paradigmes épistémologiques des sciences sociales. En me penchant sur la manière dont ils « acquièrent la culture » (Hirschfeld, 2003), j'entends ainsi renouer avec le projet maussien d'une anthropologie générale étudiant l'humain en tant que totalité, c'est-à-dire dans sa dimension sociale et psychologique, individuelle et collective, ou encore biologique et culturelle (Karsenti, 1997).

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Militarised Bodies and Gendered Roles: Assessing "Gender" in Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Trainings in Tunisia

Daniela Musina

Daniela Musina is a student of Transnational Governance at the Scuola Normale Superiore and the Scuola Universitaria Superiore Sant'Anna, under the supervision of Francesco Strazzari and Mario Pianta. Her research seeks to promote a critical analysis of the models and practices of security governance in the Euro-Mediterranean area. She is interested in theoretical approaches from international relations, international sociology, postcolonial and feminist studies that address the nexus between security, capitalism and sexuality, as well as qualitative methodologies and political ethnography.

Introduction

This contribution seeks to provide a preliminary assessment of the tentative applications of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and other gender mainstreaming provisions observed in training and other "policy transfer" settings in Tunisia. Transnational agendas focusing on gender are deeply permeated by security policies and securitisation processes. The adoption of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in 2000 by the United Nations Security Council has included gender training in both peace and institution-building contexts. The EU and EU Member States (EUMS) declare their full commitment to the UN WPS agenda and to this aim have developed a Gender Action Plan (GAP), now in its fourth edition, which is at the centre of the entire spectrum of their external action. Tunisia has approved a first draft of its National Action Plan (NAP) on gender in 2018, which is intended to implement WPS provisions. Gender-based agendas have usually a strong normative connotation supposedly aimed at transformative change in gender relations, but their contemporary character is indeed unfolding through substantial forms of external technical assistance. Technical assistance consists of a plethora of different implementation modalities, generally referred to as "capacity building", trainings and other educational activities, in line with the recent development mantras and the assumption that approaches relying on the "transfer" of knowledge and expertise are key to solving societal problems. This raises questions about the illusion that paradigms of "technique" or "governance" can be neutral, as it is often assumed in neoliberal or "post-liberal" recipes of external assistance. To the opposite, the neoliberal vision of governance renews with its older liberal tradition and contributes to the (re)production of gendered power relations.

From a preliminary encounter with trainings and their participants, it emerges that essentialised masculine/feminine roles and a specific division of labour pre-exist and are reproduced through these interactions. Militarised routines and bodily expressions also emerge, where «militarisation» can be defined as enacting a reconfiguration of the world in which masculine force and discipline matter in addressing social issues (Enloe, 2000). A feminist approach is well suited to exploring the standpoint of the marginalized or oppressed. But such an approach also teaches that power relations are not fixed, and oppression must also sought "in the interstices of power itself" (Haraway, 1986). Investigating gender issues through the lens of institutional actors, including security ones, which are usually perceived on the oppressive and not the oppressed side, is key. What if there are patterns of marginalisation and oppression within what are broadly depicted as "safe-spaces", typical of actors and actions that are supposed to "create the conditions of security"? What security is created on these sites, and for whom? What insecurity is being produced?

Problematizing normative production and definitions of "gender" within it

The WPS agenda found its launch pad in Tunisia with the recent approval, in 2018, of the NAP

implementing UNSC Resolution 1325 (Della Valle, 2018). What clearly emerges from a first reading of the Tunisian NAP is a distinct focus on gender-based violence, and its conflation with statal "counterterrorist" (CT) or "prevention of violent extremism" objectives and agendas. In a similar vein, the Tunisian Report on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) + 25 clearly states the importance to target "local" women as agents of CT/PVE. This does not differ much from the normative content of the European Gender Action Plan (GAP) which, despite its latest versions taking a broader view of "gender" and intersectional axes of discrimination (see EU GAP III and IV), reiterates in its outreach and foreign action dimensions the "inclusion of gender provisions" with CT/PVE objectives through "specific measures, including targeted training for the military, justice and security forces" (EU GAP III, 18). This is not only problematic as a-critically poses the necessity for "European training" to others, non-Europeans, but also because it absolves the state and state institutions from the (re)production of gender-based violence, identifying it exclusively with "terrorism" and "violent extremism". Whether the Tunisian NAP and the European GAP will remain words on paper with little applicability is a legitimate question. However, it is clear that a growing number of actions are being funded and supported in Tunisia under gender mainstreaming and the WPS "global" agenda, including through Security Sector Reform (SSR) schemes.

A number of contributions have analysed the problematic construction stemming from EU WPS policies of women as "victims", natural peace-mongers or in need of protection, or challenged their neoliberal instrumental use that markets their potential contribution to peace and security (Muehlenhoff, 2017). The very definitions of "gender" that are common to these documents tend to equate gender with women and do not address men and masculinities, and the male vulnerabilities produced by gender discriminations. Looking at the ways in which these formulations are performative, and thus have practical and political effects, is key to disentangling the tension between a neoliberal capitalist order that markets women's roles and experiences within peace and security agendas, and the effects of this order visible on practices, bodily routines, divisions of labour, and militarising cultures that are reproduced trough trainings. These new imaginaries promote visions of the "global" and the "human" that are often tethered to value generation or to value extraction (Agathangelou, 2017). The "women-as-value" paradigm is emblematic in this respect. It is no coincidence that the practical provisions and "follow-up" presented in these documents merely translate complex social issues into technocratic indicator-based frameworks, hardly having a transformative impact. They also foster militarisation of attitudes and bodily practices. Unlike "militarism", which is commonly defined as a set of "assumptions, values and beliefs" (Enloe, 2000), "militarisation" is not an ideology, but rather "a socio-political process by which the roots of militarism are driven deep down into the soil of a society" (*ibid.*) Speaking of militarisation conveys the sense of a dynamic, ever-evolving process that creeps and penetrates into social and everyday life, and as such can be even more pervasive than war (*ibid.*, 2-3). This process involves the intensification of the labour and resources allocated to military and security purposes, something that is now very visible in security assemblages across the Euro-Mediterranean space, including the shaping of other institutions and subjectivities in synchrony with military goals (Mama & Okazawa-Rey, 2012).

