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THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES
Gender, women's agency and alternative approaches to violent extremism in the case of Tunisia

by
INES BENCHEIKH EL HOCINE

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for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies (CAMES)
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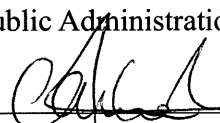# THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

WOMEN AND ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN

THE CASE OF TUNISIA

by
INES BENCHEIKH EL HOCINE

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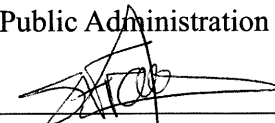**Carmen Geha**, Assistant Professor, Political Studies and Public Administration
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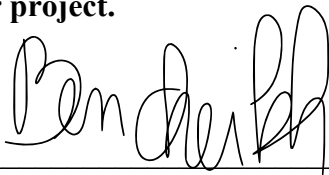Dissertation

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT OF

Inès BENCHEIKH EL HOCINE   for   <u>Master of Art</u>
                                                <u>Major</u>: Middle Eastern Studies

Title: <u>THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES</u>
<u>Gender, women's agency and alternative approaches to violent extremism in the case of Tunisia</u>

At a time where terrorism, Islamic radicalization and violent extremism are part of our everyday life, development and peacebuilding policies are crucial.
The case of Tunisia is interesting to study. Indeed, after the Revolution and in the midst of the consolidation of its democratic transition, Tunisia is facing numerous difficulties linked to Salafism-jihadism and to the prospect of the return from ISIS of its foreign fighters. Solving some of the social, economic, political and cultural causes of extremism is thus essential for the stability and long term development of Tunisia's democracy.
While taking the case of Tunisia and more specifically, the projects of the UNDP office in Tunisia, I wish to study how a gendered method of Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) is interesting and innovative.
In conflict transformation theories, the question of women and their influence, is a quickly growing field of study. This paper has thus as an objective, to analyze how women, too often marginalized, could be perceived as key actresses of their community, able to provide a significant support to national and international development policies of PVE.

<u>Key words</u>: Violent Extremism, terrorism, international development policies, gender issues.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSO : Civil Society Organization
CVE : Countering Violent Extremism
FTF : Foreign Terrorist Fighters
ISIS : Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
NEET : Not in Education, Employment or Training
OSCE : Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OTCS : *Organisation Tunisienne pour la Cohésion Sociale*
PVE : Prevention of Violent Extremism
UNDP : United Nations Development Program
UNSCR : United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID : United States Agency for International Development
VE : Violent Extremism
WPS : Women, Peace and Security

INTRODUCTION

A month after the double terrorist attack of the 27th of June, claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)[1], Tunisia is still febrile and unstable. The death of President Caid Essebsi a few months before the next legislative and presidential election puts the country at high risks[2].

On the security segment, the last weeks have been fruitful: imams have been arrested for the apology of terrorism[3] and terrorists have been killed or arrested[4]. But the issue of terrorism and violent extremism remains a major challenge in Tunisia.

The question of Violent Extremism (VE) and the means to prevent it has dominated discussions in the media, the academic world and international policies, for the last decades. Different approaches have been discussed and new strategies and methods have been implemented: cyber-technology, humanitarian support, focus on youth and women, attention to education and awareness, etc.

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[1] France24, "Un double attentat suicide cible les forces de l'ordre à Tunis". Available at : https://www.france24.com/fr/20190627-direct-tunisie-attaques-kamikaze-bourguiba-el-gorjani

[2] Al Jazeera, "Beji Caid Essebsi: Veteran who ushered in democracy in Tunisia". Available at : https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/beji-caid-essebsi-veteran-ushered-democracy-tunisia-190725142610694.html

[3] Tunisie Numérique, "Tunisie: Interpellation d'un Imam à Djerba pour terrorisme" July 31, 2019. Available at : https://www.tunisienumerique.com/tunisie-interpellation-dun-imam-a-djerba-pour-terrorisme/

[4] Kapitalis, "Tunisie: Arrestation de 10 extrémistes religieux recherchés, dont 3 condamnés par contumace pour terrorisme", August 1, 2019. Available at : http://kapitalis.com/tunisie/2019/08/01/tunisie-arrestation-de-10-extremistes-religieux-recherches-dont-3-condamnes-par-contumace-pour-terrorisme/

The first approach on facing VE appeared in the aftermath of the 9/11 Twin Tower terrorist attack, as part of a more global and international antiterrorist strategy. Ever since, counterterrorism became an international preoccupation mainly due to the transnationalization of the phenomenon, simultaneous of the globalization of the world and its rapid expansion. It was proved by the number of annual victims linked to violent terrorism which went from 3329 in 2000 to 29376 in 2015[5].

At the same time, terrorism became an international matter since it transgresses all rules of war, deploying a voluntary asymmetrical use of violence[6]. It proves of transnational challenges while being unpredictable and evolving. However, the ever-changing nature of the terms makes any policies and project implementation complicated.

It is with the adoption of the Plan of Action against Violent Extremism, in 2016, that the United Nations started considering the importance of preventing (instead of only countering) violent extremism[7]. Especially since "*violent extremism (...) undermines peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. No country or region is immune from its impacts*"[8]. Thus, violent extremism needs to be understood as a global and multidimensional threat to world peace and stability.

The case of Tunisia is especially interesting to look at when discussing ways of Preventing Violent Extremism.

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[5] Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Terrorism Index. Etude, Sydney: Institute for Economics & Peace, 2016, 108.

[6] Lutz, James. Terrorism: origins and evolution. Springer, 2005.

[7] United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, Report of the Secretary-General, A/70/674 : http://unoy.org/wp-content/uploads/UN-Plan-of-Action-to-Prevent-Violent-Extremism.pdf

[8] Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, Report of the Secretary-General, A/70/674 : http://unoy.org/wp-content/uploads/UN-Plan-of-Action-to-Prevent-Violent-Extremism.pdf

Since the *Jasmine Revolution* of 2010-2011, Tunisia is facing new economic, social and politic challenges while crossing different milestones such as its first democratic election in 2014, its new Constitution the same year, or the debate about equal inheritance rights[9]. However, those last few years were also marked by complications and instabilities notably because of security threats and weakened institutions (including religious ones). Simultaneously, Tunisia witnessed a resurgence of religiosity (through the internet, social media and private TV channels from the Gulf, promoting a vision of Islam and political Islam conformed with democracy)[10]. Moreover, the international geopolitical context led many Muslims to a general feeling of discrimination and islamophobia. Those elements, *inter alia*, contributed to the rise of violent extremism in Tunisia, threatening the already weak and febrile democratic transition.

Thus, facing the core reasons of violent extremism is a necessity. Tunisia has been implementing multiple policies over the years and benefited from numerous international development agencies such as the United Nations. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) office in Tunis works mainly on sustainable socio-economical development, as required by the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals[11].

When discussing ways of preventing violent extremism, the UNDP office insists on fighting all forms of inequalities and suppressing factors of socioeconomic marginalization while building the capacity of state institutions and civil society and

9 Brookings, "Can Tunisia find a compromise on equal inheritance?". Available at : https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/09/25/can-tunisia-find-a-compromise-on-equal-inheritance/

10 Orient XXI, "Tunisia, Battlefield of The Gulf Countries". Available at : https://orientxxi.info/magazine/tunisia-battlefield-of-the-gulf-countries,2394

11 United Nations' website, "About the Sustainable Development Goals". Available at : https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

reinforcing access to basic rights, in a very *bottom-up* logic. They thus work on the resilience of both the state and society.

In this paper, I intend to look at new perspectives of Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE), taking Tunisia and the UNDP's *Tamkeen* project in particular, as a case.

I will focus on socially marginalized groups and the role they can play within the PVE framework. When looking at national statistics, the youth and women were the two categories that emerged. The young between 15 and 29 years old represent 24,5 % of the Tunisian population (and those less than 35 years old, 57 %)[12]. At the same time, Tunisian women have a higher rate of unemployment in the country with 22,9 % of unemployed women (the national level being 15,5 % for the last of trimester 2018)[13]. Moreover, new approaches of violent extremism, frequently used in development projects, underline the valuable role women could play in preventing violence and the lack of data or case studies presents an opportunity for further research. In recent years, a focus has been made on women and on their much needed emancipation, independence and equality with men as demonstrated by the multiple public policies, agencies and UN resolutions created to underline women's empowerment[14]. The place of women when talking about violent extremism is getting more and more important.

In a period of great instability and, as we discussed earlier, insecurity and violent extremism, women are perceived as paws in the strategy of violent groups as was

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[12] UNDP Tunisia Study "Vision sectorielle de la jeunesse 2019-2020", January 2019.

[13] Tunisian National Statistics website , category "*Unemployment*" : http://www.ins.nat.tn/fr/themes/emploi

[14] UN Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242 underline the key actresses that women are in international development. See Annexe 1.

proven by the campaign "*Bring Back Our Girls*" in Nigeria[15], or the testimony of Nobel Peace Prize winner, Nadia Murad, to Donald Trump about the sexual abuse she suffered from ISIS[16].

However, women are not only perceived as victims. They are also key actors, assets and even "*de-radicalizers*"[17], capable of influencing their families (private sphere) and their communities.

As we saw, Tunisia is facing different challenges linked to violent extremism and including women as ways to prevent it seems innovative and pioneering. This is why the UNDP's project, *Tamkeen* (meaning empowerment), has currently a project joining the PVE to women's empowerment.

This paper will, with the concrete case of Tunisia, a country that has been trying to implement development policies as an alternative to only countering violent extremism (CVE), see how women could play a more active role in the prevention of violent extremism.

