

strands of transnational political justice, economic justice, and postcolonial gender justice.

#### **4.2 On the relevance of a cosmopolitan theory of justice based on a transcultural approach**

This research presented the contemporary intellectual projects of the Moroccan feminist thinker Fatima Mernissi and the Algerian philosopher Mohammed Arkoun to broaden the hermeneutical horizon for the normative discourse on justice by incorporating Arabo-Islamic philosophy. The research was divided into two main parts. The research began with a study of Mernissi's and Arkoun's thought, outlining and explaining their biographical and intellectual trajectories and presenting the meaning and characteristics of their ethico-political projects. It brings to light a detailed analysis and study of their engagement with the early and contemporary context of Arabo-Islamic thought, focusing on the cultural and socio-political context of the Maghreb countries to develop a philosophical thought that condemns orthodox hegemonic constructions.

Through a cosmopolitan ethos and the demand for religious freedom, the research challenges orthodoxy and fundamentalism. It promotes a better understanding of human rights and gender equality to combat patriarchal, discriminatory and racist structures. A key characteristic of Mernissi's and Arkoun's thinking is their blend of positive and negative views about the concepts of modernity and secularism. On the one hand, they criticize the modern Western thought for its homogenic constructs formed in the discourse and methods of Orientalism, the discourse of Euromodernism, and the discourse manifesting neo-imperialism. On the other hand, based on their analysis, they find that modern secular thought contributes to the emancipation of humanity from orthodox religious beliefs. Importantly, secular thought serves the purpose of liberating women from the manipulation of religious discourse under patriarchal power. The secular thought defended in this study preserves the place of religion in societies as a spiritual and cultural sphere that can be criticized and evaluated, but does not use religion as a means to intervene into politics.

Mernissi's and Arkoun's re-reading of early Islamic thought is characterized by an exploration of the rational and humanistic approaches that shaped the ideas of early Muslim thinkers. A rational approach inherited from Greek thought as well as humanist ideals link Islamic ethics to Greek philosophy. The research confirms that the reevaluation of early Islamic thought is an ongoing task that not only challenges the established interpretations within Islamic orthodoxy, but also corrects the Western world's misinterpretations and generalizations about the rich Islamic intellectual heritage.

The contemporary intellectual project of Mernissi and Arkoun was studied from a transcultural perspective emphasizing their transdisciplinary approaches and their reference to different cultures. A comparison of modern Western and early Islamic thought revealed that both thinkers mediate between different traditions. Both scholars rethink Islamic thought using poststructuralist methods and early Islamic logics, hermeneutics, and Greek classical logic. They also draw on various disciplines such as linguistics, -and sociological empirical research. Through these multifarious approaches, Islamic thought is removed from a monolithic framework of theological interpretation and opened up to multifarious rational interpretations.

Highlighting Mernissi's and Arkoun's rethinking of Islamic philosophy aims at the inclusion of intellectual voices of scholars from the Global South in the justice debate. The goal is to develop a cosmopolitan theory of justice that opposes the exclusion of diverse perspectives of thought. In contrast, a cosmopolitan debate, as they advocate it, includes both sides of the globe in order to build a transcultural dialogue between different cultures and systems of thought.

### **A plea for an epistemic diversity and intersectional analysis**

Following the contemporary intellectual project of Mernissi and Arkoun, which is analyzed in the context of this study, I would like to propose in this epilogue how a cosmopolitan debate on justice can be made plausible on the basis of a transcultural approach.

To establish justice via a transcultural approach, I argue first and foremost that intellectuals who are deeply engaged in their societies are well-equipped to critically examine the injustice in their specific contexts. Thus, intellectuals from around the world need to come together, reflect, and engage in a collaborative dialogue to transform the debate on injustice from a Western, Euro-Atlantic to a transnational, global level. To grasp the full extent of what is going on at the global level is something no single scholar can do alone, but only through collective efforts we may develop a global debate that includes the epistemology of the South.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, colonial structures still dominate the world. Colonialism has not ceased, only its language has evolved through the various structures that hierarchically separate the metropolitan societies of the former colonizers from the underdeveloped countries of yesterday's colonized, as well as through the division of humanity into human beings worthy to live and those destined to die.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, it is essential to abolish the hegemonic structures and languages that divide the world

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5 Santos 2007: 55.