Problematising practical effects: 'womanly' virtues, division of labour and militarised bodies

A first relevant impression coming out from observations and interviews within/on the margins of SSR and other "training" or supposedly "policy-transfer" settings is that a gendered division of labour between male/female participants pre-exists and is reproduced through trainings. When asked about her day-to-day duties, a Land Forces (*Armée de Terre*) sub-officer attached to the army garrison for transport and logistics explained that she is always asked by her superiors to take part in internationally-sponsored trainings to share her "best practices" as woman "helping with logistics that are necessary to conduct missions, sometimes in border and hard-to-reach areas":

> *I am often in charge of ensuring the backup of transported equipment, such as armaments, but also, when the occasion arises, official examination papers or electoral material and ballot boxes. They are apparently harmless tasks, but in reality they are very delicate*[1].

The specific roles performed by female officials and the relative bodily tasks are thus praised and glorified in militarised and hypermasculine spheres of power, and in some cases even become a precondition for participation in trainings. Militarisation here penetrates the body and mind through the division of labour and the creation of a sense of belonging to the military structure while performing atypical, "non-male" tasks. Role positioning and division of labour are not questioned in trainings, but are usually used to adapt gender discourses and actions to these positions.

These accounts are indicative of the ways in which division of labour and militarised gender protection practices are constructed in security arrangements and lauded as "good practices" in trainings. During a DCAF-sponsored training session, a trainer debriefed the audience on the importance of integrating a gender perspective particularly in programmes and agendas tailored to CT/PVE. He showed slides and videos arguing that:

> *besides avoiding adverse gendered consequences of CT/PVE, female officers are essential to reach out to marginalised communities and to build partnership and trust, which are fundamental to tackle recruitment chains and radicalising narratives*[2].

Alongside the emphasis on the role of female officials in activities such as CT/PVE, and according to WPS interpretations, an argument was made regarding the crucial role of Tunisian mothers and maternal education in PVE, crucially pointing to the importance of family and emotional factors as catalysers – as well as disruptors – of violent extremism. The role of "mothers" and "families" was described by some participants as weightier than a mere increased presence of women within the security sector. A video clip titled "*7ay*" (which means "alive") was played to the attention of the trainers and the rest of the participants by representatives of CREDIF (Centre de Recherches, d'Études, de Documentation et d'Information sur la Femme) who were present at the session[3]. The discourses and attitudes of both European and Tunisian participants referred to the constructed use-value of women. All seemed to converge towards a greater role to be played by women, on whose shoulders ultimately lies the responsibility for the success of prevention efforts in the private sphere, as opposed to a supposedly "protected" or "safe" public sphere guaranteed by the state and its security actors. This is symptomatic of a structurally patriarchal culture that exists in both the metropole and in the postcolony.

Such activities and relatively prescribed roles are coherent with a logic that assume women are naturally suited to "pacification" or "stabilisation" roles, and ignores that women may gravitate toward military or police careers not necessarily because they are more sensitive to peace and aid issues, but for the same pragmatic reasons that drive many men to seek job security, decent pay and improved career prospects (Pruitt, 2016). In this sense, women are "being marketed" as their skills, knowledge and potential contribution to security and peace (and relative training activities) are used as a vector to legitimise the practices of institutions, including militarised ones. Such marketing

[1] Interview, Tunis, 2022.

[2] DCAF training session, Hammamet, 2022.

[3] The videoclip has been published on the CREDIF Facebook page and is available at the following link.

works by narrowing gender mainstreaming efforts to a mere showcase of the institution or programme's inclusiveness, while simultaneously limiting other experiences, skills and resources that women can draw on in these environments, which are not necessarily linked to gender (Pruitt, 2016). These practices have clear material effects in that they encourage men and women to accept their place in the sexual division of labour and in the hierarchical military/security structures. Overlooking these everyday practices is blind to the ways in which agency (and bodies) are constrained by socio-material relations and to the ways in which women's attitudes can be counterproductive to their own empowerment (Martin de Almagro, Ryan, 2019).

There is nothing automatic or irreversible about this practical cult of militarisation. There are several examples of subtle, sometimes unconscious strategies to escape the physical constraints imposed by the security environment. Some female officers, for example, like to express their personality through their outfits, even when in uniform, and are not afraid of the judgement that might follow from their male and female colleagues. "Clothing is the first identification and demarcation accessory" (Bouzar quoted in Matri, 2021). Militarisation, like all relational processes in society, is unstable and constantly subject to manipulation by those most oppressed by it, who seek to carve out their own manoeuvring space.

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« Ne devient-il pas évident que, dès l'instant où nous posons le regard sur notre terre, sur l'environnement, nos identités s'entremêlent ? » (E. Gohary)

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