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Lebanese American University

INSTITUTE FOR
WOMEN'S STUDIES
IN THE ARAB WORLD

al-raida

Transforming the World of Work for
Gender Equality in the Arab Region

issue 135-136-137 | Fall/Winter/Spring 2011-2012

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The Institute for Women's Studies
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P.O. BOX 13-5053 Chouran, Beirut,
1102 2801 Lebanon
TELEPHONE 961 1 867618, ext.1288
FAX 961 1 791645
WEBSITE http://iwsaw.lau.edu.lb
E-MAIL al-raida@lau.edu.lb

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at the Lebanese American University

The Lebanese American University founded the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) in 1973. The history of the Institute is closely linked to that of the first women's college in the Middle East, the American Junior College for Women, which was established in 1924 by the Presbyterian Mission. The College, which educated Middle Eastern women for half a century, became co-ed in 1973. In order to honor the college's unique heritage as the first educational institution for women in the region, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World was established that same year.

Mission
- Engage in academic research on women in the Arab world.
- Develop and integrate women's studies in the Lebanese American University curriculum.
- Empower women in the Arab world through development programs and education.
- Serve as a catalyst for policy changes regarding the rights of women in the Arab world.
- Facilitate networking and communication among individuals, groups, and institutions concerned with women in the Arab world.
- Extend ties with international organizations and universities working on gender issues.

Al-Raida Quarterly Journal

IWSAW issues a quaterly journal, *al-Raida*, whose mission is to promote research and the dissemination of updated information regarding the condition of women in the Arab world.

Each issue of *al-Raida* features a file which focuses on a particular theme, in addition to articles, conference reports, interviews, book reviews, and art news.

All submitted articles are reviewed by IWSAW. IWSAW reserves the right to accept or reject the articles submitted. Those articles that are accepted will be edited according to journal standards.

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"Morning Work", by Helen Zughaib, gouache on board,17x30, 1996.

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Editorial

Transforming the World of Work for Gender Equality in the Arab Region

Simel Esim

The theme of the current issue of *Al-Raida* is "Transforming the World of Work for Gender Equality in the Arab Region". The call for papers came out at a time of critical changes as uprisings started unfolding across the region. The uprisings have signaled the need to reconsider some of the long held thoughts and practices on gender equality issues.

For long, the prevalence of deterministic perspectives regarding social questions in the Arab region has led to static social, economic, and political conditions. Complex issues such as gender roles in the public and private spheres have often been explained as the necessary outcome of cultural specificity or natural resource endowments. Such explanations undermine the universality of rights-based perspectives on gender equality issues. Yet, the rhetorical power of the rights discourse is often used to maintain the status quo and embellish existing practices.

Women in the Arab region continue to have the poorest outcomes in the world of work, whether in comparison with men or in comparison with women in other regions. The insufficient employment generation and the poor quality of created jobs, along with deficiencies in the national frameworks for gender equality contribute to women's limited participation. Women have limited participation in paid employment, in the ownership of enterprises, and in the leadership of government, workers', and employers' organizations. Where they participate, they are often in lower positions, are paid less, or face multiple forms of discrimination. Stories of success typically remain limited and do not achieve scale.

There is a slow but growing tendency by the labor market institutions of the region, be it governments, workers', or employers' associations, to engage in key gender equality issues such as underpayment of jobs with a high concentration of women or high levels of unemployment among educated youth, especially young women. Momentum from rights groups to eliminate de jure and de facto discrimination in the world of work based on gender has been also building up.

As political transformations continue to take place across the region, their socioeconomic implications remain uncertain. The need for policy-relevant and action-oriented research based on the existing and emerging realities on the ground that

advance understanding on a range of gender equality issues in the world of work in the Arab region remains pressing. And it will be critical to keep gender equality and social justice on the transitional agendas in follow up to the Arab people's uprisings.

The collection of papers in this issue brings into focus changing gender norms in the world of work in the region. They address critical gaps in programming responses to self-employment, explore linkages between ideology, research, and policy regarding gender equality and workers' rights, and shed light on fundamental problems of significant scale from gender stereotyping and gender-based discrimination to gender pay gap and work and life balance.

Mansour Omeira, in his article, argues that transforming the world of work for gender equality in the region requires transforming the prevailing economic conversation, and outlines areas for research on economics to contribute to these transformations. He notes that in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings the rhetoric of governments, national, and international organizations was playing catch-up with the reality on the ground. Such rhetorical change, while welcome, needs to move beyond cosmetic makeover that leaves unaddressed the popular concerns of women and men in the region. He notes that the transformation of the economic conversation in the Arab region towards greater alignment with the values of gender equality and workers' rights will hinge on the relative influence of different groups in the academic, policy, and social dialogue processes. Accordingly, he argues that broad alliances will need to be developed to reshape the existing structures of thought and action.

In her article on Political Islam and Support for Women's Political Participation in Morocco, Lindsay Benstead focuses on the barriers to labor force participation in the Arab world, including discriminatory social attitudes. She notes that while cultural and structural explanations are part of the causal story, they do not put sufficient emphasis on human agency and contextual circumstances in shaping attitudes. Her findings, gathered using constituent surveys, highlight how Muslim opinion on women's role in politics varies across a broad category of religiously-oriented parties. She notes that as the Arab spring unfolds, easing controls on Islamist participation in elections, and diversity among Islamist movements on issues such as gender relations may become more evident. She also suggests that norms and values may change as a result of women's leadership in Islamist parties. Her findings, taken together with other surveys, indicate that ordinary citizens are much more accepting of women's participation in formal politics than conventional wisdom about the region would suggest.

In her article on changing gender norms in the world of work in Saudi Arabia, Amélie Le Renard shows how gender and nationality are critical to understanding the clothing choices facing Saudi professional women in today's world. Based on interviews and ethnographic observations spanning between 2005 and 2010 mainly in Riyadh, Le Renard notes that the constraining dress norms and injunctions for Saudi women are more related to a prevailing image of what defines a "modern", "professional" femininity versus what constitutes "respectability". She observes that women often have to negotiate a place trying to cope with these conflicting expectations without losing the trust of their families by adopting special clothing practices, particularly in terms of veiling and unveiling. These dilemmas concerning dress code in the

workplace, she concludes, are a reminder of how being able to exercise one's profession does not necessarily signify emancipation from power relations, but rather exercising agency in contributing to their transformation.

In his article on women's entrepreneurship development programs in Lebanon, Nabil Abdo takes a critical look at how many income-generating projects targeting low-income women largely operate on the basis of a market approach in spite of claiming and appropriating the goals of an empowerment approach. These projects do not encourage the establishment of productive women-owned businesses with growth potentials. Women are often oriented towards traditional home-making occupations that generate little income and entrap them in survivalist activities that do not take them out of the terms and conditions of vulnerable employment that they suffer from. In his conclusion, he argues that these forms of entrepreneurship promotion need to include collective forms of entrepreneurship through business groups and cooperatives among the options which can provide them with benefits in terms of pooling of knowledge, resources, sharing of risks as well as responsibilities, including care. These collective business models, he notes, can also be democratic spaces that allow for voice, agency, and ownership for women entrepreneurs.

The next article in this issue is a policy brief from the ILO on pay equity in Jordan prepared in collaboration with the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW). The findings of the policy brief included in this issue suggest that Jordanian women continue to face gender-based pay discrimination at work. Women employees in Jordan are paid less than men in the same skill category. There is a considerable gender pay gap for employees at all skill levels. Importantly, almost half of the employed women in Jordan are professionals and earn considerably less than men professionals.

"Ceramic Painters", by Helen Zughaib, gouache on board, 15x20, 2004.

The average hourly wage for women professionals is 33 percent less than that of men professionals. The recommendations from the policy brief have been discussed in national fora and resulted in the formation of a National Steering Committee on Pay Equity that has been working through a number of subcommittees to advance the cause through legal change, research and advocacy (http://www.jordanpayequity.org/).

The six stories of women workers as told by Carole Kerbage and Omar Said spread across a wide range of experiences from the world of work in Lebanon. They shed light on significant widespread problems of gender stereotyping, worker-life balance, gender wage gap, gender based discrimination, and overlapping discriminations of gender and disability. These stories, originally prepared for a Sub-Regional Initiative of the ILO on Promoting Gender Equality in the World of Work in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, demonstrate the chasm that exists between the rights as set out in labor legislation and their actual realization and fulfillment.

Farah Kobaissy's article sheds light on the role of women workers in the labor movement in Egypt. It provides an analysis of the prominent role women leaders played in the strikes and protests in factories and assembly lines since 2006 and during the street protests of 2011. It was the women textile workers who sparked the initial wave of the strikes. They initiated and led many of the protests, and had a great deal of impact on the realization of their demands. They were also present in the first public sector strike and the formation of the first independent trade union, the Real Estate Tax Authority Union. Kobaissy provides a dynamic gender analysis of the participation of women workers in the strikes and public protests and points out that the growing participation of women in various movements in Egypt has been building for some time. While she mentions the most recent rise of right-wing groups and parties hostile to women's participation in public life in the country, she ends on a hopeful note pointing out that for the first time in the history of Egypt, a popular organized feminist movement is possible as there are collectives of women ready to integrate into the struggle.

Azza Charara Baydoun's article on honor killings in Lebanon is based on an earlier paper she presented in a one-day expert group meeting called for by Rashida Manjoo, the UN special rapporteur on violence against women that was convened in New York in October 2011. She reflects on the nature and extent of family violence in Lebanon and the efforts around combatting violence against women by women's organizations. She makes the connection between the struggle on protection of women from family violence and the increased visibility of women in the public space during the Arab people's uprisings. She notes that the increased occurrence of media stories on family violence against women, provides activists with a platform for awareness-raising, despite the sensationalist nature of the coverage. She concludes by mentioning the need to exercise caution with respect to forces that are working to reverse the few gains achieved regarding advancing of women's rights in the region.

This issue of *Al-Raida* concludes with two winning papers of the Mary Turner Lane Award, a student paper competition established in honor of the late Mary Turner Lane, who founded the women's studies program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

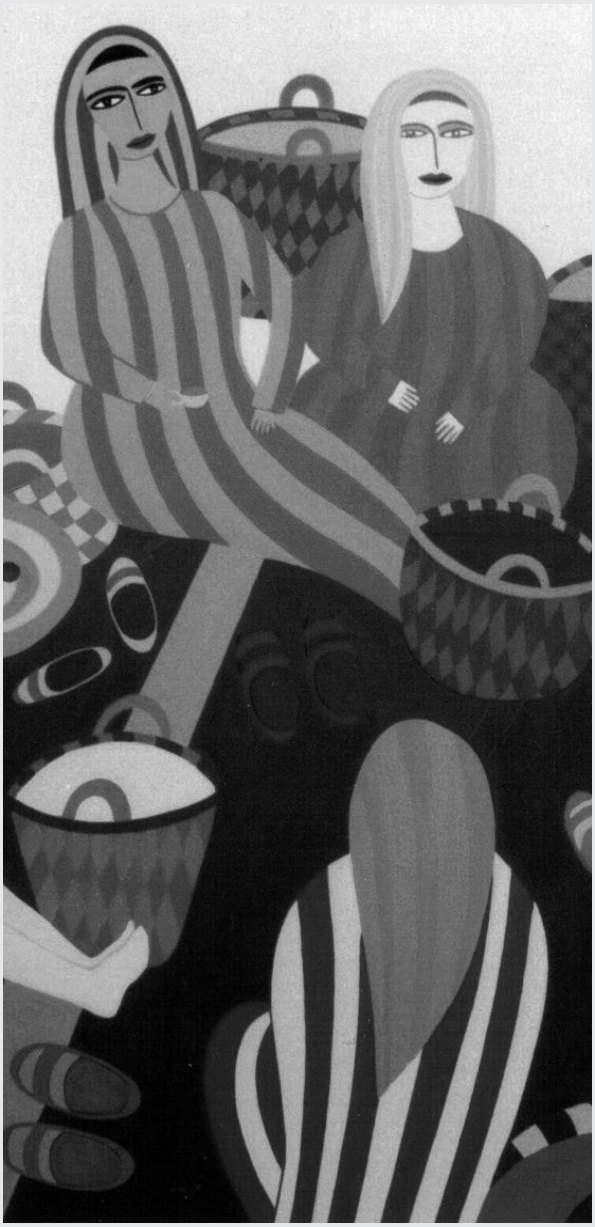
The winning graduate student paper by Patil Yessayan, Sawsan Khanafer, and Marie Murray looks at the issue of why women have limited leadership and representative roles in Lebanese politics, and why so few actually run for parliament. The authors focus on an analysis of the opinions of women politicians and political science students in Lebanon regarding what they see as the greatest obstacle that women face in pursuing political careers. They find that contrary to what many believe, the main obstacle to women's political participation may not be the patriarchal or family-based culture itself, but rather the political culture, the state structure, and the sectarian divides inherent in it. In their conclusions they suggest that the parties should start with leadership training among women early on, and eliminate the special committees for women to reduce the segregation of men and women in politics.

