸³⁴ For a discussion of how gender equality is used in Canada’s nation branding strategy, see Rankin, “Gender and Nation Branding.” For an exploration of the use of constructions of gender by US authorities upon their invasion of Afghanistan see Shepherd, “Veiled References...”

development models (almost always with a gender equality or ‘women’ chapter) are implanted in ‘beneficiary’ countries.⁸³⁵ Indeed, promoting women’s rights and gender equality is a key priority in the Spanish government’s international cooperation programming.⁸³⁶ The UK, in its own nation branding strategy, has sought to incorporate and export ‘gender equality’ as a core British value primarily through Department for International Development (DfID) projects that prioritise the empowerment of women and girls. DfID “put[s] girls and women at the heart of everything [it] do[es]” and strives to “improve the lives of girls and women in every area of [its] international development work.”⁸³⁷ As mentioned above, the Coalition and Conservative governments have remodelled DfID’s aid strategies to focus primarily on promoting British business interests in the ‘developing’ world. Depressingly, in this vein, DfID’s flagship girls’ education programming (which is realised in 18 African and Asian countries) in particular has recently come under fire for promoting British business interests instead of tackling poverty.⁸³⁸ Obiang’s discursive prioritisation of gender equality could, in theory, therefore lubricate oil transactions between Britain and Equatorial Guinea. This is not because Britain *believes* Obiang’s hollow claims to be a champion of gender equality. Rather, ‘investing’ in an African state’s (false) efforts for gender equality could improve Britain’s (self-)image, at home and abroad. It could be a way to favourably spin investment in an authoritarian regime. This would be genderwashing.

Indeed, Britain and Equatorial Guinea have recently begun to dance together. British Gas now has a 17 year-long Purchasing Agreement through which it will receive 3.4 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Equatorial Guinea’s LNG facility on Bioko Island.⁸³⁹ The British company is simultaneously working with the Equatoguinean regime to support the latter’s candidacy for membership of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) which, if successful, would be another tool for the spin doctors of both the regime and

⁸³⁵ Bruno De Cordier, “On the Thin Line between Good Intentions and Creating Tensions: A View on Gender Programmes in Muslim Contexts and the (Potential) Position of Islamic Aid Organisations,” *European Journal of Development Research* 22, no. 2 (2010): 236.

⁸³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Spanish Government, “Aid Sectors: Gender,” <http://www.aecid.es/EN/aid-sectors/gender>, No date, (1 April 2014).

⁸³⁷ UK Government Department for International Development, “Policy: Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in the World’s Poorest Countries,” <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-the-lives-of-girls-and-women-in-the-worlds-poorest-countries>, 4 March 2014, (accessed 1 April 2014).

⁸³⁸ See Global Justice Now, “Profiting from Poverty, Again: DfID’s Support for Privatising Education and Health,” London: April 2015.

⁸³⁹ Global Investment Center, “Equatorial Guinea...,” 28.

British Gas.⁸⁴⁰ One of Britain's leading maritime suppliers, Hutton's Group, has also, in 2014, set up shop in Equatorial Guinea, offering "tax-free provisions, consumables, logistics and stores handling" to its local customers.⁸⁴¹ Meanwhile, Equatorial Guinea's embassy in the UK has begun hosting events on themes such as "Female Rights and Equality."⁸⁴²

Hand in hand with British companies, the British state is also shuffling closer to the Obiang regime. In February 2014, Obiang received the UK Ambassador, purportedly for the first time, at the People's Palace in Malabo. Equatorial Guinea's Ambassador to the UK commented, "[t]his strengthening of ties is a significant step in the development of bilateral relations between Equatorial Guinea and the United Kingdom. I look forward to seeing this relationship continue to grow for the benefit of citizens in both countries."⁸⁴³ This meeting has been followed by both UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) and Chatham House events on business opportunities and development in Equatorial Guinea.⁸⁴⁴ My argument is that the above-mentioned Equatoguinean embassy to the UK's parallel focus on 'gender equality' may not be a coincidence. It matches Britain's bid to brand 'gender equality' as a 'core British value'. Arguably, we are seeing the first dates of a future genderwashing relationship between Britain and the Obiang regime.

To summarise this section, internally, nationalist discourses on gender and 'gender equality' are potentially aimed to curb women's ability to resist the dictatorship. As for the external

⁸⁴⁰ Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom, "Equatorial Guinea Meets with BG Group in London to Discuss Plans to Apply to the EITI," <http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/equatorial-guinea-meets-with-bg-group-to-discuss-plans-to-apply-to-the-eiti/>, 3 March 2014 (accessed 1 April 2014). In January 2016, BG was acquired by Royal Dutch Shell, which continues the relationship with the Equatoguinean regime.

⁸⁴¹ Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom, "UK-Based Maritime Supplier Opens Facility in Equatorial Guinea," <http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/uk-based-maritime-supplier-opens-facility-in-equatorial-guinea/>, 4 December 2014 (accessed 2 March 2016).

⁸⁴² Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom, "The Embassy of Equatorial Guinea to Host the Africa Day in London," <http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/the-embassy-of-equatorial-guinea-to-host-the-africa-day-in-london/>, 29 January 2016 (accessed 2 March 2016).

⁸⁴³ Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom, "Equatorial Guinea meets with BG Group..."

⁸⁴⁴ Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom, "Chatham House Hosts Symposium on Development in Equatorial Guinea," <http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/chatham-house-hosts-symposium-on-development-in-equatorial-guinea/>, 27 February 2015 (accessed 2 March 2016); Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom, "Webinar on Investment Opportunities in Equatorial Guinea Takes Place in the United Kingdom," <http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/webinar-on-investment-opportunities-in-equatorial-guinea-takes-place-in-the-united-kingdom/>, 30 July 2015 (accessed 2 March 2016).

function of these discourses, we have seen that key corporate backers of the Obiang regime (mainly US and, to a lesser extent, Spanish companies) are concerned about the PR implications of backing a violent dictatorship. With regards to the US, oil companies and the US embassy have invested in Obiang's image (an image that heavily incorporates an idea of the ruler as 'gender equality champion') arguably in order to avoid criticism from the US public. Yet they have been supported by their international development arm, USAID, which has channelled funding to the ministry responsible for gender equality, a ministry which, as argued above, has had, at best, a questionable level of impact on the lives of ordinary Equatoguinean women and girls. This pattern is replicated on smaller scales by other countries and their corporates. The role of overseas aid to Equatorial Guinea in general terms has received a damning judgement: the only systematic, independent evaluation available finds that aid has been used principally for the personal and political advantage of the ruling regime, whilst having no positive impact upon the lives of the poorest Equatoguineans. My key argument is that mirages of gender and gender equality contribute to maintaining the rule of the Obiang regime. Crucially, I argue that both Obiang and his Western partners *know* that their 'gender equality' measures are hollow, merely for show. This is not one-sided. This is *collaborative* genderwashing.

The effects of the Obiang regime on women's lives in terms of oppression, violence and poverty are further explored in Chapter Six. But what are the socioeconomic effects of this oil economy on women's lives? We turn our attention to this question in the next section.

5.5 Oil and (in)opportunity?

Michael Ross argues that oil maintains patriarchy. In an oil economy the wealth generated in oil sales raises the real exchange rate, making it cheaper for locals to import traded goods from abroad than to buy them from domestic producers. This causes a decline in the traded goods sector (agriculture and manufacturing), which, argues Ross, tend to be gendered feminine in most developing countries. Thus, an oil economy reduces the incorporation of women into the labour market, which in turn means less women in political positions.⁸⁴⁵ With respect to Equatorial Guinea, the economic reliance, since the oil boom begun in 1995, on petroleum has certainly provoked a decline in agriculture, a woman-dominated profession. In that sense Ross' argument is applicable. I argue here, however, that the oil

⁸⁴⁵ Michael Ross, "Oil, Islam, and Women," *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 1 (2008).

economy sustains *multiple* oppressions in Equatorial Guinea, and not only because the oil economy undercuts the local traded goods sector.

Oil, the mainstay of the Equatoguinean economy, burrows under the skin of gender, race, class and age inequalities and feeds on them. With regards to race, Hannah Appel's excellent ethnographic research into the offshore oil industry and its (onshore) executives reveals the worries of the poorly-paid, overworked Equatoguinean men on the rigs and juxtaposes this with the luxury lifestyles of the white executives living in enclaves on the mainland.⁸⁴⁶ Sexual transactions, however, are a key indicator of the *multiple* inequalities fostered by the oil economy.

Equatoguinean interviewees complained of the sexual relationships between young Equatoguinean women and white, wealthy, middle-aged oil company executives amongst others.⁸⁴⁷ In Malabo, Bata, Mongomo and Oyala especially, there are incidences of sex trafficking of children and women from neighbouring countries as well as from China, a phenomenon that the US Trafficking in Persons Report explicitly links to the oil economy.⁸⁴⁸ Also, some Equatoguinean parents encourage their daughters to engage in prostitution, "especially with foreigners" in exchange for groceries, housing and money.⁸⁴⁹ As one Spanish retired television executive boasted in the Spanish Cultural Centre cafe in Malabo before trying to grope me, "I can have five young wives here. I can do things that I wouldn't get away with in Spain."⁸⁵⁰

These sexual encounters are enacted along a spectrum between women's agency at one end, down to rape and sexual exploitation at the other. One interviewee saw this spectrum as a "system" that submits girls and young women to "socio-sexual slavery."⁸⁵¹ Another thought most girls and women showed agency in these relationships, yet simultaneously

⁸⁴⁶ Appel, "Walls and White Elephants...;" Hannah Appel, "Offshore Work: Oil, Modularity, and the How of Capitalism in Equatorial Guinea," *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 4 (2012).

⁸⁴⁷ Marcelino Obono Alogo (pseudonym), personal interview, Granada, 18 July 2014; Ntutumu (pseudonym), 16 June 2015; Constanca Balboa (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 22 June 2015. See also Alicia Campos Serrano, "Extraction Offshore, Politics Inshore, and the Role of the State in Equatorial Guinea," *The Journal of the International African Institute* 83, no. 2 (2013): 319.

⁸⁴⁸ US Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report: Equatorial Guinea," Washington, D.C., 2015.

⁸⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁰ Allan. 13 June - 1 July 2015.

⁸⁵¹ Soriso Sipi (pseudonym), 15 January 2015.

identified the men involved as abusers. His comments are worth quoting *in extenso* as they helpfully point to the wider socio-economic and political context:

it's really normal for, for example, a 50 or 60 year old North American to go out with a 14 or 15 year old girl. First, at the cultural level, Equatoguinean girls see it as a form of gaining status, you know? That they are going out with "a white man," so to speak. But if you reflect, if you think about it, this would be a crime in other societies. It's a crime. But in Guinea as much her family as the girl herself see it as progress. And the bad thing is, the problem is... why are we going to lie? They do it knowing it's a crime, these men, that it's morally inconceivable. This is an everyday thing in Equatorial Guinea. It's an everyday thing. And apart from the whites (I can't blame just the foreigners) the typical thing in Guinea is that a member of parliament, a minister, men that are high up in the government or whatever, men with money, they leave their wives at home and go out with 15 or 16 year old girls. It's complex. What saddens me most is that Guineans ourselves do this, but it's not the fault of the girls in any way. They are innocent, they see it as a good thing, or they do it because of need. And sometimes their families... but the economic factor enters into play here. The father sees it as in his interest that his daughter brings resources to the home, so that the family can eat.⁸⁵²

The encounters described here are neo-colonial in the sense that the wealthy, white executives are benefitting sexually and economically from gender and racial inequalities in an ex-colonial setting, but also in the sense that their actions build directly on the deeply-routed patterns of sexual exploitation practised by the Spanish colonials that I outlined in Chapter Three.

But oil is not simply something that 'happens' to women. Women have found ways to take advantage of the oil boom.⁸⁵³ Most foreign companies bring their workers with them, but some have employed a handful of locals, and government employs a few (PDGE member) women in management positions in the industry (figures are scarce, but overall, covering all

⁸⁵² Obono Alogo (pseudonym), 18 July 2014.

⁸⁵³ For similar examples discussing women's rights and oil, the cases of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo are discussed in Global Rights Alert, "Towards Balancing Gender: Women's Participation in Uganda's Oil Sector; Case of Rural Women in Four Sub Counties of Hoima and Buliisa Districts," Kampala, 2013.

ministries, only 14% of employees are female).⁸⁵⁴ Interviewees linked the “economic independence” that such women enjoy to small and gradual social changes. This nascent middle class of women need not put up with machismo, explained feminist interviewees: if such a woman cannot find a man who is prepared to be monogamous,⁸⁵⁵ carry out domestic chores and treat her as an equal, she can choose not to marry. For feminists, this is revolutionary, since, as one explained to me:

If you are not married you are worthless [...] in our society, no matter what you achieve professionally, if you are a woman who does not get married and have children, you have no status [...] it’s like in other countries where they call unmarried women “spinsters,” but it is much more intense here.⁸⁵⁶

This handful of women in management level jobs are able to use their relative wealth as a form of resistance to sexist social norms. In time, feminists hope, this will force changes in attitudes and unmarried women will no longer face stigma. However, we must underline that such women with management roles are rare. As Alicia Campos highlights, women are generally excluded from technical, operational and management jobs in the oil sector, as well as in the associated construction and transport fields.⁸⁵⁷

Further down the social scale, some women that have worked abroad for years have returned to Equatorial Guinea. With their savings, they open grocery shops and cafes, drawing on oil and construction workers as their clientele. Other women work as cleaners for foreign companies, or sell their smallholder produce near the ports. That is not to say that such women are able to make enough to live on, as Dolores’ case shows, but, ever enterprising (indeed, “enterprising,” *empresadora*, was the one key word that Equatoguineans chose again and again when talking of women in their country), they prepare themselves for the greyest days through savings arrangements.

⁸⁵⁴ Lucía Zamora Nsang (pseudonym), personal communication, 16 January 2015. Campos Serrano, “Extraction Offshore...” 319. The figure comes from Larrú, 2010, 7.

⁸⁵⁵ The issue of ethnicity is salient here. Polygyny is common amongst Fangs but not amongst Bubis and Annobonese. Zamora Nsang (pseudonym), 16 January 2015.

⁸⁵⁶ Engonga (pseudonym), 25 June 2015.

⁸⁵⁷ Campos Serrano, “Extraction Offshore...” 319.

Reminiscent of the concept of tontine in Francophone African countries, Equatoguinean women use the *Ndjangui*, *Esuan* or *Alason*.⁸⁵⁸ As Yolanda Aixelà Cabré explains, through these systems, women embark on informal arrangements with women friends or relatives, in which each woman pays a regular sum into the tontine, and can take out a portion when she faces exceptional financial difficulties (for funeral costs or hospital treatment, for example). This system of feminine solidarity and support relies on mutual trust, and bypasses the ‘official economy,’ as well as interventions from the likes of foreign embassy assistance programmes, the World Bank and development agencies. In some cases, the tontine extends beyond the group of investors, and can be a source of microcredits for the wider community.⁸⁵⁹

Migrant women too, mostly from West and Central Africa, have tried to take advantage of the oil wealth, getting jobs in cafes, restaurants and shops, or trading in the markets. They face systematic xenophobia from authorities, however, in the form of regular extortion and racist insults, to the arbitrary closure of their shops, to expatriation, beatings and rape.⁸⁶⁰ One such woman is Claudette Kendo, who moved to Malabo alone from Cameroon. The police come to her bar regularly to extort money from her – if she doesn’t pay they will deport her. “I come to work, I go back to my house, and that is all. I try to avoid going out as much as possible, to avoid problems.”⁸⁶¹

On balance then, a small handful of women today earn a fair salary thanks to the oil industry, and their resulting economic independence gives them tools to challenge some manifestations of sexism. Poorer women, always enterprising, have also responded to the oil economy by carving out opportunities for themselves. But “poorer women” constitutes the vast majority of women. This is trickle-down economics with next to nothing trickling down. Equatorial Guinea’s GDP per capita is the highest in Africa and one of the highest in

⁸⁵⁸ Buscant Iavors, “Tontines: la soberanía financiera de las mujeres africanas,” <http://www.ifeelmaps.com/blog/2015/06/tontines--la-soberania-financiera-de-las-mujeres-africanas>, June 2015 (accessed 25 May 2016).

⁸⁵⁹ Yolanda Aixelà Cabré, “Africanas en el mundo contemporáneo: las mujeres de Guinea Ecuatorial,” (Unpublished, 2009), 10; Buscant Iavors, “Tontines...”

⁸⁶⁰ Human Rights Watch reported that in 2004 around 1000 African migrants were deported, several after having been raped. Amnesty International has reported that security forces often raid the homes of West Africans, beating and fining them and stealing their property. Human Rights Watch, “Well Oiled...,” 81; Amnesty International, “Continued Institutional and Key Human Rights Concerns in Equatorial Guinea: Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, May 2014,” October 2013, 7. See also Campos Serrano, “Extraction Offshore...” 320.

⁸⁶¹ Carmen Campanet (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 28 June 2015.

the world, yet it also holds, by quite some distance, the depressing distinction of having the largest gap in the world between its per capita wealth and its Human Development score.⁸⁶²

Poorer Equatoguineans have paid a price for the urban development (wide avenues, plush homes and a casino) that characterise some areas of Malabo thanks to oil money, not least the stretch between the airport and the city centre: since 2003, over a thousand families have been affected by housing demolitions, carried out without consultation, adequate notice, and in most cases, compensation or rehousing.⁸⁶³ The sexual politics are the best indicators of who is benefitting most from the oil economy. The wealthy, white oil executives and their regime partners benefit sexually, as well as economically, from the oil wealth, and they foster gender, race, age, class and neo-colonial hierarchies in doing so.

To conclude, we have seen that the US actively seeks to keep Obiang – the US’s gatekeeper to Equatoguinean oil – in power and sees its ‘technical assistance’ and ‘development’ programmes as tools to help ensure this. USAID has arguably focused its efforts on so-called ‘gender equality.’ Yet Obiang has not attempted to hegemonise new gender roles. By failing to challenge the binary gender roles that make women subordinate, and by promoting fear and oppression, Obiang is perhaps trying to dampen women’s resistance efforts. Through their support of Obiang, Western states and corporates are undermining gender equality, and indeed respect for human rights and democracy more widely, despite their PR claims to the exact opposite. Meanwhile, (some of) the oil executives on the ground foster gender, raced and neo-colonial axes of power through exploitative sexual encounters with children (mostly girls) and women. The outcome of this collaborative genderwashing project with Obiang is, on the one hand, the lubrication of oil transactions between the two partners, and on the other hand, the continued subjugation of women like Dolores Molubela, who works hard all day cleaning up after oil elites and yet barely has the wages to feed her grandchildren.

But is there resistance to Obiang and/or to these repressive gender norms? What does this resistance look like and is it, itself, gendered? In order to address these questions, we now

⁸⁶² Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2015: Events of 2014* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2015), 212-13.

⁸⁶³ For more information see Amnesty International, “Los Desalojos Forzosos Violan los Derechos Humanos,” 20 June 2007; Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: Fear of Forced Evictions/Fear of Excessive Force,” 14 November 2006.

turn our attention to women's resistance to the Obiang regime, and indeed to the Macías regime before that.

Chapter Six. "A poor woman selling snails and arguing with a policeman who is trying to tax her is fighting too:" Gender, resistance and *ngueismo*

The chapter begins where Chapter Three left us: with the Spanish Women's Section. I ask questions about the gender norms promoted by the Guinean Women's Section, which grew from the seed that Spain planted. I say "ask questions" as the fullest answers are still, for the most part, buried in the memories of older Equatoguinean citizens who fear for the dangerous political implications of Macías era history. Indeed I discuss the politics of memory in order to explain why I, and other researchers, have left so many voids in our writings. Also in the section on Macías, I look briefly at how the dictator was able to establish and hold on to power. This gives context to later discussions of gender and resistance. From Macías, we move to his Nguema family relative, Obiang, who stole power in 1979. First, I briefly analyse how Obiang has managed to retain his dictatorship for four decades, and in doing so I reveal the centrality of gender in the oppressive mechanisms of Equatorial Guinea. The legacy of the Spanish and Macías eras also becomes clearer.

Secondly, I look at the tools employed by Equatoguinean women to resist the regime. As Bahati Kuumba points out, "[b]ecause of the gendered divisions in many societies and movements, some of the resistance strategies engaged in by women as an outgrowth of their productive and reproductive labor are the very ones that are submerged."⁸⁶⁴ Using, once again, Scott's theories of everyday resistance and hidden transcripts help me to track the footprints of some of these women's strategies. While traditional gender norms serve to exclude women from some forms of resistance, they simultaneously facilitate other strategies that make use of caring and nurturing skills. Furthermore, we see once again that Equatoguinean women's resistance can be interpreted as intersectional. Finally, with regards to gender and resistance, we look to the future. Making use of brief comparisons with the Saharawi case and the work of one Equatoguinean woman activist, I argue that if open, organised resistance movements wish to see more women joining their ranks, a commitment to feminist demands may be a useful strategy.

⁸⁶⁴ Bahati Kuumba, *Gender and Social Movements*, 107.

6.1 “The government was so powerful that even the sun hid behind the clouds:”⁸⁶⁵ Macías takes the presidency

Marina Alene, like other Equatoguinean women, had strategically maintained a public transcript of compliance until it became clear that independence was near. Only then did she wash off her colonial make up. Until the second half of 1968, Alene had been the model Women’s Section student and colleague, but, to the dismay of the Spanish directors of the Section, in November Alene publically announced her intention to seek support for a separate, Equatoguinean-run Women’s Section. Whilst Spanish Women’s Section leader Carmen Obón concluded that Alene had “a split personality,”⁸⁶⁶ Soledad de Santiago, who had met Alene in Spain and concluded that she was “one of the best students,” was equally winded by what she saw as a sudden change in character.⁸⁶⁷

The Spanish women’s distaste at Alene’s initiative seems surprising initially, since, as we have seen, the Women’s Section arrived in Equatorial Guinea with the aim of creating a system that would eventually be handed to Equatoguinean women themselves. Nevertheless, the colonialists had expected to handpick pro-Spanish Guinean women. Obón was “frankly disgusted” that she and her colleagues had become “replaceable so quickly” by Alene’s unexpected project.⁸⁶⁸

Despite having been trained and sponsored by the Falangists, Alene was not one for maintaining Spanish interests post independence. In February 1969, she reportedly held an “anti-whites” meeting in her house, preaching to her guests of the need to “step on the whites and crush their heads and not stop until we manage it.”⁸⁶⁹ Alene was to become a member of the Central Committee of Macías Unique National Party of Workers (*Comite Central del Partido Unico Nacional de Trabajadores, PUNT*), representing it internationally on the women’s rights stage.⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁵ María Nsúé Angüe, *Relatos* (Malabo: Centro Cultural Hispano-Guineano, 1999), 21-22.

⁸⁶⁶ Carmen Obón, Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Bata, 4 February 1969, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.

⁸⁶⁷ Soledad De Santiago, Letter to Carmen Obón, Madrid, 21 November 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.

⁸⁶⁸ Carmen Obón, Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Bata, 4 December 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.

⁸⁶⁹ Carmen Obón, Letter to Soledad de Santiago (3), Bata, 22 February 1969, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.

⁸⁷⁰ For example, she contributed to the UN’s 1974 International Forum on the Role of Women in Population and Development in Virginia, USA. United Nations, “International Forum on the Role of Women in Population and Development,” Virginia, 1974, document number ST/ESA/SER.B/4. With regards to the PUNT, in February 1972 all other political parties were suspended by Macías and all Equatoguinean citizens over the age of 7 were forced to become members.

The Women's Section that Franco's Falangists had carefully assembled over four years was pulled down and rebuilt by a new engineer. Under Alene's initial leadership, the Equatoguinean Women's Section became the PUNT's Women's Section. As Nerín notes, it carried a new name: "Organisation of Revolutionary Women," and still received some materials from central (Madrid-based) Women's Section until the latter was dissolved in 1977.⁸⁷¹ Its role was to co-opt women as pro-Macías propaganda tools and to foster women's entrance into politics as spies.

Whilst the rest of the Spanish gradually fled, Women's Section staff were able to stay put until March 1969. This was because as Alene's alternative not yet fully up-and-running, Macías had sent his wife to attend one of Spanish Women's Section schools. This afforded the Falangist women some level of protection for a time, but the six-month period between independence and their final exit was one characterised by progressive darkness. Unfortunately for Spain, the metropolis had underestimated the seemingly meek and loyal Macías.

In early March, Carmen Obón and her colleagues fled to the barracks of the Spanish Civil Guard when scores of the newly-constituted paramilitary group Youth Marching with Macías (*Juventudes en Marcha con Macías*, JMCM) stormed the school brandishing machetes and sticks. Thinking of his wife's training, the dictator personally visited the Spanish *falangistas* at the barracks to attempt to persuade them to stay. In a report sent back to her colleague in Madrid, Obón describes how Macías calmly responded to her questions about what had happened to Foreign Affairs Minister Atanasio Ndongo and Representative of Equatorial Guinea to the UN Saturnino Ibongo who both had died in unclear circumstances after having been accused of leading a failed coup d'état on 5 March. According to Macías, Ndongo had thrown himself out of the window of the dictator's office, whilst Ibongo was forced to drink the "poison" that the "UN" had sent back with him destined for Macías.⁸⁷² In the same report, Obón complained that the majority of the Section's pupils had "gone to hide in the forest."⁸⁷³ Most were daughters or wives of Government ministers and civil servants, a male demographic increasingly at risk of capture or slaughter. With few women and girls left to

⁸⁷¹ Nerín, *La Sección Femenina...*, 22.

⁸⁷² Carmen Obón, "Situación de la Sección Femenina desde Octubre de 1968," Bata, March 1969, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251. The 1969 coup by MONALIGE leaders concerned by Macías' increasingly despotic behaviour was planned in Madrid with the knowledge of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Pardo Sanz, "La Herencia de la Descolonización del Africa Española," 177.

⁸⁷³ Obón, "Situación de la Sección..."

teach, and fearing for their own safety, the Spanish staff of the Women's Section left Equatorial Guinea by the start of April 1969.

The Spanish Women's Section staff had witnessed the beginnings of Macías' gradual elimination of all potential political opponents. He began with those communities expected of having voted for the other electoral candidates, but soon proceeded to incarcerate or assassinate other figures of influence who could possibly rival him as President. Macías' success in tracking down even the quietest of critics was thanks to his system of fostering spying and informing.⁸⁷⁴

This is where the PUNT's Women's Section came into its own. Macías, arguably, was the first leader to advocate the political mobilisation of Equatoguinean women. However, his motivation had less to do with a desire for women's emancipation than for co-opting as many women as possible to act as arms of oppression. The grandmother of María Angeles Adugu Mba was a member of the Falangist Women's Section and later the Guinean one established under Macías. She passed on her memories to her granddaughter, who recounts the story here:

... Macías started to raise awareness about women's equality. Why? Because he said that all that about women being weak and unable to serve in the army or take up arms was untrue. Women can be as brave as men, and can join the army like men. [...] It was a way to make sure that women weren't under men's thumbs, but it was also Macías' way to turn everyone into an informer. Women watched their husbands, and when they had the sensation that their husbands were doing something against Macías, they'd go and they'd tell on them. And a woman's testimony was valued just as much as a man's would have been...⁸⁷⁵

This quotation of Adugu Mba suggests that Macías used the language of feminism in a way that may have empowered a few individual women but oppressed most and, more generally, mobilised women as tools of oppression. Memories of Epifania Avomo Bicó's

⁸⁷⁴ Macias quoted in Nze Nfumu, *Macias...* 62.

