Roots: socio-cultural and geopolitical contexts of exile

Sarah Daniel, 2017, France.

For a social and health providers who worked with migrants women, is important understand geopolitics and socio-cultural context in the migration issue.

For the sociologist of migration, Sayad "To *immigrate, it is to immigrate with its story* (the *immigration became integral part of this story*), with them traditions, them ways of life, to smell, to act and to think, with their language and its religion as well as all other social, political, mental orders, characteristic structures of the person, and, in common, the society, and with their culture"

When women are being migrants they do it with their history of violence. Different contexts provoked the exile; there must be the cause of the migration of women.

In the case of the women, there are two important groups of gender persecutions:

- Persecutions which target specifically the behavior deviants of the women not conforming to the standards which are imposed on them according to their gender. They more present in Socio-cultural context violent for women: genital female mutilation, forced marriage, domestic violence, honor crime, witchcraft attack.

-Those which are not motivated by the gender, but which take a gender form. They are present in geopolitics conflict and war.

In 2016 65, 6 million people were obligated to live her home and country, there are

Refugees, Asylum-seekers or Stateless persons.

Europe welcomed about 10,2 million people, with 6,6 million of refugees and asylum-seekers, and 570 000 stateless persons.

In the different group of migrants, there are more and more women, like 50% of migrant people.

It is important understand the specific violence against the women in their home countries because they impact in physical and psychosocial women's health and on their integration in host countries. If exist a universality of the system of domination of the women, the patriarchal system, this one expresses himself different according to the cultural standards and the organization of every human society.

1-Socio-cultural contexts of violence against women

Physical violence against women refugees can be practiced of several manners.

In the domestic sphere, they are the expression of **domestic violence**. Women are dominated, struck, burned, and choked by her husband or her common-law partners. This violence is caused by gender disparities and is a tool of control of the patriarchal system. The women, by the social construction of the gender, are assigned to a reproductive role, in the domestic sphere, which puts them in position of vulnerability and exposed to the violence.

Moreover, physical gender based violence can be articulate with the question of the honour of the family, woman or girl who suffered violence rather rarely can found protection in her family or in her socio-cultural community. If she separated from her husband, she should have a negative reputation and should dishonour her family (ex: Albania, Syria, Turkey,). The coming of a child is decisive and condemns the woman to stay with her common-law partners or violent husband, because a child without father can to be rejected and because the role of a woman is to take care of children.

Sexual mutilation: The most usual sexual mutilation is the excision, which involves the ablation of the dominating external part of the clitoris (clitoridectomy) and his hood. In countries where sexual mutilation is still practiced, there is sometimes a legislation which prohibits that, however this practice remains.

Indeed, the excision is traditionally practiced; it is a symbolic passage from childhood to adulthood supervised by social, cultural and community standards: A young woman who refuses the excision can be offended, excluded, and be rejected.

The excision is practiced to decrease and control the feminine sexuality, to protect the virginity of the girls before the marriage and to prevent the adultery in case of the polygamous marriages.

The section of the clitoris and the small lips cause a very intense, unbearable pain, accompanied by fear, by anxiety and sometimes by a serious state of shock. A possibly hemorrhagic bleeding can lead to the death. It is a very violent experience for the women. There is several case of the excision in countries of sub-Saharan Africa, as Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia...

Forced Marriage:

Around the world there are many form of human society organization, for example, the traditional community-based form where the group prevails on the individual, or the individual form where the individual prevails on the group.

In societies where community-based form prevails the marriages are exogenous, because of the existence of social standards concerning the choice of the spouse, which can be made outside and inside the family group. The girls belong not only to the parents but to the community, to the clan or to the brotherhood.

The forced marriages exist in many countries as Albania, Turkey, Ivory Coast, Syria, for example. It is an arrangement between the family of the girl and of the man, sometimes one endow is asked. Generally, the women do not know their pretender and do not have a word to say. If she refuses, she soils the honor of her family, what is grave. After their marriage, the woman is then forced to live with the family of her husband, who is an unknown. According to the testimonies, the forced marriage is a difficult experience which expresses the commoditization of the women; this practice is profoundly based in the inequalities between men and women. The women are not totally considered as free of themselves, but as first property of their family (and sometimes of the community) and after she become as property of her husband.