The winning undergraduate essay by Leanne Abou Hassan analyses a short story that highlights the cultural contrast and clash of generations between the present day and those of our grandparents, showing how traditions and ways of life have evolved. It emphasizes differences in the roles women occupied then and now and the greater freedom that women today enjoy as compared to the earlier generations. It is written to understand and highlight women's expectations from a grandmother's point of view one who has suffered from the burdens of rigid traditions.

Times of transition open up new realms of opportunities as they bring with them the challenges and contradictions of innovating ideas and ways of working. As this issue goes to print in the fall of 2013, the deepening convergence of economic, social, and political crises in the region calls attention to the need for development of institutions that bring out the best in humans. We hope that this period of transition will have transformative outcomes for gender equality and social justice in the region.

Simel Esim is a Turkish American political economist who has worked in social and economic development for 25 years. She has worked on gender equality in the world of work for over 20 years. From January 2004 to March 2012 she was based in Beirut in the International Labour Organization's Regional Office for Arab States as Senior Regional Gender Specialist. Since April 2012 she has been working in the ILO's Cooperatives Unit (www.ilo.org/coop) in Geneva as its manager.
Email: esim@ilo.org

Transforming the World of Work for Gender Equality in the Arab Region



Transforming the Economic Conversation in the Arab Region

Mansour Omeira

Our knowledge, as well as our ignorance, at any time and on every issue, tends to be opportunistically conditioned, and thus brought to deviate from full truth.

Gunnar Myrdal (1989)

The Challenge to the Existing Conversation

The Arab uprisings have laid bare the abyss between the rhetoric and reality of the dominant development paradigm in the region. It is widely agreed that socioeconomic discontent was a major cause of the uprisings. An early slogan raised at the start of the uprising in Tunisia was "employment is a right, you gang of thieves". The slogan contrasted the denied universal right to employment with the actual accumulation of illicit privileges by a narrow minority. It thus depicted the complex nature of inequality, which encompassed the economic, political, legal, and other fields. The concept of 'regime' in the slogan that turned out to be the most popular across the Arab region, "the people want to bring down the regime", also highlighted the need for a multidimensional approach. The current article argues that transforming the world of work for gender equality in the region requires transforming the prevailing economic conversation, and outlines areas for research on economics to contribute to these transformations.

A call for changing the economic conversation presupposes the idea that economics is indeed "a conversation, or better, a bunch of conversations" (Klamer, 2007). Anyone who has listened to speakers at an economics conference, for instance on 'women and the economy', will be receptive to the idea that economics is argumentative. Sometimes the arguments of other economists are dismissed for reasons such as being ideologically biased, technically inappropriate, or irrelevant to the real world, and the dismissal itself is part of the economic conversation. Since arguments depend on "stories, metaphors, appeals to authority, context, interests, power" (Klamer et al., 2007, p. 6), the conception of an economic conversation rehumanizes economics and explicitly brings back human values in its realm.

The rhetoric of governments, national, and international organizations active in the region has played catching-up with the slogans raised by protesters in the streets, at least initially. References to social justice and democracy became recurrent in the official positions of international actors, including those that had long supported

and legitimized the old Arab order (Bond, 2011, p. 482). The rhetorical change may be construed as a welcome response to legitimate criticism, yet it may also serve as a cosmetic makeover that leaves unaddressed the popular concerns of women and men in the region (Mohamadieh, 2012). The extent to which the rhetorical change has been accompanied by or will lead to deeper transformation in the prevailing development paradigm remains under question. An early assessment has suggested that "[b]eyond the incongruous rhetoric embracing democracy and social justice, there appears to be very little difference in what is being advocated to Arab democrats today and what was advocated to Arab dictators yesterday" (Bond, 2011, p. 482).

The Importance of Words in the Existing Conversation

The economic conversation, not unlike the broader development conversation, features often-used words that may emerge in some context, become obsolete with time, or reappear with a different meaning. The words themselves and their meanings are thus prone to contestation and appropriation. The use of the slogans raised by the Arab uprisings against the aims of the protesters, as may indeed already be the case as suggested in the introduction, is therefore an unsurprising possibility. The language used by different actors in different contexts thus deserves serious scrutiny. The words in fashion or buzzwords are more than "passwords to funding and influence" or "mere specialist jargon": the qualities they confer may leave "much of what is actually done in their name unquestioned" (Cornwall, 2007, p. 471). The questioning typically gains importance when the prevalent order breaks down, as in the case of the current global economic crisis.

The elucidation of the question of "how it is that false illusions of the global financial system's operation and consequences were conferred with sufficient legitimacy to deafen alternative views and stymie real reform" (Deeg & O'Sullivan, 2009, p. 759) will benefit a great deal from an examination of the words characterizing the dominant economic conversation. The Arab uprisings emerged in the global crisis context, at a time when the mainstream consensus of economic analysts was that the region had been largely shielded from the crisis. The analysis of the economic conversation across the Arab region, and the various uses of specific terms, their determinants, and implications, would therefore provide important insights. Such an exercise would best be served through in-depth case studies to understand how terms such as human capital, social safety nets, or labor market flexibility are configured in the region. As the aim of this article is to encourage research in that direction, it will discuss two terms for illustrative purposes of the value of a gender equality and workers' rights perspective: economic growth and women migrant domestic workers. The first discussion will be more conceptual, the second more practical.

A Widely Used Term: Economic Growth

Not unlike other regions in the world, economic growth is the central concept underlying the economic conversation in the Arab region. It is typically accepted to be desirable in itself, as reflected in the large majority of academic, policy, and media publications related to the economics of the Arab region. When considered less uncritically, it is often juxtaposed with another term, as in the examples of 'inclusive growth' or 'shared growth' (International Labor Office and United Nations Development Programme, 2012). Economic growth should generate employment and income

opportunities, ideally for the more disadvantaged sections of society. Yet despite economic growth the Arab region joblessness has been widespread, and women's participation in the labor force has been limited in comparison with other regions. Various perspectives have been presented to understand the phenomenon, but they have not questioned the basis of the concept of economic growth.

The concept of economic growth refers to the growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is derived from the System of National Account (SNA) (European Commission et al., 2009). The SNA differentiates between productive activities which use inputs to produce outputs of goods or services, and non-productive activities, such as purely natural processes without any human involvement or direction. Basic human activities such as eating, drinking, sleeping, or exercising are considered non-productive, based on the third part criterion. To illustrate, if you pay someone to diet or exercise on your behalf, you will not reap the physical benefits. For that, you would need to do it yourself. The third party criterion includes a market criterion, which marginalizes unpaid work, typically undertaken by women in the household. In practice, it excludes unpaid 'personal' activities even when they have market equivalents, such as emotional care-taking, which can be provided by a therapist, or sex, which can be provided by a sex worker (Wood, 1997).

The SNA recognizes that unpaid household activities such as washing, preparing meals, and caring for children, the sick or the elderly are productive in an economic sense, but it excludes them from the SNA production boundary, and thus from GDP. The rationale is that these activities have a limited impact on the rest of the economy, the decision to produce them is not influenced by and does not influence economic policy, and there are no comparable market prices to value them (European Commission et al., 2009). The three arguments, however, rest on shaky foundations. First, in response to 'structural adjustment' policies that cut back formal social protection, women typically increase and intensify their unpaid care work, which in turn facilitates the implementation of such policies (Elson & Cagatay, 2000). Second, assigning a monetary value to unpaid care work can be done through a variety of approaches (Budlender, 2008). Third, the SNA does include the unpaid household activities of women in developing countries, but only if they are usually provided for pay in developed countries (Wood, 1997). Prominent examples include subsistence activities such as collecting firewood or gathering water. This, in turn, further excludes other activities such as cooking or childcare. The shaky conceptual foundations of the focus on economic growth from a gender perspective are summarized in Arthur Cecil Pigou's remark that if a man marries his 'maid', GDP shrinks.

A Less Used Term: Women Migrant Domestic Workers

'Maids' in the Arab region are largely migrants, whether from rural areas or more frequently from other countries. The phrase 'women migrant domestic workers' is not widely used in the region but it has been gaining ground in recent years. Yet it was not always the case, and each of the words in the phrase serves a purpose as part of the struggle for gender equality and workers' rights. First, the word 'women' is used instead of 'female', to highlight the difference between gender and sex. Being a woman is a socially constructed identity, whereas being female is a biological characteristic. The choice of occupation as well as its terms and conditions is a social matter. It is

not fatalistically determined by nature. Therefore it can be changed, and should be changed in the interest of gender equality and workers' rights.

Second, the word migrant, although important given the great number of non-nationals in the region, is often avoided by policy-makers in the region. As already discussed, the choice of terminology is a powerful tool in the hands of those who use it. A rare occasion where the divergence of interests regarding a specific term came to the open was at the Arab Employment Forum of 2009, which was jointly organized by the International Labor Office and the Arab Labor Organization. After days of discussion between representatives of various social interests in the region, no agreement was reached on the issue of migrant workers. The relevant section in the conclusions of the forum referred to forwarding the summary of the related session to the technical follow-up committee (Arab Employment Forum, 2009). There were a number of differences in how workers', employers', and governments' representatives approached the issue, which could not be resolved within the set time.

The multiple differences came to the fore in the terminology to be used in the drafting of the conclusions. During the negotiations, it became clear that a group of governments' and employers' representatives wanted to ensure that migrant workers were not referred to as 'migrant workers', preferring instead terms such as 'temporary guest workers'. Workers' representatives refused the terminological change. Although the difference may appear to be minor, it carried in reality important implications. Explicit reference to 'migrant workers' directed the discussion towards the concrete steps needed to apply the relevant international labor and human rights standards protecting migrant workers. Alternative terminology would cast the discussion away from universal rights, and the absence of normative basis would allow for a maintenance of the status quo, given the large power differentials that migrant workers typically face.

Third, only recently has (paid) domestic work been recognized as work at the international level, in the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). That recognition has provided a needed boost to efforts of activists defending the rights of domestic workers around the world, by providing the international legitimacy and normative framework. Despite the recognition, other terms such as 'maids' and 'servants' are still used widely to refer to domestic workers in the Arab region, including in national legislation, which largely discriminates against them (Esim & Kerbage, 2011). The term 'servant' is reminiscent of a master-servant relationship of domination, and denies the domestic workers their fundamental principles and rights at work. The undervaluation and invisibility of paid domestic work is related to the undervaluation and invisibility of unpaid domestic work. While daily discussions and the media often depict women migrants and women nationals as having conflicting interests, in reality they have a common interest in redressing gender equality and workers' rights, notably in the recognition and revaluation of their work (Esim & Omeira, 2011). This redressing will need to be done in the various dimensions of the economic conversation.

