

Arab Families Working Group

Minutes of the November 2004 Meeting

Harbor Court Hotel
San Francisco, CA
November 22, 2004

In Attendance: Suad Joseph, Hoda Elsadda, Omnia El Shakry, Nadine Naber, Martina Rieker, Zeina Zaatari

AFWG Staff: *Fawn Scheer*

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MINUTES

Suad provided a brief update on current issues affecting AFWG, and outlined discussion points for the meeting.

Suad and Zeina gave an update on Volume I, including the Table of Contents format and order of chapter sections, the bibliography editing work and future expansion efforts, and the status of the draft manuscript for the text.

Research Projects

Nadine: The initial goal of focusing the Border Crossings chapter on the subject of public/private seems to have fallen by the wayside. There now seems to be some discontinuity, or a disconnection of themes.

Suad: Can common themes be named between the chapters? Maybe the authors can have some help bringing the themes up to the front. Martina, Barbara, Suad, Zeina and Nadine can help read chapters more thoroughly.

Martina: The RA could compile theoretical articles and arguments that help to map the project. Three or four articles could be compiled for colleagues to read as background material on each subject.

Suad: The RA cannot do that, but could read through the Volume I manuscript and summarize what an outsider understands from it.

Hoda: My research project will focus on literature from the 1990s (especially Egypt). It will look at: how are gender relations worked out and how is literature from this period different from previous periods; I will develop thematic links with the other research topics (especially Palestine), and offer comparative perspectives on Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine. The core focus of the project seeks to answer the question of desire.

Zeina: If we [the Core Group] are not doing comparative analyses or discussions, should we get outside help to do it?

Suad: That would be ok, but it's best to keep work within AFWG as much as possible.

Omnia: My project is flexible, and I am interested in helping out with the historical components of other project themes, for instance youth, desire, etc. I can't do all 3 sites on my own; I will need some help, and may need to hire an RA. I plan to focus on the period from the turn of the century to about the Nassar period (1970's or so), discussing regional transformations and issues of consumption and production. I need to find out who the historians are, and who are working with the primary sources.

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Zeina: Hanan Haidar, our RA in Beirut, has been researching newspaper representations of Arabic families – she can help Omnia with this aspect of the research. We also have an extensive bibliography on Lebanese Youth.

Bibliography

Suad: All authors should continue to submit resources for inclusion in the bibliography until Volume I goes to print.

Martina: One way to keep on top of newly released material is to subscribe to Global Books in Print online, which will send you an email telling you when new books are released (it can filter by subject, so you can select only books related to “women” or “Egypt” for instance). Many journals have this feature, too. Barnes and Noble is another good resource for getting information from the Table of Contents for books.

Suad: For the Volume I bibliography, it is best not to categorize citations by subject matter [group present agrees]. Citations should be categorized by language, alternative sources (websites, non-print, etc.) and dissertations.

Webpage

Martina: Almost everyone has submitted their brief (one sentence) project description for the webpage, but it looks rather sparse. I would suggest we get more information from research groups, to make a better presentation of our work. We should try to have a full paragraph describing projects – this can evolve over time – and the paragraph descriptions would be used on the introduction page for each of the projects. Most of the projects are not comparative, they either focus on Egypt, Lebanon or Palestine. I would also suggest that for the February meeting, we discuss how to develop a thematic connection between the separate projects.

Suad: Our website should be ready for public viewing by February. It is important to get it up soon, so our funders can see some tangible results; it is a critical component for our funding.

[There is some group discussion of how to address the posting of website for group to see. There is consensus that it is not quite ready for the world to see.]

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Martina: I would like to post the material I have now. I can give the group notice that it will be posted, everyone can have a week to view it, and if there are complaints about content, I will disable it until it is ready for its official unveiling.

Suad: What else can go on the website? Some ideas that have come up are: a searchable bibliography; links to other websites – groups, institutions, issues, conferences etc.; books that become available for download or online viewing; news on Arabic Families (this would require an RA to compile and update information). ESCWA and GLIB have good resources on their websites, we can also link to their websites.