⁸⁷⁵ María Angeles Adugu Mba (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 30 June 2015. Agustín Nze Nfumu, historian and survivor of Macías' Black Beach prison, recalls the death from torture of at least one fellow inmate who had been informed on by his wife. He also recalls how Women's Section members (had to) sing songs praising Macías over national radio, for as long as the latter worked. Nze Nfumu, *Macias...* 70 and 110.

(today an opposition party leader and women's rights activist) mother and of Victorino Pancho Ripeu, an Equatoguinean historian living in exile in Spain, concord with Adugu Mba's view: Women's Section was used as a platform to encourage women to spy. Yet Avomo Bicó and Pancho Ripeu also emphasise that, in other aspects, there was little rupture with the Spanish Women's Section: women were taught to be solely responsible for domestic work and to accept "being sold in marriage."⁸⁷⁶

The gender roles promoted by the PUNT's Section deserve far more research, as does the possibility that women influenced by Macías' Women Section put their relative 'empowerment' to different uses, ones of which Macías may not have approved. Unfortunately, for reasons discussed below regarding the very dangerous politics of history in Equatorial Guinea, I am not able to address such research questions. The interviewees I have cited here are known opponents of government. Facing, as they do, the oppression of the regime, addressing the Macías era taboo is not something they fear. Yet they are still unusual in confronting this forbidden history at all.

There are few sources that document life during the Macías era. Whilst the Macías regime burnt many colonial archives that remained in the country, the current government has dumped archives from the Macías era in the street.⁸⁷⁷ 70 year-old Cristina confirmed this. I approached Cristina as she worked at a school named after a late Equatoguinean woman who features heavily in the Women's Section archives. I was looking for the latter's descendants, former neighbours, or any documentation that could tell me more about her. "You're best going to her village. As for documentation, you won't find much. The history of a whole people can be found in the rubbish piles around town, or in the hands of market women wrapping food," Cristina lamented.⁸⁷⁸

89-year-old Enrique worked as a civil servant under Macías. I visited him at his home in Malabo, still on the track of the ghost of the woman that featured in the Women's Section

⁸⁷⁶ Epifania Avomo Bicó, telephone interview, 28 August 2015; Victorino Pancho Ripeu (pseudonym), personal communication, 28 September 2015.

⁸⁷⁷ Enrique Martino, "Maoist China and Macias' Equatorial Guinea - write up of some of the notes of from fragmentary conversation with a secret and sort of expensive informant. Malabo, July 2013," <http://www.opensourceguinea.org/2013/09/maoist-china-and-macias-equatorial.html>, 15 September 2013 (accessed 1 July 2014). For a thorough, if outdated, map of the surviving archives, see Constantino Ocha'a Mve, *Fuentes archivísticas y bibliotecarias de Guinea Ecuatorial: guía general del administrativo, del investigador y del estudiante* (Madrid: Anzos, 1985).

⁸⁷⁸ Cristina Boleká (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 24 June 2015.

archives. “I lived the whole terror through my own flesh and blood,” Enrique told me, but was reluctant to recall much else. He nodded towards a sepioid pile of papers resting on the garden table with his reading glasses beside them: “They’re all documents I kept from my old job in that time. I’m just going through them. I’m glad I kept them because they’re part of our history.”⁸⁷⁹ He picked up a small booklet from the top of the papers, a 1971 decree from Macías, with articles outlining the political crimes for which death would be the punishment. I asked Enrique if I might take photographs of the texts, in order to digitalise this small part of a lost archive, but he was not keen: “I’m not sure if it’s forbidden for me to possess such documents.”⁸⁸⁰ It is common knowledge in Guinea that much of the inner circle of the current regime was also implicated in the Macías terror. In such circumstances memory becomes dangerous. For many older people talking of their life stories, 1968 to 1979 becomes “the dark period” and their voiced memories thus become choked and scarce. It is not easy to collect oral histories of the Macías era.

Approximately 100,000 Equatoguineans, or one third of the country’s population, were murdered or fled to exile during Macías’ rule. The JMCM, whose attack on a school had been the last straw for the Spanish Women’s Section staff, was the frontline of Macías apparatus of terror. Public executions, tortures and rapes at the hands of the JMCM were common.⁸⁸¹ Avomo Bico recalls her school days in the town of Niefang, when government delegates, the so-called “*grandes señoras*,” would abduct large groups of girls to abuse, imprisoning or killing anyone who attempted to confront them.⁸⁸² As Maria Nsue Angüe, whose father was executed by Macías puts it, “[t]hey were grey days and terror reigned so completely that children were born with their hair on end.”⁸⁸³

As if aware of the falling legitimacy of his own regime following the never-ending cycle of violent oppression, as the years went on Macías became more and more fearful of his own population. After five years in power he began to wall himself away. The first step was securing the presidential palace in Malabo. In 1974, a huge security barrier was erected where residential houses used to stand. Later though, the wall was not enough for the increasingly paranoid Macías. He moved to continental Bata, and then, in 1976, to his home village of Mongomo (he still occasionally made visits abroad, but was less keen to travel

⁸⁷⁹ Enrique Momo (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 24 June 2015.

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸¹ Nyangi (pseudonym), 21 June 2015.

⁸⁸² Avomo Bico, 28 August 2015.

⁸⁸³ Nsue Angüe, *Relatos*.

within his country), leaving the daily running of the country in the hands of his nephew Obiang.⁸⁸⁴

As well as all-encompassing terror, the Macías era was characterised by the general economic collapse of the country. In 1972, Nigerian labourers launched street riots against bad working conditions. Some 20,000 Nigerians left in the subsequent wave of government aggressions against their kin. A few years later, as conditions in the country worsened, the Nigerian military assisted its remaining citizens in Equatorial Guinea to escape (along with several thousand Equatoguineans posing as Nigerians).⁸⁸⁵ The cocoa economy, which had relied on Nigerian labour since colonial times, was by now dwindling.⁸⁸⁶ Other sectors were failing too - dozens of thousands of Equatoguineans had fled abroad and there were few workers. Macías answer was (in 1976) to make agricultural work compulsory for some 20,000 Equatoguineans.⁸⁸⁷ The Anti Slavery Society in London accused Macías of reinstating the forced labour practised formerly under Spanish rule.⁸⁸⁸

Conditions became progressively worse. Macías had the director of the central bank publicly executed in 1976,⁸⁸⁹ then moved the money to his own house.⁸⁹⁰ Television and radio disappeared as there were no technicians left to work and no investment in maintaining lines. In 1978 the electricity failed, submerging Malabo into darkness.⁸⁹¹

Upon Obiang's 1979 coup, foreign journalists were to find a "dispirited people and a seriously dislocated society, most of whose institutions were badly damaged and barely functioning; the country had ceased to possess an "economy" or government "administration" in the ordinary meaning of these words."⁸⁹² How was Macías able to act as he did and retain power? Equatorial Guinea, as we have seen in Chapter Three, had been left, upon Spain's exit, without a clear sense of national identity and unity. Furthermore, we

⁸⁸⁴ Robert H. Jackson and Rosberg, Carl G., *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 248.

⁸⁸⁵ This was in 1976. Ballano Gonzalo, *Aquel Negroito...* 601; Martino, "Colonial Economies of Forced and Contract Labour..."

⁸⁸⁶ Production at independence was 40,000 tons annually. Commercial sources put the 1975 figure at 2340 tons. UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "Equatorial Guinea: Current Conditions," London, 1979, 3, TFA FO 973/28.

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁸⁸ Jackson, *Personal Rule...* 251.

⁸⁸⁹ Foot, "A Policy of Plunder..." 48.

⁸⁹⁰ Nze Nfumu, *Macias...* 14.

⁸⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁸⁹² Jackson, *Personal Rule...* 251.

saw how Spain had fostered divisions by ethnicity. Macías was, as Anne Foot has argued, able to further foster such divisions by enacting a system of patrimonialism along ethnic and clan lines.⁸⁹³ Whilst some (especially but not exclusively Fangs from Macías' Mongomo clan) were rewarded for their loyalty, the long reaching hands of Macías' oppressive machine kept the majority of the population in check. And the little that we know about the PUNT Women's Section suggests that newly imagined gender norms fostered by Macías, ones that 'empowered' loyal women to play a political role, allowed oppression to be practised within families. Macías' machine of fear reached into the narrowest capillaries of society.

Foreign allies also supported the regime. Spain did not get the favoured trading and political position that it had hoped for. The Soviet Union, which had negotiated rights over fisheries, equipped the army and police, whilst North Korea provided instruction at the mass gymnasiums where Women's Section members, amongst others, trained. China and Cuba also provided technical assistance.⁸⁹⁴

In explaining how Macías was able to cling to power, we should also go back to Spain once more. Foot argues that Spain left Equatorial Guinea with poor institutions and without having established meaningful arrangements for self-rule. Indeed, as First has pointed out, European colonialism in Africa in general terms was based on authoritarian command. "[G]overnment was run not only without, but despite, the people," and was therefore incompatible with any preparation for self-government.⁸⁹⁵ Spain's envisaged decolonisation of Equatorial Guinea amounted to what Franz Fanon called false decolonisation. Spain planned to gradually transfer power from the colonial bureaucracy to Equatoguinean elite auxiliaries, the latter of which were handpicked for their perceived loyalty to the metropolis. In this way, Spain would keep its mucky fingers on the wallet of the Equatoguinean coffee, cocoa and logging economy.

In Chapter Three we saw that provincialisation and the autonomous governments were just ploys by Spain to avoid decolonisation. False decolonisation combined with a lack of national identity (a lack fostered by Spain, which promoted ethnic divisions), and Macías' brand of

⁸⁹³ Foot, "A Policy of Plunder..." For an excellent analysis of how patrimonial systems work and of the conditions necessary for their overthrow, see Francesca Comunello, and Anzera, Giuseppe, "Will the Revolution be Tweeted? A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Social Media and the Arab Spring," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 23, no. 4 (2012).

⁸⁹⁴ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "Equatorial Guinea..."

⁸⁹⁵ First, *The Barrel of a Gun...* 40.

patrimonialism and (gendered) oppressive mechanisms served to keep the dictator in power. In the following section, we move to the next chapter of Equatorial Guinea's history. Charting how *ngueismo* continued after Macías' death, we focus on the gendered dynamics of the Obiang regime and how gender comes into play when resisting it.

6.2 "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown:" gender and the violence of the Obiang regime⁸⁹⁶

When I meet Dolores Molubela, who I introduced in Chapter Five, we are alone. When she later tells me her opinion of the regime and its oil money in an interview, we are also alone, but she does not fearfully whisper her views. What would happen if she were to voice her views publicly, I ask her. "In other countries, you can speak about things like that," she says loudly, her chin jutting, "but here [...] they tie up your wrists and they throw you in prison."⁸⁹⁷ She taps her foot on the floor in irritation as she speaks. This is not a woman who is content with the socioeconomic status quo, and if resigned to it, she is barely so.

Barrie Wharton blames the reticence of Obiang on the "unfortunate legacy" of the Second Republic's treatment of Equatoguineans.⁸⁹⁸ Says Wharton,

It is this nostalgia and distaste in many ways for the democracy of the Second Republic which brought Obiang to power in 1979 and has maintained him there since, despite repeated opposition attempts to overthrow him, many with foreign help. Many of these attempts have foundered due to the lack of mass opposition or real interest in establishing democracy.⁸⁹⁹

Whilst Wharton provides an illuminating picture of how regime changes in Spain affected the lives of Equatoguineans under colonial rule, I dispute his explanation for the Obiang regime's longevity, and for Obiang's ascension to presidency. Obiang became President through his own violence. Knowing he could not rely on his people to support him, he

⁸⁹⁶ William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part 2*, Act 3, Scene 1, Line 31.

⁸⁹⁷ Dolores Molubela (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 21 June 2015.

⁸⁹⁸ Barrie Wharton, "Masters and Servants; The Spanish Civil War in Equatorial Guinea," *The International Journal of the Canadian Institute for Mediterranean Studies* 26, no. 1 (2005): 50.

⁸⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

turned to Morocco for assistance. Hassan II sent hundreds of mercenaries ahead of the coup. In return, Obiang renounced Equatorial Guinea's support for POLISARIO.⁹⁰⁰

It is also questionable that there have been many attempts to overthrow Obiang. According to Amnesty International, Obiang has invented the majority of the so-called attempted coups, in order to justify the oppression of the very real pro-democracy opposition.⁹⁰¹ Indeed, I hope here to dispel the popular myth, supported by Wharton here, that there is no interest amongst Equatoguineans of ridding their country of *ngueismo* and establishing a fairer form of rule. Obiang's patronage networks may be extensive. But there are potentially also thousands of Dolores Molubelas.

This section focuses on Equatoguinean resistance since Obiang came to power.⁹⁰⁰ We have already seen, in Chapter Five, how foreign allies and genderwashing have helped to keep Obiang in place. Here, I begin with an analysis of Obiang's other self-preservation tools. These are, I argue below, patrimonialism, the construction of open, political resistance as a type of family betrayal, the masculine gendering of organised politics, the failure to construct a unifying Equatoguinean identity in the pre-independence era and the fear of (gendered) sanctions. Secondly, I look at resistance to the regime and how tactics are affected by gender.

Just as it was for Macías and the Spanish administration before him, patrimonialism is one tool that helps to ensure Obiang's rule. Some loyalty must be shown to Obiang for any wealth at all. It is hard to find employment if one is not a member of the PDGE, and thus the majority of the population is signed up to the ruling party. The extensive clientelist networks are funded first and foremost by oil money. Therefore, as Okenve has argued, the moment

⁹⁰⁰ Morocco and Equatorial Guinea continue to enjoy a strong relationship. For more on the history of how Morocco has propped up Obiang, see Max Liniger-Goumaz, *Guinea Ecuatorial: Memorandum. Medio Siglo de Terror y Saqueo* (Madrid: Sial Ediciones, 2013).

⁹⁰¹ AI states that the alleged numerous foreign-backed plots for coup d'états surrounding the 1993 elections were never proved to have existed, but were a convenient excuse to expel Spanish nationals living in Equatorial Guinea that were known to be friends of opposition activists. Amnesty International, "Equatorial Guinea: A Missed Opportunity to Restore Respect for Human Rights," 1 February 1994, 6. Similarly, the NGO argues that accusations of a plot to overthrow government led by a group of returnees from Gabon were based on no evidence whatsoever. The "grossly unfair" trial of the 15 alleged coup organisers resulted in torture and long sentences, including a 12-year sentence for one woman, María Teresa Akumu. The alleged leader, Antonio Ndong Nve, was murdered by security forces. Amnesty International, "Equatorial Guinea: A Dismal Record of Broken Promises," July 1995, 12. Later, in 2002 three members of the Democratic Republican Force (*Fuerza Democrática Republicana* [FDR]) were arrested on what AI alleges was a false allegation of attempting to organise a coup. See Amnesty International, "Equatorial Guinea: No Free Flow of Information," 5 June 2000, 2. See also Amnesty International, October 2013.

resources run out or Obiang loses control over them, loyalty is likely to rapidly evaporate.⁹⁰² The importance of resistance demands concerning natural resources (and most especially oil), cannot therefore, as is the case in Western Sahara, be overstated.⁹⁰³

The *possibility* of reward is as important as reward itself. Just as Gene Sharp argues that it is not the sanctions themselves that prevent resistance but the *fear* of them,⁹⁰⁴ Okenve argues that even families who are not part of Obiang's clientelist network are still publically loyal to him in the hope that, one day, a family member might be rewarded with a job. This has resulted in, as Okenve eloquently puts it, "electoral campaigns [becoming] a grotesque spectacle in which the electorate makes promises to the leader of the PDGE, rather than the other way around."⁹⁰⁵

Family obligations weigh on Equatoguineans. We have seen that, during the Macías regime, women were encouraged to spy on their family members. As if still tender from the blows of familial political betrayals, those who oppose the Obiang regime sometimes face anger from their relatives. As Okenve argues, the term oppositionist (*opositor*) carries negative connotations thanks to "an almost moral definition" of what is not politically acceptable.⁹⁰⁶ This is further illustrated by the common Fang expression *wa kobo abe, wa kobo politik* (you're bad-mouthing, you're talking politics). Whether or not one is a good or bad citizen depends on whether or not one supports the established political order, and if one is an oppositionist, she is likely to bring misfortune not only upon herself, but also upon her extended family.⁹⁰⁷ This is particularly true for women, who are especially encouraged to be apolitical as a result of their gender.

The construction of politics and political spaces as male-only, reinforced by Spanish colonialism, has still not been seriously challenged in Equatorial Guinea. The case of Clara Nsegue Eyi (also known as Lola), the first female president of a political opposition party, provides a strong example of this dynamic. She was imprisoned in 2013 for her pro-

⁹⁰² Enrique Okenve, "'Wa kobo abe, wa kobo politik:' Three Decades of Social Paralysis and Political Immobility in Equatorial Guinea" (paper presented at *Between Three Continents: Rethinking Equatorial Guinea on the Fortieth Anniversary of Its Independence from Spain*, Hofstra University, 2009), 5.

⁹⁰³ Whilst resistance to Obiang led from abroad (without wishing to deny that this is almost always realised with the collaboration of in-country contacts) is not within the scope of this thesis, I would direct readers to the work of the Washington-based NGO EG Justice on this issue.

⁹⁰⁴ Sharp, *...Nonviolent Action...* 25.

⁹⁰⁵ Okenve, "'Wa kobo abe, wa kobo politik...,'" 4.

⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

democracy political activities, and, although she was released a few months later thanks to international pressure, she was not allowed back to the family home, nor even to seek shelter in the homes of extended family, so strong was many of her relatives' anger at what they see as her betrayal.⁹⁰⁸ On the subject of Nseque Eyi's case, Tutu Alicante, an activist living in the USA and director of the NGO EG Justice, makes the following illuminating comments:

Undoubtedly, young women still face more backlash from their families. [...] First of all, your family will be the first one to remind you that, you know, "you're a woman, you should be having kids." Your mother, aunts, sisters would remind you of the still prevalent archaic traditional expectations. Thus, most women are very hesitant to get into any type of politics because their families are the first ones discouraging them.⁹⁰⁹

Avomo Bicó and Adugu Mba similarly emphasise, in my interviews with them, that organised politics is seen, in hegemonic discourse, as outside the norms of femininity, and attribute this to the persistent sexism inherited from past regimes.⁹¹⁰

Hegemonic history for Saharawi people is one of politically active women. Politics, and now protest and open resistance, is 'naturally' feminine, and it has 'always been' that way. Adugu Mba, Avomo Bicó and Alicante have here suggested that the opposite is true for Equatoguinean women. Hegemonic history (constructed with political aims in mind and never objective, as Hayden White has powerfully argued) of Equatorial Guinea tell us that women have always been excluded from the political sphere.⁹¹¹ This history was not re-imagined or re-interpreted by the pro-independence movements and it has yet to be re-imagined by today's political opposition movements. This directly favours Obiang.

Family ties are knotted tightly in Equatorial Guinea. They extend beyond blood to marriage and the long-term obligations of the bridewealth. Deciding to openly oppose the regime, then, carries the weight of implicating a significant number of relatives and in-laws. Obiang knows how to foster this fear. Arresting the family members of resistance activists is a common practice in Equatorial Guinea. On occasions, arrests go beyond relatives and

⁹⁰⁸ Tutu Alicante, Skype interview, 28 May 2015.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁰ Avomo Bicó, 28 August 2015; Adugu Mba (pseudonym), 30 June 2015.

⁹¹¹ Hayden White, *The Content of Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1989).

become almost farcical. For example, in March 2002, when Felipe Ondó Obiang, the leader of the Republican Democratic Force party (*Fuerza Demócrata Republicana*, FDR) was amongst the wave of over 150 Equatoguineans arrested on the perplexing accusation of “murdering the Head of State,” not only were several members of his extended family detained, but so too were people who had previously invited him to a wedding, drove him in a taxi and greeted him in the street. One unfortunate detainee had merely once retrieved his escaped ducks from a garden opposite a house that Ondó’s wife happened to be visiting at the time.⁹¹²

Male relatives of opposition activists are targeted just as much as female ones, but the arrests of women have gendered implications. In Equatorial Guinea, it is not unusual for authorities to rape or sexually assault the wives, mothers and other female relatives of male (presumed) political activists, sometimes in front of the latter.⁹¹³ This has parallels with the cases of Ali Salem Tamek, one of the current unofficial leaders of the Saharawi resistance movement, whose wife, Aicha Chafia, was gang raped in 2003 in the presence of the couple’s infant daughter⁹¹⁴ and Mohamed Salem Buamad, whose mother and sister were raped in front of him in the family home during the 2005 intifada.⁹¹⁵ Victoria Rodriguez Rescia highlights that the torture of women often has the (intended) effect of “weakening the morale of husbands or partners.”⁹¹⁶ The extent of this weakened morale is evident in the following quotation of ex-disappeared Brahim Dahane. I use an example from Western Sahara firstly, because meaningful comparisons with Equatorial Guinea can be drawn, and secondly because I have been unable to interview an Equatoguinean survivor of this family-punishment policy. Dahane recalls the effect of hearing women being mauled by dogs (a torture method used in the eighties and nineties in the Mobile Intervention Unit (*Poste de Commandement - Compagnie Mobile d’Intervention*, PC-CMI) secret detention cells of El Aaiún:

⁹¹² Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Parody of a Trial in Order to Crush the Opposition,” 30 June 2002, 6.

⁹¹³ See for example Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Country Subject to Terror and Harassment,” 1 January 1999, 6; Amnesty International, 30 June 2002, 5; Amnesty International, “Morocco/Western Sahara: Justice Must Begin with Torture Enquiries,” 22 June 2005, 5.

⁹¹⁴ Tamek’s testimony was published by Amnesty International, “Morocco/Western Sahara: The Grueling Experience of One Sahrawi HRD,” 18 April 2007. Indeed, AI has reported the rape and threat of rape of female relatives as a common form of torture for male Saharawi political prisoners. See for example Amnesty International, “Western Sahara/Morocco: Torture of Detainees Must End,” 24 June 2004. Amnesty International, “Morocco/Western Sahara: Briefing to the Committee against Torture,” 11 November 2003, 5.

⁹¹⁵ Buamad recounts this episode in Martín Beristain, *El Oasis... Tomo II*, 116.

⁹¹⁶ Victor Rodriguez Rescia, “Torture as a Form of Gendered Violence,” *Essex Human Rights Review* 6, no. 2 (2010): 139.

What hurt me was hearing women screaming because of the dogs. You can't imagine the pain, the scorn that you feel, the injustice and the desperation that you can feel and the hope or the desire that you will die there. I think if suicide weren't forbidden by religion, I would have done it there. If I had had weapons I would have used them to kill or to commit suicide.⁹¹⁷

The overall aim of such gendered oppression in both Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara is to dissuade men from political, anti-regime activism. Temma Kaplan has researched the cases of men forced to watch the rape of wives, sisters and daughters after capture by Pinochet regime officials. She finds that forcing male activists to remain passive in the face of the sexual torture of a (loved) woman diminishes the feelings of authority that help structure masculine identity in patriarchal cultures.⁹¹⁸ Indeed, although Kuumba rightly argues that traditional constructions of masculinity (such as man as protector) can benefit resistance movements, oppressive forces can harness these same constructions.⁹¹⁹ Although Dahane has never stopped his activism, my quotation of him above reveals how strongly the regime's gendered weapon hit. In Equatorial Guinea, where the added dimension of family betrayal is in play, we can only imagine the terror felt by (potential) male activists.

The limits of the anti-colonialist national movements in Equatorial Guinea still have echoes today. Although there was resistance to the Spanish at all levels of society, we have seen that organised politics remained dominated by a small and divided elite. This contrasts with the Saharawi example where the POLISARIO managed to make hegemonic a vision of nationalism that incorporated the demands of all levels of Saharawi society, and therefore mobilised even the most harshly oppressed members of their community. The society-wide culture of participation in organised politics that exists in Western Sahara was not able to develop in Equatorial Guinea, then, before Macías took a rag to smother a culture of civic engagement. In Obiang's Guinea, political pluralism is a myth and civil society still struggles. His brand of nationalism is personal, as we saw in Chapter Five, and his rule is painted as inevitable, as *destiny*, which helps to make resistance seem all the more futile.

The fear of sanctions is one of Obiang's most powerful tools. Talking to a shopkeeper from Chad whilst in Malabo, I mentioned that I had been to Western Sahara and had many

⁹¹⁷ Dahane quoted in Martín Beristain, *El oasis... Tomo I*, 285.

⁹¹⁸ Temma Kaplan, "Acts of Testimony: Reversing the Shame and Gendering the Memory," *Signs* 28, no. 1 (2002).

⁹¹⁹ Bahati Kuumba, *Gender and Social Movements*, 90-91.

Saharawi friends. “Saharawis?” he laughed, “Western Sahara? We don’t recognise that country... We don’t talk about that country here.”⁹²⁰ When Obiang came to power in 1979, 800 Moroccan security officers were seconded to his country under a bilateral agreement with the Kingdom of Morocco.⁹²¹ During the eighties (and to a lesser extent in the early nineties) these Moroccan nationals, which were “crucial” to Obiang’s ability to maintain his regime for at least its first decade,⁹²² were actively involved in human rights violations.⁹²³ Indeed, Moroccan security officers seem to have imported some of their sadistic torture methods from Western Sahara, such as suspending detainees in contorted positions from poles to beat them, the beating of the soles of prisoners’ feet (known as *falāqa* in Morocco and Western Sahara), and forcing prisoners to drink urine.⁹²⁴ In summer 1993, the majority of Moroccan officers were finally withdrawn (only around 30 remained) thanks to international pressure.⁹²⁵ Then France, Morocco’s ex-colonial power and key partner in ensuring the latter’s impunity in committing human rights violations against the Saharawis, stepped in to support the Obiang regime with a new team of thugs.

For France, Equatorial Guinea presents an opportunity to extend its sphere of influence in West Africa. Equatorial Guinea was the first non-Francophone country to enjoy a fixed exchange rate to the Franc, and France was the first European power to set up a cultural

⁹²⁰ Allan, 13 June - 1 July 2015.

⁹²¹ Pardo Sanz, “La herencia...,” 182. Morocco to this day offers education and training programmes for Equatoguineans in Morocco, whilst Morocco holds substantial business interests in Equatorial Guinea. For example, the Moroccan construction company SOMAGEC has won major contracts across Equatorial Guinea. See Somagec Morocco, “Homepage” http://www.somagec.ma/e_acceuil.asp, 2015 (accessed 26 May 2016); Somagec Equatorial Guinea, “Homepage,” <http://www.somagecge.com/>, 2015 (accessed 26 May 2016). The Obiang family own several luxury residential properties in Morocco.