Witchcraft attacks o accusation of be witch: Witchcraft-related violence in West Africa is currently attracting significant international media attention. Often witchcraft-related violence is portrayed as a recent or increasing phenomenon, particularly in Ghana's Northern region where the infamous witch camps are located. These witch camps are often depicted as epitomizing violence against women and violence itself is characterized as the inevitable outcome of witchcraft believe.

Today many countries still execute women accused of witchcraft: Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Gambia, Nepal, India, Papua New Guinea, Uganda, Angola, and DRC.

Women trafficking:

In many countries networks of women trafficking are presents, but sometimes networks get organized and are strengthened by cultural constructions, as in Nigeria for example.

In the case of Nigeria, the victims of the networks of forced prostitution are, for the great majority, contacted by recruiters called "trolley buses", committed by "moms" or " mamas ", also named "Mania Loa", which means " priestess, mom". The girls are recruited on them workplace, on markets, and even at her home: the recruiters are sometimes a member of the circle near of their family. They promise them a work in Europe which will allow the girl to pay off her debt quickly, as hairdresser or seamstress. If the girls want to leave they have to sign a contract which is sealed by a traditional rite: the "juju", a rite of magic in western Africa. The girls must take the oath to pay their debt and to reveal no identity or information concerning the network: it is the interest of the rite there «juju». They believe is that if the victims do not respect the contract concluded, the priest can use takings (hair, nail...) to make bring down the disease, madness, even the death on the victim or on their family.

Also, gender based violence with socio-cultural dimension can be the cause of the migration, violence in wars conflicts is too, and leave profound scars in the body and the psyche of the women

2- Women in Wars and geopolitical conflicts

Gender violence in war and geopolitical conflict can caused mental or psychological distress or post-traumatic stress disorder in the victims.

In armed and geopolitical conflicts, the violence against the women is not only gender based violence, but is exerted with gender dimension, a significant part of persecutions of the women have the aim to the control of their sexual and reproductive capacities.

The sexual violence was also exercised to assert a power of males, but also as weapon of repression in the case of political repression

Rape in war time is used as "weapon of war and repression", or as «method of war and repression". According to the Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the word *weapons* send back to an object, while *to rape* is an action used as war method.

Rape is being executed in specifically space where they were locked living in dehumanizing situations, kept by men with weapon and raped in front of the other women. Thus, it is a method of war and repression aiming at several objectives, to torture, to impose a physical

and moral damage, to extort information, to punish, but also to assert the power of the aggressors.

In the case of armed conflict, but with ethnic, religious and political dimensions, as in the case of the Sudan, the sexual violence is used as weapon of war but with an *ethnisation* (ethnic dimension) of the violence.

Also, the forced nudity, with humiliation and sexual assaults can be used in a specific way as means of repression or torture against the women, because through these, it is the whole social, ethnic or religious group which is destroyed.

The aim of the sexual violence is to soil the women from the opposite camp, their body being the "ethnical » territory conquered, particularly when a child arose from this rape. So, the opposite ethnic group is unstructured and tends to disappear through the sexual violence committed on their women.

The conflict in the Middle -East or in the African continent have social, historical, political, economic, cultural and religious specifics dimensions. Is important understand the particularly of the more important international conflicts, to be able to understand better migrant women histories and painful.

Focus on conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Eritrea, Soudan and Democratic Republic of Congo.

Syria

The country counts 23 million inhabitants and a surface of 185 000 Km². Under French political mandate until 1946, independent Syria knew democratic episodes and military political taken over.

In 1970, Hafez Al Assad, father of Bachar, seizes the power by a putsch, gets rid of his opponents and establishes a locked security dictatorship. In its death in 2000, the constitution of the country is modified so that his son succeeds him. After a short period of liberalization, especially economic, Bachar restores an authoritarian system around a family and military, business-oriented and corrupt clan.

Pro-democracy protests erupted in March 2011 with the "Arab Spring", in the southern city of Deraa. After security forces opened fire on demonstrators, killing several, more took to the streets. The government's use of force to crush the dissent merely hardened the protesters' resolve. By July 2011, hundreds of thousands were taking to the streets across the country.