The evidences that would be used throughout this paper were collected during an internship I did within the Tamkeen project for 6 months (from the 1st of March until the 31st of August 2019). Since the very beginning of the aftermath of the Revolution,

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[15] Amnesty International, « Nigeria: Abducted Women and Girls Forced to Join Boko Haram Attacks », le 14 avril 2015, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/04/nigeria-abducted-women-and-girls-forced-to-join-boko-haram-attacks/

[16] The Washington Post "A Yazidi woman from Iraq told Trump that ISIS killed her family. 'Where are they now?' he asked." July 19, 2019. Available at : https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/a-yazidi-woman-from-iraq-told-trump-that-isis-killed-her-family-where-are-they-now-he-asked/2019/07/19/cc0c83e0-aa2d-11e9-a3a6-ab670962db05_story.html?utm_term=.6b4f549d16e7

[17] Sophie Giscard d'Estaing (2017) Engaging women in countering violent extremism: avoiding instrumentalisation and furthering agency, Gender & Development, 25:1.

in 2012, the Tamkeen project worked "*for the promotion of citizenship and the reinforcement of social cohesion and civil society*"[18].

This way, this internship helped me understand beforehand what the UNDP's course of action is in term of capacity building, and how they implement and introduce their project in Tunisia, especially on social cohesion and Prevention of Violent Extremism.

In the first chapter, a focus will be made on the different theoretical aspects this project combine. I will thus study the different perceptions on violent extremism, on how to undertake it and on what tools could be used to bring new views on it. Gender being one of it, we will see how the gendering of prevention of violent extremism is a new trend of peacebuilding, one that is more and more exploited by International Agencies such as the United Nations. Literature on the subject has burgeoned and we will highlight the different debates it created.

In the second chapter, I will look at the concrete case of Tunisia where the UNDP office works on PVE and women empowerment. I will thus first relate to the Tunisian context over the last years on Political Islam and women's rights, before looking in more details at the Tamkeen's project on PVE.

Finally, in a third part, I will try and make a clear critic of both the Tamkeen project and the United Nations' perception of women's agency in preventing violent extremism, while criticizing more broadly the UN's mechanisms. This part will be mainly based on my own analyze of the 6 months' internship I did in this office.

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[18] UNDP Tunisia, Projet Tamkeen. Available at : http://www.tn.undp.org/content/tunisia/fr/home/operations/projects/democratic_governance/projet-tamkeen-pour-la-promotion-de-la-citoyennete--le-renforcem0.html

LITTERATURE REVIEW

A. Violent extremism, a complex definition and multiple examples

"*Violent extremism*" is a complicated and challenging term to define and the literature review revealed that there was no clear nor consensual definition of it. It is an ambiguous, polysemous, polymorphous and controversial notion. Moreover, in social sciences, Medias, politic speeches or even international policies, it is often used interchangeably with other terms like radicalization, extremism, terrorism or even jihadism as was regretted by many as George Joffé[19] or Sue Mahan and Pamala L. Griset[20].

But, Violent Extremism (VE) being a current and sensitive subject, precise definitions and proper use of terminology are crucial.

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[19] Joffé, E. George H. Islamist Radicalisation in Europe and the Middle East: Reassessing the Causes of Terrorism. Vol. 51. IB Tauris, 2013.

[20] Mahan, Sue, and Pamala L. Griset. *Terrorism in perspective*. Sage, 2008.

The voluntarily broad definition used throughout this paper comes from Jason-Leigh Striegher, defining violent extremism as *"an ideology that accepts the use of violence for the pursuit of goals that are generally social, racial, religious and/or political in nature"*[21]. Michael Béchir Ayari adds to it, "*(the) reject(ion of) the universal values of democracy, rule of law and human rights by spreading a message of religious, cultural and social intolerance*"[22].

Therefore, VE is a multidimensional threat that involves concepts of different theories from social movements to psychology. This is why contexts, groups, trajectories, structures, circumstances but also people's individual paths and motivations are essential to take into consideration when discussing the use of VE. Those elements, as was underlined by Minerva Nasser-Eddine, prove the ever-evolving notion that is VE and the difficulty to define it[23].

Thus, VE encompasses a broad range of belief systems like nationalist terrorism illustrated by Anders Breivik's attack in Oslo in 2011 or racism with the example of white suprematists. In this paper, we will discuss a particular form of VE : religious extremism illustrated by Salafism-jihadism with the case of Tunisia.

From the root *salaf*, meaning "*anterior", "precedent*", the term *salafiyya* designates the pious ancestors' era. It is based on the belief that the first generations of muslims were closely following the lessons of Quran and of the *sunna* (the tradition of the Prophet) by respecting the *shari'a* (the religious law). However, according to Salafists, Muslims

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[21] Striegher, Jason-Leigh. "Violent-extremism: An examination of a definitional dilemma." (2015).

[22] Ayari, Michael. "Analytical Review. Violent Extremism and Its Motivating Factors in Tunisia in the 2010s"; 2017.

[23] Nasser-Eddine, Minerva, et al. *Countering violent extremism (CVE) literature review*. No. DSTO-TR-2522. DEFENCE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION EDINBURGH (AUSTRALIA), 2011.

slowly moved away from those principles and committed blameworthy innovations (*bid'a*). This is why, in their opinion, there is a necessity to go back to those ancient times where everything was done in the framework of Islam, and try and restore a lawful and rightful Caliphate (an Islamic state)[24].

This ideology stems from the idea that *jihad* meaning "*effort*", "*exhaustion*", "*strain*"[25], is a way of achieving this exemplary past. Indeed, the act of *jihad* is nowadays often understood as a "*holy war*" against infidels, when, in reality, the Quran revealed there is two different kinds of *jihad*. The first one, the *jihad al saghir* (and the one that is considered as a daily duty) is defined as a "*sustained struggle (...) against one's own baser instincts*"[26]. It is the *jihad al kebir* that requires the use of force in a defensive way and is used as legitimacy for violent actions and Salafi-jihadist groups propaganda.

However, VE doesn't only encompass questions of religion. Those violent actions are more symbols of the rejection of accepted values and norms, and of a movement of desocialization. People choosing those violent modes of action are combining identity, religion, social and political components. As Michael Béchir Ayari develops it in his analytical review of Tunisia[27], violent extremism can stem from different factors leading to radicalization as developed bellow.

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[24] Kane, Ousmane. "L'«islamisme» d'hier et d'aujourd'hui." *Cahiers d'etudes africaines* 2 (2012): 545-574.

[25] Ella, Landau-Tasseron. "Jihād." Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe. Brill (2001).

[26] Saikal, Amin. "Women and Jihad: Combating Violent Extremism and Developing New Approaches to Conflict Resolution in the Greater Middle East." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 36.3 (2016): 313-322.

[27] Ayari, Michael. "Analytical Review. Violent Extremism and Its Motivating Factors in Tunisia in the 2010s"; 2017.

Situational factors

International causes like the Arab spring, jihadists released from prison, takeover of places of worship by salafist-jihadist groups, border with war-zones countries...

Institutional factors

Corruption, brutality of security forces, deficit of political representation in peri-urban areas...

Religious perceptions

Instrumentalization of religion under authoritarian rule, dissemination of salafism, repression of re-islamization processes...

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Ideological factors

Arab-islamic causes such as pan-islamism, rise of islamophobia and discrimination in the West...

Sociocultural factors

Desire to live an adventure, loss of social link, deficit of paternal authority, loss of traditional gender benchmarks...

Socio-economic factors

Hope of better opportunities, economic and social marginalization, socio-regional discrimination...

Individual perceptions

Relative frustration, humiliation, injustice, distrust in public institutions...

Those different factors and perceptions are regarded as "*push and pull factors*"[28] of radicalization. This way, push factors take into consideration structures, contexts and circumstances. It underlines the role of the state and its eventual failure, allowing gaps for non-state actors and leading it to lose its "*monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force*"[29]. On the other hand, pull factors look at individual paths and personal motivations like the lack of social perspectives or opportunities of individual promotion. This last point is particularly interesting to look at in Tunisia where the Revolution of 2011 brought the hope of new opportunities. However, incapable of reaching them, Tunisians were often faced with frustration and what Ted Gurr called "*relative deprivation*", "*a perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities*"[30].

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[28] United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, Report of the Secretary-General, A/70/674 : http://unoy.org/wp-content/uploads/UN-Plan-of-Action-to-Prevent-Violent-Extremism.pdf

[29] Weber, Max. *Le savant et le politique*. Presses Électroniques de France, 2013.

[30] Ted, Gurr. "Why men rebel." *Princeton, PUP* (1970).

Faced with the upsurge of violent extremism, states and non-state actors have been obliged to find structural solutions design to counter and even prevent any forms of violent extremism.

B. Conflict transformation and the Security Sector Reform (SSR), from Countering to Preventing

To respond to the rise of violent extremism, and the different forms it takes, academics and policy analysts have been working at finding sustainable and long-lasting solutions. New theories have emerged, including theories of social movements and social construction of identity[31] and led to peacebuilding projects thought to adjust to the ongoing evolution of conflicts.

These different components are taken into consideration within conflict transformation theories, looking at the *"long term goal of transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting"* [32]. For John Paul Lederach, and in a more extended definition, conflict transformation is :

> "*to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships*"[33].

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[31] Agrikoliansky, Éric, *et al.*, *Penser les mouvements sociaux*, La Découverte « Recherches », 2010.

[32] Miall, Hugh. "Conflict transformation: A multi-dimensional task." *Transforming ethnopolitical conflict*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, 2004. 67-89.

[33] Lederach, John Paul. Preparing for peace: Conflict transformation across cultures. Syracuse University Press, 1996.

This way, conflict transformation's theory aims at answering the previous factors to radicalization we listed such as sociocultural factors and individual perceptions.

When it comes to concrete actions, Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) was often favored.