⁹²² Marisé Castro, “Equatorial Guinea,” in *Africa South of the Sahara, 33rd Edition*, ed. Katherine Murison (London: Europa Publications, 2004), 377. See also Afrol News, “Moroccan Life Guard to Leave Equatorial Guinea,” http://www.afrol.com/News2001/egg001_moroccan_guard.htm, 10 January 2000 (accessed 26 May 2016).

⁹²³ Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Missed Opportunity...”

⁹²⁴ For example, Celestino Bacale and other detained teachers reported receiving 50 blows to the sole of each foot: see Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea. Torture and Legal Concern: Over 100 People including Celestino Bacale, Pedro Esono, Maximio Miko, Arsenio Moro, Angel Obama,” 22 December 1992. For further examples of *falāqa*, see Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Missed Opportunity...,”; Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: An Opportunity to put an End to Impunity,” 30 June 1997, 3; Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Country Subject to Terror...,”; Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: Arrests of Pro-Democracy Activists - A Changing Pattern of Human Rights Violations,” 1 November 1991, 6; Amnesty International, “Continued Institutional and Key Human Rights Concerns...,” 5.

⁹²⁵ Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Missed Opportunity...,” 12.

centre in Obiang's Guinea.⁹²⁶ French military personnel attached to the Embassy of France in Malabo trained up a paramilitary unit, created in 1992, known as the *Antorchas* (Torches). When the Moroccan Guard left, the *Antorchas* took over the role of bodyguards to the ruling powers and spearheads of oppression.⁹²⁷ Much like the Nazi Brownshirts, the group's nickname amongst the civilian population reflects its uniform: they are known as "Ninjas" due to their all black attire.

Nowadays, Israel rivals Morocco for the number one spot in terms of providing Obiang with arms and training to "secure" the country. Several Israeli military companies have won major contracts in Equatorial Guinea and Obiang's presidential guard has been trained by Israeli security companies.⁹²⁸ We have already seen, in Chapter Five, that the US has played a role securing the maritime zones around Equatoguinean oil fields. These countries, much as France, US and Saudi Arabia (amongst others) have in Western Sahara, help to oppress the pro-democracy opposition in Equatorial Guinea in order to maintain their own interests.

Walking around Malabo today, one can see several bars named after the *Antorchas*. In addition to this armed group are the police and military, all bodies used to protect the regime first and foremost. Government delegates at village level help to enforce social control in the most rural and inaccessible areas. There is also *Seguridad* (Security).⁹²⁹ The Equatoguinean *Seguridad* shares an important facet with the oppressive apparatus of the Moroccan regime. Like Morocco's network of informers and spies in civilian clothes, *Seguridad* members do not wear uniforms. Saharawis, Moroccans and Equatoguineans must always question who can be trusted thanks to such plain clothes spies. Meanwhile, the heart of the system is the close, militarised circle that surrounds Obiang.

Gender is used by the regime to increase the fear of sanctions. As well as the aforementioned forms of torture imported from Morocco, other methods include whipping, slicing ears with razor blades, confinements to tiny spaces (including, allegedly, cupboards of

⁹²⁶ Neil Hughes, "Democracy and Imperial Rivalry in Equatorial Guinea," *Review of African Political Economy* 23, no. 69 (1996): 445.

⁹²⁷ Amnesty International, "Equatorial Guinea: A Missed Opportunity...", 3. Ana Camacho, "Los 'ninjas' toman posiciones en Guinea Ecuatorial, El País, 15 August 1993.

⁹²⁸ See for example UPI, "Israeli Arms Companies Target Third World," http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2011/04/08/Israeli-arms-companies-target-Third-World/29731302286121/, 8 April 2011 (accessed 26 May 2016). See also Agustín Velloso, "Israel Starts Business in Equatorial Guinea: Disaster Closes in Obiang Nguema's Regime," https://www.nodo50.org/csca/agenda05/palestina/velloso_20-06-05.html, 27 June 2005 (accessed 26 May 2016).

⁹²⁹ Nvo, "'Wa kobo abe, wa kobo politik...'"

less than 70 by 50 cm in volume) for several weeks and the breaking of hands, legs and feet. Such violence is suffered by both women and men.

However, as mentioned above, sexual torture also exists and is applied differently according to the gender of the detainee. Reviewing relevant literature, I have found but one example of the sexual torture of an Equatoguinean man.⁹³⁰ The lack of examples may indicate that sexual torture is used on Equatoguinean men to a much lesser extent than amongst activists in Western Sahara, but not necessarily so. As we have seen, disclosures of sexual abuse, and especially rape, whilst in Moroccan police custody is a relatively new phenomenon amongst Saharawi activists. Similarly, Equatoguinean men perhaps face several barriers to disclosure, fruit of the constructions of masculinity hegemonic in Equatorial Guinea. Common barriers identified in other contexts include the belief that men should be ‘strong,’ ‘capable of defending themselves’ and ‘able to cope,’ which prevents them from sharing their experience for fear of ridicule or blame, and in countries (such as Equatorial Guinea) where homophobia is particularly rife, fear of being labelled a homosexual is also a factor.⁹³¹ Sexual torture of women has been reported widely in Equatorial Guinea.

Let us look, now, at the January 1998 oppression of a Bubi uprising. I have selected this case as it shows Obiang’s full toolbox of gendered punishment. Before the sun rose on 21 January 1998, groups of around 35 to 40 Bubis, some of whom carried machetes and guns, attacked several military barracks on Bioko island. Three soldiers and several civilians were killed. The regime, which blamed the Movement for the Self-determination of Bioko Island (MAIB), an outgrowth of the Bubi Union party founded during the Spanish colonial period, responded with systematic violence against the Bubi population. Over the remaining days of January, security forces hunted down Bubis in the villages that break up the forest, down the alleyways of the capital’s markets, and at the many checkpoints that pepper the island’s road network. In Rebola, a Bubi-dominated town on a hill a short drive from Malabo, the violence was particularly intense. The town is rumoured to house the secret headquarters of the MAIB. There, over 80 per cent of homes were reportedly destroyed.⁹³²

⁹³⁰ Lino Lisoha, arrested for “knowing the whereabouts of fugitives,” was the victim. Amnesty International, 1 January 1999, 6.

⁹³¹ For more on the barriers faced by male survivors of sexual violence, see Thema Bryant-Davis, *Surviving Sexual Violence: A Guide to Recovery and Empowerment* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 307; Nina Burrows, and Horvath, Tessa, “The Rape and Sexual Assault of Men - A Review of the Literature,” London, 2013.

⁹³² Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Country Subject to Terror...”

In the days that followed, Bubi women were prevented from drawing water from the wells, which they rely on for cooking, cleaning and caring for their families. Bubi women trading at Malabo's main market had their wares destroyed. Said one market-goer, "[t]he soldiers threw the food on the ground. They trampled on the ripe bananas and chopped up the green bananas with machetes."⁹³³ Market trade of the food grown on their smallholdings forms the subsistence of the poorest Equatoguinean women and their children. In Bubi villages, soldiers allegedly threw rubbish in the cooking pots of women. All these sanctions seem directly designed to prevent women from carrying out their gendered roles. They robbed women of their right and ability to provide for, and nurture, their communities according to gendered divisions of labour.⁹³⁴

Whilst pregnant and nursing Saharawi women seem to have been targeted by security forces systematically and *precisely because they were mothers* at certain moments of the Moroccan occupation, there does not seem to be a similar pattern in Equatorial Guinea. Nevertheless, if a wanted woman happens to be pregnant or has an infant, this is used by the regime to add further terror to its sanctions.⁹³⁵ For example, the wife (Francisca Bisoco Biñe) of another alleged instigator of the January 1998 attack was arrested at her home in the town of Sampaca and taken to Malabo police station. At the time, she was eight months pregnant. Despite this, she was whipped at the station and severely beaten. Her baby was stillborn a few weeks later.⁹³⁶

As well as Bisoco Biñe, eleven other women were amongst the 500 Bubis detained in the days following 21 January. Most were held as hostages and sexually abused to force their husbands to hand themselves in.⁹³⁷ Outside of the station walls, the sexual assault of Bubi women was more systematic. Women were raped in their homes by soldiers and Fang civilians close to the regime. Victorino Pancho Ripeu, a Bubi historian living in exile in Spain, claims many such women became pregnant.⁹³⁸ In the streets, and especially in the villages

⁹³³ Eyewitness quoted in *ibid.*, 5.

⁹³⁴ Temma Kaplan argues that the state's robbing of, or inability to ensure, this right is often cause for the development of what she describes as a "female consciousness:" a sense of community that emerges amongst women when their gendered role as providers of life is threatened. "Female Consciousness..."

⁹³⁵ There are reports of women being taken to forced labour camps whilst their infants are interned in military camps. Amnesty International, "Equatorial Guinea: A Country Subject to Terror...", 28.

⁹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁹³⁸ Pancho Ripeu, 28 September 2015.

far from the eyes of Western immigrants working in Malabo, security forces stood and watched as mobs of Fang PDGE supporters beat and raped Bubi women.⁹³⁹

The aim of this systematic sexual violence was to destroy women's dignity by reducing them to objects of penetration whilst simultaneously leaving Bubi men unable to prove their conformity with hegemonic notions of masculinity by protecting the victims. The intersection of gender and ethnicity is also significant. By encouraging targeted and mass rape (and alleged impregnation) of Bubi women by Fang men as a collective punishment for the uprising, the Obiang regime moved close to the widely researched and discussed use of "rape as a weapon of war."⁹⁴⁰ As Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Lausten point out when discussing this concept, the sexual abuse of the enemy's women in a conflict is considered to be the ultimate humiliation, and a symbol of total conquest.⁹⁴¹ The mass use of rape by regime forces and civilians loyal to the regime was dressed in ethnic terms, positioning Bubis as the enemy of the Fangs, and vice versa. A divided population not only strengthens Obiang's position in general terms, but the Fang versus Bubi dynamic also reinforces his patrimonial system in which Fangs are favoured above other ethnicities.

In summary, gender norms are wielded by the regime not only to preclude women's participation in open, organised political resistance, but also, through sexual torture, to increase the terror surrounding the threat of sanctions and to foster ethnic divisions. We can conclude that gender is central to how Obiang maintains power, just as it is for comprehending how Macías ruled and how the Moroccan occupation attempts to suppress Saharawi nationalism. In short, these cases support the thesis of Alicia Decker's assessment of Idi Amin's Uganda: scholars focusing on authoritarian regimes have seriously underestimated the extent to which dictators use gendered discourse to consolidate power.⁹⁴²

I should clarify that, here, I have used 'power' in a shallow way to refer to Obiang's hold over the economic and governmental levers of the country. The dictator's recourse to violent

⁹³⁹ Amnesty International, "Equatorial Guinea: A Country Subject to Terror...", 6.

⁹⁴⁰ We should use this concept carefully. It has been employed by the West to justify military interventions. For further discussion see "rape as a weapon of war" Kerry F. Crawford, Hoover Green, Amelia, and Parkinson, Sarah E., "Wartime Sexual Violence is Not Just a 'Weapon of War'" *The Washington Post*, 24 September 2014.

⁹⁴¹ Bülent Diken, and Bagge Lausten, Carsten, "Becoming Abject: Rape as a Weapon of War," *Body and Society* 11, no. 1 (2005): 118.

⁹⁴² Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow...*

oppression in order to control his population indicates that he has very little ‘power’ indeed if we were to use the word in the sense given to it by Foucault or Hannah Arendt, or to a lesser extent by Gramsci (hegemony) or Sharp. For Sharp, the more violent and cruel the oppression of resistance, the weaker and more fearful the regime is of those who resist.⁹⁴³ As is the case for the Moroccan King, Obiang, as the subtitle to this section suggests, is in a permanent state of uneasiness. If he enjoyed hegemony over his population (or ‘power’ in the Foucauldian sense) he would have no need to resort to violence. His (gendered) techniques of oppression reveal the inherent weakness of his regime, and therefore also make evident the potential success that the (nonviolent) resistance of the Equatoguinean people could have. I wrote earlier that there are potentially thousands of angry Dolores Molubelas in Equatorial Guinea. What I should add now is that Obiang knows and fears that.

In the next section, we move on to look at how gender shapes resistance to the Obiang regime. We have already seen that Obiang constructs organised politics as an ‘unfeminine’ activity, with very real effects for political party leaders such as Clara Nsegue Eyi. I ask now, then, how do women resist *ngueismo*?

6.3 Women’s resistance to the regime

On 15 December 2007 Brígida Asongsua Elo visited her husband Guillermo Nguema, a prisoner of conscience, at the Black Beach prison. The following day, she was arrested as she left morning mass at Malabo cathedral. She was subsequently held in Malabo central police station in a cell until 25 April 2008.⁹⁴⁴ On several occasions whilst in detention she was ordered to sweep the floor of the Secretary of State’s office. She repeatedly refused to do so, even when assaulted.⁹⁴⁵

As discussed above, being an ‘opponent’ often means implicating one’s family in a reputation of ‘bad citizenship.’ In spite of this, Brígida Asongua Elo is not alone. There are numerous examples of female relatives standing by and supporting male political prisoners

⁹⁴³ Sharp, ...*Nonviolent Action*... 471.

⁹⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch, “Well Oiled...,” 69; Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: Woman Held in Prison Cell with up to 100 Male Detainees,” 14 February 2008.

⁹⁴⁵ Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: Further Information on Detention without Charge or Trial/Harsh Detention Conditions, Brígida Asongsua Elo,” 30 April 2008.

by visiting them, advocating on their behalf, or taking them food, medicine or clothes. Others have tried to help their ‘wanted’ partners or relatives to hide or escape.⁹⁴⁶

Bearing in mind the harassment that relatives of (alleged) political activists commonly suffer, the aforementioned seemingly simple acts equate to knowingly entering the lion’s den. Prison visits and other shows of material or spiritual support should therefore be read as forms of resistance.⁹⁴⁷ In a regime where political opposition is treated as if it were a contagious disease, touching all those close to the oppositionist, women who pursue their gendered role as carers for their menfolk are challenging the regime. By continuing their support despite harassment, violence or worse, these women let themselves become politically ‘infected’ and thereby defy Obiang’s wish to turn families against the politically active ‘black sheep.’

As well as supporting male political prisoners, some women offer logistical support to opposition party activists. Such was the case of Pilar Mañana, an owner of a bar in Malabo, until a forbidden newspaper written by the CPDS was found on her premises leading to her arrest. Although Mañana was not herself a member of any opposition party, her bar was known to be a meeting place for opposition activists.⁹⁴⁸ Mañana’s offering of a safe space for activists is reminiscent of Anita Awaho’s actions and the secret back room of her bar in colonial Santa Isabel. We see, then, a continuation in women’s strategies of resistance. Excluded from organised, formal politics due to constructions of gender that have changed little since colonial times, women find their own ways of offering support to a struggle that they believe in.

Fostering a popular culture of resistance is arguably another women-dominated practice that has its roots long before Obiang or Macías came to power. In September 1997, six women members of the CPDS were detained, stripped and severely beaten in Akurenam, after having been caught preparing to welcome CPDS leaders with songs.⁹⁴⁹ We know that this was not the first time that Equatoguinean women, “who stand out for their ability to

⁹⁴⁶ See, for example, the case of Domiciana Bisobe Robe in Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Country Subject to Terror...,” 20.

⁹⁴⁷ Bahati Kuumba has pointed out that strategies of resistance employed by women in oppressive situations, including providing food and shelter, promoting liberation education, or the very maintenance of a particular “way of life” (in the face of colonial domination, for example), are erroneously not considered forms of resistance. Bahati Kuumba, *Gender and Social Movements*, 108-12.

⁹⁴⁸ Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea. Arrest of a Possible Prisoner of Conscience/Fear of Ill-Treatment, Pilar Mañana,” 14 June 1992.

⁹⁴⁹ Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Country Subject to Terror...,” 27.

enchant with dances, tell folk stories and lead games,” have employed popular culture as a form of resistance: we have seen the role that women’s dances and songs played in colonial times in Chapter Three.⁹⁵⁰ Neither was this 1997 event the last time such a form of resistance was used. Although not always the authors of songs, women are the key transmitters of an oral culture that is sometimes used to challenge the regime.⁹⁵¹ Take, for example, the following extract of the popular Bubi song *Baney Wept (Baney lloró)*:

Tears fall from the eyes of the people of Baney
For not having any authority within the Government
Over so many years gone by.⁹⁵²

Baney is a Bubi town on Bioko Island. It is not clear if the singers would mean to attack the Obiang regime as a whole, or rather just the dominance of Fangs within it, but either way, the lyrics denounce the political status quo. The same can be said of the following song, collected in 1999 by Ángel Antonio López Ortega when he encountered a Fang woman from Añisok in neighbouring Gabon:

[...]
I took the basket towards the village
Halfway there
I came across a soldier
He told me to give him the fish
I told him
I had no fish
The soldier hit me
with his truncheon and his belt
I fell to the floor
He told me to get up
I told him that I would not get up,
[...]⁹⁵³

⁹⁵⁰ Eteo Soriso, *Cancionero...* 11.

⁹⁵¹ *Ibid.*; Francisca Sale (pseudonym), personal interview, Barcelona, 25 February 2015; Ángel Antonio López Ortega, *La Poesía Oral de los Pueblos de Guinea Ecuatorial: Géneros y Funciones* (Barcelona: Ceiba Ediciones, 2008), 142.

⁹⁵² Full song lyrics in Eteo Soriso, *Cancionero...* 314.

⁹⁵³ López Ortega, *La Poesía Oral...* 105-6.

As López Ortega insightfully notes, the lyrics, whilst showcasing aspects of a Fang woman's traditional life and role, also defiantly tell the listener that the harassed woman will not submit to the soldier. The song decries the military intimidation and abuse suffered by the poorest women daily. Furthermore, it would traditionally include an all-women chorus call, itself a show of feminine solidarity.⁹⁵⁴ As Marcelle C. Dawson points out, the role of music in resistance is well researched and songs, through their repetition of ideas and ability to be recited by many, are more powerful in raising consciousness than the (more passive) listening-to of political speeches.⁹⁵⁵

As a final example of oral tradition as resistance, let us turn to the Annobonese song *For Annobón (Por Ambô)*. It was written in memory of three Annobonese men killed during an Annobón-wide "rebellion" that exploded following decades of acute poverty and oppression:⁹⁵⁶

All the little birds of Awala
Come and see, come and see...

[...]

The three islets of Mábana send you a message
Palá Liku Mébana send you a message
Jobômbô Mébana sends you a message
They tell you to protect the house

For Annobón he took lashes

For Annobón Simplicio died on the land
for Annobón Súmenè died in the sea
Malia died too.

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁹⁵⁵ Marcelle C. Dawson, "Protest, Performance and Politics: the Use of 'Nano-Media' in Social Movement Activism in South Africa," *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 17, no. 3 (2012): 332.

⁹⁵⁶ Amnesty International, "Equatorial Guinea: A Missed Opportunity..." For a fictional representation of the story of suffering of the Annobonese people, see Juan Tomás Avila Laurel, *By Night the Mountain Burns*, trans. Jethro Soutar (London: And Other Stories, 2014).

[...]

With its title and repetition of the phrase “for Annobón” throughout, the song suggests that the youths were martyrs dying for the imagined community rather than just victims of violent oppression. Amnesty International, in its report on the violent suppression of the rebellion, finds that Simplicio Llorente was actually a bystander. In this folksong, itself a sign of a hidden transcript, he becomes a martyr of resistance to the regime.⁹⁵⁷

An Annobonese housemaid working in Malabo gave me an insight into another women’s resistance tactic: the act of ‘speaking out.’ She told me that Equatorial Guinea “was not [her] country.” She complained of the harsh socioeconomic inequalities of Malabo and concluded that “Annobón was [her] country.”⁹⁵⁸ This political observation was in response to a very general question about the woman’s provenance. The fact that she replied with complaints about the socioeconomic situation and hinted that her national identity was not as Obiang would like is, in itself, an act of resistance, given that, as Okenve points out, even mild and indirect criticisms can be considered as attacks on the government or even Obiang.⁹⁵⁹ Indeed, Amnesty International has recorded cases of women detained and imprisoned after their complaints against the government, made in private conversations in their own homes, were overheard by informers listening from the street.⁹⁶⁰

Although I spent just a short time in Malabo, daily interactions with members of the less well-off strata of Equatoguinean society, including immigrants, revealed a host of grievances regarding security force bribes and fines, the lack of employment opportunities and subsequent desire to migrate, the ill distribution of wealth, the *machista* culture and so on.⁹⁶¹ Many women, responding to questions that were not designed to seek comment on the current political regime, spoke at length of the corruption, political violence and terror they and their families had suffered.⁹⁶² Such women challenge the current social order and the legitimacy of the regime with their words, and, when done in a context where speech is policed, their boldness becomes all the more apparent.

⁹⁵⁷ Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Missed Opportunity...”

⁹⁵⁸ Campanet (pseudonym), 28 June 2015. For more on Annobonese nationalism see Iñaki Gorozpe, “Reivindicación Política y Particularismo en Annobón,” (1995).

⁹⁵⁹ Okenve, ““Wa kobo abe, wa kobo politik...”” 6.

⁹⁶⁰ Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Country Subject to Terror...,” 28.

⁹⁶¹ Allan, 13 June-1 July 2015.

⁹⁶² I limited myself to posing such questions to members of parties that openly oppose the regime.

Other women went further, speaking out not to a lone British researcher but to the regime itself. Raising grievances, that is, making formal or informal complaints before an organisational system, is a well-recognised and relatively well researched form of resistance.⁹⁶³ Following the systematic rape of Bubi women in January 1998, some survivors attempted to denounce their experiences before government. They went directly to the Ministry of the Interior to complain, but found they were charged money to leave a statement.⁹⁶⁴ Whilst the reaction of the complaints office is obviously hugely unsatisfactory, by daring to go forth and denounce those that attacked them, these women showed public resistance to the regime and its misogyny. This is also true of the numerous women that dared to give testimonies to Amnesty International researchers. Revealing the gendered nature of political violence to external onlookers was (and is) in itself a political act. Just as it is for Saharawi women and men, the testimony of sexual torture becomes a form of resistance in the act of telling. Not only do the Equatoguinean tellers denounce the torturers, but they also deny the dehumanisation, humiliation and shame that the latter have attempted to inflict upon them.⁹⁶⁵ There is a crossover here with feminist resistance. Some women survivors of domestic violence have been known to go to the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and demand assistance.⁹⁶⁶

Other women fight with their harassers face to face: “A poor woman selling snails and arguing with a policeman who is trying to tax her is fighting too - joining a party isn’t the only way to fight.” This was the retort of an Equatoguinean feminist to a male opposition figure who aggressively decried his countrywomen for their ‘apathy’ in the face of the regime (she was attempting to air her views on how to overcome sexism in her society when the opposition figure intervened with a mansplaining).⁹⁶⁷ Her point, and her reference to the street seller, brings us to a telling rumour concerning the unofficial alternative to Malabo’s Semu market.

James Shapiro, author of *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*, begins his book with Shakespeare’s company *The Chamberlain’s Men* and friends crossing the ice of the

⁹⁶³ See for example Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik, “Take This Job and ... : Quitting and Other Forms of Resistance to Workplace Bullying,” *Communication Monographs* 73, no. 4 (2006): 417; Victoria Law, *Resistance behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women* (Oakland: PM Press, 2009), 111-26; James Tucker, “Everyday Forms of Employee Resistance,” *Sociological Forum* 8, no. 1 (1993).

⁹⁶⁴ Amnesty International, “Equatorial Guinea: A Country Subject to Terror...,” 28.

⁹⁶⁵ See also the work of Temma Kaplan on the gendered memory and testimony-giving of Chilean survivor of sexual torture Nieves Ayress. Kaplan, “Acts of Testimony...”

⁹⁶⁶ Ntutumu (pseudonym), 16 June 2015.

⁹⁶⁷ Allan, 13 June - 1 July 2015.

frozen river Thames with an entire dismantled theatre in tow. The playwright, actors and investors that formed the group fled a greedy landlord and planned to re-build their beloved playhouse on the cheaper southern banks of London's river. Of all Shapiro's critically acclaimed book, it is perhaps this fantastical anecdote that leaves tracks in readers' minds long after putting down the manuscript. This illustrates the power of rumours. The rent-weary subaltern women of Equatorial Guinea have their own remarkable story of nocturnal transport and construction. So the rumour goes, late one night, cloaked by the darkness of a moonless sky, dozens of women smallholders gathered as quietly as possible on the outskirts of Semu market, Malabo.⁹⁶⁸ Each had brought what she could: pieces of wood, poles, rope or corrugated tin. Unable and unwilling to pay the heavy subletting fees for shops in the new market built by the First Lady, and yet in need of an outlet to sell their agricultural produce, these poor women were prepared to build their own solution. By morning, the wooden and scrap metal unofficial extension to Semu market was ready for business, and the local Mayor did not dare force the mass of fierce women to pull it down.

Semu market, in its form today of concrete floors, high and sturdy roofs, and spacious lanes between the rows of benches for displaying goods, was built with funding officially (but, informers tell me, doubtfully) from the First Lady's personal purse in 2011.⁹⁶⁹ Around this new, high-spec Semu market sprawls a much larger network of stalls built upon the muddy, stony land with wooden polls, pieces of rusty corrugated tin, and beds of tarpaulin on which to display wares.⁹⁷⁰ I put the rumour as I had first heard it (as described above) to several interviewees. None could confirm on which date the related events happened, if they did, indeed, happen on one single night at all (the weight of the materials needed and the attention such an ambitious project of construction could draw would make this very difficult), but neither could anyone completely discount the story. Most interviewees responded with an anecdote of their own about the market women, which always revealed the latter's ways of resistance. However, they also sometimes highlighted the question of what is being resisted. This is well illustrated by the following quotation of Alba Engonga, a feminist working for state media:

⁹⁶⁸ As told to me by a local friend upon my first visit to the market, and repeated, slightly differently each time, by other informants.

⁹⁶⁹ Josimar Oyono Eseng, personal communication, 28 July 2015.

⁹⁷⁰ Who is able to rent the sort-after stalls in the new market and who is relegated to the home-made sprawling market? *Diario Rombe* and several informers have claimed nepotism. *Diario Rombe*, "La alcaldesa se hace dueña del nuevo mercado de Malabo," <http://www.diariorombe.es/la-alcaldesa-se-hace-duena-del-nuevo-mercado-de-malabo/>, 6 August 2013 (accessed 26 May 2016).

If there is someone walking around the market that they don't particularly like, who strikes them as pretentious... a foreign woman turning her nose up, for example, [the market women will] sing a song that mocks her. There's a lot of solidarity between them. It's the same if a soldier tries to extort one of them. They'll club together to try to get rid of him.⁹⁷¹

With reference to Engonga's first example, it would be reasonable to conclude that the market women are showing a form of everyday resistance to racism, neo-colonialism, and possibly classism. Regarding the second example though, are the women consciously resisting the Obiang regime as a whole, or the power of the military to extort? Like many of the examples included in this chapter, especially those involving the poorest women, resistance is not specifically anti-Obiang. It does, however, almost always challenge the daily hardships caused by the way the state is run. The resistance of women like the market sellers addresses the poverty bred of the socio-political situation in the country, the racism and neo-colonialism of foreign (white) migrants and the misogynistic tendencies of Obiang's agents of oppression.

