

Arab Families Working Group

May 4, 2001

Cairo Workshop Report

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Welcome from Dr Suad Joseph, Convener

I. Welcome:

I would like to welcome all of you to the Arab Families Working Group Workshop. After working well over a year to arrive at this point, it is gratifying to be able to open the AFWG workshop. Especially, I would like to welcome and express our appreciation to our Palestinian and Lebanese participants, given the obstacles and difficulties that they had to overcome to be here today. Welcome and thank you.

Today's workshop is the outcome of the hard work and good support of many people and institutions.

Hosts:

First I would like to thank President John Gerhart and Provost Tim Sullivan of American University in Cairo for their institutional support and for Dr. Hoda Rashad, Director of the Social Research Center for hosting the first two days of the workshop.

Funders:

1. Dr. Rashad and SRC were among the first funders of the project. Other funders I must particularly thank are
2. The International Development Research Center, where Dr. Dina Craissati shepherded AFWG,
3. Population Council under Dr. Barbara Ibrahim,
4. Population Council's MEAwards under Dr. Ibrahim El Nur and
5. UNICEF, Cairo under Dr. Leila Bisharat and Dr. Malak Zaalouk's leadership.

The funders paid for the participants, material support for the workshop, and UNICEF paid for the Research Assistant, workshop report and its materials and supplies. MEAwards offered a three-year seed grant to move us forward. A number of the participants were funded by their own institutions, and I particularly want to thank them globally for offering that support.

Institute Assistants:

We had a number of assistants working in many capacities to prepare for this workshop.

1. The Population Council offered us the enormously helpful professional assistants of Moushira El Geziri, Nahed Sakr and Dalia Abdel Moneim.
2. Social Research Center allowed us to tap the professional skills of Gunilla Soliman. You have been in touch with most of them and know their help and experience was invaluable.

Research Assistants & Volunteers:

In addition we are enormously indebted to a number of AUC undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate research assistants and volunteers.

1. Nahla Zarroug, working under the UNICEF grant, has been hard at work since February of 2001 preparing the Research Bibliography, the Web Page, the Binders, other conference materials, and beginning to set up the Resource Library for AFWG. She put in many long days, especially over the past couple of weeks to finalize preparation.
2. Tonia Rifaey began working with me on this project Spring of 2000, researching and copying materials for the Research Bibliography. This year she volunteered to assemble the Project Bibliography -- a listing and actual copies of

reports by agencies of on-the-ground projects and programs carried out concerning Arab families, which we will have available in the Resource Library.

3. Khalid Dinnawi, my Research Assistant on the University of California / American University in Cairo collaborative initiatives has helped us with the Web Page, putting the binders together and many computer-related issues.

4. Ranya AbdelSayed, my Anthropology Research Assistant helped us in the crunch of putting the Binders together.

Program Committee:

Finally the Program committee began meeting in February to plan the workshop. We had many meetings with an incredibly diverse group that somehow managed one of the most congenial set of brainstorming sessions I have ever participated in. The Committee included: Dr. Soraya Altorki, Dr. Leila Bisharat, Dr. Dina Craissati, Dr. Barbara Ibrahim, Dr. Samia Mehrez, Dr. Hoda Rashad, Dr. Martina Rieker, Dr. Sahar Tawila, Dr. Malak Zaalouk and myself.

We could not have done this work without all of this help. So, let us give them a hand of applause!

II. History of the Arab Families Working Group:

The AFWG has a long history and a short history. The long history starts the 1970s when a group of anthropologists and historians met over a several year period in New York City to try to formulate new ways to look at Arab families in the context of world changes, wars, state formations, and revolutions, and violence. This stimulated, in the mid to late 1980s, a series of panels at the Middle East Studies Association on rethinking Arab families. The last panel led to the edited book which came out in 1999, Intimate Selving in Arab Families: Gender, Self and Identity, that includes some of the participants of this workshop.

Last year two, initially unrelated, conferences on Arab families were held, which became linked through exchanges of participants. The first, on Arab Family Histories, was organized by Beshara Doumani at UC Berkeley in April, 2000, and included a number of participants of this workshop. The conference papers will be published as a book later this year by the State University of New York Press. The second, on "The New Arab Family" was co-organized by Hoda Rashad, Nicholas Hopkins and myself in May 2000, at AUC included a number of the people at this workshop. It will be published by the Cairo papers and maybe submitted to Syracuse University Press.

The shorter history of AFWG overlaps with last year's work but begins when I proposed to the University of California an experiment with the Education Abroad Directorship which I have occupied for two years. I proposed the Director work for two years strengthening the relationship between the University of California and the American University Cairo around issues having to do with gender, family and children. UC agreed and President John Gerhart agreed. The Arab Families Working Group project emerged as one focus of the UC / AUC initiatives. This allowed us to encourage and partially fund the exchange of scholars between the two conferences on Arab families last year at the two universities.

Early in the Fall of 2001, Hoda Rashad of SRC and I met to discuss forming and funding a working group on Arab families and very shortly on Barbara Ibrahim, Leila Bisharat, Malak Zaalouk and Dina Craissati joined to participate in the Core

Group and fund the project. Initially the idea was a one-day workshop of 10-15 people, but that grew as we tapped into interest beyond our initial Core Group and the Core Group grew -- out of which came the Program Committee.

The idea which caught on was to bring together a network of scholars, policy makers and planners to dialogue and brainstorm about the current state of research and programming concerning Arab families. We are especially keen to focus on what we do not know and need to know about Arab families to produce more productive theory and more effective and wise policies and planning. We set about organizing dialogues to frame new agendas for research which could become the basis for policy-making and planning. We decided to begin the dialogue with a Core Group that is interdisciplinary; a Core Group brings together scholars, policy makers and planners; a Core Group anchored in Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt as a beginning country cases.

The hope is that out of three days of dialogue, we might find issues of common interest that we would like to continue working together on in various capacities. Towards that end, we have left as much time open for discussions, including Day Three which is largely devoted to identifying issues of common concern and brainstorming on whether and how to approach them together. We have left open the door to include other scholars, planners, and policy makers and other country cases.

UNICEF, Social Research Center, and Population Council MEAwards have funded us with a full time Research Assistant for the cumulative equivalent of almost one full year to help us write research proposals and plan. The President and Provost of The American University have offered us an office for AFWG for next year. The University of California has loaned us computer equipment and staff support to do budgeting and accounting. So we are here to begin our dialogue.

III. What AFWG is Not, Cautions:

It might be useful to identify a few cautions to keep before us as we begin our discussion. 1. The "family" is not a substitute term for "women". Studying families entails studying men as well as women, boys as well as girls.

2. AFWG as a project is not an effort to "put" women back into the family. Nor can we assume that one can understand women only through the lens of "family". Women and men need to be studied where ever they are located, in their own terms, and in terms of the structures and processes in which they are situated -- of which families are one.

3. AFWG is not an effort to sanctify or resanctify the "Arab" family. I don't think we are interested in romancing the family, nostalgia acting as research, or "preserving" or "creating" some notion of the "ideal" Arab family.

IV. What Does AFWG Aim to Do:

1. AFWG is concerned to go beyond myths, metaphors and ideologies about "the" Arab family held by social scientists, policy makers, planners, or in popular culture in order to uncover the lived realities of people on the ground.

2. AFWG aims to study Arab families, in their multiple presentations and representations. We can begin by deessentializing the notion that there is "an" Arab family, by acknowledging the reality and possible functionality of multiple family forms; by situating families in the context of class, religion, region, ethnic groups, rural/urban environments, nations, and states.

3. At the same time, it is important to devote careful thought and work to finding whether there maybe commonalities across class, religion, region, ethnic groups, rural/urban environments, nations, and states. How can these commonalities be explained. Do they affect women and men, girls and boys differently? Are they historically recent? Are these commonalities shared by similar classes, religions, regions, ethnic groups... etc, in other parts of the world?

4. We need also to take account of the transformative impact of global forces, of markets, of wars and violence, of human migrations, of changing production and consumption patterns, the impact of traffic in ideas through popular cultures world wide -- and the diverse ways in which families as collectivities, and members of families as persons respond, resist, act in relationship to these constitutive dynamics.

V. Why a Working Group on Arab Families?

A. Day One Themes

These comments might naturally us to ask why then focus on Arab families, as opposed to other structures or critical lens on Arab societies?

1. First, many of us in this room, and in the field, have assumed the family is at the center of Arab societies. Much of the literature, and much of what policy makers and planners do seems to be premised on the notion that family structure, family dynamics, family relationships, family metaphors, and family idioms weave into or underwrite many structures and processes in politics, economy, religion, society, and culture. But is this so? What are other centers of social action that critically require attention? Does the centering of "the family" deflect analysis of critical social processes? Our first Dialogue critically assesses this notion of the family as center of social action.

2. Second, in the area of literature, art, music, theater, movies, and popular culture in Arab societies, family is a central theme, a critical metaphor, an on-going subject of representation. Through the lens of family, much is told in Arab families in the diverse fields of cultural studies and cultural representation. How are families represented in these cultural forms? Are these myths or do cultural forms more effectively debunk the myths of "the" Arab family? How do these representations of "the" Arab family interface with the identities Arab persons carry of and with themselves? How is the self represented in these cultural forms? How have political, economic, and social developments in the region affected the representations of Arab families. This is the topic of Dialogue II.

3. The Arab region is in and has been for some time in the throes of massive transformations resulting from urbanization, wars, displacements, migrations, forced migrations, the development of squatter settlements, peace building, transformation and uprooting of rural populations. Through all this, scholars, policy makers and planners constantly ask how does "the" family respond or what is the impact on "the" family, or try to help persons in and through their "family." Dialogue III looks at the spatial contexts of Arab families. How do spatial environments produce family forms? If space is a matrix of social action, how can the spatial environment present constraints which impact on family forms.

4. To deessentialize "the" family, we have to enter into its interior life. Power is a key factor shaping the interior life of family organization, relations, psychologies, emotionalities. In Dialogue IV, we will focus on the structures, dynamics, and cultures of gender and power in Arab families. What are the changing patterns of family relations in specific classes, countries, regions, and in Arab societies in general? How do Arab families redefine gender roles, age-based roles, to respond to

external and internal pressures stemming from the expectations, perceptions, and realities of their members and the outside society?

5. The interior of family life is identified with children and child socialization perhaps more than any other subject. Dialogue IV will consider how children are raised in Arab families, and the interface of family forms and the multiple institutions which support and compete with families to socialize children. How do families address the needs of children physically, emotionally, socially, psychologically -- how do policy makers and planners address these needs? What is needed for culture and gender sensitive approaches to children, children's socialization, and the ideas of children's rights? What are the relevant notions of the child? the self? the individual? in relationship to the "familial" in Arab societies?

6. Dialogue IV pulls us into the public arena of the interface of families and state, law and public policy. How do processes such as infitah, privatization of schools and health issues, the generation of a body of international law on human rights impact Arab families? To what extent do states systematically try to regulate and police families? How does law become an instrument to discipline families as well as an instrument families, religious institutions, and others may use against the state? How do families respond to or resist the strategies of the state monitored through law, policy, and programming?

B. Day Two Country Cases

While these themes will allow us to both center and decenter Arab families, we want to ground all this analysis in specific country cases. We have taken Palestine, Lebanon, and Egypt as specific cases to scour for these issues. These are only to begin our dialogue, not as the test or limit of the dialogues. Day Two will focus on these three cases.

C. Policy Makers Planners.

It is important to this workshop that we bridge the dialogues between policy makers, planners and scholars. The morning of Day Three is dedicated to that.

IV. Where do we go from here as AFWG: What will AFWG Become?

So after all our dialogues where do we go from here?

1. The end of Day Two we will try to identify the key issues which have emerged as critical to our dialogues.

2. On Sunday, we will break up into self-identified work teams to focus on how we might proceed to develop projects related to these issues.

3. Then we will regroup as a committee of the whole and discuss the possibilities of collective initiatives and the kind of planning we would like to see as a follow up to these three days, if there is interest in proceeding as a working group. I am more delighted than I can express to have you assembled around these issues of mutual concern and so now we welcome and we begin the Dialogues!

Dialogue I: “The Arab Family” as the Center of Social Action: Critiques

Chair Introduction: Suad Joseph

The notion that the family is the center of social action in Arab states has become almost axiomatic. Indeed, I have, in my research, for years, strongly argued that it is the center of social action in Lebanon. To critically rethink this proposition requires laying out the argument that makes that notion so compelling in the first instance, and then evaluating the evidence for or logic of the argument.

Logic of Argument for Family as Center of Social Action:

The idea that the family is the center of social action is based on both negative and positive arguments/evidence. The "negative" arguments detail what is "not" the center of social action and, by default, conclude what must be the center of Arab societies. The "positive" arguments document the effective uses of family structures, family relations, family moralities, and family idioms as evidence of its centrality to the operation of other social structures and cultures in Arab societies. The negative and positive arguments are integrally connected sets of logic and evidence revolving around assessments of the competitive and constitutive relationships among critical social forms. Invariably, in Arab countries, these forms are the set of social arrangements which organize state, class, religious communities, ethnic groups, and family systems. [I will not discuss the distinction between the terminology of "kinship" and "family" here.]

While gender is critical to all such analyses, rarely is it considered, by social scientists (particularly of Arab societies), to organize social groups in such a manner as to render it a relatively autonomous and therefore a "competitive" social organizational category. Feminist social theorists have argued for a quarter of a century that gender/sex/sexuality are relatively autonomous systems, to be analyzed on par with political, economic, and social organizational systems. Alternatively, they have argued that gender is so implicated in and mutually constitutive of other social arrangements that social analyses must always factor for gender. Social scientists, particularly of Arab countries, however, tend not to think of gender as organizing "collectivities" which could potentially "act" in the manner of state, class, religion, or family -- and therefore to set into motion "communities" which may organizational compete with other "communities" formed by state, class, religion, family. I take exception to this common argument, even in Arab societies. Nevertheless, I will, for the purpose of teasing out the delimiters of the "family as center of social action" argument as it presents itself in the literature on Arab societies, bracket gender and focus on state, class, religious communities, and ethnic groups as alternative centers of social action. Similarly, race, though certainly a social issue in Arab countries, is rarely considered to organizing collectivities. Though race, too, merits its own discussion, I will bracket for the moment.

Negative Argument:

The default argument supporting family as the center of social action in Arab countries is based on a series of logical and evidence-based arguments documenting

the inefficacy of or constraints against other social forms: state, class, religion, ethnicity.

The State as Center of Social Action: The arguments against the state as the center of social action often raise the "externality" of the state as an issue. These scholars contend that most Arab states were constructed, in this century, by imperial/colonial powers, over boundaries and sets of peoples who had little or no historical precedents as separate political entities. As a result, the "organic" connection between the state and society, or at least a ruling sector of society was not as common an experience in Arab states. Despite the fact that most of these states have now minimally half a century of autonomy, many scholars argue the many states remain external to their societies. They remain external because they, at best, represent only a small wing of society. Or they remain external because they are so exploitative of their citizens that they are able to retain control only through technologies of oppression - thus lacking legitimacy. The absence of civil society, oppositional political parties, free press, genuine political participation, or broad-based social programs which mobilize citizenry is cited as the critical evidence. Even in societies where the state has been attempted to effect social mobilizational programs, such as Egypt or Iraq, the state remains external to these scholars, either because it is considered unreliable (inefficient), or it is feared. While the state as center of social action argument has its proponents, few scholars argue that family has been displaced. Even in oil-producing states in which the state has become the hyper-benefactor, scholars, nevertheless describe these states as family-based or tribally based (I take tribally based societies to be organizationally linked to family-based). In general in this argument, the state cannot be trusted, is not trusted, and thus family remains the security net, the focus of identity and loyalty and the key to social action.

Class as Center of Social Action: Arguments against class as the center of social action note that scholars often find themselves stretching to use the category of "class", in the Marxist sense (a systematic relationship to the means of production), to describe Arab societies. Some scholars do argue the centrality of class, though they often suggest the instability of class formations, the difficulty of ascertaining class parameters, and the problems of precise analysis which allows a predictive framework using class. Even these scholars try to accommodate their class analysis to local peculiarities of family, tribe, religion, ethnicity. Some scholars prefer to use the terms elites, or ruling elites, ruling blocs, fractions. The recency and volatility of economic systems and the apparent dislocation or disconnect of social arrangements which should mutually constitute economy and society in the region (especially in oil producing countries) have left some social scientists hanging on to categories such as "traditional" to describe social organization while grasping at terms like "dual" economies to conceptualize internal differentiations. Some scholars prefer social analysis derived from dependency theories, or globalization theories, which either situate social organization passively in relation to larger world forces or mutually constitutive of them. In the social analyses which effectively document class (for example, Hanna Batatu on Iraq), family and tribe are still centers of social action. In the argument against class as the center of social action, coherent classes are said to be frail at best, and still cross-cut by family/tribe to compromise the robustness of class analysis.

Religious/ethnic Communities as Centers of Social Action: The arguments against religious/ethnic communities as center of social action in Arab countries focus on the constantly historically changing natures of what is and who is a religious or ethnic community and whether they concretely represent "interests" of collectivities. Who is Christian or Muslim, or who counts as Sunni or Shi'a, or who is an Armenian, or a Kurd, or a Copt, or a Maronite and how does their being "that" "explain" their behavior, their mentalities, their interests in a manner that can be offered to explain social events or social structures is asked by the critiques of religion/ethnicity as centers of social action in Arab countries. Historical accounts abound with case studies of events organized around religiously or ethnically defined groupings in the Arab region. The classic mosaic theory of Arab societies, bolstered by Orientalist scholars, Weberian scholars, Gellnerian scholars, center stage these groupings. Critiques of these arguments emerged from local level studies in which the coherency of identity or interest was found to dissolve on closer inspection and from macro studies which argued the situationally shifting political and historical constructedness of these "collectivities" left them, in some sense, devoid of enduring "content". Scholars again and again have found religion and ethnicity to overlay or be underwritten by "something else" -- class, tribe, or family, depending on the scholar or the context. The recent rise of Islamist movements has again center staged the argument of religion as the center of social action. Proponents of this argument observe the systematic efforts by Islamist movements to displace not only family and tribe, but class and state. Critics of this newer argument note the small numbers of these groups, the forces arrayed against them, or even argue that these movements are not about "Islam" as a religion, but about competition with the state for power by a political movement. To the degree that these movements do try to or succeed in displacing family, class and/or state, they indeed become important forces to be reckoned with theoretically and practically.

Positive Arguments:

The positive arguments in favor of family as the center of social action draw upon the default arguments above, but proceed to focus on how family structures, family relations, family moralities, and family idioms penetrate and imbue social systems, social actions, and local cultures in Arab societies. These scholars argue that it is difficult to analyze Arab societies without not only factoring in family, but center-staging family. States, they contend, are often family operations (at times tribes, which I here discuss in family terms). Among these they include not only the kingdoms (Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, the Gulf sultanates) which are overtly organized by family lineages, but also many of the so-called "republics" in which son succeeds father in leadership positions or brother allies with brother or other family to form ruling blocs (Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt). In these case, families "rule". Whether families "rule" or not, these scholars argue, family relations always penetrate political, economic, religious and social spheres. The "boundary" between "public/private" or "public/domestic" is fluid as states regulate "families" or family relations and expectations are transported into state matters or economic matters, and the like. Persons expect their family members to privilege their family relations and take care of family "business" regardless of where they are located. The patron/client structure of many Arab states pivots, to some degree, on "actual" family relations or the use of family "idioms" to cement political relations. Public officials and bureaucrats are expected to use their positions to "take care of their families", bring their families into government or bring government resources and services to their

families. In the market place, many businesses are family owned or employ family members or use family to recruit labor. The morality of family often informs the employer/employee relationships such that employers are often expected to "take care" of their workers as extended family relatives and workers are expected to do the "extra" that one does for family leaders. The idioms of family constantly circulate in society, according to these scholars, so that heads of state are likened to heads of families; bosses become fathers or family elders; friends become brothers and sisters; even strangers on the street become "uncle" or "brother" or "grandmother" or "sister". The deployment of family terminology as idioms of relationships attaches the morality of family to those relationships, evoking the sense of both familial entitlement and responsibilities. Some argue that the notion of self shaped and conditioned in Arab family systems, requiring and eliciting the continual connectedness with significant others, has mutually constituted notions of citizenship, political rights and responsibilities, political practices, and state forms. For these scholars, there is no escaping family in Arab societies. Or more positively put, few want to escape family. While some who argue the family is the center of social action may do so from a "romance" of the family, others suggest that though many families may be, in practice, abusive, oppressive, dysfunctional, there are as yet few social alternatives to family forms of affiliation. That is, they argue that the family is the center of social action, not necessarily to advocate it, but to reckon with this social force and call for its closer examination.

Critique of Family as the Center of Social Action:

To effectively rethink the argument that the family is the center of social action in Arab countries, I have outlined above the basis of some of the key arguments which support this notion. While I have been one of the proponents of the above position, it was less by advocacy and more by desire for critical inquiry of why this should be so and what are the consequences of its being so. But before that critical inquiry can be undertaken, we must first ask, is it in fact the case that the family is the center of social action?

Is the Family the Center of Social Action: To pursue this question, I might identify a line of inquiry. I would suggest research which interrogates the current categories of social analysis -- almost wholesale imported from Western social theory -- for their capacity to capture realities on the ground in Arab societies. It would then be useful to consider whether other categories are productive of insights. This should be followed by analysis of local discourses, not only of scholars and scholarship, but of people "on the ground" to identify how they understand their own social organization, their social arrangements, their social relationships, their cultures and moralities. While none of the outcome of these inquiries can stand on their own, they would hopefully inform more critical theory.

If It Is, Why Is IT: If the family is the center of social action, we need to more rigorously inquire why this is so. Is it the center because of the failure/weakness of other systems of social organization? Is it the center because of the "persistence" of "pre-modern" forms? Is it the center because it is a "modern" form? Is this an outcome of "globalization"? Is it the center because it offers to its members resources, services, identities, emotionalities, domains of experience not offered elsewhere? Is it the center because it is consistent with and helps to reproduce

political/economic organization? Is there something specifically "Arab", or "Muslim", "Middle Eastern", or Third World about this?

If It IS, What Are the Consequences: If family is the center of social action, we need to rigorously research the consequences of this social reality. What does this mean for women? for children? for men? for the state? for economy? for religious communities? for "development?" Is this to be supported? Is it to be transformed?

I would like to introduce the two speakers for dialogue I, Dr Soraya Altorki and Dr Dina Craissaati. Dr Soraya Altorki is an anthropologist at the American University in Cairo, Dr Dina Craissati is a political economist who is an independent consultant and has been very active for many years in the region on issues of development and peace making especially in areas related to gender.

Presenter I: Soraya Altorki, “Literature on the Family”

First, I will give a brief description of the literature that we have on the Arab family, and then suggest some questions that we can pursue for future research. When we talk of the literature on the Arab family, I am personally familiar with the Arabic and English literature. Most of the Arab writings in the field of the family in the last 10-15 years have been very rich in descriptive material and they have looked at things like the definitions of the Arab family, and the spillover of the family level phenomena like power into the political realm. They also talk about what happens to the family when the husband or father migrates for work and the effect of this particularly on the adolescents and the arising phenomena of the use of drugs. Of equal importance has been the attention of scholarship on the role of women as heads of households in the absence of their husbands.

The Western literature on the Arab family in the last decade has seen the contribution of historians, as well as social scientists, and has been largely theoretically driven. It has covered a broad range of topics ranging from linkages between families and say citizenships, and linkage to the economy, to larger social institutions such as schools, businesses, neighborhood associations, charitable societies and the like. On the whole Western language literature argues for the centrality of the family on these other arenas of social life, as does some of the Arabic literature. A critically significant point derived from this literature is that no single pattern or model applies to the Arab family, and this sensitivity to the diversity of the family structure is no doubt related to the dissatisfaction with earlier research that has tended to essentialize the family, particularly in relation to Islam. Consequently in recent literature, there is the emphasis that family conveys different meanings to different actors in different social contexts, and as these social contexts continue to change, particularly in combination with macro-social changes, family members will react differently to these various pressures.

On a different line, feminist literature has been especially rich in its contribution to the study of the Arab family and has benefited in general from other feminist literature from different parts of the world. This literature takes the view that the family is a social construction that basically serves a political agenda. In other words it becomes, in the interest of the State and its elaboration of the national project, to project a certain conception of the family and to socialize its population in that conception for purposes of mobilizing support for its policies. The implication of such research is that once the people see through the State's manipulation, they will

come up with solutions independent of the State, and these will reduce the paternalistic surveillance of the State, or State control.

Family scholarship has also been very sophisticated in looking at some of the implications of patriarchy, particularly the work of Dr. Suad Joseph on the psychodynamic, social and cultural processes of patriarchy. I say this not because she is my friend, but because this has become a trend in following the analysis of patriarchy. However, this literature does not have an optimistic view of the family. It does not see that there is the promise of emancipation, so to speak.

On the other hand, there is a growing body of literature, that in view of the rapid changes that are now impacting on the Arab world, show that there is a tendency to escape from these pressures and to achieve re-traditionalization. I am not speaking of the romanticizing of the family, but I am speaking of real problems that drive people back to the security and the support that families can provide. We have seen this happen in societies like Egypt where, because of State restructuring, families have gone back to family bonds that were earlier weakened.

Let me now throw some ideas on the questions of research. As we have seen families have been criticized by scholars for contributing to alienation, but they have also been praised by other scholars for providing indispensable functions hence, their resilience. One can agree that when studying the family one should avoid preconceived ideas and instead start from the meaning people attribute to such groups. But should one still pursue such sub-textual issues as whether or not the family is an oppressive institution, as much feminist literature seems to suggest? If the answer is yes, then scholars must ask why people still maintain their commitment to the family? One can also reverse this question and raise the issue of whether the family is the object of oppression or at least surveillance of the State. Thus, an intrusive State interested in its own development policies may introduce into the family social workers, health officials, educational counselors, and the like, ostensibly to deliver certain services, but with the effect of causing concern or fear in the family members. I suggest that future research needs to explore the State-family relationship in greater depth. For example, how do States reflect the interests of the ruling class in projecting a certain image of the family?

Relatedly, in what way do States act independently of the ruling class in promoting the State's own version of the proper model of the family? As, for example, what happened in Egypt under president Nasser. How do families, endowed with agency, take initiatives to hold off intrusive States? Where does agency reside in the family? Can the State, in the Arab world, do a better job than families in the delivery of certain services?

In addressing such questions, we would do well to recall that States are not monolithic, so families would vary with how they will deal with such intrusive States. There is another point that we may think of exploring here, and that has to do with the concept exchange in the analysis of the family. In general this has not been done in the study of the Arab family. By this I mean that we look at the processes of exchange that are internal to the family as well as those that link the family to other institutions in the society. The kinds of things that may be exchanged by family members range from information to indebtedness, from offers of allegiance to demands of accountability and responsibility, from presents to censure. In what way do certain kinds of exchange, among family members, alter or reinforce the relationship between them? And how do these exchanges contribute to the resilience of the family as an institution in Arab society?

Presenter II: Dina Craissati

I am going to depart from different assumptions, from what I would call new social and socio-political spaces which have slowly but forcefully emerged in the late 80's and 90's and which have demonstrated concrete potential in shaping social and societal action and change, both in the Arab world as well as worldwide. These processes include the defiance of family dynamics and moralities as well as State power and public policy. I would like to make two points.

First, if our aim in this workshop is to reach out to policy makers to initialize programs on social development, democratization, gender equality and peace building then I think it is important to adopt a political approach which not only deessentialises the concept of the Arab family, but which connects it to broader societal endeavors and conflicts for social change, justice and emancipation. In this regard, we cannot put the family as the center of analysis.

The second point relates to what we mean by social action? I would like to give an understanding that goes beyond two things, that is that social action is not individualized, atomic action within a status quo and within a stabilized, homogenized, integrated family and community, and that it is also not a rational, strategic, instrumental pursuit of particular interest, but it is more importantly a process of identity and cultural production, individual or collective, of social relations between actors around power and normative orientations. I think that social action in the Arab world should be look at within the contemporary and growing drive and capacity of citizens to become agents of change, to be more autonomous, critical, to be able to filter information, and not only react and readjust but, also to act and create, and to make better decisions that are related to their lives.

I would like to argue that there are spaces within Civil Society where democracy is learned and practiced, that is within the NGO's, associations, charitable organizations etc., through debate, interactions, tensions, struggles and conflicts in relationships with others.

I think that many of us have been very active within these spaces and there do exist concrete spaces in the Arab world where ruptures with fundamental societal orientations are established, like, patriarchal family moralities and gender inequalities. These are spaces where the forms and the regulatory mechanisms of societal control are unmasked and challenged, where new cultural and socio-political identities are reconstructed and created, where individuals learn to define and articulate everyday issues related to education, culture, health, reproduction, ecology, economic self help and where they learn to give meaning to social action. There are also spaces where new forms of associations and organizations are replacing tribal and family organic solidarities and patron-client networks, where people learn about the democratization of everyday life, where they learn about new forms of responsibility, modes of organization, models of behavior, and also where resources such as power and know how are made accessible, where individuals connect to the State, where conflicts with the State are channeled, social debates are brought up on the political agenda, where people are protected from the intrusion of the State and also, where the welfare functions of the State have been replaced.

To conclude, I would suggest that we can only view the weaving of the family dynamics, and moralities into politics and economics as part of a complex web where other new and modern forms of organization and forms of socialization as well as struggles, are increasingly drawing in and competing for centrality. I would also like

to say that it would be groundbreaking if these forms of struggles are integrated within the themes that we are discussing in this workshop, such as Child Rearing, Gender Issues, State and Law, and Peace Building.

Discussions for Dialogue I:

Penny Johnson to Dina Craissati

Because we come from a place [Palestine] where we now have a very sobering view of these spaces opened by Civil Society, and what they can or cannot do and for the 5 or 6 years of very active intervention of NGO's, I think that we have now realized that NGO's neither make up a social movement nor do they make up a political movement.

I think that what Dina Craissati said about the integration is very important because the family is also the center where people articulate needs and interests at a level that in many NGO movements are not necessarily addressed and are in fact, at times, addressed by political movements.

So if we see this keyword "Social" as a way of making these needs and interests become public, I think that we have to find other types of integrative structures, because I believe that it is not enough to use a Civil Society paradigm. There is something about the needs and interests of people, as they see and experience them in the family and in everyday reality, that is not addressed in the types of spaces that you have been talking about. We saw all those openings close, like a series of doors, as soon as political conflict arose.

Malak Zaalouk

I think this was a very interesting beginning. I just want to say I beg to differ on what Penny Johnson was saying. I see that these spaces as being extremely significant and in fact, this is an area which has very little documentation or research done on it, and I think we should not make broad generalizations on it.

I also think that what Dina Craissati is saying, is extremely significant in terms of the forces of change, and not only in Civil Society. I think that the tenacity of the family is beginning to falter. I would also like to add another comment, I realize that we have to have both a class and regional perspective, but we also have to look at the rural divide and a number of other issues.

Yes, structural adjustment and the kinds of globalization elements that have taken place, have had various impacts on the family, that need to be looked at further. I would like to share with you a little anecdote that I think will complement what Dina Craissati was saying.

We are now in the middle of a very politicized meeting on an issue concerning the program [UNICEF] in which a mother and daughter are both involved. They are both in a high-level, political, decision-making position within Civil Society. It is an interesting story because it shows the reality that is now emerging. This is a mother with eight children, who has a kind of traditional family structure. Both the mother and daughter are debating an issue where the daughter has complete allegiance to an ideological faction of that particular movement, which has severed from her mother's faction.

I feel that this kind of situation needs further analysis. We can look at the mother-daughter relationship from a psychological point of view, as well as a number of other issues. However, what is interesting in this case is the complete lack of compromise for the other's views, on both the side of the mother and the daughter.

Martina Rieker

I do wonder if certain sorts of local development and politics may be very important. Taking the example of the Palestinian case again, I feel that we should look at the issue of funding and the ways in which the funding for dialogue was launched in the post-Oslo period. In this period, a lot of groups received money for dialogue, and as this dialogue money dried up a new kind of funding was initiated which can be seen as more democratic.

The spaces that Dina Craissati mentioned are very relevant in this case. Democratic training takes place in these indigenous political spaces as people try to manipulate or manage new kinds of donor sensibilities.

Eileen Kuttab

In the context of Palestine, one of the problems that we have with this funding issue, is the institutionalization of power. We always think of the pre-Oslo period as a time of decentralization of power. This decentralization was very important in the distribution of power because it opened up the chance for gender equality.

I believe that the post-Oslo period, has expressed a kind of sober attitude and we have lost that space when power became institutionalized for funding. Funding for NGO's stopped for a while and so funding was channeled through the State. When the funders realized that the results of this were not what they expected nor were they effective, they started a program of restructuring policies and NGO's were given some of the funding.

Also, we find that the social movements, like the women's and student's movements, that had been powerful in the pre-Oslo period, were now unable to restructure themselves in the post-Oslo period. As a result of this, movements like the gender movement lost the most. Concerning this loss of power and influence there are two levels of analysis that we can talk about, the micro and the macro levels. It is in the macro level that women have lost more. The reason for this is because in the pre-Oslo period the PLO groups did have women representatives, even though most of them were marginalized, but they were at least there. Now, the circle of power is narrowing to a level where class is more vocal and so women lose more.

Afaf Meleis:

Why did this come about?

Why did inequality come out in post-Oslo?

Eileen Kuttab response to Afaf Meleis:

I could say that this is because the government that has taken control has institutionalized power and has limited it to a certain elite. Another question we can ask ourselves is about the elite, and who are the elite?

Malak Zaalouk

I wanted to reemphasize the paradox, in that in one hand there is the reinforcement of the family because of the decline or weakening of the State. This is because people will have to fall back onto family support and family ties. There is also the fact that as the State weakens, there develop spaces in the public arena, which are being filled in by Civil Society and other groups, and these spaces become the area where these groups develop social action. So this is a transitional period that needs to be studied further.

Rabab Abdulhadi

What I was wondering was if we could look at the Arab families in diaspora? And how do you deal with the State especially in a place where there is a big space in the Civil Society. I would like to give an example of what I mean. In the United States there is the issue of how the Arab family is represented and how it represents itself. There is this static representation of the Arab family but there is also the issue of how members of the Arab families represent themselves. This is where the ideas of safeguarding the culture comes up. On one hand this may be a positive thing, but it may also prevent the protection of certain family member's rights. For example, when a father or brother kills a young woman because of family honor. I feel that we have to figure out and analyze this issue. Also, what do we think when the State comes in to support the woman because it is her right as an individual, atomized person? At the same time we have all these stereotyping of the Arab family and the Arab culture. There is the right of the family in trying to prevent the intrusion of the State into family business while the State has the right to protect the individual along its citizenship mechanism.

There is a recent story, in the United States, where this lesbian Jordanian woman was kidnapped by her father, mother and two brothers and was told to leave her girlfriend.

Also in 1989, there was a Palestinian father who stabbed his daughter to death while the mother held the daughter's hands behind her back. How do we analyze such a complicated web of relations? How do we deal with it in terms of policy? And what policies can we try to initiate to help in these kinds of situations?

This is a situation where the State as a psycho-actor, and the family as a psycho-actor come into conflict. We may be able to come up with a solution in our small "safe-space" at the Social Research Center, but how can we deal with this outside our group?

Barbara Ibrahim

Rabab Abdulhadi's comments and others, have touched on the issue of emotionality and the fact that the family has always been seen as the locus of our emotionality. The family was always cherished, and it was where anger and passion were allowed to run their course.

We need to make problematic, whether or not the family is the only locus for emotions, and is the reason why Civil Society has been so satisfying to some of us because it has allowed us to express feelings and emotionality?

I want to echo Penny Johnson's caution about the promise of some of these spaces, and I think that what she is saying is not that we think they do not exist or have potential but that the frailty of these has spaces has been exposed recently, and not just in Palestine.

I wish that Dina Craissaati, because she gave a rather generic integration of all this, could give us a few hopeful concrete examples.

Soraya Altorki response

There is a point of clarification that I want to make. It seems from the comments just made that there is an implied opposition between family and Civil Society and I wonder if that is where we are going? We need to clarify this point.

I want to go back to what Rabab Abdulhadi said. There is this "other" abroad that has a claim to Arabness somehow, and this calls for an analytical perspective to

see what happens within families. I see there are other people who are interested in this issue, like Nadine Naber, and I feel that this group can benefit from their input. There is one thing that I think we need to clarify. When I was thinking of the family, I was not thinking of the family as this opposition to what we are loosely calling, Civil Society. Also, it is true that generational and ideological differences do occur within the family, but does this in anyway reduce the support that the family supplies? For example, we all know cases where there would be problems between the father and son, but the father would still support the son financially or otherwise. The ideological differences that do exist may establish distance or space between family members, where each would grow independently, but this would neither sever familial relations nor remove support mechanisms when needed.

Dina Craissati response

What I was meaning to say about the role of Civil Society, was that there are certain elements within Civil Society where democracy is practiced, and these compete with other elements that are authoritarian, and the family could be one of these elements. I have pushed for this but I have meant it within a web of relations where sometimes these elements are present or they fade and so are not so obvious. I have been very amazed with the Palestinian case because I think they have produced the most interesting models but at the same time they have been very severe in criticizing their accomplishments. This may be because they expected Civil Society to be the national movement that would take over the State.

Turning to Barbara Ibrahim's question. You all must have heard of these cases where village house workers and village women have been active in local organizations. These women have been very active in these organizations and they have asserted themselves and have been able to go back to their families and defy authoritarian relations. This means that change has occurred. This change is neither obvious nor widespread, but the change is there and we should encourage these groups no matter how rare they are.

If we look at the case of Egypt, in spite of the intrusion of the State in the Civil Society change is occurring. An example of this are the community schools in the rural areas, where rural village women have asserted themselves and are now teaching in these schools. This is taking place in a country where authority is still very centralized.

I think the examples are abundant but the problem is that they have not been researched, and research about Civil Society has been very descriptive. There has been very little on how Civil Society has contributed to democratization, and this I feel needs to be studied.

Afaf Meleis

I have several thoughts and comments to make. Concerning the idea of the Arab family in the United States, I do not believe that we can say there is such a model. There is a lot of diversity and there are different paradigms that govern the Arab family in the United States, and very little research has been done on the Arab family in the United States. We will find that the Egyptian family is different from the Palestinian family and the Yemeni Family. So we cannot really use the term "The Arab Family" without mentioning the nationality or origin.

Secondly, most of these Arab families in the United States still live with the idea that the 'family' in their home country is the same as they left it thirty years

before. They do not realize that there have been changes. The result of this is that they end up maintaining habits of reaction that no longer apply in their home country.

Also, the relationship between the family and the Civil Government is very problematic. In one way they are totally not fond of each other and are usually in conflict when it comes to issues that concern the rights of women and children. The family usually wants to keep its traditional rules and regulations when it comes to deal with the rights of women and children while the Civil Government does not believe that this belongs to the family.

What is interesting is the issue is health care. In the media, the Arab family is portrayed as the model for the health care system, because the Arab family takes good care of its sick and the health care system wants to turn care giving over to the family.

So there is a very paradoxical relationship between the Arab family and the Civil Government. In the United States, the State takes over the educational concerns, while in countries like Egypt this is still a family concern.

Ibrahim Elnur

I have one small comment to make. How do we see the State abandoning its responsibilities? And how does this affect the family structure? Would this lead to the increase in family cohesion? My guess, which is not based on any research just that on forced migration, would be that it would lead to the cohesion or re-traditionalization of the family structure and the turn back to the extended family for support. This is an important issue and I feel that it needs further research.

The second issue, that Dina Craissati has already mentioned, is the definition of the term Civil Society. How do we define Civil Society? How do NGO's fit into Civil Society? This issue comes to my mind because I was just in Teheran, where a lot of emphasis is put on NGO's in the process of democratization and the Civil Society is completely ignored.

Penny Johnson

I would like to talk about the issue of the opposition between the Civil Society and the family. I do not believe that they are in opposition or in separate corners, but I think the problem is that we do not take into account how destabilized families really are. In the course of our discussions we have mentioned this in a number of ways, for example the retreat of the State or re-traditionalization. This destabilization can occur at many levels including in times of profound crisis and in people's gender roles and their ability to meet family responsibility. I do not think that we can entirely address these kinds of destabilization in terms of NGO frames; there is something beyond that.

Nadine Naber

I want to make two points. The first is about the Arab family in the United States and the link between the State and the family. One way to look at this is to look at the pressure from the United States government, linking on what Rabab Abdulhadi said, and what Afaf Meleis said about the re-traditionalization of the ideal family values.

The pressure comes from the United States government on new immigrants to affiliate into this certain American ideal of what it means to be an American. This puts a lot of pressure on the family and the members of the family to forget their history and culture while in the United States, so that tense relations between the State and the family is produced. I think this needs to be put into consideration when we ask why

there is this strong pressure from the family members in the United States to maintain the ideal of 'bint-arab' or 'ibn-arab'.

I think that it is important to link this discussion with the Arab families in the Arab countries. Also how can we link what is happening to Arab families in the diaspora to families in the Arab countries? I think that this link would be where Malak Zaalouk said, about issues of globalization. And I think that adding this to our workshop research would be exciting for the research on the Arab family.

Rabab Abdulhadi

On the question of globalization and information technology, I think we need to remind ourselves that there have always been means of communication. I know that it has accelerated but the means have been there. I am always cautious in analysis and in saying that things are completely new.

Secondly, we need to figure out when there is a change, and what that change is? How much of a change is going on? Where is it happening? What is new about the change? We need to ask ourselves these questions because at times we get caught up in the networks of things and we forget about the continuity of things.

Martina Rieker

I would like to look at NGO's and State relations. One example to throw out are the Gender training program in rural Egypt. I think these are interesting sites where the rural girls are being taught ways in which to use the State and the rights granted to them by the State. In some ways they are quite emancipatory projects, but at the same time they are taking place under the auspices of an authoritarian State, which now comes with the image as that which will rescue you. To complicate matters I would like to say that this is a very successful project but it troubles a lot of the categories that we have been talking about.

Suad Joseph

One thing that has come up a lot is the question of our categories. Why is it that a particular kind of behavior or relationship gets talked about as family in some contexts but gets called something else say politics, in another arena and yet the behaviors and idioms that motivate it, or energize it, could look pretty much the same?

Also, to talk about Civil Society, NGO's or the State in itself is a political question and represents a political project, a moral project, and an ideological project to our collective endeavors, and I think it would be very useful for us in our minds to dissect our own political, moral, and ideological projects.

I bring this up because I was very surprised and delighted, in the incredible reaction this project got. My history with this project goes back twenty-five years. Why do we have such a reaction now? Why at this time? Why, in the context of the political forces that have aligned themselves in different ways, does the family and the question of the family reassert itself in the particular forms that it has reasserted itself in? I take the question of the family not as a given but as something we continue to dissect in the multiple ways in which it presents itself and gets represented to us. None of our categories are given; they are always subject to interrogation, politically, historically, morally and emotionally.

Dialogue II: Deconstructing the Concept of “The Arab Family”: Representation, Myth and Reality

Chair Introduction: Rabab Abdulhadi

In this panel we will be talking about deconstructing the myth and representations of the Arab family. Before I introduce the speakers I would like to make a few comments.

The three questions outlined for this dialogue are, to what extent have political, economic and social developments in the Arab world, affected the representation of the Arab families within the cultural product? What are the differences between State monitored representation, like in cinema, television, magazines, and individual created endeavors like in novels, short stories and poetry? How do these representations deconstruct the myth, notions of normal families, dysfunctional families, romance of families, the interface of families, and identity competing notions of self?

These are the questions we have been asked to address and I would like to add another set of questions that I think are relevant. First, how has the cultural context in which we are looking at the Arab family, constructed itself? So in a sense we also deconstruct the cultural context but not just the Arab family. Secondly, who are the players in this context? And can we think of another set of players beyond the State and individuals, so that the relationship is not between State and individual only but we are looking at the individual as embedded in a multiplicity of relations that maybe constructed around nation, ethnicities, or other collectives such as religion, or whether the representations are actually a way to safeguard what is perceived to be the authentic true self from outside influences, especially in a socio-economic context?

I would like to read from this article in the New York Times, dated the 21st of April, entitled “Family, Culture and Law meet in a Utah court State.”

“She was much like any other immigrant, from a far away country, eager to absorb American culture and make a new life for herself. But over several hours, one night 18 months ago Mona Hawatmeh, claims that her two brothers and her parents felt that her lesbian relationship shamed her family that they beat her and tried to take her back to her native Jordan.”

This article raises all these issues that we talk about, that is the representation and construction of the Arab family. We should ask ourselves the question if there is something constant about the Arab family? Is the culture constant? What is this assimilation model that we are talking about? What is shameful and what is not shameful about it? Mahinaz Afkhami, who is a leader and expert in Middle Eastern culture, says that the relationship between one woman and another was considered shameful in Middle Eastern cultures, regardless of their religion. This implies that this idea of shameful behavior is across time, across place, ahistorical, and non-contextual.

These are the issues that I wanted to raise. Now I will introduce the speakers. The first person to present is Dr. Samia Mehrez, who is Associate Professor of Arabic Studies at the American University in Cairo. Her areas of research are modern Arabic Literature, Post-colonial studies, Francophone literature and gender studies.

Presenter I: Samia Mehrez, “Where have all the Families Gone?”

I will look at the literary works produced in the 90's in Egypt and the representation of the family icon there. I have tried to compare what is coming across to us in the literary texts with the icon of the family as we witness it almost everyday on television series, particularly work over the last decade.

I will be arguing that the literary works of the 90's, whether by men or women, about the city or the village, confirm the death of the family as a literary icon that represents Egyptian society. Inversely, the representation of the family through the Egyptian media seems to continue to reproduce the icon of the family, whether on its immediate or extended form, as a nucleus for the traditional imaginary. Even when these television series are critical of economic or social conditions, or even gender relations, their outspokenness is legitimated precisely because they seek to reinforce the traditional values of the family through its continued use as a central icon. It is important from the start to define the relationship of the literary text and that of the media image to social reality. Both deal with the transmission of reality and of life into structures of meaning which target a specific audience. The question of audience is very important. In the case of the literary texts, the audience is constrained by the medium itself, literary Arabic in the means of production, costs and distribution of the literary work. As for the television serials, they target the majority of the Egyptians in the urban as well as rural areas. In this respect, the participation of these two modes of representation in the construction of a national imaginary is unequal, and may be directly linked to, their relationship to authority or the State.

In Egypt, the State continues to exercise control over the cultural product, even as it allows for limited privatization within some of its sectors like publishing, cinema, television and theater, designating more direct intervention in vital areas that affect a larger audience hence, television serials for example. Whereas television serials are more immediately subject to an official agenda, or national imaginary, the literary texts, benefiting from less direct attention from the State, remains at the mercy of the periodic raids of censorship. Such a lenient crisis control strategy, on the part of the State, with regard to the literary text, is what has allowed for the literary imaginary, especially where the icon of the family is concerned. The irony remains that the producers of the literary are themselves consumers of the media image however, their literary representations do not seem to be influenced by the mass-produced National imaginary. What will emerge from the comparison between the literary and mediatic, during the last decade in particular, is the extent to which the latter insists in moralizing the reality of the family, while the former is accused of immorality if not nihilism, in its attempts to unsettle that very same icon.

