



Girls & sport

in French working class neighborhoods

Why they don't want to practice PA?



Haïfa TLILI

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Deprived neighborhoods Context

Poverty

38,4% population live bellow the poverty line

Security

25% of poor area residents feeling unsafe,
instead of 14% in the rest of the population

Health

One in four declare renounced care services
(as dental) for financial reasons

Education

Only 21% children in secondary school moving toward general
sector in priority neighborhoods / instead 40% in the rest of the
territory



Sport In Neighborhoods : A Gender Gap

Rare surveys

- Relegation zone
- « Girls Invisibility », they don't practice sports
- Disappearance of Sports clubs
- Unsustainable public policies
- Combinaison of handicaps
(Education, unemployment, low financial ressources, discriminations)

Available figures

- In France, **51%** of girls practice sport
- Only **32%** in poor area
(Gasparini &Vielle Marchiset, 2012)
- **Sport licence in poor area, only 3,6% 2011** (ONZUS, 2011)

Male members **4,1%**

Women members **2,9%**

Girls' Invisibility



- ❖ Since 80's « **boys & sport** in at risk area » associated with the question of **integration**
 - ❖ **Invisibility of girls** just begun to be questioned in sport sociology
 - ❖ **Common arguments given** : Religious or cultural purposes
- > Does not help to understand any solutions for improving girls' participation in sport



UFOLEP Research Action

Place accorded to Islam?

On « Islam & Sport »
Dearth of research
France is late !



Deydier report (2004) sponsored by the Ministry of Youth and Sports :

- Correlation between low girls' sport participation rate, religious behaviors and non adapted sport opportunities
- **Use worrying terms :** « the expression of an identitarian closure » that oppose to integration and Republic values, family pressure for not practicing, « separatist religious model », « clothing disorder », « veiled girls », « separate schedules » .

No verbatim, no scientific illustration, only on feeling of white women, higher social class, former athlete, non muslim > **Problematic**

Theories

- ❖ **Propose an alternative path of analyse**

Unmet ethnographic observations

intersubjectivity at the heart of the analysis

- ❖ **Feminist & Postcolonialist theories** (Foucault, Weedon, Butler, Bhabha, Said)

Give voices to marginalized people

Give importance to girls discrimination

Complexity and hybridity of cultural border

Plural lived experiences, with paradoxes and conflicts

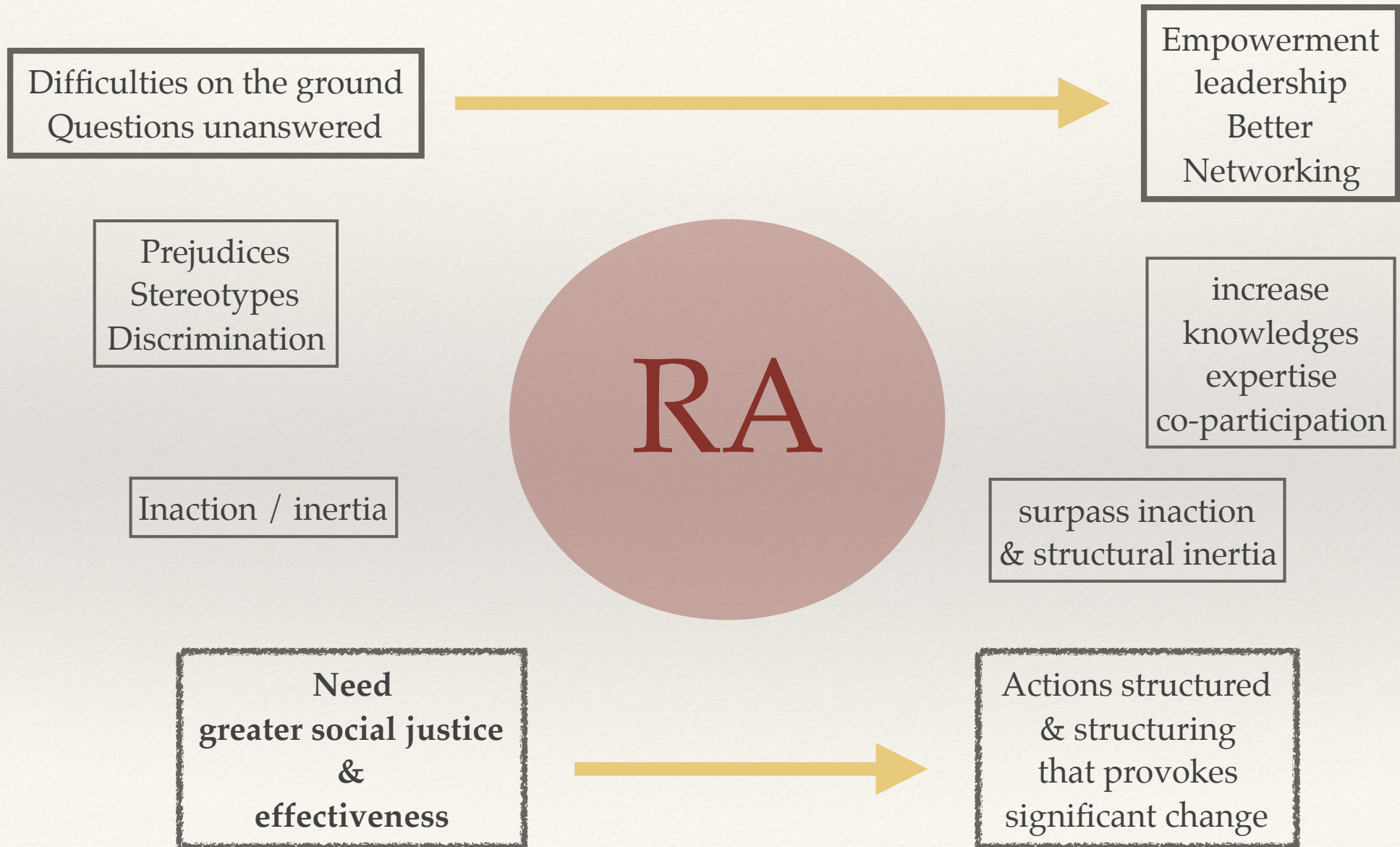
- ❖ **Main question :why girls do not want to practice PA?**