Like their foremothers under Spanish rule, we can interpret the resistance of today's poorest Equatoguinean women as intersectional. It is also everyday. Women make use of what Scott calls "the weapons of the weak," which, as we have seen in earlier chapters, is usual in situations of extreme domination. But, excluded from "organised politics," these women do not take recourse to mass demonstrations.

Epifania Avomo Bico highlights the lack of poor women-led demonstrations with an example from August 2015. She tells me of a group of women who had been selling their wares on the street, far from the market. The women had not been able to afford to sublet a stall in one of the official markets. Subsequently, Malabo Council officials stole all their stock on the grounds that the women were selling "without permission." Avomo Bico wondered, she tells me, if the market women would demonstrate following this incident. When they did not, she concluded: "they aren't able to."⁹⁷² Avomo Bico nods towards a 'missed opportunity' with regards to the market women. They resist in their own ways, but their exclusion from politics, in the traditional sense of the word, hinders their capabilities for collective, mass

⁹⁷¹ Engonga (pseudonym), 25 June 2015.

⁹⁷² Avomo Bico, 28 August 2015.

protest. In the next section, we look in more detail at said ‘missed opportunity’ that, I argue, is created when anti-authoritarianism does not allow a space for feminism.

6.4 Anti-authoritarianism and feminism?

In Equatorial Guinea at the time of writing, the only party that openly opposes the dictator (there are others that oppose the PDGE but fall short of criticising Obiang himself) and has managed to register is the CPDS. Although it is impossible to break down the demographics of the CPDS and the other (unregistered and numerous) parties and movements by gender since many members and supporters are anonymous, it is also fair to say that the vast majority are male-led.⁹⁷³ As Avila Laurel puts it, “politics, as well as being dangerous, is power, and power belongs to men.”⁹⁷⁴

Whereas for the nationalists of Western Sahara, hegemonic discourse paints public politics as a ‘natural’ part of Saharawi femininity, for Equatoguinean women, participating publicly in opposition to the regime means breaking with long-established gender norms. Furthermore, although the POLISARIO’s current level of commitment to women’s rights is debatable, their professed commitment to the same upon the emergence of the nationalist movement in the early seventies helped to mobilise Saharawi women. In Equatorial Guinea, in order to change the gendered face of (organised) oppositional political movements, a commitment to feminist demands, and to changing gender norms in order to allow a space for women, is crucial. Some political activists, such as Avomo Bicó, are bringing their pro-democracy and feminist demands together by fostering women’s groups within political parties.

Avomo Bicó is one of five women that make up the 28 members of the National Executive Committee of the CPDS party. She acts as Secretary for Gender and the Position of Women. As well as this, Avomo Bicó is President of the CPDS’ Women’s Association. On top of attempting to engage women with the party, the Association plays a feminist role. Avomo Bicó explains,

⁹⁷³ Campos and Micó have also highlighted that opposition parties, as well as the PDGE, are dominated by men. Alicia Campos Serrano, and Abogo, Plácido Micó, “Labour and Trade Union Freedom in Equatorial Guinea,” Madrid, 2006, 24-25.

⁹⁷⁴ Juan Tomás Ávila Laurel, personal communication, 13 January 2015.

...today, what my Association tries to do is to support women to play more roles [...] We fight against discrimination in the field of employment, and against gender inequalities more generally⁹⁷⁵

This is where a quotation of writer Mitoha Ondo'o Ayekaba is most pertinent: "the government's failure to take serious actions to resolve [gender inequalities] is perhaps due to the perception that to improve the lot of women would be counter-productive to maintaining tight control of the society and political process."⁹⁷⁶ Perhaps Avomo Bicó attempts to address discriminations suffered by women precisely because women, doves of fire, present a potential largely untapped by the organised anti-Obiang opposition.

Several Equatoguinean feminists are not, at least publicly, linked to any organised anti-Obiang movement (anymore). Feminist interviewees rhetorically asked me why they would join such a movement when the latter are just as misogynist as the PDGE and have no project whatsoever to address sexism. The writings of Obono Ntutumu are particularly brave and scathing on this point. As well as highlighting the misogyny of the PDGE, she accuses opposition parties not only of profound sexism but also of tolerating gender-based violence, and extends her criticisms in this regard to anti-Obiang civil society movements in the diaspora.⁹⁷⁷

Some prominent Equatoguinean feminists, especially those that are civil servants, prefer to work within the limits of the regime. They use their relatively privileged positions to (carefully) fight for women's rights. For example, one is using connections to the First Lady to lobby for funding for educational projects for women and girl survivors of violence and sexual exploitation. Another uses her influence in state communications channels to broadcast television and radio programmes that shine a (subtle) light on sex discrimination. Others publish opinion pages with a feminist slant and propagate feminist lessons through their teaching positions. One interviewee explained her efforts to persuade her male relatives, who hold high positions in the PDGE, to change their views and adapt their policies. Uday Chandra and others have called such practices (in which claims are made *within* the system, recognising the structures of domination within society but exploiting

⁹⁷⁵ Avomo Bicó, 28 August 2015.

⁹⁷⁶ Ayekaba, "The Politics of Gender Parity...", 7.

⁹⁷⁷ See especially Trifonia Melibea Obono Ntutumu, "Guinea Ecuatorial: misoginia en los partidos políticos," *Tiempos Canallas*, 8 March 2013.

cracks in state socio-political arrangements in order to push forward subaltern agendas) “rightful resistance.”⁹⁷⁸

If some women use advocacy to advance the rights of women, others use, once again, cultural means. For example, José Francisco Eteo Soriso has documented popular Bubi women’s songs denouncing men that impregnate women and leave the latter without support, encourage women to search for men that will provide for them properly, and assert women’s right to be considered the “head of the family,” as well as Ndowe women’s songs that criticise male infidelity and Fang women’s songs that express disgust at discrimination against women.⁹⁷⁹ Fang women interviewees also highlight traditional songs that denounce polygyny and that criticise sexual double standards.⁹⁸⁰ Eteo also highlights that, at times, a woman will design a song to specifically denounce a particular man that has wronged her.⁹⁸¹ As interviewees explained to me, female friends join the resistant woman in chorus, singing when the man, or men, in question are present.⁹⁸²

Significantly, one (Fang) Equatoguinean feminist tells me that it was precisely because of such songs that she has grown up as a feminist. She explains,

...demanding women’s rights is the daily bread of Fang girls! Fang girls are brought up clutching the skirts of their mothers, they go everywhere with them. When their mothers go to work the land with other women, they talk about the problems they face as women. When they go to church (they’re all believers), or when there’s a birth or a wedding, they are there singing [...] and, listening to these songs, girls learn what equality means [...] we live with our mothers’ feminism from childhood.⁹⁸³

My quotation of this woman, Trinidad Mba, raises, once again, the question asked over and over again by African feminists, why do we presume that feminism is a white woman’s invention? Indeed, and as mentioned in Chapter One, the vast majority of feminist interviewees felt frustrated that their feminism is interpreted as “imported ideas” by Equatoguinean society. Such an accusation resembles the charges of ‘racism,’ ‘colonialism’

⁹⁷⁸ Chandra provides a useful review of the literature on rightful resistance in “Rethinking Subaltern Resistance,” 566.

⁹⁷⁹ Eteo Soriso, *Cancionero...*

⁹⁸⁰ Mba (pseudonym), 16 June 2015; Engonga (pseudonym), 25 June 2015.

⁹⁸¹ Eteo Soriso, *Cancionero...* 163.

⁹⁸² Engonga (pseudonym), 25 June 2015; Mba (pseudonym), 16 June 2015.

⁹⁸³ Mba (pseudonym), 16 June 2015.

and ‘enemies of the state’ that, as Stephanie Wolters of the Institute for Security Studies points out, are launched at any organisation that criticises aspects of Obiang’s rule.⁹⁸⁴ These accusations are meant to sew mouths shut. And yet they are strengthened by the genderwashing collaboration between Obiang and his Western partners – the (false) picture of efforts for gender equality is imposed from outside. The most salient problem for Mba is that, when it comes to labelling feminist efforts as “imported ideas,” opposition activists are just as guilty as regime members. In contrast, feminism, for Equatoguinean feminists, is something organic to women of their own ethnicities, since the latter all have long traditions of fighting against patriarchal norms.

The key point that I wish to make in this brief section on feminist resistance is that, whilst often women’s resistance can be interpreted as intersectional, fighting several oppressions at once, there are also feminist activists in Equatorial Guinea that have little link to the anti-Obiang movements. Indeed, many feminists express their rejection of what they see as profound sexism amongst the anti-regime parties and groups. In other words, we cannot assume a linear relationship between anti-authoritarian movements and increased challenges to sexism. Feminism and anti-authoritarianism do not necessarily go hand in hand unless there is a conscious effort to make it so. The story of women’s resistance told in this chapter and the previous one indicates that such an effort may be worthwhile for the anti-regime, pro-democracy elements of Equatorial Guinea. The pain, anger and knowledge of the Dolores Molubelas, the Annobonese housemaid and the robbed market women is energy waiting to burst.

⁹⁸⁴ Wolters, “Equatorial Guinea’s Web...”

**Conclusions: gendering resistance and oppression, and the West's role in undermining
'gender equality'**

In this thesis, I have tried to spotlight women's everyday resistance to the intersecting oppressive power structures of colonialism, gender and race. Gender norms – Saharawi, Spanish colonial, Equatoguinean and wider Western orientalist views of Arab, African, Muslim gender constructions - are central to understanding resistance, but also oppression, in Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara, as well as to the history of resistance to Spanish colonialism. Indeed, gender is not merely something we might see if we look carefully through the right microscope. Rather, oppression and resistance are drenched in gendered implications.

Spanish Sahara and Spanish Guinea reveal important lessons about the subsequent different paths of Saharawis and Equatoguineans with regards to gendered resistance. In the Saharawi case, my previous research had highlighted the centrality of gender and gender equality to early POLISARIO nationalist discourses. What we learn now is that Saharawi women were resisting sexism and racism before the emergence of the nationalist movements. Furthermore, during their nationalist mobilisation backing the POLISARIO, archives of the Falangist Women's Section suggest that Saharawi women made feminist as well as nationalist demands in parallel. This leads me to conclude that it was perhaps Saharawi women themselves who inspired the central aim of gender equality in the POLISARIO's nationalist revolution. From a wider, theoretical point of view, this historical focus indicates the need to not only make a gendered reading of the subaltern, but to gender Subaltern Studies itself. Otherwise we risk implying that reforms to tackle racism and sexism, such as those of the POLISARIO, were exclusively the brainchild of progressive male elites, not the hard-fought-for accomplishments of 'ordinary' women and enslaved peoples.

If we go back in history to the time of Spanish rule, we see in Chapters Two and Three that colonialism brought its own forms of patriarchy and racism. These exacerbated existing inequalities along gendered and racial lines. Using Scott's theories of "hidden transcript" and "everyday resistance" we can also see that Equatoguinean women have a history of resisting sexism (as well as racism and colonialism – their resistance, like that of Saharawi women, can be interpreted as intersectional), thus supporting the arguments of modern day Equatoguinean feminists who state that their feminism is not a 'white import' but rather

something 'organically' Equatoguinean. Using Scott's work, it becomes possible to re-write Equatoguinean women into their country's history of resistance to colonialism.

Whilst colonialism in the Sahara was delayed and economically-focused, and with strategic commitments, at least initially, to not 'interfere too much' with Saharawi legal and social structures, the colonisation of Equatorial Guinea was a Catholic and 'civilising mission' from the outset that attempted, with full violent force, to hispanicise the indigenous population linguistically, socially and culturally. Therefore when nationalist movements such as the MUNGE began to radicalise, their vision for women's role in a future independent Equatorial Guinea did not break from the Spanish Falangist model of femininity. Thus women, who continued their own, everyday forms of resistance, were not encouraged to take part in the elite male-led nationalist parties, although they did support them logistically. The nationalist movements were plural and divided in Equatorial Guinea, thanks largely to Spain's divisionary politics. There was not the same strong, unifying sense of nationalism, then, as the Saharawis enjoyed, and women remained invisible.

Saharawi nationalist discourses can be understood as central to fuelling resistance to Moroccan colonialism. Today, the POLISARIO has the space to carry out its hegemonic project in its state-in-exile in Algeria. It is the nationalist cause that holds hegemony over the hearts and minds of most Saharawis, whilst Equatoguinean anti-authoritarian activists based in their own country must struggle against the hegemony of Obiang. This helps to explain why, despite violent and acute oppression of opposition in both Equatorial Guinea and occupied Western Sahara, we currently see more mass, open resistance in the latter: the committed Saharawi nationalist activists are numerous and relatively united behind strong nationalist discourses. And, as we have seen, women do not just participate but also lead the Saharawi nationalist resistance.

Maria Angeles Adugu Mba, a feminist and CPDS activist leans across the desk and looks me firmly in the eye when she describes the current situation in her country: "it's a white-washed sepulchre rotting on the inside."⁹⁸⁵ Her bible-borrowed metaphor works well to describe, more specifically, the image promoted by her government of gender equality compared to the reality of Equatoguinean women's continued experiences of sexism. The internal functions of the Equatoguinean regime's discourses on gender serve to preserve Obiang's rule. The scant commitment to addressing heterosexism, and the continued

⁹⁸⁵ Adugu Mba (pseudonym). 30 June 2015.

hegemony of heterosexist norms in nationalist discourses, dampen women's open participation in organised resistance movements. Indeed, in hegemonic discourses on gender in Equatorial Guinea, 'politics' is a singularly masculine arena that women should not enter, which was also true during the Spanish colonial period. If the anti-authoritarian resistance movements in Equatorial Guinea were able to challenge such gender norms that remove a place for women from politics, it would be to their benefit.

The other arm used by Obiang to maintain power is fear, fostered by his attempts to make his dictatorship 'pre-destined' and therefore inevitable in nationalist discourses. He also fosters fear by means of brutal violence. As discussed in Chapter Six, this violence is enacted in gendered ways, particularly in the regime's use of sexual torture of women. In Chapter Four, we see the same dynamic in Morocco's violent disciplinary practices. The torture methods performed by the Moroccan occupiers draw heavily on traditional Saharawi gender norms, especially those concerning sexuality. The horror and trauma of torture is heightened by attempting to destroy the victims' sexuality, both psychologically and spiritually in the sense that one's sexuality is a part of one's identity, and physically by focusing on the genitals of both men and women and provoking miscarriages in pregnant women. In Chapter Six we also saw how Macías used constructions of gender to consolidate power albeit in a different way: he attempted to foster a sinister version of women's political 'empowerment' by encouraging women to act as spies on family members.

Wider taboos in Saharawi society surrounding female sexuality outside of marriage further cement one desired outcome of Morocco's strategy of torture: preventing the reproduction of the Saharawi nation. Discrimination in the labour market and educational institutions are also important here. If Saharawi male activists face extra barriers to study and are unable to get a paid job, and Saharawi female activists find it difficult to get married after having been detained (and therefore, society often rightly presumes, raped), it is the most nationalist Saharawis that are least likely to be able to start a family. Furthermore, if Saharawi men in hegemonic nationalist discourses are, as my previous research has argued, the protectors of the feminised nation, and, at the family level, protectors of women, then the imprisonment and torture of Saharawi women and girls damages their sense of masculinity. Moroccan oppression makes the performance of hegemonic Saharawi masculinity and Saharawi femininity almost impossible for activists. Oppression directly targets the gendered self. We can conclude that gender norms are central to how the authoritarian regimes, at least in the two cases studies focused on here, oppress opposition. Scholars of authoritarianism must

take gender seriously when assessing how dictators maintain power.

As we saw in Chapter Four, since the Moroccan invasion, feminist demands in their own right have all but disappeared. There is discontent amongst women at the gender inequalities that exist within Saharawi society. These are inequalities that are reinforced by, and linked to, the situation of occupation, and thus the West undermines Saharawi women's rights through its continued support of Morocco. Women have found ways to show resilience and agency in the face of these inequalities, yet there is not a strong resistance to them, in most cases. The urgency of self-determination and extreme violence and trauma of the occupation brings pro-independence demands to the fore. Yet feminist nationalism continues: gender norms will occasionally be challenged when doing so will directly and obviously benefit the nationalist cause, such as when a father prohibits his daughter from attending protests and she forsakes her duty to obey him. Yet, we can conclude that there is not a simple, proportional relationship between women's political participation and women's emancipation along feminist lines.

Binary gender norms also influence how and when people resist. In both Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara we see, in Chapters Six and Four, women drawing on their traditional roles as mothers, nurturers and carers during their acts of resistance. Women activists do not always seek to revolutionise their gendered roles, but rather appropriate these roles for revolutionary purposes. In Western Sahara, the flexibility afforded to women in their roles as homemakers gives them the space and time to protest on the streets, whilst some men (assigned the role of breadwinners in Saharawi culture), if they are employed, may at times take a 'back office' role in the nationalist resistance movement due to their legitimate fear that they will lose their livelihood should they protest publicly one too many times.

Especially interesting with regards to how gender norms determine resistance is the particular brand of active maternalism that we see in Western Sahara. Motherhood for women like Fatma Aayache facilitates their resistance, yet, unlike movements of mothers elsewhere, their children are not the prime reason for their activism. On the other hand, Spanish media depictions of Aminatou Haidar during her 2009 hunger strike created an image of a physically weak (but morally defiant) single mother, complementing orientalist discourses that pity the oppressed Muslim woman. This engaged Western readers emotionally, and furthered exposure of Haidar's struggle and aims. Inspired by this, I have argued in Chapter Four, in 2015 the supporters of Tekbar Haddi used maternalism strategically to put Western Sahara on the front pages of Spanish newspapers. Once again,

we see that Western orientalist gender norms impact directly upon the dynamics of the Saharawi nationalist struggle.

However, as we see in Chapter Six, some Equatoguinean feminists complain of what they see as the entrenched sexism of the various anti-Obiang movements, and therefore prefer to follow their own paths working for women rights. Others, like Epifania Avomo Bicó, are attempting to mainstream women's rights work into the activities and demands of her opposition political party. Either way, we have seen that Equatoguinean women resist sexism, neo-colonialism, racism and the regime, even if they have generally been excluded from politics in the traditional sense of the word.

In this regard, Chapter Five charted how the Obiang regime uses its own construction of Equatoguinean society as one of gender equality to appease allies in the West (just as the POLISARIO does, albeit in a position of resistance, rather than of an authoritarian oppressive regime). Indeed it is possible that allies such as the US fund these PR efforts in order to maintain their own self-images as international leaders in women's rights. In other words, the construction of gender equality in the nationalist discourses of the regime, which are promoted (and partly funded) abroad, are vital for keeping Obiang in power. Meanwhile, Obiang's Western allies France, Israel, Morocco and the US amongst others, also provide heavy hands to help quell domestic pro-democracy opposition thereby maintaining their own economic and political interests. Obiang and his corporate and state allies are collaborating in genderwashing. They co-opt the language of feminism to market their self-serving activities, which actually undermine, rather than promote, gender equality.

Western corporations and governments partnering with Obiang use his rhetorical (but empty) support for gender equality as a PR tool to shield themselves from criticism. The current vogue for 'women's empowerment' in Western governments' 'development' agendas has a direct effect on who resists in what way, and how they are punished, in occupied Western Sahara. The West's genderwashing promotes the cover-up of stories like Sultana Khaya's, which I used to open this thesis. As we see in Chapter Four, Western hegemonic constructions of Arab, Muslim women as submissive victims, and of Arab men as 'terrorists' adds further weight to the consequences. Morocco, enjoying its status as the West's main ally in the North Africa region, is all too aware of these discourses, and thus seeks to minimize coverage of its state-sponsored torture of Saharawi women activists by avoiding trials and official imprisonments of the latter, instead detaining them in secret

torture cells for short periods. The Saharawi (Arab or black Muslim) male activists on the other hand, are far more 'imprisonable', given their status, in Western discourse, as 'undeserving victims.' This leads women to dominate public protest, knowing they are much less likely to face long sentences.

The reach of Western, gendered orientalist discourses is far and sinister. Gender (equality) is essential to the international geopolitics that allow the continuation of the Obiang regime and the Moroccan occupation. Western current 'prioritisation' of 'women's empowerment' in 'developing countries' is used to bolster certain countries' support of Obiang and affects Morocco's treatment of Saharawis down to the level of who it punishes and how. Western state rhetorical support of 'gender equality' is nothing but hypocritical whilst Western countries continue to bolster the Moroccan occupation and the Obiang regime economically and politically. Adugu Mba might be right that her country is a white-washed sepulchre rotting on the inside, but it is the West providing the paint.

If we are to understand the relationship between gender and resistance, we must focus on the idiosyncrasies of local gender constructions but also other constructions that are hegemonic at a global level. The interplay of the internationally influential Western orientalist gender constructions and the particular Saharawi constructions of gender are inextricably linked to even the smallest weekly women's demonstration on Smara Street, the avenue that marks the urban borders of the revolutionary district of Maatalla at one end, and points towards the site where Gdeim Izik lay at the other.

Bibliography

Interviews with Saharawis

1. Senia Abdurahman, personal communication, 20 March 2006
2. Agaila Abba, personal communication, 2 May 2006
3. Embarka Hamoudi, personal communication, 7 July 2006
4. Sidi Omar (ex-POLISARIO Representative to the UK, and also to the African Union), personal communication, 12 July 2006
5. Larosi Haidar, personal interview, Granada (Spain), 20 November 2007
6. Limam Boicha, personal interview, Madrid (Spain), 6 February 2008
7. Bahia Awah, personal interview, Madrid, 7 February 2008
8. Zahra Ramdan (President of the Association of Saharawi Women in Spain), personal interview, Madrid, 7 February 2008
9. Mohammed Selma (Lawyer that previously worked in Saharawi courts), personal interview, Granada (Spain), 20 February 2008
10. Castro (nickname), personal interview, Smara camp (Algeria), 29 March 2008
11. Maimona Said, personal interview, Smara camp, 29 March 2008
12. Sid Ahmed Abdulramdan, personal interview, Smara camp, 31 March 2008
13. Fanna Nafe, personal interview, Smara camp, 2 April 2008
14. Bashir Mustapha Sayed (one of the POLISARIO founders and Minister), personal interview, Rabuni camp (Algeria), 2 April 2008
15. Embarka Abdusalem (pseudonym), personal interview, Algiers (Algeria), 5 April 2008
16. Malainin Lakhhal, personal conversation, Algiers, 5 April 2008
17. Fatimetou Zrug Yomani , then MP for the Youth Union, personal interview, Algiers, 5 April 2008
18. Agaila Abba, personal communication, 27 April 2008
19. Limam Mohammed Ali (current POLISARIO Representative to the UK), personal communication, 28 April 2008
20. Limam Khalil, personal interview, Leeds (UK), 5 May 2008
21. Malainin Lakhhal, personal communications, June 2008
22. Sidi Breika (ex-POLISARIO Representative to the UK), personal interview, London (UK), 31 March 2014
23. Fatan Abaali, personal interview, Agadir (Morocco), 22 April 2014

24. Bachir Ismaili, personal interview, Agadir, 22 April 2014
25. Discussion group with seven male Saharawi students, Agadir, 22 April 2014
26. Discussion group with six male Saharawi students, Marrakech (Morocco), 23 April 2015
27. Shaykh Alhala, personal interview, Rabat (Morocco), 26 April 2014
28. Tag Sayed, personal interview, Rabat, 26 April 2014
29. Ahmed Baba, personal interview, Rabat, 28 April 2014
30. Khawla Khaya, personal interview, Rabat, 28 April 2014
31. Khairo Mayara, personal interview, Rabat, 28 April 2014
32. Mahdi Mayara, personal interview, Rabat, 28 April 2014
33. Malainin Lakhhal, personal communication, 13 May 2014
34. Saharawi host family (anonymous), personal conversations, El Aaiún (occupied Western Sahara), August 2014
35. Hamza Lakhhal, personal conversations, El Aaiún, August 2014
36. Hamza Lakhhal, personal interview, El Aaiún, 21 August 2014
37. Izana Amidan, personal interview, El Aaiún, 22 August 2014
38. Mahfooda Lefkir, personal interview, El Aaiún, 22 August 2014
39. Soukaina Yaya, personal interview, El Aaiún, 22 August 2014
40. Mohammed El Baikam, personal interview, El Aaiún, 23 August 2014.
41. Mahfood Hafdala (pseudonym), personal interview, El Aaiún, 23 August 2014.
42. Mohammed Brahim (pseudonym), personal interview, El Aaiún, 25 August 2014.
43. Mohammed Mayara, personal interview, El Aaiún, 27 August 2014
44. Mahfoud Dahou, personal interview, El Aaiún, 29 August 2014
45. Soumaya Taher (pseudonym), personal interview, Madrid (Spain), 21 October 2014.
46. Embarka Hassan (pseudonym), personal interview, Madrid, 26 October 2014.
47. Hassana Aalia, personal interview, Zaragoza (Spain), 26 November 2014
48. Nguia El Haouasi, personal interview, Zaragoza, 26 November 2014
49. Sultana Khaya, personal interview, Zaragoza, 26 November 2014
50. Hayat Rguibi, personal interview, Zaragoza, 26 November 2014
51. Lehdia Dafa, personal interview, Madrid, 28 November 2014
52. Khadijatou Mokhtar (UNMS Director of External Affairs), personal interview, Madrid, 28 November 2014
53. Lahcen Dalil, Acting President of Support Committee for the Protection of Natural Resources (CSPRON), personal communication, 18 December 2014
54. Malainin Lakhhal, personal communication, 2 March 2015

55. Hamza Lakhal, personal conversations, April 2015, Norway
56. Fatma Mehdi (Secretary General of the UNMS), Windhoek (Namibia), 4 November 2015
57. Nahjiba Saleh (pseudonym), personal conversation, Boujdour camp (Algeria), 10 December 2015
58. Silka Bilaal, personal interview, Auserd camp (Algeria), 11 December 2015
59. Tawfa Saleh, personal interview, Auserd camp, 11 December 2015
60. Salek Baba Hassana, Governor of Auserd camp, personal conversation, Auserd camp, 11 December 2015
61. Majhula Cheikh el Mami, personal interview, Auserd camp, 12 December 2015
62. Leila Sidi Mahmoud, personal interview, Auserd camp, 12 December 2015
63. Khadijatou Mokhtar, personal interview, Auserd camp, 13 December 2015
64. Mohammed Saleh, personal conversations, Auserd camp, 8-15 December 2015
65. Ali Salem Tamek, personal conversation, Auserd camp, 13 December 2015.
66. Aminatou Errer Bouzeid, personal communication, 19 December 2015

Interviews with Equatoguineans

1. Ismael Abuy (pseudonym), personal interview, Jaen (Spain), 13 October 2013
2. Gaspar Nsue Adaha (pseudonym), personal interview, London (location altered to protect anonymity), 18 February 2014
3. Ignacio Nsue Enhate (pseudonym), personal interview, Brussels (Belgium), 1 April 2014
4. Marcelino Obono Alogo (pseudonym), personal interview, Granada, 18 July 2014
5. Juan Tomás Ávila Laurel, personal communication, 13 January 2015
6. Ricardo Soriso Sipi (pseudonym), personal communication, 15 January 2015
7. Lucia Zamora Nsang (pseudonym), personal communication, 16 January 2015
8. Trinidad Mba (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 16 January 2015
9. Francisca Sale (pseudonym), personal interview, Barcelona (Spain), 25 February 2015
10. Tutu Alicante, Skype interview, 28 May 2015
11. Francisca Sale (pseudonym), 28 May 2015
12. Maria Jesus Ntutumu (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo (Equatorial Guinea), 16 June 2015
13. Alicia Watson (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 17 June 2015
14. Maria Jesus Ntutumu (pseudonym), personal conversations, 19 June 2015
15. Dolores Molubela (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 21 June 2015

16. Pilar Nyangi (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 21 June 2015
17. Constanca Balboa (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 22 June 2015
18. Cristina Boleká (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 24 June 2015
19. Enrique Momo (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 24 June 2015
20. Alba Engonga (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 25 June 2015
21. Miguel Nze (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 25 June 2015
22. Francisca Sale (pseudonym), personal conversations, Malabo, 25 June 2015
23. Carmen Campanet (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 28 June 2015
24. Claudette Kendo (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 29 June 2015
25. Veronica Mayo (pseudonym), personal conversations, Malabo, 29 June 2015
26. Maria Angeles Adugu Mba (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo, 30 June 2015
27. Patricio Nvuar (pseudonym), personal interview, Malabo 30 June 2015
28. Josimar Oyono Eseng, personal communication, 28 July 2015
29. Epifania Avomo Bicó, telephone interview, 28 August 2015
30. Victorino Pancho Ripeu (pseudonym), personal communication, 28 September 2015
31. Ana Alogo Mikue (pseudonym), telephone interview, 22 August 2016

Referenced primary archival sources

- 20 Chiefs of Rio Benito. Letter to the General Governor of the Spanish Territories in the Gulf of Guinea, Bata, Rio Muni (continental Guinea), 9 June 1942, AGA 81/08182.
- Anonymous Social Worker. "Informe del primer semestre de 1974." 30 July 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.
- Ayakaba Nzue. Request from Ayakaba Nzue to the President of the *Patronato* for Separation from her Husband, Santa Isabel, 12 May 1937, AGA 81/08527.
- Banapá Mission of Claretians. *La revista de la Guinea Española*, 28 March 1904, 1-4.
- Banapá Mission of Claretians. *La revista de la Guinea Española*, 12 January 1904, 1-4.
- Banapá Mission of Claretians. "El Problema de los Braceros." *La revista de la Guinea Española*, 1903, 1-4.
- Bermúdez Cañete, Dolores. "Informe del viaje de la regidora central de S.E.U. a la isla de Fernando Poo y Rio Muni." May 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.
- Bermúdez Cañete, Dolores. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Bata, 8 July 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.

