Introduction

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In a globalized world dominated by a neoliberal and imperial/patriarchal logic, an increasing number of women around the world are made vulnerable to violence substantiated and perpetuated in inequities that often result from an intersection of economic, political and social discriminations. Since the late 1990s, violence against women (VAW) has emerged as the site of activism and international resolutions, forcing many states to commit to take steps towards its elimination. The United Nations proclaimed in 1993 the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women which came to strengthen other resolutions like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) voted in 1979. The instruments of international human rights have been valuable for feminist organizations around the world in their advocacy for laws and policies that address VAW. However, they have also proven to be a limited and easily accommodated.

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1 The editors of the present issue of JALCS would like to express their gratitude to all the people that participated in the realization of this project. Thanks are due to all the authors in this volume for their contributions, especially those who responded positively to our invitation. It was a great pleasure working with each one of you. Special thanks go to our distinguished anonymous reviewers who generously accepted to take the time and effort to review the manuscripts and share their thoughts and suggestions with our contributors. We also would like to express our thanks to Professor Mohamed Yeou, the director of the JALCS, and Professor Reddad Erguig, the deputy director, for their professionalism and valuable collaboration throughout this process. A special word of thanks goes to our colleague Professor Benzehaf for his kind co-operation in the final stages of editing this volume. We also appreciate the help of all the lab members. Last but not least, we would like to express our profound gratitude to Professor Abdelaziz Boudlal for his encouragement from the very beginning of this process and to Professor Abdelkader Sabil for his support throughout these years.
framework in an age of neoliberalism, serving to obscure both international and local economic and financial structural violence, in addition to justify large scale military aggression. Within the prevalent human rights discourse, social and economic equity is thus often downplayed in favor of individual human rights, leaving vulnerable groups of women and their communities exposed to dispossession. It is within this political and economic context and the hegemonic human rights discourse that the concept of VAW is produced and deployed.

Morocco is no exception to this global scenario. In spite of the importance of the instruments of human rights for advocating for more rights for women, the neoliberal framework of human rights and VAW seems to prevail. Morocco is one of the United Nations state parties which have committed to international resolutions on women’s human rights and the elimination of VAW. Since the beginning of the 1990s, feminist organizations have campaigned to pressure the state to ratify CEDAW and to adjust local legislations to its standards. The 2004 reforms of the Moudawana and the issuing of a new family code are seen as one of the first strides towards this goal. More recently, Law 103-13 on combating VAW in Morocco was promulgated in February 2018, more than a decade after the Moroccan government first declared its commitment to issue a law of this kind. The national survey on the prevalence of VAW conducted in 2009 by the Office of the High Commissioner for Planning had revealed that 62.8% of women aged 18-64 were victims of violence. Law 103-13 in addition to recent amendments to the Penal Code and the Constitution are seen by human rights and feminist organizations as a positive move, though they insist the reforms remain below their expectations.

However, in spite of the importance of the voiced grievances regarding Law 103-13, the prevalent discourse tends to overplay unequal legislations, and often conceives violence as primarily the result of patriarchal culture, or the physical manifestations of male dominance. Aspects of structural violence such as the economic policies of the neoliberal state and their intersections with gender are not given adequate attention and consideration. The same shortcoming is manifest in many academic works on the issue, which, in spite of their value, usually study VAW through the sole prism of male violence, women’s victimization, religious extremism and lack of
gender equality.\textsuperscript{2} It is this one-dimensional cultural and legalistic paradigm that the present volume seeks to remedy. The idea of this collective volume is to approach VAW as a complex phenomenon with multiple dimensions that foreground the intersection of patriarchal power relations with economic and political relations. As Karen Rignall, in this volume, expresses it, “The task is not to refute the operations of patriarchy in the violence experienced by women (…) but to put patriarchy in dynamic relation with other systems of oppression.”

This second issue of the JALCS addresses the theme of VAW in the context of Morocco, using an interdisciplinary approach. It seeks to both ponder the discourse on VAW and explore the nature of the violence, its different manifestations and the conditions that lead to its reproduction whether in law, media, culture, or in economic and political state policies. As stated before, another aim of the volume is to contribute to the expansion of the concept of VAW from the very often narrow meaning of patriarchal, cultural and legal violence, or male perpetrated violence on women’s bodies, to a more comprehensive meaning that integrates both embodied and structural violence and their intersections.