6 I refer to Achilles Mbembe's concept of Necropolitics, by which he means that specific humans are forced to remain in a suspended state of being located somewhere between life

into metropolitan societies and neo-colonial territories, so that the world can come together without hierarchical distinctions.<sup>7</sup>

To this end, and to apply a cosmopolitan justice debate based on a transcultural approach, a transnational “global cognitive justice”<sup>8</sup> that incorporates diverse knowledge systems and worldviews against the manipulation of knowledge within a single system of thought, and opposes the hierarchical division between subaltern and dominant knowledge, is indeed a promising and vital conception that is gradually being incorporated into the justice debate. I would therefore like to make the following suggestions for its implementation: First, I argue for transcultural dialogue between scholars from the Global South and the Global North. Secondly, I call for epistemological diversity of knowledge informing justice theory, and third, I argue for an intersectional conception of justice.

1. As just mentioned above, the concept of transnational cognitive justice is based on the development of a *transcultural dialogue*, especially starting from academia, which would promote and enable cross-cultural studies between different cultures and systems of thought.<sup>9</sup> This would set the stage for research in the humanities to become more sensitive to other social and political structures as well as multiple forms of injustice that play a role in different places around the world. As long as we believe that justice is a virtue that serves all people as a common good, we must free the academic debates about justice from discriminatory structures that monopolize and commodify our thoughts. Rather than focusing on a monolithic Western perspective and vision of thought, we should be open to heterogeneous worldviews. In this way, we can recognize the different systems of power and injustice in the world (see Introduction).

2. Transnational cognitive justice accounts for *epistemological diversity* by recognizing the existence of a plurality of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> For example, transnational cognitive justice demands that we combine rational with religious knowledge. In addition, it transgresses the divide between marginalized knowledge, which belongs to the unthinkable realm of inquiry, and hegemonic knowledge, which belongs to the thinkable realm of knowledge. Thus transnational cognitive justice refers to the recognition of a plurality of heterogeneous knowledge systems and the dynamic connection between them.<sup>11</sup>

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and death. See Mbembe, Achille (2003): “Necropolitics”, transl. by Libby Meintjes. In: *Public Culture* (Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 11–40), Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.

7 Santos 2007: 46.

8 Santos 2007: 53.

9 Dübgen 2016.

10 Santos 2007: 67.

11 Santos 2007: 66.

In this respect, combining different forms of knowledge, especially by including religious thought in the field of philosophical thought, promises to enrich the philosophical debate on justice and promotes a transdisciplinary and transcultural approach to thinking. In this regard, in this epilogue, I would like to recapitulate what this study contributes to fulfilling the call for more transnational cognitive justice before I turn to my third argument.

### Religious diversity and gender justice

Indeed, as shown in this study, the incorporation of religious thought into the field of feminist philosophy to gain an idea of gender justice has deprovincialized the field of feminist philosophy from its Western core to include different approaches in the feminist struggle by incorporating feminist voices from the Global South. Through the approach of Islamic feminism, women of different religious affiliations, veiled and unveiled women, women from the Global South and the Global North contribute to claiming their rights based on a renewed interpretation of religious discourse. Islamic doctrine has been controlled by men and subject to misogynistic interpretations that exclude women from participating in the religious sphere, which is considered a sphere forbidden to women. Islamic feminism further offers transdisciplinary approaches to the field of philosophical feminism by incorporating the method of religious hermeneutics and exegesis into the field of feminism and by promoting various disciplines related to linguistics, sociology, and history. Indeed, the link between religion and feminism underscores “the efforts of believing women of the monotheistic faiths to subject their religious texts to a feminist rereading, or to locate and emphasize the women-friendly and egalitarian precepts within their religious texts, are to be supported.”<sup>12</sup>

Hence feminism, in this sense, refers not only to a discourse that demands gender equality based on modern and secular claims, but deals with multiple methods and approaches that should be used to assert the claim for women's rights. The starting point here is the realm of religious discourse as a powerful and patriarchal discourse and source of exclusion of women's rights. Thus the inclusion of religious and secular thought in the discourses defending women's rights serves to achieve a complementarity between religious and secular knowledge to ensure the emancipation of all women.