- Bosio Dioco, Edmundo, and Bolopá, Ricardo. Letter, Madrid, 20 June 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.
- Bradley, W.M. "Labour Report to the Honourable Commissioner of Labour, Lagos, No.3 for the Period 1st of October to the 31st December 1949." Santa Isabel, 11 January 1950, TNA, CO 554/169/1.
- Bradley, W.M. "Labour Report to the Honourable Commissioner of Labour, Lagos, no.1 for the Period 1st January to 31st March 1950, British Vice Consulate." Santa Isabel, 31 March 1950, TNA CO 554/169/2.
- Carvalho de Cora y Romero, Esteban, Territorial Police. "Informando sobre disturbios ocurridos en el Día de Hoy." El Aaiún, 20 November 1974. Document available as an annex to the doctoral thesis of Claudia Barona Castañeda, "Sahara Al-Garbia (1958-1976): Estudio Sobre la Identidad Nacional Saharai," Autonomous University of Madrid, 1998.
- Carvalho de Cora y Romero, Esteban, Territorial Police. "Informe sobre reunión con estudiantes." El Aaiún. 30 January 1975, document available as an annex to Barona, 1998.
- Dalda, Juan Luís, Martí Ares, Carles, and Pau Coromines, Lluís. "Dossier Forming Part of the Exposition, 'Aaiun 1939-73, Formación de una Ciudad Española en el Sahara Occidental,' Study Carried out in El Aaiún." Girona, 1977.
- De Santiago, Soledad. "Guión para la visita de la Delegación Nacional a las provincias de Africa." Madrid, 23 January 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.
- De Santiago, Soledad. Letter to Carmen Obón, Madrid, 22 March 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.
- De Santiago, Soledad. Letter to "Mina" ("Auxiliar Central de Juventudes"), Madrid, 27 May 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- De Santiago, Soledad. Letter to Carmen Obón, Madrid, 17 June 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.
- De Santiago, Soledad. Letter to Carmen Obón, Madrid, 15 July 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.
- De Santiago, Soledad. Letter to Carmen Obón, Bata, 29 February 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.
- De Santiago, Soledad. Letter to Carmen Obón, Madrid, 21 November 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.
- Emba, Mangué. Request Sent to the President of *Patronato*, 13 May 1937, AGA 81/08527.
- García Morales, Purita. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Bata, 4 April 1965, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.

- General Government of the Sahara Province. "Informe sobre el partido saharauí clandestino denominado 'Organización Avanzada para la Liberación de la Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro.'" *El Aaiún*, 12 June 1970. Document available as an annex to Barona, 1998.
- General Government of the Sahara Province. "Recopilación de informes y documentos de interés relacionados con el O.A.L.S. y los incidentes del 17 de Junio de 1970." *El Aaiún*, 22 October 1970. Document available as an annex to Barona, 1998.
- General Government of the Sahara Province. "Actitud alumnas Sección Femenina." Villa Cisneros, 24 January 1975. Document available as an annex to Barona, 1998.
- General Government of the Sahara Province. "Censo escolar." *El Aaiún*, 1975. Document available as an annex to Barona, 1998.
- Gori Molubela, Enrique. Letter to Teresa Loring, Santa Isabel de Fernando Po 22 September 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 247.
- Headmistress, Smara Domestic School. "Informe de las actividades realizadas durante el curso 73/74 en la Escuela Hogar de patronato de Sección Femenina de Sahara." Smara, 30 June 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 240.
- Illegible signature. Letter to the Governor General of the Spanish Territories of the Gulf of Guinea. En Mikomeseng, 15 May 1945, AGA Caja 81/08214.
- International Court of Justice. "Western Sahara: Advisory Opinion of 16 October 1975." 1975. Available at <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?sum=323&p1=3&p2=4&case=61&p3=5> (accessed 23 May 2016).
- Iriarte, Maria Luisa. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 6 November 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- Iriarte, Maria Luisa. "Informe del curso 1967-1968." Santa Isabel, 25 May 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 247.
- López de la Torre, Salvador. "El referéndum de Guinea Ecuatorial ha sido un verdadero ejemplo para todos los pueblos de Africa." *ABC*, Madrid, 17 December 1963.
- Loring, Teresa, (Sub-delegada nacional de la Sección Femenina). Letter to Antonio Trujillo, Madrid, 27 April 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.
- Loring, Teresa. Letter to Federico Ngomo Nandongo, Madrid, 10 May 1965, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.
- Loring, Teresa. "Notas para la presentación en el Instituto de Estudios Africanos." Madrid, 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 242.

- Mallado, Angeles. Letter to Dolores Bermudez Cañete, Santa Isabel, 22 June 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- Matala, Rafael M. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 20 April 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- Mateo, Concha. "Cultura del plan general: profesorado de la Escuela Hogar." El Aaiún, April 1964. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.
- Mateo, Concha. "Informe de la labor realizada en la Escuela de Hogar para nativas: 18 Mayo - 18 Julio 1964." El Aaiún, 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.
- Mateo, Concha. "Primer plan previo de enseñanzas y actividades." El Aaiún, April 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.
- Mateo, Concha. "Informe correspondiente al curso 1964-65, Escuela Hogar de nativas." El Aaiún, 1965, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.
- Mateo, Concha. Letter to María Nieves Sunyer in Madrid, El Aaiún, 16 March 1966, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 240.
- Mateo, Concha. Letter to Soledad de Santiago in Madrid, El Aaiún, 17 March 1966, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 240.
- Mateo, Concha. "Notas para la conferencia de Teresa: Situación de la mujer saharai." El Aaiún, 1966, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 242.
- Mateo, Concha. "Proyecto de nuevo edificio para escuela de primera enseñanza de patronato de Sección Femenina." El Aaiún, 4 May 1971, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 240.
- Mateo, Concha. "Informe sobre la actitud política de la mujer saharai." El Aaiún, October 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 235.
- Mateo, Concha. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, El Aaiún, 22 October 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 235.
- Martins, Lola. "Journey to Hell's Island: How it All Started." *Express*, Lagos, 21 February 1962.
- Monreal, Elisa, Curto, Maria Jesus. "Informe general de la labor realizada en la promoción de la mujer saharai durante el primer semestre de 1973." Unknown (Western Sahara), 1973, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.
- Mozaz, Maria Angeles. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, El Aaiún, 17 May 1975, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.
- Mozaz, Maria Angeles. "Actas de reuniones celebradas recientemente con mujeres nativas, ex alumnas de los centros de Sección Femenina." El Aaiún. 9 October 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.

- Mozaz, Maria Angeles. "Actas de reuniones celebradas recientemente con mujeres nativas, ex alumnas de los centros de Sección Femenina." El Aaiún. 24 October 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.
- Mozaz, Maria Angeles. "Informe motivado de los cursos que ésta delegación provincial de Sección Femenina de Sahara imparte a la mujer nativa con cargo al Fondo Nacional de Protección al Trabajo." El Aaiún. Estimated 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.
- Mozaz, Maria Angeles. "Liquidación que se presenta a gobierno del taller-escuela "Confecções Sahara"." El Aaiún. 15 April 1975, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239
- MUNGE. "Movimiento de Unión Nacional de la Guinea Ecuatorial (MUNGE), declaración de principios." Madrid. 18 January 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.
- Murillo, (First name unknown), paper letterheaded with the Falange logo. "Informe sobre la situación actual de Sahara." El Aaiún. 7 June 1974. Document available as annex to Barona, 1998.
- Negre Rigol, Jordi. "Sahara: España arria su bandera." *Diario de Barcelona*. Barcelona, 20 December 1975.
- Obón, Carmen. "Informe de las cátedras realizadas en la provincia de Rio Muni por los equipos de la delegación nacional de la Sección Femenina." Bata, September 1965, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 249.
- Obón, Carmen. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 8 August 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.
- Obón, Carmen. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Bata, 1 February 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 248.
- Obón, Carmen. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Bata, 4 December 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.
- Obón, Carmen. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Bata, 4 February 1969, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.
- Obón, Carmen. Letter to Soledad de Santiago (1), Bata, 22 February 1969, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.
- Obón, Carmen. Letter to Soledad de Santiago (3), Bata, 22 February 1969, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.
- Obón, Carmen. "Situación de la Sección Femenina desde Octubre de 1968." Bata. March 1969, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 251.
- Orgambides, Fernando. "La misión de la ONU llega hoy al Sáhara." *El País*, Madrid, 20 November 1987.
- Ozores, Pilar. "School Report of Angela Nefiri Bacale Usuru." Madrid. 5 April 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- Pan, Peter. "The Brutal Island." *Sunday Times*. Lagos, 18 February 1962.

- Pepple, Isaac. "Free Ticket to Hell." *Drum*. Lagos, April 1957.
- Pineda Barrantes, María Inés. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Aranjuez, 28 May 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- POLISARIO. "La opinión de las masas." *Boletín* 4 (1976). From the SADR National Archive, Rabuni, Algeria.
- Provincial Director of the Training and Youth Participation Department. "Cuestionario de actividades de los círculos de juventudes." El Aaiún. 27 September 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.
- Provincial Director of the Training and Youth Participation Department. "Actividades para la juventud del Sahara, Curso 1974-75, Trimestre Primero." El Aaiún. October 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.
- Radiotelevisión de Sahara via Radio Argel. "La Voz del Sahara Libre." Algeria. 15 January 1976.
- Sahara Section of the General Government of the Canaries. "Motivos de descontento en el barrio llamado 'Casas de Piedra.'" El Aaiún. 14 January 1975. Document available as an attachment to Barona, 1998.
- Saharawi Women, document addressed to the Spanish colonial government signed "Mujeres saharauis," El Aaiún, 12 October 1975. AGA, Fondo de Cultura, Caja 2877.
- Secretary of the *Patronato*. "Comparencia." Santa Isabel, Fernando Po. 8 June 1937, AGA 81/08527.
- Secretary of the *Patronato*. "Comparencia." Santa Isabel, Fernando Po. 9 June 1937, AGA 81/08527.
- Secretary of the *Patronato*. "Comparencia." Santa Isabel, 23 June 1937, AGA 81/08527.
- Spanish Administration. "Nota informativa al Gobierno General de Sahara." El Aaiún 7 July 1975. Document from Fondo Documental del Sahara (Luís Rodríguez de Viguri y Gil), currently held at *Fundación Sur*.
- Spanish and French states. "Convenio entre España y Francia (Africa Occidental – Costa del Sahara, Golfo de Guinea), 27 March 1900." Paris: Gaceta de Madrid, 30 March 1900.
- Spanish Government South Delegation. "Nota informativa a delegación gubernativa sur." Villa Cisneros. 24 January 1975. Document from Fondo Documental del Sahara (Luís Rodríguez de Viguri y Gil), currently held at *Fundación Sur*.
- Sunyer, María Nieves. "Informe de la inspección a Rio Muni realizada por la regidora central de juventudes del 4 al 8 de Marzo de 1965." Bata. 8 March 1965, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.

- Sunyer, María Nieves. "Informe de la inspección a Fernando Poo realizada por la regidora central de juventudes del 4 al 8 de Marzo de 1965." Santa Isabel, 17 March 1965, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.
- Tentor, Concha. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 26 February 1966. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- Tentor, Concha. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 17 April 1967. AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- The Provincial Delegate. Communication regarding the closure of the Women's Section. El Aaiún, 29 October 1975, AGA (3) 51.10 Caja 241.
- United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). "'Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Spanish Sahara, 1975" in the Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples." 1975.
- Women's Section. "Informe general, catedra de Smara, 13 January to 13 June." Smara. No date, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.
- Women's Section. "Proyecto de curso en regimen de internado para muchachas o señoras casadas, nativas de las provincias africanas." Madrid. December 1964, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 244.
- Women's Section. "Informe Escolar de Adela Ntang Nben, 1966-67." Castellón. 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- Women's Section. "Informe Escolar de Carmen Eyenga Mba-Oyana, 1966-67." Castellón. 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- Women's Section. "Sección Femenina." Santa Isabel. March 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- Women's Section. "Informe Escolar de Rosario Tomos Coffi." Heroínas de los Sitios School, Gerona. 4 March 1967, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- Women's Section. Letter to Soledad de Santiago, Santa Isabel, 11 March 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- Women's Section. "Informe Escolar de Florentina Ntutumu Nchama." Las Navas del Marques School, Avila. 11 April 1968, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 246.
- Women's Section. "Informe e evaluación de actividades." Villa Cisneros. October 1972, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.
- Women's Section. "Informe y Evaluación curso 1972 – 1973." Villa Cisneros. 8 June 1973, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.

- Women's Section. "Informe general de la Escuela Hogar de Villa Cisneros, Curso 1973-1974." Villa Cisneros. 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.
- Women's Section. "Informe que presenta la delegada provincial de la Sección Femenina, de los hechos ocurridos en el Taller Escuela a este Gobierno General de Sahara." El Aaiún. January 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.
- Women's Section. "Informe sobre situación en el Taller-Escuela 'Confecciones Sahara.'" El Aaiún. 6 February 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 239.
- Women's Section. "Nota Informativa sobre las actividades que la Sección Femenina realiza en el Sahara." December 1974, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.
- Women's Section. "Junta quincenal de directoras de departamento." El Aaiún. 20 March 1975, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 237.
- Women's Section, "Informe correspondiente a la labor realizada por el departamento de promoción el 1er Semestre de 1975," El Aaiún, June 1975. AGA, *Fondo de Cultura*, Caja 2877.
- Women's Section. "Informe que presenta la delegación nacional de la Sección Femenina sobre las actividades con especial relieve." Madrid, July 1975, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 236.
- Women's Section, no title [handwritten notes on plane paper], El Aaiún, 23 October 1975, AGA (3) 51.19 Caja 241.

Referenced secondary archival sources

- Aymemí, Antonio. *Los bubis en Fernando Poo: colección de los artículos publicados en la revista colonial "La Guinea Española."* Madrid: Galo Sáez, 1942.
- Cervera, Julio. "Viaje de exploración por el Sahara Occidental. Estudios geográficos." In *La reunión ordinaria de 2 de Noviembre de 1886, de Boletín Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid, Tomo XXII, primer semestre de 1887.* Madrid, 1886.
- Doménech Lafuente, Angel. "Sahara Español. Del vivir nómada de las tribus." *Cuaderno de Estudios Africanos* 21, no. January to March (1953): 31-43.
- Foreign Office of the British Government. "Spanish Guinea." *Peace Handbooks* 20, no. 125 (1920): 1-60.
- Gaudio, Attilio. "Apuntes para un estudio sobre los aspectos etnológicos del Sáhara Occidental. Su constitución básica." *Cuaderno de estudios africanos* 19, no. July-September (1952): 57-65.

- Pélissier, René. *Los territorios españoles de Africa*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1964.
- Río Joan, Francisco del. *África Occidental Española (Sáhara y Guinea) : memoria elevada al Excmo. Señor Ministro de Estado por el Comandante de ingenieros D. Francisco del Río Joan*. Madrid: Ministerio de Estado, Sección Colonial, 1915.
- Saavedra y Magdalena, Diego. *España en el Africa Occidental (Río de Oro y Guinea)*. Madrid: Imprenta Artística Española, 1910.
- Sola, Emilio. *Sahara Occidental: viaje al país de la esperanza*. Madrid: Editorial Molinos de Agua, 1981.
- Soler, Bartolome. "Cien días en el Sahara Español." In archives of the Institute of African Studies (Madrid National Library). Madrid, (14 January 1953): 43-58.
- Tabernerero Chacobo, Hermenegildo. *Legislación de A.O.E.: recopilación legislativa, por orden cronológico, de África Occidental Española (Territorios de Ifni y Sahara)*. Madrid: Selecciones Gráficas, 1947.
- Tessmann, Günther. *Los Pamues (Los Fang). Monografía etnológica de una rama de las tribus negras del Africa Occidental*. Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2003 (first published 1913).
- UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. "Equatorial Guinea: Current Conditions." London. 1979.
- United Nations. "International Forum on the Role of Women in Population and Development." Virginia, 1974.

Other references

- Aayache, Fatma. "Death was better than being raped!!!" Union of Saharawi Writers and Journalists, 23 June 2007.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 783-90.
- Accad, Evelyn. "Sexuality and Sexual Politics: Conflicts and Contradictions for Contemporary Women in the Middle East." In *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, edited by Valentine Moghadam, 237-50. London: Zed Books, 1994.

- Aderinto, Saheed. "Journey to Work: Transnational Prostitution in Colonial British West Africa." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 24, no. 1 (2015): 99-124.
- Afrol News. "Moroccan Life Guard to Leave Equatorial Guinea." http://www.afrol.com/News2001/eqg001_moroccan_guard.htm, 10 January 2000 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Agger, Inger. "Sexual Torture of Prisoners: An Overview." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 2, no. 3 (1989): 305-18.
- Agger, Inger, and Jensen, Søren Buus. "Testimony as Ritual and Evidence in Psychotherapy for Political Refugees." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 3, no. 1 (1990): 115-30.
- Aguayo, Michelle. "Representation of Muslim Bodies in 'The Kingdom:' Deconstructing Discourses in Hollywood." *Global Media Journal* 2, no. 2 (2009): 41-56.
- Aixelà Cabré, Yolanda. "Africanas en el mundo contemporáneo: las mujeres de Guinea Ecuatorial." Unpublished, 2009: 1-16.
- Al-Ali, Nadje, and Pratt, Nicola. "Between Nationalism and Women's Rights: the Kurdish Women's Movement in Iraq." *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 4, no. 3 (2011): 339-55.
- Al-Ali, Nadje. "Gendering the Arab Spring." *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5 (2012): 26-31.
- Al-Ali, Nadje, and Pratt, Nicola. *What Kind of Liberation? Women and the Occupation in Iraq*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- Al-Rasheed, Madawi. *A Most Masculine State: Gender, Politics, and Religion in Saudi Arabia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Allan, Joanna. "Gender Equality and the Politics of Representation in the Western Sahara." University of Leeds, BA Honours thesis, 2006.
- Allan, Joanna. "Representations of Gender in Saharawi Nationalist Discourse(s)." University of Leeds, 2008.
- Allan, Joanna. "Imagining Saharawi women: the question of gender in POLISARIO discourse." *Journal of North African Studies* 15, no. 2 (2010): 189-202.
- Allan, Joanna. Fieldnotes. El Aaiún 18 August - 2 September 2014.
- Allan, Joanna, and Lakhal, Hamza. "Acting With Impunity: Morocco's Human Rights Violations in Western Sahara and the Silence of the International Community." Oslo. April 2015.
- Allan, Joanna, and Lakhal, Hamza. "Annex: Human Rights Violations in Western Sahara." Oslo. April 2015.
- Allan, Joanna. Fieldnotes. Malabo. 13 June - 1 July 2015.

- Allan, Joanna. "Risks, 'White Lies,' and the Academic as Activist: Attempting Feminist Fieldwork in Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara." In *Sixth European African Studies Conference*. The Sorbonne, Paris, 10 July 2015.
- Allan, Joanna. "Education as Resistance: Saharawi Students Organizing in Morocco." *Tadween*. 18 November 2015.
- Allan, Joanna. Fieldnotes. Algeria. 8 - 15 December 2015.
- Allan, Joanna. "Natural Resources and Intifada: Oil, Phosphates and Resistance to Colonialism in Western Sahara." *Journal of North African Studies* 21, no. 4 (2016): 645-666.
- Amadiume, Ifi. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. London: Zed Books, 1987.
- Amnesty International. "Amnesty International Briefing: Morocco." London. 1977.
- Amnesty International. "Morocco/Western Sahara: Kelthoum Ahmed Labid El-Ouanat Prisoner of Conscience." Available at <http://www.arso.org/08-12.htm>. 1996 (accessed 14 June 2015).
- Amnesty International. "Report of an Amnesty International Mission to the Kingdom of Morocco." London. 1982.
- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea: Arrests of Pro-Democracy Activists - A Changing Pattern of Human Rights Violations." 1 November 1991.
- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea. Torture and legal concern: over 100 people including Celestino Bacale, Pedro Esono, Maximio Miko, Arsenio Moro, Angel Obama." 22 December 1992.
- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea. Arrest of a Possible Prisoner of Conscience/Fear of Ill-Treatment: Pilar Mañana." 14 June 1992.
- Amnesty International. "Morocco: Breaking the Wall of Silence: the 'Disappeared' in Morocco." 13 April 1993.
- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea: A Missed Opportunity to Restore Respect for Human Rights." 1 February 1994.
- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea: A Dismal Record of Broken Promises." July 1995.
- Amnesty International. "Morocco and Western Sahara. Fear of Torture/Unfair Trial: Ahmed El Kouri, Nebt Ramdane Bouchraya, Arbi Brahim Baba, Cheykhatou Bouh, M'Rabih Rabou Neysan, Abdelhay Lekhal, Mahfoud Brahim Dahou, Salama Ahmed Lembarki, all male, aged 18-20." 5 July 1995.
- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea: An Opportunity to Put an End to Impunity." 30 June 1997.

- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea: A Country Subject to Terror and Harassment." 1 January 1999.
- Amnesty International. "Morocco/Western Sahara. 'Turning the Page:' Achievements and Obstacles." 3 August 1999.
- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea: No Free Flow of Information." 5 June 2000.
- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea: A Parody of a Trial in Order to Crush the Opposition." 30 June 2002.
- Amnesty International. "Morocco/Western Sahara: Briefing to the Committee against Torture." 11 November 2003.
- Amnesty International. "Western Sahara/Morocco: Torture of Detainees Must End." 24 June 2004.
- Amnesty International. "Morocco/Western Sahara: Justice Must Begin with Torture Enquiries." 22 June 2005.
- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea: Fear of Forced Evictions/Fear of Excessive Force." 14 November 2006.
- Amnesty International. "Morocco/Western Sahara: The Grueling Experience of One Sahrawi HRD." 18 April 2007.
- Amnesty International. "Los Desalojos Forzados Violan los Derechos Humanos." 20 June 2007.
- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea: Woman Held in Prison Cell with up to 100 Male Detainees." 14 February 2008.
- Amnesty International. "Equatorial Guinea: Further Information on Detention without Charge or Trial/Harsh Detention Conditions, Brígida Asongsua Elo." 30 April 2008.
- Amnesty International. "Morocco Must Allow Human Rights Activist Aminatou Haidar to Return Home." 10 December 2009.
- Amnesty International. "Rights Trampled: Protests, Violence and Repression in Western Sahara." December 2010.
- Amnesty International. "Morocco/Western Sahara: Moroccan Authorities Must Respect Freedom of Assembly." 3 April 2013.
- Amnesty International. "Continued Institutional and Key Human Rights Concerns in Equatorial Guinea: Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, May 2014." October 2013.
- Anagol, Padma. *The Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850-1920*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2005.

- Anagol, Padma. "From the Symbolic to the Open: Women's Resistance in Colonial Maharashtra." In *Behind the Veil: Resistance, Women, and the Everyday in Colonial South Asia*, edited by Ghosh Anindita, 21-57. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006.
- Anholt, Simon. "Should Place Brands Be Simple?" *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 5, no. 2 (2009): 91-96.
- Appel, Hannah. "Offshore Work: Oil, Modularity, and the How of Capitalism in Equatorial Guinea." *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 4 (2012): 692-709.
- Appel, Hannah. "Walls and White Elephants: Oil Extraction, Responsibility, and Infrastructural Violence in Equatorial Guinea." *Ethnography* 13, no. 4 (2012): 439-65.
- Arija Martinez de Espinosa, Julio. *La Guinea Española y sus Riquezas*. Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1930.
- Arnold, David. "Rebellious Hillmen: The Gudem-Rampa Risings 1839-1924." In *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, edited by Ranajit Guha, 88-142. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Arso. "Weekly News." <http://www.arso.org/01-e-44.htm>, 5 November 1995.
- Artucio, Alejandro. *The Trial of Macías in Equatorial Guinea. The Story of a Dictatorship*. Geneva: International Commission of Jurists and International University Exchange Fund, 1979.
- Åse, Cecilia. "Crisis Narratives and Masculinist Protection: Gendering the Original Stockholm Syndrome." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 17, no. 4 (2015): 595-610.
- Avila Laurel, Juan Tomás. *By Night the Mountain Burns*. Translated by Jethro Soutar. London: And Other Stories, 2014.
- Aworawo, David. "Decisive Thaw: The Changing Pattern of Relations between Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea, 1980-2005." *Journal of International and Global Studies* 1, no. 2 (2010): 89-109.
- Baba Miské, Ahmed. *Front Polisario: L'âme d'un peuple*. Paris: Editions rupture, 1978.
- Bahati Kuumba, M. *Gender and Social Movements*. Walnut Creek and Oxford: Altamira Press, 2001.
- Bahati Kuumba, M. "African Women, Resistance Cultures and Cultural Resistances." *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 68, no. 112-121 (2006).
- Ballano Gonzalo, Fernando. *Aquel Negro de África tropical: el colonialismo en Guinea (1778-1968)*. Madrid: Sial Ediciones, 2014.