CVE is defined by the use of coercive measures that mainly focus on legislation, military and security operations, like for example, the French *Plan Vigipirate[34]* or the Homeland Security Advisory System[35] in the United States.

However, and more and more often, Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) is favored over CVE actions. For many, preventing works on the roots of violent extremism since it takes into consideration actors and communities and falls in with the theory of conflict transformation. With PVE, there is a willingness to reinforce and strengthen the capacity of people and communities against violent extremism, instead of working on the consequences and only in an institutional way.

For the United Nations (UN) Secretary General's 2015 *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, PVE is a necessity in today's world, since it means *"ensuring respect for human rights for all and the rule of law, while countering terrorism"*. Moreover, the UN underlines the importance of creating *"open, equitable, inclusive and pluralist societies, based on the full respect of human rights and with economic opportunities for all (which) represents the most tangible and meaningful alternative to violent extremism"*[36].

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[34] See the French government website, "Comprendre le plan vigipirate". Available at : https://www.gouvernement.fr/risques/comprendre-le-plan-vigipirate

[35] See the American government website, "Homeland Security". Available at : https://www.dhs.gov

[36] OSCE, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe - Handbook on Understanding the Role of Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism. Good Practices for Law Enforcement (May 2019).

To provide those "*open, equitable, inclusive and pluralist societies*", Civil Society is a useful tool. As defined by the World Economic Forum,

> "*civil society (…) refers to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations, labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations*"[37].

It is therefore often considered as separate from the state, and thus as being neutral, which gives it a valuable legitimacy. And, as underlined by the World Bank, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) "*express the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations*"[38].

Those elements put CSOs as advantageous partners when considering PVE actions since they cover different aspects of society and various localities. However, other actors have been presented over the last decades, as potential partners of PVE. Women's participation is more and more considered as the key to any successful implementation of PVE projects.

C. The ever-growing role of women in PVE objectives

Gender equality, as a way to reach basic Human Rights for all, is perceived by many as one way of creating a long-term, peaceful and secure world. There is a belief, especially

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[37] World Economic Forum "Who and 'what' is civil society?". Available at : https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/04/what-is-civil-society/

[38] World Bank, Civil Society and Peacebuilding potential, limitations and critical factors (2007). Available at : http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/875891468136195722/pdf/364450SR0REPLA1nd1 Peacebuilding1web.pdf

within international development agencies, that by including gender questions and analysis, projects and policies would be more efficient.

For example, the UN has been giving more and more importance to women's role the last twenty years and numerous UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) have been underlying the importance of using women as partners (see Annexe 1)[39].

Women's place in UN's policies took some time to appear, and started as early as 1992 when Boutros-Ghali's *An Agenda for Peace* was introduced[40]. It emphasized the fact that peacekeeping was not enough to concretely face violent extremism, and the support of CSOs for a sustainable peace was required. The next years saw a highlight on CSOs dealing with women's rights, like during the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. Multiple conferences followed, focusing on NGOs lobbying and advocacy, resolutions and international policies. Nicola Pratt and Sophie Richter-Devroe explain this new interest in civil society and women's role and active participation in peacebuilding by linking it to the movement from a "*(neo)-realist state-centered to a more holistic, agent-centered*"[41]. The agent is the one in power and thus the one that should help take the decision.

The Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda comes strengthening this belief that women are essential for world peace. Created within the UN Women agency, this agenda aims at including women at all stage of peacebuilding, "*from conflict prevention and conflict resolution to reconciliation and economic recovery post-conflict*"[42].

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[39] From Kirby, Paul, and Laura J. Shepherd. "Reintroducing women, peace and security." *International Affairs* 92.2 (2016): 249-254.

[40] Boutros-Ghali, Boutros. "An agenda for peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping." *International Relations* 11.3 (1992): 201-218.

[41] Pratt, Nicola, and Sophie Richter-Devroe. "Critically examining UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13.4 (2011): 489-503.

[42] UN WOMEN, Women Peace and Security. Available at : https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-peace-security

The programs are thought to take into consideration all women. The ones that could be considered as "*leaders*", as "*empowered*" but also the ones who suffer from different kind of injustice or violence. For example, a case is highlighted on their website : the *abuelas* of Sepur Zarco[43]. Those women suffered during the Guatemalan civil war (1960-1996) from war crimes, rape and enslavement. However, what makes their case interesting for the UN Women agency, is the fact that they fought for justice at the highest court of Guatemala and got two former officers convicted of crimes against humanity.

More generally, and as the Sustainable Development Goals Report of 2018 states, women are too often the targets of war criminals : the majority of detected trafficking victims were women and girls (71%) and over 90% of victims detected were trafficked for sexual exploitation or forced labour[44].

The goal of UN Women, as part of the United Nations System, is thus to support and accompany women in their quest for justice and equality. As was mentioned on their website, some of their actions take into consideration *inter alia*, "*leadership and political participation*", "*economic empowerment*" or "*ending violence against women*"[45].

Therefore, for the United Nations, including gender was deemed necessary as it assured the effectiveness and sustainability of the programs implemented. Two resolutions are interesting to develop in this paper.

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[43] UN WOMEN, Women Peace and Security. Available at : https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-peace-security

[44] Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2018. Available at : https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2018/TheSustainableDevelopmentGoalsReport2018-EN.pdf

[45] UN WOMEN, What we do. Available at : https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do

The first one, the UNSCR 1325 (which will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2020), is a milestone in considering women as agents of peace, instead of only victims of conflicts[46]. It recognizes the contribution of women in peacebuilding and decision making, the gendered aspect of war (mainly the weaponizing of women) and the need to include gender equality in every negotiations and decision.

The second one, the UNSCR 2242 of 2015, is the first one that put an accent on the importance of "*integrating women's participation, leadership and empowerment*"[47] in PVE projects.

Since then, the question became increasingly present and as the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy 6th review took place on June 2018, women's role in countering violent extremism appeared as being crucial.

When discussing the concrete implementation of those two resolutions, both Bangladesh and Indonesia are interesting to develop. Indeed, in both countries, violent extremism is highly present (and the Global Terrorism Index of 2016 ranked South Asia as the second most affected region in the world)[48]. Thus, in both countries, a program called "*empowered women, peaceful communities*" works at helping women through loans or the creation of small businesses. This way, those programs aims at answering some of the "*push and pull factors*" of radicalization we developed earlier. There is a belief that if violent extremism happens because of socio-economic or sociocultural factors, then one way to avoid it would be to focus on the root causes of those factors. Moreover, having a small business is not only about economic empowerment. It is also

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[46] UN Security Council Resolution 1325 « Women, Peace and Security ». Available at : https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/pdf/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement

[47] UN Security Council Resolution 2242 « Women and Peace and Security ». Available at : https://undocs.org/S/RES/2250(2015)

[48] Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Terrorism Index. Etude, Sydney: Institute for Economics & Peace, 2016, 108.

about cultivating a social link, being a full member of a community and avoid a feeling of discrimination.

However, the reasons why women are perceived by the United Nations, and other international agencies, as key actresses of prevention of violent extremism are complex and unfortunately, often only based on general assumptions.

D. Gender differences and the use of women's "maternalism"

Women are seen as capable of influencing their families and communities due to their local anchorage and their statut in their family. They are perceived as the "*heart of community and kinship structures*"[49]. Those reasons are good enough to see them as tools against VE. Being well introduced in those private circles, there is a belief that they could easily recognise unusual activities or patterns of behaviors.

Including women was thus a smart strategy to adopt. But even more, this is the idea that women, as mothers and wives, have a natural duty of preserving life since they "*live to mother*"[50]. This act of linking women to motherhood shows an action of *gendering*, the assigning of a gender to someone or something. The term '*gender*' is defined as "*socially constructed roles for women and men*" and emphasizes the "*social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female as well as the relationship and power dynamics between women and men*"[51].

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[49] OSCE, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe - Handbook on Understanding the Role of Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism. Good Practices for Law Enforcement (May 2019).

[50] Gentry, Caron E. "Twisted maternalism: From peace to violence." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11.2 (2009): 235-252.

[51] Idem.

Thus, a natural opposition between *violence* and *women* was produced. For Caron E. Gentry, it is the idea of motherhood (seen as synonymous to nurturing, loving, preserving, forgiving…) being applied and linked to women, no matter their actions. She links it to the idea of *domesticity*: women are either wives or mothers, and show a certain "*selflessness*"[52].

When talking about the possible impact of women on PVE, women are often linked to their "*maternalism*", defined as "*women's participation in the political arena with peace and non-violence*"[53]. A differentiation can be made between *active* and *passive* maternalism, the difference being the use of action or not (passive maternalism could be women being used as symbols for propaganda). Sara Ruddick questioned this term at length. She perceives that women using their "*maternal thinking (is) a resource for peacemaking*"[54] while developing the "*rationality of care*"[55] women have.

Besides, and as was highlighted by Anne McClintock, women are perceived as the one that could save the nation, "*the term deriv(ing) from 'natio' : to be born*"[56]. Just like women are perceived as the one giving birth to the next generation of citizens, if not soldiers. But to what extent this statement is true? Are women really, and even more, naturally, contributing to peace?

E. Women, new actresses of violence?

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[52] Idem.

[53] Idem.

[54] Ruddick, Sara. "Maternal thinking." *Feminist studies* 6.2 (1980): 342-367.

[55] Ruddick, Sara. 1990. Rationality of Care. In women militarism and war : essays in history, politics and social theory.

[56] McClintock, Anne. "" No Longer in a Future Heaven": Gender, Race, and Nationalism." *Cultural Politics* 11 (1997): 89-112.