It is of equal importance to look at the ideological and social constitution of the producers of the respective modes of production and they are quite different. On one hand, those who are involved in the production of television serials represent a homogenous group that is predominantly of the urban middle class. Caught between State control and their own patronizing discourse to educate the masses, that is the target audience, the producers of media representation are bound to upload and moralize basic national institutions, at the heart of which lies the family.

On the other hand, those involved in the production of the literary texts represent a heterogeneous group that brings together writers from different backgrounds, modest rural and urban backgrounds, middle class, upper middle class, bilingual, bicultural, both men and women. Their relative independence from the

State, as well as their backgrounds, have allowed them to develop their respective individual agendas towards the very same mass produced national institutions.

What remains surprising however, in the absence of a central authority and dominates this group, is the degree to which they are almost unanimous in contesting official national icons, especially that of the family image to social reality. In this framework, the literary representations seem to render the Egyptian social scene more dynamic, I would say, while the mediatic image continues to enforce one that is relatively static and doesn't allow one to see those forces of change occurring. To say that the literary texts of the 90's in Egypt announces the death of the family, as a social-literary icon, is to imply that the family has a previous life within the literary texts and to assume that certain factors have directly, or indirectly, led to the real and metaphoric death of the icon. In order to understand the nature and reasons for this death, it is necessary to identify the families' previous life within the literary texts and to locate the moments that have led to the transformation of its representation.

I would like to give you several examples if I may.

I will begin with Naguib Mahfouz. Naguib Mahfouz's trilogy. This is really 'The' family saga, and takes us through the inter-war period by looking at more than one generation in one household.

I will also use the example of Latifa al-Zayyat's "*The Open Door*." Even here where Latifa is really talking about a feminist awakening and trying to give space to 'the woman's voice', the central icon continues to be the family. In both instances, the developments occur within the household, the battle within is the battle without. It is not just a male writer's icon, it permeates all of the literature up until the 70's.

In the works of somebody whom we consider as a revolutionary avant-garde writer, Sonalla Ibrahim, in his novel "*Dhat*", that was published in 1992, the icon is the family despite the fact that he focuses on a female protagonist. In that text I feel that it will announce the death of the family in the 90's, and it ends with Dhat, the housewife, sitting on the toilet seat crying at a moment of complete defeat for the wife, the mother, the working woman, the individual, and finally the citizen. Therefore, I really think that the texts of the 90's are heir to Dhat, who closes herself up in the toilet and cries her heart out over this complete collapse and defeat. Literary critics in general would locate this moment of transformation. There is going to be a force here so we can actually say that for a long while the literary text was in line with the official imaginary until, I would argue, the Infitah period, where there is going to be a split and where we are going to witness a the difference between the national imaginary that we witness on television and the literary imaginary, that has announced the death of the family.

There are many ways in which this collapse manifests itself. Perhaps one of the immediate graphic renditions of this change is the very size of the literary text itself. That when it is engaged in this monumental construction of the family, it used up hundreds of pages whereas, now when we look at the texts of the 90's even the text itself has collapsed and does not go beyond 125 pages. This is across the board, both men and women for the last 10 years or so.

Another interesting thing that is going to happen in the 90's, is that those avant-garde writers, who are going to announce that death, are going to move away from publishing with State controlled publishing outlets and we will see an entire generation emerge through private publishing houses, so they are actually paying out of their own pockets to publish their works. I think this is very important because once they are subverting the national imaginary, they need to create an alternative space for themselves where they can go ahead and subvert it. Some of you may have

heard of two such 90's authors, who published through State controlled outlets and were caught by the minister himself, reprimanded and called immoral, nihilistic and pornographic.

When accorded a presence at all, in the literary texts of the 90's, the family becomes a relic of the past represented through old pictures, old furniture, and old apartment in dysfunctional neighborhoods and not active actors in the literary text at all, as if they were not there.

One of the titles of such a work is called *Three Suitcases for Departure* by Mona Prince. In one instance the family is responsible for the protagonist's transformation into a wooden puppet, this is in May Tilmisani's *Heliopolis*, which has just come out. In another text, it is responsible for the metaphoric death of the narrator in Adel Ismat's *Fear of Death*, and in yet another, it remains banished from the son's meaningless and real death in the big city, in Wael Ragab's *Inside an Air Bubble*.

The individual protagonists that have come to occupy the space of the family/national icon are at once disquieting and unsettling, witnessing the birth of an individual.

Miral al-Tahawi's labyrinthian novel, *The Blue Eggplant*, chronicles the life of a defeated woman born on the eve of the nation's defeat in 1967: the antithesis of Latifa al-Zayyat's *The Open Door* of the sixties, with its celebration of the new woman/new nation. The protagonist in Nora Amin's novel *Empty Pink Nightgown*, is reduced to being just that: an empty pink nightgown. The total disorientation, loneliness and alienation of the central character in Mustafa Zikri's *What Amin Knows*, becomes a macabre comment on the superfluous reality of human existence. Somaya Ramadan's moving depiction of her protagonist's parenthetical madness in *Awraq al-Nargis*, confirms the frightening rupture between the individual and the collective.

The death of the family/nation icon in the works of writers of the nineties, ushers us into a world beyond our expectations. Rather than announce the birth of the individual, these works race ahead and announce her/his death.

In one of these texts, in order to demonstrate the death of this individual, the author actually talks about the impossibility of writing about the individual by reproducing one third of the novel in blank pages.

Chair: Rabab Abdulhadi

The next presenter is Nadine Naber. Nadine is a PhD Candidate in socio-cultural anthropology in the University of California, Davis. Her research focuses on gender transformation among Arab-Americans in a transitional context. Her theoretical perspective is that Arab-American identities are located at the intersections of Arab and United State nationalist formations and the United State popular culture. Intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality and religion are central to her work. Naber has published various articles including, "White but not quite. An investigation of Arab-American invisibility" and "Muslims first, Arabs second. The strategic politics of race and gender." Naber has served as a board member in several committees and academic organizations including the Middle East section of the American Anthropological Association, the Middle East Women's Studies Association, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Association and the Arab Women's Solidarity Association. Naber comes from California.

Presenter II: Nadine Naber

I will be talking about the particular context of San Francisco California. Although I am hoping that we can rely on some of my examples to situate the discussion in the workshop in the context of rapid globalization, migration and diaspora. I have been asked to talk about the myths of the Arab family and I would like to point out that the perspective that I am coming from is that myths about the Arab family are mediated by discourses and movements organized around maintaining community boundaries whether those boundaries are imagined, national, religious or on cultural terms. So if we extend our discussion to the context of diaspora and the diaspora in the United States, we might ask ourselves what are the processes by which cultural, nationalist, religious discourses invoke family in the production and reproduction of categories of “*self*” vs. the “*other*”, “*us*” vs. “*them*”, “*Arab*” vs. “*American*”, and also “*Muslim*” vs. “*the West*”.

One example to give you an idea of what I am talking about, that comes up in my research, is that once we were at a community meeting at the Arab Cultural Center in San Francisco and there was a debate about changing the bylaws to include other types of alternative families, including gay and lesbian families or single parent households, and this man stood up and said, “*No, we need to maintain our culture!*” My point is that cultural identities that the Arab family, or myths of the Arab family, are invoked in the process through which Arabs in the United States, are arguing for what it means to be an ideal Arab or the idea of Arab cultural authenticity.

In my research among Arab diasporas in the United States, I show that some of my research participants critically inherit and reproduce features of an idealized family that are thoroughly developed in Suad Joseph’s research. But in addition to that in the United States context, they are faced with the threat of, what my research participant’s parents refer to as “*losing our children to the Amerikan*” or “*losing ourselves to the Amerikan*.”

There are three main myths that reoccurred through my research. The first myth is that of “*the good Arab family*” vs. the “*bad American family*.” Then there is the “*connective Arab family*”, and I use the word connective from Suad Joseph’s research, vs. the “*individuated American family*”, and the third myth, which is not reproduced among the Arabs but by the United States government and is internalized by the Arab-American, is that of the “*oppressive Arab family*” vs. the “*liberated American family*.”

According to the first myth, the good Arab family includes family values such as generosity and hospitality, respect for elders, and good daughters who are virgins before marriage and don’t stay out at night, and sons who maintain the ideal of what it means to be “*ibn Arab*” so the myth applies to men as well and what it means to be a respectable son. The bad American family is a “*broken*” family with loose, trashy girls, and members who do not care for their elders.

I would like to give a quote. My parents used to say to me “if you go to an American family they are smoking and drinking, but if you go to an Arab house you don’t see much of that “*be hafzo ala al banat*.”

The second myth distinguishes Arabs from Americans by saying that in Arab families people are connected to each other unlike the American family that are selfish and their children move out when they are eighteen. The important part of this is that the youth, the second generation, often find themselves caught between a choice and one women sums it up as “*I have a choice between being an American and doing whatever I want, going where I want or being Arab where family comes first and I have no choice*.”

The third myth is the racialized myth of the Arab family. The latest myth in this category regards the latest Palestinian Intifada, and it says that Palestinian mothers raise their children to go out and kill. The result of this type of propaganda is that some type of racialized Arab family is invoked and distinguished from American family.

These myths are contested on the level of everyday life and cultural identities and this is where I have a lot of research data, where in the everyday life of my research participants, they are constantly challenging the binary opposition between “*Al-Arab*” vs. “*Al-Amerikan*” and creating something new through a hybrid type of Arab family, one that is not necessarily Arab or American. One of them is a lesbian Arab woman who writes graffiti on bathroom walls that says, “*queer Arabs exist.*” She is challenging her parents who say that Arab families do not have lesbians, and that she is the only gay Arab in the world.

There are other ways in which these myths are contested. Linking to what Samia Mehrez said about doing away with the family all together, there is the idea among some people that they would never marry an Arab because Arab families are too crowded. So the idea of marrying an Arab would mean another Arab family, and one is enough!

I want to add one more point, which is that I hope we can extend the study of the Arab families beyond the way that Arab family studies continues in the paradigm of area studies where the Arab world is privileged and diasporas are marginalized and not seen as valid research areas. I hope we can change this.

Discussions for Dialogue II

Suad Joseph

I was particularly struck when the death of the family did not immediately lead to the rise of the individual and whether or not that forces us to raise the question that comes up in Nadine’s research, what is the individual? If you have the concept of *self* that is so embedded and enmeshed in the family, then does not the death of the family also mean the death of that particular *self* that was embedded in those family forms? In other words, the assumption that there is an individual and when the family dies that creates a space for this individual, presumes a notion of *self* which is the individual. But if you take that concept of individual as itself culturally specific and not use that term but use the term *self* and look at what is the notion of the *self* that is implicated in those family forms, and what would exist of that *self* without those family forms? Would you not then have a way of looking at the new icons emerging in the literary texts? I would not find it surprising that the death of the family means the death of that notion of family itself and a culturally specific notion of the self embedded in that family system.

Penny Johnson

Concerning the death of the family as an icon, the family seems to remain as a devouring kind of family. I think it is not surprising in the sense that the novels are, at least in the main traditions, very strongly family narratives. I was wondering if you could also say if there are stylistic changes in the form of the novel? I also have one comment for Nadine Naber. I think that it is also true that the separation of the diaspora and the country of origin is not the most fruitful thing and I wonder if you can comment on links? We see in Ramallah in terms of the summer bride shopping

and people bringing their kids for a kind of traditional upbringing and I wonder if this is found in your environment?

Soraya Altorki

I would like to play the devil's advocate and ask what do we mean by the death of the family? I am not clear on that point. To Samia Mehrez, I am at a disadvantage in not knowing any of the novels that you refer to however, you do refer to television serials and I am particularly interested in this because I have students now who are working on similar issues and it would be interesting to compare it to what they are doing. They are coming up with their preliminary reports which show that family relations are being transformed.

Samia Mehrez response to Soraya Altorki

You are talking about television but the death of the family is in the novels and literary works. That is why it is so interesting when we see how radically different the family icon is when you look at its portrayal on television and in the literature.

Soraya Altorki

It would also be interesting to see whether, in this period, if there is a different discourse on the family in the novel being written? And I don't only mean those published by or through official publishers. What do we mean when we say that the family is dead?

Secondly, to Nadine, what is a myth? In what terms are we really making the distinction? If things have an impact on behavior, how do they constitute motivation or direct behavior and inform what people do, and how different are they from values? To my mind when we say its a myth it is possibly something that we want to discard or do away with. I was wondering if you could address this point?

Martina Rieker

I was struck by both of your papers and to Samia, the way you ground your discussion is as a kind of political project within the space of the nation and that is very interesting.

Nadine, I would like to take that idea and ask you if it was useful in your work to look at these myths through national meaning making, through which ideas of families reproduce themselves within exilic communities? And I am struck here in particular by some of the work that has been done not in San Francisco but in a more conservative region like Dearborn, Michigan, where the Yemeni community reproduces itself through a marriage market that enacts a Yemeniness, that transcends the kind of nationalizing locals that both the Yemeni State tries to enact as well as the American multi-cultural discursive spaces.

In the case of San Francisco, the Palestinian community is particularly dominant in articulating Arabness. Now, Palestinian Arabness, is of course, a complicated Arabness and has a much more complicated definition of modernity and tradition than perhaps the Yemeni political project. Could you address some of these issues?

Rabab Abdulhadi

Is the death of the family a post-modern movement? And how does that link with it? To Nadine, how does globalization and the rise of Islamization connect to this?

Samia Mehrez response

Perhaps one of the most important changes that has taken place, again across the board, is how the first person narrator has taken control over the family sagas. But in many of these new instances, the dominant voice is that of the individual. This complicates what Suad Joseph was saying about the birth of the *self*, because I think if we are witnessing a birth then it is a very unsettling birth, as I indicated, because even that first person narrator is never an "I" throughout the narrative. It is often split so that the *I* will speak of itself in more than one pronoun, in order to bring across this idea of alienation, of aloneness, and of being split in many of the recent texts.

I am actually linking in this paper, the gap between death of the family, and what is happening in the society itself and I think many of these novels are written by people who are children of the *Infitah* period and are in many ways reflecting the same gap that has happened within the social context.

What do I mean when I say death? I am speaking about the death of the family as an icon within the text itself. What is coming across to us in the written page is the fact that the members of the family are no longer actors within the text in many of these cases. If they exist at all, they are pictures on the wall or they are remembered through pieces of furniture, but they are not characters or actors. The individual is the focus of the text alone.

To give a concrete example, when you look at *The Open Door* Laila, the protagonist develops in the household with the family members. The mother, the father and brother are part of that narrative and they impact on Laila. We see them, they are actors, whereas in all of these texts there is no family. The family is remembered through relics, but you don't have people actually partaking in the narrative itself.

Nadine Naber response

In response to Penny Johnson about the links between the Arab world and the diaspora, I think you just hit the nail on the head.

Dialogue III: Families in Place, Space and War

Chair Introduction: Ibrahim Elnur

This session will look at Families in Place, Space and War, and how new forms of Arab family are produced, under conditions of massive social transformations and looking at various aspects of these transformations like the vast urban-rural migration, transformation of urban place, reconstruction of urban place, massive voluntary and involuntary migration resulting from protracted wars, peace building, and other manifestations of these social transformations. All these massive social transformations are premised on the conception of space as a matrix of social acts.

So the themes that we are going to explore center around one major question which is, in which way spacial change produce or reproduce family structures and family relations in relation to traumatized nations?

Our first speaker will be Penny Johnson. Penny is a social researcher in the Institute of Women's Studies at Beirzeit University. She has written on issues relating to poverty and households, humanitarian aid and development, gender in relation to the second Intifada, and a comparative study on poverty among Palestinian camp populations in Jordan, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza.

The second speaker is Martina Rieker who is an Assistant Professor at the American University in Cairo. She has been working on men and women in modern cities focusing on Cairo and Jerusalem. She has researched on the reproduction of the local within Palestine and more recently, she has been focusing on the reconstruction of war-torn communities.

Presenter I: Penny Johnson

In terms of war, I would like to raise a series of questions from our experience in Palestine and I will try to provide avenues of research which I hope will have implications for policy on family, and individual welfare and rights. A main concern here is war, as an expression of power and powerlessness, and how it produces a crisis in paternal and maternal roles and in the stages and life cycles of male and female children and youth.

A second important set of issues revolves around the level of violence and confrontation, the form and nature of leadership and governance. The per-war context and the post-war goals shape issues of participation, organization, victimization, gender identities and post-war entitlements of men, women, and children, and thus may change relations within and among families.

In terms of space, I would like to raise some issues for discussion arising from reflections on Palestinian households and refugee camps, and in particular the persistence of poverty and vulnerability among refugee camp households. Here I am looking at how to apply some of the features of capability analysis in what I call the capability or command over space. I will then give a brief examination of place and the meaning of localism in terms of family dynamics, where there are highly specific forms of family composition and processes that seem to be tied to particular localities rather than to larger formations like the nation. In the Palestinian context, I would call

it the Hebron problem, and why Hebron is so distinct from the other localities in the West Bank.

Turning to war, I suppose any of us who have lived in the region have experienced, whether virtually or immediately, wars and conflicts of abundant types. It seems to me that academic literature about these wars tends to be political, diplomatic accounts dealing on the micro-level and academically there would be very few social analysis that would link it to what we are discussing. I do think we can find descriptive accounts of these processes but mostly in human rights organizations literature, in solidarity literature, in developmental organizations and I think one goal is to bring out some of the academic understanding in what is relatively a rich empirical vein of accounts of how people, families, and households experience different kinds of war and conflict. There is also the kind of literature about women's participation in national liberation, Palestine is another abundant source for this kind of literature.

There is a third kind of literature, which is the war's other voice literature. This usually explores, in literary means, perceptions of war by women writers and I would caution about the problem conflating women and women writers. I know in the Palestinian context, women and men's attitudes towards war and different kinds of violence are similar. All our polling in the recent months have shown that both women and men have high approval of Palestinian military operations, even suicide bombings and we find that the differences in their attitudes is before and after the Intifada, and not between men and women.

I would like to focus on the difference in gender roles. Here I found a very helpful book, on a different period, which is Elizabeth Thompson's new book *Colonial Citizens*. I think that this book breaks ground in linking dynamics within households, States and colonial systems, the three of which we have in Palestine. She calls the linked reactions to these stresses in household, community and polity a "Crisis in Paternity."

I am arguing that in the second Palestinian Intifada the dislocations at these three levels, and the households coping with shocks in community and in polity and even in the tension between the weakened national authority and the dominant Israeli colonialism, has produced a series of stresses in gender roles that have been highly accentuated in the current struggle.

There is also a crisis in masculinity, found among young men that go to the check points, in essence exposing themselves to Israeli fire without any hope of the ability to effectively resist. Here I found Julie Peteet's work on masculinity helpful in that she sees in our first Intifada, in the 1980's, a kind of rite of passage where young men return to their communities and families with heightened status and political capital, which they are able to translate. I am arguing that in our situation this does not happen, that what we have is resistance but no resolution except for increased militarism, and that young men are not able to make that return. This is partially due to the nature of governance, the absence of a national government that is theoretically present, practically powerless and exercises a kind of system of rule which I have termed "authoritarian populism", that does not allow for that kind of participation.

In terms of maternal and paternal roles, here there is a rich field that I have only just begun to think about and I would wonder if colleagues from Lebanon would also have something to say about this? What got me to thinking about it are the two images that our current Intifada has disseminated, both locally and worldwide. One of course, is the twelve-year-old child, Mohammed El Durra, who was killed while his father was trying to shelter him. The second image is not as widely disseminated, but

can be found every where in Palestine, is of a young boy who is as small as El Durra, standing in front of a huge Israeli tank and throwing a stone. On the face of it these would seem that they are contradictory images, one of defiance the other of victimization. What I am arguing is that these two images, if we think about them, are both about failure in paternal protection, in the inability to protect and I think this also stands for failure in adult politics as well as the crisis in the family.

I would like to relate this to the other issue that comes up in terms of our war, and that is the role of mothers. The mother of Fares Odeh, the child in front of the tank, who was later shot and left to bleed to death, was always haunting the check points looking for him, and indeed mothers are always at the check points looking for their children. What I argue is that there is a kind of maternity crisis as well, even though it is less visible, and where mothers are in deep conflict over different forms of maternal roles. In other words, if you think of a mother's role to preserve their child's life, to develop growth, and to have their child socialized into the community, to be accepted into the community, then I think there can be profound contradictions in these roles, particularly in preservation and acceptance. I personally think that the discourse of the "mothers of martyrs", which is very accentuated in the Intifada, conceals contradictions that are both deeply painful and not possible to resolve on the level of individuals.

Both our crisis in Palestine, and any war crisis, will produce in the post-war situation a new gender pact. Here we are talking about the profound inequality between Israel and Palestine, the enforced weakness of Civil Society, that also shape a new gender pact. The real needs, interests and rights of women and men, in providing for their families is in these very basic levels of gender roles, protecting and providing. If we continue with the same conditions then these crises will not be addressed. This is not unique to Palestine and is true for many post-war Arab States. I think that here is the role for research that does have an activist component in articulating and analyzing these crisis.

In terms of space, I will pose the question that I was exploring. The persistent poverty among Palestinian camp populations in Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine, is very problematic. Given that camp populations have often had a comparative advantage in health and education, particularly to their host population, so why do they remain poor in relation to the host population and to other refugees? I think this is an issue that needs investigation. Here I think the answer lies more in looking at different ways that camp populations are deprived of spacial functionings and also control over time, in the sense of time substituting for money in a place that is both non-productive, a place of surveillance, and a place of absence and loss, over many generations.

Presenter II: Martina Rieker

I come from a slightly different direction. My main argument is why spacial frameworks might be useful for studying families and understanding family relationships, not just for those of us interested in cities and urban space, but also to those of us interested in family histories. When I looked at the title "Families in Place, Space, and War," I thought it complicated, or troubled, the kind of theoretical possibilities that spacial research currently suggests. So coming from this particular direction actually begin with suggesting in linking war to place and space.

Like Penny Johnson I also begin with Elizabeth Thompson however, I have a different reading of Thompson. It is a very influential text, *Colonial Citizens*.

Elizabeth Thompson uses the famine of 1915-1916 in Syria and Lebanon, to stage her thesis on the making of modern political gendered subjects. She argues that the shattering of the basic social unit, the household, brought on a crisis of paternity demanding a renegotiation of gender roles. Thompson uses this moment of instability, furthered by the advent of French colonial rule, to trace ways in which women and men struggled for colonial citizenship in the space of a general crisis of authority. Here I quote,

“The war had shaken the definitions of family and community that people had known and called into question the paternalistic basis of authority that they had respected. Memories of a world turned upside down would produce both a nostalgia for lost norms and a revolutionary spirit.”

There are a number of problems in the story that Thompson tells however, this text is to point to the space assigned to crisis be it as a result of migration, war, or displacement. In our thinking about families, the household, and the domestic crisis opens up the possibility to rearrange the order of things. An important and growing body of literature, attests to crisis in enabling, opening, or foreclosing, different possibilities and producing new identities. Texts such as *Sexuality and War*, or *Women in War Story*, insist that women and men look at conflict and war with a different gendered lens.

Now for the three countries of concern in this workshop, important works on ways in which crisis impact on the family, for instance, includes works on the effect of the Intifada on power relations, between junior and senior members of the households, particularly father and son and mother and son, and the relationship between the masculinization of the public.

In the case of Egypt, here would include two generations of work on ways in which familial categories and relationships are subject to rearrangements as a result of male labor migration, with a special focus on rural and urban working class households. Certainly traumas of the magnitude of war and famine put in place processes that are immediately and visibly transformative in all sorts of ways and it is not my intension to argue anything else. Yet, since the title of this panel weds war to questions of space and place, I thought it useful to wonder aloud around what sorts of process of transformation we stage our studies on the Arab family and with what sort of effect?

As Kandil asks in the review of literature on households and migration in upper Egypt, *“What are we saying if our analytical frameworks posits the absence of men from the household as the genesis for change and employment of women within, for instance, the Saidi family?”*

In recent social theory, increasing attention is being given to spacial, as well as temporal, dimensions of human behavior. This has been less so in studies of gender particularly in the Arab world. My point here is not to suggest the recent theoretical obsessions elsewhere should determine our research agendas, rather I want to propose that the sorts of discourse in politics being put in place in the present in the region, defend for a critical engagement with the spacial.

In his *Refashioning Futures* the post-colonial critic David Scott, elaborates on what he calls the question of logic and answer. Quote, *“A strategic politics is concerned with determining at any conjuncture, what conceptional moves among the many available options will have the most purchase, the best yield? Put differently, what sorts of engagements, what mores and what positions and argument? What sorts of questions are worth, I having an answer to?”*

I would like to draw on three examples, two on Palestine and one from Egypt, to suggest why we think crisis around space might be a worthwhile direction to pursue. The first example looks at the question of place and space in Jerusalem. The fragmentation of East Jerusalem into closed, inwardly focused neighborhoods, has resulted in a social and cultural reorganization of the city itself. In a way in which not only discourses of true genealogical local identities are reanimated in this particular context, but more importantly how the processes of familiarization vs urbanization operate as a result of what we could term the *incarnation effect*.

The second example are questions of urban reconstruction and the ways in which urban reconstruction, make visible and articulate, new social geographies, particularly around families, rural families, and the dusting off of old categories like tradition. One of the things that is interesting in the revitalizing project of the old city of Jerusalem, is that there has been particular problematization of the practices of the Hebronite families. Basically what we have is on one hand, a national project which attempts to reanimate the Palestinian urban space of the national space in Jerusalem, which is closely tied to the re-inscription of the of the old city into the cognitive urban space of the national project and its lexicon of local geo-spatial identities. However, those who live in the old city are people of rural descent variously scripted as Hebronites, whose family system is considered a core problem for the realization of a certain kind of modern, urban Palestinian family. The reason why this is important is not just about myth and representation, but I argue that the Hebronite family system is treated here as a cultural artifact that informs ideas about Palestinian modernity, ideas about Palestinian localisms and thus has a real political effect.

One other point that I wish to make is the fact that this is a project that has a certain idea about the cultural artifact of the Hebronite family system. Most people who are engaged in the project argue that the real crisis is that there is the absence of hard data. In other words, the tools, the logic, the science of the urban planners is absent. I think that it is very important in the way that the Hebronite family system informs our understanding of spatial relationships, of policy interventions as well as reconstruction projects.

The third and final example that I wish to make is from Egypt. Here I wish to draw on a similar theme, that is the theme of networks, family systems and how we need to rethink families in terms of practices of family systems. There is a whole group of scholars doing work rethinking the family and family systems in the neighborhoods of Cairo. Very briefly I want to engage in the work of two well-known scholars, Singerman and Hoodfar.

All three of their books suggest ways in which spatial constrains structure the making and maintenance of family systems in older intercity, as well as newer migrant neighborhoods. One of the things that strikes me, upon closer reading of their works, is that while Singerman explicitly frames her argument around families and neighborhoods as alternative political spaces, Hoodfar gives detailed attention to the strain of the commute for middle class working women. At the same time the family and the practices of family maintenance are here understood as being profoundly local.

Since the earthquake, other sorts of literature and popular media attest to the ways in which this event set the ways for municipal desires to remake downtown Cairo. The municipal housing project is being geared to reclaim central and historical parts of the city for a modern middle class project. The commute from faraway places for work, childcare and for strategic kin-work is a popular topic for discussion.

Now the academic question that I propose is how these ways of doing kin-work within different spatial constructs are also producing new ways of making families? I suggest that we look at the work done by the researchers in Amman, who are looking at spatial shifts in the reproduction of Palestinian camp families from '68 to the present. Other work is the one done by Zeinab Chelek, who is rereading ethnographic material of popular housing in Algeria from the 1920's and the 1930's.

So there are all sorts of ways in which families in space are being put together, but I suggest that there is a certain political project involved not just within urban space and that we need to rethink families around these spatial categories.

Discussions for Dialogue III

Malak Zaalouk:

There is an issue about the crisis in paternity amongst the Palestinians living in Lebanon. The family is no longer the center of control. Fathers cannot tell sons where they come from, so they refer to outsiders to tell their sons about their past. So public domain changes to private domain.

Hania Sholkamy

There is also a crisis of maternity.

Penny Johnson

I would like to talk about the crisis in paternity. This is both a social and family concern. We could say that the role that mothers in Palestine play is a political role but because the struggle has been going on for so long it has become a way of life.

Rabab Abdulhadi

In the first Intifada the mother of the martyr was represented with joy, this is because the first Intifada was more nationalistic.

Penny Johnson

I would like to add to Rabab's comment and say that the mothers of martyrs have always had a kind of uniformity in representation.

Martina Rieker

It is interesting to note that in the first Intifada the crisis of paternity and the way that kids go out to fight relates to gang formation in the United States.

Penny Johnson

I would not call it a gang but a cult of militarism.

Suad Joseph

In Lebanon the parents were in conflict with the militia groups because they felt that they were taking the children away from their families.

Ray Jureidini

There is the question of protection and masculinity. An issue has been raised where youth will not wear bulletproof vests because they will not die a 'Shaheed.' Is this true?

Penny Johnson

I will not go as far as to call the youth that go to the check points as militants. About the crisis in paternity, there is such a high level of Israeli violence and excessive use of force that the ability for parents to protect their children 24 hours a day is impossible. The dangers are always there and we should look at how we can go about protecting the whole society. I do not think that the goal of the youth that go to the check points is to be killed and become a 'Shaheed'.

Martina Rieker

How does one understand death in a cultural construct? By seeing death everyday does this make the construct different?

Dialogue IV: Gender and Power in Arab Families

Chair Introduction: Hania Sholkamy

I would like to start with a remark on children's literature both in the West and in our part of the world. In the West heroes in children's books tend to be orphans and they tend to do fantastic things without the inhibitions of the fathers and mothers. So in this genre if there is a crisis in not having an effective father or mother it does not exist in the West. If you think of Harry Potter, James and the Giant Peach and Pollyanna, you will find that they are uninhibited by family and they are strong social bodies. In our part of the world, children who feature in books tend to be portrayed as very good members of the family, good boys and girls. There is no tension between being a fictional hero and being a good family member. The two roles are assumed to harmoniously coexist rather than conflict

This session is about power and it is about the power of the individual vis-à-vis the power of the family. But we need to render problematic our sense of individual and where we get our references for gender. This whole notion of family, which I recall in one UNICEF meeting many years ago, people decided it did not exist, still has a lingering presence as an entity. It is invoked and read into history as an object of oppression, it is also invoked as an idiom for how we talk about social relationships, and we need not just think of the family and kin and lineage, it is how we talk about God the father and how we talk about sisters and brothers and holy orders. So as an idiom of expression, the family prevails. Today we will be talking about this tension between gender roles in the Arab region and this enduring entity, or non-entity the family.

Our first speaker is Dr. Hoda Elsadda. She is a professor of English and comparative literature in Cairo University and is a founding member of the Women and Memory Forum, which is a research group which is interested in gender and cultural issues.

Presenter I: Huda Elsadda

The "Arab Family." or the "Muslim Family" has always occupied a central place in political, social and economic analyses of the Arab region. For a very long time, the "otherness" of the Arab family, as Judith Tucker pointed out, has supported the notion that "*this family can be defined in historical opposition to other kinds of family like the European family*".

To render this project feasible, the Arab family has been subjected to a sequence of essentializing processes that we have all been criticizing since this morning. Within this construct, the Arab family came to symbolize the intrinsic traditionalism of Arab societies. It upheld values, concepts that were defined as "backward" and that were perceived as necessarily antagonistic to, or at least incompatible with, the values of modernity and progress. Now this traditionalism was very often equated with the influence of Islam as a religion on the region. Again, Islam and Islamic dictums were included in the notion of otherness and were essentialized to a large extent. So this family represented everything that needed to be changed, developed and transformed to signal the entry of the Arab region into the

modern world, and within this paradigm, women, have been perceived the victim of the Arab families. Discourses on gender and power in the Arab family have come under the influence of a number of grand narratives on Islam, modernization, and nationalism, to give three examples. These narratives have been responsible for the biased interpretations of Middle Eastern history and for the lop-sided representations of the Arab family. Now as you all know, recent research on gender issues in the Middle East has challenged some of the basic tenets of these grand narratives. I would like to make special reference to a book edited by Margaret Meriwether and Judith Tucker called *A Social History of Women and Gender in the Middle East*, which basically consists of some excellent reviews of recent work that challenge these grand narratives on the family.

Now for the purpose of rendering the above generalizations intelligible I would like to go through very quickly some eclectic examples of what I perceive as new directions in research that have critiqued the modernization narrative, in particular, just focusing on one grand narrative. Critics of the modernization narrative have challenged assumptions about the inherent opposition between traditional societies and modern societies. Traditional, we can now say, does not necessarily mean backward or anti women and modern does not necessarily mean more freedom for women.

Modernist criteria for measuring women's control over their freedom have also undergone a revisionary process. So access to education, work, or economic freedom, legal rights, as we understand them, have been used as criteria to assess the position of women in society or their power or powerlessness. The assumption was that women in pre-modern times were denied education, were not allowed to work and did not participate in economic transactions. Now again, recent research has shown that women did have access to education in pre-modern times through various structures. Research on Ottoman households has challenged women's assumed powerlessness and has found evidence to prove that they were capable of being agents of power and control. Again research on religious court archives has shown women to be agents of economic activities. They sold land, they established *waqfs*, and conducted various economic transactions. Court records have also shed new light on social practices that often conflicted with the letter of the law.

Deconstructing modernist dichotomies between tradition and modernity, or between public and private has also directed attention to the role played by the different modern states in formulating and inscribing gender relations, I have in mind Deniz Kandiyoti's edited volume *Women, Islam and the State*. I also have in mind, Diane Singerman's work that challenges the public/private dichotomy.

The above-mentioned directions in research have resulted in a revision of our understanding of the opposition between power and powerlessness. It is noteworthy that the purpose of contending that women have had access to education, or were economic agents in pre-modern times, is not meant to lead to the conclusion that they had total control over their lives, or that the position of women was significantly better in pre-modern times. But all this research problematize the conceptualization and perception of power and power relations. For a long time, the concept of power has been treated as an abstraction located in concepts, beliefs and ideologies, which led to an emphasis on formal institutionalized relations inscribed in authoritative texts and structures. Paying special attention to the details of everyday life, archival work, together with postmodern and post-colonial deconstructive readings of constructed modernities is opening up new areas of research and analysis.

My second point is where do we go from here? I have referred to the ongoing critiques of metanarratives, which I think are interesting as starting points. Many researchers have also suggested several categories or concepts that need to be taken into consideration when discussing gender issues in the Middle East. Some of these concepts have been tradition, identity, colonialism, nationalism and religion. In these last few minutes, I would like to reflect on the issue of representation. How issues of gender and power are represented within dominant discourses, and how women represent themselves within the context of their perceptions of power, and within the context of existing regimes of truth.

The question of who represents whom, why and how has led to a great deal of interest in making room for women's voices to represent themselves and their experience without mediation. Autobiographies, women's creative writings, oral narratives are posited as potential transmitters of women's experiences and self-representations. Nevertheless, the idea of unmediated voice has been challenged. Spivak, for example, has asked can the subaltern speak and be heard? Assuming control over one's voice has become a widely debated issue. On another level, researchers from various disciplines are becoming more and more aware and critical of their analytical categories and tools. Within feminist scholarship, the relationship between the researcher and the researched has been the object of much reflection. So I think it is safe to say that there is a general realization that all categories of analysis are the effects of specific power relations.

Future research on gender issues in the Middle East will need to pay special attention to the politics of representation. First, a revision of theoretical categories and assumptions, and I think this is something that everybody is engaged in. Secondly, a critical self-awareness of the dynamics of power behind processes of othering, or the construction of sameness and difference. This point is premised on the assumption that representations of self and other are interdependent and constantly support or undermine one another. So when I say "we", what are the criteria of inclusion or exclusion from my imagined community? How are my definitions of particular concepts (the concept of "rights" of "autonomy" of "freedom" for example) historically, subjectively, ideologically or culturally defined?

Thirdly emphasis on women's writings and oral narratives. A social-textual analysis of life stories or stories of self, or representative narratives of self, can potentially shed light on how women contest or negotiate representations of themselves given the constraints of existing regimes of truth. Here, meaning is not held hostage to the paradigm of true or false. Rather, meaning is generated through the complex interaction between the text, the subtext, and the metatext.

My last point, I think that more attention needs to be paid to media studies. I raise this point because I think that media studies, at least in the Arab context – in Egypt, has a lot of gaps.

In our contemporary world, with the expansion of mass media, information technologies and communication networks, the scope of influence and implications of global cultural messages produced and disseminated through the various venues of "visual culture", still needs to be understood. Now, theoretical and practical approaches to visual culture are concerned with the cultural practices of looking and seeing, that is, with the psycho-cultural complexities of how the image is received, understood and internalized by the viewer. This takes us beyond the "image of women in the media" approach, which assumes women to be passive recipients of stereotypical images, to asking questions about processes of assimilation, rejection and contestation. There is still a great deal to understand about the impact of the

globalization of visual culture on representations of gender relations and roles, and on dominant and marginal discourses on gender.

Chair: Hania Sholkamy

Our next speaker is Eileen Kuttab. She is a lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Birzeit and the Director of the Women's Studies Institute. Her work on gender and the politics of the women's movement in Palestine is well known. She is also interested in alternative developments and the impact of funding on development sites and landscapes. She is of course, a very well known women's activist.

Presenter II: Eileen Kuttab, "Gender and Power in the Arab Family-Theoretical and Methodological Issues"

I would like to emphasize some of the issues that have not been dealt with today. Beginning with describing the Arab family, I went back to my old professor, Halim Barakat, in the American University in Beirut who in his famous book the *Arab World: Society, Culture and State* has described the Arab family as, "*The basic central socio-economic unit which has a patriarchal tradition where father has the authority and responsibility as he owns the property and provides the family's livelihood*". He explains that "*this patriarchal family has assigned women in a subordinate status varying by social class.*"

In his book women are described as powerless, secluded, segregated as they continue to occupy the private domain of the household, and at the same time, discriminated against by personal status laws especially in areas of marriage, divorce and inheritance; and buttressed by the prevailing religious ideology. That is a real intensive summary of how he portrays women in the family.

The above-mentioned characteristic of Arab family, which explicitly suggests the inferior position of women and hence mandates power to the males, is a general statement that maintains and confirms the stereotype nature of the Arab family. Although in general we do not observe nor see drastic changes in gender relations in the Arab family, yet in my view, general statements and positions as the above should be examined further and discussed in more depth through further empirical findings as the Arab societies in general, are undergoing different socio-economic and political changes due to globalization and privatization policies which in turn is impacting the formation of the family at large including the nature of intra-household gender relations variably according to social class, and ethnicity, this is talking about the Arab region.

An in-depth analysis on the Arab family, especially in the context of gender and power is multidimensional and should distinguish between the two levels of analysis: First, analysis that relates to the macro-social level, that is the loci of power like the State, legislation, capital or resources and opportunities... etc. And analysis that relates to micro-social level, the immediate social life where family cultures and nuclear dynamics are given expression.

In this context, analyzing gender inequalities within the family should respond to research questions raised as to whether the oppression of women is a direct, and in some way necessary, consequence of societal system. This is important for policy implications. Furthermore, we should also ask if there is a deterministic relationship between the "structural factors," division of labor for instance, and oppressed status of

women, as women are always presented as passive and recipients. It is important to realize to what extent these societal constraints penetrated the daily life of family unit, or to what extent does the macro-social dimension shapes the micro-social dimension. Understanding the different levels can have direct policy implications of course. For instance, some policies can be promoted on a short term as a sort of coping strategies to empower women and expand their circle of authority and power, but such strategies should be tied to a clear vision of long term strategies that have strategic implications and can affect general policies that governs the family's livelihood, for instance State and legislation reform that can enlarge women's opportunities and capacities through legal protection which can have a direct impact on women's status in the family.

Such research questions as to whether dependency and forms of oppression and exploitation of women in the family took root more at the societal level or on the micro-level can explore the level of the relationship which can prove that, at times, it is not a mechanical one. To elaborate more, some Western sociologists, recently in their various studies on the family, have argued that despite "official patriarchy" rural women for instance exercised considerable power in pre-capitalist economies, owing to a division of labor that entrenches the "complementarity of tasks" and often led women to perform important roles outside home.

It seems clear that in certain historical stages, women's roles went beyond the strictly domestic sphere like for instance the Palestinian women in the uprisings who were able to take social as well as political roles in addition to their reproductive roles, but in stages of political stability, women were nevertheless excluded from major roles relating to public life or the societal system in general. So the idea of separation of private and public remains still prevalent despite the occasional changes in gender roles.

On the other hand, although the complementarity of roles has traditionally been a source of strength in marriage for instance, it can become at the same time a source of weakness within marriage as has been discussed in the Egyptian case study by Naghiub and Lloyd, the Population Council has published this study, where the growing contribution of women to family finances results in no measurable improvement in their other domestic responsibilities or rights.

According to different studies, analyzing bargaining policies within existing marriages can give only an incomplete picture of the determinants of the well being of men and women. Although the marriage market is an important determinant of distribution of power between men and women as it can determine who marries, and who marries whom, yet the extent to which the marriage market also determines distribution within particular marriages depends on whether spouses can make binding agreements in the marriage market. The imbalances and unequal gender relations in the Arab family have always determined division of responsibilities in general. As men have been responsible for providing financial needs for the family in addition to protection, and maintenance, whereas the traditional responsibility of women has been centered on the internal well-being of the family. This gender division of familial responsibility is based on the complementarity of gender roles, which creates the interdependence between men and women, and this in normal conditions can promote solidarity and cohesion, but in difficult conditions especially like in the Palestinian context, it can also promote conflict.

In the Palestinian context, for instance, where unemployment is high for the males and of course females, and poverty has become a spread structural phenomena, as Penny Johnson has indicated, the Palestinian household, or this kind of analysis exposes the security and sustainability of such a policy. So to what extent is the

traditional gender division of financial responsibility for the well-being of the family maintained in the Arab, or the Palestinian society in the face of the present changing socio-economic and political conditions? There is also an empirical issue that should be observed further because there is a big puzzle about this traditional breadwinner and who is that breadwinner in such a context?

A popular concern in dealing with gender and power in the family is the area of women and the organization of work in the family. In the economic sense, the first model that analyzes this issue is the cooperative or community oriented model which assumes a lack of distinction in the assignments of roles especially the productive roles.

The second model sets up a duality based either on a form of functional complementarity or the marginalization of women. This has been criticized due to the cases of overlap in male and female tasks. Among the more radical positions, there is the idea that the family is the foundation of the patriarchal system, the place where the oppression of women as well as their alienation develops. This position has been the most popular in identifying the Arab family, which becomes a combination of “complementary and contradictory” elements at the same time. Halim Barakat has also manifested that.

The issue of women and work, and the emphasis of the society on paid work as being more important than unpaid work, is also an important area of research that the Arab social scientists should promote. Many of the tasks associated with rearing a family are seen as a product of unpaid work, and despite the rise of female economic activity in the Arab world, most household tasks are still done by the woman even when she takes up paid work. In general, feminists have identified gender inequalities in paid work as one of the key forms of discrimination in modern societies. The debate is especially relevant among feminists who have long argued against the sole homemaker role for women and for the integration into the male world of work.

Recent research findings have also promoted another level of findings that are important in analyzing gender and power. They have emphasized the significance of the connection between the nation-States and gender relations as Kandiyoti’s work outlines. As States begin to mobilize work forces and make laws, the state becomes a direct determinant of patriarchal relations molded by the ruling elites. This State patriarchy, as Kandiyoti calls it, is where the State becomes an actual creator of culture, as well as the maker and enforcer is also of interest and should be investigated more.

As new Arab States are modernizing their societies are not depending solely on the traditional legitimacy, except when they deal with gender. The contradiction between modern State and patriarchy has a schizophrenic dichotomy as women aspire to become members in the parliament but they face difficulties in divorcing their husbands. I think the difficulty is not only in the dichotomy but also in the double standards where the modern secular and civil laws are applied to the economic and politics spheres, whereas the religious laws are applied to the personal status laws, which leave women in confusion, which limit their power in the family. This dichotomy is also manifested when we talk about the Palestinian context, and when we talk about the new Palestinian curriculum, which has adapted modern concepts like citizenship, democracy, human rights, but when applied has been defined by the cultural and traditional sources, which have emphasized the allegiance to the family, for instance, and this contradicts with these concepts in application. This is manifesting how the donor community is imposing new values that are culturally conflicting.

So in this context it is important to develop the area of research on the concept of distribution of power when it is a revolutionary stage as we have manifested in the discussion this morning. Women have more voice and in analyzing the Palestinian politics, a comparison between pre-Oslo and post-Oslo politics, regarding representation, power and participation becomes very interesting. At the same time formal vs informal politics, has also become important when talking about gender and power in transitional situations.

A final area of research that I would like to promote is the understanding of the paradoxical impact of globalization and privatization on family formation, attitudes and gender relations. This area has a combination of conflicting dynamics. As the State loosens its role in service provision, because of privatization, women are more pressured to respond to this gap by promoting coping strategies, but at the same time it can have a positive implication in a gender perspective as state patriarchy is loosening up, which may affect the ideological framework and the legislative format and thus give more room for women.

Discussions for Dialogue V

Penny Johnson

There are some questions that I would like to put forward. Does nationalism give a different sense of empowerment? Is globalization a visual culture? At times globalization is seen as an invasive force and I feel that one effect of its invasive nature is to reinitialize the traditional family structure. I also think that we need to look at power relations within genders and the positions within the family structure. It would also be interesting to look at the different attitudes that parents have towards their sons, daughters and daughters in-law.

Malak Zaalouk

I would like to add another dimension to the power relations that Penny just introduced and that is power in relation to paid and unpaid work. Also, is there any leverage in power?

Martina Rieker

I would like to make a link between breadwinners and refugees. In Palestine, incarceration has caused a problem with bread winning leverage because at one time or another breadwinner maybe in jail. Taking this into account can we say that the paradigms of breadwinners has changed due to this refugee status?

Suad Joseph

What do we mean about power? Is it linked to the idea of agency and self in that we want to improve one's power? It would be useful to delink power and gender issues and link power to another agency like self. What is the nature of power? I feel that we need to look at the new discourses of power.

Hoda Rashad

We should introduce a new term for 'women and power' and it should be something like 'women and welfare' or 'women and well-being.' Is power related to education? In Egypt there are 3% of women above the age of 15 that have a university degree.

Eileen Kuttab Response

The breadwinner concept has been promoted by the traditional family view as the one with power. Because the traditional male breadwinner is no longer the breadwinner women have had to step in and take over so as to keep the family together. During the second Intifada, women have created income-generating projects. These projects have been called an economic failure but I feel that this is still a very empowering concept. I feel that in the micro level, women are gaining informal power. I also think that women will soon get the idea of their individuality and power through this process.

Hoda Elsadda

When we look at Palestine, what do we mean to struggle?