### Rethinking secularism and modernity from a transcultural angle

This study aimed at deconstructing and rethinking secularism and modernity, disclosing their Eurocentric roots. First, I have demonstrated that secular thought does

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12 Moghadam 2002: 1162.

not systematically imply an exclusion of religion by considering religion as irrational discourse. Rather, this study defends a secular thought that advocates for the right of religious citizens to exist and participate in civil society. The secular state must protect its citizens and grant them rights, without discrimination based on religious and political affiliations. In this sense, “all citizens should be equal before the law, with equal rights and obligations. Civil, political, and social rights of citizens should be protected by the state and by the institutions of civil society.”<sup>13</sup>

From the hegemonic scientific point of view, religious discourse is considered the opposite of rational discourse and thus reduced to the realm of the unthinkable. In contrast, this study has pointed out that religious discourse must be considered a field of critical analysis and is open to multiple interpretations that correlate with the needs of people in their contemporary societies. In other words, religious discourse must be critically rethought and must be considered as an important field of knowledge that should not be simply dismissed. In fact, acknowledging the connection between secular and religious thought can help “to improve the status of women and to modernize religious thought.”<sup>14</sup> In this way, poststructuralist and postmodernist methods, in conjunction with the field of religious hermeneutics, can be used to liberate religious discourse from extremist, fundamentalist, and dogmatic interpretations that lead to violence between religions as well as between the religious and the non-religious actors.

Moreover, this study includes a significant analysis of the concept of modernity. Based on my readings of Mernissi, I argued that the idea of modernity as a liberal and emancipatory thought is valuable for the emancipation of humanity from the constraints of religious orthodoxy and dogmatism. Considering that the discourse of modernity is linked with important treaties of human rights, furthermore, “a counter-hegemonic use”<sup>15</sup> of the concept of modernity can criticize any neo-capitalist and neo-colonial appropriation. This neo-capitalist and neo-colonial appropriation of modernity is manifest in global injustices and discourses of civilizational superiority.<sup>16</sup> It refers to a hierarchical distinction between states that advance civilization and those that obey and consume what developed states command. This study seeks to break down this hegemonic division of the globe by illuminating the possibility of the Global South, labeled “underdeveloped countries,” to contribute to the intellectual and ethical advancement of the Global North. In this regard, rather than cultivating a neo-capitalist modernity, the study cultivates the idea of an intellectual modernity that focuses on the enlightenment of thought and the emancipa-

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13 Moghadam 2002: 1163–1164.

14 Moghadam 2002: 1162.

15 Santos 2007: 70.

16 Santos 2007: 59.

tion of the human spirit. In this way, intellectual modernity calls for philosophical dialogue between different cultures and different systems of thought.

### **The quest for a cosmopolitan ethos: Transgressing the boundaries between philosophy and religion**

In this sense, the call for a transcultural approach to justice was demonstrated in this study following the re-reading of early Arabo-Islamic thought, which is characterized by the connection between Islamic religious ethics and Greek philosophical ethics. This connection between Islamic legacy and philosophical thought reveals the heterogeneity and plurality of knowledge that constitute early Islamic thought in order to establish a concept of divine justice and a concept of human justice that grants justice in the social and distributive realms. Furthermore, rational thought proved to be an essential idea in early Islamic thought. It has been argued that early Muslim philosophers placed importance on formulating standards for Islamic discourse based on logical terms borrowed from Aristotle's *Organon*. This connection between rational and religious thought demonstrates how important early Islamic thought was in incorporating different perspectives of knowledge and opening itself up to other schools of thought.

In the context of this study, the relevance of the transcultural paradigm was anchored in the cosmopolitan ethos, which is central to cognitive justice between the Global South and the Global North. This book advanced the method of deconstruction as a conceptual tool to challenge monolithic conceptions – particularly the notion of “culture” – as mere intellectual constructs and strives to demonstrate the permeability, flexibility, and dynamism of cultural phenomena by insisting on the need to engage with different cultural perspectives and use different scales of analysis.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the transcultural paradigm was demonstrated in this study by exploring the concept of *interreligious dialogue as cosmopolitan ethos*, which embodies the principle of tolerance as a necessary value to promote peaceful coexistence in civil societies. In this study, not only was interreligious dialogue embodied as a cosmopolitan ethos grounded by the transcultural paradigm, but also a cosmopolitan approach to feminism that deconstructs the stereotypes about Muslim women, who are oftentimes seen as religious and traditional women who have no perspective for self-emancipation in the tradition of Orientalist discourse. This study shows a different way of perceiving Muslim women by deconstructing these Western stereotypes. This approach is inspired by the Islamic doctrine of Sufism, which promotes the principle of openness to other cultures and thus cross-cultural dialogue within pluralistic identities rather than constructed homogeneous identities.