It is important to consider the fact that women can be violent. This is a statement developed by Caron E. Gentry, in her book *Twisted Maternalism*, where she studies women and violence by taking the case of the *shahidas*, the female suicide bombers in Palestine[57]. However, she realizes that this violence used by women will often be understood and analyzed under the specter of their identity as a widow who lost her husband or as a mother who lost her child. Even in violence, their action is perceived in parallel with men. This way, when women are active in violent organizations, they might do so because of family ties or friends: it is never because of her own agency.

The relation between violence and "*being a woman*" is interesting to examine in the religious extremist groups such as Salafi-jihadist. For a long time, women in those terrorist groups were exempt from acting violent because of this maternal image they had. Thus, they cannot be violent and cannot take part in the *jihad* or any "*active combat*"[58]. Even more than that, as was underlined by Amin Saikal, the successor of Bin Laden, Al-Zawahiri, has forbidden women to combat and to be within the ranks of *Al-Qaeda*. He based his thoughts on the Islamic scholar Mawaffeq ad-Din Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Quadama (1147-1223) who said that there were 7 reasons to take part in *jihad* : "*being a Muslim, being an adult, being of sound mind, being free, being **male**, being physically sound and being able to afford it financially*"[59]. It was enough to exclude women from violent projects.

However, recently, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) proved women are capable of violence. In July 2015 the ISIS all-female brigade *Al-Khanssaa*, as part of its

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[57] Gentry, Caron E. "Twisted maternalism: From peace to violence." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11.2 (2009): 235-252.

[58] Saikal, Amin. "Women and Jihad: Combating Violent Extremism and Developing New Approaches to Conflict Resolution in the Greater Middle East." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 36.3 (2016): 313-322.

[59] Idem.

propaganda, published an online document titled *Women in the Islamic State: Manifesto and Case Study*[60]. Women were depicted in it as both active and supportive, especially in a recruiter role and were legitimized by the memory of the *mujahidaat*, the early female warriors protecting the Prophet[61].

However, and it is important to underline it: if women were allowed violent behavior for their *jihad*, it was still in the frame of their "*divine duty of motherhood*"[62]…

Women, as anchors to local realities and private spheres, are more and more presented as tools for preventing from within, any violent behavior. International development agencies believe women, as marginalized as they are, can be a solution to violent extremism. The case of Tunisia is interesting to look at when considering international development policies and women's role in preventing violent extremism.

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[60] Winter, Charlie. "Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade." *Quilliam Foundation* (2015).

[61] Sjoberg, Laura, Grace D. Cooke, and Stacy Reiter Neal. "Introduction: Women, Gender and Terrorism." *Women, gender, and terrorism* (2011): 1-25.

[62] Winter, Charlie. "Women of the Islamic State: A manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade." *Quilliam Foundation* (2015).

TUNISIA, AN INTERESTING CASE OF STUDY

A. Tunisia's security threats, a hurdle on the road to democracy

When discussing the terms of *violent extremism*, *Salafism-jihadism*, *terrorism,* and *prevention of violent extremism*, looking at the case of Tunisia is interesting.

As seen in the introduction, the current context of Tunisia is not stable. President Béji Caïd Essebsi passed away on the 25th of July, almost a month after the double terrorist attack that took place in the capital. But those security threats have been lingering for the last two decades.

Already in 2003, the Tunisia state took strong measures to counter violent extremism when President Ben Ali enacted an Anti-terrorist law[63], considered by many as extremely repressive (and as criticized by an Amnesty International report in 2008, led more to stigmatization and discrimination than a reduction of violence)[64].

Moreover, the Revolution weakened the state and was a turning point that ushered in more violence inside the country. The attacks on the US Embassy in September 2012

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[63] Tunisian Anti Terrorism Law n° 2003-75, available in french at : https://www.imolin.org/doc/amlid/Tunisia/Tunisia_Loi_No._2003-75_relative_au_soutien_des_efforts_internationaux_de_lutte_contre_le_terrorisme_et_a_la_rep ression_du_blanchiment_dargent.pdf

[64] Amnesty International press release "Tunisie. La loi antiterroriste met en péril les droits fondamentaux, il faut adopter des garanties". Available at : https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE3021952015FRENCH.pdf

and the two political assassinations of Chokri Belaïd in February 2013 and Mohamed Brahimi in July 2013, were both claimed by ISIS[65]. However, it was the terrorist attacks of 2015 at the Bardo museum and at the beach in Sousse that brought attention to the problem of violent extremism in Tunisia. After those attacks, the state has tried to reassert its control with a counterterrorism law enacted in August 2015, a state of emergency in Novembre 2015 and the creation in 2016 of the *Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Terrorisme*[66] and the *Stratégie Nationale de Lutte contre le Terrorisme*[67]. However, those institutions bring mainly security answer and do not develop methods of prevention.

Furthermore, as stated by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), "*at the peak of its operation in 2014–2015, Daesh attracted to its ranks approximately 40,000 so-called foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) from around the world*"[68]. Tunisia has the highest number of foreign fighters that have joined ISIS, with around 6 000 fighters between Iraq, Syria and Libya[69]. With the fall of ISIS, the state is considering their return, and more importantly, their possible reintegration into society.

Finally, another threat comes from the borders with Libya and Algeria. Both borders are important routes for drugs, weapons and human trafficking, often controlled by armed

[65] Le Monde, "Tunisie : des djihadistes ralliés à l'EI revendiquent l'assassinat de deux opposants". Available at : https://www.lemonde.fr/tunisie/article/2014/12/18/tunisie-des-djihadistes-rallies-a-l-ei-revendiquent-l-assassinat-de-deux-opposants_4543261_1466522.html
[66] *Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Terrorisme*, available at : http://www.cnlct.tn/fr/
[67] *Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Contre le Terrorisme* available at : http://www.cnlct.tn/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/stratégie-nationale-2016-FINALE-2-8-sept-2016-pdf.pdf

[68] United nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, "The Challenge of Returning and Relocating Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Research Perspectives". Available at : https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/CTED-Trends-Report-March-2018.pdf

[69] The Soufan Group. Foreign Fighters. An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq. New York: The Soufan Group, 2015, 26.

groups. This was proven with the Ben Guerdane attack in March 2017, where ISIS members tried to install an Islamic Emirate in the South of Tunisia[70].

Violent extremism in the form of Salafism-jihadism is thus a significant problem for Tunisia and to the stability of the state itself. However, looking at the relationship between the state and Islam is necessary to understand this resurgence in religious conducts and violent behaviors.

B. Tunisia and Political Islam, an ambiguous relationship

The Revolution that exiled president Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali (1987-2011), ended decades of repression. The country during his 24 years of rule, was led by a one-state party, the *Republican Democratic Party* (RCD) which used to win elections with over 90% of the votes, leading many to consider Tunisia as suffering from "*electoral authoritarianism*"[71].

It is with the immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in December 2011, in Sidi Bouzid, that the Revolution started. The reasons of this Revolution were numerous: the youth unemployment rate was reaching 40%, the country was suffering from nepotism, bad governance, corruption and lack of human rights[72].

However, the Revolution did not help on some fronts and many of the reasons that led to the Revolution are still here. Indeed, there is still a lack of trust between citizens and public authorities when 60% of young Tunisians, between 18 and 35, mistrust the state

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[70] Article from the newspaper « Huffpost Maghreb », available at : https://www.huffpostmaghreb.com/entry/la-tunisie-fete-le-3e-anniversaire-de-la-bataille-de-ben-guerdane_mg_5c80f37fe4b06ff26ba5e647?utm_hp_ref=mg-attaque-ben-guerdane

[71] Cavatorta, Francesco, and Rikke Hostrup Haugbølle. "The end of authoritarian rule and the mythology of Tunisia under Ben Ali." *Mediterranean Politics* 17.2 (2012): 179-195.

[72] Zoubir, Yahia H. "The democratic transition in Tunisia: a success story in the making." *conflict trends* 2015.1 (2015): 10-17.

institutions[73]. This crisis of confidence did not disappear with the Revolution (as can be seen on walls of the country, ACAB, "*All Cops Are Bastards"...*). Thus, Police, for many, represents "*both repression and corruption at the same time*"[74].

Moreover, the Revolution in Libya in 2011 severely affected Tunisia. Before both Revolutions, the two countries had the highest volume of trade and Libya absorbed 6,9% of Tunisia's exports, "*making it Tunisia's second-largest export market after the European Union*"[75].

The security situation did not help either, especially in a country where tourism makes up 11% of Tunisia's gross domestic product (GDP) and 14% of employment[76].

In this context, many found solace in religion especially since Islam and Political Islam became more and more present on the political and social scene.

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[73] UNDP Tunisia Study "Vision sectorielle de la jeunesse 2019-2020", January 2019.
[74] Merone, Fabio. "Enduring class struggle in Tunisia: the fight for identity beyond political Islam." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42.1 (2015): 74-87.

[75] Abderrahim, K., and V. Castel. "Inflation in Tunisia: Perception and Reality in a Context of Transition." *Central Economists Complex. Tunis: African Development Bank* (2012).

[76] Santi, Emanule, S. Ben Romdhane, and Mohamed Safouane Ben Aïssa. "Impact of Libya's Conflict on the Tunisian Economy: A Preliminary Assessment'." *North Africa Quarterly Analytical* (2011).

For Elizabeth Picard, there is a comeback of the "*parler musulman*"[77], as in an active affirmation of religion from societies who suffered from acculturation linked to the Western colonial expansion. Islam was perceived as a way to reconnect with identity markers of the Islamic culture. This is why, for Olivier Roy or Francois Burgat (often opposed to people like Samuel Huntington or Bernard Lewis)[78], Political Islam was developed as a new step towards decolonization and modern secularism[79]. Islam is thus understood as a religion but also an ideology, a culture, a civilization[80].