\textsuperscript{2} See the review of this literature in Silvia Gagliardi’s article (2017) “Violence against Women: the Stark Reality behind Morocco’s Human Rights Progress.” Gagliardi’s study on VAW is illuminating and its insights very much relevant to the present volume’s concerns. Gagliardi interrogates the state’s celebratory narratives regarding progress made in human rights, or its “hagiographic discourse” on women’s rights and gender equality. It also sheds light on the discrepancy between women’s rights organizations’ discourse on VAW and the lived experiences and needs of ordinary women on VAW. She argues that women’s rights’ over-emphasis on legal reforms and gender equality has left the existing power structures producing inequality in Morocco uncontested, which suggests their cooptation by the state. Legal reforms, although undeniably important, she argues, are not identified by the rural and lower class urban women of her ethnography to be the primary solution to VAW. Gagliardi concludes that “without a ‘vernacularisation’ of women’s rights and frameworks and, more importantly, a grassroots understanding for women’s explanations for, and justifications of, VAW in their own communities, any reform in this area will continue to be perceived as undemocratic, exogenous or even as merely useless” (p.17). Gagliardi, S. (2017). Violence against women: The stark reality behind Morocco’s human rights progress. The Journal of North African Studies, 23(4), 569–590. DOI:10.1080/13629387.2017.1363649
To reverse the usual order of things and subvert the prevailing analytical frame, the first articles which appear in this volume address aspects of structural violence. Karen Rignall’s essay “Is Rurality a Form of Gender-Based Violence?” interrogates the hegemonic discourse on women living in rural areas, which posits that it is rurality itself, or the fact of inhabiting the countryside, where repressive traditions and conservative religious norms prevail as is stereotypically presumed, which are the root causes of women’s subordination, marginalization and even violence perpetrated against them. This analysis obscures how this situation is the outcome of complex relations and processes. Rignall’s paper puts the marginalization of rural zones and the dispossession women (and men) suffer from in a historical and political context. It sheds light on the way women’s marginalization is the outcome of specific structural and political processes ranging from colonial policies, national polity, global labor markets and networks of capital accumulation and dispossession. Using ethnography and an interrogation of statistical indicators, the paper seeks to show how gender disparities are structural rather than simply cultural. Rignall calls for a “new feminism” or new feminist analysis which adopts an intersectional approach that examines gender-based structural violence such as that experienced by rural women through a broader lens of social justice, one that also takes rural women’s priorities and actions seriously.

The second article by Ismail Frouini and Brahim Benmoh, titled “The Incarcerated Female Subject(ivity): Resisting Gendered Trauma” addresses the issue of state violence and women’s agency in Moroccan female prison literature. Frouini and Benmoh discuss the issue of gender, trauma and resistance within the Moroccan prison apparatuses during the “Years of Lead” (1956-1999). The paper analyzes female prison writings and testimonials, such as Fatna El Bouih’s Talk of Darkness (2008), Khadija Marouazi’s The Biography of Ash (2000) and Malika Oufkir’s Stolen Lives: Twenty Years in a Desert Jail (2001). Using a postcolonial and trauma theory, the paper seeks to present these writings as a form of resistance to “epistemic violence,” as foregrounding a feminist/political consciousness, and as a significant contribution to Moroccan postcolonial feminist theorizing.
On a related theme, Brahim El Guabli’s “Gender-Unaware History: Ordinary Women as the Forgotten of Moroccan Historiography of the Present” reflects upon the issue of history writing and gender in the aftermath of the Years of Lead, with a special focus on ordinary women’s testimonials and their treatment by contemporary academic historians. The article revisits Moroccan historiography at a particular time of ‘post-reconciliation’ period within the space opened up by the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (ERC) in January 2004, when historians were reflecting on the meaning of history-writing post-1999. It specifically examines the historians’ discussions around the concept of “tārīkh al-zaman al-rāhin,” or “histoire du temps present” (history of the present), through a gender lens. The article also discusses some ordinary women’s moving testimonies and narratives about their experiences of state violence, their agency and their journey towards empowerment. El Guabli argues that despite the existence of the women’s narratives, “predominant Moroccan historiography of al-zaman al-rāhin has failed to take women into account both as victims of state violence and history makers during the Years of Lead.” This silence on women’s suffering and contribution to the fight against authoritarianism reflects the ERC’s lack of a gender-conscious vision of the equity and reconciliation process, which does not only diminish women’s historical roles, but also “lays the ground for the repetition of violence.” The objective of this critique is to contribute to the conceptualization of a more “inclusive and gender-conscious” history, which is critical to any project that genuinely aims to prevent future violence and to bring about real social change.

On another register, Hanane Darhour and Ginger Feather’s papers explore the legal aspects of VAW. Darhour’s “The Impact of CEDAW’s Global Norms on GBV Legislation in Morocco” investigates, as the title suggests, the different ways the ratification of the CEDAW impacted Moroccan legislations. The article focuses on an examination of the 2011 Constitution and the 2018 VAW law, shedding light on their legal ambiguities and loopholes. Darhour uses a methodology which combines a content analysis of Moroccan legislations with interviews with feminists and political activists. She concludes that the internalization of CEDAWs norms, mainly gender equality, in the Moroccan legal structure “remains of evolutionary
nature” since it is largely dependent on domestic dynamics and political compromises.