- Bárbulo, Tomás. *La historia prohibida del Sáhara Español*. Barcelona: Ediciones Destino S.A., 2002.
- Barca, Salka, and Zunes, Stephen. "Nonviolent Struggle in Western Sahara." In *Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance in the Middle East*, edited by Maria J. Stephan, 157-68. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Barker, Gary, and Ricardo, C. "Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence." Washington. 2005.
- Barona Castañeda, Claudia. "Memorias de una resistencia. La otra historia del Sahara Occidental." <http://emam.revues.org/859>, 1 January 2015.
- Barona Castañeda, Claudia. "Sahara Al Garbia (1958-1976)." Autonomous University of Madrid, PhD thesis, 1998.
- Barrett, Stanley R. *Anthropology: A Student's Guide to Theory and Method*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
- Bayard de Volo, Lorraine. "A Revolution in the Binary? Gender and the Oxymoron of Revolutionary War in Cuba and Nicaragua." *Signs* 37, no. 2 (2012): 413-39.
- BBC News. "Equatorial Guinea's "God"" <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3098007.stm>, 26 July 2003 (accessed 23 May 2016).
- Benderly, Jill. "Rape, Feminism and Nationalism in the War in Yugoslav Successor States." In *Feminist Nationalism*, edited by Lois A. West, 59-72. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Bengochea Tirado, Enrique. "La movilización nacionalista saharai y las mujeres durante el último periodo colonial español." *Revista Historia Autónoma* 3 (2013): 113-28.
- Bengochea Tirado, Enrique. "Las mujeres saharais a través de la Sección Femenina, un Sujeto Colonizado." *Arenal* 19, no. 1 (2012): 143-59.
- Bengochea Tirado, Enrique. "Mujeres, nacionalismo y políticas coloniales en la provincia de Sáhara (1958-1975)." <http://diasporasaharai-es.blogspot.co.uk/2014/07/mujeres-nacionalismo-y-politicas.html>, 2014.
- Bengochea Tirado, Enrique. "Políticas Imperiales y Género: la Sección Femenina en la Provincia de Sahara (1961-1975)," PhD Thesis in Contemporary History, University of Valencia, June 2016.
- Bengochea Tirado, Enrique. "La 'Sección Femenina' dans la province du Sahara Espagnol (1961-1975)," presented at *La question (irrésolue) du Sahara Occidental: quels enjeux pour quelles recherches en sciences humaines et sociales ?*, Sorbonne, Paris, 2-3 June 2016.

- Berg, Bruce L. *Qualitative Research for the Social Sciences*. Boston: Pearson Educational Inc., 2007.
- Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage Publications, 1995.
- Bjarnegård, Elin and Melander, Erik. "Disentangling Gender, Peace and Democratization: the Negative Effects of Militarized Masculinity." *Journal of Gender Studies* 20, no. 2 (2011): 139-54.
- Bloor, Meriel, and Bloor, Thomas. *The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*. London: Hodder Arnold, 2007.
- Bogdewic, Stephen P. "Participant Observation." In *Doing Qualitative Research*, edited by Benjamin F. Crabtree, and Miller, William L., 47-70. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1999.
- Boicha, Limam, "Mitología", available at <http://literaturasaharai.blogspot.co.uk/2008/04/los-versos-de-la-madera-limam-boicha.html> (accessed 30 April 2016).
- Bolekia Boleká, Justo. *Aproximación a la Historia de Guinea Ecuatorial*. Salamanca: Amarú Ediciones, 2003.
- Borrel, Prisca. "El Ghalia Djimi, militante sahraouie en territoire occupé." *Haut Courant*, <http://www.hautcourant.com/El-Ghalia-Djimi-militante,599>, 8 January 2009 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Bouatta, Cherifa. "Feminine Militancy: Moujahidates During and After the Civil War." In *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, edited by V. Moghadam, 18-39. London: Zed Books, 1994.
- Boulay, Sébastien. "'Returnees' and Political Poetry in Western Sahara: Defamation, Deterrance and Mobilisation on the Web and Mobile Phones." *Journal of North African Studies* 21, no.4 (2016): 667-686.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Brahim, Aziza. "Q&A: Aziza Brahim." Interview by Steven Johnson (2014).
- Brown, Gavin, and Pickerill, Jenny. "Space for Emotion in the Space of Activism." *Emotion, Space and Society* 2 (2009): 24-35.
- Brownmiller, Susan. *Against Our Will – Men, Women and Rape*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1975.
- Bryant-Davis, Thema. *Surviving Sexual Violence: A Guide to Recovery and Empowerment*. Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.
- Burrows, Nina, and Horvath, Tessa. "The Rape and Sexual Assault of Men - A Review of the Literature." London. 2013.

- Buscant llavors. "Tontines: la soberanía financiera de las mujeres africanas."
<http://www.ifeelmaps.com/blog/2015/06/tontines--la-soberania-financiera-de-las-mujeres-africanas>, June 2015 (accessed 25 May 2016).
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Callaghan, Jane EM, Gambo, Yaganama, and Fellin, Lisa C. "Hearing the Silences: Adult Nigerian Women's Accounts of 'Early Marriages.'" *Feminism and Psychology* 25, no. 4 (2015): 506-27.
- Calvo, Juan María. "Guinea Ecuatorial: La ocasión perdida." Available at
<http://www.asodegue.org/hdojmc.htm>, 1989 (accessed 2 August 2015).
- Camacho, Ana. "Los 'ninjas' toman posiciones en Guinea Ecuatorial, *El País*, 15 August 1993. Available online at
http://elpais.com/diario/1993/08/15/internacional/745365612_850215.html (accessed 8 August 2016).
- Campos Serrano, Alicia. "The Decolonization of Equatorial Guinea: The Relevance of the International Factor." *Journal of African History* 44 (2003): 95-116.
- Campos Serrano, Alicia. "Nacionalismo anticolonial en Guinea Ecuatorial: de españoles a guineanos." *Araucaria* 5, no. 9 (2003): 1-16.
- Campos Serrano, Alicia. "Extraction Offshore, Politics Inshore, and the Role of the State in Equatorial Guinea." *The Journal of the International African Institute* 83, no. 2 (2013): 314-39.
- Campos Serrano, Alicia, and Abogo, Plácido Micó. "Labour and Trade Union Freedom in Equatorial Guinea." Madrid. 2006.
- Caratini, Sophie. "La prisión del tiempo: los cambios sociales en los campamentos de refugiados saharauis." *Cuadernos Bakeaz* 77 (2006): 1-21.
- Caratini, Sophie. *Hijos de las nubes*. Madrid: Ediciones del Oriente y del Mediterráneo, 2008.
- Castro, Marisé. "Equatorial Guinea." In *Africa South of the Sahara, 33rd Edition*, edited by Katherine Murison, 373-86. London: Europa Publications, 2004.
- Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.). "The World Fact Book: Equatorial Guinea."
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ek.html>, 29 April 2014 (accessed 9 June 2014).
- Chadya, Joyce M. "Mother Politics: Anti-Colonial Nationalism and the Women Question in Africa." *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 3 (2003): 153-57.

- Chandra, Uday. "Rethinking Subaltern Resistance." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 45, no. 4 (2015): 563-73.
- Chatterjee, Partha. "Agrarian Relations and Communalism in Bengal, 1926-1935." In *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* edited by Ranajit Guha, 9-38. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Chaudhuri, Nupur, and Strobel, Margaret, ed. *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Cherifati-Merabtine, Doria. "Algeria at a Crossroads: National Liberation, Islamization and Women." In *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, edited by V. Moghadam, 40-62. London: Zed Books, 1994.
- Cienfuegos, A.J., and Monelli, C. "The Testimony of Political Repression as a Therapeutic Instrument." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 53, no. 1 (1983): 43-51.
- Clarence-Smith, William G. "Spanish Equatorial Guinea, 1898-1940." In *The Cambridge History of Africa: From 1905 to 1940*, edited by Arthur D. Roberts, 537-44. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Clement, Victoria. "Articulating National Identity in Turkmenistan: Inventing Tradition Through Myth, Cult and Language." *Nations and Nationalism* 20, no. 3 (2014): 546-62.
- Cockburn, Cynthia. "The Continuum of Violence." In *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, edited by Wenona Giles, and Hyndman, Jennifer, 23-44. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). "CEDAW 31st Session. Summary record of the 652nd meeting." New York: United Nations, 2004.
- Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). "Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 18 of CEDAW: Equatorial Guinea." 1-36. New York: United Nations, 2011.
- Comunello, Francesca, and Anzera, Giuseppe. "Will the Revolution be Tweeted? A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Social Media and the Arab Spring." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 23, no. 4 (2012): 453-70.
- Correale, Francesco. "La 'última guerra colonial' de España y la literatura militar entre memoria y conocimiento." At *Seventh African Studies Congress*, 1-19. Lisbon, 2010.
- Court of Justice of the European Union. 21 December 2016. Appeal - Agreement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco concerning liberalisation measures on agricultural and fishery products. In *Case C-104/16 P*, edited by Court of Justice of the European Union. curia.europa.eu/juris: InfoCuria.

- Couturier, Don. "The Rape of Men: Eschewing Myths of Sexual Violence in War." *On Politics* 6, no. 2 (2012): 1-15.
- Crawford, Kerry F., Hoover Green, Amelia, and Parkinson, Sarah E. "Wartime Sexual Violence is not just a 'Weapon of War.'" *The Washington Post*. 24 September 2014.
- Crenshaw, K.W. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: a Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." In *The Politics of Law: A Progressive Critique*, edited by D. Kairys, 195-217. New York: Pantheon, 1990.
- Crenshaw, K.W. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." In *The Public Nature of Private Violence*, edited by M. and Mykitiuk Albertson Fineman, R, 93-118. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Critchley, Simon, and Marchart, Oliver. "Introduction." In *Laclau: A Critical Reader*, edited by Simon Critchley, and Marchart, Oliver, 1-14. Oxford: Routledge, 2004.
- Cusack, Igor. "Being Away from 'Home:' The Equatorial Guinean Diaspora." *The Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 17, no. 1 (1999): 29-48.
- Cusack, Igor. "'Equatorial Guinea's National Cuisine is Simple and Tasty:' Cuisine and the Making of National Culture." *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 8 (2004): 131-48.
- Cusack, Igor. "Nation-Builders at Work: The Equatoguinean 'Myth' of Bantu Unity." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 7, no. 3 (2001): 77-97.
- Dafa, Lehdia. "En el Día de la Mujer, recuerdo y homenaje a las pioneras de la sanidad saharai." *Personal blog of Lehdia Mohamed Dafa*. 7 March 2015 (accessed 1 May 2015).
- Darkoa, Nana. "Standing on African Feminist Land: Personal Reflections on the 4th African Feminist Forum." AWID, <http://www.forum.awid.org/forum16/posts/standing-african-feminist-land> 2016 (accessed 8 May 2016).
- Dawson, Marcelle C. "Protest, Performance and Politics: the Use of 'Nano-Media' in Social Movement Activism in South Africa." *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 17, no. 3 (2012): 321-45.
- De Castro, Mayka. "El colonialismo franquista en Guinea Ecuatorial: una lectura crítica en clave decolonial." University of Granada, Masters thesis, September 2013.
- De Cordier, Bruno. "On the Thin Line between Good Intentions and Creating Tensions: A View on Gender Programmes in Muslim Contexts and the (Potential) Position of Islamic Aid Organisations." *European Journal of Development Research* 22, no. 2 (2010): 234-251.

- De Dalmases, Pablo Ignacio. *La esclavitud en el Sáhara Occidental*. Barcelona: Ediciones Carena, 2012.
- Decker, Alicia C. *In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda*. Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2014.
- Democracy Now! "'The Genie Is Out of the Bottle:' Assessing a Changing Arab World with Noam Chomsky and Al Jazeera's Marwan Bishara." http://www.democracynow.org/2011/2/17/the_genies_are_out_of_the, 17 February 2011 (accessed 25 May 2016).
- Deubel, Tara Flynn, "Between Homeland and Exile: Poetry, Memory, and Identity in Sahrawi Communities." Dissertation: Doctor of Philosophy, School of Anthropology, University of Arizona, 2010.
- Deubel, Tara Flynn. "Poetics of Diaspora: Sahrawi Poets and Postcolonial Transformations of a Trans-Saharan Genre in Northwest Africa." *Journal of North African Studies* 17, no. 2 (2012): 295-314.
- Deubel, Tara Flynn. "Mediascapes of Human Rights: Emergent Forms of Digital Activism for the Western Sahara," *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 5, no.3 (2015): 5-19.
- Diario Rombe. "La alcaldesa se hace dueña del nuevo mercado de Malabo." <http://www.diariorombe.es/la-alcaldesa-se-hace-duena-del-nuevo-mercado-de-malabo/>, 6 August 2013 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Diario Rombe. "La policía detiene a un "homosexual" y taxista y los exhiben en la TVA." <http://www.diariorombe.es/la-policia-detiene-un-homosexual-y-taxista-y-los-exhiben-en-la-tva/>, 7 April 2014 (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Diario Rombe. "Liberada en Palma una menor guineana que estaba siendo explotada sexualmente." <http://www.diariorombe.es/liberada-palma-una-menor-guineana-estaba-siendo-explotada-sexualmente/>, 2 May 2016 (accessed 15 May 2016).
- Diario Rombe, "Descarga los proyectos de ley que regulan el matrimonio tradicional en Guinea Ecuatorial." <http://www.diariorombe.es/descarga-los-proyectos-de-ley-que-regulan-el-matrimonio-tradicional-en-guinea-ecuatorial/> 27 May 2014, (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Diken, Bülent, and Bagge Lausten, Carsten. "Becoming Abject: Rape as a Weapon of War." *Body and Society* 11, no. 1 (2005): 111-28.
- Dyombe Dyangani, Cristina. *Identidad cultural ndowe*. New York: Ndowe International Press, 2008.
- EG Justice. "Human Rights Annual Report of Equatorial Guinea." Washington, DC. 2015.

- EG Justice. "Presidential Elections 2016 to Entrench Dictatorship."
<http://www.egjustice.org/post/presidential-elections-2016-entrench-dictatorship>, 18
 March 2016 (accessed 2 May 2016).
- EG Justice. "Equatorial Guinea: Ensure Media Freedom."
<http://www.egjustice.org/post/equatorial-guinea-ensure-media-freedom>, 12 April
 2016 (accessed 2 May 2016).
- EG Justice. "Opposition Party Boycotts Presidential Elections."
<http://www.egjustice.org/post/opposition-party-boycotts-presidential-elections>, 18
 April 2016 (accessed 2 May 2016).
- EG Justice. "Severe Crackdown on Opposition and Media."
<http://www.egjustice.org/post/severe-crackdown-opposition-and-media-0>, 20 April
 2016 (accessed 2 May 2016).
- EG Justice. "Democracy Held Hostage." [http://www.egjustice.org/post/democracy-held-](http://www.egjustice.org/post/democracy-held-hostage)
[hostage](http://www.egjustice.org/post/democracy-held-hostage), 25 April 2016 (accessed 2 May 2016).
- Eichler, Maya. *Militarizing Men: Gender, Conscription, and War in Post-Soviet Russia*.
 Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2011.
- Eke, Kola. "Responses to Patriarchy in African Women's Poetry." *Matatu*, no. 41 (2013): 3-18.
- El Mundo*. "Teodoro Obiang agradece al rey su influencia para participar en un acto en el
 Cervantes en Bruselas."
<http://www.elmundo.es/espana/2014/04/01/533a997522601dcf748b4572.html> 1
 April 2014 (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Ela Ondo Onguene, Clemente. "The Chinese Embassy Offers a Special Reception for the
 International Day of Women." Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and
 Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=1400>, 12
 March 2011 (accessed 28 May 2014).
- Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom. "Equatorial Guinea
 Meets with BG Group in London to Discuss Plans to Apply to the EITI."
[http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/equatorial-guinea-meets-with-bg-](http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/equatorial-guinea-meets-with-bg-group-to-discuss-plans-to-apply-to-the-eiti/)
[group-to-discuss-plans-to-apply-to-the-eiti/](http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/equatorial-guinea-meets-with-bg-group-to-discuss-plans-to-apply-to-the-eiti/) 3 March 2014 (accessed 1 April 2014).
- Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom, "UK-Based Maritime
 Supplier Opens Facility in Equatorial Guinea,"
[http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/uk-based-maritime-supplier-opens-](http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/uk-based-maritime-supplier-opens-facility-in-equatorial-guinea/)
[facility-in-equatorial-guinea/](http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/uk-based-maritime-supplier-opens-facility-in-equatorial-guinea/), 4 December 2014, (accessed 2 March 2016).

- Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom, "Chatham House Hosts Symposium on Development in Equatorial Guinea,"
<http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/chatham-house-hosts-symposium-on-development-in-equatorial-guinea/> 27 February 2015 (accessed 2 March 2016).
- Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom, "Webinar on Investment Opportunities in Equatorial Guinea Takes Place in the United Kingdom,"
<http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/webinar-on-investment-opportunities-in-equatorial-guinea-takes-place-in-the-united-kingdom/>, 30 July 2015 (accessed 2 March 2016).
- Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom. "The Embassy of Equatorial Guinea to Host the Africa Day in London."
<http://www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk/the-embassy-of-equatorial-guinea-to-host-the-africa-day-in-london/> 29 January 2016 (accessed 2 March 2016).
- Enloe, Cynthia. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. London: Pandora Press, 1988.
- Enloe, Cynthia. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. London: Pandora Press, 1989.
- Enloe, Cynthia. *Nimo's War, Emma's War*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010.
- Erikson, Thomas Hylland, and Nielsen, Finn Sivert. *A History of Anthropology*. London: Pluto Press, 2001.
- Errazzouki, Samia. "Working-Class Women Revolt: Gendered Political Economy in Morocco." *The Journal of North African Studies* 19, no. 2 (2014): 259-67.
- Errer Bouzeid, Aminetou. "Sexismo en la sociedad saharai actual: Un acercamiento a la sociedad saharai desde el trato a sus mujeres. Propuesta de intervención." University of Zaragoza, Masters thesis, 2015.
- Espacios Europeos. "La activista guineana Clara Nsegue Eyi, Lola, continua todavía en Mongomo (Guinea Ecuatorial)." http://espacioseuropeos.com/la-activista-guineana-clara-nsegue-eyi-lola-continua-todavia-en-mongomo-guinea-ecuatorial/?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter, 2013 (accessed 16 October 2013).
- Espacios Europeos. "La policía de Guinea Ecuatorial detiene a un homosexual y el gobierno lo exhibe en la televisión como si fuera un trofeo."
<http://espacioseuropeos.com/54707/la-policia-de-guinea-ecuatorial-detiene-a-un->

- homosexual-y-el-gobierno-lo-exhibe-en-la-television-como-si-fuera-un-trofeo/, 14 April 2014, (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Espín, Vilma, de los Santos, Adela, and Ferrer, Yolanda. *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution within the Revolution. From Santiago de Cuba and the Rebel Army, to the Birth of the Federation of Cuban Women*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 2012.
- Esteban, Mario. "The Chinese *Amigo*: Implications for the Development of Equatorial Guinea." *The China Quarterly* 199 (2009): 667-685.
- Eteo Soriso, José Francisco. *Cancionero tradicional de Bioko*. Barcelona: Ceiba Ediciones, 2008.
- European Commission. "Gender Equality: Encouraging First Results of EU Gender Action Plan in Developing Countries," http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-1557_en.htm, 15 December 2011 (accessed 23 June 2016).
- European Commission. "European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations," http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/morocco/index_en.htm, 23 June 2016 (accessed 23 June 2016).
- European External Action Service. "L'Union européenne appuie l'égalité des genres au Maroc," http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/morocco/press_corner/all_news/news/2012/2012_0703_fr.htm, 3 July 2012 (accessed 23 June 2016).
- Fairclough, Norman. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Essex: Longman Group Ltd, 1995.
- Fanon, Franz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. London: Penguin Classics, 2001.
- Farah, Randa. "Oral History in the Palestinian and Saharawi Contexts: A Comparative Approach." *Al Majdal*, 2006.
- Fariza, Ignacio. "El Instituto Cervantes y la UNED invitan en Bruselas al dictador Obiang." *El País*. 19 March 2014.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. "The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough." *The Sciences* 20, no. 4 (1992): 20-25.
- Fernandez, James W. *Bwiti: an Ethnography of the Religious Imagination in Africa*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.
- Fiddian-Qasimiyeh, Elena. *The Ideal Refugees. Gender, Islam, and the Sahrawi Politics of Survival*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2013.
- First, Ruth. *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'État*. London: The Penguin Press, 1970.
- Fisher, Jo. *Mothers of the Disappeared*. London: Zed Books, 1989.

- Foot, Anne. "A Policy of Plunder: the Development and Normalisation of Neo-Patrimonialism in Equatorial Guinea." Stellenbosch University, Masters thesis, 2014.
- Fortier, Corinne. "The Right to Divorce for Women (khul') in Islam: Comparative Practices in Mauritania and Egypt." *Droits et cultures* 59 (2010): 59-83.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Foucault, Michel. "The Ethic of Care for the Self as Practice of Freedom." In *The Final Foucault*, edited by J. Bernauer, and Rasmussen, D., 1-20. Boston: MIT Press, 1988.
- Foucault, Michel. "The Life of Infamous Men." In *Michel Foucault: Power, Truth, Strategy*, edited by Meaghan Morris, and Patton, Paul, 76-91. Sydney: Feral Publications, 1979.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality*. Translated by Robert Hurley. London: Penguin Books, 1984.
- Fra-Molinero, Baltasar. "De libros: CEIBA II. Regreso al país natal." *Atanga*, 2015, 44-49.
- Fra-Molinero, Baltasar. El deber de contar y la pasión de escribir: Entrevista a María Nsue Angüe. Abacus. 10 June 2010.
- France Liberté Foundation and French Association of Friendship and Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa (AFASPA). "International Mission of Investigation in Western Sahara." Bagnolet, France. 2003.
- Freedom House. "Freedom in the World: Equatorial Guinea." <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/equatorial-guinea-0-.U5XWLdzfhg0>, 2014 (accessed 9 June 2014).
- Freedom House. "Freedom in the World: Anxious Dictators, Wavering Democracies." Washington. 2016.
- Gabo Ntseane, Peggy. "Culturally Sensitive Transformational Learning: Incorporating the Afrocentric Paradigm and African Feminism." *Adult Education Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (2011): 307-23.
- Gaite Pastor, Jesús. "El sistema de archivos de la administración central española." *Revista General de Información y Documentación* 9, no. 2 (1999): 127-36.
- Gandolfi, Nicoletta. "A Propósito del Sáhara Occidental: testimonios de los canarios que allí residieron durante el periodo colonial." *Oriente Moderno*, 1989.
- Gans, Herbert J. "Public Ethnography; Ethnography as Public Sociology," *Qualitative Sociology* 33, no. 1 (2010): 97-104.
- Geertz, Clifford. "What is a State if it is not Sovereign?". *Politics in Complicated Places* 4, no. 5 (2004): 577-93.

- Gentry, Caron E. "Twisted Maternalism: From Peace to Violence." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11, no. 2 (2009): 235-52.
- Ghosh, Anindita, ed. *Behind the Veil: Resistance, Women and the Everyday in Colonial South Asia*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Gibbs, Andrew, Tyler Crone, Elizabeth, Willan, Samantha, and Mannell, Jenevieve. "The Inclusion of Women, Girls and Gender Equality in Strategic Plans for HIV and AIDS in Southern and Eastern Africa." *Global Public Health* 10 (2012): 1120-44.
- Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. London: Harvard University, 1998.
- Gimeno Martín, Juan Carlos, and Robles Picón, Juan Ignacio. "Ambivalencia y orden colonial español en el Sahara Occidental (1969-1973)." *Revista andaluza de antropología* 5, (September 2013): 151-177.
- Global Investment Center. *Equatorial Guinea. Company Laws and Regulations Handbook. Volume 1: Strategic Information and Regulations*. Washington: Global Investment Center, 2013.
- Global Justice Now, "Profiting from Poverty, Again: DfID's Support for Privatising Education and Health," London: April 2015.
- Global Rights Alert. "Towards Balancing Gender: Women's Participation in Uganda's Oil Sector; Case of Rural Women in Four Sub Counties of Hoima and Buliisa Districts." Kampala, 2013.
- Goldblatt, Beth, and Meintjes, Shiela. "Gender and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission." South Africa. 1996.
- Golde, P. *Women in the Field: Anthropological Experiences*. London: University of California Press, 1970.
- Gómez Martín, Carmen. "Gdeim Izik. A Change in the Struggle Strategies of the Sahrawi Population." In *From Social to Political. New Forms of Mobilization and Democratization*, edited by B. Teferina, and Perugorría, I., 58-72. Bilbao: Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco 2012.
- Gorozepe, Iñaki. "Reivindicación política y particularismo en Annobón." (1995): 1-7.
- Gottschalk, Peter, and Greenberg, Gabriel. *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008.
- Government of Equatorial Guinea. "Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

- against Women. Second and Third Periodic Reports of States Parties: Equatorial Guinea." Malabo, 27 September 1995.
- Government of Equatorial Guinea. "Responses to the List of Issues and Questions for Consideration of the Combined CEDAW Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Periodic Reports: Equatorial Guinea." New York, 2004.
- Government of Equatorial Guinea, "Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Sixth Periodic Reports of States Parties: Equatorial Guinea," (New York, 2011).
- Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office. "Title Page." <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com>, No date (accessed 12 June 2014).
- Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office. "Ministry of Information, Press and Radio." <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=129>, No date (accessed 25 May 2016).
- Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office. "The Government of Equatorial Guinea." <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=126>, No date (accessed 4 June 2014).
- Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, "The President of the Spanish Government Will Attend the AU Summit in Equatorial Guinea," <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=5290> 16 June 2014 (accessed 28 April 2016).
- Graham-Brown, Sarah. "Women's Activism in the Middle East: A Historical Perspective." In *Women and Power in the Middle East*, edited by Suad Joseph, and Slymovics, Susan, 23-33. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Translated by Quentin Hoare, and Nowell Smith, Geoffrey. Edited by Quentin Hoare, and Nowell Smith, Geoffrey. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971.
- Greenburg, Jessica. "Nationalism, Masculinity and Multicultural Citizenship." *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 3 (2006): 321-41.
- Greening, Justine, "Investing in Growth: How Dfid Works in New and Emerging Markets." gov.uk: UK Government, 11 March 2013.
- Guha, Ranajit, ed. *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

- Guha, Ranajit, ed. *Subaltern Studies VI: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Guthrey, Holly L. *Victim Healing and Truth Commissions: Transforming Pain Through Voice in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste*. New York: Springer Publishing, 2015.
- Guzman Bouvard, Marguerite. *Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*. Lanham: SR Books, 1994.
- Hacene-Djaballah, Belkacem. "Conflict in Western Sahara: A Study of POLISARIO as an Insurgency Movement." The Catholic University of America, 1985.
- Haidar, Aminatou. "The Persecution of the Saharawi: The Testimony of a Human Rights Activist." In *Unilateralism and International Law with Western Sahara as a Case Study*, 266-71. Pretoria, 2008.
- Haidar, Larosi. "Prólogo." In *La esclavitud en el Sáhara Occidental*, edited by Pablo Ignacio de Dalmases, 7-13. Barcelona Ediciones Carena, 2012.
- Hammersley, Martyn, and Atkinson, Paul. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Tavistock Publications, 1983.
- Haraway, Donna. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Helms, Elissa. "Gendered Transformations of State Power: Masculinity, International Intervention and the Bosnian Police." *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 3 (2006): 343-61.
- Hernández Burgos, Claudio. *Franquismo a ras de suelo. Zonas grises, apoyos sociales y actitudes durante la dictadura (1936-1976)*. Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada, PhD thesis, 2013.
- Hill Collins, Patricia, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, (New York: Routledge, 1990)
- Hobsbawm, Eric, and Ranger, Terence, ed. 1992. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hodges, Tony. 1983. *Western Sahara: The Roots of a Desert War*. Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company.
- hooks, bell. *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. London: Pluto, 1982.
- Howarth, David. *Discourse: Concepts in the Social Sciences*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000.
- Hughes, Neil. "Democracy and Imperial Rivalry in Equatorial Guinea." *Review of African Political Economy* 23, no. 69 (1996): 442-45.