Methodology

- ❖ **10 months Period : sept 2013 - June 2014**
- ❖ **6 french departments**
- ❖ **Populations :**
 - 100 Girls, between 14 - 19 years old
 - 40 Sport actors (PE, educator, animator, municipality head)
- ❖ **Interviews:** semi directive / conversation
- ❖ **3 themes discussed :** sport définition, obstacles and recommandations
- ❖ **Research Action framework** Co-construct with girls and stakeholders / Processus of experimentation in the long run (**exploratory stage, understand and recommandations**)
- ❖ **Steering committee national and local** (comité de pilotage)
- ❖ **Nvivo Software** (verbatim, thematic analysis and discourses analysis)

Research Action in Urban Context



Research Action Specificities

Classic Research

- Research on people
- Globalization / representativity
- Controlled & rigid framework
- Look for objectivity / distance / data control
- Linear process, Hypothetico-deductive
- Researcher expert / domination & superiority
- Positivist logic

RA

- Research with/ for people motivated
- Local with excluded and marginalized
- Moving framework
- Connexion between researcher & participants
- Cyclic process, moving and inductive, must adapt to realities
- Researcher facilitator / egalitarian relationship
- Postmodern & critic logic

Results :

1/ What does it mean « sport » for girls?

2/ Brakes / resistance to PA

**3/ Main recommendations for empowering girls
in sport participation**

1/ What does it mean « sport » for girls?

Girls Definition	Overall Results	
	Sources	Ref.
Relax	15	39
Body Beauty	11	33
Physical Effort	11	23
Pleasure - Have fun	11	20
Competition	5	18
Health	10	18
Psychological Well-being	10	17
Collective Activity	11	16
Total		184

For Girls : Associated with Leisure, less to competition, rejecting physical effort, Physical Activity as tools, no shared physical experience

Actors in sport Definition	Overall Results	
	Sources	Ref.
Collective Activity	15	21
Pleasure - Have fun	11	15
Competition	8	14
Unwind	10	12
Assert yourself	6	8
Body Beauty	5	7
Physical Effort	4	5
Health	1	1
Psychological Well-being	1	1
Total		84

For Actors : They find it's hard to respond, insisting on social, collective and institutional dimensions; and less on psychological aspects

2/ Brakes to PA

General brakes : Reduced offers, not adapted, competition spirit, PE class

- ❖ **For Girls :** Constraining effort, gaze of others, psychological dimension, family duties, negative lived experience, no return on time investment / not profitable
- ❖ **For Actors :** Over estimation of institutional constraint, pedagogical, problems related to puberty and adolescence, religious; Under estimation of lived experience and familial responsibilities by girls

Gap Between Sport Representations Of Girls

(Tlili & Delorme, 2014)

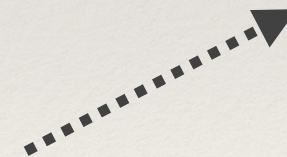
For Girls

- Psychological dimension is more important
- Fear of being judged by others
- Sport is synonyme for fatigue, waste of time, reduce time for homework
- They don't like competition and look for fun
- Past negative experiences
- Parents need to be informed and reassured
- Sport opportunities are not adapted to their likes

