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My interest in the issue of homosexuality started, in 2011, as part of a master's research (Sciences and Techniques of Sports and Physical Activities) on gay and lesbian athletes in Tunisia. Inspired by my personal experience as a high-level athlete, I decided to work on the issue of homosexuality in sport. The purpose of my study was to explore and to understand gay and lesbian experiences in a particular homophobic space which is sport.

However, it was clear that conducting such academic research in an Islamic state of increasing homophobia is very risky for both the researcher and the participants. In Tunisia, same-sex sexual relations are religiously taboo and legally prohibited. There is no academic discussion or public discourse about homosexuality in sport. As it was expected, the reactions to my research project were very negative and brought me a lot of trouble.

Even today, people still ask me questions about my choice of this topic. Why did I choose to approach such a taboo subject? Am I able to conduct such a survey and assume the potential consequences? Am I gay? These questions and others are almost part of my everyday life.

For me, working on homosexuality in Tunisia was not a simple sociological study, it is a challenge that has completely changed my life. Like other Tunisians, I had preliminary ideas on homosexuality and homosexuals; sometimes wrongly, sometimes rightly. These thoughts are certainly acquired through the process of socialization in a Muslim society. I really benefited from my research to deepen my knowledge about homosexuality, to deconstruct certain prejudices and to closely approach gay and lesbian persons.

During my interviews, I sometimes feel deep sympathy for the individuals I question. I feel touched by their stories and their pathways full of suffering and conflict. These people cannot live their citizenship as free human beings. If they are disclosed, they risk being rejected by their families, fired from their jobs and assaulted and tortured by everyone. From my position as a sociologist, I always feel responsible for helping and supporting them. I desired that every single participant's voice to be heard, because they may have felt that they were taking a risk in granting interviews. It may be the only chance for my participants' voices to be heard outside of their own, closeted, subculture of other sexual minorities.