Opposition supporters eventually began to take up arms, first to defend themselves and later to expel security forces from their local areas.

Violence escalated, and the country descended into civil war as rebel brigades were formed to battle government forces for control of cities, towns and the countryside. Fighting reached the capital Damascus and second city of Aleppo in 2012.

By June 2013, the UN said 90,000 people had been killed in the conflict. By August 2015, that figure had climbed to 250,000, according to activists and the UN.

The conflict is now more than just a battle between those for or against Mr Assad. It has acquired sectarian overtones, pitching the country's Sunni majority against the president's Shia Alawite sect, and drawn in regional and world powers. The rise of the jihadist group Islamic State (IS) has added a further dimension.

All parties to the conflict have committed war crimes - including murder, torture, rape and enforced disappearances. They have also been accused of using civilian suffering - such as blocking access to food, water and health services through sieges - as a method of war. The Syrian regime used toxic chemicals several barrel bombs attacks in March, April and May 2015.

More than 4.5 million people have fled Syria since the start of the conflict, most of them women and children.

Gender-based violence has been prevalent in both public and private spheres for decades and was exacerbated by the armed conflict. During the armed conflict, Syrian women have been exposed to various forms of GBV and human rights violations by government bodies well as by some armed factions. These include:

-Sexual violence against women and girls: most allegations of rape and other forms of sexual violence have been committed by government forces and "Shabiha" (government affiliated militias) during raids, at checkpoints and in detention centers. There were also sexual abuses against women in public spaces or in front of their relatives. Some victims were raped and killed by the rapists without any accountability, which led to severe traumas among victims and survivors. Some women have also been forced to endure forced and unwanted pregnancy resulting from Rape. They are sexually abused or witnessing sexual abuse in detention, including rape, penetration with objects, sexual groping, prolonged forced nudity, and electroshock and beatings to genitalia.

-Human trafficking: Human trafficking crimes have increased since the start of the armed conflict, although there are no official statistics to reflect it. Reports demonstrate that human trafficking in the form of child marriage occurs in refugee camps in Jordan and Turkey

through special offices, justified by religious fatwas. Furthermore, the poor financial conditions and lack of employment, especially in refugee camps force women to work in prostitution. That is why many Syrian women are in Lebanese prisons charged with prostitution.

-Detained and forced disappeared women: 76% of the female detainees are detained in security branches and other secret detention places, while only 24% are in the central prisons, among which 83% are detained in Damascus central prison, Adra. Adra prison is a dangerous place because it is in a battle zone, where military operations prevent the families from visiting their detained relatives, particularly those residing in other governorates

Detention constitutes an insurmountable difficult experience in the lives of women detainees even after release. They are not only tortured but also humiliated and dehumanized. In it ongoing quest to destroy the fabric of the Syrian society, the Syrian Government deliberately arrests women, knowing that this will bring shame to the entire family in a patriarchal society that confines honor to the bodies of women. This has prompted many families to push their daughters to emigrate.

-Targeting women civil activists and human rights defenders: Repression and violence against women civil activists by Syrian security forces is systematically escalating. Activists are subjected to various forms of abuse, including arbitrary arrests, abduction and torture inside and outside the security branches and official and unofficial detention centers.

Irak

The Iraq's war begins officially March 20th, 2003 with the invasion of Iraq (said operation Iraqi Freedom) with the coalition led by the United States against the Party Baas of Saddam Hussein. The invasion led to the fast defeat of the Iraqi army, to the capture and the execution of Saddam Hussein and in the implementation of a new government. President George W. Bush officially declared the completion of the fights on May 1st, 2003.

However, the violence against coalition forces quickly led to an asymmetric war involving several groups of insurgents, militias, members of Al-Qaeda, the American army and the strengths of the new Iraqi government. The Iraqi guerrilla warfare is led Sunni side, mainly by the Islamic Army in Iraq, by the baasist of the Army of the People of the Naqshbandiyya and by the jihadists of Al-Qaeda in Iraq who form in 2006 the Islamic State of Iraq. Several Shiite

militias are also constituted, like the Army of Mahdi. On February 22nd, 2006 an attack against the sanctuary Al-Askari to Samarra provoke the First Iraqi civil war, between Sunnites and Shiites which makes hundreds of thousand deaths. It ends in 2008 with the victory of the Shiite militias which take control of Baghdad and hunt the major part of the Sunni population of the capital, whereas Nouri al-Maliki trains a government at the head of the Shiite party Dawa.