Mona Khalaf

I would like to look at women's work and power in both the informal and the formal sector and whether this empowers women. I feel that this depends on the women's earning income and how it is spent, ie who decides how the income is spent. I feel that we have to be careful in linking work and empowerment. When we are talking about the well-being of women this includes leisure time, and I feel that they have very little leisure time. We need to decide and agree on the terminology that we are using. What do we mean about power? What do we mean about empowerment?

Soraya Altorki

I am interested in the idea of breadwinner and the notion of the expectation of the male as the breadwinner. I feel that this has become part of the masculinity of men, and so women's income would go into the unnecessary or secondary things. It is also very hard for women to admit that their husband is not the breadwinner.

Rabab Abdulhadi

In Palestine privatization has minimized the size of the State and it has opened the space for women. But we should ask the question which women? I would say that it is for women of the middle class and educated women or women who are related to the PLO in one way or another. We also have to ask how this space has been opened?

Suad Joseph

We should look at how nationalist projects or movements have played out gender manifestations.

Eileen Kuttab

In Palestine I do not feel that privatization has provided many opportunities for women because it is gender oriented.

Dialogue V: Child rearing, Child Socialization, and Children's Rights

Chair Introduction: Afaf Meleis

A recent study in the United States made a big splash. It is a multi-disciplinary, multi-national study, that hit the newspapers and there is a lot of debate on it. The study was done to explore the relationship between childcare services and behavior of children. Some of the findings of the study were that children who spent many hours in daycare centers tended to be more aggressive, their behavior was problematic. What was interesting was that the study was interpreted differently by different people. The men in the study said that too many hours in childcare is not good for the kids and that we need to send the kids back home, and guess who stays home with the kids? The women say that this is not the interpretation of the study and why these children had aggressive behavior might be because the children already had problems, or because the nature of childcare was mediocre, and this may have created the problem.

We have several questions that we will look at. We will look at the child, with a comprehensive look at childbearing and child socialization. We also want to look at how children are raised within Arab families and what are the interfaces of family with other social institutions which tend to socialize children? I think it was said earlier that families are about children, I think we might disagree about that and we might debate it. I believe that families are about lots of things and there are families about children, but they are very diverse in the definition of family as there is diversity in the roles of women.

We will also discuss parenting and the relationship with preserving, constructing or deconstructing children's rights and we hope to answer, through dialogue, whether Arab families tend to meet the needs of children with gender and cultural sensitivity, and how does that manifests itself within the family structure?

There is a question about whether there is such a thing as *self* and *individualism* within the structure of Arab families and how do these *self* and *individual* get created within the structure of Arab families? And of course we did say earlier that there is no such thing as an Arab family because there is a lot of diversity. This is a very complex question.

I would like to introduce our speaker Dr Malak Zaalouk, who is a graduate of social anthropology and political economy. Her thesis was in political economy but her degree was in social anthropology from the University of Hull in the United Kingdom. She works in early childhood, and she is interested in girls education, education and information systems, and she also links this with adult education and policy learning. She has done extensive consultations in many parts of the world. She has been to Africa and Asia and she consults in this area of child education. She is also the initiator of the community schools in Egypt, and she is currently the chief of the Education section at UNICEF.

Presenter I: Malak Zaalouk

I will begin from a policy framework that needs and requires to be contextualized, and actually the core knowledge base is virtually absent in terms of children and child rearing. This is mainly due to the change in concepts of children, here and globally. The fact that children have moved from being non-persons to persons, whether in the Western world or the Middle East, and the fact that in the Middle East there are still vestiges of the non-person, even though there is a very strong child rights movement. This movement will definitely have an effect on the concept of children and how we deal with them. However the general policy frameworks that exist at the moment, whether nationally or globally, are based on static assumptions and are void of contextualization. I think that this makes a lot of these policies suffer and that it requires policy makers and researchers to work together to really contextualize this area.

In this part of the world, the family is the primary arena of social action for early childhood, mainly the age bracket of 0-3 in particular. I also need to point out that in this part of the world, specifically in Egypt, only 12% of children, 0-8, are in institutions other than the family. So the vast majority are relegated totally to the family as the space for social action and this is significantly important for children in that age group.

I want to begin by looking at what is the comprehensive early child care development policy framework. This framework is one that is increasingly used in many of our countries like in Lebanon, and Jordan, through international agencies. However it is almost a blind application, since we do not have much of the knowledge base that would render it more contextual. All these components, survival, growth, psycho-social and cognitive development, are intimately intertwined. There were traditional approach, in which the cognitive was relegated more to schools, pre-schools etc, and the other components were primary health-care and IMCI initiatives, but now they are all being tackled in a more comprehensive fashion. Another comprehensive component of this approach is the fact that the care provided is not just done by families anymore, and it is moving into communities and other institutions. So it is comprehensive in the sense of the aspects of childcare as well as institutions that would be looking after children.

The international definition of children is from the age group 0-18. In the Middle East we do not tend to look at people of 18 years as children. The specific age bracket for the early child care component is 0-8 years, and it interfaces with the schooling simply because there is new thinking in terms of the linkages between family care, schooling and the transitional phases. All the recent research on brain and child development begins to show how really important it is to link the two years of schooling with the family context. Care has been included into this and it is the recognition of the emotional aspects, and all those things that go into enabling an environment. But it has not been looked at in detail neither globally nor in our region. The whole notion of relationships, physical contact, reliance, and all these other components of the caring process were not singled out as significant but are now increasingly beginning to be seen as important.

There is the recognition that home becomes the immediate caring environment simply because all the brain related research is beginning to point out how increasingly important the 0-3 age group is. Research has shown that in those very

vital hours and weeks after the birth of child, the family is very important and it is the most important actor in this stage of child development. Development, in this framework, refers to the lifelong process of human development where they learn to handle more complex things and also a movement from dependency to autonomy. It is important to contextualize this in our own independent cultural and national contexts and ask ourselves what this has on child rearing practices? Why has this become such a huge focus for attention?

This could be because globally, we are moving more into a rights movement stage that has children in the forefront. Just recently there was a global campaign in which there is a vote that says 'yes for the child.' This puts a huge amount of pressure on governments and policy-makers to make children their first priority. It took a century for a lot of nations to recognize that children are a first priority. The Child's Rights Convention has been signed by many of the nations in the world with the exception of a few.

Children's rights is a potent entry point for human development and it obviously has an economic base. There has been a lot of research done in the involvement in the early start stages, in terms of opportunities to learn and personality development. These are the rationales behind increasing the importance of investing in an early childhood development. It also breaks the vicious circle of poverty, it counters discrimination, and it can serve as an entry point for community and social mobilization because it is very community based and a lot of it can trigger and catalyze a lot of these movements.

From a scientific perspective, we are beginning to understand the critical importance of the first synaptic connections in the brain, how these happen, and what are the kinds of things that will create more synapses and more complex and developed brain structure, that would enhance a lot of development processes? It also affects the potential for learning, and it critically impacts on the formation of intelligence, personality, and social behavior.

There are also a lot of studies on resilience and it is becoming another area in its own right, and how children grow to be emotionally balanced psychology. Early detection and prevention of mental and physical diseases can decrease with proper interventions of care within families and in very simple forms. On a programmatic level, this kind of comprehensive approach can improve other family-related initiatives, foremost of which is gender relations. Most of the comprehensive frameworks employ complimentary strategies, so it is not just the family but it is also connected to communities, to policies, to service delivery, to institutions, to national resources, to media, and the whole national context. So it is complementary in that sense, but these strategies work hand in hand. Their focus is essentially in poor and developing countries. The problem is that in our region we know very little about what goes on in families and this is an area that needs a lot of research.

We need to know what it is that we actually need to know to be able to launch these types of comprehensive policies that are critical to gender transformations and development and break away from dependency. These are very critical intervention points. We need to know a lot about existing national and international policies and laws pertaining to early childhood care and development. Existing programs, the kind of community relationships within those programs, and family structures are all very critical to the kinds of interventions and the diversities that are in our Arab nations.

Family relationships. What do we know about mother-daughter, father-son, mother-son, and father-daughter as well as sibling relationships? There is some research in this area but it is neither sufficient nor is it contextualized. Gender roles.

We keep on talking about them but what are they? How are they changing? What context is the change occurring in? When we talk about children we should remember fathers and what is their role in the child's life? Is there an essential role? Is it changing? In what ways is the change occurring? These are very structural and global issues and there are other issues that we need to look at especially in terms of research. What are the safety measures that families use? What are the disciplinary measures? What is punishment and what is reward? And how do families deal with this? Is there a prototype?

We are working on static assumptions and we do not have a lot of information on what families do with their children in a comprehensive, ethnographic way. How do families deal with caring, physical contact, breast-feeding, choice of names? What are the games that children play? What about storytelling? Is there any of that happening in illiterate societies? Is it changing in post-literacy societies? What is the kind of language that is employed with children? And what does this create in terms of relationships? What about body language? Is there a lot of it, for example, eye contact? What kind of discourse is employed with children and is this changing? How are values and emotional expression transmitted?

I have been in the field where little boys do not touch or kiss any women in the family including their mothers because the concepts of manhood are taught since the age of four.

To what extent are children being watched? To what extent is there participation between adults and children? What are the spaces that are relegated to children and what is relegated to adults? How much time is spent with children? What kinds of responses are there to crying and child expression? Are boys allowed to cry? They are not in most parts of the world and even less so here. What kinds of reactions and relationships do they have with parents?

To what extent is growth monitoring happening? Are children allowed to develop exploratory skills? When does independent behavior and decision making develop?

To be able to answer these questions we will have to work closely with families. A lot of the comprehensive packages will focus a great deal on parenting and parenting education and the ways to deal with these structures in this region of the world. There are obviously a lot of positives we need to reinforce but we need to know about them and we need to know they exist. We also have to make sure that policy-wise we are reinforcing these positive measures. But there is a lot of stuff that we need to question and how do we handle that?

Discussions for Dialogue V

Hania Sholkamy

The Arab crisis about family is children, because the Arab family is focused on the child. We are a family focused society and children are very important.

Sahar El Tawila

I agree that children are very important in our society but as Malak said, we need to change the focus of our views. Traditionally children were important because they benefited the family, they were a proof of masculinity, femininity, and womanhood.

Rabab Abdulhadi

The question is how should we deconstruct the family? And then how should we put it together again? How are family relations produced through siblings? What about orphans? What do we want to see when we say the Arab child?

Hoda Elsadda

What do we mean when we say that children should get more rights?

Malak Zaalouk response

When we talk about the rights of the child we are first pointing out that the child has rights as an individual. Very little research has been done in this region about this issue. We should not adopt a global model for children's rights because the family structure and way differ between our region and the west. Another problem is the diversity of family structures in our region. There is also the problem of the changes that are occurring within our family structures and this needs to be studied before we can promote new programs and new child rearing practices.

Suad Joseph

I have done a study on children in Lebanon and I have seen how the gendering of roles take place. Many families do not know what it is that they want for their children. There are multiple models available in television, literature, and popular culture and parents are confused on which model to take.

Penny Johnson

We should look at the family expectations on boys and girls and how they differ according to gender.

Nadine Naber

What are the problems that we need to address about children's needs? Why are children's rights not being pursued? Are children an extension of their parents?

Dina Craissati

The problem why children's rights has not been pursued is because governments are not interested in the issue. We need to get them interested if we want to make any changes.

Soraya Altorki

We need to look into how the State promotes family values and roles.

Malak Zaalouk

The question is how are children valued? How is this shown through child rearing? One of the problems about this issue is that we have to look at it along different contexts, class, religion etc. Nutrition can also be an indicator of the value of children. For example in a village in Egypt a women was breast-feeding her son until the age of 3 years while her daughter was stopped at 8 months.

Dialogue VI: Arab Families and State, Law, and Public Policy

Chair: Penny Johnson

Our first presenter is Ray Jureidini.

Presenter I: Ray Jureidini

There is no documented history of servants in Lebanon or the Arab world. It is strange that this has not been done. It indicates how invisible servants are in the Arab history and in the contemporary writings and literature on Arab families and Arab societies. I was recently reading in Jean Makdisi's article, her autobiographical account of her mother and her Teta. *Mother, Teta and Me*, which reflects on her childhood with them. There is only one reference to the issue of the domestic chores that her mother and Teta engage in, but they were ably assisted by servants. Also, when she returned to Lebanon in the early 1970s she said that she "reluctantly bowed to social pressure" and employed domestic help. But what is interesting in her account is that there is no mention of names of who these servants were. So the question are how significant are domestic maids in Arab family life? Because they have not come out as real people with names, faces, and influence in the literature. Were they indeed outsiders to the family, and did they remain so within the family as outsiders? We get a lot of stories, but not enough because the research has not been done, but clearly what is being said is that they are treated as one of the family. So the question is do they get treated as one of the family or is that simply a myth that is being perpetrate? And if they are one of the family why are they so invisible in the literature?

We know that prior to the civil war in Lebanon, most maids were from poor rural or urban Lebanese, Syrian or Palestinian families. They were taken in to households as early as 10 years of age and they stayed in the household until they left to be married. The parents of the girl would come once or twice a year to collect her wages. A lot more needs to be learned about this history, which will be an oral history, and we would have to go and talk to both men and women of all ages to get the information on who these maids were and what influence did they have on the family?

The second point that I wanted to make is that there a need to document not only who were the domestic servants, but how did they actually affect the family dynamics? How did they affect the lives of the children whom they looked after, and what is the effect of this on adulthood? Did they influence males differently from females? Are they always remembered in people's recollections of childhood? And what are the images that are brought up? To what extent are women who were brought up with servants compelled to employ servants when they marry, or before they marry, or when they have children, or even if they do not marry at all? These kinds of questions I think will be interesting to find an answer to.

In this regard, to what extent do domestic maids, particularly foreign maids, now not particularly in Lebanon but throughout the Arab world, from Africa and Asia, do they upset the balance of the Arab family. For example, we have some evidence from our study of Sri Lankans that those who live-in, are seen as somewhat of an intrusion to the family, there is tremendous tension between these maids and their employers . It was said in a number of interviews that arguments, for example, were often conducted behind closed doors. So what is the extent to which the presence of a foreign domestic maid actually determine the way in wich the family dynamics operate? To what extent does it actually help the family dynamics? That is to what extent are

marriage relationships, for example, enhanced by the fact that there is someone to do the domestic chores? One of the major issues has been to look at the extent to which the existence of domestic workers facilitates women going out and finding paid employment outside the home. Our findings in Lebanon say that that is not the case, it does not facilitate women going out to work. What we find in our study is tremendous abuse, and there is structural problems in the employment and in the bringing in of foreign domestic maids. Studies have shown that the employment relationship is one of contract slavery. This term is not an exaggerated one, and we find it quite appropriate to be used in this context.

Questions need to be asked as to the reasons why Asian and African women are now preferred as domestic maids? It is not only that they are cheaper but there is a status issue as well. Indeed as in many other countries, both in the Arab world and in the West, certain jobs have become 'racialized'. Infact Arabs will not do this kind of work because that is now the work of a Sri Lankan, or a Phillipino or an Ethiopian.

My original interest in this was work started when I was doing work in Israel, when Israel was bringing in foreign workers from Asia, and Eastern Europe, to replace Palestinians after the closure in 1991. There is also the discourse of complaint, by women in particular, about their Sri Lankan maids and the kind of problems that they create for them, and this often dominates discussion around the dinner table. *"It is hard to get good help these days."*

I also want to raise the issue about the extent to which there are racist attitudes and practices against foreigners in the Arab world. And I am raising the issue of Arab racism towards other foreigners and that is an issue that I think we should look into. And to what extent is that that a function of the patrilineal and patriarchal practices? And to follow from this to what extent can we talk about a xenophobia that actually exists in the Arab world through patrilineal and patriarchal relations, and those that particularly govern property ownership and citizenship? Why is it that foreign workers are only allowed in on a temporary basis? I feel that this is because they are expected to return to their home countries after their contracts have expired. They cannot settle and apply for citizenship, or to immigrate into these countries.

Lebanon has now passed a law that foreigners can own property in Lebanon except for Palestinians. Another important point is why is it that the major abuse, non-physical abuse, of domestic workers done by their female employers? So the phenomenon of female abuse by females is interesting to explore. I have asked a lot of people about this issue and I have a lot of theoretical propositions to explain this phenomenon.

Chair: Penny Johnson

Thank you Ray for not only bring out an invisible issue to light but to raising such an important question. Now I turn you over to Dr Barbara Ibrahim.

Presenter II: Barbara Ibrahim, "State, Law and Public Policy"

Let me start with some thoughts about definitions. It seems to me that it would be useful to think about laws, policies and regulations as elements of a process, rather than discreet things. If we think about process then there are several things going on. One is clearly the preservation of societal values, the ordering human interaction, clearly safeguarding power vested in the State and other authoritarian structures, and then finally laws and policies served to distributing resources in the society.

As such, these can all be tools in the hands of the State and those others who benefit from powers vested in them by the State. I think that it is important that we know that laws can be initiators of change but they can also be consequences of social change. And so new personal status laws, here in Egypt, have responded to emergent realities like passports and the physical possibility of air travel for women and so making problematic something that had not been problematic about patriarchal control over women in the past. Conversely it looks to me like a recent law which was passed in Egypt and allows Egyptian women, for the first time, to initiate divorce (Khul') may in fact have precipitate more husband – initiated divorces almost immediately. I believe the unintended reason for this is that this was so challenging to male pride and authority, rather than even contemplate a wife-initiated divorce many men who have held out for years are rushing to the courts with their divorce petitions. This was an unanticipated backlash to the law.

These two examples of the flip side of the coin are very much ones where the cause and effect are fairly easy to identify and fairly close together in time but I heard a fascinating example in which a law had a longer term, and much more difficult to disentangle, social outcome. I do not know if any of you have seen the studies about the decline in the crime rate in the United States which has been phenomenal in the last 25 years. This has been attributed by police forces to stricter policing, by judges to tougher sentencing, by economists to the up turns in the economic cycle but in fact a recent statistical analysis found that what was accounting for 50 % of the decline in crime was the legalization of abortion in the mid 1970's in the United States. The reason for this was because unwanted children were not being brought into the world.

A second general point to keep in our minds is that States and their legal systems are nowhere monolithic—States are collections of agencies and individuals with varying levels of authority with varying attachments to the status quo. So we can think of examples of a visionary minister at the cabinet level who could not push forward with his agenda's because of resistance at the middle-level bureaucracy.

In my remarks I would like to look at the one interface between the family and an important institution in the society and that is wage labor. It is interesting that both Ray Jureidini and I have picked up on this issue but we have almost opposite takes on it. He was looking at wage labor within the family while I am interested in the interface between families and the work place, as it has become completely, and physically segregated over the last two generations. This is happening in an era of privatization and the withdrawal of the State. So we have the struggle of both men and women to manage their work lives in this physically separated space and their home and family responsibilities at a time when the State is withdrawing. I think we need to keep in mind how recent this is.

In the late 1970's when I was observing women workers in Egyptian public sector factories, I was very struck by the fact that only way they could regularize their social lives in the workplace was to adopt kinship terminology. So everyone was an uncle or an aunt or a sister or

a brother. They simply could not imagine it another way to make it normal. This is no longer the case and similar research has shown that this may or may not happen but it is not to the same degree. Likewise in the late 70's people who came to work in these factories like young unmarried women were almost always blood kin of someone at the work place and this is no longer the case. Likewise marriages in those public sector factories were almost always between those who were working in the same work place and not arranged marriages at home, and the reason was that husbands could oversee their wives and be assured of their behavior after marriage and these were styles of life that were acceptable to both sides in the marriage bargain. Whereas a working wife was pretty much an alien idea in those times.

I also remember that girls in that area would tell me about leaving home every morning for the factory and with school books under their arms so that relatives and neighbors would assume they were off to school not to work. Clearly that fiction is no longer necessary and in fact a girl's marriageability is enhanced now if she has a job. So a lot has changed and it has done so in a short time.

How have policies responded to this major sift in families and work and the dual job couples are organized? Well when we had a socialist project and the government the main employer, the main policy response was amelioration. The government and the work place provided additional services but these services were simply to soften or to ease the double burden that working women must bear. That was not an assumption, that was a question and it was completely taken for granted. So women in Egypt had an extra hour off the workday for breast-feeding. Employers of 50 or more women were required to provide on-site day-care, and the government subsidized NGO'S in Egypt to prepared and freeze peas and tomato sauce so that women could buy them and take them home and make food preparation easier at the end of a work-day.

Now we are at a policy cross-road, because these laws and policies of the 60's and 70's are perceived as undermining competitiveness and cannot be afforded in the globalized economy that Arab countries are trying to respond to. The new draft labor laws are almost removing all of these former services and accommodations to working women and mothers in the work place and they are lifting all these responsibilities of the employer. So more and more families are thrown back on their own resources; a grandparent as caretaker; women having swiss-cheese careers because they move in and out of the workforce whenever they cannot manage both roles. They never accumulating social security and never acquire job seniority.

There are two alternatives that Arab States can look to if they want to observe what is happening in the industrialized parts of the world. These two models are often set up as competing and I would like to argue that they are basically the same thing. One is the Scandinavian model in which you create supposedly "family –friendly" policies in the work place and at home you create parental leave for both parents and they are required to make sure that they both use it so they are not penalized for having children. You do a lot of subsidies for childcare. This is juxtaposed against the United States model, which is a complete abdication of any public responsibility. Employers are not required to do anything. The State does nothing and the entire burden falls on the family. And sometimes only offering a post-facto tax credit to parents who must pay for expensive childcare in dual job families.

It seems to me that both of these policies make the same assumption, which is that it is families which need assistance in order to accommodate to an unchanging workplace and to some unchanging idea about the role or place that work should have in our lives. It is only very

recently that a handful of progressive, usually large co-operations around the world, that are coming to believe that something is fundamentally flawed in the work-family relationship, they are doing much more radical rethinking on many levels. One of the levels is spatial, and is questioning of the wisdom of separating work from the private space, some of it is temporal, questioning assumptions about when and for how long we work everyday, and some of it is structural, in the sense of rethinking people's life cycle and their relationships to work at the exclusion of personal goals. What is interesting to me is that the companies, which are experimenting with new work forms, have been studied in some detail. Not only are they happier places to work in, morale is higher and turnover is lower, but they are also more competitive and their bottom line is also better. This is the interesting news for those of us in developing countries who want to make lobbying efforts through some of these new ideas about policies for the work place.

This has been a rather long way around of setting out one example where laws and policies intersect with the family presumably in the name of "preserving" or "supporting" the family, but if not done very thoughtfully simply throwing the burden back onto the family, and not admitting that they are doing that. This is what I would call the bait and switch of the State in recent years.

Discussions for Dialogue VI

Rabab Abdulhadi

Ray, which Arabs would not do certain kinds of domestic work? It is true that there is domestic abuse by females but have you looked at the sexual abuse of the domestic workers?

Soraya Altorki

I am troubled by the term 'Arab racism' because in Saudi Arabia domestic help eat with the family. Is this a case in Lebanon only? Why do you call it slavery? How is it slavery?

Samia Mehrez

In the representation of the family in the literature the nanny is portrayed as the foster mother and she occupies a more important space in the narrative. She is also portrayed with a very ample personality.

Eileen Kuttab

One thing that I think needs to be looked at is the cultural effect of a foreign maid on the family. There is a study that suggests that the language of the children is affected as well as the cooking and the loss of authority of the parents.

Afaf Meleis

I am interested in the effect of domestic workers on marginalized women. I would like to see the world from their eyes and look at the well-being of these women.

Mona Khalaf

Ray, How many interviews have you done? Are domestic workers being hired so that women could go out to work? I have observed that if women of the middle class have domestic

maids they will usually work but those from a higher class would not work. In the past domestic workers were seen and treated as part of the family, is this the case now?

Suad Joseph

Laws have become an instrument of the construction of a subject. This has become an era of laws. They are used by the population to affect the State.

Hoda Elsadda

I would like to say to Ray that there does exist literature about domestic workers and it goes back a long way. It is true that there is abuse and exploitation of domestic workers but there is also another side to the relationship between domestic workers and their employers that is one of good relations. In the Arab world work and family relations models have been handed down but now we need to step out of these existing relationships and create new ones.

Hoda Rashad

Ray, I think that there are two sides to domestic labor relationships. There is the relationship between the domestic worker and the children and the relationship between the domestic worker and their employer. In Egypt, foreign domestic labor is usually paid better than Egyptian domestic labor.

Ray Jureidini response

The sample of our study was of interviews of 70 Siri Lankan women who had to be interviewed outside the workplace. This survey does not represent all domestic workers but it is a start. Not all relationships between the domestic workers and their employers were bad, there were some good relations. Why do I call it slavery? This is because some of the definitions of slavery have been found to apply in this case. For example, there is the threat of violence, there is the restriction of movement, and there is the exploitation of the person in the workplace. These three things are done to the foreign domestic workers, their passports are taken, they have no days off, and they are on call 24 hours a day. ILO conventions do not cover these workers. There have been reports of sexual abuse of domestic workers but this is found in the Gulf States and not in Lebanon. The relationship between the domestic worker and the children is usually strong and children have been found to confide in the maid rather than their mother and this would cause problems of resentment from the female employer.

Barbara Ibrahim

Is marital conflict diffused by having domestic help? I would say that the answer to this would be yes. The reason for this would be because there is always someone to do the work that could be a possible cause of the conflict. Also, there is someone else to blame. So in this way tension and conflict is deflected on to the maid.

Arab Families Working Group

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Cairo Workshop Report

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Dialogue VII: Palestine Country Case

Chair: Martina Rieker

This panel will look at the issues that the family faces in Palestine. We will start with our first presenter, Penny Johnson.

Presenter I: Penny Johnson

1. Palestinian exceptionalism versus a comparative framework

Both researchers in Palestine – and colleagues in this workshop – tend to treat Palestine as an exception, and indeed its exceptional circumstances can be compelling to examine. However, this exceptionalism can preclude understanding commonalities across Arab societies and here a comparative framework has not been sufficiently deployed and may be enormously useful in understanding basic issues in family research. For example: The question of how nuclear is the nuclear household? In Palestine, 75% of households are now nuclear, but our household research shows the predominance of kin-based housing arrangements. Of those not living in a completely separate dwelling (31% of sample), 77% report that they shared housing arrangements with kin of the head of household and 68% that these kin were first degree relatives of the househead. Questioning of the meaning of nucleation across our societies may yield interesting results.

2. Family versus household research.

The example above is in the framework of a community-based household survey. When thinking about participation in the AFWG, some colleagues in Palestine originally thought our research didn't fit because it was "household, not family." It would be interesting to explore how these frameworks shape research questions and interest and how to integrate them.

3. Brief description of Birzeit (Institute of Women's Studies) household survey

A community-based household survey of 2254 households in 19 communities, including the Old City of Jerusalem conducted in the summer of 1999. The report is to be published in three or four volumes, with the first volume in June/July 2001. We describe it as "multifaceted" -- which is a kind word for accommodating the research interests of eight researchers from fertility to migration to human capital allocations and preferences in work, marriage and education for male and female children, to the "value" of children to gendered divisions of labor, to distributions of the burden of care, to social support systems, to economic histories. In many ways, it is a (perverse) attempt to get at qualitative methods through quantitative methods. At one level, the study focuses on differences, whether between urban, camp and rural households or by region in the areas outlined above.

4. The Significance of Localism

Here a question I raised yesterday about "localism" or "systems of enduring dispositions" (Bourdieu) where family composition and processes seem tied to a particular place, rather than to national frameworks. In our survey, the significance of region often weighed more heavily in, for example, preferences for male and female children in work, marriage and

education, than factors such as wealth or status. This localism may be peculiar to the fragmented history of Palestine or have larger comparative resonance.

I have called it, half jokingly, the Hebron problem, given that the Hebron district in the southern West Bank tends to stand out in national statistics, as well as our own survey, from other districts in the West Bank (distinctions between the West Bank and Gaza are easier to explain by divided histories and economies). For example, Hebron's much higher fertility rate in national statistics (1995 TFRs, Hebron 6.83, remaining WB 5.61, Jerusalem 3.95, 7.44 Gaza) begs for an explanation, as does its lower formal female labor force participation, lower educational levels, etc.

This is often explained by simply asserting that Hebron is more "traditional" or "conservative," as well as dominated by family-based economies. However, what is interesting in our survey is that Hebron (the southern West Bank) preferred to give a much greater freedom of choice to both male and female children in their choice of spouse and to daughters in their freedom to work. One possible explanation is that cohesive family structures produce a kind of "trust" that daughters and sons will make choices in line with family interests – another is that these families exercise more direct and indirect "control."

5. Deconstructing camp and urban and rural differences

It is interesting in this regard, that rural households also allow greater freedom of choice in marriage and work than their camp and urban counterparts. Here both family structure and communities that are less "exposed" offer a partial explanation that needs much more exploration. Beyond this point, however, these categories of analysis need closer examination. They are a strong feature of almost any analysis of Palestinian society and are often considered self-explanatory. A closer questioning might wonder how "cities" function in a society that in fact lost its major cities and processes of urbanization, and how "rural" operates when most villages have lost both land and agricultural modes of life. (Indeed the somewhat elevated number of female-headed households in villages in our survey and higher proportion of the elderly suggest that some villages function as dormitory communities or at least represent those who are "left behind." In our survey, a high one-third of rural households had no one in the labor force). Camps -- those 50-year-old temporary dwellings -- are also assumed to have their own specific character that is distinct from urban and rural households, but obviously different camps can also fall along an urban-rural spectrum.

6. Gender Roles and Positions in the Family

Our survey showed that attitudes towards female education, fertility and work were highly conditioned by family position. In particular we asked male and female respondents questions about preferences in education, work and family size for a (randomly-selected) daughter and for a spouse of a randomly selected son. For example, 45% preferred a family size with three or more boys for their sons, while only 28% preferred this for their daughters. When contrasting educational preferences for daughters and daughters-in-law, also above, we found that only 24% were content with an educational level of "*tawjih*" or less for their daughters, while 38% chose this level for daughters-in-law. And 67% preferred their daughter to engage in paid employment (including after marriage), while only 59% chose this for daughters-in-law.

Here, for example, 74% of mothers chose employment for their daughters, while only 62% of fathers did – another form of family positioning.

7. War, migration and families: The Palestinian returnees

Quote from a returnee in Friends School drama club production, “Love in the Time of Pumpkins,” who is trapped in the school toilet during an Israeli raid: “My father is Palestinian, my mother is Serbian, and I am in this toilet.”

Returnees constituted 4% of sample population and 4.5% (102) of households (returnees were not a category used by PCBS in 1977 census, so this is of special interest, but can't ascertain representation). No differences in age-sex distribution, indicating they came as families. Returnees were found in similar proportions in villages, cities and camps

Original inhabitants had a family size of 6.5, compared to a high of 6.7 for refugees and a considerably lower rate of 5.7 for returnees. Although there were no differences in wealth status, returnees own more of certain kinds of amenities – 18% computers and 49% satellite dishes compared to 8% and 35% of non-returnees (refugees less), suggesting a greater perceived need for communication and ties to the outside.

Only 9% of male returnees report themselves as primary child caretakers, as opposed to 20% on non-returnees, and 86% denote the wife as the primary caretaker, as opposed to 72% among non-returnees. Mothers and mothers in law completely absent as secondary caretakers, both in male and female responses (in general sample 23% of secondary care). They also contribute less to housework than non-returnees (none of the women of returnee origin denote husbands helping ever, even rarely, in contrast to 25% of those who are non-returnees). However, women work less hours (17% 2 hours or less as opposed to 10% of non-returnees, and 15% only at 5-6 as opposed to 36% among non-returnees).

Presenter II: Eileen Kuttab

I think Penny has told us about what our survey has shown. What I would like to promote is some of the issues that were raised yesterday, mainly on power, State formation and the transitional phenomena's and their impact on the family and on women in particular. I think that it is important to locate the gender-power relations in a society. There are different issues that we can talk about concerning the democratic transformation we have all dreamt about. Sometimes the State formation process has a very negative dimension in promoting equality and democracy because the institutionalization of power removes the spaces where people could act.

The duality that Palestinians live in concerning the formal and informal sectors is very important. The PLO has centralized power and legitimacy, which it has gained through the history of the organization. I believe that there is a split in formal political activity and the informal political activity that is represented by the Civil Society.

National liberation struggles do not promote issues of gender equality and the like because the people are all unified for the struggle. It is the Civil Society that picks up these types of issues. But during periods of transformation there is more space to pursue issues of gender and class. This duality between strong formal/political activity versus weak/informal activity is marginalizing the whole Civil Society, and this weakens the tools for the empowerment of women. This is one level of analysis that we have to deal with when we talk of power.

Another issue is the public space versus the private space. What is the definition of public and private? I think it is the delinking of the political movement that in turn delinks the national/political from the private. Here the public becomes the national and the private becomes the gender. Delinking is dangerous to both the democratic transformation of a society and the empowerment of gender relations in the family. I think that the isolation of equality and gender from governance and political systems is an issue that citizens have to deal with.

Another issue is the impact of funding and the donor community, on the agenda of the national authority and the Civil Society. I think the donor communities have been very effective in isolating us in these dualities of modernity and traditionalism. I also think that in maintaining the responsiveness to the donor community, the women's movement has lost, as have other movements. The reason for this is because the agenda has been shifted to promote gender issues that the donor community, rather than the society, wants. The problem of the donor community is that it has defined the political period as a post-independence one and I think that this has resulted in the depolarization of women's activism. I also think that a main problem is in not including the nature of governance as one of the core issues of democratic transformation and I think that there is still the traditional stereotyping of women and the traditional Arab family. The situation is very complex and needs to be studied in detail.

About NGO's. A question was raised if NGO's would be able to become a political movement. I would answer this question with a no. Even a coalition of these groups would not be able to form a political movement because they are specialized institutions who can not support or promote, political movements.

Presenter III: Rabab Abdulhadi

I would like to go back to a point that Penny Johnson made on the particularities of the Palestinian case. Are Palestinian families more exceptional than other Arab families? I would say that the answer is both yes and no. I would like to take the case outside the West Bank and Gaza and look at other concentrations of Palestinian people. When we talk about whether Palestinian families are exceptional or not we will need to talk about if there is a thing as a Palestinian identity? This is something that we have taken for granted. There is always tension between what is it that is unified about the Palestinians and, what is it that is diverse. I think this is very important in the study of the Palestinian family because on one hand there is this identity that keeps unifying the people because of what they have gone through. However, there are particulars to each case.

The second issue is what do Palestinian families do in their various locations? And how are these dynamics considered sites of oppression or sites of resistance for the family members? How do changes in the socio-political context affect these dynamics?

I would like to talk about some major issue concerning the Palestinian communities.

- The issue of uprootedness and exile. There are two aspects to this issue
- Those living in refugee camps throughout the Arab region.
- Those living in the diaspora [The West]
- The Palestinians in Israel and what type of family dynamics do they experience there? Specifically on the issue of whether they are second-class citizens. Are they a cultural

minority? What kinds of dynamics exist when you have Palestinians living there and speaking Hebrew and interacting with the Jewish community? How can we speak of a Palestinian family in this regard? Is this family a site of oppression or resistance?

- The question of house demolition under occupation. What does it mean to lose your home and livelihood? What does it mean when you go into the Israeli labor market? The shift in the post-Oslo period becomes very important in socio-cultural dynamics.

Rema Hammami has written on the construction of a culture of modesty during the first Intifada, by which there is a certain code of behavior expected of men and women. Women are not expected to wear makeup or colorful clothes. People are not expected to engage in joyful things such as singing. In all the years of the occupation there have been no love songs. What does this mean? How does this impact on the community and the way it sees itself? What does it mean when all these returnees come back? How do we define the social code when returnees bring in new codes? How do these new codes affect family dynamics?

Another issue are the Palestinians in the refugee camps. There is something in uprootedness and exile that makes the family the last institution for those who have no other institutions to deal with. If we look at the life of the people in the refugee camps, we will find that there are fourteen people living in one room what kinds of dynamics are created in this setting? What does it mean when families have co-education schools? How does this affect family dynamics? When we look at the Palestinian resistance movement that emerged in exile and the children that are joining this movement, then does the family become a site of resistance?

Finally, about the diaspora. The idea of how a family constructs itself in exile. How is it defined by the other? How does it define itself? What happens to the family when faced with the assimilation of the country of exile? Now we see a change in new generations as they assimilate both cultures and produce a new self and identity.

Discussions for Dialogue VII

Rabab Abdulhadi

Before we start our discussion I would like mention the issue of memories. The role of women in passing on memories about the family has both good and bad aspects. First, it helps maintain or create identity. Secondly, it maintains old myths.

Suad Joseph

I am interested in the way that gender has become institutionalized and how this institutionalization has absorbed the gender movement and taken away its initiative especially from the women's movement.

Sahar El Tawila

The issue of exile and return is being looked at as being specific to Palestine, but it is now an Arab issue. We have issues of exile and return from the Sudan, Egypt to the Gulf [in the

70's and 80's], from Morocco and from Lebanon. So this issue is common to most Arab families and affects the family structure in different ways. Some children from returnee families may come back to more restrictions while others would come back with a more traditional outlook.

Ibrahim Elnur

I would like to include another country that is in exile and that is Iraq. Iraq has most of its middle class in exile.

I would also like to say that the Palestinian economy is fluctuating because of the border restrictions, and this has a bad effect on the development of the Civil Society.

Nadine Naber

We need to define the concept of exile and what we mean by exile, because there are those who leave for economic reasons and are not forced out of the country. Also, what does the right to return mean to the Palestinian identity?

Concerning the collapse of the skeleton of the progressive movements, what does this mean? Where are the people of these organizations working now? What are they doing?

Jihad Makhoul

Eileen, you said that there are no more Palestinian love songs, why is this? What could those in exile do in helping the reproduction or preservation of Palestinian culture? Has this been studied? Has the portrayal of what is going on in Palestine in the media affected those living outside? Will this affect their return?

Nadine Naber

I have found, through my research, that the impact of being a Palestinian in exile has strengthened the Palestinian identity of youth born in the United States.

Mona Khalaf

How have villages lost their land? Why would people return to Palestine if they would live in camps?

Suad Joseph

How does the appearance or thought of an enemy affect identity? Does the appearance of a well-institutionalized enemy change the nature of the family?

Penny Johnson response.

Villages have lost their land because of land confiscation and also the pull of the Israeli market has pulled people from the villages out of the land. Also in 1968 most of the land was frozen and is not registered and villages are being settled by Israelis. Most of those who returned were working for the PLO.

In regards to the question of exile, the public space has changed and is now less available. The question is, can democracy be practiced in non-public spaces? This relates to the family because the issues of what can put out in the public space and still be acceptable, is raised.

Eileen Kuttab response

The question that has been raised is if the women's movement has been absorbed by the State? One of the problems with the women's movement is the problem of the women who are coming from outside, returnees, and are trying to rule in a very authoritarian way. Grass-roots movements are still there but they are not well organized, so they need time to restructure.

Rabab Abdulhadi response

I believe that the Palestinian family is different than other Arab families. However, their uprootedness has produced strong community feelings. The Palestinian identity is continually changing and is being reconstructed according to the changing situations. We will find that the children living in the camps are very concerned with memories of where they came from, even if they never saw it.

Soraya Altorki

We have to look at the cultural assertions of identity. What happens to institutions like the family, that are both the source of security and oppression?

Ray Jureidini

With the traumas occurring everyday, have there been any psychiatric studies done on this? And how has trauma affected identity? How trauma is being dealt with by the family or community?

Hoda Elasdda

The perceptions of masculinity have fluctuated between pre-Oslo and post-Oslo period. How is this affecting the family structure?

Barbara Ibrahim

This is in response to Eileen Kuttab's point about the structural adjustment and how it would marginalize Civil Society, as Ibrahim Elnur said the effect could be the opposite because NGO's have become very involved.

Hoda Rashad

I feel that we need to study the cross-cultural experience versus real exile.

Rabab Abdulhadi

We need to look at identity and trauma the way that Fanon did in Algeria. Also, about how trauma affects children. Before we used to glorify sacrifice for struggle, while now we need to pay more attention to children. Children should play, not fight. There is also the issue of hyper masculinity, which is similar in other dominated communities. It is simplistic and mechanistic to say men become violent when faced with oppression. I feel that the issue here is more complex.

Penny Johnson

Trauma consists of actual events and the reactions to these events. In Palestine, there is a high rate of violence and there is the lack of a public framework to deal with it in this size. The Gaza mental health clinics deal with face to face counseling, but with problems of this magnitude, this does not help. We need more public models to deal with trauma rather than individuals. Also, cultural workers need to work and create a healthy environment for children. I also feel that militarism without politics causes a crisis of masculinity.

Eileen Kuttab

There will be restlessness and powerlessness as long as the State is not delivering to the people. But Palestine has a premature economy even the private sector is an extension of the State.

Dialogue VIII: Lebanon Country Case

Chair Introduction: Mona Khalaf

I would like to start examining the Lebanese Case Study by making the following remarks:

- Lebanon is one of the smallest countries in the Arab world but was for a very long time and will again be, we hope, a major cultural, educational health and financial center in the region, despite all the progress achieved along these lines in the various Arab countries over the last two decades.
- Lebanon is one of the countries that have contributed substantially to the preparation and formulation of the International Declaration of Human Rights but has violated this Declaration more than once through civil strife.
- Lebanon is the Arab country that is closest to a democratic system in the region, but seems to be presently moving away from it.
- Lebanon is the only Arab country where Islam is not the religion of the state, yet it is the Arab country where internal religious conflicts seem to flourish.
- Lebanon gave women the right to vote as far back as 1953, but has presently only 3 women in Parliament and no Lebanese woman was ever appointed minister.
- Lebanon is a country where women are highly educated (they represent 50% of students enrolled in universities), but very few of them have made it to decision-making positions; i.e. the glass ceiling is far from being broken.
- Lebanon is presently going through a very severe economic recession, its public debt is more than 150% of its gross domestic product. Unemployment rates are very high. As a result, Lebanon is witnessing a huge exodus of young Lebanese. Anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that their number is around 15,000 per month. This phenomenon is not new in Lebanon; Lebanese are known to have always looked for better living alternatives abroad. There is a major difference now: Lebanese who are presently leaving the country are not coming back. It is important to note that migration, as a result of the civil strife, was also internal. The traditionally heavy rural – to urban migration has been intensified by the forced migrations that took place. Official estimates indicate that between 800,000 and one million persons were displaced at one time or another during the war out of which 20% became established in the areas to which they migrated. It should also be mentioned that the average family size of the displaced is larger and the proportion of individuals younger than 20 years of age among them is higher than the national average. It is thus important to examine the status of displaced youth living under these conditions in an attempt to empower them both economically and socially and help them relate and cooperate with the members of the new milieu in which they live.

Prior and during the civil war, men left their families behind and sought work in the Arab Gulf countries during the oil boom and sent remittances to their families at the end of every month. As a result of this and given the heavy toll that the civil war had on human lives

Lebanon, the number of women headed households increased. Available statistics indicate that around 14% of Lebanese families are headed by women.

What was the impact of the points I have raised on Lebanese families? How have these families – whether male or female headed – coped with these problems? We will attempt to answer these questions focusing on the themes and issues raised yesterday. Before doing so, I would like, however, to point out to the results of two studies undertaken in Lebanon, ten years apart. The first one undertaken in a rural area – aimed at assessing the economic contribution of women and examine its impact on intra-familial relationships, *The Economic Contribution of Women and its Effect on the Basic Dynamics of the Families in two Lebanese Villages*, (by Mona Chemali Khalaf & Irene Lorfing, 1985).

According to this study, women work only whenever there is a pressing economic need to do so. In addition, whether they earn money or not, they still feel that their role should be confined to the home, to the private space, while their husbands only are entitled to the public space. In addition, regardless of how much they earn, they still view their husbands as the breadwinner of the family. Earning money, however, gave them more voice in decision-making within the household.

The second study *The Arab Woman and Work: Facts and Perspectives, the Lebanese Case 1998*, (by Mona Chemali Khalaf) was undertaken in Lebanese urban areas and covered the textile industry. The fieldwork took place in 1995 – 1996 with a sample of 520 women. Its main results could be summarized as follows:

- 52.3% of the women in the sample contribute more than half of the family budget.
- 16.8% of the women declared that their involvement in decision-making within the family decreases when they stop working. This figure increases to 41.1% in the case of married women.
- Husband/wife relations are still ruled by prevailing family values: the wife still considers that her primary role is her home-making one.
- 53.1% of the women are ready to leave their work if their husbands ask them to do so.
- 51% of the married women think that their husbands are the major breadwinners.
- 40% of the women who earn the same salary as their husbands still consider their husbands as the main breadwinners.

It is clear that women's attitudes regarding their status within and outside the family have not really changed during a decade and these attitudes prevail both in rural and urban areas. I will now introduce our first speaker, Jihad Makhoul.

Presenter I: Jihad Makhoul

The war that we speak about in Lebanon has been called many names, the civil war, other's war on our nation, and the regional conflict in Lebanon. Arab families in Lebanon would include a lot of different ethnic backgrounds like the Palestinians in Lebanon, Lebanese in Lebanon, etc. To make this easier for myself I will focus at the Lebanese in Lebanon. I have

looked at the literature from 1990 onwards. Studies on family in the 1990's are very limited because the war ended in 1990 and most scholarly work at the time was concerned with the emergency conditions. In this literature I did not find a workable definition of the Arab family. In the majority of the studies that I have found the family is the smallest unit of analysis and there is little stress on gender roles and how they interact.

Basic considerations

The concept of Arab families in Lebanon could include, as a working definition Lebanese families [where the male head of household is Lebanese] Other families who have been residing in Lebanon for a long time having multiple ethnic origins, such as Armenians and others, Palestinian refugees of forced settlements, such as those living in the camps.

The choice for the theme will be limited to the Lebanese families. Studies on families and war in the 1990s are very limited as the war ended in 1990 and during that time, scholarly writing was limited to the description of emergency conditions, displacements, casualties and fragmenting societies. The 'war' will refer to the 1975-1990 war in Lebanon, which extended 16 years and included Israeli invasions and outbreaks of battles in different areas in the country and included externally backed local fighting parties. The definition of the Arab family in the studies or the literature available through printed published journals and accessible text books fall short of defining 'the family' when the authors refer to it. It also seems in the majority of references to represent the smallest unit of analysis in the studies presented. There is very little stress on the cultural gender roles and how these interact in the topic of interest or that in question. The authors present a reductionist portrayal of the 'family' either to the stereotypical extended family, usually descriptive of rural Arab cultures or the nuclear family type, presented characteristic of the modern urban communities. Thus leaving no space for families and who their constituents are and the kinds of relationships among them.

This also portrays the 'family' as a static entity, useful for etic viewpoint studies, with little internal analysis of the impact of roles on other family members and the family as a whole. Although the 'family' is mentioned in various contexts, in fact the individual family members are those who are referred to: the children the parents and the married couple or simply the number of individuals in the household. In many cases they have been the 'targets' of development projects after the war within a 'community development' approach.