- Human Rights Watch. "Well Oiled: Oil and Human Rights in Equatorial Guinea." New York. 2009.
- Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2015: Events of 2014*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2015.
- Humm, Maggie. *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory*. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989.
- Huntington, Samuel. "A Clash of Civilisations?" *Foreign Affairs* Summer (1993): 22-49.
- Igreja, Victor, Kleijn, Wim C., Schreuder, Bas J.N., Van Dijk, Janie A., and Verschuur, Margot. "Testimony Method to Alleviate Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms: Community-based Intervention Study with Mozambican Civil War Survivors." *British Journal of Psychiatry* 184 (2004): 251-57.
- International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Republic of Equatorial Guinea: IMF Country Report," No.15/260, Washington, D.C., (September 2015): 1-65.
- Isidoros, Konstantina. "The Silencing of Unifying Tribes: The Colonial Construction of Tribe and its 'Extraordinary Leap' to Nascent Nation-State Formation in Western Sahara." *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* (2015): 168-90.
- Jackson, Lawrence. "President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama Pose for a Photo during a Reception at the Metropolitan Museum in New York with Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and his Wife, First Lady Constancia Mangué de Obiang." The White House, 2009.
- Jackson, Robert H., Rosberg, Carl G. *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- Jiwani, Yasmin. "Trapped in the Carceral Net: Race, Gender, and the 'War on Terror.'" *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition* 4, no. 2 (2011): 13-31.
- Joseph, Suad, ed. *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000.
- Joseph, Suad. "Women and Politics in the Middle East." In *Women and Politics in the Middle East*, edited by Suad Joseph, and Slymovics, Susan. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Joseph, Suad, and Slymovics, Susan, ed. *Women and Power in the Middle East*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2001.
- Joseph, Suad, and Slymovics, Susan. "Introduction." In *Women and Power in the Middle East*, edited by Suad Joseph, and Slymovics, Susan, 1-19. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

- Jubber, Nick. "Salaam's Story." <http://sandblast-arts.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/salaams-story-by-nick-jubber.html>, 2012 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Kampwirth, Karen. *Women and Guerrilla Movements: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz. "Islam and Patriarchy: A Comparative Perspective." In *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, edited by Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Gilmartin, Christine, and Lydenberg, Robin, 219-35. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz. "The Politics of Gender and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Old Dilemmas or New Challenges." In *Gendered Peace: Women's Struggles for Post-War Justice and Reconciliation*, edited by Donna Pankhurst, 155-85. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Kaplan, Temma. "Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The Case of Barcelona, 1910-1918." *Signs* 7, no. 3 (1982): 545-66.
- Kaplan, Temma. "Acts of Testimony: Reversing the Shame and Gendering the Memory." *Signs* 28, no. 1 (2002): 179-99.
- Katz, Cindi. *Growing Up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Kennedy, Kerry. "Morocco has Pressured UN to Ignore Western Sahara." *The Guardian* London, 23 July 2015.
- Khalil, Andrea. "Tunisia's Women: Partners in Revolution." *The Journal of North African Studies* (2014): 1-14.
- King, Catherine. "The Politics of Representation: A Democracy of the Gaze." In *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender*, edited by Frances Bonner, Goodman, Lizbeth, Allen, Richard, Jones, Linda, and King, Catherine, 131-39. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.
- Klein, Marian van der, Plant, Rebecca Jo, Sanders, Nichole, and Weintrob, Lori R., ed. *Maternalism Reconsidered: Motherhood, Welfare and Social Policy in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2012.
- Klitgaard, Robert. *Tropical Gangsters: One Man's Experience with Development and Decadence in Deepest Africa*. USA: Basic Books, 1990.
- Kontorovich, Eugene. "Economic Dealings with Occupied Territories," *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* 53, no. 14-46 (2015): 584-637.
- Kovács, András. "The Role of a Public Identity Code in Defining the Boundaries of Public and Private." In *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis: Theory, Method and*

- Interdisciplinarity* edited by Ruth Wodak, and Chilton, Paul, 269-79. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005.
- Kreutzberger, Kai. "Single Mothers and Children Born out of Wedlock in the Kingdom of Morocco." *Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law* 14 (2008-2009): 49-82.
- La Vanguardia*. "Críticas al gobierno por la invitación del Instituto Cervantes y la UNED al dictador Obiang." <http://www.lavanguardia.com/contacto/index.html> 20 March 2014, (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Laclau, Ernesto. "Deconstruction, Pragmatism, Hegemony." In *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, edited by Chantal Mouffe, 66-83. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Laclau, Ernesto. *Emancipation(s)*. New York: Verso, 2007.
- Laclau, Ernesto, and Mouffe, Chantal. *Hegemonía y estrategia socialista: hacia una radicalización de la democracia*. Madrid: España Editores, 1987.
- Laclau, Ernesto, and Mouffe, Chantal. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso, 1985.
- Lafarga, Alfonso. "Mariam Hassan, la voz que cantó la lucha del pueblo saharauí por el mundo." <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/08/mariam-hassan-la-voz-que-canto-la-lucha-de-pueblo-saharauí-por-el-mundo/#more-6172>, 24 August 2015 (accessed 25 May 2016).
- Larrú, José María. "Foreign Aid in Equatorial Guinea: Macroeconomic Feature and Future Challenges." In *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*, 1-38. Madrid: CEU San Pablo University 2010.
- Laurence, Anne. *Women in England 1500-1760: A Social History*. London: Phoenix Press, 2002.
- Law, Victoria. *Resistance behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women*. Oakland: PM Press, 2009.
- Lewis, Marvin A. *An Introduction to the Literature of Equatorial Guinea: Between Colonialism and Dictatorship*. Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2007.
- Lewis, Reina. *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Liddle, Joanna, and Rai, Shirin. "Feminism, Imperialism and Orientalism: the challenge of the 'Indian woman.'" *Women's History Review* 7, no. 4 (1998): 495-520.
- Liniger-Goumaz, Max. *Guinea Ecuatorial: Memorandum. Medio Siglo de Terror y Saqueo*. Madrid: Sial Ediciones, 2013.

- Lippert, Anne. "Sahrawi Women in the Liberation Struggle of the Sahrawi People." *Signs* 17, no. 3 (1992): 636-51.
- Lončar, Mladen, Medved, Vesna, Jovanović, Nikolina, and Hotujac, Ljubomir. "Psychological Consequences of Rape in 1991-1995 War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Croatian Medical Journal* 47, no. 1 (2006): 67-75.
- Lonely Planet. "Introducing Agdz." <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/morocco/agdz-ixzz3UvrpJh2j>, 2015 (accessed 25 May 2016).
- López Ortega, Ángel Antonio. *La Poesía Oral de los Pueblos de Guinea Ecuatorial: Géneros y Funciones*. Barcelona: Ceiba Ediciones, 2008.
- Lukes, Steven. *Power: A Radical View*. Second ed. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. First published 1974.
- Lunn, Jon. "Equatorial Guinea: a Quick Introduction." Edited by UK Parliament. London: House of Commons Library, 2011.
- Lutgen-Sandvik, Pamela. "Take This Job and ... : Quitting and Other Forms of Resistance to Workplace Bullying." *Communication Monographs* 73, no. 4 (2006): 406-33.
- Machaqueiro, Mário. "Ambiguities of Seduction: Photography and the 'Islamic' Policy of Portuguese Colonialism." *Anthropological Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (2015): 97-131.
- Mama, Amina. "Khaki in the Family: Gender Discourses and Militarism in Nigeria." *African Studies Review* 41, no. 2 (1998): 1-17.
- Mangaliso, Zengie A. "South Africa: Gender and Nation-Building in South Africa." In *Feminist Nationalism*, edited by Lois A. West, 130-44. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Mannell, Jenevieve. "Advancing Gender Equality to Improve HIV Prevention: A Study of Practice." *African Journal of AIDS Research* 15, no. 4 (2016): 315-23.
- Martín Beristain, Carlos, and González Hidalgo, Eloísa. *El oasis de la memoria: Memoria histórica y violaciones de Derechos Humanos en el Sáhara Occidental. Tomo I*. Bilbao: University of the Basque Country, 2012.
- Martín Beristain, Carlos, and González Hidalgo, Eloísa. *El oasis de la memoria: Memoria histórica y violaciones de Derechos Humanos en el Sáhara Occidental. Tomo II*. Bilbao: University of the Basque Country 2012.
- Martin-Márquez, Susan. "Brothers and Others: Fraternal Rhetoric and the Negotiation of Spanish and Saharawi Identity." *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 7, no. 3 (2006): 241-58.

- Martino, Enrique. "Clandestine Recruitment Networks in the Bight of Biafra: Fernando Pó's Answer to the Labour Question, 1926-1945." *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (IRSH)* 57, no. Special Issue (2012): 39-72.
- Martino, Enrique. "Nsoa ("dote"), dinero, deuda y peonaje: cómo el parentesco fang tejó y destejó la economía colonial de la Guinea Española." *ÉNDOXA*, 37 (2016): 337-361.
- Martino, Enrique. "Colonial Economies of Forced and Contract Labour in the Bight of Biafra (1926-1979): Imperial Figurations, Atlantic Constellations." University of Humboldt, Forthcoming, PHD thesis.
- Martino, Enrique. "Maoist China and Macias' Equatorial Guinea - write up of some of the notes of from fragmentary conversation with a secret and sort of expensive informant. Malabo, July 2013." <http://www.opensourceguinea.org/2013/09/maoist-china-and-macias-equatorial.html>, 15 September 2013 (accessed 1 July 2014).
- Mason, Corinne L. "Global Violence Against Women as a National Security "Emergency."" *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 2 (2013): 55-80.
- Mazama, Ama. "The Afrocentric Paradigm: Contours and Definitions." *Journal of Black Studies* 31, no. 4 (2001): 387-405.
- McAdam, Doug, Tarrow, Sidney, and Tilly, Charles. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- McDonald, Laura Zahra. "Islamic Feminism." *Feminist Theory* 9, no. 3 (2008): 347-54.
- McFarland, Daniel A. "Student Resistance: How the Formal and Informal Organization of Classrooms Facilitate Everyday Forms of Student Defiance." *American Journal of Sociology* 107, no. 3 (2001): 612-78.
- McPherson, Alan. "Rioting for Dignity: Masculinity, National Identity and anti-US Resistance in Panama." *Gender and History* 19, no. 2 (2007): 219-41.
- McTighe, Kristen. "Absent from the Arab Spring limelight, refugee youth consider war with Morocco." *Global Post*. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/morocco/131111/africas-longest-conflict-western-sahara-refugees-morocco-arab-spring>, 13 November 2013 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Medina-Doménech, Rosa. "Scientific Technologies of National Identity as Colonial Legacies: Extracting the Spanish Nation from Equatorial Guinea." *Social Studies of Science* 39, no. 1 (2009): 81-112.

- Medina-Doménech, Rosa. "Sentir la historia. Propuestas para una agenda de investigación feminista en la historia de las emociones." *Arenal* 19, no. 1 (2012): 161-99.
- Mercer, John. 1976. *Spanish Sahara*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Merriman, Hardy. "Theory and Dynamics of Nonviolent Action." In *Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance in the Middle East*, edited by Maria J. Stephan, 17-29. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Middle East Eye. "Ban Ki-Moon Demands Western Sahara Mission Be Fully Restored." <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/ban-ki-moon-demands-western-sahara-mission-be-fully-restored-1606934184>, 19 April 2016 (accessed 13 March 2017).
- Mills, Sara. *Michel Foucault*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Minder, Raphael. "Spanish Soccer Team Under Fire for Game in Equatorial Guinea." *New York Times*, 14 November 2013.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Spanish Government. "Aid Sectors: Gender." <http://www.aecid.es/EN/aid-sectors/gender> No date, (1 April 2014).
- Moghadam, Valentine. "Introduction and Overview." In *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, edited by V. Moghadam, 1-12. London: Zed Books, 1994.
- Moghadam, Valentine. *From Patriarchy to Empowerment*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007.
- Moghadam, Valentine N. "Nationalist Agendas and Women's Rights." In *Feminist Nationalism*, edited by Lois A. West, 75-100. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Mohamed, Reem. "Women and the Arab Spring: Tough Choices to Make." <http://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/reem-mohamed/women-and-arab-spring-tough-choices-to-make>, 25 October 2013 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Mohanty Talpade, Chandra, Russo, Ann, and Torres, Lourdes, ed. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Mookherjee, Nayanika. "The Absent Piece of Skin: Gendered, Racialized and Territorial Inscriptions of Sexual Violence during the Bangladesh War." *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 6 (2011): 1572-601.
- Morales Villena, Amalia, and Vieitez Cerdeño, Soledad. "La Sección Femenina en la «llamada de África»: saharauis y guineanas en el declive del colonialismo español." *Vegueta. Anuario de la Facultad de Geografía e Historia (Universidad de Granada)* 14 (2014): 117-33.

- Morcillo, Aurora G. *True Catholic Womanhood: Gender Ideology in Franco's Spain*. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000.
- Morgades Besari, Trinidad. "Antígona." *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 8, no. 1 (2004): 239-45.
- Morgan, David. "Men, Masculinity and the Process of Sociological Enquiry." In *Doing Feminist Research*, edited by Helen Roberts, 83-113. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Morris, Loveday. "In Western Sahara, women play large role in forgotten struggle for independence." *Washington Post*. Washington, 7 July 2013.
- Morris, Loveday. "Women on Frontline in Struggle for Western Sahara." *The Guardian*. London, 16 July 2013.
- Mouffe, Chantal, and Laclau, Ernesto. "An Interview with Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau." By Ian Angus (1998).
- Moya, Conxi. *Las 32 batallas de Aminatu Haidar*. Madrid: Bubok, 2010.
- Msimang, Sisonke. "African Feminisms II: Reflections on Politics Made Personal." *Agenda* 17, no. 54 (2002): 3-15.
- Mundy, Jacob. "Autonomy & Intifada: New Horizons in Western Saharan Nationalisms." *Review of African Political Economy* 108 (2006): 255-67.
- Mundy, Jacob. "The Dynamics of Repression and Resistance: Sahrawi Nationalist Activism in the Moroccan Occupied Western Sahara." In *Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association*, 1-17. San Francisco, 2011.
- Mundy, Jacob. "How the US and Morocco Seized the Spanish Sahara." *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 2006.
- Murphy, Jennifer M., and Omar, Sidi M. "Aesthetics of Resistance in Western Sahara." *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 25, no. 3 (2013): 349-58.
- Murthy, Dhiraj. "'Muslim Punk' Music Online: Piety and Protest in the Digital Age." In *Music, Culture and Identity in the Muslim World*, edited by Kamal Salhi, 160-77. Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2013.
- Ndongo-Bidyogo, Donato. "El gobernador Faustino Ruiz González y el nacionalismo en Guinea Ecuatorial." In *Seminario Internacional "Actores coloniales españoles y espacios africanos SS. XIX-XX*, 1-28. University of Alcalá, 2-3 December 2010.
- Ndongo-Bidyogo, Donato. *Historia y tragedia de Guinea Ecuatorial*. Madrid: Cambio 16, 1977.
- Nerín, Gustau. *Guinea Ecuatorial, historia en blanco y negro*. Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 1998.

- Nerín, Gustau. *La Sección Femenina de la Falange en la Guinea Española (1964-1969)*. Valencia: CEIBA, 2006.
- Nerín, Gustau. *La última selva de España: antropólogos, misioneros y guardias civiles*. Madrid: Catarata, 2010.
- New Vision. "Africa's Longest-Serving Leader Re-elected."
http://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1423403/africas-serving-leader-elected-94-vote, 28 April 2016 (accessed 3 May 2016).
- Nkogo Ondó, Eugenio. "La Guinea Ecuatorial: reminiscencia histórica, experiencia de las luces y de las sombras de un proyecto político." Paper presented at *Between Three Continents: Rethinking Equatorial Guinea on the Fortieth Anniversary of Its Independence from Spain*, Hofstra University, 2009.
- Norris, Harry T. 1986. *The Arab Conquest of Western Sahara*. Beirut: Longman and Librairie du Liban.
- Nsang Nguema, María Jesus. "Speech by the First Lady at the 5th Congress of the PDGE." Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, 21 April 2012, <http://guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=2578&lang=en> (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Nsang Nguema, María Jesus. "The Honorary and Executive Chairwomen of the Women's Organization of the PDGE are elected," Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, 21 April 2012, <http://guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=2580&lang=en> (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Nsang Nguema, María Jesus. "Meeting for Women in the Equatorial Guinean Embassy in Spain." Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=3607>, 15 March 2013 (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Nsang Nguema, Maria Jesus, and Ngomo Avomo, Reina. "Return of Constanca Mangué de Obiang." Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=3919>, 20 June 2013 (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Nsué Angüe, María. *Relatos*. Malabo: Centro Cultural Hispano-Guineano, 1999.
- Nsué Angüe, María. *Ekomo: Au Coeur de la forêt guinéenne*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995.
- Nsue Mibui, Rosendo-Ela. *Historia de la Guinea Ecuatorial: periodo pre-colonial*. Madrid: Gráficas Algoran, 2005.

- Nugent, Paul. "States and Social Contracts in Africa." *New Left Review* 63 (2010): 35-68.
- Nye, Joseph S. *The Future of Power*. New York: Public Affairs, 2011.
- Nze Nfumu, Agustín. *Macías, verdugo o víctima*. Madrid: Herrero y Asociados, 2004.
- Obiang Biko, Adolfo. *Equatorial Guinea: From Spanish Colonialism to the Discovery of Oil*. New York: O.Writers, 2010.
- Obono Ntutumumu, Trifonia Melibea. "Acerca de la mujer guineana. Un largo camino por recorrer." <http://www.asodegue.org/marzo0809.htm>, 8 March 2009 (accessed 23 May 2016).
- Obono Ntutumumu, Trifonia Melibea. "Guinea Ecuatorial: misoginia en los partidos políticos." *Tiempos Canallas*, 8 March 2013.
- Obono Ntutumumu, Trifonia Melibea. "¿La mujer fang tiene precio?", available at <https://www.scribd.com/doc/92067686/La-Mujer-Fang-Tiene-Precio>, 2012 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Obono Ntutumumu, Trifonia Melibea. "Sin dinero no se puede estudiar parte 1." ASODEGUE, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/94653145/Sin-Dinero-No-Se-Puede-Estudiar>, 24 May 2012 (accessed 13 April 2014).
- Obono Ntutumumu, Trifonia Melibea. "Sin dinero no se puede estudiar: el caso de las mujeres parte 2." <http://www.scribd.com/doc/94769683/Sin-Dinero-No-Se-Puede-Eestudiar-El-Caso-de-Las-Mujeres> 24 May 2012 (accessed 21 July 2014).
- Ocha'a Mve, Constantino. *Fuentes archivísticas y bibliotecarias de Guinea Ecuatorial: guía general del administrativo, del investigador y del estudiante*. Madrid: Anzos, 1985.
- Odartey-Wellington, Dorothy. "Entre la espada y la pared: la voz de la mediadora en *Ekomo*, una novela afrohispana." *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 32, no. 1 (2007): 165-75.
- Okenve, Enrique. "Equatorial Guinea 1927-1979: A New African Tradition." School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, 2007.
- Okenve, Enrique. "'Wa kobo abe, wa kobo politik:' Three Decades of Social Paralysis and Political Immobility in Equatorial Guinea." In *Between Three Continents: Rethinking Equatorial Guinea on the Fortieth Anniversary of Its Independence from Spain*, 1-8. Hofstra University, 2009.
- Ondo Ayang, Luis, Bokesa Camó, Anacleto and Liniger-Goumaz, Max. *Nguemismo: 33 años de auto-golpes y torturas, corrupción nacional e internacional*. Switzerland: Editorial Tiempos Próximos, 2002.

- Ondo'o Ayekaba, Mitoha. "The Politics of Gender Parity in Equatorial Guinea: Toward a more Sustained Political and Social Civility in the Twenty First Century." In *Between Three Continents: Rethinking Equatorial Guinea on the Fortieth Anniversary of its Independence from Spain.* Hofstra University, New York, 2009.
- Ortega, Ines. Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, "Interview with Maria Leonor Epam Biribe, Minister of Social Affairs: 'Our Effort has not Gone to Waste.'" <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=2989>, 11 September 2012 (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Ortega, Ines. "The First Lady Receives the Title of Doctor Honoris Causa." Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=4529> 27 November 2013 (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Ortega, Ines. Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, "The Minister of Culture in the International Press." <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=4844>, 22 February 2014 (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Ortner, Sherry B. "Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal," *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 37:1, 1995, 173-193.
- Ostriker, Alicia. "A Wild Surmise: Motherhood and Poetry." In *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender*, edited by Frances Bonner, Goodman, Lizbeth, Allen, Richard, Jones, Linda, and King, Catherine, 103-07. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.
- Paciello, Maria Cristina, Pepicelli, Renata and Pioppi, Daniela. "Public Action towards Youth in Neo-Liberal Morocco: Fostering and Controlling the Unequal Inclusion of the New Generation." Power2Youth project policy document (February 2016): 1-30.
- Pardo Sanz, Rosa. "La Herencia de la descolonización del Africa española." In *La Décolonisation de l'Afrique espagnole: Maroc, Sahara Occidental et Guinée-Équatoriale* edited by Olivier Dard, and Lefeuvre, Daniel. Paris: Riveneuve Editions, 2008.
- Pérez Moreno, Heliodoro Manuel. "La Sección Femenina de la España de Franco (1939-1975) y sus contradicciones entre 'perfil de mujer' y medios educativos." *Cadernos de História da Educação* 7, no. January/December (2008): 77-92.
- Peteet, Julie M. *Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

- Peteet, Julie M. "Icons and Militants: Mothering in the Danger Zone." In *Gender, Politics and Islam*, edited by T. Saliba, Allen, C., and Howard, J.A., 133-59. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Peteet, Julie M. "Women and the Palestinian Movement: No Going Back?." In *Women and Power in the Middle East*, edited by Suad Joseph, and Slymovics, Susan, 126-34. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Pink, Sarah. *Doing Visual Ethnography*. London: Sage Publications, 2001.
- Pohlman, Annie. "Testimonio and Telling Women's Narratives of Genocide, Torture and Political Imprisonment in Post-Suharto Indonesia." *Life Writing* 5, no. 1 (2008): 47-60.
- Pohlman, Annie. *Women, Sexual Violence and the Indonesian Killings of 1965-66*. Oxford: Routledge, 2015.
- Pollock, Thomas G., and Bono, Joyce E., "Being Scheherazade: the Importance of Storytelling in Academic Writing," *Academy of Management Journal* 56, 3 (2013): 629-634.
- Porges, Matthew, and Leuprecht, Christian, "The Puzzle of Nonviolence in Western Sahara." *Democracy and Security* 12, 2 (2016): 65-84.
- Power, Margaret. "Dictatorship and Single-Party States." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*, edited by Bonnie G. Smith, 55-56. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Qorvis Communications LLC. "Equatorial Guinea Reports Progress on Gender Equality, Elimination of Violence Against Women."
<http://equatorialguineainfo.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/equatorial-guinea-reports-progress-on.html> 14 March 2013 (accessed 1 April 2014).
- Rakowski, Cathy A. "Women as Political Actors: The Move from Maternalism to Citizenship Rights and Power." *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 2 (2003): 180-94.
- Rankin, Pauline L. "Gender and Nation Branding in 'The True North Strong and Free.'" *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 8, no. 4 (2012): 257-67.
- Reporters without Borders. "Facebook and Opposition Websites Blocked Ahead of Elections."
<http://en.rsf.org/guinee-equatoriale-facebook-and-opposition-websites-14-05-2013,44618.html>, 14 May 2013 (accessed 9 June 2014).
- Rice, Xan. "Western Sahara Activist on Hunger Strike at Lanzarote Airport." *The Guardian*. London, 17 November 2009.
- Richter-Montpetit, Melanie. "Empire, Desire and Violence: A Queer Transnational Feminist Reading of the Prisoner 'Abuse' in Abu Ghraib and the Question of 'Gender Equality.'" *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 9, no. 1 (2007): 38-59.

- Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1982.
- Rodriguez Rescia, Victor. "Torture as a Form of Gendered Violence." *Essex Human Rights Review* 6, no. 2 (2010): 193-206.
- Rose, Cecily. "The Application of Human Rights Law to Private Sector Complicity in Governmental Corruption." *Leiden Journal of International Law* 24 (2011): 715-740.
- Rosón, María, and Medina-Doménech, Rosa. "Resistencias emocionales. Espacios y presencias de lo íntimo en el archivo histórico." *Rúbrica*, no. Forthcoming (2016).
- Ross, Michael. "Oil, Islam, and Women." *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 1 (2008): 107-123.
- Rowbotham, Sheila. *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It*. London: Pluto Press, 1975.
- Ruano Posada, Violeta, and Solana Moreno, Vivian. "The Strategy of Style: Music, Struggle, and the Aesthetics of Sahrawi Nationalism in Exile." *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 5, no. 3 (2015): 40-61.
- Sahara Thawra. "GDEIM IZIK: Detonante de la Primavera Árabe." YouTube, 2012.
- Said, Edward. *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1997.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin, 1995.
- Salami, Minna. "7 Key Issues in African Feminist Thought." In *Ms Afropolitan*, 16 August 2012.
- Salas Guirior, Jose. "Viaje a las sombras de España." *ABC*. Madrid, 7 March 1976.
- San Martín, Pablo. *Western Sahara: The Refugee Nation*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010.
- San Martín, Pablo, and Allan, Joanna. "The Largest Prison in the World: Landmines, UXOs and the Role of the UN in the Western Sahara." Madrid. 2007.
- Sands, William. "Equatorial Guinea: Legitimizing Obiang." Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting. <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/equatorial-guinea-president-teodoro-obiang-legitimization-corruption-oil-unesco-eiti-dodd-frank>, 24 April 2012 (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Sarkar, Sumit. "Orientalism Revisited: Saidian Frameworks in the Writing of Modern Indian History." In *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, edited by Vinayak Chaturvedi, 239-55. London: Verso, 2000.
- Sayigh, Rosemary. "Gendering the 'Nationalist Subject': Palestinian Camp Women's Life Stories." In *Subaltern Studies X: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, edited by

- Gautu Bhadra, Prakash, Gyan, and Tharu, Susie, 234-52. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Scafidi, Oscar. *Equatorial Guinea*. Buckinghamshire: Brandt, 2015.
- Scholz, T.M. Linda. "The Rhetorical Power of *Testimonio* and *Ocupación*: Creating a Conceptual Framework for Analyzing Subaltern Rhetorical Agency." University of Colorado, 2007.
- Scott, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. Michigan: Yale University, 1990.
- Scott, James C. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985.
- Sen, Samita. *Women and Labour in Late Colonial India: the Bengal Jute Industry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Seodu Herr, Ranjoo. "Reclaiming Third World Feminism: or Why Transnational Feminism Needs Third World Feminism." *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 12, no. 1 (2014): 1-30.
- Seymour, Susan. "Resistance." *Anthropological Theory* 6, no. 3 (2006): 303-21.
- Sharp, Gene. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action: Parts 1-3*. Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973.
- Shea, Maureen E. "Latin American Women and the Oral Tradition: Giving Voice to the Voiceless." *Critique* 34, no. 3 (1993): 139-53.
- Shelley, Toby. *Endgame in the Western Sahara*. London: Zed Books, 2004.
- Shepherd, Laura J. "Veiled References: Constructions of Gender in the Bush Administration Discourse on the Attacks on Afghanistan Post-9/11." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8, no. 1 (2006): 19-41.
- Silverstein, Ken. "Obiang's American Enablers." <http://100r.org/2011/12/obiangs-american-enablers/> 14 December 2011, (accessed 28 April 2016).
- Sipi Mayo, Remei. *Inmigración y Género: El Caso de Guinea Ecuatorial*. Donostia: Tercera Prensa-Hirugarren Prentsa S.L., 2004.
- Sipi Mayo, Remei. "Introducción." In *Voces Femeninas de Guinea Ecuatorial. Una Antología*, edited by Remei Sipi Mayo. Barcelona: Ediciones Mey, 2015.
- Sipi Mayo, Remei. "Ribocho. Identidad y encuentro." In *Baio: Ellas y sus relatos*, edited by Remei Sipi Mayo, 1-53. Barcelona: Editorial Mey, 2015.
- Sipi Mayo, Remei in discussion with Sampedro, Benita. "La huella de la colonización Española en las mujeres de Guinea Ecuatorial." University of Granada Media (UGR Media), <http://www.asodeguese segundaetapa.org/la-huella-de-la-colonizacion-espanola-en-las->

- mujeres-de-guinea-ecuatorial-remei-sipi-y-benita-sampedro-ugrmedia/, 20 June 2016 (accessed 23 June 2016).
- Sivakuman, Sandesh. "Sexual Violence Against Men in Armed Conflict." *European Journal of International Law* 18, no. 2 (2007): 253-76.
- Slyomovics, Susan. *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.
- Sola-Martin, Andreu. *Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution in Western Sahara*. Ceredigion: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006a.
- Sola-Martin, Andreu. "Lessons from MINURSO: A Contribution to New Thinking on Peacekeeping." *International Peacekeeping Journal* 13, no. 3 (2006b): 366-80.
- Solana Moreno, Vivian. "'A Woman is Stronger than our State:' Performing Sovereignty on the Margins of the State." *Explorations in Anthropology* 11, no. 1 (2011): 57-70.
- Solana Moreno, Vivian. "'No somos costosas, somos valiosas.' La lucha de las mujeres saharauis cuarenta años después," in *Sahara Occidental: 40 Años Después*, eds. Isaías Barreñada and Raquel Ojeda (Madrid: Catarata, 2016)" 81-91.
- Somagec Equatorial Guinea. "Homepage." <http://www.somagecge.com/>, 2015 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Somagec Morocco. "Homepage." http://www.somagec.ma/e_acceuil.asp, 2015 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Colonial Discourse and Post Colonial Theory*, edited by Patrick Williams, and Chrisman, Laura, 66-111. Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "The New Subaltern: A Silent Interview." In *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, edited by Vinayak Chaturvedi, 324-40. London: Verso, 2000.
- Stanbridge, Karen. "Review of Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, Contentious Politics, Paradigm Publishers, 2006." *Canadian Journal of Sociology Online* November-December (2006): 1-3.
- Stehrenberger, Cécile Stephanie. "Folklore, Nation, and Gender in a Colonial Encounter: Coros y Danzas of the Sección Femenina of the Falange in Equatorial Guinea." *Afro-Hispanic Review* 28, no. 2 (2009): 231-44.
- Stephan, Maria J., and Mundy, Jacob. "A Battlefield Transformed: from Guerrilla Resistance to Mass non-Violent Struggle in Western Sahara." *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 8, no. 3 (2006): 1-32.

- Stoler, Ann Laura. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002.
- Stoltz Chinchilla, Norma. "Central America: Nationalism, Feminism and Revolution in Central America." In *Feminist Nationalism*, edited by Lois A. West, 201-19. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Stucki, Andreas. "The Hard Side of Soft Power: Spanish Rhetorics of Empire from the 1950s to the 1970s." In *Rhetoric of Empire: Imperial Discourse and the Language of Colonial Conflict*. Exeter University's Centre for War, State and Society, 2014.
- Styhre, A., & Eriksson-Zetterquist, U. "Thinking the Multiple in Gender and Diversity Studies: Examining the Concept of Intersectionality." *Gender in Management* 23, no. 8 (2008): 567-82.
- Sundiata, Ibrahim. *From Slaving to Neoslavery: The Bight of Biafra and Fernando Po in the Era of Abolition, 1827-1930*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.
- Tarifa King, Sarilusi. "Equatorial Guinea Women Make Progress in All Sectors." Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=1802>, 3 August 2011 (accessed 27 May 2014).
- Tarifa King, Sarilusi. "Celebration of the World Day of Rural Women." Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=1989>, 18 October 2011 (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Tarifa King, Sarilusi. "Meeting of the Wives of Government Members." Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=3795> 15 May 2013 (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Tarifa King, Sarilusi. "Celebration of International Women's Day in Malabo." Government of Equatorial Guinea's Press and Information Office, <http://www.guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=4907> 11 March 2014 (accessed 1 June 2014).
- Tata Arcel, Libby. "Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of Women. Psychological Consequences." *Psyke & Logos* 22 (2001): 322-51.
- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). "Development at a Glance: Statistics by Region." 1-18. Paris: OECD, 2015.
- Theweleit, Klaus. *Male Fantasies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

- Thompson, Paul. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Tillion, Germaine. *The Republic of Cousins: Women's Oppression in Mediterranean Society*. London: Al Saqi Books, 1983.
- Tilly, Charles, and Tarrow, Sidney. *Contentious Politics*. London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007.
- Tiranía Ecuatoguineana. "¡Oleeeeeeee! Toda la familia del tirano con las manos en el petróleo y a robar en Guinea Ecuatorial."
<http://tiraniaecuatoguineana.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/obiang-incluye-su-hijo-gabriel-en-nuevo.html>, 23 May 2012 (accessed 13 June 2014).
- Tohidi, Nayereh. "Modernity, Islamization and Women in Iran." In *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, 110-47. London: Zed Books, 1994.
- Torrejón Rodríguez, Juan Domingo. *La Unión Europea y la cuestión del Sahara Occidental: La posición del parlamento europeo*. Madrid: Editorial Reus, 2014.
- Trezenem, Edouard. "Notes ethnographiques sur les tribus fan du Moyen Ogooué (Gabon)." *Journal de la Société des Africanistes* 6, no. 1 (1936): 65-93.
- Tsikata, Dzodzi. "Women's Organizing in Ghana Since the 1990s: From Individual Organizations to Three Coalitions." *Development* 52, no.2: 185-192.
- Tucker, James. "Everyday Forms of Employee Resistance." *Sociological Forum* 8, no. 1 (1993): 25-45.
- UK Government Department for International Development. "Policy: Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in the World's Poorest Countries."
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-the-lives-of-girls-and-women-in-the-worlds-poorest-countries> 4 March 2014, (accessed 1 April 2014).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). "Guinea Ecuatorial: Retomando confianza en la vida con el acceso gratuito al tratamiento de lucha contra el VIH/SIDA."
http://www.gq.undp.org/content/equatorial_guinea/es/home/ourwork/hiv_aids/successstories/guinea-ecuatorial--retomando-confianza-en-la-vida-con-el-acceso-.html 2013, (accessed 30 March 2017).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). "Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone. Table 4: Gender Development Index." Published online: UNDP, 2016.
- UN Women. "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Overview of the Convention." <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>, No date (accessed 3 June 2014).

- Union of Saharawi Writers and Journalists (UPES). "Saharawi Government Firmly Condemns the 'Obstinate' Position of the Moroccan King." *Union of Saharawi Writers and Journalists (UPES)*, 2007.
- UPI. "Israeli Arms Companies Target Third World." http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2011/04/08/Israeli-arms-companies-target-Third-World/29731302286121/, 8 April 2011 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- US Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Western Sahara 1999." Washington D.C. 2000.
- US Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Western Sahara 2000." Washington D.C. 2001.
- US Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Western Sahara 2001." Washington D.C. 2002.
- US Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Western Sahara 2002." Washington D.C. 2003.
- US Department of State. "Trafficking in Persons Report: Equatorial Guinea." Washington, D.C. 2015.
- Valenciano-Mañé, Alba, "Vestido, identidad y folklore. La invención de un vestido nacional de Guinea Ecuatorial," *Revista de dialectología y tradiciones populares*, LXVII, no. 1 (2012): 267-96.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. "Contextual Knowledge Management in Discourse Production, a CDA Perspective." In *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis: Theory, Method and Interdisciplinarity* edited by Ruth Wodak, and Chilton, Paul, 71-100. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. "Principle of Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse and Society* 4, no. 2 (1993): 249-83.
- Velloso, Agustín. "Israel Starts Business in Equatorial Guinea: Disaster Closes in Obiang Nguema's Regime." https://www.nodo50.org/csca/agenda05/palestina/veloso_20-06-05.html, 27 June 2005 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Vickers, Jill. "Bringing Nations In: Some Methodological and Conceptual Issues in Connecting Feminisms with Nationhood and Nationalisms." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8, no. 1 (2006): 84-109.
- Vinthagen, Stellan. "Political Undergrounds: Can Raging Riots and Everyday Theft Become Politics of Normality?," 1-31, 2006. Draft paper available at draft paper available at

- https://www.academia.edu/658457/Political_Undergrounds_Can_Raging_Riots_and_Everyday_Theft_Become_Politics_of_Normality (accessed 23 May 2016).
- Wallechinsky, David. "Dictator of the Month: Teodoro Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea." <http://www.allgov.com/news/us-and-the-world/dictator-of-the-month-teodoro-obiang-nguema-of-equatorial-guinea?news=843015> 25 July 2011 (accessed 2 March 2016).
- Walters, Dolores M. "Introduction. Re(dis)covery and Recreating the Cultural Milieu of Margaret Garner." In *Gendered Resistance: Women, Slavery and the Legacy of Margaret Garner*, edited by Mary E. Frederickson, and Walters, Delores M., 1-24. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013.
- Wenar, Leif. "Clean Trade in Natural Resources." *Ethics and International Affairs* 25, no. 1 (2011): 27-39.
- Wenar, Leif. *Blood Oil: Tyrants, Violence and the Rules that Run the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- West, Lois A., ed. *Feminist Nationalism*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- West, Lois A. "Introduction: Feminism Constructs Nationalism." In *Feminist Nationalism*, edited by Lois A. West, xi-xxxvi. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Wharton, Barrie. "Masters and Servants; The Spanish Civil War in Equatorial Guinea." *The International Journal of the Canadian Institute for Mediterranean Studies* 26, no. 1 (2005): 39-50.
- White, Hayden. *The Content of Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. London: John Hopkins University Press, 1989.
- Whittaker, Elvi. "Decolonizing Knowledge: Towards a Feminist Ethic and Methodology." In *The India-Canada Relationship*, edited by J.S. Grewal, and Johnston, Hugh. New Delhi: Sage, 1994.
- Wikileaks cable (US diplomatic cables). US Embassy to Morocco. "Moroccan Relations with Sub-Saharan African Countries - A Survey." Rabat. 3 June 2008.
- Wikileaks cable, (US diplomatic cables). US Embassy to Equatorial Guinea, "Equatorial Guinea Raw, Paper 6: Refining our Approach." Malabo, 21 May 2009.
- Wikileaks cable (the GI Files). Email from adelaide.schwartz@stratfor.com to africa@stratfor.com, https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/28/2867601_re-africa-equatorial-guinea-uk-energy-ct-uk-accuses-eq.html, 7 December 2011 (accessed 28 April 2016).
- Wilson, Alice. "On the Margins of the Arab Spring." *Social Analysis* 57, no. 2 (2013): 81-98.

- Wilson, Alice. Personal communications. December 2015.
- Wilson, Alice. "Elecciones transterritoriales: los votantes saharauis en los campamentos de refugiados y más allá." In *Sahara Occidental: 40 años después*, edited by Isaías Barreñada, and Ojeda, Raquel, 67-80. Madrid: Catarata, 2016.
- Winter, Ida Sophie. "Many Moroccan Students Pursue Sex but Few Get Sex Education." <http://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2015/08/many-moroccan-students-pursue-sex-but-few-get-sex-education/>, 17 August 2015 (accessed 26 May 2016).
- Wittig, Monique. *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992.
- Wodak, Ruth, and Chilton, Paul, ed. *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis: Theory, Method and Interdisciplinarity* Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005.
- Wodak, Ruth, de Cillia, Rudolf, Reisigl, Martin, and Liebhart, Karin. *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.
- Wolf, Diane L. "Situating Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork." In *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, edited by Diane L. Wolf, 1-55. Colorado: Westview Press, 1996.
- Wolters, Stephanie. "Equatorial Guinea's Web of Wealth and Repression." Pretoria. 15 July 2014.
- World Bank. "Net Official Development Assistance and Official Aid Received." <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD>, 2016 (accessed 22 March 2017).
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage Publications, 1997.
- Zavella, Patricia. "Feminist Insider Dilemmas: Constructing Identity with Chicana Informants." In *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, edited by Diane Wolf, 138-59. Colorado: Westview Press, 1996.
- Zuijgeest, Nicolien. "Aminatou Haidar: the Sahrawi Gandhi." Nicolien website, <http://www.nicolien.com/content/pivot/entry.php?id=110>, 2013 (accessed 3 July 2015).
- Zunes, Stephen. "Upsurge in Repression Challenges Nonviolent Resistance in Western Sahara." *Open Democracy*. 17 November 2010.
- Zunes, Stephen, and Mundy, Jacob. *War, Nationalism and Conflict Irresolution*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010.

Appendix: Index of personalities

This includes only those persons who recur several times in the thesis. In the main text, I refer to individuals with their first name rather than surname only when I have used their 'story' in a largely narrative way.

Aayache, Fatma: An ex-disappeared and nowadays a human rights activist. She was part of the so-called 'Commission Group' of detainees, arrested in 1987 for having organised a pro-human rights demonstration upon the expected arrival of UN personnel in occupied Western Sahara. She was freed in 1991. Her testimony of surviving torture in prison was published in English by the Union of Saharawi Writers and Journalists.

Adugu Mba, María Angeles (pseudonym): Member of the Convergence for Social Democracy Party (CPDS) and activist against the Obiang regime. Her grandmother was a member of the Guinean Women's Section and survivor of the Macías regime.

Alene, Marina: model Spanish Women's Section member then anti-Spanish founder of the Guinean Women's Section, which would become the Women's Section of Macías' Sole National Workers Party (PUNT).

Amidan, Izana: pro-independence activist, arrested and tortured in a secret detention centre in 2010.

Avomo Bicó, Epifania: acts as Secretary for Gender and the Position of Women in her party, the CPDS, and is one of the 28 members of the National Executive Committee of that party. She was arrested in March 2011 ahead of her envisaged participation in a demonstration organised for International Women's Day. She has represented her party for several years in the International Socialist organisation, and sits on its Council (alongside a representative of the POLISARIO).

Awaho, Anita: creole woman who owned *Bar Anita* in Santa Isabel (now called Malabo), the colonial capital of Spanish Guinea. She secretly allowed independence activists to use the backroom for their meetings.

Ayakaba Nzue: in 1937, she approached the *Patronato* (the colonial justice system for Guineans) for an annulment of her marriage on the basis that her husband for beating and forcibly prostituting her.

Bassiri, Mohammed Sidi Brahim: The founder and leader of the Vanguard Organisation for the Liberation of the Sahara, also known as *Harakat Tahrir* (Liberation Movement). He was disappeared in June 1970, following what Saharawi nationalists know as the 'Zemla massacre,' and was probably executed some weeks later.

Bilaal, Silka: born in Spanish-ruled El Aaiún, where she became a pro-independence activist in 1970. She attended classes at a Spanish Women's Section school. She was forced to flee to Algeria in 1975, and still lives there in Auserd camp.

Dafa, Lehdia: just 2 years old when she and her family fled El Aaiún due to the Moroccan invasion. Like hundreds of other children that grew up in the camps, she had her secondary school and university education in Cuba. Today she works as a doctor in Madrid, and is peripherally associated with the Friendship Generation (Generación de Amistad) of Saharawi writers and poets, who write in Castilian. She is also a blogger, and, although pro-self-determination, she is critical of the POLISARIO with regards to the struggle for women's rights.

El-Ouanat, Kelthoum: arrested in 1992 after participating in demonstrations calling for the independence of Western Sahara. She was handed a 20 year prison sentence by a military court on the charge of 'threatening external security.' She was released in 1996 following international pressure and was the first Saharawi to speak of the sexual torture endured in detention.

Elhaouasi, Nguia: Saharawi pro-independence activist and ex-political prisoner born in 1990 in occupied El Aaiún. After having been secretly detained and tortured several times, and, along with her friend and fellow activist Hayat Rguibi, serving several months in prison for her role in the Gdeim Izik camp, she currently lives in exile in Spain.

Gori Molubela, Enrique: briefly imprisoned in 1951 for taking part in a demonstration against the Spanish. President of the autonomous government of Fernando Po, 1964-68.

Member of the Movement for the National Union of Equatorial Guinea (Movimiento de Unión Nacional de Guinea Ecuatorial, MUNGE). In 1970, under Francisco Macías Nguema, he was tried by a military tribunal and executed. Incidentally, in 2015 his niece Rita Bosaho Gori was to become the first black Member of the Spanish Parliament.

Haddi, Tekbar: Haddi's son, Mohammed Laimine Haidala, died in February 2015 a few days after having been stabbed by a group of five Moroccan settlers and after several Moroccan public and private hospitals denied him treatment. Moroccan authorities confiscated his body. Haddi staged a hunger strike in May-June 2015 outside the Moroccan consulate in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, demanding the return of her son's body, an autopsy and an independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death.

Haidar, Aminatou: in 1987, due to her participation in a demonstration in favour of respect for human rights and self-determination, she was disappeared for four years. She was imprisoned for a second time in 2005, this time for seven months. In 2009, when denied entry into Western Sahara and forcibly sent to Spain, she staged a 32 day hunger strike in Lanzarote airport. She is president of the Collective of Saharawi Human Rights Defenders (CODESA). She has been awarded the 2009 Civil Courage Prize, the 2008 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award, the 2007 Silver Rose Award, and the 2006 Juan Maria Bandrés Prize. In 2008 she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Hassan, Mariam: aged 12, Mariam avoided a coerced marriage by running away. A few years later, she was escaping from the Spanish authorities after attending POLISARIO clandestine meetings as a revolutionary singer. She fled to the refugee camps in Algeria upon the Moroccan invasion. There, as well as working as a nurse, she continued her singing career with the Saharawi group *Shahid El Uali (El Uali the Martyr)*. Mariam began her solo career in 1998, in which she made five albums, the last of which, *El Aaiún Egdat (El Aaiún on Fire)* reached number 1 in the World Music Charts Europe in 2012. Over the course of her career, she regularly headlined world music festivals and toured several countries. She died in 2015.

"Khadijatou": died in Auserd camp, November 2015. Her friends claim that she was a close friend of Mohammed Bassiri, that it was from her house that Spanish authorities abducted him, and that she visited him in prison in the weeks leading up to his final disappearance.

Khaya, Sultana: pro-independence activist from Boujdour, occupied Western Sahara. She is president of the Saharawi League for Natural Resources and Human Rights. In 2007 she lost an eye whilst being tortured in an ambulance by Moroccan police.

Leili, Fatima Ghalia: Saharawi pro-independence activist from Tan Tan, Morocco. She was disappeared in 1976, as were 11 members of her family. She was released in 1991. Her brother became the SADR's first Prime Minister.

Leili, Moulay Ahmed: The father of Fatima, who washed the bodies of dead political prisoners at Qal'at Mgouna secret detention centre. He died the day after being released in 1991, but only after reciting the names and dates of death of his fellow Saharawi political prisoners.

Lmdaimigh, El Bataoul Mahjoub: Saharawi author who writes only in black ink. Male members of her family were disappeared in 1977, leading her to refuse marriage in an act of political resistance.

Llombé, Raquel: Poet and writer born on Corisco Island, Spanish Guinea, 1931. Her Spanish father took her to Spain as an infant, against her Equatoguinean mother's wishes, and told Raquel that her mother was dead. During her lifetime, she published a poetry collection and a volume of Fang legends and traditional stories. A second collection of her poetry has been published posthumously.

Macías Nguema, Francisco: First President of Equatorial Guinea and widely regarded as a tyrant. Killed on the orders of his nephew Teodoro Obiang Nguema in 1979.

Mangue, Constancia: 'most senior' of Obiang's wives and First Lady of Equatorial Guinea. Several of the accounts credited in the so-called Riggs Bank scandal were in Mangue's name. She is modelled, in government discourse, as a women's and children's rights champion.

Mañe, Acacio: a planter from Bata and one of the 'martyrs' of Equatorial Guinea's independence struggle. He was one of the leaders of the Cruzada Nacional de Liberación de Guinea Ecuatorial (National Liberation Crusade of Equatorial Guinea, CNLGE), a party that emerged from a 1951 demonstration at the Banapá seminary against the bad conditions

that Guineans faced. The CNLGE later changed its name to Movimiento Nacional de Liberación de Guinea Ecuatorial (National Liberation Movement of Equatorial Guinea, MONALIGE. Mañe was arrested in Bata in late 1959 and disappeared. It is believed that Spanish authorities threw him into the sea.

Mateo, Concha: “Delegada Provincial” (Delegate for the Province) for the Falangist Women’s Section in Spanish Sahara.

Mokhtar, Khadijatou: born in Spanish Sahara, where she attended a mixed school run by the Spanish authorities. She fled to the camps upon the Moroccan invasion, where she worked for the radio of the state-in-exile. Today, she is based in Spain as the representative of the National Union of Saharawi Women (UNMS).

Molubela, Dolores (pseudonym): Cleaner working in Malabo, struggling to feed her orphaned grandchildren and resentful of the dictatorship.

Morgades Besari, Trinidad: Writer, intellectual and teacher. Morgades managed to complete a university degree under Spanish colonialism. She became a teacher with the Falangist Women’s Section, occasionally challenging her colonialist colleagues. Between 2005 and 2008 she was Vice Rector of the University of Equatorial Guinea.

Nadrani, Mohammed: Moroccan ex-disappeared, incarcerated with Saharawis at Qal’at Mgouna secret detention centre.

Nchama Esono: fought for an annulment of her marriage through the *Patronato*, on the basis that her husband violently abused her.

Ndongo, Atanasio: Was present at the Banapá seminary protest in 1951 and linked to the CNLGE. He later became a leader of MONALIGE and lived exiled in Algeria and Gabon until 1964, when he was allowed to return. He was a presidential candidate in 1968 but lost to Macías, who later allegedly killed him.

Nsegue Eyi, Clara: leader of the Democratic Social Justice Party (Partido Democrático de la Justicia Social (PDJS)). She was arrested alongside her colleague Natalia Angue Edjodjomo

and detained in May 2013 (just ahead of presidential elections) after attempting to organise a demonstration demanding the legal registration of her party. She was incarcerated for five months, released following international pressure.

Nvo, Enrique: another martyr of the Equatoguinean independence cause, he was allegedly murdered by Spanish-employed mercenaries in Cameroon, 1959. Like Mañe and Ndongo, Nvo was involved with the 1951 Banapá seminary protest and the CNLGE.

Obiang Nguema, Teodoro: President of Equatorial Guinea since 1979.

Obón, Carmen: Women's Section leader in Bata, Rio Muni, Spanish Guinea.

Ondó Edú, Bonifacio: President of the autonomous government of Rio Muni (1964-68) and member of the MUNGE. Ran for President of Equatorial Guinea in 1968, but lost to Macías who allegedly killed him in 1969.

Rguibi, Hayat: pro-independence activist and ex-political prisoner. After having been secretly detained and tortured several times, and, along with her friend and fellow activist Hayat Rguibi, serving several months in prison for her role in the Gdeim Izik camp, she currently lives in exile in Spain.

Saleh, Tawfa: Born in 1955 and grew up in Spanish-ruled El Aaiún. She witnessed the 'Zemla massacre.' She later (secretly) attended Women's Section classes and obtained a job in the hospital. She became an activist with the POLISARIO. Fled for the refugee camps during the 1975 invasion, and currently lives in Auserd camp.

Sayed, El Uali Mustapha: Born in 1948 in the desert plains of Western Sahara. His family later settled in Tan Tan, southern Morocco. He gained a scholarship to study Law in Rabat, where he met other Saharawi students and was influenced by the radical currents spreading through Moroccan universities at that time. He was one of the founders of the POLISARIO, and became Secretary General in 1974. He presided over the establishment of a state-in-exile in the refugee camps in Algeria. Sayed died in combat in 1976, during an assault on the Mauritanian presidential palace.

Sunyer, María Nieves: Women's Section leader in Fernando Po (now Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea).

Taleb, Fatima: First Saharawi woman to graduate in medicine (from the University of Granada, Spain). She was employed by the Women's Section, but used her position to lobby for nationalist, and feminist nationalist, demands. She was instrumental in constructing the health infrastructure that exists in the camps today.

Tentor, Concha: Women's Section leader in Rio Muni (continental part of Equatorial Guinea).

Yaya, Soukaina: grew up in Tan Tan, where she witnessed the abduction of members of the Leili family. She is now a pro-independence activist in occupied El Aaiún. She has been tortured several times by Moroccan police.