3. A Research Agenda on the Conversation: Economic Thought, Policy, and Community

The argument developed in this article is that effective responses to the popular aspirations of women and men in the Arab region, particularly the youth, need a transformation of

the prevalent economic conversations. Such transformation can take place in the various dimensions of economics, bringing to light issues such as power, conflict, ideology, interests, and institutions. These issues are typically ignored or concealed in the prevailing economic conversation around the region, which has contributed to widening the gap between economic rhetoric and reality. Three dimensions of economics are discussed briefly for illustrative purposes: economics as body of thought, as policy outlook, and as community. Each of the three dimensions opens up promising research leads in the context of the Arab region, and together they contribute to a research agenda enabling the transformation of the world of work for gender equality and workers' rights.

Economics as Body of Thought

The emergence of the Arab uprisings has revealed the inadequacy of the typical separation between the economic and the non-economic, such as the social or the political (Moore, 2013). Far from being a minor issue, this separation lies at the core of the dominant school of economic thought, and its rejection therefore directly challenges that school of thought. The first lesson of the typical (neoclassical) economics textbook teaches students to distinguish between positive economics and normative economics. "Positive economics describes the facts of an economy", they are told, "while normative economics involves value judgments" (Samuelson & Nordhaus, 2010, p. 7). The distinction, which is meant to separate the descriptive from the prescriptive and what is from what ought to be, is untenable (Putnam & Walsh, 2011). Yet it remains dominant in economics textbooks and among economists. The separation of positive and normative economics is also related to the separation of the social and the economic, which is detrimental to gender equality and workers' rights issues (Nelson, 1998). The separation allows the teaching of neoclassical economics as the science of economics, which "violates various conceptions of morality to which most people claim to adhere" (Parvin, 1992).

Neoclassical microeconomics presents students with a set of tools and models including equilibrium, utility-and profit-maximization, and the marginal productivity theory of distribution (Lee & Keen, 2004). It also provides the basis for the microfoundations of the macroeconomics project, which continues to be supported despite its failure (Hodgson, 2012). The global economic crisis has laid bare the failure of neoclassical economics and its deficient methodological basis and empirical performance (Colander et al., 2009). The crisis has also rekindled interest in the numerous theoretical alternatives, such as "Post Keynesian-Sraffian, Marxist-radical, institutional-evolutionary, social, feminist, and ecological economics", which are often grouped together under the label of 'heterodox economics' (Lee, 2012). Heterodox economics takes as its starting point the social provisioning process, which it seeks to understand and improve. It promotes the value of pluralism, in the dual sense of intellectual tolerance and engagement with a range of theoretical views (Lee, 2012). The uprisings have made heterodox economics more relevant than ever for understanding the Arab region, as they came in response to a situation exacerbated by the prescriptions derived from neoclassical economics, which in effect became a meta-ideology justifying a broader ideology: neoliberalism (Bresser-Pereira, 2010).

Economics as Policy Outlook

The development paradigm that has dominated the Arab region in recent decades needs to be considered within the broader trend towards neoliberalism around the

world (Amin, 2011). In modern market societies, a major responsibility of governments is to develop the institutions that decrease the uncertainty and instability inherent in markets, while promoting economic security (Minsky, 1996). Instead of the promotion of economic security, precariousness and informalization have been fomented during the neoliberal era under the guise of labor flexibility policies (Standing, 2011). The pursuit of the total market, referred to as globalization, has replaced the pursuit of social justice, thus undermining the institutional bases of the existence of markets (Supiot, 2010). Financialization, including the expansion of debt in the various spheres of economic life, has been endemic to, and can even be considered as synonymous with, neoliberalism (Fine, 2012).

The interrelated phenomena of financialization, informalization, and globalization have been manifested in growing economic inequality along national, gender, ethnicity/racial, and class lines, as exhibited in the context of wars (Peterson, 2008). In particular, three gender biases have characterized neoliberal policies around the world (Elson & Cagatay, 2000): a commodification bias giving priority to markets at the expense of non-market provision; a deflationary bias promoting high interest rates and tight monetary and fiscal policy; and a male breadwinner bias assuming a traditional division of labor and permanent full-time (male) employment. The three biases are interlinked and together contribute to gender inequality in the world of work, particularly in increasing the unpaid work burden of women at home. Relegating women to the household is thus a shared outcome of both neoliberal and political Islamist agendas. As highlighted in the continuity of post-uprising economic policy, investigating the linkages and overlap between the two agendas is a promising area of research. To elaborate an alternative development paradigm, a useful starting point is the critical review of neoliberal policies through the lens of gender equality and workers' rights (Berik et al., 2012). Practical tools such as gender sensitive budget initiatives can help governmental and non-governmental organizations assess the extent to which revenues and expenditures are aligned with those aims (Esim, 2000). The Moroccan experience can provide valuable lessons in this regard (Johnson et al., 2009). The recognition that alternative policies are available begs the question of who will elaborate them.

Economics as Community

A deeper understanding of the community of economists can help uncover seldom discussed aspects of the production of economic knowledge in the Arab region. Joan Robinson's quip that the point of studying economics is to avoid being fooled by economists is a call for the democratization of economic knowledge. Such democratization requires knowledge of economics as body of thought and as policy outlook, as well as knowledge of economics as community. The analytical tools of economists and other social scientists have been used on the economists themselves, with research areas such as the economics, history, and sociology of economics shedding light on the economics community around the world (Coats, 1997; Lee, 2009; Fourcade, 2009). Studies shed light on the socialization of economists into the profession and the institutional dynamics that they deal with, as well as their gender inequitable characteristics (Ginther & Kahn, 2004). Such factors have an often significant influence on the theories, methodologies, and policy prescriptions that economists use. The global dissemination of the US-based neoclassical model

of economics education, from the undergraduate to the PhD level, has played an important role in shaping the community of economists.

Longstanding recognition of the misaligned incentives underlying the neoclassical model have not slowed its spread nor undermined its legitimacy. In a breakthrough article published more than 15 years ago, Arjo Klamer and David Colander (1987) asked graduate students at six top-ranked US economics departments about what was needed for success in the economics profession. About two-thirds of the respondents considered that "being smart in the sense of being good at problem-solving", in the sense of formal modeling, was very important. Meanwhile, only three percent found that "having a thorough knowledge of the economy" was very important (Klamer & Colander, p. 100). Further studies using a comparative analysis have identified the international commonalities and differences regarding economics, yet the Arab region has yet to be the subject of such systematic analysis. Interesting research questions abound: Who are the economists working in or on the region? How are they socialized in the profession? How is their research financed? Who are their preferred audiences? Which conversations do they participate in? How do they address gender equality and workers' rights issues? Research would inquire into the changing nature of educational systems in the region as well as their gender responsiveness (Omeira, 2010). The evolving relationship between economic thought, policy, and practice in Egypt, and the central role of the state in this evolution, has been outlined by Galal Amin (2001). The uprisings have unmasked the complex nature of the economics profession beyond the scientific facade, as illustrated in the case of the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (Grimaldi & O'Harrow Jr, 2011). At the regional level, an interesting case study would be the Economic Research Forum for the Arab Countries, Iran, and Turkey, which is the regional hub of the Global Development Network (Plehwe, 2007).

Towards a New Conversation

The transformation of the economic conversation in the Arab region towards greater alignment with the values of gender equality and workers' rights should ideally be the initiative of the economists themselves. The efforts of individual economists in this direction would benefit from further coordination through the creation of interest groups within existing scholarly associations, or through the establishment of new associations. The promotion of a broadly pluralist approach to economics, as well as interdisciplinary and interregional exchanges, would help avoid the biases that are typical of the dominant paradigm. Yet the good intentions of the persons involved may not suffice to stir the economics boat beyond the mainstream, given the prevailing incentive systems. Governments and funding institutions can help secure the transformation if they consider it in their interest. Yet as illustrated in the experience of state feminism (Al-Ali, 2012), the backlash could make the situation worse in the absence of organized social groups that are committed to heterodox economics. Membership-based organizations have an intrinsic advantage in resisting the imposition of an economic conversation that is detrimental to gender equality and workers' rights. The prominent role played by organized women in the uprisings has contributed to breaking gender stereotypes, yet this change has been challenged by the rise of conservative forces in the unfolding political process. The leading contribution to the popular mobilization by independent trade unions, some of which have emerged during the uprisings, has contributed to transforming the world of work, as well as the

economic rhetoric. The rhetoric needs to be consolidated through support for economic research, teaching, and grassroots organizing as part of the efforts to generate an alternative development paradigm. Ultimately the transformation of the economic conversation will hinge on the relative influence of different groups in the academic, policy, and social dialogue processes. Accordingly, broad alliances will need to be developed to reshape the existing structures of thought and action. Given the dual role of teachers as workers and educators, and the significant presence of women among their ranks, teachers' unions are ideally placed to play a strategic role in the transformation of both the world of work and the economic conversation. The struggle of teachers for such issues as organizing, wage increases, pay equity, non-discrimination, and social security have already achieved breakthroughs across the region.

Mansour Omeira is a PhD candidate at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzeland. He has worked on workers' rights and gender equality with a number of international organizations, and has served as labor economist at the International Labor Organization (ILO).
Email: mansour.omeira@gmail.com

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Barrier or Opportunity?

Political Islam and Support for Women's Political Participation in Morocco

Lindsay J. Benstead

Women face a myriad of barriers to labor force participation in the Arab world, including discriminatory social attitudes which hinder their access to elected office (Norris & Inglehart, 2001). Scholars differ about why women's empowerment lags behind in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Inglehart and Norris (2003a) argue that the gender gap in women's political participation is explained by a dearth of democratic values, including support for women's rights, which they show is lower in the Middle East and North Africa than in any other world region (Inglehart & Norris, 2003a; 2003b, p. 33). This belief is reinforced by data from the World Values Survey (1995-2007), in which respondents in 20 Muslim nations expressed negative stereotypes about women as political leaders. In more than 60,000 surveys conducted between 1995 and 2007, nearly 69.7 percent (N=54,894) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "Men make better political leaders than do women" (Benstead, 2010). These data are also supported by evidence from field research, in which an unsuccessful Algerian candidate in the 2002 parliamentary elections noted that "people will not vote for a list if they see that there is a woman at the head. Algerians do not vote for women" (personal communication, May, 2007).[1]

Yet, while these data to some extent reinforce conventional wisdom that popular support for gender equality and interest in voting for diverse candidates is limited, they also wash out variation both across and within Muslim countries with regard to attitudes toward women as political leaders. Further, they raise questions about whether and why ordinary citizens are more or less supportive of inclusive work and political environments. Modernization theory suggests that attitudes towards women's rights are determined by monolithic cultural and religious values (Inglehart & Norris, 2003a). Yet, while there is strong cross-national evidence for a relationship between religiosity and support for patriarchal values (Benstead, 2010; Norris, 2009), these studies do not fully explain within and across country variation in attitudes. As evidenced by data from the World Values Survey (1995-2007), presented in Figure 1, support for women as political leaders varies widely across Arab countries included in the study, with mean support highest in Morocco (2.05), followed by Algeria (1.96), Saudi Arabia (1.82), Jordan (1.59), Egypt (1.50), and Iraq (1.43).[2] This variation is also evident in data from the Arab Democracy Barometer (2006-2008), presented in Figure 2, which asked the same questions about women as political leaders. Support was highest in Lebanon (2.39), followed by Morocco (2.34), Kuwait (1.94), Algeria (1.89), Jordan (1.84), Yemen (1.73), and Palestine (1.72).[3] Yet, women

1. Interview conducted by the author in Algiers.

2. Detailed information and data for the World Values Survey (Inglehart and Tessler) are available at: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

3. Detailed information and data for the Arab Democracy Barometer (Jamal and Tessler) are available at: http://www.arabbarometer.org/

have been active in Moroccan politics, including in the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD), offering new opportunities to redefine the role of women in Muslim public space. The impact of these contextual conditions on societal attitudes has not been systematically investigated.