Millions of Iraqis were forced to leave their home after decades of conflict and violence. 1 626 558 of the displaced persons in temporary installations

Iraq's descent into conflict has had disastrous consequences for women. **14,000 women killed** so far in Iraq conflict, thousands more abducted

The breakdown of the rule of law that followed the invasion saw the rise of armed groups acting with impunity in the streets of Baghdad, seeking to impose their sectarian ideologies through violence. The risk of kidnapping, sexual assault, bombings and assassinations became so high that families often refrained from allowing women and girls to leave the house alone, attend school, or go to work. When sectarian violence reached its peak in 2006-2007, women were kidnapped, raped and killed on an almost daily basis. After a temporary reduction in violence, the sectarian conflict has escalated again.

The rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and the collapse of the Iraqi Security Forces in Mosul in June have led the federal government to revive its dependence on militias to help fight the growing insurgency. Meanwhile, ISIS has imposed a reign of terror in the areas in controls, imposing strict moral codes on women, massacring unarmed civilians, and kidnapping minority women and girls on a massive scale.

Women are threatened by all sides of the conflict: by the armed groups which threaten, kill, and rape them; by the male-dominated security and police forces which fail to protect them and are often complicit in violence against them; and by criminal groups which take advantage of their desperate circumstances.

It covers violations perpetrated by all parties to the conflict, including the Iraqi army and police forces, militias with direct or indirect government support, and armed groups fighting against the government, such as ISIS.

Ezidi women in particular became the targeted victims of abduction on a massive scale after ISIS swept through while some hostages reported being treated well in captivity, many others were sold as sexual.

Members of the police are known to be perpetrators of gender-based violence. Sexual assault is frequently used during police interrogation as a method of extracting confessions, and is also widespread within the detention.

Women professionals throughout Iraq have also directly targeted for taking on active public roles, whether as lawyers, doctors, journalists, politicians or activists. In the post-invasion social and political culture in Iraq, it has become dangerous for women to take on roles outside the home.

Human trafficking: Once a relatively unheard-of phenomenon in Iraq, human trafficking has mushroomed in recent years. Prolonged conflict has created conditions ripe for traffickers, including displacement, economic desperation and the breakdown of law and order.

Displaced women, especially widows and female-headed households, are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. There were approximately 1,600,000 widows in Iraq at the beginning of 2014 and even more female-headed households. During the height of the sectarian violence, estimated 90-100 women became widows every day. The dire economic situation of widows means that many are pushed to engage in temporary marriages to sustain themselves or fall prey to sexual exploitation.

Another category of women vulnerable to trafficking are women and girls who have run away from home to escape domestic violence, forced marriages or honor killings.

Eritrea

Eritrea pursued a thirty-year war of independence against Ethiopia which ended in 1991. A referendum was held, and independence was approved in1993. Nevertheless, a border war erupted between the two countries which lasted from 1998 to 2000. This body elected Issayas Afewerki as president and there have not been any presidential or parliamentary elections thus far. A Constitutional Commission drafted a Constitution which was ratified by the national referendum, but the president has not implemented the state as 'highly repressive', in which freedom of opinion is restricted and journalists and editors are arrested and detained without due process. The Eritrean government's systematic use of extrajudicial killing, torture, rape, indefinite national service and forced labor may amount to crimes against humanity.

The increase in the incidence of violence within the general society may suggest that a similar increase may be present within the military system. All Eritrean citizens above the age of have a duty to serve in the national service and forced recruitment of adults and minors is so

widespread that the country has been described as 'completely militarized'. All high school students are sent to finish their final year within a school in the military training camp in Sawa. The tensions with Ethiopia resulted in a murderous conflict in 1998- 2000.

The conflicts and the authoritarian regime activated movements of populations towards the Sudan, which found themselves in camps of refugees, more than 60 000 Eritreans live in these camps.

Gender based violence is more executed in the military system.