There is, because of the funding sources and recent stress in the international arena on gender issues, an attraction in the social science field to the structural violence against women and less powerful men. Projects are described to have moved on 'empowering' women and educating the public on the issues of women's and human rights [through education, literacy programs] in the aim of rebuilding a shattered society after the war. However, feminist research into the deconceptualisation of militarism and political boundaries, which define family roles and gender related structural and domestic violence are non-existent for Lebanon.

The literature covers:

1. Effect of the war on specific family members, such as children, mainly written by agencies working with orphans or disabled children; health effects of the war on family members, with a stress on mental and psychological problems and matters as well as mortality rates.
2. Sample surveys on a defined student body to investigate social values and norms in comparison with pre-war data on social norms in the family.
3. Displacement statistics within Lebanon and the basic needs of the families are presented by a few academicians, a workshop, NGOs and the Ministry of Displaced of the public sector. Particular stress recently on casualties and political conditions of the South in relation to the Israeli occupation and fighting across the border, in the 1990s. Cross-sectional economic conditions of some families or families in general- all ad hoc and with no follow-up to study changes to the family over time.

Official reports on money being spent for displaced families 'returnees' and interventions, to rehabilitate them back into their original property- no studies done on how the meaning of home has changed for these families and their perceptions of the recently changed lives that they have adapted to in their new settlements.

Studies of Lebanese families abroad after migration due to the war, and how this has influenced women's roles and the new opportunities it has given them in their new countries of residence.

A hint of the multiple realities of families along many loyalty lines: descent, political affiliations which are used to access favors, goods, services through mediation [*wasta*]. Restructuring of Beirut during the war and in the development and reconstruction period of the early 1990s. Only one study points to the restructuring of families and household arrangements: massive population movements and their effects on the spatial configurations, uses and perceptions of space in terms of the public/ private, rural/ urban are blurred due to the war events. Specifically, since 1975, many families experienced changes in their residences. Economic impact of the marriage and divorce patterns have been marginally described, but not analyzed in depth. Adverse financial conditions are reported to have decreased the number of new marriages and increased the rate of divorces. However, no analysis has been made to explore these phenomena over different social geographical and social settings.

Peace building and reconciliation. The reconciliation process among the Lebanese has been described in a small number of texts and workshop proceedings, but it is not documented or studied in the communities which have witnessed returns of displaced families. The Ministry of the Displaced established in 1992 has been given this task. However, the opinions and the involvement of the people themselves have been left out of the process because of the technocratic character and the involvement of key figures in the war affected communities as well as the disequilibrium in the balance of political power. This impairs negotiations and explains the lack of studies on people returning.

The available literature on social integration in Lebanon mentions that social integration is further hindered by existing structural inequalities which were existing before the outbreak of war, namely the social and physical development differentials; the unequal laws governing personal status and the existing political system which favors sectarianism to nationalism; the weak state which fails to be the effective guardian of society.

In conclusion, the studies done on Arab Families and war in Lebanon are mainly descriptive in nature, not analytical, with very few ethnographic and sociological accounts on the family and family dynamics.

Methodologies include surveys carried out on community levels [of special interests, such as health indicators for children etc..], and many with or in reference to the head of the household, who is in general considered to be male. At a country level recently done by the public sector with a lot of funding and yet little coordination and inconsistent findings, as the methods used relied heavily on doubtful available statistics in the country.

Implications for Research

What kind of structural change brings about what kind of change for families? How does this vary in different spatial contexts. Fertility levels and marriages decreased during the war [?], but also the number of elderly populations have increased and will continue to do so in general. Implications on family coping and supporting services.

Context analysis of change on the characteristics of the family is needed rather than broad generalizations.

How have families coped with disabilities or mental illnesses which have emerged after the war or in an after war context. Coping strategies of families in post-war conditions [poverty, spatial changes. Statistical data from the Population and Household and other surveys can be analyzed against available pre-war data, which may be used to describe changes in demographic and socioeconomic indicators.

Chair: Mona Khalaf

The topic that Zeina Zaatari will be tackling relates to women and their families and their participation in Civil Society, the role of NGO's focusing on development and some general comments about the themes raised yesterday about Lebanon.

Presenter II: Zeina Zaatari

One of the main issues discussed in the first dialogue yesterday dealt with whether families can still be considered the main location for social action in Arab societies. In the following pages, I want to tackle this question and some others in the context of Lebanon. I will also talk about my research on women's collectivities in Lebanon with a focus on economic development and I will raise some issues regarding women's empowerment in society. Are families the main location where people learn how to be social actors in society? Or have other areas arisen, as suggested by Dr. Craissati, where individuals learn how to become certain kinds of political, economic, and social subjects within the societies they live in? In the context of Lebanon, most research has always insisted that the state during the war (even some argue before) and within the post-war era has been weak. Even though, there are attempts to strengthen its role and enforce some regulations, yet in comparison to other Arab States, it is considered a weak state.

Here, I want to interject with a cautionary comment on civil society and the state. I feel that we have been situating the two in an oppositional and exclusionary relationship, the state vs. the civil society. I fear essentializing the state so it becomes this untouchable entity. Althusser talks about the ideological state apparatuses whereby the state operates through other institutions that have a symbiotic relationship to it. He identifies the educational system in the modern era as the most important element (which has replaced the church). As such, religious institutions have their own laws in our societies, yet they are very much so part of the state and part of civil society. Moreover, I believe that in our societies, there is a convergence of the ruling class (state interests) and the governing private sector. A coalition is established between those in power politically and economically. As such, civil society might not be in direct opposition to the state and notions of an active civil society and a private sector where democracy reigns and hegemony decreases need to be problematized further.

During the war years, family relationships were instrumental for people to maintain their living standards and to procure their daily and future needs. One builds relationships as a matter of survival strategy and maintains those relationships to ensure growth and development. Nonetheless, militias, political parties and other neighborhood coalitions were also locations for learning social action in which patron client relationships fed of and emulated familial relationships and often times used kinship idioms to reinforce the ties. Since 1990 (post civil war Lebanon), “civil society” action is in abundance. There are more family associations and NGOs registered in the Ministry of Internal Affairs now than at any point in time in Lebanon’s short history.

Some researchers (AbuKhalil) have suggested that with the decline and relative failure of political parties to act as democratic institutions and as the locations where individuals learn how to act socially, politically and economically, women’s NGOs and/or professional associations might be able to lead civil society in Lebanon into a more democratic process. Therefore, it becomes extremely essential for us to analyze the nature and process of organizing within these organizations. Joseph’s earlier work, *The Reproduction of Political Processes Among Women Activists in Lebanon: ‘Shopkeepers’ and Feminists*, indicates that women organizations were reproducing patriarchal and other inequalities. Joseph found that “[o]rganizationaly, there is little capacity for sustained coalition building, collaborative efforts, or working collectively with other organizations”.

Family life is still central in most people’s lives in Lebanon. Fictive and Real Kinship ties are still created and re-created on a daily basis to procure resources. The question that we should ask then maybe framed in terms of whether those supposed alternative spaces produce intrinsically different kinds of political subjects.

Women’s economic empowerment is a favorite topic of many international funding agencies and international NGOs. One organization in Lebanon is a lending micro-credit organization that receives funding from the USAID. They started out as a pilot project by Save the Children US and due to its success became an independent Lebanese organization. Economic development ideology is an interesting subject for study. There are a number of levels by which this ideology is enacted. First, we have the main headquarters with executive directors and young university graduates mostly females with their own ideas about economic growth and women’s roles in society. Second, there are the area supervisors who often times are very

educated (mostly university degree) with a middle class background and from the same geographic region as most of the loan analysts they supervise. Finally, the loan analysts themselves who maintain a weekly contact with most of the clients and whose education is usually limited to high school or less and who are from the villages where the women live. The organization has two types of loans that target low-wage earners. The first is for groups of women from 5 – 15, who are productive but have no access to established funding agencies. The loans are given to individuals within a group, but the members guarantee each other. The second program offered to both males and females, who have their own businesses, is the individual loan program with larger loans to be returned over longer periods of time. The proclaimed aim was to teach women how to become good entrepreneurs. The staff also had ideas about how to be a good citizen, how to empower women, and how to decrease social injustices and poverty. One should ask, then, about the political and social impact of women's participation in these organizations both as clients and as paid professionals. Does participation in these organizations have an impact on interrelationships within and without families? Does it empower women and change the power dynamic in their favor within family structures? Sometimes participation in these organizations opens new avenues, especially different kinds of production, for those involved. In what ways do the women and men as members of families and households make sense of these changes and of the pressures that participating in more than one kind of production for example entail.

Finally, I will present a brief comment on some new publications/studies in Arabic about Arabic families. Studies of the Arab Family in general, and even more recent studies, have tended to take a couple of trends or grand theories. Eickelman states that structural functionalism endured in the study of the region more so than in studies of other parts of the world. This fact, explains why structural functionalism has also endured in the study of the Arab Family, when other theories have been tackled in other regions of the world.

As recently as 1997, for example, Young and Shami, *Anthropological Approaches to the Arab Family*, have attempted to define the family as “a social unit:

- Based on common descent, or ‘shared blood’;

- Whose members share the same dwelling;

- In which the members work to accomplish a particular set of tasks, such as the production and distribution of food;

- Through which individuals are socialized and acquire important elements of social identity, including gender identity, linguistic/ethnic/national identity, and religious identity” They do, nonetheless make a claim for the diversity of the Arab Family and the almost impossibility of making a claim for a one unified type.

Therefore, for each of the aspects of the definition given they provide a range of possible ways that we have come to know based on field experience and data collected. To answer the question what is the Arab family, the authors state, “We can see that the two different organizing principles (descent and co-residence) and the two different kinds of projects carried out by families (productive and reproductive tasks on the one hand and socialization on the other) are central to the understanding of the family in the Arab world”.

Other approaches to studying the Arab family include the Normative Approach. The assumption here is that members are uniform and there is little variation. The normative approach thus characterized an Arab family based solely on cultural understandings that prioritized descent and language. Another approach has been the so called demographic approach or statistics approach where certain phenomenon are placed under the microscope and evaluated like family composition, size, fertility rates, labor, migrations. In a study by the Administration for the Social Affairs of Woman and Family in 1994, *Marginalized Groups and Changes in Roles in Arab Countries*, the focus is on how the centrality of the family in our societies has managed to lessen the existence of marginal groups like petty criminals, prostitutes, misery belt inhabitants, and juvenile delinquents that usually arise in developing countries. There is though a total overlooking of the marginalization of other groups, which arises from viewing the family as the natural social unit and viewing a certain type of the family (mainly nuclear or extended) as the 'natural' way of structuring social and familial relationships. It also overlooks those marginalized within this 'natural' family unit such as women and children.

In a recent issue of the 1994 publication *The Arab Family, The Arab Family, an edited Journal from the Arab Association for the Family, Tunis*, most articles focused on a structural/functional approach. The introduction often takes into account the evolutionary process of the different types of family systems. It also classifies families according to whether they are for example, nuclear or extended. Moreover, it tends to dissect the family's function in society with very little consideration for ideology for example. In an article by Abboud Najim Najim (1994), *Family Management: The Concept and the Affecting Factors*, the family as a unit is seen as the natural, the normal, and the main avenue for structuring society. Family as such is then rarely even questioned. Moreover, Najim sees the family as the main avenue in which the individual can enact his freedom and human rights. He sees an ideal form of a family where democracy reigns, where individuals within the family communicate and work together in harmony. This ideal form is what he believes our societies need to strive for. Why is this an ideal form? How did it arise to being so? What is its relation to the nation, to the internal and external struggles faced by the nation (especially in cases of war and dislocation)? Are there alternative social creations that people benefit from?

The issue of Patriarchy: It seems that most articles and research being published recently, almost all agree to the idea that Arab society in general and the Arab family is patriarchal. This often means in terms of the family, that men are the decision makers in the family and the main breadwinners. It also entails that male-sons are preferred, that male offspring might get better treatment at nutrition and education. It also often entails that women are supposed to view themselves as extensions of their male relatives and thus their actions always reflect on the males' status and name and not vice versa.

In the case of Lebanon for example, society at large seems to believe that families are not largely patriarchal and that women have gotten their share of equality. Moreover, men tend to joke about women's organizations and those calling for equality and so forth. The statements one hears are that 'women are the ones actually in control and not men', 'they manipulate and get what they want', 'men are the ones actually wearing the skirts even if they try to show otherwise', and 'men are going to have to start men's organizations to ask for their rights now'. I believe that these statements are extremely interesting in the sense that they seem to grossly

override serious struggles and make them the subject of ridicule and jokes. In addition, they also seem to cover up certain social realities. These statements also bring to mind racial struggles in other parts of the world, like the idea of 'white men's burden'. Why are such responses arising at this point in time of this social struggle? Jokes are one legitimate form of cultural representation of the family and need to be addressed more seriously. We cannot dismiss them with some psychological explanations of men feeling threatened that their power and authority might be compromised? To what extent are they counterattacks to maintain the status quo? We can also relate those comments to other forms of resistance among activists (who continue to claim that we should fight injustices under the banner of humanism and not segregate genders) and academics (who state that gender studies is not a valid avenue for research and its epistemology and methodology are not scientific).

Chair: Mona Khalaf

Ray Jureidini is a sociologist whose main areas are industrial and economic sociology. He conducted research and published work in diverse issues. He is the editor of two academic journals. He will talk about the Lebanese in diaspora and the issue of the family and family networks as part of the national identity.

Presenter III: Ray Jureidini

I want to mention a couple of things. First, when I arrived in Lebanon 18 months ago the issue of *Wasta* was raised, and it is closely connected to the family and the political, economic and social networks and operations and structure of Lebanon. When I arrived and wanted to do research, it was put to me that if I wanted to speak to key people I would need a *Wasta* before I could meet anyone. There is a lot of faith in *Wasta*.

The main issue that I wanted to raise was the issue of the Lebanese in diaspora. There are more Lebanese who live outside Lebanon than those who live in Lebanon. This means there are always some family connection between those in Lebanon and those outside. Leaving Lebanon is one of the major parts of the imagining of the Lebanese identity. The brain drain is a major problem for Lebanese society. 100% of my students want to leave the country when they graduate. This has an important implication for the family.

We have, through the diaspora, an extension of the nation. It is a national extension where people still see themselves as Lebanese even if they were not born there. This also includes imaginings and fantasies of return to Lebanon and the visions for the country itself. There are stories of people returning, usually with money to invest, and being disappointed with what they find because it is not part of their fantasy. A lot of work is being done on Lebanese diaspora in Australia to show how these imaginings operate on a day-to-day basis. In many countries where there is a well-developed community of Lebanese, they have daily newspapers written in Arabic about Lebanon and the political situation there. This brings further connection between the country of origin and the diaspora. I think that these connections are real extensions not only because of the economic importance of remittances but there is also this familial/cultural and in many way political dimension to the diaspora.

Discussion for Dialogue on Lebanon

Rabab Abdulhadi

What about women and sexuality? *Wasta*, is this methodical in field? Expatriates who come back as businessmen and do not stay. Why is this? Is it because of corruption? Are they leaving because they do not have *Wasta*? Zeina, should we maintain a distinction between the State and Civil Society?

Hania Sholkamy

Women would usually invest in symbolic capital ie, give money to husband to buy land. What makes her feel more secure to give money to husband to buy land rather than buy it herself? Is this *Wasta* or corruption?

Afaf Meleis

I do not see *Wasta* as a negative thing. There are returnees all over the Arab world, have there been studies done on why their return?

Soraya Altorki

If we want to know more about *Wasta* we should look at the work of Laura Nader. I also think that we should call NGO's, Voluntary Associations because in our region of the world NGO's are always involved with the State in one-way or another.

Samia Mehrez

I would agree with Soraya Altorki, because even if pockets of space do open up they are usually regulated by the State. About donors. The problem that we have is that NGO's have to tailor themselves to the agenda of the donor. However, there has been the attempt to change this and have the donors accept NGO agenda.

Suad Joseph

The character of the State is important. The State did not provide protection for families, nor the services they needed and neither did Civil Society, so families had to basically depend on themselves. *Wasta* in Lebanon is still more than in any other country. There is really no other choice because political alternatives have not been developed. *Wasta* is both gendered and class based.

Ray Jureidini response

Lebanon is a status society and identity is based on kinship not in work like in the West. Concerning the returnees, they may have returned because they were fooled by propaganda or the Lebanese State into believing that it is safe to invest there.

Mona Khalaf

When we talk about the returnees we need to divide them into: Those coming back from Africa. They are usually forced to return to Lebanon.

Professionals that are returning because of propaganda. This group is usually not able to fit in. Investors that are returning because of propaganda.

Concerning the issue of *Wasta*, there is both clean and dirty *Wasta*. The reason for this is because Lebanon has had a history of foreign rule, Turkish and French, so the people have always wanted to get as much out of the State as it could, even if it meant cheating. As a result of this they did not have a lot of allegiance to the State, but they could have loyalty to religious leaders.

Jihad Makhoul

Wasta is not necessarily a bad thing. It is now seen in the negative because it favors a certain group. I feel that we should look more into patrons and their idea of *Wasta*.

Zeina Zaatari

It is very hard to categorize the State and Civil Society because they intersect in many ways. Once we name things, they are categories, but if we separate them, we see inequalities, I don't think we should essentialize the State. NGO's need to be examined; they are collectivities, but everyone calls them NGO's in Lebanon.

Nadine Naber

Concerning the Lebanese in United States diaspora, most of the early immigrants were all Christian.

Penny Johnson

Symbolic capital, this is where turn is actual capital, or monetary values, for symbol/social capital gain. It is for this reason why women would buy land and register it in the name of her husband. Also, when people leave the villages they sometimes need strategic distance to claim assets.

Eileen Kuttab

The character of the State is very important. Women use land and capital as tool of bargaining. Through NGO's the donor community has brought in a structure to institutionalize gender and that has undermined the women's movement. I also think that the character of the State is critical, as Suad Joseph said.

Ibrahim Elnur

I am troubled about two things about *Wasta*:
Because the State is not institutionalized then there is the lack of access to state resources.
If the State is sufficiently developed then *Wasta* is a bribe.
Also, women's empowerment, how do we determine it?

Sahar El Tawila

Wasta, is it the lack of institutionalization of the State? If *Wasta* leads to major distribution of resources, is it favoritism? If *Wasta* has price in the market, is it a bribe?

Hoda Elsadda

There is a dichotomy between State and Civil Society. In Egypt, we see the State as monolithic; so we see involvement in civil movements as pure and involvement in the State as dirty. However, NGO's are not necessarily different from State. It is assumed that NGO's have pure politics and that NGO decision-making is all egalitarian. This is not the case.

Dialogue IX: Egypt Country Case

Chair Introduction: Hoda Rashad

The mandate that we were working toward was to try and identify research agendas within the family concerning Egypt. The theoretical idea was that we, as Egyptians, will get together, will debate what are the concerns and then we will agree on a common list and choose some presenters to give you the consensus of this group. What happened is we did not meet as a group. It was such a small sub-group of the Egyptians that managed to get together and you have to bear this in mind that we are not really representing the Egyptian scholarly thinking in this respect. However, as a small group we told each other let's start by forgetting all the themes that are going to be presented on the first day and let's try and forget our disciplines, let's not discuss issues that sort of come out of the interest that we already do, let's just sit back and think what are the kind of questions that are relevant nowadays, and we brain stormed together.

I will not try and introduce each one of the speakers. I think you've heard them and know them. I will just remind you that two of them are from the demography field, and the population science field, Sahar el Tawila and Zeinab Khadr, they work in both SRC and they also work in the faculty of economics and political science in Cairo University. Hania Sholkamy is an anthropologist, she works also both in the Population Council and at the American University in Cairo. Afaf Meleis combines nursing and sociology, and we will start with Afaf Meleis.

Presenter I: Afaf Meleis

I will be speaking from several documents that you have in your binder. One is called "*Women's work redefined.*" The other one is "*The unrelenting work of domestic workers.*" Then I will also give you several publications that are already published on definition of work and policy implications of redefining work and then a couple of publications related to women's work. Now where did I come to the position I'd like to share with you today is a study that was done in six or seven countries with marginalized population, marginalized women, low income women and some studies in the United States of Middle Eastern immigrants in California and Brazilian immigrants in California. And as my team of colleagues from those six countries Brazil, Columbia, Mexico, Thailand, Egypt and the United States, we got together and we looked at our work looking at marginalized women and their roles and health, then we decided that there is one common theme that's coming out of that and we need to think in terms of policy. So this is what I would like to share with you, and I actually just want to say one more thing that I have been very inspired by the discussions this morning from Lebanon and from Palestine and started thinking about some of the Egyptians who live in California, New York and in Chicago, and some of their issues, and I'll like to address that at some point in the discussion.

This presentation is also the result of an international congress on women's health, *Women's Work, Health and quality of life* that happened about a year ago, and it is stemming

from the whole issue that was discussed at the United Nations and the Cairo Conference on gender equity, and on how to bring equality in health and human development. Yesterday there was a discussion about early childhood and we really cannot think about early childhood without thinking of the role of women in raising children, the work that women do, and also without thinking about gender equity in raising children. So this is all part of this discussion.

To achieve those goals of United Nations in terms of equity, we need to look at barriers to gender equity. We believe that one of the major barriers related to gender equity is in the definition of work and how work is defined for women. When we looked at Webster definition of work it is, “ *Activity in which one exerts strength or faculties to do or perform, sustained physical or mental effort, and it is the labor and the task.* ”

However that is a broad definition that really does not reflect the work that women do. In the definition that is adopted in our research, and I want you to be thinking about your research projects as you are listening to this, in our research in the economic policy work is defined in terms of that generates income, that produces goods, and that occurs within the public sphere. We know that women’s work versus men’s work tend to be more in the private sphere and it’s usually un-remunerated, un-paid, for and it includes home kind of work and informal work. So this leads to women’s work being devalued, and men’s work being more valued. This narrow definition of work which is attached to financial gains, tends to devalue all the unpaid, the informal, the non-income generating activities, and actually statistics show that 50% of production in industrial countries is done by women and about 60-65% of production in developing countries is done by women.

So what is women’s work? Women’s work, and this came out in lots of discussions encompasses the sphere of social reproduction, encompasses social capital, as well as financial capital, and I think the symbolic capital that was mentioned by Hania this morning is part of that. However we know that social capital and reproductive capital are unremunerated, unpaid for, and it’s only the financial capital that’s been remunerated. So what happens is when social reproduction is not considered productive, women are provided with less of everything, less assistance, less fertilizers, less food, less money for whatever it is they do.

Yet we know that, and you know the statistics about Egypt, but for example in South East Asia women spend two to five hours daily in gathering fuel, 17 hours per week getting water, and girls as young as three are expected to help mothers. We also know that in many different countries there are also the girl maids that start very early and we haven’t even touched on that, and actually some of our interests in this whole area is because we studied maids in Columbia and in Egypt and we studied farm workers and fishermen’s wives in some places, we have studied helpers of the elderly in Thailand. All this is part of the social capital but it is not remunerated for.

Social capital is also devalued. Women play the primary role in maintaining human relationships. We call it gossiping but if we reframe it, we find that this keeps communities together and maintains social cohesion, in both groups and institutions even when women are working. For example, subsistence farming and producers of goods at home. These jobs are not usually counted in labor statistics.

So, what is women’s work? Women also work in paid labor but in these capacities, they earn between 25 - 45 % of men’s paid labor. This is because what women do has not been

defined as work it provides them to less status and less power. But what we are interested in health care, is that risk is then defined for them on traditional models. For example, the risk factor on women for the machinery that women use in subsistence farming and at home is not studied. The impact of heavy lifting has been studied on men but not on women when in fact they do a lot of heavy lifting at home and on farms. There are also risks on stress on women for all the work they do and this has not been looked at all. Also the stress in being the mediator between father and children has not been looked at. So there is a false safety in terms of women's work. Housewives and maid's exposure to chemicals also need to be looked at. So risks for women have not been looked at and most machines have been designed for men's bodies in mind.

Care for the elderly and the sick is left for women and the health care system sends the sick home to those at home, the women. The current definition is based on a model that focuses on financial man-made, that restricts women's access to resources and limits the research on women's work. So there are a lot of things we have to look at when we define women's work in this way.

I want to talk about research because if we have dichotomized women's work then we need to deconstruct work and so we might think about energy, the amount of time, and the amount of stress on women. So work needs to be deconstructed and the new set of variables need to be used.

What we propose is to expand the definition of work for policy implications, which will help in valuing the social production and human aspect of work. We propose two policy challenges which have implications for Egypt and all other countries that are doing research on women.

- 1) How the economist have taken the definition of work to be a numerated one and not work in its broadest sense. We need to translate all the kinds of work in terms of not only its symbolic meaning but also its economic meaning. This is one policy challenge.
- 2) We should not use in our research definitions of work that are dichotomous.

Chair: Hoda Rashad

Now I will introduce Dr. Zeinab Khadr

Presenter II: Zeinab Khadr

My presentation will be on the structural changes in the household. What is happening to the family in Egypt? In Egypt, people have already passed through the demographic transition. People are having less children and they are getting older. What is happening to the older generation? I will look at a few groups in the household that I think are very vulnerable. I will focus on four groups and I will then give some questions I think need to be answered.

- 1) The elderly. They are increasing in number.
- 2) Female headed household. This group is the poor women who are taking care of their children. With structural adjustment we expect these women to be burdened the most.

3) Unmarried women. It is interesting to note that with all the changes that are going on in the Egyptian society we now find an increase in the age of marriage. Many women over the age of 30 are not married.

4) People living alone, especially women. This is not a cultural norm.

1) The elderly. We are an aging/maturing population. I will be comparing between the 1980 and 1995 demographic data. It has been seen from this data that people are getting older. The distribution of women to men is not changing very much but now older people are living alone, especially older women. In 1980, 50% of our sample of older people living alone were women. By 1995 it was around 75%. What kinds of networks are supporting these women? Is it their children who are giving them support? Is there a resident child? Is this child providing the older parents the necessary care? What are the mutual benefits between the residing child and the parent? What is the health implication of the elder on the household? Why is aging more common in the rural areas rather than in the urban areas? How is this when statistics show that the health system in the rural areas is declining?

2) Female headed households. Again, I will be comparing between the 1980 and 1995 demographic data. There has been a decline in the number of female-headed households in this period. 1980 was characterized by a large number of female-headed households because husbands migrated to the Gulf States in the oil boom period. However, female-headed households are increasing in the urban areas. I find this strange because there is a migration for work from the rural to the urban areas, but what has led to this increase in the urban areas? The answer to this question lies in the fact that women who have never married are heading their households. Also, there has been an increase in the number of divorced women heading their households. This is a social change, where divorced women are now allowed to head their households. I do not like the term "head of a household" because at times the woman would earn the money and make decisions but the husband would always be seen by the society, and the state, as the head. Is poverty intrinsic to the female-headed household? What is the effect of a female-headed household on the psychological, social and economic well being of the members in the household? What about the issue of female-headed families being absorbed within the larger kin. Who takes care of these women? Is it the patriarchal head? Statistics show that 20% of families being absorbed into the kin group are female headed.

3) Never married. These have not changed number wise between 1980 and 1995, but the characteristics of the household has changed for men. The average age is around 43 and has not changed, for men. For women, they are getting younger, mostly daughters taking care of siblings. The question is in a society that sees marriage as a necessary passage of life how does it see these women? How do these women perceive themselves in the society? How do they achieve satisfaction away from the traditional role of keeping family? What are the roles of the family in supporting these women? What are the social networks surrounding those women?

4) One person household. Their numbers are increasing especially among never married and divorced women. They are also characterized by older women. Compared to the other groups that I have just mentioned, older women living alone have the lowest standards of living. These are the women who are suffering the most. Talking about age, the average age for men living alone is 71, but they have financial resources. So the major question is not who is supporting women? But who is supporting older women?

Presenter III: Hania Sholkamy

I will talk about three aspects of the Egypt case. I will first like to talk about family formation and I will take data from the 1995 demographic survey. My first point is about the setting of the family in family formations. According to the DHS 1/4 of married women are married to men at least 10 years older. 44% of women have a less educational level than the men they are married to. Of the 39% that have the same education as their husbands, they are both illiterate. 3 out of 4 women still do not choose their spouse. 44% of all women have not met their spouse before the signing of the contract. It is quite interesting to know that until the mid 90's, 39% of all couples are still related. 15% still marry first cousins. Also, up to 58% of marriages in rural areas are within families. This is a pretty traditional patriarchal setup. The final statistic that I find interesting is that over half of newly married couples in the 90's still move in with the husband's family. This does not contradict what Zeinab Khadr was saying, because they will move out after about a year.

These figures are interesting because they say a lot about our concept of autonomy but they also point out a distinction that we need to keep in mind between structure and function, and between form and content. So the structure and forms seem not to favor women but the content seems to change. The amount of autonomy that women gain, the amount of power that they develop and the interaction between couples is instrumental in forming the Egyptian family. So we need to think about these distinctions.

My next two points are about middle class families who are over represented in Egypt, yet we take from them our values of right and our values of wrong from lower class rural families. What is happening to middle class families in Egypt is quite interesting. There are tensions that concern the middle class families. We often say that children are the focus of the family. But how do we understand this focus when we look at the rates of migration and the absence of father figures? What is the point of this focus? What is it that we want for our children? What are the moral and ethical considerations for the middle class family?

There has been a noted rise in the spoiling of children and the absence of an ethical or moral point. There is a crisis in masculinity. Mothers talk about the difficulty of bringing up sons. And the focus is more and more materialistic. The outcomes are also troubling, the rates of divorce among the young middle class is rising and the sense of cohesion of the family seems to be getting lost. There is also a sense of a competing material well-being over moral well-being. My final point is about attention between the individual and the family. When we think of legal and public frameworks there is a competition between the individual and the family. Publicly we reward individuals and personally/morally we uphold families. The tension is clear in Egypt especially in the law about traveling, in which women need a husband's consent to travel, and is defended by saying mother's cannot leave their families. We are in a context of social change. And what is the relationship between the family and the individual? Are we supposed to be modern, liberated individuals or are we supposed to still find reward in the family?

The question that I ask is, are family ties a stick for women and men to conform to or are they the carrot that helps individuals overcome the alternation of modern citizenship?

I think that families have rewards but it is our engagement to the family that tends to penalize us as individuals.

Presenter IV: Sahar el Tawila

I will talk about laws. I think there is a common interest that we all share and that is, how does the Arab family look like now? We can rephrase this to ask, have the parameters of the Arab family, that have long been cherished and sustained, still in place? If not how have they changed? In my opinion what gives rise to these questions is evidence we have about the significant contextual changes at the macro/social and historical levels, which have historically been known as a vehicle for social change. In Egypt these macro/social and contextual factors are basically five main factors:

- 1) Expansion in education among females. This is very evident because in the 1996 census women 60-70 years old 90% of them were illiterate but young girls of 10-19 years only 15% were illiterate.
- 2) Migration to the Gulf and the kind of mobility it gave the Egyptian society.
- 3) The implementation of the economic restructuring programs and the resulting process of marginalization of some groups in Egypt.
- 4) Unprecedented access to global media.
- 5) The process of revisiting the existing laws and legislation.

Laws provide the precise articulation of legal context that ideally reflects popular needs, response to demands of social movements or economic situations. The legal framework is perceived by many as the vehicle that would lead to a social change. Contrary to our expectations that the 5 factors combined must have led to a kind of mobility and social change that we anticipated and would be in favor of more liberal attitudes and practices. Contrary to this, the new deliberations of the amendments in the Egyptian personal status laws were accompanied by controversial debates and overwhelming contradictory reactions, not only among the public but also among the intellectuals. The amendments were oriented towards procedural aspects and aimed at improving the efficiency of the judicial system, while catering for the needs of the cases that faced a dead end in court. The amendments were on three things:

- 1) Procedure to collect alimony for the children after divorce.
- 2) *Khul'* law. Which is the right of the woman to go to court and initiate divorce.
- 3) Freedom of travel of women.

The first two amendments were accepted. But the right of women to travel was rejected and removed from the agenda. While these amendments seem minimal and very modest to some groups, for the majority they represented a progressive leap forward. What is surprising is the opposition to these laws. We can understand men's opposition but there is also the opposition of women. And it seems that this opposition of women is in the majority, especially to the *Khul'* law.

In the case of the right to travel many have rejected it because it is said to be against the *Shari'a*, but what is interesting is that the way it is embedded in the law has nothing to do with the *Shari'a*. This is an important point to be raised, because had it been based on the *Shari'a*

from the start, then women would not have been allowed to travel at all and they would have been stopped at the airport. What the law actually says is that a woman can travel alone unless her husband gives a statement or takes an action to prevent her from traveling. Several questions arise in this context. To what extent do the new reforms reflect a genuine shift in the State's interpretation of the principle of the preservation or protection of the family? The new laws have opened a space for women in which they can get access to decision-making.

My last point is about spaces. Dina Craissati talked about Civil Society and that the spaces provided women and other groups the ability to exercise freedom and participation. These amendments to the laws have done the same thing, but the targeted groups themselves have rejected these laws. This may be because of fear, because they do not know what these new changes will bring out in the society.

Discussions for Egypt Dialogue

Samia Mehrez

With regards to the *Khul'* law, by some, this is seen as a progressive leap for women but I do not believe that it is. I see it as a law that disempowers women and that is only used by the privileged. So the women who are taking advantage of this law are the advantaged that can dispossess themselves. I feel that the law that would empower women is the right to travel.

Hoda Elsadda

I do not necessarily agree with Samia Mehrez and I think that we have to look at the court cases before we can judge. Concerning the case of the right to travel, we have to look at the reasons why this law was imposed. This decree was introduced in the 1960's by the minister of interior affairs to control the women leaving Egypt and going to work in jobs that were considered bad. This was the reason the law was introduced.

Rabab Abdulhadi

There are some issues that I want to raise.

First, we need to look into the reasons behind why Egyptian women are not able to give their husbands and children Egyptian citizenship if their husbands are not Egyptian.

Second, what are the kinds of debates that have come up with regards to birth control and abortion? Thirdly, where do the State and the religious institutions meet?

Fourth, about the ability of women to divorce husbands, middle class women would want to take advantage of this law but the lower class women would not want this because it would mean the de-masculinization of men.

Martina Rieker

I see that the term "the head of a household" as a faulty category. How do we localize international categories?

Penny Johnson

When we talk of female-headed households, we have to define them. For example widowed women, divorced women etc. About the issue of *Shari'a* and reform, it is true that reform issues are usually class related. Also, in Palestine the *Khul'* law is the most common type of divorce.

Hoda Elasdda

It is hard to find the truth about who makes the decision-making in the household because women often do not admit that their husbands are not the decision maker.

Afaf Meleis response

We have found that when asked about decision-making women would give different, and often conflicting, answers to the researcher depending on whether they are from the region or if they are a foreigner. About the older generations that we find living alone in Egypt, they are usually people who have lived their lives outside of Egypt and once they have raised their children and retired they come back to their home country. They often come with the misconception that they will be taken care of by their family back home. We usually find that these older people living alone are usually men. The reason for this is usually because when women work they will not want to go back home when their husbands retire because they have created networks and friends. Men, on the other hand, do not usually create these networks at work and will want to return to their home country. About divorce laws, observations among the immigrant Egyptians shows that there is a very low divorce rate. However, for the generation that was born in the United States, the number of women initiated divorces is quite high.

Hania Sholkamy

We have not looked at consciousness. When do people react with individual consciousness and when do they react with familial consciousness?

Zeinab Khadr

In the research on households, we have found that in urban areas highly educated women would usually head the households.

Hoda Rashad

The definition of the head of a household depends on what perspective we are looking at.

Afaf Meleis

I agree with Hoda Rashad on the point that she has just made and I think that in research we should use the term, breadwinner, where they could be men, women or children.

Sahar el Tawila

I see the *Khul'* law as a modest move and also somewhat progressive. This is because the heart of the law deals with citizenship rights. The right to divorce is a citizen right, the right to

freedom. The problem with the acceptance of the law by some people is cultural because families raise children to become members of the society, not as individuals or citizens.

Suad Joseph

We are struggling around boundaries. Boundaries between State and society, public and private. We need to ask the question, who makes the boundaries? Who polices these boundaries? Who is in them? So, we need to look at the boundaries and see why they developed, and who developed them? I feel that the State is involved in more ways than we can see.

Ibrahim Elnur

About the issue of women opposing divorce law and the play of the media in this, I feel that we have to define what we mean by media.

Hoda Elsadda

We have to look at reality and its connection to literature and the media. I feel that what we read in the literature and see in the media we internalize and take as the reality, so sometimes we find that fiction representation defines reality.

Hania Sholkamy

I feel that the media is an imperfect source of information.

Martina Rieker

We need to look at the nature of the State and also the relationship between the law and the State and the people and the law. We should also look into how people collect data and how they represent themselves.

Ray Jureidini

How is the policing of women traveling done?

Sahar El Tawila

A woman can get a passport with the permission of her husband or guardian. Once she has this passport she can travel any time, unless her husband tells the authorities that he does not want her to travel.

Hoda Rashad

There is one point that I would like to make about this travel law. In the Egyptian constitution, all people are allowed the freedom of movement. Also, the court has not passed this law and so it is not applied now because the court has said that it is unconstitutional.

Barbara Ibrahim

Those who were for the restrictions on women's travel said that it was because they feared that the family would break down if women were allowed to travel.

Samia Mehrez

I find it strange that no-one talks about the '*Isma*', which is when the women has the marriage contract and can divorce her husband, this is a right given by Islamic law and rather than look into this, people have turned to the *Khul'* law.

Dialogue X: Plan Small Groups

AFWG Topic List

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Afaf Meleis | Compare and contrast women's roles in cohorts in Egyptian families, Egyptian American families who are U.S. citizens, and returnee Egyptian families. |
| 2 | Jihad Makhoul | Families coping strategies and war-related displacement. |
| 3 | Rabab Abdulhadi | Gender, displacement and exile communities |
| 4 | Rabab Abdulhadi | Conflict, post-conflict, family & gender dynamics |
| 5 | Martina Rieker | Families & governmentalities: state, law, citizenship practices |
| 6 | Nadine Naber | Diasporas, sexualities and families in the context of race, class, gender |
| 7 | Ray Jureidini | Families and foreigners: foreigners within families, families as foreigners and racism |
| 8 | Hoda Rashad | Gender dynamics & family well-being: social change, female work, education, adaptation models, and quality of life |
| 9 | Hoda Rashad | Values, perspectives, attitudes, women's empowerment & responses |
| 10 | Hoda Rashad | Models of family support: home, work space, employers & family support |
| 11 | Penny Johnson | Gender contracts, family law & state: marriage exchanges, rights & obligations |
| 12 | Penny Johnson | Investments in male and female children |
| 13 | Barbara Ibrahim | Family formation and marriage markets |
| 14 | Barbara Ibrahim | Creation, formation of masculinities and maleness and how that is changing |
| 15 | Eileen Kuttab | The state and public space: Comparative study Palestine & Lebanon |
| 16 | Eileen Kuttab | Breadwinners: gender politics, intra household gender politics & relations |
| 17 | Ibrahin Elnur | Family and reproduction of wealth |
| 18 | Suad Joseph | Children/state/family: Gendering of person, "self", "individual" and citizenship |
| 19 | Samia Mehrez | Hybridity & families in Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt: inter-marriages |
| 20 | Samia Mehrez | Youth, adolescence and families |
| 21 | Afaf Meleis | Quality of life, well being of marginal populations and families: elderly, domestic workers, single parents |
| 22 | Rabab Abdulhadi | Families as sites of oppression & resistance |
| 23 | Martina Rieker | Negotiating marriage contracts comparative ethnographic project:
a.) displace focus on state law and religious law; |

- b.) look at choice, how men & women negotiate rights
- | | | |
|----|-----------------|---|
| 24 | Zeina Zaatari | Representation of family dynamics |
| 25 | Ray Jureidini | Sources of harmony in families |
| 26 | Mona Khalaf | Women's work and family well-being |
| 27 | Mona Khalaf | Norms, traditions and family relations |
| 28 | Mona Khalaf | Roles of women in displaced families |
| 29 | Hoda Elsadda | Representations of families & gender relations in different historical periods as related to state policy & dominant discourses: cinema, literature |
| 30 | Rabab Abdulhadi | Arab families: Images and representations |
| 31 | Rabab Abdulhadi | Do a new textbook on Arab families |
| 32 | Rabab Abdulhadi | Arab families: Opportunities and constraints |
| 33 | Samia Mehrez | Fiction & reality: how fiction affects reality and how representation plays out in the real. How people conduct their lives according to their readings of representation |
| 34 | Eileen Kuttab | Analysis of impact of policies (like World Bank, UN) on Families |

Arab Families Working Group

Cairo May 6, 2001

Cairo Workshop Report

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Dialogue XI: Policy Makers and Planners

Chair Introduction: Malak Zaalouk

This panel will be on policy makers and planners, and it is a dialogue on research as well. Before I introduce the panelists I would like to make a few remarks on some issues on policymaking and its relationship to research. One of the major trends that we need to take into account is that there is a prominence of globalization in policy making, where the global movements get translated into global policies. Some of this is very good, particularly when we are thinking of the global movement of the child. All in all, there is a trend in globalizing policies. However, a lot of these globalizing policies are not contextualized to a large extent and we, as researchers, have to deal with this issue. I have to say that I was very interested in what Hania Sholkamy wrote in the Cairo Papers about some of the issues on the relationship between researchers and policy makers and I think we need to address this issue.

There is also the fact that a lot of policies today are moving towards an integrated model. For example, the fact that we are having councils for childhood and motherhood, and the fact that in some countries we have childhood ministries, the fact that we are beginning to look at human capital in an integrated fashion and how that reflects on policy making and research as well. What this calls for is more multidisciplinary, more holistic visions, the breaking of disciplinary boundaries, and most important, the calling for the knowledge creation and knowledge construction in this part of the world.

For a long time this has been a knowledge-consuming region. This is very significant because, with the advance of globalized policy making, this becomes a knowledge based research community. It is not just the issue of generating research but also of theory. This is pertinent to the relationship between policy making and research. Strategically, what this means is that there needs to be a demystification of research and a decentralization of knowledge creation so that each community can portray their own representation. This decentralization would be achieved by allowing more NGO's to become part of the research movement, allowing NGO's to connect with the community and also by helping communities represent their own realities. I would now like to introduce today's speakers.

Dr. Robert Hindle is from the World Bank office in Cairo. Dr. Hindle has been at the Bank for 28 years. He worked mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia. This is his first assignment in the Middle East. His Ph.D. was in the social sciences.

Mona Zulficar is an international attorney and a human rights activist, specializing in international banking and markets. She is also heavily involved in voluntary work. She is a member in the National Council for Women (NCW) and Chair for the External Gender Consultancy Group of the World Bank. She is also a board member of several Egyptian and international NGO's.

Dr. Barbara Ibrahim is the Regional Director of the Population Council of West Asia and North Africa. She is a former Women's Studies and Urban Poverty Program officer at the Ford Foundation. Her research interests are in looking at the ways policies are influenced by research advocacy in the areas of women's labor, youth and indigenous philanthropy. Without much a due, I would like to turn the floor over to Dr. Robert Hindle.

Presenter I: Robert Hindle

First I would like to point out that we, as the World Bank, are not policy makers ourselves but it is certainly true that we seek to influence policy makers in countries, and it is therefore important for us to provide sensible policy advice, recognizing that we ourselves are not the ones making and implementing policies. Let me say just a few brief words about the World Bank, because I do not want to presume that you all know about us, and what we do.

We are an international institution, which has existed for slightly more than 50 years. We lend money, and we are enjoined by our statutes to lend this money to governments. There are some nuances on how the money is to be used but the fact is we need to deal with governments. Broadly speaking, our objective is to stimulate growth in developing countries.

There are two parts to what we, as the World Bank, seek to do. The first is to accelerate economic growth. The principle is that any poverty alleviating strategy requires economic growth and higher per capita income. The second thing is that we support governments with direct interventions designed to alleviate poverty and to target the poor and to improve equity in income distribution.

Ten years ago we decided to look at what was the impact, or lack of impact, of our lending. When we looked at what we were doing we concluded, at that point in 1991, that 40% of our lending was not having the impact that we said it would have. What that meant was that since we dispersed about \$20 billion a year, then \$8 billion was being wasted. When we went back and tried to understand the reason for this loss we found that the one of the reasons, and there were many reasons for this including the way we were organized and the type of things we were trying to do, was found to be that too much of what we were doing was driven by a technical/ economic/ engineering approach to growth and development, and not enough was being paid to the social sciences. But changing an organization that has viewed itself as a technical, engineering, formula-driven organization to one that has tried to look at people differently has taken quite a long time, and the challenge

continues. One of the conclusions of the review that was done in 1991, was that we were not succeeding in what we wanted to do was because we were not taking into account the social, political and institutional dimensions of growth and development. This finding has led to a number of changes in how we do our work, and also in trying to recruit different types of people. We are still trying to figure out how to do this, and to do it effectively, and this brings me to the assigned topic of what would I, as a practitioner, say to you, the researchers, what we would like to see from you and the ways in which you could help us do what we think is the right thing. Essentially what we are involved in doing is trying to bring about change in governments and societies. What I said before about our objective in trying to accelerate growth and per capita income, requires a significant amount of change in the society. So by the nature of what we are recommending to governments, we create change. This change is particularly worrying to a lot of people, especially in societies that are homogenous and have long histories. It is less so to societies that are highly heterogeneous. As a result, if one thinks about the countries in the Middle East we need to pay particular attention to thinking about the impact of change on governments and people. The whole idea of change is uncomfortable to a number of people but if we want to improve the lives of people, then it requires change and we need to understand this change.

We were talking earlier about one of the things that has become clear to us, which is that a critical dimension of growth and equity is the role of women and how one deals with women in the process of policy making and change. Thinking about the ways in which women are affected by policy change clearly has an impact on the family.

Let me give you a couple of examples of several of the things that we are saying that will affect the family. In Egypt, we are arguing that one of the things that Egypt needs is to accelerate its export industries. This is the way Egypt will succeed in generating employment that will improve income distribution by providing more jobs. Clearly, if one goes through all that logic, then that means more people will be

out of the home and this will have an impact on the family. The degree to which Egypt competes in the world market would mean that it would have to deal with things like the regulations of the World Trade Organization, who are going to come to Egypt and say, What is happening in terms of child labor? What is happening in terms of access of women to jobs? So inevitably, what we are recommending to policy makers has an impact on the family.

Similarly, we argue that in Egypt, educating women is a critical dimension to economic growth and equity. This also has an impact on the family. If women are doing things differently from the way they have been doing, then it would have an impact on the family and children.

I would like to finally conclude with three points about what we, as the World Bank, are interested in. One thing that we are very interested in is to understand how to integrate the work that you are doing with economic research and economic analysis, and our advice to governments. Obviously it is not enough to say that the economists are not listening to the researchers and it is important to go to an economist and say here is some information that will help you in doing what you want to do.

The second challenge is to think about what the social sciences have to offer those of us who are concerned with, and are trying to stimulate, change. How do we make change acceptable? How do we make sure change brings about the best rather than the negative?

This brings us to the third and final point that is particularly important to the Middle East and that is, how does one do what the governments want? What we want? And what large numbers of people want? Which is improving of the quality of life while preserving the really good things of the family and social structure of the region, without becoming an image of the West. How do we preserve all of those good things but still encourage openness to new ideas and diversity of views?