In view of this gap, this paper uses data from the Constituent Survey, a nationally-representative survey of 800 Moroccan men and women conducted by the author to investigate whether and why ordinary Moroccans support gender equality in

Figure 1

Mean Level of Acceptance of Women as Political Leaders

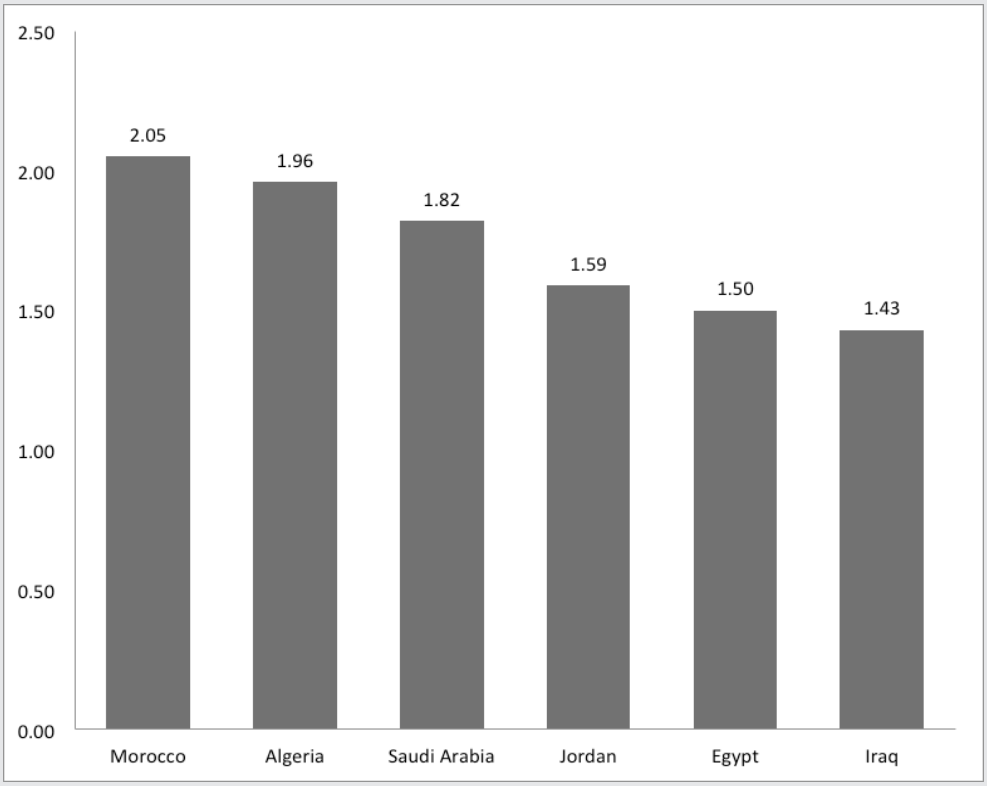

Figure 1 shows mean support for women as political leaders by country. Question: "Men make better political leaders than do women. Strongly disagree [=4]; Disagree [=3]; Agree [=2]; Strongly Agree [=1]." Source: World Values Survey, 1995-2007.

formal politics.[4] The data suggest that the more religious Moroccans tended to be less supportive of gender equality, on average, than the more secular Moroccans, as predicted by modernization theory. Yet, confidence in the PJD predicted higher support for gender equality. This finding suggests that the views of religious Muslims are not monolithic. Norms and values about women's role in political life may, through a process of socialization, change as a result of women's visibility in politics.

Literature Review

A robust social science literature examines why the Arab and Muslim world lags

4. I am grateful to Ellen Lust and Mhammed Abderebbi for their collaboration on the survey and to the Charles Cannell Fund in Survey Methodology, the William Davidson Institute, and the Nonprofit and Public Management Center at the University of Michigan and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding the survey.

Figure 2

Mean level of Acceptance of Women as Political Leaders

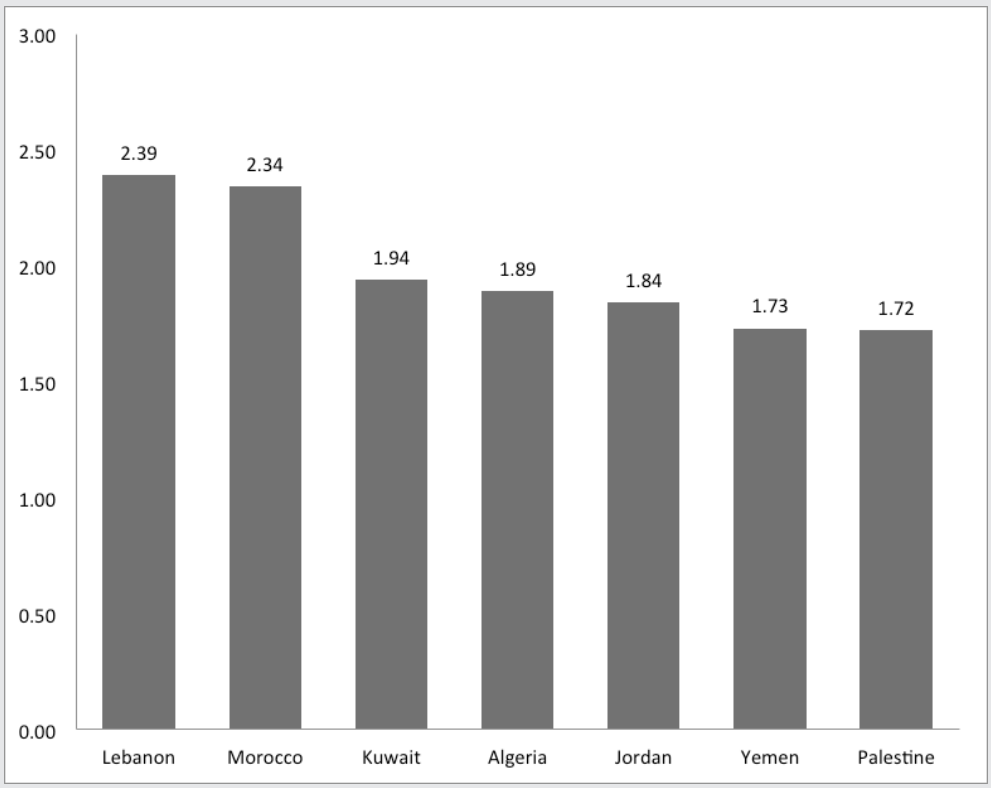

Figure 2 shows mean support for women as political leaders by country. Question: "Men make better political leaders than do women. Strongly disagree [=4]; Disagree [=3]; Agree [=2]; Strongly Agree [=1]." Source: Arab Democracy Barometer, 2006-2008.

behind other regions in support for gender equality (see, for example, Norris, 2009). Conventional wisdom attributes strongly patriarchal attitudes in the Middle East to Islamic culture and religion, which is viewed as incompatible with gender equality (Inglehart & Norris, 2003a, 2003b). Theorists espousing a "cultural interpretation" regard the lag as due in part to an inherent, immutable feature of Muslim identity and society (Alexander & Welzel, 2011). This view stems from modernization theory, which suggests that socioeconomic processes, such as education, urbanization, and economic development, shape culture and religious values, which in turn come to bear on individuals' values, including tolerance, acceptance of personal liberty, and support for gender equality (Jamal, 2006; Lerner, 1958; Lipset, 1959).

A second paradigm argues that lower support for gender equality is attributed to structural conditions, such as abundant oil or poor labor market opportunities for women. Theorists arguing for a "structural interpretation" contend that oil and economic conditions, not Islam, explain support for patriarchy (Alexander & Welzel, 2011). Ross (2008) argues that the lag in women's representation in parliament is caused not by Islam, but by the effect of oil production on the economy, which limits

women's participation in the labor force and, thus, skills needed to succeed in politics. In a related study, Blaydes and Linzer (2008) found evidence for an economic basis of support for fundamentalist views, arguing that poor job and educational opportunities for women lead to higher returns for conservative views in the marriage market than of secular views in the job market. Political institutions also play a role in mediating support for gender equality. Authoritarianism was related to higher levels of patriarchal values at the aggregate and individual level (Benstead, 2010; Paxton & Hughes, 2007), suggesting that the lag of democracy in the Arab world might explain lower levels of support for gender equality. Most studies that test the impact of personal religiosity, religious identity, or cultural setting on individual-level attitudes find that Islam is related to support for patriarchy, even controlling for structural conditions, such as democracy and oil (Alexander & Welzel, 2011; Norris, 2009).

While cultural and structural explanations are part of the causal story, these explanations underemphasize human agency and contextual circumstances in shaping attitudes. Modernization theory predicts that higher religiosity and support for Islamist parties will be related to lower support for gender equality. Yet, the prevalence of rights-based claims for equality and the robust participation of women in Islamist parties in Morocco (Salime, 2011) suggest that supporters of the PJD may not be less likely to support gender equality in politics than supporters of non-Islamist parties. They also suggest the possibility of socialization to norms of gender equality as a consequence of women's leadership in Islamist and other parties. Elsewhere, I have found that the implementation of a gender quota is associated with a 5 percent increase in the likelihood of an individual disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that "Men make better political leaders than do women" in 20 countries with a Muslim population of more than 25 percent (Benstead, 2010). This suggests that debate about and implementation of quotas, a key electoral reform, shapes societal attitudes.

Theoretical Framework and Expectations

Women's rights-based activism has a long history in Morocco (Sadiqi, 2008), but an agreement among political parties in 2002 to reserve 30 seats in the upper house of parliament for women significantly enhanced their visibility in politics. With this quota in place, women won two seats in the regular geographical constituencies and thirty on national lists, bringing their representation to 9.8 percent of the 325 seats in the Chamber, one of the highest levels in the region at the time. The agreement had a lasting effect on women's representation in formal politics. After the quota was abolished in 2007, 34 women were elected to 325 seats, in part because the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) adopted a party quota, fielding women in at least 20 percent of its electoral list positions (IDEA). In 2012, 66 (16.7 percent) women were elected to parliament, which increased in size to 395 seats (Women in National Parliaments, 2005).

Yet, the representation of women in parliament was not dominated only by secular or socialist parties, such as the USFP. The Islamist PJD has been active in including women in its membership, party offices, and electoral lists and was the only party in which women won seats in regular constituencies in the 2002 parliamentary elections. The data presented in Table 1 shows that, at the time of the Constituent Survey in 2006, six women represented the PJD in the upper house of Parliament, giving it

among the highest proportion of female deputies among the parliamentary groups and parties. Further, women increasingly joined the PJD over time (Wegner, 2011) and now make up one-third of the party rank and file (Salime, 2011). While Islamist parties in Jordan and Yemen also surpassed their secular counterparts in terms of the inclusion of women in their decision-making bodies (Clark & Schwedler, 2003), these parties segregated women in women's sections and excluded them largely from party offices (Wegner, 2011). By contrast, according to extensive field research conducted by Wegner (2011), the Moroccan PJD allowed access by women to party offices. In 1999, the PJD set a 15 percent quota for female delegates at the party congress and its General Secretariat had one female member. Women have also been elected at the municipal level for the PJD (Wegner, 2011).