Hoda: Should there be an Arabic version of the Bibliography on the website?

[Group indicates agreement – it is a good idea.]

Human Subject Protocols

Suad: I still have not received everyone's certificates of completion for the Human subjects tutorial. These are needed in order to complete the renewal of our research protocol, which is overdue right now.

Suad: We need to create a consent form in Arabic, and will need to submit a waiver for instances when no signed consent form can be obtained. Consent forms will be kept in Davis in case of an audit.

Grants/Subcontracts

Suad: With regards to fund disbursement, Core Group members can be considered individual P.I.'s at their institutions for the purpose of getting their funds transferred from Suad to their individual institutions.

Hoda: We need to complete a working draft of a report on our research that we will submit to our funders. The deadline for the working draft is September 2005.

Suad: Yes, I must submit an official report by December 2005.

Hoda: Maybe by Fall 2006, a second volume will be finished.

Suad: Our grants formally expire in the Summer of 2006 (the money has to be spent by then); our granting agencies should agree to a no-cost extension, but that is not a guarantee. We need to be sure we deliver what we have promised, in addition to the research. This includes: a public webpage and facilitation of stakeholder meetings.

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Suad: I will check to see if the Core Group can use their own discretion for allocating funds (e.g., for buy-out, summer salary, research, etc.).

February Meeting Planning

Suad: The Core Group meeting is planned for February 3 & 4 (all day), and Feb. 5 (afternoon); The Stakeholder meeting will take place the morning of Feb 5. The meeting will be held in Cairo. The Cairo RA will help with the logistical arrangements for the meetings.

[The Group discusses stakeholder meeting details: We need to reach out to NGOs and scholars; one purpose is to disseminate AFWG research themes and to get feedback on the relevance of our research to the stakeholders; our presentation will be relatively formal with pre-meeting material provided and a discussion following the presentations. We shouldn't invite more than 15 stakeholders (the numbers of AFWG and stakeholders present at the meeting should be about equal).

Hoda: I will need help preparing the materials to provide stakeholders at meeting. We need to inform them why they are being invited to the meeting and why they should come.

Suad: We could go back to our proposals to clarify why we think stakeholders should be involved.

Zeina: We want them to come to the meeting to provide us with feedback on our research, but what can they give to us?

Suad: Suad and Hoda can write up a one-page document listing the expectations AFWG has of the stakeholders.

Hoda: The Stakeholders should be given time to present their issues to AFWG for feedback.

Suad: The different sections of the meeting should be arranged so that AFWG research and issues are presented, followed by the presentation(s) of Stakeholder issues, and finally a discussion amongst AFWG and the stakeholders.

Hoda: Suad should write a brief letter to invite stakeholders, circulate to the Core Group for comments, then give to Hoda for translation and distribution. ***This should be finished by Dec. 10*** Invitations will be mailed at the end of December.

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Suad: Prior to the February meeting, the researchers need to have their project ideas finalized, and a complete a written description about the project thesis, details, issues, etc.

Suad: For the Feb. meeting agenda, add: discussion of RA expectations/guidelines (including: how to use them/where they fit in, issues of authorship, different models across disciplines (Pop'n Council vs. a university system)). The protocols for RAs should be put in writing for future reference and to communicate to the RAs. The Group needs to have collective agreement about these issues.

Volume I Translation

Hoda: I would like to recommend Hela Kamel for the Volume I translation. Women and Memory cannot do the distribution. If we find a printer that will also do the distribution, we should go with that.

Zeina: El-Adab can publish, distribute and contract the translation; or we could contract Hela for the translation.

Suad: We need to decide this and begin to make the arrangements.

Hoda: Hela is happy to translate, but she wants to see a sample pf the text to know what it is like before she commits.

Zeina: The money is an issue, too. It may cost too much to do a separate translation.

Hoda: I will find out what Hela would charge.

Suad: We have about 300 pages of text, not including the bibliography. How much would Hela charge for translating 300 pages?

Hoda: We could recommend that el-Adab contract Hela as the translator.