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17 König 2016: 101.

“Global social injustice is, therefore, intimately linked to global cognitive injustice. The struggle for global social justice must, therefore, be a struggle for global cognitive justice as well”.<sup>18</sup> Thus cognitive justice, as argued above, is crucial for creating global justice on a transnational scale by making connections between different fields of knowledge, such as religion and philosophy, and by removing the hierarchy of knowledge systems in order to deconstruct concepts, methods, and ideas from their hegemonic use to more heterogeneous, pluralistic, and intercultural networks and worldviews. A cosmopolitan ethos emerges when there is a transcultural dialogue based on cognitive justice that connects the Global South with the Global North. Following this line of thought, I conclude this epilogue to my study with the suggestion that intersectional justice is essential for promoting a transcultural approach to justice and also for the global justice debate.

3. *Intersectional justice* recognizes that discrimination can result from a variety of reasons and sources. Individuals can be discriminated against on the basis of gender as well as ethnicity, religion, or cultural background, as seen in the many different ways that women of color and minorities are discriminated against in their local societies. In this sense, global justice must serve the good and progress of all human beings in all sectors of society and in the various institutions. Therefore, the transcultural approach can be seen as a starting point for a critical debate that considers injustice in its global and local manifestations. As I indicated above, it is the task of engaged philosophers and theorists to talk about the various forms of injustice that exist on different levels of analysis. They could bring the forms of injustice into the global academic debate through more transcultural dialogue.

As an example, this study critiqued “nationalism” as one sphere of injustice related to other sides of oppression. It exposed how Arab nationalism has been used to exclude and discriminate against marginalized ethnicities and religions and deny them their rights. In addition, the study presented sociological empirical research that describes intersectional injustices such as socio-economic inequalities, ethnic discrimination, and gender inequality in their interrelatedness. In order to shed light on people’s experiences and their struggles for social justice in the post-revolutionary era, the study focused primarily on the Maghreb region in North Africa.

In this context, I argued that intersectional injustice remains pervasive in the Maghreb region, particularly for women. Despite the increasing presence of women in public life who see their emancipation in education and access to high university degrees as a means to their liberation and emancipation, women continue to face inequalities in family law. They still depend on patriarchal dominance, as women still do not predominate in the field of religious knowledge despite the rise of the Islamic feminist studies. In Algeria, for example, polygamy and male repudiation remain legal; women cannot marry without a male-controlled guardianship, and an

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18 Santos 2007: 53.

identity card is issued automatically to the male head of household while a woman needs to apply separately for one.<sup>19</sup> In Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, women are still largely responsible for childcare and care of the elderly. The free market economy has not benefited women as promised by neoliberal economic policy-makers. Economic liberalization has not generated more jobs for women, and certainly no well-paid jobs. To the extent that economic challenges – income inequality, poverty, unemployment, and inadequate social and physical infrastructure – prevent the material empowerment of women in the region, women's full participation in public life still needs to be achieved as well.<sup>20</sup> The division of access to the educational system and job opportunities is highly stratified based on the geographical divide between rural areas and metropolitan cities.

Highlighting the inequalities and forms of discrimination that still exist in the Global South leads me to conclude this study by emphasizing the need to deepen transcultural dialogue and matters of justice. The transcultural approach to justice requires philosophical principles to consolidate and develop the emergence of a cosmopolitan ethos based on the recognition of diverse experiences and traditions of thought. The study seeks to make a contribution to consider justice from the perspective of non-Western thought, focusing on the understanding of justice from the perspective of Arabo-Islamic philosophy. In addition, the study highlighted the mutual influence of Western and Islamic thought in enriching the debate and method of promoting justice during earlier stages of Arabo-Islamic philosophy.

The renewal of our philosophical terminology about justice becomes a necessity in a world where genocides, neo-colonialism as well as various forms of exclusion persist, and where communication between cultures, nations, and religions is repeatedly hampered by serious misunderstandings and prejudices.

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19 Moghadam 2020: 480.

20 Moghadam 2020: 480.