Table 1
Female Member of the Seventh Chamber of Representatives (2002-2007) by Parliamentary Group

Party/Parliamentary Group	Seats	Number of Female Representatives	Proportion of Seats Held by Females
Parliamentary Groups*			
Movement Group (MP)	72	5	6.9
Independence Group of Unity and Equality (Istiqlal)	60	6	10.0
Group of the National Rally of Independents (RNI)	39	4	10.3
Group of the Constitutional Democrat Union (CD)	28	2	7.1
Socialist Group (USFP)	48	5	10.4
Group of the Socialist Alliance	21	2	9.5
Justice and Development Group (PJD)	42	6	14.3
Small Parties and Independents			
Deputies of the Democratic Forces Front (FFD)	8	2	25.0
Deputies of the Unified Socialist Left (GSU)	3	0	0
Deputies of the Alliance of Freedoms	1	0	0
Deputies without Party Affiliation	3	0	0
Total	**325**	**32**	**9.8**

* Parliamentary group composition at the time of the Constituent Survey, April to August 2006.
For the results of the 2002 parliamentary election by party, see Wegner 2011, p. 80. Parties for parliamentary groups and members may switch groups during the mandate, which alters the figures given in the table.

Observers disagree about whether the cause of women's empowerment in the PJD is women's rights-based discourses in Islamist movements or strategic instrumentalization of women after 9-11 and the 2003 Casablanca bombings (Salime, 2011). Yet, just as mosque attendance might reinforce patriarchal attitudes (Alexander & Welzel, 2011), public engagement with PJD party structures and the party in the media might

strengthen supportive attitudes about women in political life. The prominent role of women in the PJD suggests that support for the party should not be incompatible with acceptance of gender equality in politics.

Accordingly, as summarized in Table 2, modernization theory suggests that support for gender equality in Morocco will be higher for individuals who are wealthier, live in urban areas, are more educated, are less religious, and who have lower support for Islamist movements. These predictions are consistent with evidence linking higher support for gender equality with higher educational attainment; younger age; higher income; and, employment (Blaydes & Linzer, 2008; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Norris, 2009; Norris & Inglehart, 2001). A large literature also supports a link between female gender and egalitarian values (for example, Benstead, 2010), particularly for unmarried women (Blaydes & Linzer, 2008).

Table 2
Expected Relationship Between Independent Variables and Higher Support for Gender Equality

	Hypothesized relationship (Modernization theory)	Result (Model 2)
Education	+	Not significant
Urban Residence	+	+
Religiosity	-	-
Support for Islamist parties	-	+

Data and Methods

In order to test the hypotheses summarized in Table 2, I use data from a 2007 nationally-representative survey conducted face-to-face with a sample of 400 residents of Morocco, 18 years and older. Implemented in Arabic by a local team of faculty and students, the survey comprised 174 questions related to political behavior and attitudes and took 60 minutes to complete. The minimum response rate was 42.9 percent.[5] A two-stage sampling strategy was used, with a random stratified sample of electoral districts at the first stage and quota sampling in systematically sampled households at the second stage.

The survey contains nine items related to the participation of women in politics. The items were asked in the following order, with no intervening questions between items 2 and 7:

- Item 1: "If the party list you would like to vote for has a woman at the head of the list, would you be more likely to vote for that list, a little less likely to vote for that list, or, would it have no influence?" (3=More likely, 2=Not influence, 1=Less likely)
- Item 2: "The participation of women in political life has not yet reached a satisfying level." (4=Agree strongly, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Disagree strongly)
- Item 3: "In general, social and economic problems would improve if there were more women in politics." (Categories as Item 1)
- Item 4: "The government should take care to make sure women accede to top political positions in our country, up to and including Ministers." (Categories as Item 1)
- Item 5: "In general, would you have more confidence in a man or a woman to represent your interests in Parliament, or, would you say there is no difference?"

5. Response Rate 1, calculated according to the guidelines of the American Association of Public Opinion Research.

(3=More confidence in a woman, 2=No difference, 1=More confidence in a man)
- Item 6: "As you may know, there are presently 35 women elected to the Chamber of Representatives. In your opinion, would it be best if this level were to decrease, increase, or stay about the same?" (3=Increase, 2=Stay the same, 1=Decrease)
- Item 7a and 7b: Coded: 1=Oppose quotas, 2=Support 25 percent quota, 3=Support 50 percent quota
- "Would you support or oppose a quota requiring 50 percent of the Chamber of Representatives to be women?" (2=Support, 1=Oppose)
- "Would you support or oppose a quota requiring 25 percent of the Chamber of Representatives to be women?" (2=Support, 1=Oppose)

Responses to Items 2-7 were combined into a scale of support for gender equality, which is approximately normally distributed and ranges from 0.26 to 1.00.[6] The items correlate at r = 0.31 or higher and the scale has a reliability coefficient of alfa=0.85. The scale summarizes attitudes toward gender equality in politics, with higher numbers corresponding to greater support for women's participation in politics.

Bivariate Analysis

The bivariate data presented in Figure 2 show that female respondents were more likely to support gender equality in politics than were men. The mean response of females was 0.75, compared to 0.63 for males. The difference is statistically significant ($p<0.000$).

The data presented in Figure 4 suggest that more religious people were less likely to support gender equality, as predicted by modernization theory. The mean response on the gender equality scale for those who were very religious was 0.64, compared to 0.69 for those who were religious; 0.70 for those who not religious; and, 0.70 for those who were not religious at all. The mean response for those who refused to answer the question was 0.75, suggesting that secular individuals were less likely to respond to questions about religiosity than were more religious individuals, perhaps out of fear of

Figure 3

Mean Level of Support for Gender Equality in Politics by Respondent Gender

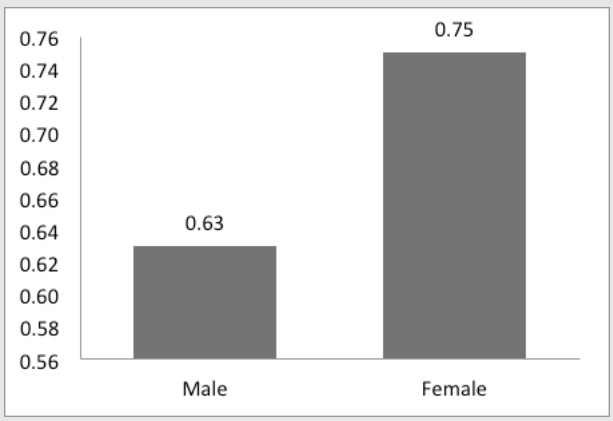

Figure 3 shows the mean level of support for gender equality in politics by gender of respondent
Source: Constituent Survey, 2006.

6. Item 1 could not be included in the scale because the survey was conducted in two forms, with Item 1 asked on form A and Items 2 through 7 asked on form B.

Figure 4

Mean Level of Support for Gender Equality in Politics by Level of Religiosity

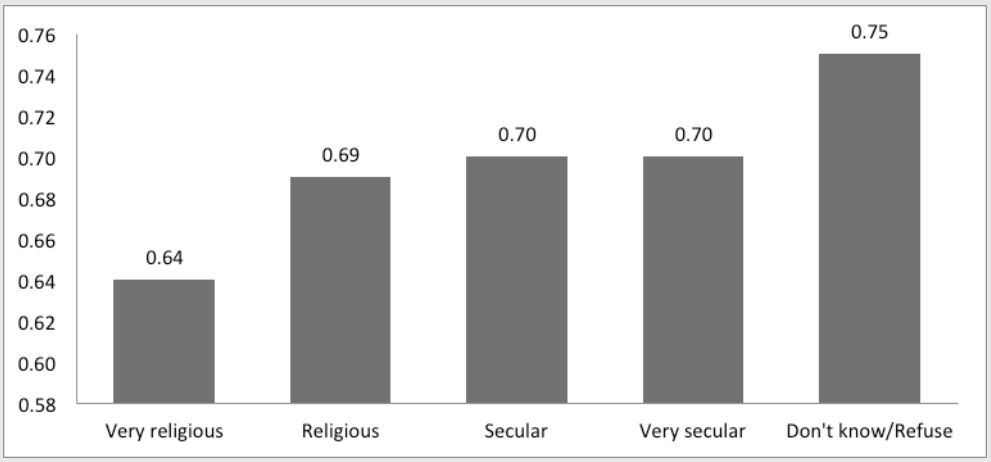

Figure 4 shows the mean level of support for gender equality in politics by level of religiosity. Question: "Religious leaders should have no influence on the decisions of government: 1=strongly disagree (most religious), 2=disagree, 3=agree, and, 4=strongly agree (most secular)."
Source: Constituent Survey, 2006.

social sanction. The difference was statistically significant ($p<0.035$). This relationship is consistent with the predictions of modernization theory.

The data presented in Figure 5 suggest that those with left-leaning political preferences were more likely to support gender equality. The mean response on the gender equality scale for those who did not have much confidence in left or socialist parties such as the Socialist Alliance or the USFP was 0.69, compared to 0.69 for those who had some confidence and 0.84 for those who had a lot of confidence. The difference was statistically significant ($p<0.000$). This relationship suggests that preferences for socialist parties correlate with higher support for gender equality.

The data presented in Figure 6 also suggest that those who have confidence in the PJD were more likely to support gender equality in politics. The mean response on the gender equality scale for those who did not have much confidence in the PJD was 0.67, compared to 0.70 for those who had some confidence, and 0.71 for those who had a lot of confidence. The difference was not statistically significant in the bivariate analysis ($p<0.259$). While higher religiosity was related to lower support for gender equality, there was no evidence of a link between support for Islamist parties and lower support for gender equality. Tentatively, this may indicate that the views of religious Moroccans are not monolithic with regard to gender equity in politics.

Results and Discussion

I used ordinary least squares regression to test the independent impact of religiosity and confidence in Islamist parties on support for gender equality. Model 1 includes individual-level variables traditionally included in models of support for gender equality, including a measure of religiosity. Model 2 includes these same variables as well as measures of support for socialist and Islamist parties. I included the following

Figure 5
Mean Level of Support for Gender Equality in Politics by Level of Support for Socialist Parties

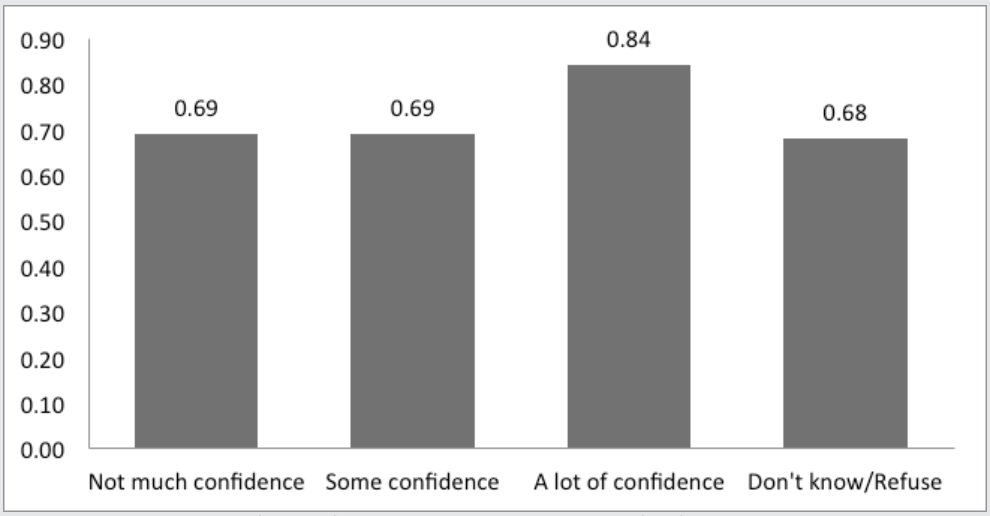

Figure 5 shows the mean level of support for gender equality in politics by level of confidence in socialist parties such as the USFP. Question: "As you may know, more than a dozen political parties and independents held seats in the Chamber of Representatives during the last ten years. For each type of party, please tell me how much confidence you have that it will help Morocco reach its most important goals if it holds a parliamentary majority in the next session (2007-2012). Left or socialist parties such as the Socialist Alliance or the USFP: 3=A lot of confidence; 2=some confidence; 1=not much confidence".
Source: Constituent Survey, 2006.