The Eritrean female asylum seekers attested to the rape of other women besides themselves, signaling the possibility of a systematic practice. They claimed abuses including detention (short and long term), beatings, forced abortions (and attempted abortions), forced heavy labor, forced ingestion of drugs, death threats, degrading treatment, continuous sexual violence and rape, as well as possible forced pregnancy and sexual enslavement.

They also alleged that some women suffered sexual abuse by military leaders beyond the one they served directly.

Refusal to submit to sexual abuse was punished by detention, torture, humiliation and underground detention, binding of hands and feet and placement in stress positions, suspension from trees, limitation of food rations, exposure to extreme heat and insects, shaving of the head, etc.

However, rapes committed in military training centers, in the army, and in detention by military officials, trainers, as well as detention officials and guards continue to be committed with impunity.

When Eritrean women realize the gender based violence in the military institution, many of them try to flee; but the penalty for desertion or evasion of military service is punishable by imprisonment not exceeding five years, in times of emergency or war the penalty runs from five years to life, or in the gravest cases to the death penalty.

Democratic Republic of Congo

After long period under Belgian colonial domination, the DRC reaches the independence in 1960 then knows a quasi-dictatorial period under Mobutu who begins in 1965 and ends in 1997, with the beginning of the first Congo War wounds of which are not closed yet. Since then, the country knew two presidents, Laurent-Désiré Kabila and his son Joseph Kabila, who were not capable of putting an end to the war which has already made between 4 and 8

million deaths according to the estimations, and which continues to ravage the territory, and particularly the civilian population.

Today, In the East, the country is ravaged by the fights involving a multitude of militias and the Armed forces of the DRC (FARDC), which are engaged in a merciless guerrilla warfare punctuated with plunders - in particular gold mines, of coltan, and ores - but also of numerous exactions on the civilian populations. The DRC is at present managed by his president Joseph Kabila, in the power since 2001, elected in 2006 then reelected in 2011. The Congolese constitution authorizes only two consecutive mandates, but Kabila detains the absolute majority to the assembly and can modify the constitution in its advantage. He is also accused of electoral fraud and misappropriation of the public funds. Kabila exercises an authoritarian power, and controls the police and the army, very repressive to them opponents;

The persecutions are committed at the same time by militias and by strengths of the government, the violence is several orders: rapes and sexual violence against the women and the children, the torture, the summary executions, the plunders, or still the recruitments forced by children soldiers and of sexual slaves. The violence rages particularly in east of the country but also in Kinshasa the capital, what causes many displaced people and of refugees since the beginning of the conflict.

Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has been ravaged by war and violence since the mid-1990s. Dozens of illegal armed groups and army units have been responsible for endless human rights abuses and widespread insecurity. Civilians carry the greatest burden of the conflict. Innocent people get attacked, abused, and killed by all sides. Women and girls are especially vulnerable to such attacks. Sexual and gender-based violence has become a defining characteristic of the conflict, a tactic of war. Different armed groups and corrupt army units have become involved in the conflict over time for a variety of politically motivated and historically rooted reasons. The development of the exploitation and trade of natural resources in the region has further raised the stakes and means of all conflict actors to continue their fight.

The two subsequent wars and continued conflict in the east has cost more than 5 million human lives so far.

Civilians have suffered immensely from the widespread insecurity and they have often been the deliberate target of violence by all actors involved. In the course of last years' military operations against armed groups in the east, civilians and villages have been attacked by the conflicting parties, who accused them of collaborating with enemies. Villages have been destroyed, houses looted, people kidnapped and killed, and women and girls raped. Even though military operations have slowed down this year, attacks and abuse continue in an environment of high insecurity.

Sexual and gender-based violence has become a defining characteristic of the conflict. Women and girls are sexually abused in their own homes and at their workspace, including in mines, fields, and forests. Forced Labor, sexual violence continues throughout Congo today, but is particularly endemic in the east.

The military operations since early 2009 have led to a further dramatic increase in genderbased assaults in conflict areas.

Since the conflicting groups attack and rape civilians during military operations, waging a proxy war more often than battling each other directly, some have argued that sexual violence is being used as a weapon of war in Eastern

Sexual assaults include gang rape, which represents most of all cases, rape in public or in presence of family members, rape with instruments, genital mutilation, and forced incest.