Chair: Malak Zaalouk

Thank you Dr. Hindle. We now move to Mona Zulficar.

Presenter II: Mona Zulficar

I do not see myself as a policy maker, although I am a member of the National Council for Women. The National Council for Women, is a new national mechanism which has a mandate including, proposing laws, monitoring the implementation of laws, the promotion of women's causes, and proposing the strategy for the enhancement of women, cannot be seen strictly as a policy maker. We propose, lobby coordinate and advocate for women's issues but we do not make laws or policies. Nevertheless, the National Council for Women, is an important mechanism for women that has, during its short life of one year, shown that it can be a catalyst or instrument for social change in relation to the cause of women.

What I would like to focus on is the importance of law and policy making and how this affects the family. In the Arab world, law is a very important instrument, not just in reflecting the legal status of the family, but because it is the mirror of the official perception of the society. Law is also an important as a dynamic instrument for social change. I have recently done a comparative study on the family laws of the Arab world with respect to the marriage contract and the establishment of marriage. Through this study I have come up with several important and interesting conclusions. We can say that the Arab world is divided into three groups with respect to family law.

The first group does not have a codified family law. It has Shari'a judges that apply Shari'a principles directly, specifically taking after one school of thought only. Examples of these countries are Saudi Arabia and the Gulf counties, with the exception of Kuwait, which has a codified family law.

The second group is more open than the first. This group also applies Shari'a principles directly, but it is open to the four schools of Islamic thought. I see this

group as more liberal than the first one because the judge can apply what is better suited to the circumstances of the case.

The third group covers the countries that have codified family laws. These laws are based on the Shari'a law, but they are codified. This means that they provide a set of rights and obligations that are applied by the courts uniformly to all the citizens of the country irrespective of whether they support one school of thought or another.

The most liberal family laws are those that adopt the most liberal principles of Shari'a from the various schools of thought. Examples of these countries are: Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, Somalia, Kuwait, Oman, Lebanon etc.

In Egypt, some see that the new family law which adopted Khul', amendment to family law, but this is not the case. This is a procedural law not a family law and there is an important distinction between substantive rules of law and procedure. The rights and obligations are part of the substantive law and the method of enforcing those rights and obligations constitute the procedural law. This is like the train and the procedures are like the railway tracks, which take the rights and obligations from being theoretical into enforcement in real life. So if you have a top-notch bullet train and old obsolete railway tracks, then it does not work. Both need to be compatible to achieve the best results.

Turning back to the Arab family, I have always thought that the laws could be used as an instrument of social change, and in fact it has been used in this way. Looking at the countries that have a codified family law, you can see that they have adopted some progressive trends in many aspects, especially in the marriage institution. They have all confirmed that marriage is a contractual relationship. This is a modern concept of law. It is based on mutual consent and the right of choice.

The second progressive tendency in most of these countries is to restrict polygamy. There are three types of restrictions on polygamy:

- Countries which completely prohibit polygamy, for example Tunisia.

- Countries in which permission from a judge is required, example: Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Libya, and Yemen.
- Countries which allow conditions to be put down in the marriage contract and the requirement to notify the first wife of the coming marriage. In this case the first wife usually has the choice of remaining married or of getting a divorce. Examples are Egypt, Morocco, and Jordan.

So this shows a progressive trend that is gradually growing and being applied in Arab family laws. These examples, however, show that the Arab countries are not all the same in terms of progressiveness, the interpretation of religion, and the perception of women. So law has been used as an instrument of social change especially in terms of family laws in various degrees depending on the cultural circumstances in each country.

The second area where law has been very important is in judicial and procedural reform. This has to do with the procedures in the court. In Egypt, it was women who pushed for one family court. It was women who pushed for family insurance for payment of alimony and child maintenance, which has so far not yet been implemented. It was women who asked for Khul' and have done so by arguing that it is a legal right given to them by Islam. So all these changes were initiated by women's groups in Egypt who lobbied for them.

I want to say one thing about Khul'. The new law constitutes a model or example, not in terms of progressiveness, but as a model on how to bridge between international conventions and specific cultural norms. We have, through this new law, achieved equality in divorce now. This was not done by imitating Western laws but by putting our own Islamic rights into practice and thus making them more culturally acceptable. This is a model on how to use culture in a positive way. Culture is not only a constraint, it can also be a source of treasures, and can be used very positively in order to induce social change.

I think law should be used for institutional reform, but in itself it is not enough to induce social change whether it is through national mechanisms like the National Council for Women, or through Civil Society. All these changes can be

instituted by law, but the implementing agency and the culture have an impact on whether you can achieve the objective or not.

Another point which is very important is cultural reform. For example, in Egypt we have just passed a new standard form of the marriage contract, which allows conditions to be put in the marriage contract. We have been lobbying for this for fifteen years. It is now part of the law but it will not be used unless the cultural environment encourages and enhances it. So law is a door opener but there is a lot of work to be done by the institutions of the society, whether formal or informal, to enhance the cultural environment that would enable implementation of the law.

The last point that I would like to make is to the academics and the research institutions. We need applied research. We need to know the impact of the implementation of new laws. We need interdisciplinary research between the social scientists, the economists, and the lawyers etc., to see if the laws will have a positive or negative impact. This is an area where research is very scarce and I think it needs to be developed so that policy makers could intervene to ensure better implementation, or reissue or amend laws to cater to the need for changes that have come up in everyday life.

Chair: Malak Zaalouk

We will now turn to Dr. Barbara Ibrahim.

Presenter III: Barbara Ibrahim

I would like to reflect on what the Population Council as an organization that does research, and tries to make it utilizable to those that make a difference, has come up with. What we want is to make our research not only useful to policy makers but we want it to be powerful. We want it in a format that would make

people wake up and get their attention in ways that are mobilizing. It seems to me that policy makers have several ways in which to do that.

First they can redirect resources, so if we show them that something is cost-effective and can make changes without huge budgetary allocations, then that is powerful data and information to many people in positions of power. Sometimes we want to look for the person that can allow experimentation in a small place. In other words, this is not the all-powerful minister who could redirect policy for an entire country, but people who have a little opening at their local level beyond the eye of the press or the public, to try something a little bit differently. Let us put it this way, we are looking for ways of addressing young women that do not just beat them over the head with reproductive health issues, but ways of talking to them about their transition to being young adults, about their needs to have an education. Somewhere you will find someone who is willing to experiment. This someone is on a different level of policy makers, and it is someone we need to keep in our mind.

I just want to say a couple of things about the general climate in which research is being utilized. My friend Sahar el Tawila in a recent MEA Awards meeting, talked about the perceptions of people in power, and the general public, have on research. Research is seen as either a luxury that we cannot afford, or it is a tremendous threat that has to be suppressed at all costs. We are all aware of research as a threat paradigm, which says that foreign funding has entered our part of the world and is undermining our values and that anyone who accepts funding from the outside is therefore by definition, an agent of that foreign source of funding. This does not allow for the fact that someone could be genuinely committed to change and the improvement of their society, and is willing to utilize recourses from a number of different places in order to advance that very nationalist/local agenda. These, I think, are debates that intellectuals have somehow not always honestly entered into, because we have sometimes tended to say that the research I do is clean, pure and acceptable and I ought to be able to do it, and the research that those other people do, because of their ideological leanings

or political persuasions are different from mine, is suspect research. I think we should move the debate to talking about the quality and integrity of the research, assessed on its own merit regardless of the personal persuasions of those that come with them.

About research as a luxury, there is an assumption that as resources are shrinking we do not have the time or money for research, so we plunge immediately into some change in policy or law that would have a drastic effect on the society. I also think that we need to become much more effective in making the opposite argument, that when resources are limited then we need to take the time to do short-term, practical, targeted, applied research so we do not waste these limited resources.

When looking at research on the family we need to find a way to deal with the nostalgic ideas of the family and our culture. When utilizing research, researchers are usually very committed to detail and are not necessarily the best communicators with policy-makers. So we need to look for a way in which we can bring in those who can communicate the ideas of the researchers to the policy-makers. The Population Council has experimented in this very successfully. We have taken mid-career journalists to do this job of communication.

Concerning the policy-makers, we can now see that there is a new group of policy-makers that are emerging. These policy-makers are more open to new ideas and we, as researchers, need to get them onto our side. The larger group of policy-makers are still those who are not open to change. The last group of policy-makers are those who are open to new ideas but they do not have the space to act and this group needs our encouragement.

Now the private sector has become a new arena for action. Investor associations have been found to be very civic minded men and women, who are willing to look at more flexible job security policies.

Discussion for Dialogue XI on Policy Makers and Planners

Afaf Meleis

There is a lot of international debate and dialogue on the kind of research being done. What I would like to hear about is human capital, and how it can be incorporated into policy-making.

Penny Johnson

As a researcher I have found a lot of frustration in approaching and talking to policymakers. I feel that we have to find a link between policy-makers and researchers.

Sahar El Tawila to Mona Zulficar

I would like to comment on the new procedural laws and amendments that bridge the gap between social change and culture. I am very surprised that the groups that were expected to be happy about the new amendments to the divorce law in Egypt were not so. Why is this? I personally do not see the Khul' law as being good or progressive. Some of the women's groups who did not support the law may have not had a voice. Yes, there has been a change in women's

participation in the economy and education, but at the expense of the women because they do have these opportunities but at the same time their duties at home have not changed. Thus, there is a double burden on women to be active in the labor market and then to come back home and take care of their duties there. So the women are the only ones who have paid the price.

Hoda Rashad to Robert Hindle:

I would like to comment on the change of strategy in the World Bank. There is the assumption that the improvements that you attempt to make are beneficial to the society. This is true in monetary terms, but while doing these changes they are affecting the family and not just as a burden on women but on family relationships. Would the World Bank look into researching family life and seeing the changes that these improvements make on the family structure?

Hoda Rashad to Mona Zulficar:

Whenever there is change there is a response to the change and this varies along different groups. Are you worried about the effects of these changes? Is there the need to have cultural awareness to prepare the people to accept these changes?

Hoda Elsadda

Applied research is important but theoretical research is also needed to lead to new findings. If we look at the image of the Egyptian women, promoted by the National Council for Women, on television we will find that it is the same as that of the American women in the 1970's. I feel that we need to research the problem of media representation because it affects the views of people and we need to look at the effects of these changes.

Robert Hindle Responses:

Applied research is important but this should not stop theoretical research in the social sciences from being done. But on a practical level organizations like the World Bank, would not look at or fund, theoretical research. In the 1960's in the West, public policy-making was held by the economists. In the Middle East the real danger would be if public policy-making was captured by the economists, and this is a danger in most developing countries. The reason for this taking over by the economists is because they are able to talk to policy-makers and have convinced them that the only measure there is, is on monetary terms. I feel that this needs to be changed. I think that the balance is shifting into research but it is going at a very slow rate.

Mona Zulficar Responses:

We need theoretical research to be able to form applied laws because this will give ammunition to those who are pushing for policy change. Concerning law, the idea of language is important because in using change and in portraying it in the cultural language, accepted ideas and norms, make it more acceptable. Using the international language will not be accepted, so when talking about family law and the family we need to speak of it in terms of Islam. For example, the divorce law is a modern contract law [he who breaks the contract pays] but it is put in Islamic language so it becomes culturally accepted. This issue, I feel, should be studied in depth.

Barbara Ibrahim

What is going on with the representations of the family, of masculinity, and of feminism?

Malak Zaalouk

The quest for theoretical research is necessary to generate the kind of knowledge needed to understand these issues better. This region has very little research in this area.

Eileen Kuttab

When the formal economy is geared towards an export-oriented economy, how can we deal with cultural issues for example child labor? I feel that a market-oriented economy would not stop child labor but would increase it.

Suad Joseph to Robert Hindle:

As the World Bank, what do you have in your mind when you think about the Arab family?

Suad Joseph to Mona Zulficar:

What image of the Egyptian family does the National Council for Women have in mind when they are looking to pass laws? About getting more social scientists to do policy related research, how should social science researchers put forward their ideas to the policy-makers, when they do not put a monetary value on the child, family etc? About the division between applied and theoretical research. I think that applied research would come from the theoretical research. We should produce local theories that are applicable to our region, because where the theory is done affects its application. In many societies at the level of ordinary people there is less law orientation. We live in an era of law making but there is a disconnection between law and people's knowledge of the law.

Nadine Naber

It seems to me that we need to define change in regards to external/foreign funding, from the point of view of organizations like the World Bank because there is a voice of resistance towards foreign funding.

Ibrahim Elnur

I am interested in Robert Hindle's notion of the need to turn to social issues. There has been a shift from Structural Adjustment Policies but the notion of homogenous economics has not changed and I feel that this needs to change to incorporate these moves of application of approaches.

Mona Khalaf.

Economics is one of the social sciences in which the human being is seen as the unit of analysis. Human capital, or human resources, is the key to put together the other economic factors, such as capital and raw materials. So the social aspect has always been taken into account. I have a problem in talking about "The" Arab family because there is regional and cultural diversity.

Mona Khalaf to Barbara Ibrahim:

How big is the private sector? And how willing is it to help in women's issues?

Mona Khalaf to Mona Zulficar:

I think that the National Council for Women should produce spots on the media to make people think about change. This is what the National Council for Women in Lebanon is doing.

Mona Zulficar response

We need to bridge the gap between the international human rights treaties and cultures and their assimilation. This is an area that needs to be researched. We also need to engender policies. The notion of the family is multifaceted and this can be seen in the different laws in the various Arab countries.

Robert Hindle response

The World Bank is under pressures of cost effectiveness of work-plans, so they will not do the in depth research that social scientists want. The World Bank does not have a definition of the Arab family, but they are aware of the major issues concerning the family in this region. About the economics, neoclassical economics dominate the field but I feel this is gradually changing

Barbara Ibrahim response to Mona Khalaf

It is true that the market forces are in control but now global markets insist that certain conditions are met. For example, the Western market consumers insist that child labor is not used in the production of goods. So there is a force of change and local markets will have to change in order to compete in the world market.

Barbara Ibrahim response to Suad Joseph

As a group we could look and see what new theoretical issues we can come up with.

Dialogue XIII: Concluding Plenary

AFWG met in a plenary session to discuss the long list of possible research projects developed on May 5, 2001 and to synthesize them into specific Research Project Groups. [Refer to long list]

Afaf Melies:

Group A. # 8,21,28 can be grouped together

Ray Jureidini:

Group B. We can group #2,3,6,7,19,13 under the umbrella of Arab Families and Diasporas.

Penny Johnson:

#2, 28, #3 should be separate - displaced and exile. The umbrella can be “conflict, displacement and exile”.

Ray Jureidin, Nadine Naber:

Group B can be family coping strategies under conditions of migration; connectivities of those living in home country and outside home country regardless of circumstances; family and migration and Emigrates, immigration which would include 6,7,13,19 from days 2 and 3.
Group B can be Diasporas and Immigration

Afaf Meleis, Hoda Rashad, Barbara Ibrahim, Mona Khalaf, Eileen Kuttab:

Group A can be Breadwinners: women’s work, health, quality life, marginalized populations; responses to social change and well being, including #16,8,21,26, [32, 10 could be anywhere] They are within the family and linked to well being and women’s work and health. We could look at models of support outside family; public policies and employers; how families interface with other institutions under conditions of change and where families should not take the burden of these changes on their well being.

Malak Zaalouk:

Group C can be Child rearing at large, including #18, 12, 20, 14. Early childhood is UNICEF priority. The thrust is on the gender issue here, but we need to include: community and stages of childhood. We should be discreet, for example, the 0-3 years old period is critical. Is what we will be doing totally family bound? It is science based? We need to look at neuro-science. Child rearing at large - masculinities, representations of children, wholistic childrearing practices.

Penny Johnson:

Children can not go in one research project alone. It is linked with selving, male/female identities This is not one research project but weaves through all the projects.

Malak Zaalouk:

The network will be larger than this room. We need to look at not only practices of self (what goes with breastfeeding for example) but there is also a neuroscience of breast feeding.

Barbra Ibrahim, Hoda Elsadda Samia Mehrez Suad Joseph:

Group D can be The family in the Public focusing on public discourse; media; literary; representations; law and policy. We can bring public policy and law and culture together as representations of family: Arab Families and Public Discourses.

AFWG Core Group Decisions on Research Project Groups:

Group A. Breadwinners Reconsidered [later changed to Arab Families and Well Being]

This will include women's work, response to social change; family well being and health models of family support; norms and traditions.

8,10,16,21,26,32,27 from the long list of May 5..

Members: Hoda Rashad, Mona Khalaf, Afaf Meleis; Eileen Kuttab

Group B. Arab Families and Diasporas/Migration, War, displacement, Immigration, Emigration

This includes families and migration, emigration; diasporas; connectivity between people in home country and those who have left (include refugees, exile).

6, 7, 13, 19, 2 from the long list of May 5.

Members: Ray Jureidini, Nadine Naber, Rabbab Abdul Hadi, Jihad Makhoul, Ibrahim El Nur

Group C. Arab Families and Child rearing

This includes the full range of issues dealing with childrearing

14, 18,12, 20 from the long list of May 5.

Members: Malak Zaalouk, Sahar Tawila,

[This group met with and became a part of Research Project Group D]

Group D. Arab Families and Public Discourse

This includes how the state sets policy on the basis of imaginary notions of family. The government is represented as a family - need to also look at power of state media in relation to family, law, literature, popular culture, notions of citizenship and children.

24, 29, 33, 34, 15, 5 from the long list of May 5

Members: Barbara Ibrahim, Martina Rieker, Penny Johnson, Hoda Elsadda, Zeina Zaatari, Suad Joseph, Sahar Tawila, Samia Mehrez, Soraya Altorki

Dialogue XII: Research Project Groups

Three Research Project Group Descriptions:

1. Arab Families in search of Well Being.

[Hoda Rashad/ Mona Khalaf/ Afaf Meleis/ Hania Sholkamy/ Huda Zurayk]

This Research Project Group will focus on how families define and experience their individual and collective well-being. Emphasis will be placed on women's work and education as major forces shaping the realities and conditions of everyday life. The concern will extend to different aspects affecting the quality of life of the surveyed families. The parameters used encompass among other concerns: Gender dynamics, standards of living, coherence and integration, sense of satisfaction, leisure times, children welfare and development. The study will focus on two life cycle stages. An early stage of a couple with young children and a later stage of a couple with adult children.

2. The Relationship Between Migration, Displacement and the Construction of Arab Families

[Ray Jureidini/ Nadine Naber/ Jihad Makhoul/ Ibrahim Elnur/ Rabab Abdulhadi/ Eileen Kuttab/ Madhavi Sunder/ Leila Bisharat]

This Research Project Group seeks to understand the ways in which processes of migration and displacement shape the ways in which Arab families are constructed, imagined and experienced. This project focuses on two key areas in the study of diasporic Arab families.

- First, we focus on the political economy of Arab families.
- Second, we focus on the cultural processes involved in the making of Arab families with a particular interest in the imagining and remembering of "home" and "homeland," as well as "memory," "language," "artifacts," and "yearning."
- Third, we are interested in the ways that displaced/migrant families live and interact with their social and political contexts, including the emerging race, class, and gender intersections within those locations.
- Fourth, we highlight the inter-family dynamics, including marriage patterns and child-rearing, as centered by diasporic ties.
- Fifth, we explore the agency of family members and the ways that cultural identities are central sites where Arab families are imagined and experienced.
- Sixth, we are interested in the creative and innovate means enabled by different socio-cultural contexts and articulated or experienced by family members, including survival strategies and coping mechanisms.

3. Arab Families in Public Discourse, Representation, and Ideologies:

[Malak Zaalouk/ Martina Rieker/ Suad Joseph/ Barbara Ibrahim/ Soraya Altorki/ Dina Craissati/ Hoda Elsadda/ Penny Johnson/ Sahar el Tawila/ Zeina Zaatari/ Lina Abu-Habib/ Samia Mehrez/ Annelies Moors]

The Arab Families in Public Discourse, Representations, Ideologies Research Project Group explores ways in which representations of families impact upon policies and social practices in comparative regional frameworks. The project focuses on three areas in particular:

- Representations of families in public policy, media, educational institutions and literature
- Discourses of family law and marriage contract practices, and
- Ideologies of citizenship and the roles assigned to families and children within them, including the socialization and development of children.

AFWG Final Session

Reports of Research Project Groups

Group A: Arab Families in Search of Well-being

Hoda Rashad

We discussed what we want to do. Arab Families in Search of Well Being is our new title. How families define and experience their individual and collective well being, with an emphasis on women's work. Education shapes realities and of everyday life. We will be looking at different outputs affecting life of families such as gender dynamics; state of being; coherence and irregularities; sense of satisfaction; leisure time; children, welfare, development. Our study will focus on the life cycle stages: 1. Early stages of the couple with young children; 2. Later stages with adult children. Our next steps

Hind Wassif:- trying to refine terms that will be used, ex. well-being

Hoda Rashad:- to see if a donor is interested in the project and then will develop an idea. If University of California talked to Mellon they will find a large project. They will fund large projects if they get a feel for the projects. I cannot go to Mellon for more funds, but UC could. At the end of July will be in contact with each other again.

Group D: Representation of Family in Public Policy Over Different Historical Periods

Martina Rieker:

Three general issues were discussed: 1. Regional comparative framework; 2. New framework for theory; 3. Politics of representation (new research) how politics practices and representation affect each other in reaction to family.

Three topical issues were discussed: 1. Representation and Public Discourse includes families and public policy; media; education; literature. 2. Marriage Contracts, including family law; 3. Ideologies of Citizenship. Group C on children come into this group, esp. #1 and 3. We'll report to our group in 1 week, a paragraph on each of the 3 topics by June 15.

Group B: Immigration

Nadine Naber:

“Arab Families, Diasporas, Migration and Displacement” is our title. Our research ideas include the ways in which the process of migration and displacement shapes Arab families and the construction of Arab families and how they are imagined. Specific research topics are:

1. Political economy of Arab families; 2. Cultural process involved in making the Arab families and the imagining of the homeland including artifacts and language; 3. How they interact with their context - social structures, businesses, entrepreneurship; 4. Interfamily dynamics as centered in diasporic ties; 5. Agency of family members; cultural identities as a rite for imagining Arab families; survival strategies and copy mechanism. We want to meet again to develop the research and fund raising, create a formal group to put our work into publications and books.

Plenary Group Meeting

Rabab Abdul Hadi

1. We need someone to convene the AFWG. I suggest Suad Joseph continue as convener.
2. Core group should meet again, it was not enough for three days.
3. Each group should make their minutes available others.
4. Children group is important for the Diasporas Group

Martina Rieker

If this is 10 year project and if we are developing Research Project Groups, we need to keep larger Core group in mind, and not split off into smaller groups. We can commit to publishing in both Arabic and English. We'll put 2-3 books into a series. It better to do a series rather than different publications. California Univ. Press, AUC Press, Rutledge Press would be interested.

Core Group Decisions:

1. We will meet again as Research Project Groups
2. We will not split off as small groups
3. We will publish together in series, not separately
4. We will publish in Arabic and English simultaneously
5. Suad Joseph will serve as convener

[Barbara Ibrahim

MEA Population Council is willing to look at individual group projects for funding. We support non-institutional proposal. This does not mean an "individual" can be group. We fund

\$10-12,000 for individuals

\$35,000 for institutions

one person needs to be a PhD]

6. We will set up list serve for discussion for real communication, anyone can discuss
7. We will set up a Web page for resources: research bibliographies; Research Project Group bibliographies;
8. We will develop a resource library including audio visual tools for classrooms (films, videos, slides, list of films, novels, popular culture journals); material in Arabic and other languages.
There is a Diaspora Literature Bibliography
We can collect news articles on Arab families
We can send the articles and emails to the library

Rabab Abdul Hadi:

How can we get this excitement to MA students to do research on our work We can send our report and publication free to regional universities.

Ibrahim El Nur:

We can extend this research to North Africa

Rabab Abdul Hadi:

This is brainstorming- what will we focus on next time? A different theme?

Martina Rieker:

The next workshop focuses on the solidifying the structure on these themes first. We can develop our first volume, present on our work as out themes.

Afaf Meleis

Can Nahla Zarroug do reviews existing literature on three topics we have identified? What data do we already have for some topics? What topics need new research? What topics can we do content on?

Barbara Ibrahim, Hoda Elsadda , Mona Khalaf:

We have literature on Palestinian households. The Population Council has done surveys as has the Social Research Center. ESCWA has done studies on men and women in all Arab countries UNDP has reports on Arab countries.

Barbara Ibrahim:

John Casterline is taking what is known about Egyptian families now and projecting it in the future. What families would look like. He could do it for Lebanon, Palestine and raise questions for research. We need to try to get a common approach. We'll meet again next May possibly earlier if small groups are ready to report. We'll meet in 6 months, at the end of January in Cairo or Beirut, unless hard for the Palestinians. Each Research Project Group will meet first and then present their work to the whole Core Group.

Appendix I: Thematic Dialogue Papers

Afaf Meleis: Women's Work Redefined

Afaf I. Meleis, PhD, Teri Lindgren, PhD student, & DeAnne Messias, PhD
Prepared for the Arab Families Conference
American University, Cairo
May 4-6, 2001

The conceptions and the images of women maintained by societies tend to influence the health and social policies that drive social and health policies. It is these policies that in turn tend to profoundly influence their lives and their livelihoods. There are two areas that need to be addressed globally: how work is defined for women and what models are used to drive health care for women. These two areas are very related and entwined and changes in one will influence changes in others. But until we address them and until we change the prevailing paradigms that guide their definitions and their societal prevalence, women's lives will continue to be constrained by them.

Gender equity has been a clear goal for a number of international meetings. To achieve these goals we need to give careful attention to how work has been defined for women. Work has been broadly defined to include all activities and/or efforts remunerated and nonremunerated needed to achieve an object or a result (Webster definition). As such it could encompass all the work that women do inside or outside the house. However, the more prevailing definition of work is much narrower and is shaped by capitalistic economic models to mean the formal labor market. This definition has influenced the devaluation of all that women do outside the labor market, or have idealized their work in ways that made it more congruent with their nature and a more taken-for-granted activity for them. This definition of work also tends to eliminate women's activities from the economic equation. In contemporary societies, human beings are more and more being measured by their ability to generate funds and to make a contribution to the economy of a society. Therefore, this limited definition of work deprives women of the valuation that their work deserves and from the rewards and benefits that a broader definition may bring.

In contrast to the definition of work as employment, women's work has often been equated with the female reproductive work of pregnancy and childbirth. Childbearing and child rearing, although not engaged in by all women, are universally recognized as women's work (DeJoseph, 1993). References to women "entering the workforce," "nonworking women," and the "empty nest" reflect implicit assumptions about women's work and women's employment. Contrary to such assumptions, women are continually engaged in many types of working activities throughout their life span, in addition to the work of biological reproduction (Kessler-Harris, 1981). Yet, the male-gendered, market-driven ideology of work as synonymous with paid employment has contributed to the contrasting stereotype of women's work as unproductive, marginal, trivial, temporary, intermittent, dispensable, less valuable, less skilled, and less physically demanding (Oakley, 1974). As used colloquially, women's work often refers to

domestic work, that is, paid or unpaid housework, child care, and elder care performed in private homes. *Social reproduction* is a term used by feminist scholars to refer to the many activities and relationships involved in maintaining people both on a daily basis and intergenerationally (Lorber, 1994; Glenn, 1992).

Social capital, which is the development and maintenance of community safety, harmony and social cohesion through a web of cooperation, trust and networking leading to mutually collective action is likewise primarily the work of women. From participation in community development projects to volunteering in the community, women sustain an important “public good” but the support of social capital is seen as expendable as long as financial capital grows. In addition to all the unremunerated, women also work for remuneration in both informal and formal workplaces. Informally “paid” work includes subsistence farming, production of goods in the home, trading or exchanging good and services, or small business owners and domestic work. Likewise women also participate to varying degrees as paid labor in the formal workplace. In industrialized countries women’s participation in the civilian labor force ranges from 48.9% (Japan) to 60.7% (US) in comparison to men’s participation which ranges from 61.6% (Italy) to 76.7% (Japan). In South East Asia 29-55% of women of the age of 15 are economically active. Yet women earn between 25-40% less than men for the same work and this disparity is increasing. This disparity is due in part to the sexual segregation of jobs where women work in areas that reflect the traditional gender roles like nursing, teaching or service industries. Yet these occupations are not valued, demonstrating the lowest pay, prestige and decision-making power. This discrepancy is being utilized by transnational corporations in the developing world where female labor is being exploited to produce “cheap” consumer goods for the west. Regardless of the gender inequality evidenced by earning differences, the number of women who are economically productive is increasing. Yet they are still expected to shoulder the unpaid work that accompanies their gender role, constituting a double burden where they are working two to three full-time jobs. This unpaid burden is much higher for women, where two-thirds of their working hours are unpaid, than for men where only one-fourth of their hours are unpaid. The unequal gender-based distribution of unpaid and paid work, highlights the inadequacies of the current definition of work as remunerated work.

However, the ideology of the separation between the multiple spheres of women’s lives ignores the reality of women’s styles of lives, their cognitive styles, their priorities, their patterns of communication and their value systems. Women’s lives are more interconnected and interwoven with no structured nor temporal boundaries. There is a fallacy that homes for them, like for men, are havens of reprieve from their demanding work lives. Home for women is equally a demanding work life for them inasmuch as their work outside the home is also demanding and stressful. There are neither separate spheres nor dichotomous lives.

Policy Implications

Because women’s work is complex, multidimensional, and not synonymous with employment, restrictive definitions and linear models do not lend themselves to the study of the relationships among women’s work, education, development, health, and well-being. Both conceptual assumptions and measurement limitations have contributed to the limited explanatory power of much research on the relationships of women’s health, leadership, education and work. At

present, and of particular interest, are the health consequences for women of combining work outside the home with domestic responsibilities which is poorly explained because of the lack of understanding of how women integrate the different spheres, demands, and stresses in their lives (Bullers, 1994).

There is plenty of evidence that the economic definition of work supported by the western capitalistic perspective does not capture the reality of work for women. It reinforces gender inequities, devalues women's contributions to the economy and social capital, and makes invisible all the work that women do on a daily basis. Indeed, it continues to marginalize women in the home, workplace, and in research. The interpretation of female labor as an inferior version of male labor is central to the position of women today (Lorber, 1994). The predominance of an economic definition of work is reflected in both the research on women's work and health and in health and social policies.

Meleis and Lindgren (2001) and Messias, Im, Page, et al (1997) recommend policy changes related to defining work by incorporating a definition of work that encompasses all that women do and the multiplicity of dimensions of women's work which may include degree of difficulty, obligation, option, necessity, conflict, or integration of her multiple spheres of life. Changes in definition of work may drive changes in the nature of development programs, social policy research, and research related to women and their health, which in turn may drive different benefits, rewards and consequences for women.

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Afaf Meleis: The Unrelenting Work of Domestic Workers

Afaf I. Meleis, PhD
Prepared for the Arab Families Conference
American University, Cairo
May 4-6, 2001

(For the Egyptian Women's Group)

I am choosing to bring out the voices of domestic workers today for a number of reasons. First, we cannot discuss issues related to female-headed households without paying attention to the one strategy that helps them manage their lives, and that is having a maid in the house to help them with their household chores, and second, because household help makes a major contribution to the value structure and patterns of interaction that Egyptian children eventually acquire. Thirdly, I chose this topic because of my own interest. To situate the issue that I would like to highlight, let me tell you about where I fit in these issues. As a born Egyptian, I grew up in a household that had a professional career-working mother, a traveling father because of his work in the lighthouses, and a grandmother who provided stability and continuity for me and my sister. However, it was the series of maids in our lives who played center stage in keeping the house going. Our lives were controlled by who was going to be our housekeeper, how long she would stay, whether she was stealing from our house, whether our friends would lure her out of our house and into theirs with more money, was she clean enough in the kitchen, and all the other questions that those of you in the audience from my generation may empathize with. I grew up with all my needs being met by the professional mother, the doting grandmother, and my best friend always – a maid in the house. Compared to a child who is usually low on the totem pole, a maid is an equal. Then overnight I became a graduate student at UCLA in California, with only myself to take care of all my needs. Eventually two years later I married and became responsible not only for my own needs but those of my husband. Four years later our first child, and then our second child arrived and the nuclear family was formed with no extended family nor any domestic help. A series of arrangements of household help and baby-sitters began to sharpen my interest in the multiplicity of roles for women, the meaning of overload for them, and the role of housekeepers and domestic workers in keeping such households viable and manageable. More importantly it made me aware of this group of people and I will spare you the reasons for this awareness. My interest in women in low income jobs or those in no income jobs and how they tend to maintain their health, how they get access to health care and how their illnesses are taken care of, led me to Brazil to study fishermen's wives, to Mexico to study auxiliary health workers and to Colombia to study domestic workers. Finally my interest in how work is defined drove me to study domestic workers and the concept of "work" itself and the findings have shaped my collaborative work with my students on how the narrow definition of work, a definition that is largely influenced by a male/employment/out of the house approach to work, has limited the social and health policies. Much needs to be done in this area.

So I speak with you today as a career woman, as an employer of a domestic worker, as a feminist, as a nurse who is highly interested in the health care of low income, voiceless,

marginalized groups of women, as an Egyptian born who is a citizen of the U.S. where I have lived for 40 years. My voice is enriched by all that and is limited by it. You are the experts here; I am the outsider looking in.

An overwhelming majority of domestic workers of the world are women, but domestic work continues to be the most important for women and the most invisible and devalued work. Women choose this work, or they are selected for it for a variety of reasons: because their parents need financial support, because they want their daughters to move to the city life, because they have no education, because they need housing, because they are trapped in it for many reasons, or because it provides them with the necessary subsidy to maintain their lives. In our interviews of domestic workers in the US, Colombia or Egypt, the overwhelming insight we got was the broad theme of women's unrelenting work in homes in the face of harsh social and economic environments. In addition to the physical work that many endure, there are the occupational hazards that go attended, from light repetitive lifting, to heavy lifting, to the use of chemicals that are not well researched nor from which they are protected, to the perceived effect of cold and hot drafts on them and their bodies. Added to all that is the emotional work of caring and attention that they have to give to all members of the household in which they work as well as the household in which they are the spouse, the daughter, or the mother.

Our interest in women in domestic work stems from our goals to uncover those aspects that attract women to it, as well those aspects that make it particularly stressful for them. Eventually we want to uncover the nature of this work, what puts women at risk and what kinds of social and health policies should be established to protect them. Domestic work has its satisfying and its stressful aspects. Many women told us that they like this work because it is what they do best. They like the temporary economic security it gives them, it shows them how women of better economic conditions live, how career women survive and grow, and they like to develop close connections with those women who have hired them.

Besides the global devaluation of domestic work, domestic workers are marginalized in many societies. In the U.S. domestic workers are mostly immigrants, with no voice, with no collectivity, with no benefits and with no health care insurance. In the U.S. and Colombia, two countries where we studied domestic workers' lived experiences, there are laws to protect them, and laws that give them such benefits as maternity leaves, Social Security, paid vacations, etc. However it is very clear that either the domestic workers do not know about those policies, or that they choose not to honor them for tax reasons. This makes me wonder about the lived experiences of women in domestic work in countries where such policies and benefits do not exist!

Women in domestic work talk about the most stressful aspects of their work and I only chose a few of these stresses. They speak of their overwhelming workload that includes both spheres of their lives, the domestic work and their own household demands. They complain about the demands related to working hours and transportation issues in Egypt coupled with the lack of flexibility of employers. The economic insecurity is a major stress that is exacerbated by their lack of benefits.

One of the major issues for them is the violence they endure in the homes of their employers. Women spoke of being raped, of being molested, of being beaten, of being insulted, and of being constantly belittled. The psychological tyranny they face influences them to the core. They feel dehumanized and devalued but they also know how dependent their employers are on them

Conditions of women who work in domestic jobs are very similar globally. Reviews of newspapers reveal horror stories of Indian women who work as domestic workers in their own countries as well as those who work in other countries such as Kuwait or Saudi Arabia. Other examples are the Thai women who are hired by Koreans, rural women who are hired by urban women, and the stories are plentiful. Many domestic workers are child workers, who become imprisoned by their employers and are not protected by their families. I have had the misfortune to be part of a story that made me even more sensitive to their plight. I was here to attend to my father's affairs shortly after he died. After a very emotional two weeks I was packing to leave, when a young 16-year-old girl appeared at the door of my parents in a frantic panic saying "please hide me, please hide me," so I let her in despite the admonitions of my male cousins who were visiting. Her story started unfolding, told to me in private, that she was molested by the owner of the house, who had just left her to go to his evening job, with the promise that when he came back that night will be their night together. He threatened her about saying anything about the repeated rape attempts. She collected her few clothes and ran randomly in the streets until she came to a house with an open door. I was told that this story may be fabricated but I believed her. The man's wife came after her and was told where she was and said she was sincerely concerned about her young maid but was also concerned about what she may have taken from the house. I had to go through all her belongings and offered to give them to the man's wife but insisted I can not turn this Owen in. The question now was what to do next. I got a lot of advice about the consequences, none of which I knew anything about, and I did what appeared to me to be the most sensible: to report the incident to the police and to try to bring the young woman's family to pick her up. In order to do that you have to contact the family, who lives in a faraway village and you have to go through many in-betweens. To my horror, the police insisted that she had to spend the night in jail. With the husband back from work I had no choice but to send her to jail. At the moment I reported this to the police, I lost control. I thought to myself "what have I done?" Prevented rape at home but increased her chances of rape in a police station? Well, after a harrowing two days, her family came to pick her up and only then, I realized that I had done the right thing. But I also realized that there is no recourse for young women who are employed as housekeepers. I experienced first-hand how everybody's hands are tied except those who have full control on the child maid, her employers, and her family. If the family is in another city or country, the maid then has no shelter and no advocacy. So the questions are what are the structural mechanisms to protect women, particularly those in vulnerable devalued positions? How can members of such a vital occupational group, vital for employed women, for the elderly and for child care – how can they maintain their wellness, their sense of safety, their earning power, with no clear rules, regulations or benefits?

CONCLUSION

Domestic help is necessary for women who want to enter the work force but are reluctant to do so because of the expectation that they will continue to carry and manage family as well as

perform all household responsibilities (León, 1984; Marulanda, 1981). For these women, having domestic help is the only way of achieving their own emancipation from household chores and responsibilities and obtaining economic support. Unfortunately, the very help that emancipates some women tends to oppress the other women who must assume these responsibilities.

Domestic help is to some extent valued by those who receive it and by those who give it, but it is devalued by society at large (León, 1984). Devaluation is manifested in a lack of regulation, mistreatment, respect, and the lack of resources for women who perform domestic services.

In conclusion, because of the necessity of domestic work for women who do it, and for women who benefit from it, the working conditions for these women must be regulated to ensure that workers are treated well and receive appropriate benefits. While domestic jobs have many satisfying aspects and provide temporary economic security for many women, participants in this study suffered from a great deal of overload and a high degree of long-term economic insecurity. These women are often mistreated and expected to handle an unmanageable schedule. Job stress can profoundly influence the quality of life of these women, their health, and the health of their children.

In addition, women who work as daily domestic workers have a more unstable work situation than live-in maids, and tend to be even more overworked. As opposed to live-in maids, who may receive more support during illness, when these women are unable to work due to illness they lose their daily pay and have only limited support. While policies to protect domestic workers and their health are being developed, there is a need for the development of a systematic approach to raise the consciousness of the women who work in the domestic sphere as well as that of their employers. Consciousness-raising would include acknowledgment of daily domestic workers' stressful living experiences, as well as their need for benefits, security, and protection. More significantly, structural conditions surrounding domestic work must be addressed. Resources need to be identified and made available to support domestic workers in achieving these basic needs.

Barbara Ibrahim: Notes on State, Law and Public Policy

ARAB FAMILIES WORKING GROUP

Notes on State, Law and Public Policy

May 4th – 6th, 2001

Laws, policies and regulations are elements of a process for preserving societal norms, ordering human interaction, safeguarding power vested in the state and managing distribution of resources.

As such, these tools of the state can be both outcomes of and initiators of other social forces. For example, new personal status laws regarding women's mobility respond to emergent realities like passports and frequent air travel. Conversely, a recent law allowing Egyptian women to initiate divorce (Kul') may precipitate unintended behavior, such as more husband – initiated divorces, as a backlash effect takes place.

In these two examples the relationship of law to other social elements is fairly direct and clear, but we need to keep in mind that unintended consequences of legal change may be subtle and less obviously linked. An interesting example of this comes from the U.S., where for the past 25 years, violent crime has declined significantly. Commonly held assumptions were that improvements in employment and economic growth were responsible, coupled with tougher policing and sentencing for convicted perpetrators. But in a recent statistical analysis that examined a number of factors simultaneously, the element found to account for up to 50 % of the decline in crime was a shocking one: legalization of abortion in the 1970's. In other words, an unintended consequence of making abortion available was a decrease in unwanted children born to those social groups which contribute most heavily to crime statistics. We would do well to keep this dialectic between laws and behavior in mind as a frame for the dialogue in this session.

A second general point is that states (and legal systems) are nowhere monolithic – states are collections of agencies and individuals with varying levels of authority, and varying attachments to the status quo whenever it is under pressure to change. A minister with new vision cannot necessarily move his mid-level bureaucracy. Pockets of progressive thinking may be found in a local authority, or local officials may occasionally stand up to and oppose hegemony from central authorities. Just as we want to avoid reifying “the Family”, we should also avoid oversimplifying “the State”

In my remarks I would like to look at the interface between legal contexts, Arab families, and another major social institution - the workplace. Little empirical work has been done that examines these relationships in an era of privatization and withdrawal of state services.

Regulated/shaped/influenced by laws and state policy, the workplace is particularly interesting because our societies of the Arab world are only recently experiencing the complete separation - physical and in terms of social relations - between home/family and work. Only on family farms and a shrinking number of urban family enterprises are there seamless movements between

familial and work related roles and behaviors. In 1978-79 when I was observing workers in Egyptian public sector factories, members of mixed-sex work groups addressed each other using kinship terms (*ami, ukhti, binti*), as a way of overlying familiar relational forms onto a largely alien social space. Many young girls who came to work in these factories were in fact blood kin to a male employee (a daughter or niece usually), otherwise this form of work was considered inappropriate in the extreme. Girls also told me of leaving home to the workplace every morning with school books under their arms so that neighbors would assume they were going to school. Whether this fiction was successful or not, in today's Egypt it is no longer necessary, nor are kinship terms the only acceptable way of relating to co-workers. Women's employment is a fact of life, debated not in terms of propriety, but rather with concern for the potential harm to women's other familial roles.

How have policies responded? When Egypt had a socialist project and government was the main employer, the policy response was paternalistic: providing additional services to soften or ease the double burden that women who worked must bear. Labor regulations never questioned whether domestic roles might be shared with men. The assumption of segregated male/female domestic roles was completely taken for granted. So women had an extra hour off the work-day for breastfeeding. Employers of 50 or more women were required to provide on-site day-care, and government-subsidized NGOs prepared and sold processed vegetables and other food stuffs to save on the time women needed to cook meals at the end of a working day.

Now we are at a crossroad. These policies of the 60's and 70's are perceived as undermining business competitiveness. Thus draft labor laws are lifting many former responsibilities from employers with the effect that families are thrown back on their own resource, utilizing a grandparent as caretaker of children, causing women to have swiss-cheese career trajectories as they move in and out of the workforce, never accumulating social security or seniority.

Looking elsewhere for more humane policy directions, it seems to me that Arab states can learn from and possibly avoid some of the unproductive policy responses in industrialized societies (which they themselves are now trying to undo). I would argue here against the usual dichotomy noted between Scandinavian laws and policies which are seen to be "family-friendly" due to generous parental leaves for both parents and subsidies for staying home to raise kids, usually juxtaposed to the U.S model, which withdrew completely from the work-family realm, only offering a post-facto tax credit to parents who must pay for expensive child care in dual job families.

In approach, both societal policies make the same assumption, which is that it is families which need assistance in order to accommodate to an unchanging workplace. Only very recently are a handful of progressive, usually larger corporations come to believe that something is fundamentally flawed in the work-family relationship. They conclude that it is the structure of work which needs to change and accommodate to family needs. This radical rethinking is taking place on many levels: spatial, in a questioning of the wisdom of separating work from the private space so absolutely; temporal, in assumptions about when and for how long we should work everyday; and structural, in the sense of rethinking people's life cycle relationship to work at the exclusion of personal goals and talents. A handful of European and North American companies which are experimenting with new work forms have been recently studied in some detail. Not only is turnover lower and morale higher, but - contrary to expectation - competitiveness is oftentimes improved.

This has been a rather long way around of setting out one example where traditional labor laws and policies intersect with the family, presumably in the name of “preserving” or “supporting” the family, but in practice almost always loading the burden inordinately back onto the family. And because of existing patriarchal structures, that translates almost perfectly to putting the burden solely on women.

Perhaps this working group can provide a venue for reexamining these issues in the Arab context. Hopefully this will include an empirical analysis of how work and family are changing, and explorations of how the workplace might become more supportive of family well-being.

Dina Craissati: Challenging the Assumption of the Arab Family as the Center of Social Action

Introduction made in the framework of the Arab Families Working Group
Cairo Workshop (May 4 - 6, 2001) by
Dina Craissati

This brief introduction questions dominant and static assumptions and sociopolitical analyses on Arab societies as remaining traditional and directed by kinship and family ties. It proposes that research on the Arab family departs from the new social and sociopolitical spaces which have slowly, but dynamically, emerged in the late 80ies and 90ies and which have demonstrated concrete potentials in shaping social and societal action and change (including the defiance of family dynamics and moralities as well as state powers and public policies).

Two clarifications need to be made before:

1. If the aim of the Arab Families Working Group (AFWG) is to influence programming on social development, democratization, gender equality, and peacebuilding, then it is important to adopt a *critical and political* approach which de-essentializes the concept of the Arab family and connects it to broader *societal* endeavors and conflicts for social change, justice and emancipation. In this regard, the family cannot be put at the *center* of analysis.

2. The second point relates to the definition of social action. The understanding put forward here is that social action is, neither an individualized atomic action within a status quo and within a stable homogenized integrated family or community, nor a rational strategic-instrumental pursuit of particular interests. Rather, social action is a process of *social relations* between actors and of *debates, confrontations, conflicts and struggles* around power and around normative meanings and cultural orientations.

Social action is to be viewed within the contemporary and growing drive *and capacity* of citizens to become “agents of change”, to be more autonomous, reflexive, and critical, to filter information, to not only react and readjust, but also to act and create, and to make better decisions relevant to themselves and to their everyday life. In the present era of globalization, and because of it, more domains of social, cultural, political and economic life are opened to alternative projects and forms of societal organization and democratization, linking economic growth and technological progress to participation and social justice, to what is called by the British sociologist, Anthony Giddens, “generative politics”.

Concrete experiences are taking place, specifically at local levels, where economic resources are invested in social initiatives, providing conditions for decentralization, engagement and bottom-up information flow, freeing the capacities of people, strengthening autonomy and innovation, placing emphasis on empowerment and the reconstruction of social solidarities, changing the citizen from a passive recipient of services to an active subject of social development, and

increasingly recognizing that market forces and private initiatives need to be balanced by public and civil society action.