Figure 6
Mean Level of Support for Gender Equality in Politics by Level of Support for Islamist Parties

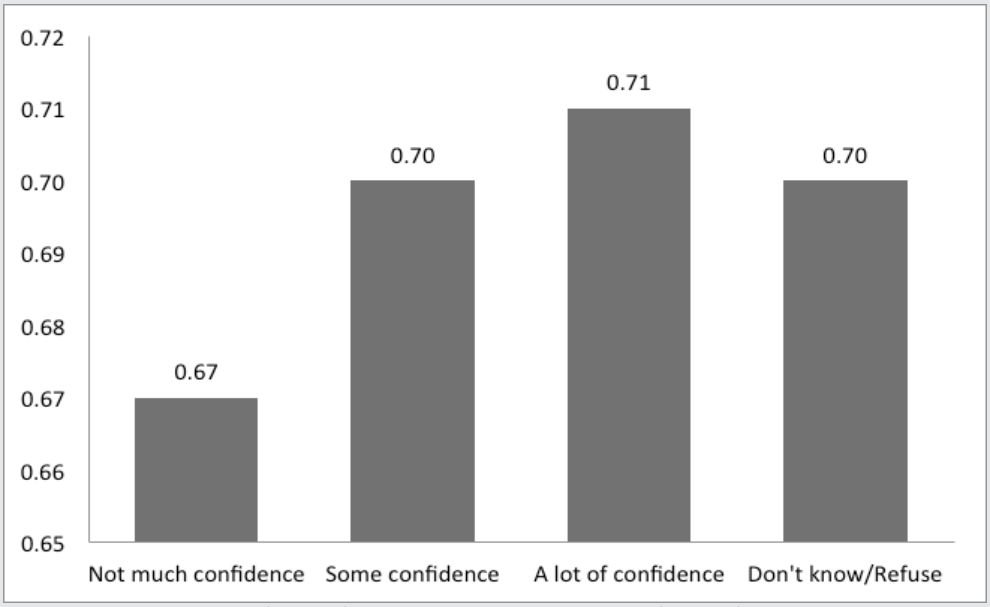

Figure 6 shows the mean level of support for gender equality in politics by level of support for Islamist parties.
Question: "Moderate Islamist parties such as the Party of Justice and Development: 3=A lot of confidence; 2=some confidence; 1=not much confidence".
Source: Constituent Survey, 2006.

independent variables in the regressions, in addition to district-level fixed effects:

- Gender, where 1=female and 0=male.
- Age, where 1=18-24 years, 2=25-44 years, 3=45-59 years, and 4=60 or more years.
- Education: "What is your highest level of education", where 1=no schooling, 2=grade 1-9, 3=grade 10-high school diploma, and 4=baccalaureate-doctorate.
- Economic satisfaction: "How satisfied are you with the present financial situation of your household?" where 1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=satisfied, and 4=very satisfied.
- Secular orientation: "Religious leaders should have no influence on the decisions of government," where 1=strongly disagree (most religious), 2=disagree, 3=agree, and, 4=strongly agree (most secular).
- Rural residence: 1=rural housing and 0=apartment, Moroccan home, bidonville, or villa.
- Language: "What language do you normally speak at home," where 0=Arabic and 1= Tamazight, Tamazight and Arabic, French, or Spanish.
- Marital status, where 1= married and 0=never married, engaged, separated, or divorced.
- Interest in elections: "On a scale of one to ten where one is that you do not care at all and 7 is that you care very much, how much would you say you personally care about the outcome of parliamentary elections in this district?", where 1=do not care at all through 7=care very much.
- Support for socialist parties: "As you may know, more than a dozen political parties and independents held seats in the Chamber of Representatives during the last ten years. For each type of party, please tell me how much confidence you have that it will help Morocco reach its most important goals if it holds a parliamentary majority in the next session (2007-2012). Left or socialist parties such as the Socialist Alliance or the USFP: 3=A lot of confidence; 2=some confidence; 1=not much confidence".
- Support for Islamist parties: "Moderate Islamist parties such as the Party of Justice and Development " (Categories as support for socialist parties)
- District fixed effects

No data were missing for the independent variables, except for 3 cases for economic satisfaction, 17 cases for interest in the elections, 29 cases for secular orientation, 70 cases for support for socialist parties, and 44 cases for support for Islamist parties. To mitigate bias, "non-response" was included as a separate category for items measuring religiosity, support for socialist parties, and support for Islamist parties. Ordinal variables were included as continuous variables in the OLS model only after ensuring that their effects were monotonic. The addition of a "missing" category for interest in politics did not alter the results and was not included in the final model. Economic satisfaction was used as a proxy for income in order to reduce bias introduced by the large amount of missing data for income.

The results reported in Table 3 supported some observable implications of modernization theory, particularly with regard to the role of religiosity in shaping attitudes toward gender equality. In Model 1, respondents who preferred a closer relationship between religion and politics tended, on average, to be less supportive of women's participation in formal politics. Compared with the least secular, those

who strongly agreed with a separation between religion and politics responded 0.09 units higher, on average, on the 1-point scale of support for equality. Individuals who refused to answer the question measuring religiosity responded 0.10 points higher, on average, suggesting very secular individuals were most likely to refuse to answer questions about religious orientation. Arab language spoken at home was also strongly correlated with lower support for gender equality. Individuals who spoke Tamazight exclusively or as one language at home scored, on average, 0.06 points higher on the scale of support. Rural residence was associated with lower support for gender

Table 3
Determinants of Popular Support for Gender Equality in Formal Politics

	Ordinary Least Squares Coefficients (Model 1)	Ordinary Least Squares Coefficients (Model 2)
Female Gender	0.12 (.02)***	0.13 (.02)***
Higher Age	-0.00 (.01)	-0.00 (.01)
Higher Education	0.01 (.01)	0.00 (.01)
Higher Economic Satisfaction	0.00 (.01)	-0.00 (.01)
Secular Orientation[1]		
Religious (Disagree)	0.05 (.03)†	0.06 (.03)*
Secular (Agree)	0.07 (.03)**	0.09 (.03)**
Most Secular (Strongly Agree)	0.09 (.04)*	0.08 (.04)*
Missing (Don't know/Refuse)	0.10 (.04)**	0.16 (.04)***
Rural Residence	-0.03 (.03)*	-0.06 (.03)*
Tamazight	0.06 (.02)**	0.07 (.02)**
Married	-0.00 (.02)	0.00 (.02)
Higher Interest in Elections	0.01 (.00)	0.00 (.00)
Political Support (Socialist Parties)[2]		
Moderate Confidence	-	-0.00 (.02)
High Confidence	-	0.14 (.04)***
Missing (Don't know/Refuse)	-	-0.06 (.03)†
Political Support (Islamist Parties)[2]		
Moderate Confidence	-	0.05 (.02)*
High Confidence	-	0.06 (.02)**
Missing (Don't know/Refuse)	-	-0.00 (.04)
Constant	0.40 (.06)***	0.34 (.06)***
N	360	360
F	F (23, 336) = 5.38	F (29, 330) = 5.18
Prob. > F	0.00***	0.00***
R2 / Adjusted R2	0.27 / 0.22	0.34 / 0.28

† $p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$ two-tailed test. Standard errors are in parentheses. District fixed effects omitted.
[1] Most religious (strongly disagree) is the reference group.
[2] Not much confidence is the reference group.

inclusiveness in politics, but the effect is not substantively significant. Those who lived in a rural area on average responded 0.03 units lower on the scale of support for gender equality. Education and economic satisfaction, a proxy for income, were not statistically significant, despite the key role these factors play in modernization theory. Neither more educated, nor more affluent Moroccans, on average, were more likely to support gender equality. Taken together, the effects of religiosity, Arab culture, and rural residence were statistically significant, but substantively smaller than the effect of female gender, which is associated with responses 0.12 points higher, on average, on the scale of support for gender equality than male gender.

Yet, despite the positive relationship between lower religiosity and higher support for gender equality, the data in Model 2 showed that individuals with preferences for Islamist parties were not necessarily less supportive of equality. Confidence in Islamist political parties was associated with an increase, on average, in support for the involvement of women in politics. High confidence in Islamist parties was associated with a 0.06 unit increase in level of support for gender equality compared to low confidence. High confidence in socialist parties was associated with a 0.14 unit increase in level of support for gender equality compared to low confidence. These findings suggest that confidence in Islamist parties is not inconsistent with support for women in politics. Support for majority parties, including the Istiqlal and the Popular Movement (MP), was not a significant predictor of support for gender equality and was not included in the final model. Taken together, these findings suggest that supporters of both the Islamist and socialist opposition were more likely than those who lack confidence in these parties to support an expansion of women in political life. They also suggest that more religious individuals in Morocco hold different points of view with regard to gender equality in politics.

Conclusion and Implications

The Constituent Survey highlights the limitations of modernization theory to explain Moroccans' attitudes about gender equality. More religious respondents expressed lower support for gender equality, yet support for Islamist parties was associated with higher support for women in politics. These findings are also consistent with evidence from Egypt, which suggests that Muslim opinion on women's role in politics varies across a broader category of religiously-oriented parties. With the full opening of the electoral field to parties of all tendencies, Islamist parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood tend to empower women, sometimes by placing them high on electoral lists, while more conservative movements, such as the Salafi Al-Nour party, include women only to the extent required by the electoral law, placing them last on the list and omitting their photos. As the Arab spring unfolds, easing controls on Islamist participation in elections and diversity among Islamist movements on issues such as gender relations may become more evident.

This finding also, more tentatively, suggests that norms and values may change as a result of women's leadership in Islamist parties. More research is needed to understand the mechanism mediating support for Islamist parties and gender equality and to elucidate why support for large parties such as the MP and Istiqlal is not related to higher support for gender equality. Is it the strong, visible role that women play in Islamist and socialist parties? Are women in Islamist or socialist opposition parties

perceived as less corrupt and co-opted by the regime than their male colleagues, while women in pro-regime parties are not considered less clientelistic than their male counterparts? Is right-based political discourse or the mere presence of women most important for shaping attitudes towards women as political leaders? Are supporters of the PJD more likely to favor moderate Muslim politics and to support gender equality through independent reasoning (*ijtihad*), in contrast to traditionalists who reject gender equality?

Taken with the data from the World Values Survey and the Arab Democracy Barometer, these findings suggest that ordinary citizens are much more accepting of female participation in formal politics than conventional wisdom about the Arab world suggests. Indeed, the data suggest strongly that the active role of Moroccan women in human rights advocacy and parliamentary politics has fostered highly positive evaluations, with even some men preferring female over male representatives. Without overstating the commitment of Moroccan parties to women's empowerment or minimizing the struggle of women's rights activists to educate women about their rights under the reformed Personal Status Code, combat sexual harassment, gain wage equality, and narrow the gender gap in politics, these survey results should encourage activists that their work is bearing fruit. Moroccan activists should capitalize on the widespread and perhaps growing support for female leaders, and use these data to support a rights-based policy agenda for inclusiveness in work and public life and to support claims that female candidates can be in the strategic interests of political parties.

Lindsay J. Benstead is an Assistant Professor of Political Science in the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University.
Email: benstead@pdx.edu.