In Tunisia, under President Ben Ali, religion was instrumentalized, and Political Islam was associated with political opposition and therefore, contained. Modernization was perceived as contradictory with religion. Moreover, the state had the monopoly of religious practices and was in charge of the appointment of religious actors or religious worship buildings. This control by the state weakened the religious institutions as a whole, in parallel of the growth of social media, Medias from the Gulf[81], and a dynamic of re-Islamization due to geopolitical issues (islamophobia, identity crisis, propaganda, etc.).

In Tunisia Political Islam was embodied by the political party *Ennahda*. Banned under Ben Ali it became the political opposition in the 1980s-1990s. They only became legal after the Revolution and, for the first democratic election of the constituent assembly,

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[77] Picard, Elizabeth. *La politique dans le monde arabe*. Armand Colin, 2006.
[78] See Huntington, Samuel P. "The clash of civilizations?." *Culture and Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2000, and Lewis, Bernard. What went wrong?: the clash between Islam and modernity in the Middle East. Harper Collins, 2003.

[79] Burgat, François. L'islamisme au Maghreb: la voix du Sud. 1988.

[80] Seniguer, Haoues. "L'islamisme en terre d'islam majoritaire." *Histoire, monde et cultures religieuses* 1 (2015): 99-125.

[81] Orient XXI website : "Tunisia, Battlefield of The Gulf Countries". Available at : https://orientxxi.info/magazine/tunisia-battlefield-of-the-gulf-countries,2394

won 89 out of 217 seats, 41% of the popular vote[82]. Today, they represent almost 30% of electors and were the principal political force in 2011 and in 2016's elections[83]. However, if for some the moderate Islamic party is perceived as keeping people from extremism, others were disappointed by the moderate leader, Rashed Ghannouchi and sought other options.

For Mehdi Mabrouk, Political Islam was "*monopolized*"[84] in Tunisia by *Ennahda* while an Islamist group, representing the lower classes, *Ansar al-Sharia* became more and more prominent over the last decades[85]. After the *Jasmine Revolution*, it was perceived as the "*new youth social movement that emerged from the Revolutionary processes*"[86]. This emergence of *Ansar al-Sharia* happened as a part of the political democratization after the Revolution leading Francesco Cavatorta to link the freedom of expression that followed the protests of 2011 with the possibility of having a *jihadi* movement represented by *Ansar al-sharia*[87].

However, the group became illegal in August 2013, after a decision of the Minister of Interior and after trying to establish the *shari'a*, forbidding the consummation of alcohol and advocating for gender separations in public spaces[88]. This last point in particular

[82] Zoubir, Yahia H. "The democratic transition in Tunisia: a success story in the making." *conflict trends* 2015.1 (2015): 10-17.

[83] Wikipedia's website : "Assembly of the Representatives of the People". Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assembly_of_the_Representatives_of_the_People

[84] Mabrouk, Mehdi. "Tunisia: the radicalisation of religious policy." *Islamist Radicalisation in North Africa*. Routledge, 2012. 58-80.

[85] Merone, Fabio. "Enduring class struggle in Tunisia: the fight for identity beyond political Islam." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42.1 (2015): 74-87.

[86] Idem.

[87] Cavatorta, Francesco. "Salafism, liberalism, and democratic learning in Tunisia." *The Journal of North African Studies* 20.5 (2015): 770-783.

[88] Béchir Ayari, Michaël, and Fabio Merone. "Ansar al-charia Tunisie: une institutionnalisation à la croisée des chemins." *Soulèvements et recompositions politiques dans le monde arabe*. Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2014. 414-428.

was badly received, as Tunisia as a long history with gender equality and fighting for women's right.

C. Tunisians women, a tool towards modernity

The place women in Tunisia had after the independence and after the Revolution is interesting to study.

The Arab world is often described as a "*phallocracy*"[89], as Abdessamad Dialmy stated. Moreover, when it comes to Arab women, as Bruce Dunne underlined, they are perceived "*as emotional and lacking self-control*"[90].

However, In Tunisia, women were often the proof of how modern and democratic the country was. When Tunisia became independent from France, after 75 years of rule, in 1956, it started a process of democratization and modernization and included debates on women's right. Those debates were fruitful since, the next year, the newly formed government banished polygamy as a legal form of a marital statute. Those debates were part of a bigger policy of Habib Bourguiba's presidency (1957-1987) that led to the *Code du Statut Personnel*, which legalized, *inter alia*, the replacement of repudiation in favor of the institution of divorce, the removal of the figure of the tutor and the fixing of the minimum age for marriage at 18[91]. Bourguiba even went as far as to sanction a

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[89] Dialmy, Abdessamad. "Sexuality in contemporary Arab society." *Social Analysis* 49.2 (2005): 16-33.

[90] Dunne, Bruce. "Power and sexuality in the Middle East." Moral Issues in Global Perspective: Volume 2: Human Diversity and Equality 2 (2006): 268.

[91] Bessis, Sophie. "Le féminisme institutionnel en Tunisie." *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 9 (1999).

decree banning the headscarf in administrative buildings, schools, universities and public spaces, a veil that he considered as "*an odious rag*"[92].

Tunisia's policies can thus be defined as being a form of "*state feminism*", defined as a state which "*seeks to promote gender equality, often described in this context as the advancement of women*"[93]. It was even more the case under the mandates of Ben Ali who based some of his policies on gender equality and the advancement of women's rights.

Yet, for Leila El Houssi, it was in reality a "*mutilated modernity*"[94], a facade that concealed a male-dominated state. She underlines: Bourguiba was perceived (and is still perceived) as the main patriarch, with a "*father-like*" figure. Thus, the different Tunisian governments were "*feminist*" more as a political necessity (and to hide a democratic deficiency) than a modernist conviction.

In modern times, women had an active role in the Revolution and were considered by several as "*partners in Revolution*"[95].

The new Constitution, drafted in 2014, and symbol of the consolidation of the democratic transition underlined the importance of gender equality in future Tunisia.

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[92] Habib Bourguiba quoted in Bessis, Sophie. "Le féminisme institutionnel en Tunisie." *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 9 (1999).

[93] Tchaïcha, Jane D.; Arfaoui, Khedija. *The Tunisian Women's Rights Movement*. London, Routledge, 2017.

[94] El Houssi, Leila. "The Role of Women in Tunisia from Bourguiba to the Promulgation of New Constitution." *Oriente Moderno* 98.2 (2018): 187-202.

[95] Khalil, Andrea. "Tunisia's women: partners in Revolution." *The Journal of North African Studies* 19.2 (2014): 186-199.

It's Article 21 says: "*all citizens, male and female, have equal rights and duties, and are equal before the law without any discrimination*"[96].

However, as Leila El Houssi said it, this article created polemics before it was approved, since it stated that "*the state ensures the protection of women's rights, of their achievements, under the principle of their complementarity to men within the family, and as men's associates in the nation's growth*". It is only after a petition "*Protégez les droits de la femme en Tunisie*"[97] was created by Selma Mabrouk, a deputy from *Ettakatol*, a leftist party, that the article 21 was modified.

Even if this event tarnished for some the democratic debate, for others, the petition and the pressure it held on the establishment of the Constitution was proof of the ever-growing and powerful Tunisian civil society.

D. Civil society in Tunisia, the symbol of an attempt at democracy

In Tunisia, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) have been key players since the beginning of the Revolution in 2011.

It was well illustrated when the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, a group of four Tunisian CSOs, got rewarded in 2015 by the Nobel Peace Prize, proving their value to the democratic process and the transition Tunisia was going through. Since then, the number of CSOs increased greatly, from 9,700 in 2009 to 20,251 in 2017[98], demonstrating the growing role they play in Tunisia.

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[96] Tunisian Constitution, 2014. Available at : http://www.legislation.tn/sites/default/files/news/constitution-b-a-t.pdf

[97] Petition available at : https://www.avaaz.org/fr/community_petitions/Protegez_les_droits_de_citoyennete_de_la_femme_en_Tunisie//

[98] *Centre d'Information, de Formation, d'Etudes et de Documentation sur les Associations.* General chart of Tunisians associations available on the 26 of March 2019 : http://www.ifeda.org.tn/stats/francais.pdf

As a consequence, they became privileged partners for the state but also for NGOs, INGOs and International Agencies, especially when discussing questions of education and culture (respectively 20,45% and 19,16% of the total of CSOs in Tunisia in 2019)[99]. Indeed, civil society is recognized as a fundamental tool for implementing just, adapted and inclusive policies since they are perceived as separate from the state and neutral, which gives it a valuable legitimacy.

E. The Tamkeen Project of the United Nations Development Program in Tunisia

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) office in Tunisia is a key partner in the process of accompanying the Tunisian democratic transition. The *Tamkeen* project (*tamkeen* meaning empowerment) is proof of it.

This project was established in Tunisia within the UNDP's office in 2012, "*for the promotion of citizenship and the reinforcement of social cohesion and civil society*"[100]. Its main goal is to help create a participatory and healthy democracy in Tunisia, through the formation of facilitators and mediators, building the capacity of CSOs and focusing on fighting inequalities and socioeconomic marginalization. Their particularity, and what makes them an interesting and some would say, an impactful project within the UNDP's office in Tunis, is their voluntary choice to only work with CSOs. They believe that all projects need to be first thought through by those local actors, more aware of the field reality, and the UNDP office should only assist them.

Moreover, basing their work on CSOs helps avoiding the risk of not taking into consideration the national, and even more, the local specificities of the country they are working in. It is thus important to avoid any disparity, mismatch and divergences, and

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[99] *Idem.*
[100] UNDP Tunisia, Projet Tamkeen. Available at : http://www.tn.undp.org/content/tunisia/fr/home/operations/projects/democratic_governance/projet-tamkeen-pour-la-promotion-de-la-citoyennete--le-renforcem0.html

any feeling of a *top-down* decision, from the United Nations Secretariat in New York to the rural cities of Tunisia.