Gang rape is predominantly perpetrated by men wearing military uniforms.

Most perpetrators are armed men or men in some kind of military uniform—this includes armed men identified or unidentified with a specific armed group or the military.

8000 cases of sexual violence took place yearly in 2009 and 2010 in Eastern DRC.

South Soudan

The inter-Sudanese conflict is a current armed conflict since May 21st, 2011 between the Sudan and the factions close to the South Sudan for the control of Abiyé, region rich in petrol. South Sudan seceded from Sudan and became an independent state in July 2011. Two years later in December 2013, an internal armed conflict erupted, plunging the new state into a path of conflict. Violence erupted because of simmering political tensions between President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, Vice President from 2005 until his dismissal by Kiir in July 2013 Fighting started in Juba where government forces engaged in targeted killings of Nuer people, based on ethnicity and perceived political allegiance, and quickly spread to Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity states. Security forces across the country split – with some maintaining allegiance to the government and others defecting to support the armed opposition under Riek Machar, which came to be known as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/AIO) there was heavy fighting between the government and opposition forces in many areas of the country, particularly the Equatoria, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Jonglei, and Upper Nile areas.

This rivalry makes reappear old dissensions between the various clans of the popular Movement of liberation of the Sudan, the old rebellion which led the country to the independence in 2011, on the background of ethnic rivalry: on one side Dinkas (majority ethnic group of Salva Kiir) and of the other one Nuers (ethnic group of Riek Machar)

In the context of the ongoing non-international armed conflict, government and opposition forces and their associated armed militia have committed war crimes and other serious human rights violations and abuses.

Sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, sexual slavery, sexual mutilation including castration, forced pregnancy, and forced abortion has been a consistent feature of the conflict. Sexual violence often takes place during attacks by armed actors, and alongside other violations such as the deliberate killing of civilians, often based on ethnicity; destruction and looting of hospitals, schools, civilian homes and means of livelihood; attacks on humanitarian personnel and assets; recruitment of child soldiers; arbitrary detention; and the killing of captured soldiers and other fighters placed hors de combat. Sexual violence and other acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population also constitute crimes against humanity

Since December 2013, the violent conflict in the South Sudan made thousands of deaths and forced about four million people to leave their home.

While numerous people are always moved inside the country, more than two million ran away towards the nearby countries in quest of safety.

2 073 105 refugees and asylum seekers native of the South Sudan

Sexual violence that has occurred is shocking in its scale and level of brutality, and will leave physical, psychological, and social impacts for decades to come.

Sexual violence was part of a strategy to terrorize, degrade, shame and humiliate both the victims and their ethnic or political group. Both government and opposition forces have frequently targeted individuals based on their ethnicity or their perceived political allegiance and affiliation.

The endemic levels of sexual violence during the current conflict can only be fully understood when placed in the longer-term context of gender dynamics within South Sudanese society. Sexual violence is facilitated by the overall status of women and girls in South Sudanese society as subordinate to men, and the resulting discrimination that they experience in their everyday lives. It is also motivated by patriarchal structures and gendered concepts of power which position men as "protectors" of women. It is the mixture of historical precedent, the general acceptance of sexual violence, increased opportunism, impunity, and conflict dynamics, particularly inter-ethnic violence, that form the context for the surge in sexual violence that has occurred in South Sudan since December 2013.

During and after the July 2016 fighting in Juba cases of rape and gang rape involving 217 victims. 72% of women living in the Juba sites reported having been raped since the conflict broke out, mostly by police and soldiers. The frequency of sexual violence is getting worse as the conflict persists. Sexual and gender-based violence increased by 61% between 2015 and 2016.

In 2016, 32% increase over 2015 in the number of cases of gender-based violence perpetrated by men in uniform, while cases of abduction for the purpose of sexual slavery more than doubled.

Conclusion:

To understand gender based violence which are caused the migration, is interesting to use Jane Freedman's analysis and speaking about gender based violence about women. It's expressed the double intensity: the violence exercised on the women for their social position, their political implication, the membership in an ethnic group in geopolitical conflict, and the violence connected to the gender in specific socio-cultural environment.

The origin of the migration is very complex issue.