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Dress Practices in the Workplace

Power Relations, Gender Norms and Professional Saudi Women's Tactics

Amélie Le Renard

"Would you accept to work in a mixed-gender place (*makan mukhtalat*)?" "Would you uncover your face in the presence of men?" This is a sample of the questions included in a 2008 survey questionnaire distributed to Saudi women in a job fair organized by the private sector.[1] The wording of the questions – that have no equivalent in questionnaires for men – suggests that the choice is exclusively theirs. But the fact is that professional women's dress codes are subject to many restrictions in Saudi Arabia as well as in other parts of the world with, however, some variants specific to the Saudi context.

Research findings on gendered organizations reveal how power relations within the organizations do shape specific gendered expectations and practices (see Acker, 1990, and Britton, 2000, among others). The dilemmas faced by female employees with respect to the choice of clothes in male-dominated organizations are an indication of the way gender as a "difference" and as a hierarchy is "done" in everyday work interactions (West & Fenstermaker, 1995). Linda Mc Dowell (1997) draws on Judith Butler's (1990) conceptual framework to show how the employees in the City of London embody and perform specific models of masculinity. She also examines the impact such norms have on women's everyday working practices. Mc Dowell writes that employees always comment on their female colleagues' clothes because it is impossible for women to dress in a "neutral" fashion like men whose suits are unmarked. Female employees face a dilemma: if they opt for a style that is considered to be too feminine, they face sexually-loaded comments. In case they choose to adopt a "neutral" style similar to that of their male colleagues, they are considered to be too "masculine." In other words, either they perform dominant "masculine" norms that are valued only for men, or they perform femininity, that is devalued.

The expectations regarding the attire to adopt at the work place, as well as the gender norms and power relations that shape them vary with each social context. In Cairo, for instance, Arlene MacLeod (1991) considers the veil that middle-class working women wear as a way to reconcile their family lives with their work lives, as well as a means for being considered good wives and good mothers in spite of their professional activity.

This article is about the tactics used by Saudi professional women in order to adapt to gender-mixed workplaces in Riyad, a city where gender segregation is rigorously observed. In these "gender-mixed" workplaces, particularly in hospitals and banks,

1. It is a job application form distributed by Abdul Latif Jameel 's program. This program was supposed to put jobless persons in contact with private firms. I picked up this form from Abdul Latif Jameel's stand, during the "modern woman" fair that took place in Riyad (Kingdom Tower), from December 28 till December 30, 2008.

female Saudi employees interact with Saudi and foreign male colleagues (South Asian, Middle Eastern, European, or U.S. nationals). What are the dress dilemmas Saudi professional women face and how do they differ from those analyzed in the previously quoted works? What are the gendered expectations affecting Saudi women's conduct as well as their self-presentation in the "cosmopolitan" worlds of work? What models of femininity do they embody and perform in these workplaces?

In Riyad as well as in London, professional women's justification concerning their dress practices is characterized by their attempt to be "neutral". It is important to underline, however, that they are not just considered as "women" by their male colleagues. They are treated more specifically as "Saudi women", in a context where the labor market is not only segmented into males and females but also into nationals and expatriates. In other words, gender and nationality cannot be dissociated when examining the status assigned to Saudi female employees.[2] My aim is to show how, due to this particular status, Saudi female employees are subject to conflicting expectations. I will analyze how they respond to these expectations by enacting dress tactics that are nevertheless constraining.

Methodology

This article is based on ethnographic observations and on interviews conducted in Arabic, between 2005 and 2010, mainly in Riyad. Initially, I spent ten months in the Saudi capital between 2005 and 2009 for the purpose of writing a Ph.D. dissertation focusing on young Saudi women's access to public spaces. Then, in February and March 2010, as a post-doctoral research fellow, I conducted an exploratory fieldwork focusing on young Saudi women's employment. I have collected material (ethnographic observations and a hundred of interviews) on the activities and the mobility of young Saudi women students, professional employees, or job seekers (aged 20 to 30). For the purpose of this article, I have selected the material pertaining to the Saudi women working in gender-mixed spaces, mainly in hospitals and in banks. I conducted 22 interviews with Saudi women working in gender-mixed spaces. Some of them worked as nurses, therapists, MDs, receptionists, or auxiliary nurses in public hospitals or in private clinics. Others were managers, accountants, computer scientists, secretaries, portfolio managers, HR personnel, as well as employees in charge of other clerical tasks in the banking sector. All of them worked in organizations controlled by (Saudi and/or foreign) men and where female employees do not have top-management jobs. These interviewees come from families with different levels of income (for more details on class and Saudi women's employment see Le Renard, 2013). For many of them, things did not stop at this point, as we kept seeing one another after the interview on a more or less regular basis. I also joined some of the informants for a tour of their work sites, where I met their female colleagues. In addition to formal interviews, I was able to have group discussions with women working in three banks and three hospitals. In 2012, I pursued my research in a more systematic way, by conducting interviews focusing on just one bank. The results confirmed the assumptions made in this article, although the article is based on previously collected material.

The interviews followed the "life story" methodology and focused on three main topics: waged labor, family life, and urban practices. The interviews did not focus on the dress issue, but the majority of the interviewees spontaneously brought up this

2. See Holvino (2010) for an overview of intersectionality in organizations' sociology.

matter when they mentioned their professional career and experience, as well as their relationships with colleagues at work. They were predominantly direct interviews conducted at work sites, which allowed me to observe the interviewees' conveyed self-presentations, as well as the way they interacted with their colleagues. I will hereby analyze their behavior and the justifications they gave for such dress practices, in order to understand their reaction vis-à-vis the conflicting expectations they face in these "gender-mixed" workplaces.

Saudi Women's Professional Activity in "Gender-Mixed" Workplaces

The number of Saudi women's working in mixed workplaces is low. This is not the result of a segregationist "tradition" as the widespread stereotype would like us to believe. The modern history of Saudi female labor has known two major fluctuations. In the 1950s, the increase in oil revenues along with nation-building according to a developmental strategy has reshaped the definitions of labor (Altorki & Cole, 1989). Activities that women used to perform side by side with men in order to make ends meet became invisible according to this new definition. The handicrafts that enabled some women to earn a living became obsolete with the increase in imports of consumerist goods (Almana, 1981). The strict implementation of gender-segregation in the big cities has restricted women's professional activity to the field of education in the primary, secondary, and university levels (Doumato, 1999).

In the 1990s, and with the increase in unemployment rates, the national development plans started to promote women's participation in the national labor force. In the 2000s, the government took measures that were in favor of a larger participation of Saudi women in the professional world, even though these measures were only partially implemented. Promoting the work of Saudi women was part of a global measure advocating "the nationalization of jobs", i.e. replacing expatriate workers by a Saudi labor force. Similar strategies were adopted everywhere else in the countries of the Gulf. Unlike the previous labor code that has been effective since the 1960s, the new labor code of 2006 did not explicitly ban gender-mixing. In practice, there are authorized gender-mixed workplaces, like hospitals, whereas in other workplaces, gender-mixing is not clearly authorized and is hidden and invisible from the outside. Nowadays, Saudi women working in gender-mixed workplaces are a small minority. Generally speaking, Saudi women constitute 15 to 20 percent of the national labor force (without counting the immigrants), and most of them work in all-female educational institutions (from which men are excluded). I have chosen to focus my study on the experience of Saudi women working in gender-mixed workplaces for several reasons: on the one hand, Saudi women joining workplaces such as hospitals and banks are currently being supported by the Ministry of Labor, and the number of these working women is bound to increase over the coming years. On the other hand, the dilemmas the Saudi female employees are facing play a significant role in transforming power relations and gender norms in the professional world in Saudi Arabia.

Conflicting Expectations

Saudi women working in gender-mixed places are bound to face conflicting expectations. These expectations might be explicit or more subtle. They come from different persons belonging to the women's professional milieu or to their family entourage.

To start with, there are explicit rules concerning the dress practices in the work place. These rules classify people according to their sex and to their nationality. In the banking sector Saudi men have to put on *thûb*, and Saudi women have to put on *'abâya* when they are in a gender-mixed milieu. Whenever they are in a women-only milieu they can remove the *'abâya*. Usually, expatriate men are dressed in suits, otherwise they wear shirts and trousers, according to their ranking in the professional hierarchy. In banks, there are almost no non-Saudi female employees. All foreigners are men, and all women are Saudi. This is different in hospitals, where many of the female employees are expatriates. All staff members wear the white gown, but in general, Saudi women are veiled, whereas expatriate non-Muslim women are not necessarily so.[3]

These strict rules are coupled with expectations coming from male colleagues or seniors in rank. In some professional milieus, such as in the financial services sector, they might make remarks in a more or less insisting way to Saudi female employees so that they conform to a certain image of the "modern" professional woman. By using the word "modern" I don't intend to express any value judgment about tradition or modernity. I only use it to designate a way of seeing things widely shared in the banks and hospitals where I conducted my research, and that implies specific models of femininity and masculinity. For instance, based on interviews I have conducted with male employees in multinational banks, many (Saudi or foreign) managers imagine professional women as unveiled (or wearing only a light scarf uncovering a part of their hair), discreet, comfortable, and friendly with male colleagues (rather than shy and distant), hard-working, dedicated to their career, and not having any family constraints. It competes with another discourse on femininity, widespread in the public sphere, according to which women should respect gender segregation (be veiled and have limited interactions with men) and be dedicated first and foremost to their families. The female employees dress practices and self-presentation are a site where this competition takes place. Fatma, a Saudi bank employee working in Riyad, told me that her boss, a Saudi man, suggested that she discard the heavily covering *'abâya*, (also known as the "head *'abâya*", from the top of the head to toe) and opt instead for a more trendy and attractive *'abâya* called "shoulder *'abâya*" (cast over the shoulders like a coat, is narrower, and often decorated). The justifications she was given for that suggestion was as follows: "Just dress the same way your colleagues do, it is more comfortable for you".

Of course, worries about the working women's comfort are far from being the only reason underlying such expectations. The women's attire in the workplace is central to the image of the whole sector. The most covering *'abâya* as advocated by the majority of the members of the committee of senior *ulemas* (Al-Jiraysî, 2002), which is a state institution, is only adopted by a minority of young Saudi women of the new generation. It is depicted as a plain garment, literally conforming to the Islamic precepts. Whereas the shoulder *'abâya* represents "modernity à la saoudienne", especially when it is adorned with crystals and other decorative items. Contrary to the head *'abâya*, the shoulder *'abâya* can be worn without a *niqab* (i.e. face covering). Many male managers give an overwhelming importance to these dress nuances that concern specifically Saudi women. In fact, some expatriate executives, particularly those coming from Europe or from the United States, notify the HR personnel about

3. There are no clear-cut rules concerning this issue. See Somayya Jabarti, Dress Code for Female Hospital Staff – No Official Word Yet, Arab News, 2 November 2004. http://archive.arabnews.com/?page=1&section=0&article=53816&d=2&m=11&y=2004

their refusal to collaborate with Saudi women who wear the *niqab*. That's what an HR female employee explained to me. The dress issue is not discussed during job interviews, but it could determine the appointing of the candidate in such or such department. In general, women who accept to uncover their face have more opportunities since they are not excluded from some departments. Fatma maintained that she declined a job offer as secretary of the board of administrators because she would have had to uncover her face: "there were many meetings with expatriates who refused to deal with a face-covered girl". Though there is less pressure on female employees to uncover their face in hospitals, the issue does exist however. A Dammam clinic has put the removal of *niqab* as a pre-condition for hiring, and this created a minor controversy in 2005.

Female employees are subject to another type of constraint resulting from the contacts they have in their professional milieus. Many interviewees have described how the patients' (in hospitals) or the clients' (in banks) comments tended to deviate from the professional domain to the personal domain, in spite of the women's firm intention to be looked at in a "neutral" manner like any other employee. Nâhid, a 31-year- old nutritionist, said that her patients were very surprised to see "a woman whose face is not covered". According to her, they start asking personal questions pertaining to her marital status, her origins, and her age. Most of the non-Saudi nurses, particularly the Filipinas, are not veiled, so it is the combination of being both a "Saudi woman" and "unveiled" that looks unusual, even shocking, to some patients.