Therefore, and as we saw earlier, civil society has a particular role in the theory of conflict transformation. Actors of civil society, such as CSOs, appear to help install an inclusive relation in a *bottom-up* logic. They have two major key aspects that made them important when thinking of doing PVE. First, they are grass rooted and have a solid local base which is essential, especially in rural and marginalized zones which, secondly, helps allocate them with legitimacy. Moreover, they are perceived as detached from the state, allowing open debates and dialogues. They are neutral, impartial and independent which makes them crucial partners in development policies.

This trust in CSOs by development agencies could be illustrated by the different projects the social cohesion team of the *Tamkeen* Project tried to implement, notably the one that looks at a potential relationship between women's empowerment and PVE.
It bases it's legitimacy, on the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism of the UN which states the importance of "*building the capacity of women and their civil society groups to engage in prevention and response efforts related to violent extremism*"[101].
Moreover, as was underlined in the 2178 UNSCR, there is an importance in settling the "*local drivers of violent extremism*"[102]. It also talks about recognizing the importance of women's autonomy as a factor of the prevention of violent extremism and

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[101] UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General United Nations General Assembly Seventieth Session A/70/674

[102] UN Security Council Resolution 2178 "Foreign Terrorist Fighters". Available at : http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2178

deradicalization[103]. Concretely, this project is based on two UNSCR, developed earlier, UNSCR 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) and UNSCR 2242 (Youth, Peace and Security).

F. Rural women's empowerment and the Prevention of Violent Extremism in Tunisia

It is with the willingness of including marginalized populations that the project of *Tamkeen* decided to focus on women of rural areas. There is thus a real ambition of localizing the ideas included in the different UN resolutions and strategies as was stated in the UNSCR 1820, on Women, Peace and Security, where CSOs and local communities were underlined as key players of PVE[104]. It affirmed the importance of peri-urban and inland areas, places of socioeconomic marginalization[105].

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[103] *Centre d'Information, de Formation, d'Etudes et de Documentation sur les Associations*. General chart of Tunisians associations available on the 26 of March 2019 : http://www.ifeda.org.tn/stats/francais.pdf

[104] United Nations Security Council Resolution1820 (2008), available at : https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1820(2008)

[105] Vallentina Colombo, "Multiple layers of marginalization as a paradigm of Tunisian Hotbeds of Jihadism", in Arturo Varvelli (ed.), "Jihadist Hotbeds, Understanding Local Radicalization Processes" (ISPI, 2016).

Many academics have discussed the link between gender inequality and violent extremism. Thus, for Sophie Giscard d'Estaing, their empowerment (social or economical) is seen as having a direct role with preventing violent extremism and sustaining peace since she believes that terrorism is mainly due to poverty and population growth[106].

It was also underlined in the UNSG's Plan of Action when it said that "*societies for which gender equality indicators are higher are less vulnerable to violent extremism*"[107].

This way, for *Tamkeen*, rural women are seen as key actresses of the prevention of violent extremism in Tunisia. It is based on this that the Social Cohesion team issued a
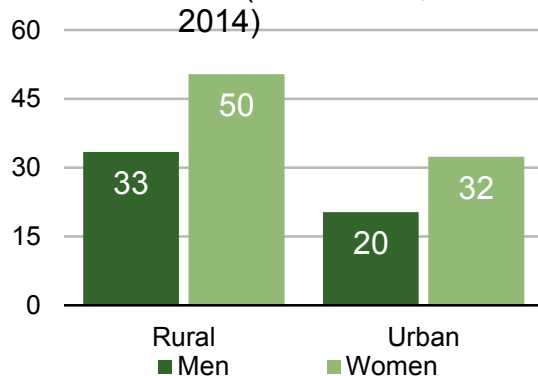
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[106] Sophie Giscard d'Estaing (2017) Engaging women in countering violent extremism: avoiding instrumentalisation and furthering agency, Gender & Development, 25:1.

[107] UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General United nations General Assembly Seventieth Session A/70/674

call for proposals end of August 2018 to identify and select suitable feminine CSOs as partners. The CSOs needed to offer ideas for projets that could last between 6 to 9 months, and that could not cost more than 20 000 Tunisian Dinars.

More tangibly, the *Tamkeen* Project supports 19 organizations of women which answered a call for proposal of the UNDP office. They are represented within five priority governorates, Jendouba, Médénine, Tataouine, Bizerte and Kairouan (see map). Each region has their particularities and the Algerian and the Libyan border (north-west and south-east) were emphasized as being crucial. Those regions are often the poorest, often isolated and even stigmatized as being a breeding ground for terrorism, like it is the case with Sejnane[108].

Moreover, rural areas face high rates of unemployment especially for young people. In a study made by the World Bank in 2014, it was underlined that 1 over 3 young Tunisian of rural areas (33,4%) was a NEET (*Not in Education, Employment or Training*)[109].

Young NEET, men and women in rural and urban areas in Tunisia (World Bank, 2014)

Rural — Men: 33, Women: 50
Urban — Men: 20, Women: 32

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[108] For example, Tunisian (and French) Newspapers described the city of Sejnane (north-west) as an "Islamist Emirate". See Le Figaro at : http://www.lefigaro.fr/mon-figaro/2012/01/19/10001-20120119ARTFIG00678--sejnane-les-salafistes-tunisiens-font-la-loi.php and Le Courier de l'Atlas at : https://www.lecourrierdelatlas.com/-tunisie-des-salafistes-commemorent-le-premier-anniversaire-de-la-creation-de-l-emirat-de-sejnane--2382

[109] World Bank. Tunisia: Breaking the Barriers to Youth Inclusion. 2014. Available at : https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tunisia/publication/tunisia-breaking-the-barriers-to-youth-inclusion

However, women are more deeply impacted, and 50,4% of them are in this situation (see following graphic)[110].

In the South, the World Bank noticed that there is fewer opportunities for women to work due to "*lack of economic diversification (and) social norms (that) continue to limit the mobility of young women for employment*"[111]. This is why the 19 organizations part of the Tamkeen Project decided to focus on promoting social and economic integration of women living in a rural context. At the same time, they aimed at alerting them on the role they could play in terms of PVE and reinforcing their capacities on methods of PVE. For the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), "*female empowerment is achieved when women and girls acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society*"[112]. It thus englobes economic but also social, cultural and psychological autonomy which was the goal for *Tamkeen*.

A 20th organization, acting at a national level, the *Organisation Tunisienne pour la Cohésion Sociale* (OTCS) regroups facilitators formed by the UNDP and is in charge of overseeing the project and giving specific training on conflict management and PVE.

Thus, by promoting entrepreneurship and the economic empowerment of women, those CSOs create an excuse to form a network of women, circles of trust where those women can freely discuss the thematic of violent extremism.

More precisely, the project supports, as a way of enabling women, the formation of dialogue groups and the promotion of women's entrepreneurship thanks to income-generating activities. All 19 CSOs had activities linked to women, like reproductive

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[110] Idem.

[111] Idem.

[112] USAID, "Gender Equality and Female Empowerment", March 2012. Available at : http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/GenderEqualityPolicy.pdf

health, environment and ecology, agriculture, permaculture or handicraft. For example, the city of Sejnane, already mentioned for the stigma attached to it, got a new focus on its pottery, recently added on the list of the world's intangible cultural heritage of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)[113].

The financial autonomy women would get out of those projects is also underlined as a way for them to gain confidence and sustain women's leadership. They now get a small income every month and get to decide what they do with this money. Work is valued in those societies and, as Ayesha Khan underlined, it "*improves women's self-perception (...) decreases gender discrimination (...) and improves women's autonomy*"[114]. This way, women affirm themselves personally and socially.

Furthermore, those women were preselected, and the *Tamkeen* project team tried to chose "*leader women*" that could be references to their communities. The criteria were the following: she needs to be active, open on her environment and participant, an active citizen. She is aware of her possible role in her community and her society. She is a volunteer, and is persevering. For example, a CSO in Jendouba faced some difficulties when some men refused that women took part of the project. The women that argued and showed determination were selected by the CSO and the *Tamkeen* team.

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[113] UNESCO World intangible cultural heritage, Sejnane "Pottery skills of the women of Sejnane" available at https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/pottery-skills-of-the-women-of-sejnane-01406?RL=01406

[114] Khan, Ayesha. "Paid Work as a Pathway of Empowerment." Feminisms, Empowerment and Development: Changing Womens Lives (2014).

In total, 568 women were directly affected by the project and 2894 were indirectly; 70% of those women were considered as "*young*", between 18 and 35[115].

After months of the project, some good practices were drawn by the CSOs. First, the importance of local specificities (especially in communities directly affected by PVE) was significant. Second, the CSOs advocated for a canvasing approach in order to create a trusting bond with the women, often having troubles opening up. Finally, they also favored a personalized communication, more direct, benevolent and considerate (by sharing meals and special occasions, for example).

Those three practices helped strike up the conversation about PVE, often considered as a sensitive and taboo subject due to the stigmatization of some cities and confusion of the term with domestic violence.

To help it, two approaches were favored. The first one is an artistic approach. One CSO from Bizerte projected two Tunisian movies dealing with PVE and radicalization (*Brotherhood*[116] and *To the Mirage*[117]) and also put up a play about PVE. The second approach was to showcase the stories of some women and men who faced violent extremism. It was done in a desire to let people talk at their own rhythm, let them differ towards PVE. This way, thanks to the 19 CSOs, 80 circles of dialogue with 1548 persons involved were created[118].

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[115] Draft of the Good Practices on Women's empowerment and PVE in Tunisia, UNDP Tunisia, 2019.