While the definition of civil society remains burdened with unresolved debates, and specifically concerning the Arab world, the argument put forward here is that *certain elements within it* constitute a growing and active competitor to the Arab family in influencing social action, in steering cultural production, in shaping political activism and in influencing the relationship of the individual to the state. These elements are neither primary networks of solidarity nor modern institutions of economic planning; they are not the various conservative, clientelist, traditional, fundamentalist, integrative and disintegrative socialization and organizational spaces, where authoritarianism is nourished.

The focus here is on these elements of civil society which create, appropriate and defend spaces where democracy is learned and practiced through different debates, interactions, negotiations, tensions, confrontations, conflicts, struggles and relationships with others. They could be concretely represented by NGOs, associations, self-help groups, or other forms of social organization, but they are more adequately (and qualitatively) defined by the French sociologist Alain Touraine as “new social movements”, which consciously challenge and create ruptures with established and fundamental societal orientations, like patriarchal family moralities and gender inequalities, producing new emancipatory meanings, opening up new private and social spaces to the democratization process, contesting control over them, and plugging their particular struggles to broader societal stakes of domination.

Such processes are *not programmatic* and they are not the privilege of contexts where representative democracy is well entrenched; they are observable worldwide, including in the Arab world, in the form of concrete struggles, and in the domains of everyday life and social relationships. Indeed, the reorientation of the donor community to civil society in the past decade is not only related to the push for decentralization, but also to the growing recognition of the human, and civil society, creative, productive and emancipatory potentials. Research on civil society in the Arab world has however not deeply researched, explained and acknowledged this potential.

There are concrete spaces in the Arab world, in diverse fields of health, education, rural and urban development, led by different actors, women, youth, professionals, development and human rights activists, etc.

- where the forms and regulatory mechanisms of societal control are unmasked and challenged,
- where concealed power is revealed,
- where new cultural and sociopolitical identities, new meanings and new values are reconstructed or created,
- where individuals learn to define and articulate everyday life issues and needs related to education and culture, health and reproduction, ecology and environment, economic self-help, peace and tolerance,
- where they learn to give meaning to social action and produce new knowledge,

- where new forms of association and organization are gradually replacing tribal and family organic solidarities and patron-client networks,
- where struggles against domination are possible and occur,
- where individuals actively participate in democratization processes,
- where new forms of solidarity and responsibility are built and experienced,
- where modes of organization and styles of action are developed,
- where models of behavior and social relationships are produced and experienced,
- where leaders are formed,
- where resources, power, and know-how are made accessible,
- where the individual connects to the state (and public policies and laws) at political and social levels,
- where conflicts with the state are channeled and mediated,
- where social debates are brought on the political agenda,
- where individuals are protected from the intrusions of the state, and
- where the welfare functions of the state are taken over.

In the field of health in Palestine for example, new social movements have furthered through social action a new vision of and approach to health, stressing qualitative development over quantitative expansion of services, bridging preventive and curative health, and regarding basic primary health care and simple intervention techniques as more effective and cost-efficient than expensive sophisticated equipment and structures, encouraging the active participation of people in the advancement of their health and the involvement of health professionals with the patient and the community. Projects, such as the training of midwives and village health workers, women's health, community-based rehabilitation, and school health programs, are all oriented towards changing attitudes towards health, breaking the dependent and hierarchical outlooks towards doctors and health professionals as well as towards technological equipment, recognizing the capacity of ordinary people to treat common health problems, but insisting at the same time on efficiency and professionalism, democratizing relationships between the doctor, the nurse, and the health worker, valorizing health workers trained outside formal health institutions and respecting their creative capacities.

A social movement developed around health centres and health committees constituted of organizers, health professionals and health workers. Social spaces have been created where young village women were trained as village health workers and highly credited in their role, where role models were generated for them in village public life, where democratic functioning has not only initiated voluntary spirit and self-confidence, but also questioned relations of authority in the homes, creating ruptures with dominant societal orientations on the role of the family, defying hierarchical behavior and control of knowledge, confronting patronizing attitudes, discussing life-styles and mentalities, and empowering women to change their conditions.

To conclude, we can only view the weaving of family dynamics and moralities into politics and economy as part of a *complex web*, where other new and modern forms of organization and socialization, *as well as struggles*, are increasingly drawing in and *competing for centrality*, and for the influence of social action and public politics.

NOTE: For a more elaborate discussion on the role and potential of new social movements in the Arab world, and particularly in Palestine, see

- in the field of health: Craissati, Dina. forthcoming. "New Social Movements and Democratic Governance in Palestine: A Pioneering Model for the Arab World?" In a joint publication on NGOs and democracy in the Arab world by the UNESCO MOST Program, the CEDEJ in Cairo, the IRD in Paris, and the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies,

- and in the fields of health, agriculture and education: Craissati, Dina. 1998. *Social Movements and Democracy in Palestine: A Future for Radical Politics in the Arab World?* PhD Dissertation presented at the Department of Political Science, Universitaet Hamburg (in the process of publication).

Eileen Kuttab: Gender and Power in the Arab Family-Theoretical and Methodological Issues

The Arab family as described by different sociologists is a basic unit of social organization in traditional and contemporary Arab society, and it has been undergoing significant changes in the last decades due to the multidimensional challenges created and intensified by the State policies and other social institutions in the context of the socio political and economic transition of the Arab societies in general and Palestinian society in particular.

Halim Barakat in his famous book *the Arab World: Society, Culture and State* has described the Arab family as the basic central socio-economic unit which has a patriarchal tradition where father has the authority and responsibility as he owns the property and provides the family's livelihood. He explains that this patriarchal family has assigned women in a subordinate status varying by social class. In his book women are described as powerless, secluded and segregated as they continue to occupy the private domain of the household, and at the same time, discriminated against by personal status laws especially in areas of marriage, divorce and inheritance; and buttressed by the prevailing religious ideology. (Barakat, 1993,pp:97-102).

The above mentioned characteristics of Arab family, which explicitly suggest the inferior position of women and hence mandate power to the males is a general statement that maintains and confirms the stereotype nature of the Arab family. Although in general we do not observe or see drastic changes in gender relations in the Arab family yet in my view, general statements and positions as the above should be examined and discussed in more depth through further empirical findings as the Arab societies in general, are undergoing different socio-economic and political changes due to globalization and privatization which in turn is impacting the formation of the family at large including the nature of intra-household gender relations variably according to social class, and ethnicity .

A popular concern in dealing with gender and power in the family is the area of women and the organization of work in the family. In the economic sense, the first model that analyzes this issue is the cooperative or community oriented model which assumes a lack of distinction in the assignments of roles especially the productive roles (Osterud, 1991). The second model sets up a duality based either on a form of functional complementarity (Calrk 1990) or the marginalization of women. This has been criticized due to the cases of overlap in male and female tasks. Among the more radical positions, there is the idea that the family is the foundation of the patriarchal system, the place where the oppression of women as well as their alienation develop. (Bouchard,2000). This position has been the most popular in identifying the Arab family which becomes a combination of "complementary and contradictory" elements at the same time. (Barakat,1993).

The issue of women and work and the emphasis of the society on paid work as being more important than unpaid work is an important area of research that the Arab social scientists should promote. Many of the tasks associated with rearing a family are the products of unpaid work.

Despite the rise of female economic activity in the Arab world, most household tasks are still done by the woman even when she takes up paid work. In general, feminists have identified gender inequalities in paid work as one of the key forms of discrimination in modern societies. The debate is especially relevant among feminists who have long argued against the sole homemaker role for women and for integration into the male world of work. (Bernarde, 1997 p.184). In exploring the nature of working women and their families, Lerner suggests the need to put families first, and what is needed is an approach that puts the families in the forefront and is responsive to the changes that confront them. (Lerner,1994).In putting family first , clearly he says, we should recognise the labour involved in child care and housework as proper work and it should be given no more or less priority than any other form of work. Equality of recognition between paid and unpaid work or motherhood and housework should be developed through research methodologies and findings that can promote the kind of respect and value of unpaid work, and most obvious support to end discrimination in eligibility for welfare benefits. Even when we talk about female unemployment, one of the significant problems with the estimated female unemployment rates is that they do not take into account the fact that a large part of the female population voluntarily or by legal or social pressure, left the labour market or was not able to be part of it.

Palestinian women economic activity is very limited and has not exceeded 12 % in the formal labour force, and it is believed that the vast majority are housewives, and if working in the paid sector it is usually in the informal sector where they maintain their traditional roles and are exploited in unskilled labour. Palestinian labour market is a gendered market which has isolated women in fields or areas of work that relate to their reproductive roles and hence maintained their traditional roles that has not promoted a relatively balanced gender equality. This is because the other inter-related sectors like the private domain: housework, care...etc. and public domain: State policies or legislation have not responded or pushed the economic changes and hence have not taken up these issues into serious consideration. Hence it is important to notice that paid work alone cannot be a measurement for empowerment. According to our findings on the Palestinian households, the percentage of work confirms the official statistics and women are mainly centered in housework and domestic economy where power cannot be attained. Despite these findings which are well known, some interesting issues have been explored that need to be examined further like for instance, there is a correlation between education and work, but what needs to be examined more is the impact of higher education on type of jobs that women can attain as it seems that there is a more positive relation between higher education and better paid or prestigious jobs that can have an impact on the woman's authority and power in the family. Further research in this context can be useful for bridging the gap between education and work. Also as women's representation in the public sphere is still very limited, then more gender specific policies should be promoted to expand women's opportunities . Research on this level can also become useful to expand women's power in the public sphere that can also promote more gender equality in the family through legislative reforms.

Hence any in-depth analysis on the Arab family, especially in the context of gender and power is multidimensional and should distinguish between the two levels of analysis:
1-analysis that relates to the macro-social level, that is the loci of power like the State, Legislation, Capital or Resources and Opportunities...etc.

2-analysis that relates to micro-social level, the immediate social life where family cultures and nuclear dynamics are given expression.

In this context, analyzing gender inequalities within the family should respond to research questions raised as to whether the oppression of women is a direct and in some way necessary consequence of societal system. This is important for policy implications. Furthermore, we should also ask if there is a deterministic relationship between the “structural factors” (division of labour) and oppressed status of women as women are always presented as passive and recipients. It is important to realize to what extent these societal constraints penetrated the daily life of family unit- or to what extent does the macro-social dimension shape the micro-social dimension. Understanding the different levels can have direct policy implications. For instance, some policies can be promoted on a short term as a sort of coping strategies to empower women and expand their circle of authority and power, but such strategies should be tied to a clear vision of long term strategies that have strategic implications and can affect general policies that govern the family’s livelihood, i.e. State policies and Legislation Reform that can enlarge women’s opportunities and capacities through legal protection which can have a direct impact on women’s status in the family.

Such research questions as to whether dependency and forms of oppression and exploitation of women in the family took root more at the societal level or on the micro-social dynamics, can explore the level of the relationship which can prove that it is not a mechanical one. To elaborate more, some Western sociologists in their various studies on the family (Bouchard,2000) have argued that despite “official patriarchy” rural women for instance exercised considerable power in precapitalist economies, owing to a division of labour that entrenches the “complementarity of tasks” (Ward 1990) and often led women to perform important roles outside home. (Riley, 1988).

It seems clear that in certain economic or historical stages, women’s roles went beyond the strictly domestic sphere like for instance the Palestinian women in the uprisings who were able to take social as well as political roles in addition to their reproductive roles, but in stages of political stability, women were nevertheless excluded from major roles relating to public life or the societal system in general. So the idea of separation of private and public remains still relevant despite the occasional changes in gender roles.

On the other hand, although the complementarity of roles has traditionally been a source of strength in marriage, it can become at the same time a source of weakness within marriage as has been discussed in the Egyptian context especially when the growing contribution of women to family finances results in no measurable improvement in their other domestic responsibilities or rights. (Naghiub and Lloyd, 1994).

According to different studies, analyzing bargaining policies within existing marriages can give only an incomplete picture of the determinants of the well being of men and women. Although the marriage market is an important determinant of distribution between men and women as it can determine who marries, and who marries whom, yet the extent to which the marriage market also determines distribution within particular marriages depends on whether spouses can make binding agreements in the marriage market. Division of responsibilities have always been

determined by the imbalances and unequal gender relations in the Arab family in general. As men have been responsible for providing financial needs for the family in addition to protection, and maintenance, whereas the traditional responsibility of women has been centered on the internal well-being of the family. This gender division of familial responsibility is based on the complementarity of gender roles, which creates the interdependence between men and women. This in normal conditions can promote solidarity and cohesion, but in difficult conditions like (market dislocations and political unrest) can promote conflict. In the Palestinian context where unemployment is high for the males and females, and poverty has become a spread structural phenomena of the Palestinian household this kind of analysis becomes irrelevant as it does not promote any kind of complementarity and exposes the security and sustainability of such a policy. So to what extent is the traditional gender division of financial responsibility for the well-being of the family maintained in the Arab society in the face of the present changing socio-economic conditions is also an empirical issue that should be observed when studying gender relations in the family.

For a long time the focus of economic analysis on market activities excluded decisions and activities within the family. However, the choices made within the family about time allocation, about the distribution of income and consumption, and human capital accumulation in parents and children have important repercussions for what happens in the market and to the development of the economy on one hand and gender relations in the family on the other. Recently, attention has been devoted to the intra-household distribution family policies like policies directed toward increasing female labour supply, especially when related to the care or custody of children. Alternative models take into account the intrahousehold distribution of resources and understands the separate effects of price and income and the distributional implications of various policies within the family. In fact, the household bargaining model shifts the attention from resource-pooling to the control of resources as resources are attributable to each spouse. (Ibid.). Hence an important research issue is the analysis of resources, should not only be centered in women's resources but who controls resources and what kind of resources are they and how and what are the effects of these resources on gender relations.

Recent research findings on Quebec communities in the 19th century have explained that through empirical research they were able to find that the societal system established an outright patriarchy whereas it is less evident at the micro-social level. Such a finding is important as women gaining power at the micro level can have some area in which women are able to negotiate and quite often even assert themselves on the macro-level.

Beyond the constraints of either societal or micro-social order, what is woman's actual status in relation to her husband, in the daily life of the couple and the family can promote analysis that can give an insight and more understanding of what happens in the family and how changes can affect gender relations in the family for women's interest.

Hence researchers should emphasize the significance of the connection between the rise of nation-states and gender relations as Kandiyoti's work outlines. As states begin to mobilize work forces and make laws, the state become a direct determinant of patriarchal relations molded by the ruling elites. This state patriarchy as she calls it, is when the state becomes an actual creator of culture as well as the maker of laws and laws are enforced directly from a central government.

As new Arab states are modernizing their societies they are not depending solely on the traditional legitimacy, except for gender roles. (Sonbol, 1998).

The contradiction between modern state patriarchy has a schizophrenic dichotomy as women aspire to become members in the parliament but they face difficulties in divorcing their husbands. So the difficulty is the dichotomy between modern secular and civil laws that are applied to the economy and politics, whereas religious laws are applied to the personal status laws which leave women in confusion and hence limit their power in the family.

On the other hand, there is also a need to explore gender and power in the political arena or political system in relation to participation and representation. It has been observed through different studies on Third World societies that women have more space, voice and opportunities of representation in national independence struggles, but when power is institutionalized, and centralized in a formal political system usually called the state, then this voice weakens and women lose the space and impact on the political life. This is clear when we analyze the status of Palestinian women in the struggle for example and compare Pre-Oslo and Post-Oslo period regarding women's representation. We can realize obviously the withdrawal and retreat in women's power post-Oslo, as women have lost their voice and space as power has been hegemonized by the Palestinian Authority, and the civil society has ceased to functionally exist.

A final methodological comment concerning gender and power that needs to be explored further in the Arab as well as the Palestinian context is the impact of the national development policies on the family in the context of globalization and privatization concerning family formations, change of attitudes, and gender relations. Although the Palestinian economy is a weak economy and it does not represent a typical transitional economy or have the same characteristics of more developed third world societies, yet the impact of privatization and globalization can also be felt. Such an analysis can have a combination of conflicting dynamics. As the State loses its role in service provision, women are more pressured to respond to this gap by promoting coping strategies. Yet at the same time, it can have a positive implication as state patriarchy is loosened, which on one hand may affect the ideological framework or change the legislation to take a more modern positive position towards women and gender relations in the society, giving women more space and opportunities to participate in the public sphere. This is an assumption that can be explored, but at this stage, one needs to wait for a more suitable political reality in the Palestinian context to be able to explore further these issues.

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Hoda Elsadda: Gender and Power in Arab Families

The “Arab Family”, or the “Muslim Family” has always occupied a central place in political, social and economic analyses of the Arab region. For a very long time, the “otherness” of the Arab family, as Judith Tucker pointed out, has supported the notion that “this family can be defined in historical opposition to the European family” (Tucker, 1993, 195). To render this project feasible, the Arab family has been subjected to a sequence of essentializing processes that have ultimately rendered it monolithic, static and ahistorical. Within this construct, the Arab family came to symbolize the intrinsic traditionalism of Arab societies. It upheld values, concepts and customs that were defined as “backward” and that were perceived as necessarily antagonistic to, or at least incompatible with, the values of modernity and progress. The traditionalism of the Arab family perpetrated oppressive practices that denied its members basic rights and autonomy. This traditionalism was equated with the influence of Islam as a religion on the region. Again, Islam and Islamic dictums were included in the notion of otherness and were essentialized to signify a value system that was obsolete in the modern world. In short, this family represented everything that needed to be changed, developed and transformed to signal the entry of the Arab region into the modern world. Within this paradigm, women, and their perceived disadvantaged position within the family, were posited as being the prime victims of the Arab family system. In effect, “the subordinate role of women in the Muslim family was treated as both a cause and a symptom of societal backwardness” (Hatem, 1999, 67).

Discourses on gender and power in the Arab family have come under the influence of a number of grand narratives on Islam, modernization, and nationalism. These narratives have been responsible for the biased interpretations of Middle Eastern history and for the lop-sided representations of the Arab family outlined above. Recent research on gender issues in the Middle East has challenged some of the basic tenets of these grand narratives. *A Social History of Women and Gender in the Middle East*, edited by Maragaret Meriwether and Judith Tucker (1999) consists of excellent review articles of recent work that challenge these grand narratives. For example, two chapters, by Annelies Moors and Mary Elaine Hegland review work that address the assumptions about the victimization of women under Islamic laws; Ellen Fleischman looks at work that challenges the nationalist narrative by revising definitions of politics and political participation which exclude women’s activities; Mervat Hatem addresses the modernization narrative.

How? For the purpose of rendering the above generalizations intelligible in this brief overview, I will simply give a few selected, even eclectic examples of new directions in research that have critiqued the modernization narrative and have revised some of its tenacious assumptions. But first, what have been the basic tenets of the modernization narrative? Modernization, or to render modern, is predicated on the description of western societies for the last two centuries, and carries with it a heavy load of western cultural baggage: a belief in the linear progress of civilization from darkness to light; an embracing of a western paradigm of progress and development; an assumption that other parts of the world are going through earlier stages of

development and hence are backward compared to the progressive western model; and a binary mode of thought that allows for the construction of opposing dichotomies such as tradition and modernity, public and private, self and other.

Critics of the modernization narrative have challenged assumptions about the inherent opposition between traditional societies and modern societies: traditional does not necessarily mean backward or anti women and modern does not necessarily mean more freedom for women. In a much quoted article that looks at discourses on gender in the post 1976 neo-liberal phase, Mervat Hatem challenges the assumptions about the oppositions between secularist and Islamist views, and argues that both are modernist and biased against women (Hatem, 1994). For a very long time, the prevalent assumption had been that secularist or liberal directions supported the empowerment of women as opposed to more Islamist or “conservative” directions that curtailed women’s freedom and rights. A revision of the modernist binary opposition between tradition and modernity has resulted in the reconsideration of the assigned meanings of particular cultural symbols and practices. The veil, for example, a powerful symbol of women’s oppression has been revised and its multiple meanings have been reconsidered.

Modernist criteria for measuring women’s control over their freedom have also undergone a revisionary process. Access to education, work (economic freedom) and legal rights have been used as criteria to assess the position of women in society. The assumption was that women in premodern times were denied education, were not allowed to work and to participate in economic transactions, and were also denied their legal rights, particularly within the family. Research has shown that women had access to education in premodern periods, notably at the *kutab* (Marsot 1995). Research on Ottoman households has challenged women’s assumed powerlessness and has found evidence to prove that they were capable of being agents of power and control (Pierce, 1993). Research on religious court archives has shown women to be agents of economic activities. They sold land, established waqfs, and conducted various economic transactions (Zilfi 1996; Fay 1996 and 1997; Marsot 1995). Court records have also shed new light on social practices that often conflicted with the letter of the law. As Tucker points out, “women used the courts as way of negotiating, testing, and even pushing gender boundaries” (Tucker, 1999,15). Work in this direction has revolutionized our understanding of the power relations within the family.

Deconstructing modernist dichotomies between tradition and modernity, public and private has also directed attention to the role played by the different modern states in formulating and inscribing gender relations. A noted example here is Deniz Kandiyoti’s edited volume *Women, Islam and the State* (1991), where different state policies had different implications for gender relations in the family. Also, Diane Singerman’s work which focuses on the household as a political arena deconstructs the public private divide by shedding light on women’s informal economic and political activities and provides new insights in the dynamics of power within the family (Singerman 1994; 1996).

The above-mentioned directions in research have resulted in a revision of our understanding of the opposition between power and powerlessness. It is noteworthy that the purpose of contending that women have had access to education, and have been economic agents in

premodern times, is not meant to lead to the conclusion that they had total control over their lives, or that the position of women was significantly better in premodern times. It is meant to problematize the conceptualization and perception of power and power relations. For a long time, the concept of power has been treated as “an abstraction located in concepts, beliefs and ideologies” (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 23), which led to an emphasis on formal institutionalized relations inscribed in authoritative texts and structures. Foucault drew attention to the relational aspect of power, an insight which destabilizes the rigidity of power hierarchies. In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990) Scott posits the existence of dual transcripts for all relations of power: “the official transcript” which regulates subordination through official texts, and “the hidden transcript” which consists of the various acts of resistance and subversive interventions by the “weak” in their daily struggle to gain advantages within an oppressive system. Paying special attention to the details of everyday life, archival work, together with postmodern and postcolonial deconstructive readings of constructed modernities is opening up new areas of research and analysis.

Where do we go from here? I have already referred to the ongoing critiques of metanarratives. Needless to say, these are still very much with us and need a great deal of attention and critical self-awareness. More archival work in social and family history remains to be done. Researchers have suggested several categories or concepts that need always be taken into consideration when discussing gender issues in the Middle East: tradition, identity, colonialism, nationalism and religion (Tucker 1999; Abu-lughod 1998; Gocek and Balaghi 1994). In these last few minutes, I would like to reflect on the issue of representation: or, 1-how issues of gender and power are represented within dominant discourses; 2- and how women represent themselves within the context of their perceptions of power, and within the context of existing regimes of truth.

The question of who represents whom, why and how has led to a great deal of interest in making room for women’s voices to represent themselves and their experience without mediation. Autobiographies, women’s creative writings, oral narratives are posited as potential transmitters of women’s experiences and self-representations. Nevertheless, the idea of unmediated voice has been challenged. Spivak has asked can the subaltern speak and be heard? Assuming control over one’s voice has become a widely debated issue. On another level, researchers from various disciplines are becoming more and more aware and critical of their analytical categories and tools. Within feminist scholarship, the relationship between the researcher and the researched has been the object of much reflection, even soul searching. I think it is safe to say that there is a general realization that all categories of analysis are the effects of specific power relations.

Future research on gender issues in the Middle East will need to pay special attention to the politics of representation. This will require:

- 1-A revision of theoretical categories and assumptions.
- 2- A critical self-awareness of the dynamics of power behind processes of othering, or the construction of sameness and difference. This point is premised on the assumption that representations of self and other are interdependent and constantly support/ or undermine one another. When I say “we”, what are the criteria of inclusion or exclusion from my imagined community? How are my definitions of particular concepts (the concept of “rights”,

“autonomy”, or “freedom” for example) historically, subjectively, ideologically or culturally defined?

3- Emphasis on women’s writings and oral narratives. A social /textual analysis of life stories, stories of self, or representative narratives of self, can potentially shed light on how women contest / negotiate representations of themselves given the constraints of existing regimes of truth. Here, meaning is not held hostage to the paradigm of true or false. Rather, meaning is generated through the complex interaction between the text, the subtext, and the metatext.

4-More attention to media studies. I raise this point because I feel that it is not receiving enough attention in this meeting, compared to laws, family structures, property. In our contemporary world, with the expansion of mass media, information technologies and communication networks, the scope of influence and implications of global cultural messages produced and disseminated through the various venues of “visual culture”, still needs to be understood. Theoretical and practical approaches to visual culture are concerned with the cultural practices of looking and seeing, i.e. with the psycho-cultural complexities of how the image is received, understood and internalized by the viewer. This takes us beyond the “image of women in the media” approach, which assumes women to be passive recipients of stereotypical images, to asking questions about processes of assimilation, rejection and contestation. There is still a great deal to understand about the impact of the globalization of visual culture on representations of gender relations and roles, and on dominant and marginal discourses on gender.

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Jihad Makhoul: Arab Families and War- The Case of Lebanon

Basic considerations

The concept of Arab families in Lebanon could include, as a working definition

- Lebanese families [where the male head of household is Lebanese]
- other families who have been residing in Lebanon for a long time having multiple ethnic origins, such as Armenians.....
- Palestinian refugees of forced settlements, such as those living in the camps.

The choice for the theme will be limited to the Lebanese families.

Studies on families and war in the 1990s are very limited as the war ended in 1990 and during that time, scholarly writing was limited to the description of emergency conditions, displacements, casualties and fragmenting societies. The 'war' will refer to the 1975-1990 war in Lebanon, which extended 16 years and included Israeli invasions and outbreaks of battles in different areas in the country and included externally backed local fighting parties.

The definition of the Arab family in the studies or the literature available through printed published journals and accessible text books fall short of defining 'the family' when the authors refer to it. It also seems in the majority of references to represent the smallest unit of analysis in the studies presented. There is very little stress on the cultural gender roles and how these interact in the topic of interest or that in question. The authors present a reductionist portrayal of the 'family' either as the stereotypical extended family, usually descriptive of rural Arab cultures or the nuclear family type, presented as typical of modern urban communities. Therefore, there is no mention of families whose members share the same dwelling place and those who include others of common descent.

The literature also portrays the 'family' as a static entity, useful for etic view point studies, with little internal analysis of the impact of roles on other family members and the family as a whole. Although the 'family' is mentioned in various contexts, in fact the individual family members are those who are referred to: the children the parents and the married couple or simply the number of individuals in the household. In many cases they have been the 'targets' of development projects after the war within a 'community development' approach.

There is, because of the funding sources and recent stress in the international arena on gender issues, an attraction in the social science field to the structural violence against women and less powerful men. Projects are described to have moved on 'empowering' women and educating the public on the issues of women's and human rights [through education, literacy programs] in the aim of rebuilding a shattered society after the war. However, feminist research into the deconceptualisation of militarism and political boundaries, which define family roles and gender-related structural and domestic violence are non-existent for Lebanon.

The literature covers:

1. Effect of the war on specific family members, such as children, mainly written by agencies working with orphans or disabled children; health effects of the war on family members, with a stress on mental and psychological problems and matters as well as mortality rates;
2. Investigation into social values and norms in comparison with pre-war data on social norms in the family using sample surveys on a defined student body;
3. Displacement statistics within Lebanon and the basic needs of the families are presented by a workshop, by NGOs and the Ministry of Displaced in the public sector. Particular stress lies on casualties and political conditions of the South in relation to the Israeli occupation and fighting across the border, in the 1990s;
 - Official reports on money being spent for displaced families ‘returnees’ and interventions to rehabilitate them back into their original property- no studies done on how the meaning of home has changed for these families and their perceptions of the recently changed lives that they have adapted to in their new settlements;
 - Cross-sectional economic conditions of some families or families in general- all ad hoc and with no follow-up to study changes to the family over time;
 - Studies of Lebanese families abroad after migration due to the war, and how this has influenced women’s roles and the new opportunities it has given them in their new countries of residence.
 - A hint of the multiple realities of families along many loyalty lines: descent, political affiliations which are used to access favors, goods, services through mediation [*wasta*].
 - Restructuring of Beirut during the war and in the development and reconstruction period of the early 1990s. Only one study points to the restructuring of families and household arrangements: massive population movements and their effects on the spatial configurations, uses and perceptions of space in terms of the public/ private, rural/ urban are blurred due to the war events. Specifically, since 1975, many families experienced changes in their residences;
 - Economic impact on marriage and divorce patterns have been marginally described. Adverse financial conditions are reported to have decreased the number of new marriages and increased the rate of divorces. However, no analysis has been made to explore these phenomena over different social geographical and social settings;
 - Peace building and reconciliation:

The reconciliation process among the Lebanese has been described in a small number of texts and workshop proceedings, but it is not documented or studied in the communities which have witnessed returns of displaced families. The Ministry of the Displaced established in 1992 has been given this task. However, the opinions and the involvement of the people themselves have been left out of the process because of the technocratic character of the process and the involvement of key figures in war affected communities as well as the disequilibrium in the balance of power. This impairs negotiations and explains the unavailability of studies on people returning.

The available literature on social integration in Lebanon mentions that social integration is further hindered by existing structural inequalities which were existing before the outbreak of war, namely the social and physical development differentials; the unequal laws governing

personal status and the existing political system which favors sectarianism to nationalism; the weak state which fails to be the effective guardian of society.

In conclusion, the studies done on Arab Families and war in Lebanon are mainly descriptive in nature and lack analysis and longitudinal follow-up perspectives. Very few ethnographic and sociological accounts on the family and family dynamics exist.

Methodologies include surveys carried out on community levels [of special interests, such as health indicators for children etc.], and many with or in reference to the head of the household, who is in general considered to be male. At a country level, only two studies on the condition of families and the general population have recently been carried out by the public sector with large amounts of funds from two UN agencies present dissimilar findings. No coordination occurred and the survey methods used relied heavily on available, but inaccurate statistics in the country.

Implications for Research

- ! What kind of structural change brings about what kind of change for families? How does this vary in different spatial contexts. Fertility levels and marriages decreased during the war [?], but also the number of elderly populations have increased and will continue to do so in general. Implications on family coping and supporting services.
- ! Context analysis of change on the characteristics of the family is needed rather than broad generalizations.
- ! How have families coped with disabilities or mental illnesses which have emerged after the war or in an after war context.
- ! Coping strategies of families in post-war conditions [poverty, spatial changes, such as displacement and returning home.
- ! Changes of the roles of family members and their implications on gender segregation and family dynamics as a whole.
- ! Statistical data from the Population and Household and other surveys can be analysed against available pre-war data, which may be used to describe changes in demographic and socioeconomic indicators.

Josette Abdalla: Child Rearing, Child Socialization, and Children's Rights in Arab families

by
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A review of contemporary Egyptian society raises certain issues regarding how different it is today in comparison to around 30 years ago, the variables currently involved in the child rearing and socialization processes, as well as the apparent needs that need to be considered in order to meet and satisfy the physical, emotional, social, and psychological components of children's development.

It does not need a professional person to highlight the fact that the family structure today is different than what it was previously. Generally speaking, Egyptian family life was characterized by extended family involvement in child rearing, the mother was viewed as a homemaker and family caretaker, there was a hierarchy of authority within the family and associated with age and relationship status, level of education and work aspirations were more characteristic of male rather than female members of the family, and the pace of life within the family was more on the pedantic side with time allotted for socialization within family settings, the situation is no longer the same.

Nuclear families are more characteristic of contemporary family life. Relatives are automatically less involved in the day to day child rearing process mainly due to the facts that families are no longer extended, distances separate different households, and occupations keeping each family into its separate entity are much more numerous and prevent closer communication. It is accepted nowadays that women go to school and university, and most women choose to work after they graduate from university. The hierarchy of authority as well as responsibilities within the household family members is more diffuse, and as a result of a faster pace of life during the daytime concurrent with the improvement of quality of home entertainment, socialization patterns have also changed.

In order to identify the principal factors contributing to these changes, it is necessary to focus on each of what the psychologists consider the socialization factors from the perspective of how these have changed and consequently resulted in changes. These are mainly (1) the family (2) the school, and (3) peers, and (4) society. It is also important to assess these changes and evaluate their impact - both positive and negative - and what would need to be modified and how.

Volumes could be written on each of these variables based on general observation and individual interpretation of events. However, from a scientific point of view, this has not been done in a rigorous and well-studied way. Psychologists, sociologists and social workers, have all

contributed in bits and pieces. However, well integrated research, to identify the significant and contributing variables in concurrent Egyptian society, and evaluate how these variables affect the socialization process, is certainly a much needed enterprise, that would be of benefit to people involved in child rearing as well as child policy making.

A review of the area of children in exceptional circumstances, for example, reveals that there is a lot of research in Egypt on child and adolescent delinquency. There is also growing interest in orphans and street children. However, the number of persons interested in these areas from a professional point of view, in comparison to the amount of work needed to be done, is certainly not proportionate. The estimated prevalence of orphans, street children and delinquents is each approximately 10 thousand. The number of institutions in each of these fields does not cater to more than 3 thousand in the case of orphans and less than 1 thousand in the other two cases. The specialized persons in terms of professionalism, funding, and administrative organization not more than 20 persons in each of these fields. These figures speak for themselves, and needless to say, the result of not attending to the needs of these children in these exceptional circumstances would have serious repercussions on the children themselves as well as the society.

It is becoming increasingly common to read in the daily newspapers stories about rape, crimes, robberies, etc.. and most people agree that their seems to be an elevated crime incidence. It is true that this may be the result of mass media policy being more open about these issues and reporting them. However, amateurish analysis of the personalities of these criminals and the events that led to their committing their crimes may also reflect poor socialization and child-rearing practices and that the principal socializing agencies - whether families , institutions, or other - did not pay the much-needed attention to these criminals when they were children themselves.

Drug addiction is also becoming a phenomenon among the younger generation. Previously, it used to be limited to certain working classes, and minority groups. Nowadays, it has become an admitted fact that drug addiction is prevalent in not only universities, but also in schools and among pupils who are in their early teens. Many politically influential personalities are currently making it their goal to do overrule this tendency, and they are combining efforts with many organizations including institutions to identify the variables and causes that led it to these proportions. It is continuously reported that family breakdown or disruption, the influence of peers, as well as economic factors contribute significantly to the drug phenomenon.

A third broad area involving exceptional children refers to that of the physical and/or mentally handicapped. Egypt, like most other countries, has about 10% prevalence of handicapped children. This means about 6 million children. Although much is being done to help these children and provide the psychological and physical services, a lot still needs to be accomplished in order to help them grow into well-adjusted and productive individuals. Once again, assessment of their basic needs, and how to provide and satisfy these needs is an area of research that is needed.

As for the remaining population of children. These can be divided into three sub- groups. The first includes children who come from broken families, where there is a high amount of stress,

conflict, etc.. and the children are usually victims of these circumstances and most of them are negatively affected by the psychological consequences following these adverse circumstances. There is a high rate of divorce in Egypt - including separation of parents and/or remarriage of either or both parents - and statistics have shown that this rate is on the increase in spite of the known consequences of divorce. Nevertheless, the situation is an important one and one which needs to be considered very seriously by all people involved with children. Closely related to divorce is the new “khol” situation which has its own dimensions in terms of societal implications and new family and gender role dynamics.

The second sub-group is that of children who belong to families where parent(s) work away from their families (usually in the Gulf countries) to be able to make money to tend to their family needs. Naturally the dynamics in these families are of a different caliber, and these have their own characteristics and dynamics which are different than those of the previous group. They also lead to different psychological and social adjustment patterns, and much research needs to be done in this domain as well so as to alleviate the negative effects that these contexts bring out.

The third sub-group is the one that is usually referred to as the group of “normal” children in “normal” circumstances. Although the focus on this group is quite significant, and numerous books and research articles have been prepared on “How to raise a child”, “What are the best child-rearing techniques” “All what parents have to know in raising a child” etc... much more needs to be done in view of many of the changing current societal circumstances and practices.

Among these significant societal changes that impact on the entire family dynamics and children is the educational system. Schooling in Egypt has recently undergone basic changes. This is apparent from the increasing number of schools that have adopted educational programs other than the traditional Thanaweyya Amma, and programs like the British IGCSE, and the American High School diploma, are now being implemented in many schools. Apart from the financial implications that these programs have, their psychological and educational consequences on children and their families are reflected across many dimensions, including the quality of studying, amount of homework, creativity, hobbies, sports, extra curricular activities, as well as amount of peer and family involvement. This is also reflected later on when the pupil and his/her family select the university for higher studies, and whether the choice is a national and traditional university, an American style university, or going abroad.

Another significant societal change is the impact that mass media and improved technology and electronic inventions has on peer and family style of interaction and on patterns of entertainment. As a result of being able to view TV programs from all over the world, and being exposed to different styles of thinking, patterns of behaving, cultures, languages, etc.. in the vicinity of one’s home, the family and societal interaction patterns, including expectations, aspirations, and motivational goals as well as entertainment practices have also been modified. Patterns of entertainment - at home or outside of home - in clubs, malls, electronic shops, coffee shops, etc.. all different than what they were a few years ago.

The economic status of the country is another contributing factor to changing family dynamics closely impacting on socialization and child rearing practices. Venues like banking, tourism,

petroleum companies, etc... are recent to the Egyptian society, and these impact on the attitudes towards job selection and aspirations, motivations, financial revenue, working hours, characteristics of job descriptions, etc.. have been modified during the last few years etc... Related to the economic status, and simultaneously having an impact on child-related issues are the increasing availability of transportation such as cars, and communication facilities such as mobiles, and most young people aspire to obtain them at very early ages. Marriage-related issues such as financial responsibilities of the bride, groom and their families, respectively are also reflective of modified economic situations in Egypt and the impact that these have on the future outcome of the couple i.e. the children, is certainly a significantly related situation.

An additional factor that may also have some sort of impact on family dynamics - even though it is not a major one - has to do with the style of holiday taking. Previously going on holiday implied a long vacation in one single beach resort e.g. Alexandria, Ras el Bar, or Marsa Matrouh, and being established in one place and for a long period of the holidays had its traditions and style of living and interaction that impacted on all of the family members for that period of time. Nowadays, the fact that there are many resorts all over Egypt, and most of them are costly, means that families who want to take a holiday now tend to divide this holiday in one or more less-than-a-week period and go to one or different resorts each time. Although this may seem to be a trivial factor, nevertheless, it does impact on how the family decides on and spends the holiday, and the financial implications involved since the entertainment facilities in these resorts are also different quality and price-wise than their counterparts in the past.

It can be observed that the attitude in general towards gender-related issues is also in a transitional phase. This means that family and societal attitudes, as well as governmental or administrative policies have undergone certain changes and the pressure that is put on these four different areas has to be carefully investigated to assess their positive and negative outcomes. Much has been accomplished, and still more needs to be done in order to put both genders on a similar footing and provide equal opportunities for both girls and boys.

Needless to say, a lot has been done in the domain of child rearing and child socialization in the recent years in Egypt. Many children's rights have now been outlined (including education, work, medical care, and vocational training for the various categories or groups of children), and much is in the process of being implemented.

However, there is a tremendous need for intensive, child-oriented and child-related research in urban as well as rural Egypt, to be able to systematically assess the current situation, evaluate the ideal situation, and develop a means end analysis to enhance the mental health and psychological well being of more than 30 million children in Egypt.

Laila El-Zeini: Theme: Arab Families in Place, Space, and War: A commentary

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Preface

This is a brief discussion of some of the issues that I consider to be of relevance to research on the contemporary Arab family. There is no attempt on my part to make it an exhaustive list nor do I claim that these issues are the most important ones. My choice is mainly determined by my disciplinary background as a statistical demographer. As such, two dimensions are of special significance to me: population dynamics and the ability to draw inference and to predict basing on relevant research findings. This disciplinary bias, however, is not to be allowed to curtail my interests or to mold them into predefined limits. Measurement and inference is my arena, but this is not to be taken as an excuse to be superficial or unrealistic. It is that ever-challenging pursuit of quantifying the seemingly unquantifiable that best describes the vocation of the social statistician.

Population Dynamics and the Arab Family

By population dynamics, it is simply meant the three basic processes that shape the size, distribution, and structure of a given population through time: mortality, fertility, and migration. These processes that collectively determine the macro picture of populations interact with other macro processes, e.g. the national and the global political economy. However, the locus of the population dynamics processes is the individual. It is the individual that dies, gives birth (with essential contribution from another individual), and/or migrates. One of the results of this visible interlock between the macro and the micro in the demographic domain is a growing interest in multilevel frameworks. Knitting their multilevel web, demographers sooner or later have to confront the necessity to include the family as a major level of concern and a critical link between the micro and the macro. 'Family demography' is the branch of demography that explicitly considers the family or the household as the unit of analysis. However, much demographic research that is not formally designated as family demography has come to consider the family as a focal point of interest.

Specifically, and of relevance to this particular theme, research on migration cannot afford to ignore the family dimension as a major factor determining who migrates, to where, and when. But population dynamics go beyond migration. In what follows, I discuss two main issues that I believe to be of special relevance to the Arab family that mainly stem from changes in population dynamics. At the end of this commentary, I will address some of the methodological problems encountered by research on family.

1. Issues Related to Population Growth and Urbanization

Demographically, the Arab region is currently in a transitional stage, with mortality (especially infant and child mortality) decreasing rapidly and fertility also declining but not as

fast. As a result, the Arab region is experiencing one of the world's highest rates of natural increase. And as is the case in other developing countries, the rate of population increase is significantly higher in urban regions, especially metropolitan cities. This urban growth results from high internal migration from the rural areas (especially as they become saturated and fail to support their growing population) as well as from the expansion of large cities that swallow nearby smaller communities within their borders.

The exodus from rural to urban areas is a highly selective process, since young males are more likely to move. This pattern has implications for the age and sex composition of both urban and rural areas, not only on the macro level but also on the household and family level. For example, a recent study about Egyptian households shows that single-person households are distributed almost equally between urban and rural areas. However, in urban areas they contain mainly young men while in rural areas they contain old women. Several studies have also documented the increase in female-headed households in rural areas. The full implications of such disruption in the age and sex structure of rural families are still to be studied.

On the other hand, the increasing population pressure on large cities has recently drawn much attention. The implications for housing, environment, employment, political stability, and even morality have been considered. In such studies (most of which done within the economics discipline) the household is frequently used as the unit of analysis, but the majority of the studies on urbanization ignore inter-household and within-household dynamics. Ethnographic research has filled that gap by putting much emphasis on those dynamics. Specifically, the gender dimension in families' coping strategies has attracted much qualitative research. What is lacking is quantitative large-scale research that focuses on the impact of urban growth on family dynamics within the household and within larger kin groups that cross over different households and different localities.

2. Issues Related to Age Composition of Kin

A major implication of the changing demography in the Arab region is the change in the age structure of the population. As a result of the decrease in mortality followed by a decrease in fertility after a long period of rather high fertility and infant mortality, contemporary Arab population contain a considerably large segment of youth. On the family level, the same demographic changes can be shown to result in parallel changes in the age composition within both the nuclear and the extended family. In the past, an average woman started childbearing very early, continued it for an extended period, and experienced many births and also many infant losses. Now, an average woman starts her childbearing much later, stops it relatively early, and experiences fewer births and much fewer infant losses. Because fertility levels in most Arab countries, though largely declined, are still moderately high and at the same time infant and child mortality has appreciably decreased, the total number of siblings surviving to adulthood has not decreased dramatically. However, the change in the reproductive pattern is expected to result in a large decline in the average age difference between the oldest and the youngest surviving siblings at their young adulthood.

The decline in the age difference between siblings can result in a growing competition among them (and also among cousins) as they enter adulthood at nearly the same time.

Competition among siblings is more likely in the Arab context, where parents are largely responsible for helping their children establishing their career (e.g. shouldering the larger bulk of marriage expenses, funding higher education, locating a job through kin network, providing required money or assets to start a new business...). Such competition is likely to generate a force in favor of higher spatial mobility. As older children feel less obligated to remain close to home to help their parents raise their younger siblings, sibling ties may grow weaker. As a result, the change in the age structure of siblings is expected to decrease the prevalence of extended and joint family residential patterns and to increase internal and external migration.

Another plausible outcome of the change in the Arab demography is that in contemporary Arab families relational generations become more aligned with age than they used to be. With the more condensed pattern of reproduction, it is less likely for someone to have an uncle or an aunt at the same age as oneself. Since one's sense of his or her generation is dependent both on one's age and one's relational position in one's family, the alignment of both dimensions is expected to decrease the diffusion across different generations so that inter-generational differences become more salient. This in turn may also result in higher spatial mobility among the younger generations.

Although the change in the age composition on the macro level has received much attention from demographers and other social scientists (especially with focus on the elderly and the adolescents), no study has yet tried to investigate the effects of the demographic transition on kin age structure and the potential implications of a changing age structure of kin. With the special significance of kin networks in the Arab context, such studies are much needed.

Some Methodological Issues in Family Research

As a quantitative science, demography has demanded the development of a standardized operational definition of the family and its companion concept, the household. Designers of population censuses have always recognized the need to group individuals in distinct units, based on either a residential or a housekeeping criterion. Kin who reside in the same residential unit – and/or pool their resources in a shared budget – are considered as a family unit. Further distinction is made between nuclear and extended households. Generally speaking, the procedures used to identify separate households and the families residing within them are far from being infallible. In particular, they suffer from problems in confusing functional and structural definitions and in using subjective criteria to pinpoint one person as the head of the household. Such shortcomings might not seem harmful when the sole aim of a census or a survey is to count and to describe residents and the housing units they reside in. However, if the aim is to advise social policy about the support systems and kin networks active in a specific setting, the definitional problems become a handicapping feature of population censuses and conventional household surveys. And for sure, if the aim is to probe into family dynamics and dyads, the census definition can easily turn out to be totally irrelevant.

On the other hand, qualitative research that collects detailed and in-depth information using less rigid approaches can be feasibly carried out only in small localities. Case studies are of great value as a tool to unearth obscure realities and to probe into complex interrelationships. However, it is difficult to generalize from such studies. They can be used to examine the validity

of specific theoretical models, but they cannot be used to describe any larger population – a major component of any policy-informing research.

Studies on family can be a promising area for research that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative approaches. They can also benefit from recent developments in the techniques of network analysis. Recently, there have been several attempts to study demographic behavior using the concept of social network as a link between the macro and the micro in demographic research. In the Arab region, kinship can be considered the major social network that largely defines the individual's identity and interacts with almost every aspect of his or her life, from production to reproduction and from religious rituals to leisure activities. Unlike traditional demographic approaches, network analysis has the advantage of going beyond structure to study the relational dimension of kin ties, and of going beyond the geographical limits to inter-regional interactions. Still, issues of measurement validity and representativeness can easily plague family network studies.