For Sport Actors

- ❖ They don't know what girls really want & their problems
- ❖ They insist on pedagogical actions and institutional organisations
- ❖ They insist on the need to provide health knowledge
- ❖ Financial and religious dimensions

Make the decisions



Ideological system

Economical system

Political system

Time constraints

Sports policy system

Media system

Educational system

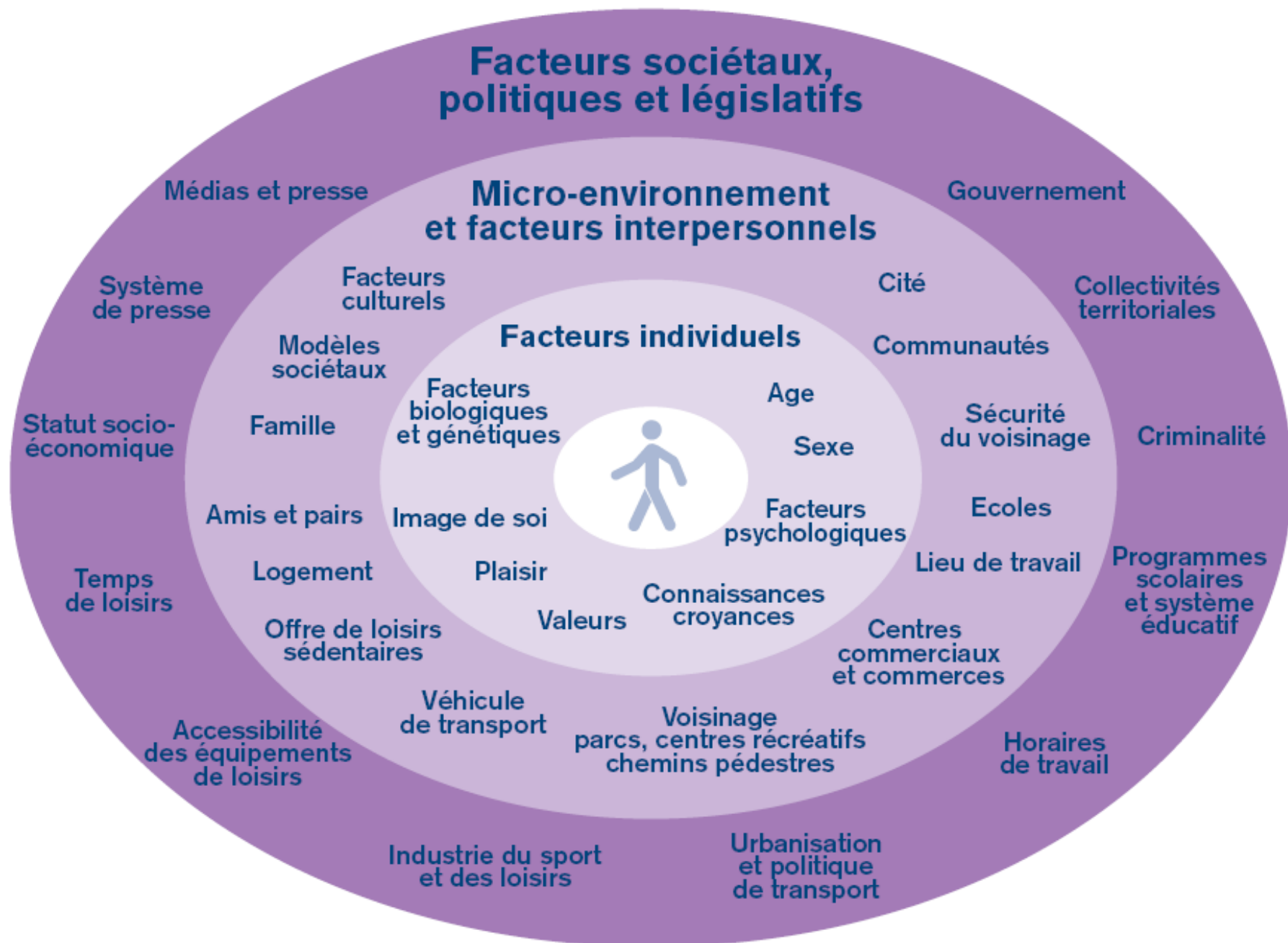
Family system



Context of life in the neighborhood

Girls Biodiversity :
Stuck in systemic brakes ?

- Difficult to change systems quickly
- Urgent to focus on girls, as actors of their social changes



Ecological model
Factors influencing PA and sedentary behaviors



3/ Recommendations

What to do?



**PA
should not be the privilege
of an elite**

How could we do otherwise,
when structural constraints are significant ?

How could we put the girls as actors of
their change?



Need more justice !