[116] See trailer at : https://vimeo.com/302337736

[117] See trailer at : https://www.tunisienumerique.com/tunisie-video-la-lutte-contre-lintegrisme-et-le-terrorisme-par-le-biais-de-la-culture/

[118] Draft of the Good Practices on Women's empowerment and PVE in Tunisia, UNDP Tunisia, 2019.

All those approaches had in mind to prevent phenomenons of violent extremism, to facilitate the dialogue, to produce alternative discourses to violence and to encourage a network of women living in rural areas.

This project also had a focus: create an efficient network for those women, notably between them but also with local centers of security, municipal councils, imams, youth centers, radios and media. Now women can be acquainted with other communities while learning eventual new ways, traditions and customs.

This way and thanks to those 20 CSOs, the *Tamkeen* project aims at multiple goals. They work on capacity building, resiliency but also at sustaining the development and role of Tunisians CSOs, especially rural ones, working towards a democratic transition and the prevention of violent extremism.

A CRITIC OF THE UNITED NATIONS' GENDERING OF

PVE'S ACTIONS

A. A halftone picture and a partial success

The United Nations, and the example of the *Tamkeen* project of the UNDP office in Tunis, proves how Civil Society is now established as the key actor to implement sustainably different development project, including ideas of prevention of violent extremism. However, this project, and in general, the specific intention of including women in Prevention of Violent Extremism creates some critics.

Those projects emphasize some qualities and characteristics of women, often only linked to their eventual roles as mothers and wives.

For example, during my internship at the UNDP office in Tunis, between March and August 2019, I had the opportunity to see from firsthand how a project related to PVE and Women CSOs was supervised and reported. An expert was in charge of the follow up with the CSOs, in order to write a *practice guide* on how to empower women and, at the same time, educated on PVE. It reports the few months of this project's realization, summarizes the different breakthroughs, discuss the best practices and sees its eventual outcome.

One of my task as an intern was to read the first draft of this practice guide. It was mainly to check proof any grammatical, spelling and formatting errors. However, I found some flagrant inaccuracies perhaps even mistakes, when the subject of gender and the gendering of PVE was addressed, based on the definitions and the research I did for this paper (see chapter 1).

Firstly, I was puzzled by their vision of patriarchy. The draft said, "*rural women suffer from a patriarchal dominance of men, let him be a husband, a father or a brother*"[119]. Even though the term is hard to define, and is "*something that means different things to different people and purports to explain everything, but really explains nothing*"[120], some outlines seem clear.

For Sylvia Walby, patriarchy is "*a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women*"[121]. She emphasizes the terms "*social structures*" explaining that it proves that this domination has nothing to do with biology. She, however, criticizes the term, regretting it does not take into consideration differences between cultures and countries, and relies too much on the idea of capitalism inducing gender inequality. She thus develops six different kinds of patriarchy: "*a patriarchal mode of production in which women's labor is expropriated by their husbands; patriarchal relations within waged labor; the patriarchal state; male violence; patriarchal relations in sexuality; and patriarchal culture*"[122]. She summarizes it by stating that there is a "*public and private patriarchy*"[123].

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[119] Translated from French. Draft of the Good Practices on Women's empowerment and PVE in Tunisia, UNDP Tunisia, 2019.

[120] Buss, David M., and Neil Malamuth, eds. Sex, power, conflict: Evolutionary and feminist perspectives. Oxford University Press, 1996.

[121] Walby, Sylvia. "Theorising patriarchy." *Sociology* 23.2 (1989): 213-234.

[122] Idem.

Thus, the definition of patriarchy accepted in the draft of the *Tamkeen* project does not discern the different versions and aspects this male domination can have and only underlines the perception of a "*private patriarchy*", which is problematic. In order to tackle gender inequality, to give women real social and economic empowerment, all versions of domination need to be countered, especially when both public and private patriarchy are so intertwined.

A second sentence surprised me, which was used to defend the use of women in the PVE aspect of the project. It said : "*women, in their essential role of being a mother, and, more secondarily of being aunts, sisters, wives, can play the role of a close observer, of a privileged interlocutor, of a confidante, of an advisor, if not of a dialogue facilitator on the question of VE*"[124].

Thus, for this draft of a *practice guide*, women are only understood, seen and perceived as members of a family, guided by their domestic roles and their title in the private sphere. Besides the fact that the impact those women have on their family or community members is not concretely measurable, and not easily monitored, it raises other questions.

Indeed, it is based on the perception that women cannot be violent. As seen in the first chapter, those fixed assumptions on both masculine and feminine roles lead to the belief that women are incapable of being violent as it is in their nature, not to be. It is complicated not to fall into stereotypes and even essentialism understood as the idea that "*human behavior is 'natural', predetermined by genetic, biological, or*

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[123] Idem.
[124] Translated from French. Draft of the Good Practices on Women's empowerment and PVE in Tunisia, UNDP Tunisia, 2019.

psychological mechanisms and thus not subject to change"[125]. Therefore, this could be objectifying both women and men's socio-biological role.

This way, violence is unconditionally and unquestioningly masculine, proving a very "*patriarcal structure of violence*"[126]. This is the only reason why women are a valuable tool against violent extremism, only because they are not violent, and because of their privileged position in their private spheres and within their communities. And even worst, it is almost as if it is the only reason why they should be empowered, to avoid violent extremism and not to reach equality of all citizens.

Moreover, the idea of women as natural and biological non-violent beings can easily be contradicted. In recent years, women became more and more accepted in supportive roles of violent extremist groups. As seen before, the Islamic State all-female brigade Al-Khanssaa is interesting. However, if it agrees with the capacity of women to be violent and to have a sense of duty, this manifesto still shows blatant sexist ideologies. Thus, men that joined ISIS are depicted as "*real men*"[127] and women are still mainly linked to recruitment, homemaking, attack planning or education.

The issue with this assumption, and the previous statement about patriarchy being solely a private matter, fuels wrong beliefs and stereotypes on women and on their potential support to PVE.

Even more, because of this gendered vision of women's roles, women are perceived as enduring the actions happening around them. For Kristan Hunt and Kim Rygiel,

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[125] Ortbals, Candice D., and Lori M. Poloni-Staudinger. Gender and political violence: Women changing the politics of terrorism. Springer, 2018.

[126] Auchter, Jessica. "Gendering terror: Discourses of terrorism and writing woman-as-agent." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 14.1 (2012): 121-139.
[127] Idem.

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"*women are represented as being acted upon rather than as actors themselves*"[128]. They are victims of circumstances, passive actresses, and become thus, as Andrea Cornwall said "*both heroines and victims*"[129].

This way, putting aside the capacity of women of making their own choices and decisions (violent as they can be) leads to the need of giving women autonomy, and more importantly, "*selfhood*"[130].

Thus, even if the *Tamkeen's* project had a willingness to both empower women and provide real tools for PVE, their approximate definitions and perceptions of women and patriarchy, risks creating harmful effects.

B. Goodwill but messy setups

Those two examples led me to question the academic and professional background of the expert hired to follow the good management of the project. My supervisor had given me her resume at the very beginning at the project. After her studies in France in management sciences that led her to be a researcher and do a Ph.D., she became a university teacher and a consultant for the UNDP and ofter INGOs (such as *Search for Common Ground*). All her missions were linked to social cohesion and conflict management. However, it seems she never studied or worked on subjects related to gender equality or PVE. Even more, after a semester working in the office, one issue seemed recurrent to the different projects (social cohesion, youth, social and political

[128] Quoted in Auchter, Jessica. "Gendering terror: Discourses of terrorism and writing woman-as-agent." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 14.1 (2012): 121-139.

[129] Cornwall, Andrea, Elizabeth Harrison, and Ann Whitehead. "Gender myths and feminist fables: The struggle for interpretive power in gender and development." *Development and Change* 38.1 (2007): 1-20.

[130] Benhabib, Seyla. "Feminist contentions: A philosophical exchange." (1995).

accountability…): there were not enough good national consultants, and if there was one, he or she was not necessarily an expert on the subject. Thus, for example, one consultant is polyvalent and works with all projects…

The problem here is that on a subject as sensitive as rural women and prevention of violent extremism, it is crucial to have a clear and appropriate definition as essentializing women's role could be counter-productive.

Indeed, as Joseph Suad underlined it, the danger would be to "*reinforce gender and age privilege*"[131]. The risk is having projects backfiring and ending up marginalizing women instead of empowering them. For example, with this fixed vision of women as naturally peaceful and maternal, the ones that had members of their family who got radicalized or that went to war zones could be perceived as failing in their core social identity that is being a good wife or/and a good mother. Those women often end up being marginalized and isolated, being a "*maternal disappointment*"[132].

More critics could be emitted. The UN Women office in Tunisia is a few meters away from the UNDP office. However, and against UNSCR 2122 (see Annexe 1), UN Women wasn't involved in the process of this project. No communication, dialogue or cooperation between agencies, offices and colleagues working on gender questions, happened in the design of this project.

But while risking having a project that is not adapted (and as we saw, could worsen conditions at the local level), there is also a risk of having a lack of understanding of actors: what is the difference between the UNDP and the UN Women's office?

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[131] Suad, Joseph. "Patriarchy and Development in the Arab World." *Gender and Development*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1996, pp. 14–19.

[132] Gentry, Caron E. "Twisted maternalism: From peace to violence." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11.2 (2009): 235-252.

Especially when those localities are also working closely with other international agencies like the USAID, the AFD (French development agency), the GIZ (German development agency)…

Furthermore, the office in Tunis demonstrated how important the production of knowledge was to the UN. Each project has biannual objectives, including reports to the donors, studies, practices guides, etc. This is why for Kenneth King and Simon McGrath, "*development agencies are positioning themselves as 'knowledge agencies'*"[133].