Last but not least, and regardless of the approach employed, policy-oriented research on the family must address a further methodological issue: determining causality direction. National political economy, population dynamics, social institutions, and family systems are all endogenous processes, finely intertwined. Sophisticated econometric models and longitudinal studies can help to disentangle complex relationships, but a sophisticated analytical method is only an aide not a substitute for sound theoretical bases. Always there will be competing theories and interpretations. And always there will be a need for research endeavors to test and to advance existent theories.

أفكار حول الأبحاث المتعلّقة بالأسرة في لبنان

منى فايز

عندما أعود الآن إلى الفصل الذي كتبتّه في نهاية السبعينيات حول "موقع الأسرة والطفولة في - ، أجدني كتبت بنوع من الحماس الزائد إذا أمكن القول؛ بحيث لو أنني "الإسلامية"-الضرورة العربية ذلك بطريفة مختلفة، أكثر حيادية. كيف ذلك؟ ربما من المفيد أن أذكر أعدت كتابته الآن لفعلت أن الهدف أو المنظور الذي كتبتّه من أجله كان محاولة فهم خصوصية وضع الطفل في هذه المنطقة، Foucault, Mises, Aries وخاصة الطفل المتخلف عقلياً. وذلك بعد أن لفنت نظري كتابات كل من موضوع التسامح والموقف الخاص من الطفل في هذه الحضارة. الأمر الذي جعلني حول² et Weulersse أعود إلى الجذور التاريخية للموقف المتسامح تجاه الطفل المعاق والذي كان نموذج موقف جارة لنا من ابنه المعاق ونوعية حمايته الملفتة له من اعتداءات أطفال الحي ومن إهمال المؤسسات ومن موقف ض الأطباء المحمل بالأراء المسبقة. بعد كما شكّل القرآن وأحاديث النبي تزخر بالأمثلة التي تحض على التسامح الخلفية التي دعمت هذا التوجه.

ربما نجد أن بعض أنواع السلوك والممارسات لا تزال سائدة، وربما كانت ملاحظاتي تصح على عد يكفي الآن. ربما هو التغيير الحاصل بسبب الوضع الذي سبق الحرب، ولكن هذا التحليل لم ي الحرب أو بسبب الدور المتعظم للإعلام الذي ينحو لانتشار لمزيد من الصفات العامة المشتركة بين البشر، الأمر الذي يجعل التجارب الإنسانية المتنوعة والشديدة الاختلاف في متناول الجميع أنواع السلوك أو على الأقل تمايزها واختلافها عن مع ما يحمله ذلك من إمكانية التأثير وتغيير الموروث.

أول ما لفنت نظري بعد الحرب وأثناء حضوري لزفانين تقليديين إذا أمكن القول، هو وعيي - المفاجيء، من موقع الباحثة وليس من موقع المشاركة أو المتورطة، لتشكل فئة اجتماعية جديدة في مباشرة حملت أفكاراً وقامت بممارسات مختلفة عبرت فيها عن بدايات السبعينات و قبيل الحرب مفاهيم جديدة طالت الزواج والأسرة والإنجاب والموقف من الذات والآخر. الأمر الذي كان موضوع بحثي نظرة مغايرة -في العدد الأول من باحثات: "الكوبل"، نمط آخر من الزيجات في بدايات السبعينات للذات وللتقليد.

ستنتج أن إن التغييرات تحدث بسرعة وكثافة، ونكاد أن نلاحظها عيانياً، ففي فترة والاطفال التي لم تكن النساء كثرات في شوارع مدننا، ولكن عندما يخرجن إليهن يسرن مسرعات متلفعات بأنواع مختلفة من الأحجبة منها ما كان مطابقاً للملابس السائدة الآن في الجزيرة أو في أي من لم تكن ظاهرات للوعي أو مكشوفات الوجه. أما الآن فإن نظرة حولنا تجعلنا ندرك الي من. بم عن كم أن المرأة موجودة في الشارع، فلذلك أنها تركت البيوت الذي كان موقعها الأساسي وخرجت فنزلت إلى ان حيث الشارع والمقهى والمكتب والمصرف. إنها حاضرة في كل الأمكنة. وهذا التغيير هائل في عمر إنس أن التغييرات لم تكن تقاس في فترة زمنية بهذا القصر. إنه تغيير كبير يصيبننا بالدوار فمؤسسة الزواج تتغير ودور المرأة يتغير الأمر الذي يعنى تغيير وضعية الأسرة، وظيفتها ودورها.

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السجناء الأمر الآخر الذي ساهم في لمسي لمدى التغيرات والتميزات الحاصلة كان نتيجة عملي على (أطفالاً وكباراً) وجمعهم لسيرهم الذاتية (هذا بالإضافة إلى الملاحظات الواعية التي يقوم بها كل منا كفرد يشكل جزءاً من المحيط الذي يعيش فيه)؛ ما أوضح لي أننا غالباً ما نمثلك عن أنفسنا سبق وتكونت على صورة تكون مختلفة أو هي لا تزال سابقة على التطورات الحاصلة أو التي الأرض. فالفكرة السائدة التي نكونها عن الأسرة في مجتمعاتنا هي أنها متماسكة ومتضامنة (التعبير الإسلامي المستخدم هو التكافل) وتقوم مقام الدولة ومؤسساتها في عملية دعم أفرادها. والتفكير الذي من أي عن وحفظ حقوقهم على مختلف الأصعدة. وشعارنا عامة: الحمد لله إن مجتمعاتنا لا وإلى... التفلت الحاصل في الغرب والأفراد لم يعرفوا بعد التحلل والتمزق والأسرة لم تتفكك آخر هذه الشعارات التي تستخدم الأليات الدفاعية بالمدعى النفسي لكي تتركنا إلى ما تطمئن إليه لعنف المرضي الغربي، لكن أمام التغيرات أو التهديدات المحتملة. ربما لا تعرف مجتمعاتنا أنواعاً يجدر بنا عدم نسيان عنف الحرب اللبني التي ذهبت مثلاً حيث تزدى وصار يكفي أن نشير إلى "البننة" حرب ما لكي نعرف تقرياً ما هو المقصود؛ أي العنف الأهلي المتمثل والمتجدد والمتكرر؛ يلجأ بالمرحوم عزيمهم والممارسات العنصرية كانت سبباً في أنواع التمثيل بالجنس والتفكير والمسجونين والمخطوفين، بحيث تم تطويق آخر صرعات أفلام العنف الشديدي. والأسر نفسها عانت من التفكك ومن المشاكل على أنواعها. ولست أمك من معطيات محددة ولكنني أسأل نفسي أحياناً عن قدرة الإنسان في هذه عن سبب عدم تفجر الأوضاع أكثر مما هو حاصل وأجد أن السبب ربما يعود إلى البلاد على التحمل والمكابدة أكثر مما يعود إلى مدى التعاطف الذي يحصل عليه بالضرورة من الآخرين. ونسأل هنا هل يمكن لشعب أن يتحمل ما يتحمله الشعب العراقي؟ إننا القدرة الفعالة على ن الإنسان العربي لم يستوعب، أو الاحتمال (صبر أيوب) وعدم البحث عن منقذ آخر ممكن. لذا أفكر أ ما لا يتطلب أصلاً، فكرة مسؤولي الدولة والمجتمع عن مصائبه بل هي مسألة بيده وبين ربه الذي بيده من نجاته أو خسارته. الأمر الذي لم يعد الإنسان العربي ليقبل به. يتعلق الأمر ربما السباق الغربي وحصلت كالتقليد الأمة التي حصلت في سياق مختلف عن بيئته تشكّل الدولة للغرب ولم تحصل لتطور في المتطلبات والاعتقالات نبع من سياق داخلي. وهذا موضوع آخر.

الأمر الذي تأكد لي في السجن حيث لدى السجناء "وهم" الراكون إلى أقاربهم مثل الوالد أو الأخ أو العم ويخبرني عن أن أسرته تدعّمه وتهتم به أو أكثر من كونه واقعاً ملموساً. يكون السجن في أسوأ حال أقاربه ويعود في مناسبات أخرى يذكر، مع تنهيدة، أن أمره لله وأن "ما حدا لحدا". وذلك أكان متزوجاً أو عازباً. فغالباً ما لا تحصل أسرة السجن وأولاده وزوجته على الدعم المنظر له من هذه البننة³ التقلدي.

من الآن وصاعداً، فليس من الك Steriotypes وما أفكر فيه حالياً هو عدم وجود الأسرة تتغير بالطبع من أسرة شرقية نموذجية بعد الآن، من الك "أسر" بمعدنى الجمع والاختلاف والتميز. أخبرتني طالبة لي من فترة قصيرة عن نفسها وأسرته وأولادها ونظرتها إلى نفسها وأخبرتني أنها اكتشفت أن لسنها تراسله بواسطة البريد الإلكتروني يخضع لضغوط من جانب أسرته حول شاباً في مث حرة حركته تفوق الضغوط التي تتعرض لها هي نفسها (هي ابنة لأسرة عاشت في الخليل ولأب في الخليل لجهة الضغوط متفتح بالرغم من ذلك، لكن نعرف جميعاً ما يعنيه العيش ركون إلى "أنماط اجتماعية" موحدة في مجتمع ما؟ أم). هل يمكن بعد الآن... والممارسات إلى فئات تتشابه أكثر فأكثر على الصعيد وتختلف باختلاف الطبقة والتعليقي ونوعية الثقافة؟ هل يمكن أن أعد نفسي أقرب إلى فلاح من الاجتماعية والمستوى سرية عامل من هذا الوسط أم أسرة بلادي أم إلى باحثين غربيين من مجتمع آخر؟ وهل تشبه أسرته أ متوسط أقرب إلى النمط الغربي؟ خاصة إذا أخذنا العامل الثقافي والانتماء إلى الديموقراطية الليبرالية بعين الاعتبار؟

هذا ما حدا بي مرة أن أقوم ببحث صغري في الجامعة والقسم الذي أدرس فيه، في العام 1997 حيث صار عدد المتزايد مع الوقت للطلبات اللواتي صرن بمعظمهن من العازبات بعد من الملفت للالتباه ال أن كنت أصادف عدداً أكبر منهن إما مخطوبات إما متزوجات في بداية الثمانينات. واستخلصت من هذا

النهاري، بيروت، 1999. دار السجن مجتمع بري، أنظر كتاب: ³

الاستفتاء أن الفتيات لم يعدن يخفن كثيراً من فكرة البقاء غازبات أو "عانسات" بحسب
كما لم تعدن على استعداد لتقديم كل التنازلات الممكنة من أجل الحصول على التسمية التي يديها؛
مربية زوجة. وصار من الواضح أن العقلانية (أو البراغماتية) هي الغالبة، وشعار الحب مع الزيتون
لم يعد سائداً في الأخير. لا يقتصر الأمر على الفتيات العصرييات أو غير الملتمزمات دينياً بل
جبات أيضاً. كما لاحظت برونشيو مفعوم العلم والعمل عند الجيل الرابع. غيرت الضرورة على المح
المطلقة موضعها من الزواج كصمام أمان للمستقبل إلى العمل والاعتماد على النفس.
كل ذلك يطرح أسئلة جديدة ربما علينا مواجهتها من الآن وصاعداً من أجل محاولة معرفة التمايزات التي
ع وتفرق وأسبابها ومظاهرها، فلنكلم مجتمع "فئاته التي يديها" وفئاته المسؤولة عن تجم
ربما الأجدى القيام بأبحاث صغيرة... التي غيّر، ومثقفيه وحرفيه، سكان المدن وسكان الريف
تطال أطراً محددة ومن دون آراء مسبقة وعمل مقارنات رؤية ما الذي يجمع بينهما وما الذي يفرق
ه منذ فترة هو ضرورة قيامة بأبحاث عميقة حول التغيرات التي تطال الذهنيات وما أفكر في
على صعيد المواضيع التي نود دراستها. الأمر الذي نلتمس ضرورته بعد الاطلاع على Mentalités
إن ما يتغير وما نلتمسه كمتلف هو تعبير Le Goff/Duby⁴ الفرنسوية وخاصة Annales أعمال مدرسة
ل على مستوى معين (أو مستويات معينة ومتعددة أيضاً) وهو المستوى الذهني. وهذا عن تعبير حص
ليس مجرد تغيير في نظمة الأفكار أو القيم أو العقائد؛ إنه شيء مختلف ويغير عن شيء عميق
يحدث بضربات خفيفة وبللمسات لا تكاد أن تحس.
لا تتوفر بسهولة وليست دائماً في على كل حال تنقصنا الأبحاث في هذا المجال وهي إذا وجدت -
متناول اليدي، للنقص في التوثيق وتبادل الخبرات بين الجامعات وبين فروع نفس الجامعة
أحياناً ولعدم تقديم التسهيلات الممكنة للباحثين. الأمر الذي يستوجب إيجاد أهداف مشتركة
التي تلحظ الحاجات وتخطط تربط بين الأبحاث الجامعية ومطالب الوزارات والإدارات العامة
للسياسات العامة.
فيما يتعلق بالأسرة يمكن القيام بأبحاث تتعلق بالتحولات التي طرأت على القيم الأسرية -
وعلى العلاقات داخل الأسرة:
هل تغيرت وظيفة الأسرة؟
ما هو أثر الحرب اللبانية على الأسرة؟
ل تقلل يدي أم قيم جديدة وهجينة؟ ما الذي يغلب على الأسرة اللبانية: القيم
ل الأسرة النووية مقطوعة عن المحيط التي يدي؟ إلى أي درجة؟ (في حال اللا والنعم).
هل ضعفت الروابط الأسرية أم اشتدت بعد الحرب؟
هل ظل دور الحماية التي يدي على ما هو عليه؟
ولماذا؟ هل يمكن أن يتساكن الزوجان مع الأسرة كما كان يحصل في السابق؟
ما هي السن أنسب للزواج؟
ما هي شروط السكن المادية: نمط الشقة، نوع المفروشات والتجهيزات؟ مدى ارتباطها بالاشكال
التي يدي السابقة؟
الطريقة الفضلى - الموقف من تنظيم الأسرة - يتطلب ذلك تعريف معنى الأسرة المثالية
- الموقف من الجنس قبل الزواج - الموقف من العمل - الموقف من اختلاط الجنسين - اختياري شريك
الموقف من أقارب... الحاجة إلى العلاقات مع الآخرين وأولوياتها: أقارب، جيران، أصدقاء، رفاق عمل
... الشريك، الطلاق، العزوبة،

⁴ Faire de l'histoire, Gallimard, Paris, 1974. أنظر أبحاثها في:

Nadine Naber: Deconstructing the Concept of the Arab Family

1) Key issues in the state of the Art relevant to Panel themes:

Recently, the study of globalization, diaspora and transnationalism have challenged the notion that fixed and bounded cultures unmediated by global processes exist. Feminist literature on nationalist discourses and movements in the Arab world reveals that cultural identities and assumptions about cultural authenticity are mediated by a modernist discourse based on binary oppositions between Us and Them, the self and the Other, the Arabs and the West. Numerous scholars have argued that in a late capitalist era, cultural identities are always mediated by a discourse on maintaining group boundaries in the face of U.S. led globalization, colonialism and war, migration and the threat of assimilation, cultural erasure or distinction.

In addition to addressing the features of an idealized Arab family within the scholarly literature, I hope that we might extend our discussion so that we might look at the Arab family as a central component to the struggle over maintaining group boundaries and Arab cultural identities.

Building on Suad Joseph, who argues that family is the center of Arab societies and identities, I add that nationalist discourses rely on myths about the Arab family in their production and reproduction of the categories self vs. Other, us vs. them. These myths are reinforced by Arab states and Arab popular cultures and contested at the everyday level where cultural identities are imagined and performed.

In my research among Arab Diasporas in the U.S, for example, my research participants critically inherit and reproduce features of an idealized family that thoroughly developed in Suad Joseph's research. These include an extended kin social order, a patriarchal, patrilineal ideal, and a preference for kin, ethnic and religious endogamy.

Yet in a U.S. context, faced with the threat of "losing their children to the Amerikan," my research participants invoke three myths of the Arab family as a strategy to demarcate the boundaries between Us and Them. The first myth is that of "The good Arab family" vs. "the bad American family." The second myth is that of the "the connective Arab family" vs. "the individuated American family" and the third myth is that of the oppressive Arab family vs. "the liberated American family."

According to the first myth, the good Arab family includes family values such as generosity and hospitality, respect for elders, and good daughters who are virgins before marriage and don't stay out late at night. The bad American family is a "broken" family with loose, trashy girls, and members who do not care for their elders. This first myth serves to protect the boundaries of an imagined Arab community in the face of hegemonic U.S. cultural nationalism and its law of assimilation. The extent to which members uphold the regulatory ideals of the ideal Arab family is understood to determine whether the imagined Arab community will survive, or lose itself to the Amerikan. Although both men and women are pressured to maintain the regulatory ideals within this discourse, there exists more pressures on women than men.

The second myth distinguishes Al Arab vs. Al Amerikan by associating family and connectivity (see Suad Joseph's research) with Arabness and individualism and separateness with

Americanness. Among San Francisco's Arab Diaspora, I regularly heard youth speak about their identity options in terms of a choice between, "being American and doing whatever I want...going wherever I want to go...or being Arab, where family comes first and there is no choice." As one young woman puts it, "I live in two worlds, I can either be Arab and have family and community, or I can become another lonely white American CEO woman." In the context of this myth, notions of selfhood are central to the distinction between "Arab families" and "American families."

The third myth is based on orientalist thinking and is an extension of hegemonic U.S. multicultural nationalism. It is reproduced in the U.S. media, in academia, and within mainstream U.S. feminist movements. According to this myth, the Arab family is backwards and includes husbands and fathers who are supra-oppressive and wives and daughters who are either passive veiled victims, or exotic, erotic, whores. The American family is civilized and includes liberated women who fight for their freedom and their rights. This myth serves to rationalize and explain anti-Arab racism and anti-Arab U.S. foreign policy. Like the first and second myth, this myth reinforces the binary opposition al Us vs. Them, Self vs. Other, al Arab vs. Al American.

(Examples from research include my research participant's peers who asked her, "your father let you go to college?" when she learned she was Arab.)

These myths are contested on the level of everyday cultural identities when individuals challenge the idea that a fixed and unchanging Arab family exists and deconstruct the binary between us and them, good Arab families vs. bad American families, al Arab vs. al Amerikan. Cultural identities also contest the idea that "the Arab family" is unmediated by historical circumstances, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion.

While I have focused on the ethnographic context of San Francisco, the modernist, nationalist discourses of Us and Them, the Arab world vs. the Western world is not specific to the U.S. Numerous scholars, including Laila Ahmad and Lila Abu-Lughod have theorized the intersections between gender and family in the Arab world and cultural nationalist discourses and movements. I am hoping that in our discussion we can address the ways that an idealized Arab family is essentialized as the primary marker of Arab cultural authenticity. I suggest that whether it is Palestine, Jordan, Egypt or Lebanon, when group boundaries are threatened by colonialism, globalization or migration, an idealized Arab family is always co-constructed with discourses on cultural nationalism and Arab cultural authenticity as a strategy for maintaining group boundaries.



New research needs to address the relationality between the concept of the Arab family and changing historical circumstances that are global in scope, including nationalist discourses and movements, transnationalism, and globalization. The literature on the Arab family tends to uphold the classical model of Arab studies that assumes that a bounded "Arab world"

unmediated by global process and transnational links exists. As a result, research on the Arab Diaspora and transnational Arab movements and migrations are often excluded or marginalized in the discourse and the literature.

Historically situated research that views the global and the local as intersecting will allow us to theorize the ways that myths about the Arab family are reproduced and contested differently depending on socio-historical circumstances.

Penny Johnson: Commentary: Families in Space, Place and War

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Given our immediate, past and perhaps future context in Palestine, I inevitably start with war and violent conflict. In particular, I would like to raise a series of questions from our experience that may provide both avenues for future research and, in the best of all possible worlds, for social and political action for family welfare and for individual welfare and rights of women, men and children in family and society. A main concern is how war as an expression of power and powerlessness produces crises in maternal and paternal roles, as well as in stages in the lifecycles of male and female children and youth. A second important set of issues revolve around how the specific features and levels of violence, types of confrontations, pre-war context and post-war goals shape the participation, victimization, gender identities, and war and post-war entitlements of men, women and children and thus may change relations within and among families.⁵

I will then raise for discussion several issues of space and household dynamics and processes arising from reflections on Palestinian refugee camps, and in particular on the persistence of poverty and vulnerability among refugee camp households.⁶ A brief examination of place asks the meaning of "localism," where highly specific forms of family composition and dynamics seem tied to particular localities or regions (more grandly a habitus – that "system of enduring dispositions" (Bourdieu 1990, 141)– grounded in place) rather than to more abstract, albeit critical, national dynamics. A shorthand for this in the Palestinian context could well be the "Hebron question." I will use Palestinian examples and indicate their relevance (or not) to other contexts in the Arab world. Nation as an imagined and longed-for space as well as an imagined community however runs through all three themes. I will refer only to the literature that is available under our circumstances, so an apology is in order for not fully meeting the request for a literature review since 1990.

1) War and Violent Conflict

War and violent conflict are abundantly present in the history of the modern Arab world – whether anti-colonial struggles, formal wars between Israel and the Arabs, bloody wars between Arab or with other Middle Eastern or foreign states (the Iraq-Iran war, the Gulf war), civil war (Lebanon and Algeria, or state violent repressions of (sometimes insurgent) ethnic or religious minorities. Academic literature of these events, however, is dominated by political, military and diplomatic accounts of these conflicts; social analysis that explores the relationship of these mega-events with families and households is rare. Here, I am not very conversant with the literature in Arabic outside Palestine so I hope to be corrected. Empirical information on war's social effects, I suspect, is to be found largely in the reports of international agencies,

⁵ An extended – but still initial – discussion of these issues can be found in Johnson and Kuttab, forthcoming.

⁶ These reflections arise from work done of the question of persistence of poverty for Fafo (Oslo, Norway) using data from their recent surveys. A full discussion can be found in Johnson and O'Brien 2000.

developmental NGOs, and solidarity and human rights organizations that cite detailed case histories and personal accounts, as well as document the effects of war and conflict on the health, education and security of the population and social groups within it. To some extent government records and journalism also provide this kind of information. Bringing to bear the theoretical insights and critiques emerging from the study of gender and family, social and family history, and household dynamics and processes on this relatively rich empirical vein in our region seems to me an important task.

A rather extensive literature does exist investigating women's participation in war and more specifically in national liberation (since 1989, works on Palestinian women in the first intifada have abounded, see Jad 1990, Kuttab 1990, Strum 1992, Giacaman and Johnson 1989, among others). While this literature has explored women's participation, for example, as an extension of maternal and domestic roles, it has focused more on the development of the Palestinian women's movement and on issues of gender and nationalism than on changes and constraints in the family setting. The Lebanese civil war has also been explored through "war's other voice," the voice primarily of women writers, in the works, for example, of Miriam Cooke (Cooke 1988) and Evelyn Accad (Accad 1990). This literary exploration of "blood into ink" is rich and revealing, but has the problem of conflating artistic and women's voices, and thus tacitly assuming that women's voice is indeed different. For example, a more pedestrian review of public opinion polls during our current Palestinian intifada suggests that women and men do not have widely divergent attitudes on Palestinian violent resistance, with 70% of women and 74% of men approving of Palestinian military operations (JMCC 2000) – the real gap is with their pre-intifada opinions when only about a quarter of men and women so approved. The difference lies not so much in attitudes, as in roles which are highly constituted by gender and age (and social class).

Elizabeth Thompson's new book breaks ground in linking dynamics within households, state and colonialism in the context of war and conflict. She identifies a "gender crisis" in Syria and Lebanon in the wake of the ravages of World War I and consequent colonial systems as follows:

"the profound dislocation suffered by family households during and after World War I, second, the creation of new, theoretically, national states; and third the imposition of French rule. In their combination, these three conditions encouraged linked reactions to the microlevel stress of shifting household economies and gender roles within the family and to the macrolevel reorganization of community and polity." (Thompson 2000, 6)

Thompson calls the linked reactions to stress in household, community and polity a "crisis in paternity." (Thompson 2000, 6) In the second Palestinian intifada, Palestinian dislocations at these three levels – in households coping with shocks and in community and polity living in the tension between a weakened national authority and a dominant Israeli colonialism – also produce stress in gender roles that have been highly accentuated in the current intifada.

Masculinity in Crisis

Another interesting and relevant approach can be found, rather schematically, in Peteet's work on masculinity during the first Palestinian intifada (Peteet 2000). Writing on the violence perpetuated on Palestinian young men by Israeli soldiers both on the street and in prisons during the first intifada, Peteet believes that "the beatings (and detentions) are framed as rites of passage that become central in the construction of an adult, gendered (male) self with critical consequences for political consciousness and agency." (Peteet 2000, 103). I would add that the political credentials and capital thus acquired affect both family dynamics in the young man's original family and his ability to move into adult roles of husband and father. In our present context, young men (and male children) coming to the checkpoints⁷ -- placed usually at the limits of Palestinian sovereignty -- are first and foremost protesting the confined conditions of their lives and futures, whether unemployed workers, fathers and sons who cannot provide for families. Refugee children who have never left Gaza, or even security and police personnel who have been patrolling these borders while they cannot themselves leave them. In this setting which, in comparison to the first intifada, is isolated from the community, they confront Israeli power that has defined them as marginal and can only respond with a mode of struggle that is less guerilla than sacrificial. And they confront, I would argue, an absence of a national government that is theoretically present, but practically powerless and unable to lead. The political and cultural resources available to the young men in rebellion in many ways allow their resistance but not a resolution -- unless one sees increased militarism as a solution. While I will not explore this further here, I think comparison with war and violent conflicts in other settings in the Arab world would be very useful.

War and Crises in Paternity and Maternity: Paternal Protection and Maternal Acceptance

While Thompson focuses on a "paternity crisis," the second Palestinian intifada seems to have produced interlinked crises of paternity and maternity -- particularly in paternal protection and in "maternal acceptance," to use Ruddick's term for maternal responsibility for socializing children into the community (Ruddick 1997)

The crisis in paternity is captured in the two poignant images that have dominated the second Palestinian intifada. The first is well-known worldwide: a young father in Gaza futilely attempts to shelter his son, 12-year old Mohammed Durra, as repeated Israeli fire takes his young life. The second image is of another slender young boy, Fares Odeh, also in Gaza, standing defiantly in front of an enormous Israeli tank, stone in hand, a picture that is ubiquitous in Palestinian shops, offices and homes. The image is even more poignant given that Fares Odeh was shot in the neck by Israeli soldiers in another demonstration ten days later and bled to death at the Karni crossing. While these images are often counterposed -- Muhammed as a victim and Audeh as a challenger of Israeli force and repression (Mohammed 2000) the images of these two children exposed to Israeli power both resonate with the inability of fathers (and mothers) to protect children (in the haunting words of Robert Lowell, "a father's/no shield for his child." The images also are testimony to the profound failure of adult politics in general. Indeed, the symbol of Fares Odeh dissolves into Muhammed Durra -- two children whose "fathers" are

⁷ Of course, women also come to the checkpoints, as well as engaging in other resistance activities. But the isolation from the community and the very different conditions of the second intifada has made their participation both marginal and limited to certain forms of activities (like rock breaking!) in specific settings.

unable to protect them – both their actual fathers and the community and polity as well. These linked failures in protection, I suggest, produce a crisis of paternity of the first order. This crisis is not only linked to the level of violence and the type of confrontation, however: it is enmeshed in the apartheid conditions of Oslo that fuelled the intifada -- including the crises faced by fathers as breadwinners and providers as communities were confined and workers separated from livelihoods – and in the vacuum in Palestinian political vision and strategy in the wake of Oslo.

The crisis in maternity not so visibly displayed, but another angle of vision at the checkpoint confrontations finds mothers looking for their children, including the mother of Fares Odeh, who was such a familiar site with the mother of Fares Odeh, the boy who defied the Israeli tank. Anam Odeh, was such a familiar site at the Karni crossing that boys teased Faris saying "Hey, Faris, what's that SWAT team after you?" (Hockstader, 12 December 2000, 2).

In both intifadas, informal women's activism has taken the form of an extension of women's roles, particularly "mother activism," most visible in the first intifada when older women sheltered youth and defied soldiers. In the second intifada, this "maternal" protection is almost completely inadequate. While media images tend to focus on mothers blessing their son's martyrdom, the real dilemma of mothers is much more agonizing and maternal blessings are also a way of coming to terms with terrible grief and unresolvable contradictions. If, as Ruddick notes, "the three interests of preservation, growth and acceptability of the child govern maternal practices in general," (Ruddick in Meyers 1997, 589), these interests can be in painful contradiction. Preservation may well conflict with growth (political involvement) and most particularly with acceptance when "state" and society – or social group - honor resistance even at impossible odds. The relative powerlessness of mothers to resolve these contradictions in their own terms adds to the dilemma. In this framework, it makes sense that one of the most sustained initiatives of the Palestinian women's movement has been to counter allegations that Palestinian mothers are sending their children to die at the checkpoints -- one of the more blatant cases of the aggressor (Israel) blaming the victim for their deaths.

Post-Conflict Gender Pacts

Crises of the order I have suggested will lead to reformulations of gender relations in the post-war period, or new "gender pacts" in Thompson's words, with multiple implications for families and men, women and children within them. If the conditions that produced these crises – profound inequality between Israel and Palestine, authoritarian and dependent Palestinian governance, and the enforced weakness of civil society among them – also shape a new gender pact, the real needs, interests and rights of women and men in protecting and providing for their families that these crises reveal will not be addressed. (Hammami and Johnson 1990) This is certainly not unique in post-state histories in the Arab world and elsewhere, but researchers can assist policymakers – and more importantly democratic publics – in identifying these needs and interests and making the links between political and nationalist aspirations and the conditions of families and individuals.

2) Space: Spatial Deprivations, Poverty and Family Welfare and Capabilities

For over half a century, Palestinian refugee camps have been “temporary” spaces of habitation in three host Arab countries and in Palestine itself. While there are persistent features among camp dwellers -- notably the persistence of exile, the memory of loss, and the desire for return, -- these overarching features of refugee life have yet to be fully explored in their interaction over time with family formation, dynamics and characteristics, although tantalizing glimpses emerge in the sociological and anthropological literature (Sayigh 1990, Peteet 198). An investigation into the persistence of poverty and vulnerability among Palestinian camp populations in Jordan, Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza suggests the importance of understanding the space of the refugee camp and the spatial functionings and spatial capabilities of lack of capabilities of refugee camp households and members within them. I will briefly indicate why this line of analysis is fruitful in the setting of refugee camps, and raise the question if it would also be useful in other contexts.

Camp Refugees Poorer

The comparatively greater poverty of Palestinian camp households in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza) in relation to the population of host countries and significantly, to non-camp refugees in the same country is established, at least since 1990, through examining living conditions surveys conducted by Fafos in those three “fields” (including camp living conditions surveys conducted in Jordan and Lebanon in 1999). While analysis of these surveys generally use income-based measures of poverty, understanding the persistence of poverty demands the utilization of other frameworks. The capability poverty approach developed by economist Amartya Sen is particularly useful whereby poverty is viewed as a “deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of income” (Sen 1999, 87). However – and here is where interesting questions about spatial functionings arise – the capability approach globally has generally focused on capabilities and functionings in health and education to assess capability poverty (see particularly the capability-based index used for UNDP annual human development reports). In the case of Palestinian refugee camps, by contrast, camp (and refugee) populations, although not in all fields and at all times – have often had a historic comparative advantage in health and education, including female education, thanks both to UNRWA services and refugee perception of education as capital for greater welfare and mobility. (Significantly education is related to mobility away from camp living). This comparative advantage can sometimes be documented, but, particularly in the first decades, is sometimes a matter of observation. As the 1950s progressed, for example, “UNRWA officials believe that the refugees became healthier than people of similar economic status in the surrounding Arab areas, but because the Arab states statistics are inadequate, conclusive comparisons are impossible.” (Schiff 1995, 27). Some advantage continues to this day; as Khawaja notes, refugees as a whole (not camp population only) contrast favorably in infant mortality to host populations in all countries but Lebanon (Khawaja 2000). While the features that produce poverty in families in other settings, such as low educational profiles, poor health status, lack of wealth and low labor market profiles, also produce poverty among families in refugee camps, additional features and dynamics of camp life clearly need to be addressed

Command Over Space

In reflecting on the persistence of poverty in this context, the features that seemed to be endemic or particularly accentuated in camp life began to cluster around two larger areas of household and individual capability, one of which might be called command over space, encompassing such measurable demographic, physical and economic factors as mobility and migration, relatives abroad, built environment, infrastructure, housing and population density and enclave or ghetto economies, but also including symbolic and political spatial features and functionings, stemming both from features of exile and loss of livelihoods and way of life, and from characteristics of camp life, such as surveillance and others noted below. A closely related area, not further explored in this paper is, control over time encompassing such phenomenon as the substitution of time for money or other resources and the demands on time in the political, social, physical and administrative space, organization and dynamics of camp life.

In fact, in a number of works, Sen has referred to the importance of location, as well as age and gender in contrasting the capabilities of population groups (Sen 1999, 89). He gives a relevant example in the location of urban living which presents “special challenges to safety and security,” (Sen 1992, 113) The lens of location offers a powerful view of how the welfare and rights of camp refugee households are shaped by their command (or lack of command) over space as “a fundamental and all-pervasive source of social power” (Harvey 1989, 226). We can speculate also about a fundamental feature of spatial capabilities – the ability to leave the camp environment – through examining the features of families who are “left behind.” Here, the elevated rate of female-headed households in comparison to host country populations -- particularly in Lebanon – is of particular interest, but also features of age, education, and kin networks also have a bearing.

Spaces of Loss and Deposit for the Peasant Population

Refugee camps are places founded by, and saturated with loss – but also dominated by the notion of return – in other words, a place that by definition is not a place that one belongs to, a home, but a place where one waits to return home. The transmission of memory may be all the more powerful when the receiver feels “out of place” (Said, 1999), so this transmission may work as powerfully in locales outside historic Palestine, particularly as amplified by the political mobilization of Palestinian nationalism. Looking over half a century of camp refugee existence, however, it is the spatial and temporal features (physical, administrative, economic, social, political) of that existence that links family memory and nationalist discourse to actual and persistent deprivations (lack of command over space and control over time) that contribute to poverty. Further research is required to understand how these features interact with family histories, endowments and capabilities and change or reinforce family patterns and composition.

While one could argue that age, sex and skills are factors in mobility of any population, the fact that refugee camps were the main depository for the peasant refugee populations, while wealthier urban populations had other options was the first division between camp refugee and other refugee populations, even in the same host country. This is a critical point in tracing both the persistence of poverty and family dynamics inside camps (mobility for refugees and shifts in class leadership). The peasant base of refugee camps had long-term meaning for abilities to develop new livelihoods and to utilize social networks and family connections for migration, asset

building and employment, for example. The camp as a space of loss -- the original spatial deprivation -- had a continued material reality, as the loss of agriculture as livelihood and way of life was permanent. As Hammami reminds us, there are also multiple losses of ways of living that are highly place-specific and gendered. Writing of female religiosity among peasant women refugees, she notes, for example, the “almost total non-transferability of saint festivals and even every day ritual centered around saint shrines to Gaza – since the relationship to specific saints had been deeply intertwined with village identity” (and specific village sites) (Hammami 1999). At the same time, she notes that peasant women were able to re-configure work, while peasant men could not, at least in the first, period becoming “gatekeepers,” male breadwinners by virtue of the ration card.

Temporary Spaces: Bureaucratic but Not Productive

Loss – and its solution as return – also configure the camps as spaces of waiting. That this waiting has persisted for half a century in bounded locations is a fact that we have come to take almost for granted, but is obviously remarkable. It is particularly striking when we consider camps as consciously constructed temporary locations over such a long period of time. Coupled with resistance from the host countries’ to more small-scale economic projects involving refugees, the organization of the camps as a bureaucratic, rather than a productive, spaces strongly contributed to the artificial, temporary character of camp existence, and made labor migration a main option for individual and household welfare. It also, in a sense, made poverty the “business” of camps, with minimum levels of welfare accessible, but productive opportunities tending to be distant.

This temporary and artificial character of camps is reflected in their physical organization – most notably into numbered blocks of relatively uniform dwellings. Often even the color is a monochrome grey. This uniformity, however, does not have the character of the original grid, which has long since been overrun by the mass of illegal and badly planned buildings constructed to meet housing needs without going outside boundaries, but this “chaos -- with most camps possessing only one or two roads with car access, narrow alleys, dark houses with little window access -- is itself rather uniform across camp sites. While there is substantial variance in camps, there is little formal economic or public space, although both have slowly grown over time, and residents have continuously been engaged in informal, and counter-regulatory economic activity -- from the buying and selling of rations in the early period to the bringing in of forbidden chickens and other animals today.

It is only recently that UNRWA has developed more developmental initiatives and that camp residents have clearly distinguished between economic and social rehabilitation (*ta'hiil*) and resettlement (*tawtin*), opening up more possibilities for improving social and economic conditions in camps, with the important provision that the host country also does not offer resistance. This flexibility, as Tamari points out accurately, should not be confused with “the willingness of refugees to reduce their political demands, based on the assumption that they have pragmatic attitudes towards housing. (Tamari 1996).

Space of Surveillance

Refugee camps are visibly and invisibly places of surveillance. Surveillance can result in loss of spatial functionings, as routines of movements are restricted, and, at times, exit and entrance to camps monitored. When surveillance becomes repression, ability to move into various forms of institutional life – schools, workplaces, centers – can be severely limited or curtailed. Surveillance also results in restrictions on individual abilities to enter labor markets, enter institutions of education or training, or leave the camp or country – particular if the person is deemed suspicious. (It also increases movement into prison). Since none of these restrictions are highly unusual in the camp context, and some are features of family life for a majority of families, they can clearly contribute both to processes of impoverishment and to changes in family dynamics.

Surveillance is also contested; and resistance to repression – the claiming of space – has also been a persistent feature of camp life. A paradigmatic example is the eviction of the Lebanese security services from camps by the Palestinian resistance in the 1970s. This surveillance had affected the everyday life of the household, from getting a permit to “put a nail through one of the zinco sheets” to cleaning the doorstep: As a woman in Shatilla camp reminisced to Sayigh: “Policemen! Could a woman clean in front of her door? She didn’t dare! (Sayigh 1999, 71) Today, surveillance of Palestinian camps in Lebanon is focused on spatial confinement of the camp population: Peteet describes the “spatial dimension” of marginalization in 1996 as “confinement to well-demarcated, bounded and surveilled camps” (Peteet 1996, Merip July-September 1996), noting also that Lebanese reconstruction has newly demarcated urban camps where boundaries were previously blurred.

In the Lebanese context, surveillance and the consequences war and conflict have directly led to “missing men,” with camps showing sex ratios disfavoring males, as well as an elevated rate of female-headed households. However, the effects of these political features of camp life – loss, temporariness, surveillance and lack of security – are pervasive in all settings and contribute in immeasurable ways to some of the measurable features of camp households, such as early exit from the labor market, elevated needs for care of the elderly and infirm, and persistent high fertility in most fields. Camps of course are not static settings – either in their physical, social, economic and political characteristics or in the movement of households in and out of them – but in themselves they have constituted spatial deprivations for families over generations. The questions raised by thinking about Palestinian households in refugee camps thus offer us a avenues for further research in themselves and ways of looking at other types of communities and spaces (other refugee settings, squatter communities, exiles, communities of forced migrants, etc).

3) Place: Is Localism Persistent or Re-Constituted?

Place can perhaps be differentiated from space by its material geography. While refugee camps, as above, share spatial characteristics over various locations, an investigation of place is rooted in the material location, its particular history, environment, economies, practices and politics. Very briefly, I would like to raise the question of “localism” in family formation and dynamics in the Arab world from the perspective of findings in Palestine from a 1999 community-based household survey, to be discussed more fully in the Palestinian case study portion of this

conference. In this survey, region emerged as a key determinant in a range of family and household issues, whether marriage, educational and work preferences and perceptions of child costs and benefits or the more specific demographic features of fertility, occupation, family composition and so forth. Indeed fertility is one of the most interesting puzzles – with the West Bank TFR at 5.6 and Gaza at 6.9, for example (PCBS 1998). In the household survey and other studies, regional differences tended to be sharper, for example, than differences by type of locality (city, camp, village) or differences by wealth or living standard. While differences between the West Bank and Gaza can be explained partly by divergent histories, the sharp regional differences in the West Bank are not so obviously explained. While there are ethnographic studies in various locations in the Arab world that illuminate the specific features of communities and groups, there has been a study to view families and households largely through national lenses – for many good reasons – or through the urban-rural divide. Is this localism particular to the Palestinian context (there are certainly good historical and contemporary reasons for it there? Do localisms in Palestine or elsewhere represent the persistence of local identities and practices or their re-constitution as a response to new (and difficult) circumstances?

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Ray Jureidini: Foreign Domestic Maids in Lebanon

Arab Families Working Group Cairo

Foreign Domestic Maids in Lebanon

The following is a rather truncated set of issues that I want to raise for discussion and thought. I will probably not need to elaborate substantially on many issues as everyone has had personal experiences of one kind or another and generally know the current arrangements in employing foreign domestic workers.

- No documented history of servants in Lebanon or the Arab world. It is strange that this has not been done. It indicates how INVISIBLE servants are in the literature. For example, in Jean Makdisi's article "Mother, Teta and Me" there is only one reference to the issue of the 'domestic chores' of her mother and teta. She noted that it could not have been particularly arduous because they were assisted by servants. She also, when she returned to Lebanon in the early 1970s "reluctantly bowed to social pressure" and employed domestic help. But there is no mention of who these servants were or how they were significant in the family's life. Were they indeed outsiders who remained so? For example, a common response regarding maids is that they are "treated like one of the family." If that was so, then these women (or girls in many cases) would have become visible in the literature and analyses of women and family life in the Arab world. They would assume significant characteristics other than their occupational title, and perhaps have names.

We know that prior to the civil war in Lebanon, most maids were from poor rural or urban Lebanese families, being taken in as young as 10 years of age and leaving when they were ready to be married. The father or family member would visit the home perhaps once or twice a year to collect the wages of the maid. Others included Syrian and Palestinian women. But there is no systematic documentation of this so far that would satisfy a social scientist or historian. It would seem that only through a process of documenting the oral history will we get to know more who the maids or servants were, how they were treated and how significant they were to Arab families – presumably mainly the middle and upper class families.

- There is a need to document not only who were the domestic servants, but how did they affect the family dynamics? How did they affect the lives of the children, and subsequently into adulthood? Did they influence males differently from females? Are they always remembered? How are they thought of in people's memories? To what extent are women who were brought up with servants compelled to employ them when they marry, or before they marry, or when they have children, or even if they do not marry at all?

In this regard, also, to what extent do domestic maids, particularly foreign maids (ie. African and Asian) upset the balance of the Arab family. For example, there is some evidence from our study in Lebanon that Sri Lankan maids, if they are live-in, are somewhat of an intrusion. When asked about the relationship between members of the household they worked in, many respondents either could

not say or did not know. Arguments, for example, were often conducted behind closed doors. In other words, to what extent does having a maid reduce tensions between family members, and to what extent do they exacerbate tensions or even create them? Or, to what extent can servants become confidants of children who cannot as easily talk to their parents? Further, in our study, the husband was often thought of much more kindly by the women than the wife (this, it has been argued, partly reflects the patriarchal origins of the maids who perhaps tend to favour serving the husband and resents taking orders from the wife[?]) and that in disputes with the maid, the husband often defended the maid. Of course he is rarely there to see how the tensions develop throughout the day and the origins of the disputes. Indeed, most work to date has only explored the poor conditions of household maids as conditions of slavery and abuse – in other words seeing them primarily and quite rightly as victims. However, there is always another side. For victims are not always pure and persecutors are not always evil. That other side has yet to be explored properly. Further, although not all experiences of maids are traumatic, for many complete their objectives successfully and prosper financially and presumably in many other ways from the experience and return to their home countries having fulfilled their role to bolster the income of their families, etc. It is argued, however that, despite being well treated, there are structural conditions that render these women as “contract slaves” (defined by violence or the threat of violence, restriction of movement and exploitation) or at least “unfree labour”. Indeed they may be situated within the global processes of trafficking in human labour.

- Research also needs to be carried out which better documents the reasons why Asian and African women are now preferred as domestic maids. This should not rely on only the economic motive in that they are seen as cheaper, because there are many problems attached to employing Sri Lankans. There is a discourse of complaint against foreign maids – they are stupid, they don’t understand, they give them too many problems, etc. To what extent is there now racist attitudes and practices against such foreigners that did not exist in the past? Many have stated privately that Lebanese have always been racist (as well as sexist or patriarchal and patrilineal and ageist as Suad points out in a number of her writings). Indeed as in many other countries both in the Arab world and in the West, certain jobs have become ‘racialized’ in that they are only filled by certain types of people. Menial, or secondary labour market jobs, are only filled by a certain class or race of people. Domestic maids in Lebanon can only be Sri Lankan or Filipinas, or Ethiopians, etc. Indeed because Sri Lankans are so numerous, the position of domestic maid is classified colloquially as a Sri Lankiye. Lebanese national are reluctant to do this kind of work because of the status it holds.
- Following from this, to what extent can we talk about a xenophobia which can be seen in the patrilineal regulations governing property ownership and citizenship? Lebanon is plagued by the delicate politics of sectarianism which affects the laws and policies regarding issues of property and citizenship, which are also tied to kinship practices. This is also evidenced in the policies towards access of foreigners to citizenship in Lebanon and other Arab countries. Domestic workers and other unskilled workers are only allowed temporary residency and work permits. This is because they are expected to return to their home countries after their contracts have expired. It is an expectation that they will not settle in Lebanon and form further ethnic communities. No doubt, Lebanon has enough problems with its current religious, ethnic and political diversity. Nonetheless, where there is a constant flow of

temporary migrants in any country, structurally they form a more or less permanent presence, and if in sufficient numbers, inevitably form some communal activities and possibly associations.

Thus further research could be carried out regarding attitudes of families towards foreigners, both in Lebanon and in the Lebanese diaspora. For example in some of the work of Ghassan Hage there is evidence of Lebanese racist attitudes towards Aboriginal, Anglo and other Australians of different ethnic origins. This is an interesting avenue to pursue as it contains the paradox that on the one hand Lebanese are discriminated against and there are racist attitudes towards them in places like Australia, but at the same time those attitudes are reciprocated. For example, as I grew up in Adelaide in South Australia, I experienced the kind of confusing dissonance that such contradictions threw up. While I was made to feel very much an inferior outsider, the foreign “other” – “wog” – and had to fight my way through school as a result, when I returned home, I heard the sounds of superiority from my mother and teta decrying and often despising the lack of culture and dignity of Anglo-Australians and their vulgarity in particular.