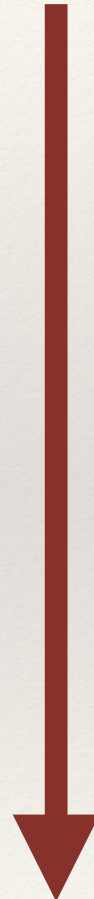
Fast track actions Short-term Proposals	Medium-term Proposals	Divergent subjects between girls and sport actors
1- Restore meaning to physical effort and the need to practice physical activities (for personal health)	5 - Develop an adapted offer to girls. Ensuring security and qualified educators.	Financial grants and social aids
2- Offer a wide range of PA, with pleasure, fun, more social references and less competition.	6- Support sport actors networking in at risk area.	Gender diversity vs. only between girls. Sport actors must practice with girls or not.
3- Develop individual awareness, psychological dimension, leadership and empowerment. Create a space to talk, for deconstructing prejudices, and to give them the possibility to outreach their daily obstacles.	7- Individual mentoring and tutoring	Framework and discipline Vs flexibility and co-construction, take into account their subjectivities.
4- Develop a strong family communication. Work with urban planner for reconsidering girls/ women position in their neighborhood/city.	8- Parents need to understand the need to practice PA every day. Ensure and respect that leisure time for girls development. Maintain educator positions.	Gender diversity of educators. Islam, french secularism complex

**Main recommendations for empower girls in sport participation,
in French at risk areas (Tlili & Delorme 2014)**

Creating change for girls in SPA

- Safety space for optimal well being
- Integrating participants
- Providing knowledge of the body and health
- Reducing self censorship
- Deconstructing gendered & beauty speech

- Changing the image of SPA
- Meeting achievable goals
- Helping to outline a personal SPA project
- Promoting their actions in SPA
- Helping with time management
- Integrating parents support mentoring



Enhance Girls' Leadership & Empowerment

Empowerment

- Support girls, accompanied them for giving meaning to their actions
- Stimulating living context
- Laws that ensure gender equal opportunities
- Inspiring examples (mentorship, media) allow identifications
- Deconstruct prejudice

Leadership

- Work self confidence, become what you want to be
- Reconnect with ourselves, not disrupt by the glance of others
- Self awareness on personal tastes, choices and goals
- Importance of work and challenge for progressing and being the best possible
- Importance of communication

Inspired Examples

- ❖ **USA - Canada** : awareness, make aware of responsibilities, importance of the community
- ❖ **YWCA, Girls action foundation, Women sport fondation** offer secure area with individualized support.
- ❖ **USA - Bolder Options, one-on-one mentorship**
- ❖ **Tucker Center** for research on girls and women in sport- Minneapolis USA - give importance to girls and their communities, **action research, co-construction and social innovation**
- ❖ **In France**, Muslim Women (Hijab) are not easily accepted at the gym (public space), source of discrimination (CCIF). **Sport and Physical activities are not viewed as a source of empowerment for them (Strong Paternalist and islamophobic discourses). With movement people will change (cultural and social rules).**
- ❖ **In Netherlands, WomenWin**
- ❖ **In Belgium ?**



Research Agenda

**Deydier
Report (2004)**

Lack of information on women in poor area
in particular in muslim community

Guidelines

Action Research 2013-2014
(Tlili & Delorme, 2014)

**1. Pilote Program
(2016-2020)**

**2. Erasmus + Project on women
empowerment in at risk area
(for starting in 2020)**

**Active muslim girls/women
fighting discrimination & sedentary lifestyle**

In France

Muslim Girls and PA / Sport

Complex situation

Muslim women in sport ?

Context and characteristics in evolution

Plural identities / moving/ non rigid

Muslim women need examples of women physically active

« Burkini Ban » (Summer 2016)

Prejudices inside and outside the community



French Islamophobia Reflexion : What can we do?

National Association For
Women & sport

Institutional Discours
« Secularism » « French Identity »
« Integration »

Fear / Tension
Attacks

+

Non inclusive

Paternaliste
& essentialist discourses

« Burkini Ban »



Difficult for
Muslim Women to practice
sport
> Reinforce stereotypes

Statistics on
« Race » or « ethnicity »
not allowed

No official statistics on
minorities

Difficult to measure
discrimination

Reinforcement
ethnic profiling in
Police
State Racism

Discourses
produce
social division
amplify stereotype

Impact on islamophobia
discrimination & racism

? Social & Physical Participation for Women?



French Women Muslim Leaders

TABOU

FOR WHOM?

WHY?





Muslim Community Leaders : CFCM 2018



**Where are
Women leaders
(Muslim or not) ???**

**Consequences &
social Impact?**

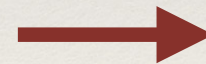


French National Assembly



> Example of East African Muslim Women in USA(Tucker Center, Minneapolis)

In France
We Need more justice,
empowerment
& Women leadership
in /by /with sport



to deconstruct prejudices
inside & outside
the community