But as Caron E. Gentry said, "*the manufacturing of women's political activism as part of their biological function as mothers tells the reader more about the story-teller (the one who manufactures the narrative about women's proscribed violence) and less about women's agency*"[134]. In other words, this scenario of maternal and not violent women says more about the UN than the women themselves. A lot of studies are made and there is a risk that those agencies look at their project with objectives solely based on what is useful and compatible to their list of deliverables within their deadlines (financial for example with the annual deliveries). Moreover, a project that combines rural areas, women and the prevention of violent extremism, is fashionable at the moment, especially when it does underline comforting stereotypes.

The reality of women and their impact on peace and security projects is, unfortunately, contrasted. For Nederveen Pieterse, there is an issue on how the development agencies work. He argues that "*what is needed for world development is not so much a*

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[133] King, Kenneth, and Simon McGrath. "Globalisation, enterprise and knowledge: Education, training and development in Africa." Symposium Books Ltd, 2002.

[134] Gentry, Caron E. "Twisted maternalism: From peace to violence." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11.2 (2009): 235-252.

'rearrangement of knowledge' as a realignment of power"[135]. That leads us to think of how those decisions, resolutions and annual objectives are envisioned and if the beneficiaries are sufficiently consulted.

There is two different kinds of UN resolutions. The UN Assembly Resolutions (like the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism) and the UN Security Council Resolutions (all resolutions discussed in this paper are UNSCR, see annexe 1). While the first ones are voted by the majority of members of the UN Assembly, the second are more problematic, especially when seeing the impact and importance those UNSCR have. Indeed, the Security Council Resolutions are voted by both the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council, so a total of 15 members, including 10 non-permanent, changing every two years. The permanent members (France, Russia, China, the United States and the United Kingdom) owning the "*veto*" right, were subject of multitude critics due to the unfairness and inequality of the process[136].

This proves a certain inadequacy and lack of knowledge of concrete local realities, questioning the value and legitimacy of those UN resolutions. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, quoted by Lila Abu-Lughod in her chapter "*Do Muslim Women (still) Need Saving?*" summarized it, it seems that there is a need for "*white men saving brown women from brown men*"[137]. Even more, Abu-Lughod, by taking the example of the Afghani women, regrets the « *obsession with the plight of Muslim women* »[138] and the cultural essentialism and orientalism present in both the Arab World and the West.

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[135] Nederveen Pieterse quoted in Cornwall, Andrea, Elizabeth Harrison, and Ann Whitehead. "Gender myths and feminist fables: The struggle for interpretive power in gender and development." *Development and Change* 38.1 (2007): 1-20.

[136] de La Sablière, Jean-Marc. Le Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies: Ambitions et limites. Éditions Larcier, 2018.

[137] Abu-Lughod, Lila (2013), "Do Muslim Women (Still) Need Saving?" in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Harvard University Press. page 30.

[138] Idem.

This way, to counter this lack of legitimacy, one solution would be to include women at all level of decisions. Unfortunately, women are still underrepresented. As was regretted by Paul Kirby and Laura Shepherd, the number of women participating actively in peacekeeping missions is not sufficient. They state that "*a 2012 review found that women comprise under 10 percent of peace negotiators and under 4 percent of signatories to peace agreements*"[139].

It is the case with Tunisia where CSOs focusing on women's matters are sparse with only 0,86% (193) of Tunisian's CSOs[140]. Trying to include more general gender equality ambitions in Tunisia should thus be a priority of the UN and other development agencies, if the end goal is to lead to social cohesion. We cannot criticize the fact that the UNDP project chose to focus on 19 women CSOs of rural areas to work on PVE. We can however regret the fact that this project seems hardly suitable and impactful in the long run due to its "*utopian visions*"[141].

For example, including men in the process, instead of focusing only on women could have had an eventual better and long-lasting impact. It could have created peaceful ways of communicating between men and women, permitting women to be considered as full participants of their city, instead of being solely understood for their capacity to impact their private spheres.

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[139] Kirby, Paul, and Laura J. Shepherd. "The futures past of the Women, Peace and Security agenda." *International Affairs* 92.2 (2016): 373-392.

[140] Tableau général des associations, July 9, 2019. Available at : http://www.ifeda.org.tn/stats/francais.pdf

[141] Gibbings, Sheri Lynn. "No angry women at the United Nations: political dreams and the cultural politics of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13.4 (2011): 522-538.

CONCLUSION

The case of Tunisia in term of women's input in Prevention of Violent Extremism, is a tangible example of how international development agencies such as the United Nations Development Program considers both gender inequalities and the social and economic aspects of preventing something as Violent Extremism.

Tunisia is interesting to analyze. Indeed, while still working at consolidating its democratic achievements, Tunisia faces numerous turmoils including security threats, economic recession, lack of social cohesion and political uncertainty with the next presidential and legislative elections in November. Moreover, in term of security threats, the issue of foreign fighters and their eventual return and reintegration, is a prominent topic.

Thus, this essay with the example of the *Tamkeen* project, aims at examining how women are perceived by international agencies such as the United Nations, and how according to them, women could take part of international development policies to prevent violent extremism.

When discussing ways of enabling social cohesion, the *Tamkeen* project proposed an appealing and noteworthy project: working on empowering rural women through income-generating activities as a way of preventing violent extremism.

While reading the literature available on the subject, I realized that few articles took concrete examples of projects including both women and PVE. Even more, if some issued critics of the often utopian views of the United Nations, a few analyzed it more specifically. This is what I wished to do with this paper thanks to the *Tamkeen* project of the UNDP's office in Tunis.

What appeared during this study is that recently, women have been more and more involved in international development policies because of their status, identity and gender accepted role.

However, including them in projects cannot be enough. Based on the different academic articles and work I read, it appeared that strong and complex terms as *gender* or *violent extremism* need to be precisely understood and defined, in order to avoid any stigmata, stereotypes, essentialism or risk of objectifying women.

And, if this paper is unfortunately too short to go into considering different projects, and try to compare them, the reality is still grim. As seen in chapter 3, women are not present enough in terms of peacekeeping and decision making. And here lies the real issue. There is a necessity in mainstreaming gender, as in including gender equality at all times. This includes using men and women, equally, in this action for a more inclusive and sustainable action.

As the UN promotes it, gender equality as an answer to VE is a compelling argument. However, it is only if it means a real inclusion of both men and women, together, at the

same level. This way, two current cases show promising projects and answer some problematic lack perceived throughout the paper.

Firstly, in Morocco, women are also perceived as potential tools for PVE. However, a project was innovative and interesting to mention. In order to face what Joseph Suad called a "*religious patriarchy*"[142], the Moroccan Ministry of *Habous* and Islamic Affairs created in 2005, a group of female preachers, the *mourchidates* (the Arabic word for guides). Those women work mainly in mosques or prisons of Rabat and Casablanca, and aim at promoting different aspects of Islam[143].

Secondly, the case of Nigeria is interesting. Indeed, the country suffers from different forms of violent extremism, notably due to the Salafi-jihadist terrorist organization *Boko Haram* which "*used more female suicide-bombers than any other terrorist group*"[144]. Thus, a project of prevention of violent extremism showed an interest in including women at different level of decisions, but also in intelligence, police and law enforcement, creating the possibility for a real and englobing "*glocal intervention*"[145].

This way, full empowerment of women is deemed important, and even necessary. But, it should not only be used as a strategy to PVE. It needs be perceived as being a way to lead to real social cohesion and the achievement of human rights and democratic values. It should thus be part of a broader public program for international, regional and national peace where all actors should be involved: international development agencies but also civil society, religious personalities, state actors…

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[142] Suad, Joseph. "Patriarchy and Development in the Arab World." *Gender and Development*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1996, pp. 14–19.
[143] Couture, Krista London. A gendered approach to countering violent extremism: lessons learned from women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention applied successfully in Bangladesh and Morocco. Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence at Brookings, 2014.
[144] Nwangwu, Chikodiri, and Christian Ezeibe. "Femininity is not inferiority: women-led civil society organizations and "countering violent extremism" in Nigeria." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 21.2 (2019): 168-193.
[145] Idem

Thus, this paper revealed that women are indeed important to implement PVE actions. But they will only be useful if perceived as important not solely due to their maternal, non-violent accepted role but because they are full-fledged members of our present world with their own agency.

ANNEXES

Annexe 1 : From Kirby, Paul, and Laura J. Shepherd. "Reintroducing women, peace and security." *International Affairs* 92.2 (2016): 249-254.

UN RESOLUTION	SUMMARY
1325 (2000)	Representation and participation of women in peace and security governance; protection of women's rights and bodies in conflict and post-conflict situations.
1820 (2008)	Protection of women from sexualized violence in conflict; zero tolerance of sexualized abuse and exploitation perpetrated by UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations personnel.
1888 (2009)	Creation of office of Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV); creation of UN Action as an umbrella organization addressing issues related to CRSV; identification of 'team of experts'; appointment of Women's Protection Advisers (WPAs) to field missions.
1889 (2009)	Need to increase participation of women in peace and security governance at all levels; creation of global indicators to map implementation of UNSCR 1325.
1960 (2010)	Development of CRSV monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements; integration of WPAs to field missions alongside Gender Advisers.
2106 (2013)	Challenging impunity and lack of accountability for CRSV.
2122 (2013)	Identifies UN Women as key UN entity providing information and advice on participation of women in peace and security governance; whole-of-UN accountability; civil society inclusion; 2015 High-level Review of implementation of UNSCR 1325.
2242 (2015)	Integrates Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS) in all UNSC country situations; establishes Informal Experts Group on WPS; adds WPS considerations to sanctions committee deliberations; links WPS to countering terrorism and extremism.

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