- Research on explaining why it is that female employers are the most likely to non-physically abuse their maids. A number of explanatory levels so far but which we might explore during the discussion.
- Patriarchal dominance being practiced through women as intermediaries. Ie. symbolic representing patriarchal domination. Wife is second class citizen, the maid is beneath her, so she asserts her status as the male’s status is asserted against her
- Pathological, obsessive behaviour of Lebanese (does not explain same behaviour in other countries)
- History of enslavement – simply more of the same
- Should not see women as stereotypically passive. Can also be inherently aggressive and violent as men
- Because the female employer is with the maid most of the day and in close intimate proximity it is natural for tensions to arise. Partly explains why it is not the male (in Lebanon), because he is rarely at home
- Psychoanalytic: women see in the maid all that they loathe and despise and lash out at it. In other words, they see in the maid their own reflection (there but for the grace of God go I). They see the servility in their own role with their husbands manifested in the maid and assert themselves over it, establishing an authoritative place in relation to the maid. In this sense the maid is a ‘gift’ to the wife – a compensation for having to accept his authority – so give her someone to ‘beat up on’.

Dr Samia Mehrez: Where Have All the Families Gone?

This paper will look at the representation of the Egyptian family in the literary works of the nineties in contrast to that which is produced and propagated in the Egyptian media focusing specifically on TV serials over the past ten years. I will argue that the literary works of the nineties, whether they are by men or by women, about the city or about the village, confirm the death of the family as a literary icon that represents Egyptian society. Inversely, the representation of the family through the Egyptian media seems to continue to reproduce the icon of the family, whether in its immediate or extended form, as the nucleus for the national imaginary. Even when these TV serials are critical of economic or social conditions their outspokenness is legitimated precisely because they seek to reinforce the traditional values of the family through its continued use as central icon.

It is important from the start to define the relationship of the literary text and that of the mediatic image to social reality. Both deal with the transformation of "reality" and of "life" into structures of meaning which target a specific audience. In the case of the literary text, the audience is constrained by the medium (literary Arabic) and the means of production (cost and distribution). As for the TV serials, they target the majority of Egyptians in urban as well as rural areas. In this respect, the participation of these two modes of representation in the construction of a national imaginary is unequal and may be directly linked to their relationship to authority (the state).

In Egypt, the state continues to exercise control over the cultural product even as it allows for limited privatization within some of its sectors (publishing, cinema, theatre, TV) designating more direct intervention in vital areas that affect larger audiences. Whereas TV serials are more immediately subject to an official agenda for a national imaginary, the literary text, benefiting from less direct attention from the state, remains at the mercy of periodic, ruthless raids of censorship when publicly caught out of line with this official national imaginary. Such a "lenient," crisis-control strategy on the part of the state, with regard to the literary text, is indeed what has allowed for the development of a different literary imaginary especially where the icon of the family is concerned. The irony remains that the producers of the literary text are themselves consumers of the mediatic image. However, their literary representations do not seem to be influenced by the mass produced national imaginary. What will emerge from the comparison between the literary and mediatic representations, during the past decade in particular, is the extent to which the latter insists on moralizing the reality of the family while the former is accused of "immorality," if not nihilism in its attempts to unsettle the very same icon.

It is of equal importance to look at the ideological and social constitution of the producers of the respective modes of representation. On the one hand, those who are involved in the production of TV serials represent a homogenous group that is predominantly of the urban middle class. Caught between state control and their own patronizing discourse to educate the masses (the target audience) the producers of media representation are bound to uphold and moralize basic national institutions at the heart of which lies the family. On the other hand, those who are involved in the production of the literary texts represent a far more heterogeneous group that brings together writers from diverse backgrounds: modest rural and urban, middle class, upper

middle class, bilingual/bicultural, both men and women. Their relative independence vis-à-vis the state, as well as their backgrounds, have allowed them to develop their respective individual agendas toward the very same mass produced national institutions. What remains surprising however, in the absence of a central authority that dominates this group, is the degree to which they are almost unanimous in contesting, indeed obliterating, official national icons, especially the family. In this framework, the literary representation seems to render the Egyptian social scene more dynamic while the mediatic image continues to enforce one that is relatively static.

To say that the literary text of the nineties in Egypt announces the death of the family as social/literary icon is to imply that the family had a previous life within the literary text and to assume that certain factors have directly, or indirectly, led to the real and metaphoric death of the icon. In order to understand the nature and reasons for this death, it is necessary to identify the family's previous life within the literary text and to locate the moments that have led to the transformation of its representation.

Naguib Mahfouz's work offers an ideal case study of the family as a central literary, social, and political icon. Mahfouz's chef d'oeuvre, *The Trilogy* (1956-57) is the family/national saga par excellence. In three long volumes, the reader follows national developments as they unfold within Ahmad Abdel Gawwad's extended family, over more than one generation spanning the historic inter-war period in Egypt. The representation of the family in *The Trilogy* reproduces traditional gender and power relations that characterize the rising Egyptian middle class. Ahmad Abdel Gawwad, the patriarch, is fearless but feared by all. Relationships within the household, although not always harmonious, are well structured and well aligned to realistic norms. And most important of all, the family's history is one and the same as that of the nation: it is the theatre for conflicting ideologies, the arena for the elaboration of national sentiments and confrontation with the British colonizer. Mahfouz's text presents a family icon that is in perfect harmony with an official national imaginary. Even when Mahfouz moves away from social realism to the symbolic mode of *Awlad Haratina* (1959), his banned novel that parodies the lives of the prophets, he still uses the family as the central icon of the text. Gabalawi, the godlike patriarch is distant but all powerful; his erring son Arafa is punished at the end.

The family as icon for a national imaginary is not only a male writer's strategy. Latifa al-Zayyat's classic *The Open Door* (1960) resorts to the same symbolism even as it represents a "new woman's" awakening. *The Open Door* is the feminist counter-part to Mahfouz's *Trilogy*, a decade later, encompassing the critical years of 1946-1956. The national resistance to the British occupier is parallel to the female protagonist's resistance to patriarchy. Her maturity into a free woman is identical to that of the nation. It is through the familial confrontations that occur within this middle class household that an entire national history is articulated. The battle within is the battle without. Despite the fact that *The Open Door* introduces the female protagonist's contestation of patriarchal power, it does not totally subvert the family icon, ending with two "modern" family prospects.

Nor is the family icon a traditionalist's representation of society. Sonallah Ibrahim's *Dhat* (1992) is an example of the early beginnings of the disintegration of the family icon from one of Egypt's most radical and avant-garde writers of the sixties. This unconventional, audacious text looks at

the deformation (physical, economic, ideological, and social) of Dhat, the female protagonist, during the decade of the eighties in Egypt. In this celebration of the mediocre, the author intertwines the satiric narrative chapters of Dhat's deteriorating, post-*infatih* life within the family with ten chapters of carefully selected newspaper clippings from the Egyptian press of the eighties. The complimentary relationship between the narrative chapters and the newspaper clippings drives the point home : the national is the familial and vice versa. Even though the novel ends with Dhat alone, crying on the toilet seat, her defeat at the end is one that must be read within the family/national context: it is the defeat of the wife, the mother, the working woman, the individual, and finally the citizen.

It is not surprising that both *The Trilogy* and *The Open Door*, whose representation of the family remains within the acceptable boundaries of the official national imaginary, have been turned into feature films, with significant changes that downplay the feminist awakening in the case of *The Open Door*. However, Sonallah Ibrahim's *Dhat* has not, and will not, accede to the same fate for obvious reasons: it demolishes both the familial and the national initiating, perhaps unknowingly, the death of both in the literary representations of the younger writers of nineties.

The post-*infatih* period in Egypt indeed becomes the turning point in the history of the national imaginary especially with regard to the icon of the family within both the literary and mediatic representations. Whereas the family dominated both modes of representation till the eighties, the last decade of the twentieth century witnessed the elimination of the family/national icon from the literary text. The absence of the family/national icon in literary representation becomes a direct contestation of the official national imaginary that continues to represent the family as the central, national icon.

The writers of the nineties are heir to *Dhat*'s total defeat of the eighties. They are the generation that has witnessed radical social, political, economic, cultural, demographic and topographic changes. A generation that has come to know "the impossibility of becoming what you want" as one Egyptian literary critic succinctly put it. It is perhaps their awareness of this dismal reality, at both a personal and national level, that prompts them to *write* what they want. The result is a literary imaginary that portrays a radically different picture from the official national one, especially where the family is concerned.

One of the significant elements that bind many of the writers of the nineties is their collective distance from state controlled publishing houses. Several rising names like Miral al-Tahawi, Somaya Ramadan, May Tilmisani, Nora Amin, Mustafa Zikri, Adel Ismat, Husni Hasan, Ibrahim Farghali have all opted for private publishing where they actually pay, out of their own pockets, for the publication of their works. These writers have come to be known as the *Sharqiyyat* generation in reference to the name of the private publishing house that publishes their work. The writers of the nineties who continue to publish through state controlled outlets, are expected to conform to the boundaries of the official national imaginary. Those who do not, and they are many, risk being caught and ostracized. This was the case in the recent crisis surrounding the three Egyptian novels (two of which are by writers of the nineties generation: Mahmoud Hamid and Yasser Shaaban) where minister of culture, Farouk Hosni, labeled their works "pornographic" and, tellingly enough, accused them of "violation of societal values."

It is interesting to note that the generation of the nineties displays, for the first time in modern Egyptian letters, gender equality in literary production. The work by women writers of this generation matches, if not surpasses, both quantitatively and qualitatively, that of their male-counterparts. This has earned them “special” attention from the literary critics who celebrated their accomplishment as well as “special” treatment from the press that stigmatized their work with the derogatory label “*kitabāt al-banāt*” (girls’ writing). However, *kitabāt al-banāt*, rather than constrain itself to a woman’s world in the traditional sense, explored the same *ensemble* of themes and issues raised by the “boys.” This new phenomenon has confirmed, yet again, gender equality within the nineties’ generation at the level of both unconventional content and experimental form.

Gone are the monumental works that explored the family/national icon over hundreds of pages, that diligently chronicled the structure of family relations in all its manifestations and detail. In came the slim novels of the writers of the nineties that do not exceed 150 pages in any of the instances focused primarily on the individual, whether male or female. A collapse in size that mirrors the collapse of the icon itself. The busy world that sustained the lengthy pages of family sagas gave way to the empty and constrained existence of the lonely and anguished individual. The continuity and logic that governed the family/national icon are replaced by the ruptures and disjunctures of the literary text itself. The omniscient and godlike narrators that controlled and oversaw the world of the family/nation are dethroned by schizophrenic first person narrators whose vision is focused on their split selves. Rather than contemplate the possible unity between the personal and the collective the writers of the nineties are intent on representing the antagonism between them.

When accorded a presence at all in the literary works of the nineties, the family becomes a relic of the past represented through old pictures, old furniture, and old apartments in disfigured neighborhoods (May Tilmisani, *Heliopolis*, 2001), fit only to be packed in suitcases for departure (*Three Suitcases for Departure*, Mona Prince, 1998). In one instance, the family is responsible for the protagonist’s transformation into a wooden puppet (*Heliopolis*) in another it becomes the fear that eats at the narrator’s soul leading to his metaphoric death (Adel Ismat, *Fear of Death*, 1995) and in yet a third it remains banished from the son’s meaningless and real death in the big city (Wael Ragab, *Inside an Air Bubble*, 1995).

The individual protagonists who have come to occupy the space of the family/national icon are at once disquieting and unsettling. Miral al-Tahawi’s labyrinthian novel, *The Blue Eggplant* (1998) chronicles the life of a defeated woman born on the eve of the nation’s defeat in 1967: the antithesis of Latifa al-Zayyat’s *The Open Door* of the sixties with its celebration of the new woman/new nation. The protagonist in Nora Amin’s novel *Empty Pink Nightgown* (1997) is reduced to being just that: an empty pink nightgown. The total disorientation, loneliness and alienation of the central character in Mustafa Zikri’s *What Amin Knows* (1997) becomes a macabre comment on the superfluous reality of human existence. Somaya Ramadan’s moving depiction of her protagonist’s parenthetical madness in *Awarq al-Nargis* (2001) confirms and expands the frightening rupture between the individual and the collective.

The death of the family/nation icon in the works of the writers of the nineties ushers us into a world beyond our expectations. Rather than announce the birth of the individual, these works race ahead to announce her/his death. All the writers of the nineties seem to share this dominant icon despite their radically different social and cultural orientations. The only way we can comprehend and come to terms with this gap in the literary imaginary is by reading Egyptian post-*infitah* reality outside the literary text. Suddenly it becomes evident that there too lies a gap: the death of the family/national icon in reality announces not the birth but the untimely death of the individual.

In this bleak world that confirms “the impossibility of becoming what one wants” it is the very act of writing that becomes the only remaining possibility for salvation. But even, such an initiative threatens to become a new death. A frightful, but brilliantly depicted possibility in Adel Ismat’s *Fear of Death* where the dead narrator, attempting to write about his metaphoric death, can only produce blank pages which the author has paid for out of his own pocket.

Suad Joseph: The Family as Center of Social Action: Critiques

**Arab Families Working Group Workshop, May 4-6, 2001, Cairo
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The notion that the family is the center of social action in Arab states has become almost axiomatic. Indeed, I have, in my research, for years, strongly argued that it is the center of social action in Lebanon. To critically rethink this proposition requires laying out the argument that makes that notion so compelling in the first instance, and then evaluating the evidence for or logic of the argument.

Logic of Argument for Family as Center of Social Action:

The idea that the family is the center of social action is based on both negative and positive arguments/evidence. The "negative" arguments detail what is "not" the center of social action and, by default, conclude what must be the center of Arab societies. The "positive" arguments document the effective uses of family structures, family relations, family moralities, and family idioms as evidence of its centrality to the operation of other social structures and cultures in Arab societies. The negative and positive arguments are integrally connected sets of logic and evidence revolving around assessments of the competitive and constitutive relationships among critical social forms. Invariably, in Arab countries, these forms are the set of social arrangements which organize state, class, religious communities, ethnic groups, and family systems. [I will not discuss the distinction between the terminology of "kinship" and "family" here.]

While gender is critical to all such analyses, rarely is it considered, by social scientists (particularly of Arab societies), to organize social groups in such a manner as to render it a relatively autonomous and therefore a "competitive" social organizational category. Feminist social theorists have argued for a quarter of a century that gender/sex/sexuality are relatively autonomous systems, to be analyzed on par with political, economic, and social organizational systems. Alternatively, they have argued that gender is so implicated in and mutually constitutive of other social arrangements that social analyses must always factor for gender. Social scientists, particularly of Arab countries, however, tend not to think of gender as organizing "collectivities" which could potentially "act" in the manner of state, class, religion, or family -- and therefore to set into motion "communities" which may organizational compete with other "communities" formed by state, class, religion, family. I take exception to this common argument, even in Arab societies. Nevertheless, I will, for the purpose of teasing out the delimiters of the "family as center of social action" argument as it presents itself in the literature on Arab societies, bracket gender and focus on state, class, religious communities, and ethnic groups as alternative centers of social action. Similarly, race, though certainly a social issue in Arab countries, is rarely considered to organizing collectivities. Though race, too, merits its own discussion, I will bracket for the moment.

Negative Argument:

The default argument supporting family as the center of social action in Arab countries is based on a series of logical and evidence-based arguments documenting the inefficacy of or constraints against other social forms: state, class, religion, ethnicity.

The State as Center of Social Action: The arguments against the state as the center of social action often raise the "externality" of the state as an issue. These scholars contend that most Arab states were constructed, in this century, by imperial/colonial powers, over boundaries and sets of peoples who had little or no historical precedents as separate political entities. As a result, the "organic" connection between the state and society, or at least a ruling sector of society was not as common an experience in Arab states. Despite the fact that most of these states have now minimally half a century of autonomy, many scholars argue the many states remain external to their societies. They remain external because they, at best, represent only a small wing of society. Or they remain external because they are so exploitative of their citizens that they are able to retain control only through technologies of oppression - thus lacking legitimacy. The absence of civil society, oppositional political parties, free press, genuine political participation, or broad-based social programs which mobilize citizenry is cited as the critical evidence. Even in societies where the state has been attempted to effect social mobilizational programs, such as Egypt or Iraq, the state remains external to these scholars, either because it is considered unreliable (inefficient), or it is feared. While the state as center of social action argument has its proponents, few scholars argue that family has been displaced. Even in oil-producing states in which the state has become the hyper-benefactor, scholars, nevertheless describe these states as family-based or tribally based (I take tribally based societies to be organizationally linked to family-based). In general in this argument, the state cannot be trusted, is not trusted, and thus family remains the security net, the focus of identity and loyalty and the key to social action.

Class as Center of Social Action: Arguments against class as the center of social action note that scholars often find themselves stretching to use the category of "class", in the Marxist sense (a systematic relationship to the means of production), to describe Arab societies. Some scholars do argue the centrality of class, though they often suggest the instability of class formations, the difficulty of ascertaining class parameters, and the problems of precise analysis which allows a predictive framework using class. Even these scholars try to accommodate their class analysis to local peculiarities of family, tribe, religion, ethnicity. Some scholars prefer to use the terms elites, or ruling elites, ruling blocs, fractions. The recency and volatility of economic systems and the apparent dislocation or disconnect of social arrangements which should mutually constitute economy and society in the region (especially in oil producing countries) have left some social scientists hanging on to categories such as "traditional" to describe social organization while grasping at terms like "dual" economies to conceptualize internal differentiations. Some scholars prefer social analysis derived from dependency theories, or globalization theories, which either situate social organization passively in relation to larger world forces or mutually constitutive of them. In the social analyses which effectively document class (for example, Hanna Batatu on Iraq), family and tribe are still centers of social action. In the argument against class as the center of social action, coherent classes are said to be frail at best, and still cross-cut by family/tribe to compromise the robustness of class analysis.

Religious/ethnic Communities as Centers of Social Action: The arguments against religious/ethnic communities as center of social action in Arab countries focus on the constantly historically changing natures of what is and who is a religious or ethnic community and whether they concretely represent "interests" of collectivities. Who is Christian or Muslim, or who counts as Sunni or Shi'a, or who is an Armenian, or a Kurd, or a Copt, or a Maronite and how does their being "that" "explain" their behavior, their mentalities, their interests in a manner that can be offered to explain social events or social structures is asked by the critiques of religion/ethnicity as centers of social action in Arab countries. Historical accounts abound with case studies of events organized around religiously or ethnically defined groupings in the Arab region. The classic mosaic theory of Arab societies, bolstered by Orientalist scholars, Weberian scholars, Gellnerian scholars, center stage these groupings. Critiques of these arguments emerged from local level studies in which the coherency of identity or interest was found to dissolve on closer inspection and from macro studies which argued the situationally shifting political and historical constructedness of these "collectivities" left them, in some sense, devoid of enduring "content". Scholars again and again have found religion and ethnicity to overlay or be underwritten by "something else" -- class, tribe, or family, depending on the scholar or the context. The recent rise of Islamists movements has again center staged the argument of religion as the center of social action. Proponents of this argument observe the systematic efforts by Islamist movements to displace not only family and tribe, but class and state. Critics of this newer argument note the small numbers of these groups, the forces arrayed against them, or even argue that these movements are not about "Islam" as a religion, but about competition with the state for power by a political movement. To the degree that these movements do try to or succeed in displacing family, class and/or state, they indeed become important forces to be reckoned with theoretically and practically.

Positive Arguments:

The positive arguments in favor of family as the center of social action draw upon the default arguments above, but proceed to focus on how family structures, family relations, family moralities, and family idioms penetrate and imbue social systems, social actions, and local cultures in Arab societies. These scholars argue that it is difficult to analyze Arab societies without not only factoring in family, but center-staging family. States, they contend, are often family operations (at times tribes, which I here discuss in family terms). Among these they include not only the kingdoms (Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, the Gulf sultanates) which are overtly organized by family lineages, but also many of the so-called "republics" in which son succeeds father in leadership positions or brother allies with brother or other family to form ruling blocs (Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt). In these case, families "rule". Whether families "rule" or not, these scholars argue, family relations always penetrate political, economic, religious and social spheres. The "boundary" between "public/private" or "public/domestic" is fluid as states regulate "families" or family relations and expectations are transported into state matters or economic matters, and the like. Persons expect their family members to privilege their family relations and take care of family "business" regardless of where they are located. The patron/client structure of many Arab states pivots, to some degree, on "actual" family relations or the use of family "idioms" to cement political relations. Public officials and bureaucrats are expected to use their positions to "take care of their families", bring their families

into government or bring government resources and services to their families. In the market place, many businesses are family owned or employ family members or use family to recruit labor. The morality of family often informs the employer/employee relationships such that employers are often expected to "take care" of their workers as extended family relatives and workers are expected to do the "extra" that one does for family leaders. The idioms of family constantly circulate in society, according to these scholars, so that heads of state are likened to heads of families; bosses become fathers or family elders; friends become brothers and sisters; even strangers on the street become "uncle" or "brother" or "grandmother" or "sister". The deployment of family terminology as idioms of relationships attaches the morality of family to those relationships, evoking the sense of both familial entitlement and responsibilities. Some argue that the notion of self shaped and conditioned in Arab family systems, requiring and eliciting the continual connectedness with significant others, has mutually constituted notions of citizenship, political rights and responsibilities, political practices, and state forms. For these scholars, there is no escaping family in Arab societies. Or more positively put, few want to escape family. While some who argue the family is the center of social action may do so from a "romance" of the family, others suggest that though many families may be, in practice, abusive, oppressive, dysfunctional, there are as yet few social alternatives to family forms of affiliation. That is, they argue that the family is the center of social action, not necessarily to advocate it, but to reckon with this social force and call for its closer examination.

Critique of Family as the Center of Social Action:

To effectively rethink the argument that the family is the center of social action in Arab countries, I have outlined above the basis of some of the key arguments which support this notion. While I have been one of the proponents of the above position, it was less by advocacy and more by desire for critical inquiry of why this should be so and what are the consequences of its being so. But before that critical inquiry can be undertaken, we must first ask, is it in fact the case that the family is the center of social action?

Is the Family the Center of Social Action: To pursue this question, I might identify a line of inquiry. I would suggest research which interrogates the current categories of social analysis - almost wholesale imported from Western social theory -- for their capacity to capture realities on the ground in Arab societies. It would then be useful to consider whether other categories are productive of insights. This should be followed by analysis of local discourses, not only of scholars and scholarship, but of people "on the ground" to identify how they understand their own social organization, their social arrangements, their social relationships, their cultures and moralities. While none of the outcome of these inquiries can stand on their own, they would hopefully inform more critical theory.

If It Is, Why Is IT: If the family is the center of social action, we need to more rigorously inquire why this is so. Is it the center because of the failure/weakness of other systems of social organization? Is it the center because of the "persistence" of "pre-modern" forms? Is it the center because it is a "modern" form? Is this an outcome of "globalization"? Is it the center because it offers to its members resources, services, identities, emotionalities, domains of experience not offered elsewhere? Is it the center because it is consistent with and helps to

reproduce political/economic organization? Is there something specifically "Arab", or "Muslim", "Middle Eastern", or Third World about this?

If It IS, What Are the Consequences: If family is the center of social action, we need to rigorously research the consequences of this social reality. What does this mean for women? for children? for men? for the state? for economy? for religious communities? for "development?" Is this to be supported? Is it to be transformed?

Zeina Zaatari: Arab Families Working Group Workshop

Studies of the Arab Family in general has tended to take a couple of trends and even more recent studies seem to still cling to these grand theories. Eickelman states that structural functionalism endured in the study of the region more so than in studies of other parts of the world. This fact, explains why structural functionalism has also endured in the study of the Arab Family, when other theories have been tackled in other regions of the world.

As recently as 1997, for example, Young and Shami⁸ have attempted to define the family as “a social unit: (1) based on common descent, or ‘shared blood’; (2) whose members share the same dwelling; (3) in which the members work to accomplish a particular set of tasks, such as the production and distribution of food; and (4) through which individuals are socialized and acquire important elements of social identity, including gender identity, linguistic/ethnic/national identity, and religious identity”⁹. They do, nonetheless make a claim for the diversity of the Arab Family and the almost impossibility of making a claim for a one unified type. Therefore, for each of the aspects of the definition given they provide a range of possible ways that we have come to know based on field experience and data collected. To answer the question what is the Arab family, the authors state, “We can see that the two different organizing principles (descent and co-residence) and the two different kinds of projects carried out by families (productive and reproductive tasks on the one hand and socialization on the other) are central to the understanding of the family in the Arab world”¹⁰.

Other approaches to studying the Arab family include the Normative Approach. “In this approach, the attempt is made to delimit a set of cultural precepts which, through socialization and social control, structure the behavior of individuals”¹¹. The assumption here is that members are uniform and there is little variation. Any statement (proverbs) is usually given as representative of trends and characteristics of family interaction without a thorough analysis of the contradictions within these proverbs or the context by which they were provoked. The normative approach thus characterized an Arab family based solely on cultural understandings that prioritized descent and language.

Another approach has been the so called demographic approach or statistics approach where certain phenomenon are placed under the microscope and evaluated like family composition, size, fertility rates, labor, migrations. In a study by the Administration for the Social Affairs of Woman and Family¹² (1994), the focus is on how the centrality of the family in our societies has

⁸ Young, William C. & Shami, Seteney

1997 Anthropological Approaches to the Arab Family. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 28(2): 1-13.

⁹ Ibid, p.2

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 4-5.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 5

¹² Woman and Family Affairs Unit

managed to lessen the existence of marginal groups like petty criminals, prostitutes, misery belt inhabitants, and juvenile delinquents that usually arise in developing countries. There is though a total overlooking of the marginalization of other groups, which arises from viewing the family as the natural social unit and viewing a certain type of the family (mainly nuclear or extended) as the 'natural' way of structuring social and familial relationships. It also overlooks those marginalized within this 'natural' family unit such as women and children.

Young and Shami¹³ argue that researchers tend to project their results as decisive and generalizable. They often do not take all aspects into consideration and there is ample variability to make it close to impossible to generalize. Studies of family size often do not take into consideration fertility policies, religions, etc., nor the impact of labor migration on decision-making processes, nor gender relations. Preference for a nuclear, extended, or multiple family households is often not absolute but rather a result of the kind of work the family is involved in¹⁴. Moreover the distinctions made between rural and urban are often based on an imagined dichotomy rather than a real one and on the idea that urban implies civilized and modern while rural implies backward. Finally, very few studies take into account differences across classes. In a recent issue (1994) of the publication *The Arab Family*¹⁵, most articles focused on a structural/functional approach. The introduction often takes into account the evolutionary process of the different types of family systems. It also classifies families according to whether they are for example, nuclear or extended. Moreover, it tends to dissect the family's function in society with very little consideration for ideology for example. The family in the national narrative is rarely discussed. In an article by Najim¹⁶ (1994), the family as a unit is seen as the natural, the normal, and the main avenue for structuring society. Family as such is then rarely even questioned. Moreover, Najim sees the family as the main avenue in which the individual can enact his freedom and human rights. He sees an ideal form of a family where democracy reigns, where individuals within the family communicate and work together in harmony. This ideal form is what he believes our societies need to strive for. Why is this an ideal form? How did it arise to being so? What is its relation to the nation, to the internal and external struggles faced by the nation (especially in cases of war and dislocation)? Are there alternative social creations that people benefit from?

1994 Marginalized Groups and Changes in Roles in Arab Countries. In *The Arab Family*, an edited journal from the Arab Association for the Family, Tunis: 1994, Pp.33-57.

¹³ Young, William C. & Shami, Seteney

1997 Anthropological Approaches to the Arab Family. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 28(2): 1-13.

¹⁴ Barakat, Halim

1982 [93] Social System and its Relation to The Problem of the Arab Woman. In *Woman and her Role in the Arab Unity Movement*, Seminar Proceedings, Beirut: The Center for Studies of Arab Unity.

¹⁵ 1994 In *The Arab Family*, an edited journal from the Arab Association for the Family, Tunis.

¹⁶ Najim, Abboud Najim

1994 Family Management: The Concept and the Affecting Factors. In *The Arab Family*, an edited journal from the Arab Association for the Family, Tunis.

The issue of Patriarchy: It seems that most articles and research being published recently, almost all agree to the idea that Arab society in general and the Arab family is patriarchal. This often means in terms of the family, that men are the decision makers in the family and the main breadwinners. It also entails that male-sons are preferred, that male offspring might get better treatment at nutrition and education. It also often entails that women are supposed to view themselves as extensions of their male relatives and thus their actions always reflect on the males' status and name and not vice versa. In the case of Lebanon for example, society at large seems to believe that families are not largely patriarchal and that women have gotten their share of equality. Moreover, men tend to joke about women's organizations and those calling for equality and so forth. The statements one hears are that 'women are the ones actually in control and not men', 'they manipulate and get what they want', 'men are the ones actually wearing the skirts even if they try to show otherwise', and 'men are going to have to start men's organizations to ask for their rights now'. I believe that these statements are extremely interesting in the sense that they seem to grossly override serious struggles and make them the subject of ridicule and jokes. In addition, they also seem to cover up certain social realities. These statements also bring to mind racial struggles in other parts of the world, like the idea of 'white men's burden'. Why are such responses arising at this point in time of this social struggle? Can they be dismissed with some psychological explanations of men feeling threatened that their power and authority might be compromised? To what extent are they counterattacks to maintain the status quo?

The issue of Women Representation: I think that here we still have the same dilemma of how do we represent women. If we dismiss all of these statements as not true and in contradiction to social realities, aren't we falling into the category of victimizing women totally and making them responders rather than actors and creators?

In terms of war, space and place, it seems that many demographic style studies have been conducted that looked at what happens to families in times of migration and dislocation¹⁷. If the migration is from one geographic entity to another then the dynamic might be very different from migrating from one city to another. Most of the misery belts around Beirut are inhabited by people who moved from the South or the Beka'a for economic and war reasons. Almost all those who were able to (except those whose villages were in an occupied area and they were at risk of being captured) kept constant contact with their villages of origin. We do not know in details if they moved as families or as individuals. It is obvious that the two patterns were present. Even those who moved as individuals ended up staying with relatives. How did this dislocation affect family relationships? We can see from several studies (Khalaf, Johnson) that patron-client relationships seemed to continue to operate and especially during the war years. The dislocated have no regular access to state operated facilities due to the fact that they are not within their 'normal' dwelling. In addition, war made the state's role minimal. As a result family and neighborly ties continued to grow and people relied on them. The most studied case

¹⁷ Hammad, Tallal

1994 The Palestinian Family Between Diaspora and the Right of Return. In *The Arab Family*, an edited journal from the Arab Association for the Family, Tunis.

of migration and dislocation is that of the Palestinians, whose forced dislocations spread family members often time all over the world. There are always all sorts of stories about reunions at someone's wedding or funeral. What happens to familial relationships within these contexts. In the context of the Palestinians one cannot evade discussing the relationship to the homeland and the continuous struggle. The family thus carries more ideological meanings, and mythical applications than a family dislocated for economic or war reasons but with the possibility of return more concrete. Social, historical and contextual factors are so important in understanding the relationship between family dynamics, the notions of the family, and the notions of place (imagined or real) and war and dislocation. Does the family become the homeland that people carry with them? Does gender dynamics within the family change temporarily or is the change a more sustained process?

Appendix II: Research Project Group Notes

Arab Families in Search of Well-being

How families define and experience their individual and collective well-being. Emphasis will be placed on women's work and education as major forces shaping the realities and conditions of every day life. The concern will extend to different aspects affecting the quality of life of the surveyed families. The parameters used encompass among other concerns, gender dynamics, standards of living, coherence and integration, sense of satisfaction, leisure times, children welfare and development.

The study will focus on two life cycle stages. An early stage of a couple with young children and a later stage of couple with adult children.

The concern with well being, the chosen parameters of social change (work and education) and the specification of the two stages in life cycles are conscious decisions based on the deliberations of the working group. The discussion touched on the following widely stated propositions:

- Increased responsibilities on women have not been matched by familial, societal and public support. Women are almost solely shouldering the implications of their changing conditions (particularly, longer years in education and engagement in out of home labor) and these in turn are influencing negatively their physical and psychosocial health.
- The prevailing value system placing supremacy to women's family roles over public roles and resisting a redefinition of divisions of responsibilities and reshaping of gender dynamics. These cultural notions are hypothesized to protect the family and to contribute to its welfare, and perpetuate the incompatibility of familial and non familial roles. They are driving the younger generation – that can economically afford to do so – out of the labor market.

The co-existence of these inherently inconsistent developments: more public space and resource for women as well as more family dependence on women's economic contributions vis a vis traditional gender dynamics and muted public policies and support for women's work call for a research effort to:

- Document the realities of women's lives and adaptations of different families to such realities. A particular concern is with the emergence of models of adaptations that are positively contributing to family well being. The group noted that significant changes in family dynamics and divisions of responsibilities may be actually occurring but not receiving adequate attention.

- Better investigate the contributions of work to individual/family welfare. The group noted that the burden of double responsibilities on women and particularly the difficulty of adequately satisfying young infants' needs may be over shadowing the many positive contributions of work to the woman, her children and her husband. The group discussed in details the importance of recognizing family cycles that involved changes in dependencies, needs and power in different times.
- It was felt particularly important to contrast the gains of mothers not working during the first few years of raising children to the consequences of non-engagement in productive careers at later stages of women's life.

The group was also very sensitive to the definition and operationalization of the concept of well-being. The broadness of the concept, the value system shaping its definition as well as the many and different manifestations of this elusive terms were subject to a great deal of debate.

- Recommend policies and interventions that support the Arab families in fulfilling their roles. Particularly as a source of psychological support and as an environment for the development of all family members.

Arab Families in Public Discourse, Representation, and Ideology

Members: Soraya Altorki, Hoda Elsadda, Penny Johnson, Suad Joseph, Barbara Ibrahim, Martina Rieker, Zeina Zaatari, Sahar Tawila [members not present Dina Craissati, Samia Mehrez].

Including long list issues:

- 5. Families and governmentalities: State, Law, citizenship practices
- 15. The State, families, and public space
- 18. Children/state/families: gendering person, "self", individual & citizenship
- 24. Representation of family dynamics
- 29. Representations in cinema, literature, arts, popular culture of families & gender relations in different historical periods as related to state policies & dominant discourses
- 33. Fiction & reality: how fiction affects reality and how representation plays out in the real. How people conduct their lives according to readings of representation
- 34. Analysis of impact of policies (of governments, World Bank, NGO's...) on families
 - The state sets policy on the basis of certain imagery.
 - The government is represented as a family.
 - The group will look at the power of the state on and in media.

Suad Joseph

Shall we have each person tell us what they would like to do in this group?

Martina Rieker

We need to think about larger theoretical project linking a.) our specific studies and b.) incorporating work on representation into studies examining their effects on the ground. We need to do comparative projects

Sahar el Tawila

We studied TV serials over 9 months and during Ramadan. We were trying to quantify what is qualitative. We developed an instrument for studying media representation of women on TV. We could, in this group, carry out an analysis of the data we already have and how this is related to public policy at that time and now. Has public policy been reflected in TV dramas? Is there any reflection of the new family law in TV drama? Are new marriage patterns reflected in TV dramas? We could do this while doing field work on marriages.

Hoda Elsadda

I would like to look at specific historical moments when women's issues were important. For example, the media coverage of the October 1999 Qasim Amin conference in Cairo. How were women's issues covered in the media? Why and when do women's issues become highlighted as a problem. Or how did the media cover the first World Women's Book Fair? The

question is the media's representation of women's issues. Women and Memory published a response to media coverage of the 1999 Qasim Amin conference.

Soraya Altorki

Hoda, are you interested in family? Can you relate this to family?

Hoda Elsadda

We would work on media coverage of families. We could also look at the relationship between the audience and these discourses. How women see themselves as mothers in relation to public discourses. If there is a public discourse which sees working mothers as bad, then working mothers would have to justify themselves. So the relationship between audience and discourses on families is important.

Penny Johnson

We've used discourse, representation and I'll add ideology. How family ideologies operate. I would like to look at law and public policy and ideologies. How family is represented in discourses and ideologies. For example, mothers of martyrs -- how does that work in representation and ideologies? Also we need to talk about families versus households, and the languages used. For example, in Palestine, the term "poverty" is not used, because there is an idea that "we are all poor."

Martina Rieker

I am interested in examining ways in which representation of families express governmentalities.

1. We can look at the ways in which different notions of "family" come to stand in for representation of the local (often the underdeveloped local) within specific national contexts (i.e. the Sa'idi family in Egypt; Khalili family in Palestine). How notions of family express governmentalities. 2. Practices of marriage contracts, negotiating family law. 3. We can look at the representations of the breadwinner and household. How certain categories become normalities and with what effects?

Soraya Altorki

I would like to work from the ground up. 1. How people cope with their lives today, perhaps do a comparative study. How young people are coping with having to find jobs, make families; where is the state in there; how is it putting more pressure on people. 2. I would focus on the middle class, not the poor. 3. Citizenship is another interest. How is it evolving in various contexts? The representations on TV, in school books, state curricula, what kids are learning in school and the state shapes this.

Suad Joseph

The last project could link with the project on children.

Zeina Zaatari

1. I am interested in practices, how ideologies would be enacted in public practices. I shy away from the language of discourse because it ignores practice. So I would look at

ideologies. How do public policies which enact ideologies impact women and families? 2. I would focus on economic policies, development, impact of policies on practices.

Hoda Elsadda

How do we relate representation, policy, practice? How representation impacts policy and practice and how policy and practice impact representation.

Suad Joseph

I am interested in how states construct their subjects through notions of citizenship from the earliest notions of childhood, even notions of child development. How the state constructs the citizen through laws and public policies. Laws and policies are constitutive of what it means to be citizens. How these laws and public policies are then translated (and transmuted) into school curricula, media, notions of childrearing, parenting, socialization, and what it means to be a "good child". How this links with notions of self, serving, rights and entitlements and how these notions come to be gendered. I am interested in the link between science and the state in constructing the citizen through constructing notions of proper citizen education, proper parenting, and notions of normative child development.

Soraya Altorki

We could do a comparative study on schools.

Martina Rieker

The Gender Training Programs targeting pre-pubescent girls in rural Egypt would be an interesting study.

Suad Joseph

We could break new ground with the task group on children working with ideas of representation, the state, science, notions of parenting/child socialization, and citizenship.

Hoda Elsadida

We need to ask when the gender concept was introduced into the regional school curricula. How school curricula have been impacted by key concepts such as gender. For example, the images of when Mama is not in the kitchen -- how are they introduced?

Penny Johnson

It is fascinating how we keep slipping to talking about gender, and not families. Most of us are more familiar with gender and we escape the family. It is difficult for us to deal with family. What is our aim? New frameworks of analysis?

Suad Joseph

I hope our aim is also new research, new data gathering. The topic of the family is familiar which makes us think we know what we do not know. It is its familiarity that is deceiving.

Martina Rieker

Malak Zaalouk's point of challenging the knowledge consumption model of the Arab region is important. We need to create knowledge locally and take this to policy makers. We create knowledge locally in relation to local issues.

Soraya Altorki

We should aim for a larger audience. We should aim to publish simultaneously in Arabic and English.

Suad Joseph

It is very difficult to obtain grant monies for translation. When it is available, it is to translate from English to Arabic. There is hardly any funds to translate from Arabic to English. We should build into all grants, translation and publication/distribution funds so we can publish simultaneously in Arabic and English.

Suad Joseph

I see several topics of common interest emerging:

1. Schooling and representation of Arab family.
2. Marriage contracts/family law
3. Citizenship, law, and representation of Arab family and citizen.

Sahar el Tawila

1. We could redo #1 as Representation of families in public policy in different historical periods and look at school textbooks, school curricula, in media, in TV, literature.

Zeina Zaatari

We need to look at the audience -- who watches which TV shows, and see how these TV shows affect families.

Martina Rieker

2. Could include negotiations, exchange, family law.

Suad Joseph

3. Citizenship could include representation of the citizen and family, preparation of families for war and peace, how mothers/fathers are taught to train their children for warfare, for martyrdom or for peacemaking. It could include citizenship laws, who gets to be a citizen, who gets to pass citizenship on to children.

Suad Joseph

Let look at these three topics one at a time:

1. Representation of families in public policy in different historical periods

Hoda Elsadda

Some define discourse as ideologies without political aspect. I don't but I'm ok with using ideologies or representation.

Zeina Zaatari, Penny Johnson, Soraya Altorki

I prefer to use ideologies rather than discourses.

Zeina Zaatari

Representation brings in the idea of images and someone is behind the images.

Martina Rieker

I would like to keep discourse. Discourse theory does not have to take a right wing approach. Ideology presumes politicization and presumes there is something that is not ideology, that is objective. It presumes research is objective, outside of ideology. Discourse theory suggests that we grasp, express "the real" through language at specific historical moments and in specific geographical spaces. It displaces the very notion of "objective" / "subjective".

Soraya Altorki

Part of the problem is to look at actors who believe what they are doing.

Suad Joseph

I think it would be important to keep all these terms now. It is premature to drop any. Let's keep for now ideology, discourse and representation.

All

a. Public policy; b. TV; c. school curricula; d. literature; e. popular culture such as songs, jokes, cartoons, magazines; f. laws, including welfare law, labor law, health law

Suad Joseph

Topic 2 is

2. Marriage contracts, negotiations, exchange, family law

Penny Johnson

This deals with contestation of marriage negotiations and marriage contracts at certain periods of time. We can look at community discourses; how whole discourses in communities arise over rights and wrongs within families. Look at marriage in public life -- how public debates emerge over marriage contracts

Zeina Zaatari

Including looking at gossip about marriage contracts

Barbara Ibrahim

We could ask what are the material exchanges. People state them as "fact". For example that "the groom has to provide the refrigerator." But there were no refrigerators at the rise of Islam. The next village will say the groom has to provide something else, not the refrigerator. But each sees these as "facts". So marriage negotiations lead to regional identities.

Martina Rieker

Discourses of marriage practices become regionalized and become part of regional identities.

Hoda Elsadda

Let's itemize what we have on this topic

a. Marriage contracts; b. media representation of marriage contracts; c. different class and regional marriage contracts; d. the state and representation of marriage contracts.

Martina Rieker

Urfi marriage (common law marriage) is an example of the relation of the state to marriage contracts. The Egyptian state required registration of Urfi marriages.

Barbara Ibrahim

When do families push the state? Do they demand informality when the state demands formality?

Suad Joseph

Topic #3 is ideologies of citizenship

3. Citizenship and Representations of family/children

This includes the representation of the citizen as a family member; representation of family in terms of citizenship; the socialization of the young for citizenship, for war and peace; who gets to be full citizens and pass citizenship on to children/spouses.

Penny Johnson

Ideology is an important word here. There are ideologies of family operating, ideologies of citizenship, ideologies of the state; ideologies of the young...

Hoda Elsadda

Is there education for peace anywhere in the region?

Penny Johnson

What do mothers and fathers do and think and act in terms of raising their children for war, peace, and citizenship?

Zeina Zaatari

There were youth camps at first in Lebanon after the war, but they have faded.

Suad Joseph

There are some who are working on education for civil society and peace and were working to put this in the national curricula in Lebanon -- Antoine Messarra.

Zeina Zaarari

There was tarbiyya medaniyya (civic education) when I was in school, but it was not taken seriously.

Penny Johnson

Parents often have to give up their children in war-- what do they do to prepare the children?

Barbara Ibrahim

Citizenship deals with identity -- preparation of citizens for identity. Identity politics comes in here. The competition between the state, families, religious groups over the identities of the young. How does that get put inside the person?

Hoda Elsadda

We need to look at how this links with the Diaspora Group work. How do diasporic groups socialize their children for identity in the diaspora? The international schools that many of us attended also impact national identity within Arab countries. We went to private schools run by British, French, Germans, Americans.

Suad Joseph

Our next steps?

Each of us will write a paragraph on each of the three topics we have identified between June 1-15 and email all the rest their paragraphs. The write up of this discuss will be sent to the group in one week, by May 15 at the latest.

Malak Zaalouk, Sahar Tawila, Rita Giacamen, Penny Johnson, Suad Joseph, are especially interested in the children project and we will discuss having that project woven in as part of this Initiative.

Also Dina Craissaiti and Samia Mehrez may join the Representation Initiative Group.

The Relationship Between Migration, Displacement and the Construction of Arab Families

The Diasporas working group will conduct research on discourses and practices of "Arab families" that emerge in the context of "border crossings" within, between and beyond the geographical territories of the Arab world and North Africa. Of particular interest to this group are forced migrants, labor migrants, and refugees as well as second generation diasporic movements and identities. Through a variety of research projects, we will focus on :

1. Displaced "Arab" families within and beyond national borders;
2. Youth in the global North;
3. Palestinian and Sudanese refugees within and beyond the Arab world;
4. Arab and non-Arab domestic workers within Arab families.

Underwriting our research is the notion that "family" is a key site through which diasporic ties are imagined and performed and that "gender" is a key marker of community boundaries, particularly in the context of constructing displaced communities. Central to our project as well is a recognition that the ways in which we theorize and methodologically conduct our research are produced in the context of "situated knowledge." As the historical processes by which memories, attachments, and loyalties to a "real" or "imagined" "homeland" vary, different kinds of diasporas emerge. As a result, our research and methods will shift depending on the "kinds" of diasporic ties we are studying.

A key focus in the research on refugee families will be the issue of "survival strategies." Research on refugee families will also include a focus on the links between "stigmatization;" "displacement;" "economic status" and "family." In Lebanon, for example, "stigmatization" will be studied in terms of the consequences of the dominant Lebanese discourse on re-construction and impediments, including the inferior status assigned to Palestinian refugees and its impacts on family formations and survival vis-à-vis the "new and improved" Lebanese state.

Research on Arab and non-Arab domestic workers in Arab families will focus on the roles of domestic workers within Arab families and their impact on family structures, child-rearing and identity formation. Simultaneously, we seek to understand the ways in which "domestic labor" shapes the lives of female domestic workers in particular and the impact it has on family dynamics and gender relations within the families of the employees as well as the employers. Because research on domestic workers in the Arab world is almost non-existent, this research will require

documentation of oral histories of domestic labor in Arab families across multiple generations and religious sects.

Finally, research on "domestic labor" contributes to the body of work that challenges the public/private binary opposition in a number of ways, including the assumption that the "public sphere" is a place of work while the "private" is a place of family as well as assumptions that see the house/the home as the site of blood/family relations.

Research on Arab families within and between the global North will explore "the family" as a site through which diasporic identities are imagined and performed. This part of our research will deconstruct the monolithic image of what constitutes an "Arab family" and how Arab families and communities are constructed in the diaspora. The U.S. led escalating militarization combined with the increasing attacks against persons perceived to be of Arab, Muslim, or Middle East descent points to the need for studies on the formation of Arab identities within the global North. Accounting for the interaction of family dynamics and transnational politics in this particular historical moment is necessary to make sense of where concepts such as home and homeland fit in processes of identification for Arab-Americans, for example. Here, we want to focus on the simultaneous understanding of the Arab displaced family as both a site of oppression and a site of resistance. On the one hand, there is the notion that romanticizes the family as an agent of cultural preservation and survival the bi-product of which is at times oppressive and suffocating to its members, especially when gender is factored in. On the other hand, at times of escalating violence against people of particular ethnicity, the family may act as a protective shield. Acting as a "home" away from "home," the Arab family can, then, be seen as a site of resistance that empowers its members to combat attempts to be silenced and/or to denounce a part of them they wish to keep.

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