Ginger Feather’s article “Legal Discrimination and Violence against Women: Analyzed through a Feminist Lens Using the Advocacy Coalition Framework” is equally critical of Morocco’s legislations which do not align with international norms. Feather analyzes the impact of discriminatory Moroccan laws on VAW. Using the analytical framework of Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) from public policy, the article examines the way feminist and religious women’s organizations compete with each other and may cooperate along “core and secondary beliefs.” This study is based on in-depth interviews and focus groups with more than 200 stakeholders across twenty Moroccan cities from 2013-2018. The study includes people ranging from women’s and human rights associations, VAW listening centers, overnight shelters, and violence victims as well as members of the judiciary. The sampling aimed at including voices from across the Moroccan political spectrum, namely, secularists, socialists, progressive Muslim feminists, and conservative Islamic associations. This inclusive perspective, Feather argues, reflects the complex Moroccan social fabric which illuminates the challenges to, as well as the potential for, cooperation and consensus-building in the process of fighting VAW in Morocco.

Mohammed Derdar’s “Sexual Harassment against Waitresses in Morocco: The Case Study of El Jadida” addresses the issue of sexual harassment against waitresses in cafés in the city of El Jadida, as the title indicates. The study utilizes a qualitative data collected from cafés based on 25 interviews, including waitresses, male café clients, and café managers. The objective of the study is to analyze the nature and proportion of sexual harassment against waitresses, to explore the socio-economic structures which contribute to its production, and to shed light on the attitudes of the victims and the perpetrators. Finally, the aim of Derdar’s study is to contribute to subverting the taken for granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations which reproduce, normalize and sustain sexual harassment in the workplace.

Valerie Orlando’s article titled “Depicting and Documenting Violence against Women in the Contemporary Counter-Narratives of Moroccan Film” opens the section devoted to the media and VAW. Orlando
argues that Moroccan films and documentaries made in the last decade represent an effective medium to challenge the State’s “hagiography” and the hegemonic state narrative of exceptionalism, which often inflated the progress made in recent years in terms of women’s sociocultural, political and economic enfranchisement. Analyzing Nadir Bouhmouch’s documentary “475” (2013) and the fiction film, “Much Loved” (2015) by Nabil Ayouch, Orlando argues that these films serve to set the record straight on VAW in Morocco.

Ouidyane Elouardaoui’s “Romanticizing Rape in the Turkish TV Series Fatmagul’un Suçu Ne? and The Female Moroccan Fans” analyzes Moroccan audience’s attitude to rape in the Turkish series Fatmagul’un Suçu Ne? [What is Fatmagul’s Fault?] (Kanal D, 2010), known by the title of Fatma. The series narrates the psychological and social sufferings of Fatma, a village girl who was gang raped by four men, a few days before her wedding date, and who ended up eventually marrying one of the men involved in the rape act. Elouardaoui uses a close textual analysis of the narrative to explore the different meanings the series evokes in Moroccan audience using an analysis of Facebook fan pages and YouTube videos about the series. The paper concludes that the series serves not only the normalization of rape, but also its romanticization among Moroccan female viewers.

Ayoub Loutfi’s article “Exploring the Discursive Construction of Rape in Morocco: A Critical Discourse Analysis” further explores the representation of rape in Moroccan culture in social media platforms. Loutfi analyzes three recent rape cases and the reactions they received from Moroccans on Facebook and YouTube. The paper analyzes the language used in depicting the victims or the perpetrators. The data confirm the prevalence of victim-blaming typical of traditional norms which hold women responsible for men’s actions and sexual aggression. Loutfi argues that the discursive strategies revealed by the study indicate the way the female victims are subjected to another form of assault- verbal violence- in social media.

Finally, Moha Ennaji’s paper “Reflections on the Role of New Media in the Prevention of Violence against Women” ends this volume with a more optimistic note. Ennaji argues that the new media have the potential to improve women’s lives and gender relations, and promote
social change. The paper addresses VAW in Morocco and its different manifestations whether in the private sphere or in the public realm. Ennaji begins his study by a brief overview of Morocco’s international human rights commitments. He then looks at the political, legal, economic, and social status of women in Morocco, which serves as a background for his analysis of VAW perpetrated by male intimate partners as well as by the state. Finally, the author discusses the prevalent and positive use of the internet and social media, especially among the young female generation. Ennaji maintains that using modern technology and new media to debate VAW and exchange experiences whether among the youth or the human rights organizations is indispensable in raising awareness on violence and its consequences.

To conclude, this volume is dedicated to the memory of Professor Fouzia Rhissassi, who left us too soon, and who edited (together with Abderrazak Moulay Rchid) the first collective book on violence against women (in 2003). We wish that the present volume supplement the early questions and concerns of her volume and incite future research to further examine the interlocking structures and complex power relations producing violence against women in Morocco.