For Saudi women, the mere fact of accepting to work in a gender-mixed environment could be interpreted as a sign of being open to relationships. Interactions can shift from professional relationships to reach the stage of "harassment" as some interviewees recounted. A 30-year-old woman accountant relates the problems she faced when she used to work in a private clinic: "I did not like this job because too many men came to the reception, sometimes they were nasty. There were no security measures, no security guard. I was the only woman among men (...) Men are all alike, I used to cover my face, wear the *'abâya* instead of the hospital's white gown. Still, whenever they see your eyes, men think time has come to make a pass, it is O.K..." Her testimony is not exceptional/isolated. Mâjida, a 25-year-old receptionist in a hospital, starts the interview by praising work at the hospital, as well as the gender-mixed environment, which she describes as being "more serious, and more demanding than women-only environments". Later, she reveals that she has encountered problems with her male colleagues: "Any girl who works in a gender-mixed environment is going to face problems. There are always respectable and professional men, and others who are not. They try to take advantage of a girl, harass her. If she refuses their advances, they may create problems for her, such as starting to gossip about her".

This gossiping entails portraying the female employee as an accessible woman rather than a professional colleague. Also, gossip and rumors are of utmost importance because the interviewees are very keen to preserve their respectability vis-à-vis their families in particular. For some of them, working in gender-mixed places had to be negotiated with their relatives who perceived it as an activity damaging/undermining their respectability as Saudi women. But these definitions of respectability are fluctuating: they vary with families and with social groups. A middle-class respondent

working for a small clinic explained to me during the interview that her parents refused to let her apply for a job in the banking sector, because they consider this milieu to be too "liberal". Another respondent working in the same clinic said that for a long time, her husband refused to let her work in a gender-mixed environment until she convinced him of the necessity for her to earn an additional salary in order to meet the children's needs. Due to these negotiations, working in gender-mixed places constitutes in some cases a precarious situation that might come to an end anytime. The legal guardian's authorization (father, husband, brother, or uncle) is necessary for a woman to engage in any professional activity, and might be subject to withdrawal at any moment. Some pressure is felt on the interviewees whose families are not supportive of their professional activity. The expectations to adopt fashionable *'abaya* and uncover one's face in the workplace put these women in dilemmas that are not easy to deal with, especially that when it comes to family affairs women are expected to keep a very low profile.

Constraining Practices

In this context, what will be the interviewees' reaction vis-à-vis conflicting expectations such as being "modern" and "open-minded", and at the same time being "respectable"? Most of the interviewees adopt dress codes that vary according to the situation, to their family's attitude, and to their own convictions. In some cases, the interviewees might adopt tactics, what De Certeau calls "manières de faire" (De Certeau, 1980) vis-à-vis the expectations they receive. It is to be noted here that for many of them, veiling and unveiling depend on the urban space (Secor, 2002; Le Renard, 2011), so, for instance, they do not necessarily dress in the same manner in their work place or in a shopping mall.

In professional milieus, wearing the *niqab* can be considered as a tactic, as many informants who work in a hospital explained. When she started working, Nâhid uncovered her face. Her Saudi female colleagues gave her what she calls a "trick" in order for her to gain respect: wearing the *niqab*. She describes it as a "barrier". This is not an issue for the majority of young Saudi women who wear the *niqab* anyway in all gender-mixed spaces in Riyad. But the cases of Nâhid and another interviewee, a hospital receptionist who has made the same choice, show how negotiating a professional status implies, as women, being distant and inaccessible to their male colleagues. They accept the constraint of covering their face, but at the same time they impose on their interlocutors another constraint; that of preventing them from seeing while being seen. In this situation and for these interviewees, it is not a matter of claiming a religious belonging, it is simply a means of being considered "respectable" women. But this was not the choice that all female nurses, MDs, speech therapists, and other paramedical staff have made. Some of them claimed that they felt relatively secure and felt free to uncover their faces at the hospital which they described as being a world of its own. Others wore the *niqab* for religious reasons.

Another option would be not to wear the veil. Najlâ' and Maryam, 23 and 26-year-old respectively, and with whom I have conducted interviews, work in a gender-mixed environment in the banking sector. Both of them perform a "modern", "professional" femininity: they are unmarried (and unwilling to marry in the next coming years), hard-working, intent on making a career for themselves, and discreet when it comes

to discussing their family lives at work. Najlâ' does not wear the veil, while Maryam wears a loose veil, one that is constantly falling back, revealing some of her hair. They did not deliberately choose to dress in such a way as a strategy, nevertheless both of them gained some benefits from this look. Both Najlâ' and Maryam got quickly promoted at the banks where they work, although they do not have the same degree or level of qualifications (a Masters degree from the United Kingdom for one of them, and a vocational diploma for the other one). The swift progression in their career is due to the confidence they gained from their expatriate male seniors in rank, in addition to their being serious and hard-working. This implies that they did not implement gender segregation in their daily lives at work: they have relatively friendly relations with some expatriate male colleagues, which is unusual. The sweeping majority of Saudi women in Riyad strictly respect the gender segregation even when there are no dividing walls in order to safeguard their reputation (Le Renard, 2011).

But there are some constraints to performing a "modern" image of femininity at work, as some expatriates would expect from their Saudi colleagues. Najlâ' and Maryam behaved as if they came from very open-minded families, and as if they were totally independent in the decisions they take, even if this was not always true. In an informal discussion, Najlâ' revealed that she had to decline a dinner invitation organized by some married colleagues. This type of heterosociality is not a common thing in Riyad. It is only found in some cosmopolitan milieus of the upper class society. Usually, receptions are men-only, or women-only. Najlâ' opted out of the dinner by citing a family obligation as an excuse on that evening, but the real reason for her declining the invitation is that her parents refused to allow her to attend a gender-mixed gathering outside the workplace, something she is ashamed to reveal to her expatriate colleagues. Therefore, she lied in order to maintain the image she conveyed both about herself and about her family. She also lied in order to avoid her colleagues' embarrassing questions. This case shows how difficult and constraining it is for these working women to "reconcile" their colleagues' and familys' expectations.

Conclusion

Saudi professional women face specific dilemmas in "gender-mixed" workplaces: their dilemmas are more complex than the alternative between performing masculinity or femininity that has been analyzed in other contexts, as explained in the introduction (Mc Dowell, 1997). The norms and expectations that shape Saudi women's dress practices are related to a certain prevailing image of, on the one hand, what is considered "modern", "professional" femininity, and what constitutes "respectability".

I have shown that conflicting expectations weigh on Saudi female employees' conduct at work. On the one hand, especially in banks, some male managers refuse to work with face-covered colleagues. It means that women who do not agree to remove their face cover (or whose relatives do not agree that they do so) are excluded from some jobs and responsibilities. On the other hand, many female employees face the problem of being considered "accessible" rather that "respectable", just because they accept to work in gender-mixed places.

Faced with these conflicting expectations, some employees choose to be fully covered at work as a tactic to show their distance and inaccessibility, especially those who

interact with many different people daily, while they would not necessarily choose this attire in other places. Others, especially those who work in small, closed teams in banks, choose to work without a face cover and to conform to their colleagues' expectations of "open-mindedness" and "modernity". Even for those who feel comfortable without a face cover, the model of professional, "modern" femininity they perform is constraining. For instance, they hide from their colleagues the restrictions imposed on them by their relatives in order to preserve the "liberal" image they have built of themselves and to avoid intrusive and embarrassing questions.

This article has focused on a particular issue related to the constraints Saudi professional women are facing. Dilemmas concerning dress at the work place remind us that for women, to be able to have a profession does not necessarily mean being able to emancipate oneself from power relations, but rather can contribute to transforming them.

Amélie Le Renard is a permanent researcher in sociology at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique/ National Center of Scientific Research). She is affiliated to the Centre Maurice Halbwachs- Professions Réseaux Organisations, in Paris.
Translated by Rada Soubra
Email: amelie.lerenard@gmail.com

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Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship in Lebanon:

Enhancing Empowerment or Vulnerability?

Nabil Abdo

The International Labour Organization in Beirut has been running a project in the Palestinian Camps of Nahr El Bared and Ein El Helweh entitled "Palestinian Women Economic Empowerment Initiative". The project started in 2011 and targets low-income Palestinian women entrepreneurs through a threefold strategy: giving out loans and grants to women business groups in order to expand their businesses; training women entrepreneurs to enhance their business skills; and building the capacity of support organizations in order to improve business development services for women entrepreneurs and training them to be formally certified to deliver business group formation training. The project builds on the potential of business groups in assuring the protection of Palestinian women entrepreneurs from risks through resilience, pooling of resources, and collective voice. The objectives are to assure a sustainable livelihood for Palestinian women entrepreneurs through supporting them in expanding their businesses beyond survivalist low-income activities.

Introduction

Since the end of the Lebanese civil war in the year 1990, there has been a rise in the attention to women's issues in Lebanon, on both the official and non-official levels. Efforts have been made, albeit limited, to address women's concerns by signing international conventions calling for gender equality. In fact, following the country's participation in the Beijing fourth world conference on women in 1995, Lebanon established the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) to advance women's status in Lebanon at all levels. The commission formulated a sole National Action Plan for Women that spanned over the years 1997 to 2000. However, there was no follow-up, and the second national plan is still in draft mode. Moreover, other governmental bodies became involved with following women's issues such as the Department of Women's Affairs in the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Parliamentary commission on Women and Children, and the Social and Economic Council, which is not functioning. In 1997, Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) with reservations related to nationality, personal status, and arbitration. Lebanon has also ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention (C 100) and the Non-Discrimination (employment and occupation) Convention (C 111).

There has been a surge in the attention of international donors to women's issues as well as the concentration of efforts by many NGOs on the social and economic conditions of women. More specifically, the term "women empowerment" has become familiar within the NGO sector in Lebanon and has translated into increasing income-generating projects for women led by women organizations as well as civil society organizations. These efforts went beyond income-generation to reach the wider goal of women's economic empowerment. They encompass a myriad of activities that mainly include: microcredit services, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), business development services, entrepreneurship education, and sometimes securing access to markets, etc. This range of services came to be known as Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) services. In the context of Lebanon and most developing countries these efforts have been mainly targeting low-income women in order to help them overcome constraints that they encounter when they engage in entrepreneurship activities.

This article attempts to examine the emergence of WED initiatives in the Lebanese context by identifying the current practices of national and local NGOs. It is worth mentioning that there are other actors involved such as governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, bilateral organizations and international NGOs. However, in this article the focus will be on national and local NGOs as they are the main service delivery actors in the Lebanese context.

This article is based on a study prepared by the ILO-Geneva in November 2010 authored by Nabil Abdo and Carole Kerbage. Attempting to highlight WED initiatives undertaken by international organizations, governmental organizations, and local NGOs in Lebanon, the study examined the structural gaps that characterize WED support in Lebanon and concentrated on the organizations' delivery mechanisms of WED support. The study relied on literature review of key documents examining WED from a conceptual perspective as well as publications specifically targeting the Lebanese context, a desk-search mapping the main WED initiatives in Lebanon, a survey covering 45 local, national, and international organizations engaged in women economic empowerment activities, and 10 in-depth interviews.

Constraints Facing Women Entrepreneurs in Lebanon

Studies show that the concentration of women-owned businesses is found in less profitable and productive sectors such as food, clothing, and crafts (GEM-IFC, 2007), and that women usually own micro and small enterprises and earn a modest income (Husseini, 1997). However, 39.7 percent are unregistered (Hamdan, 2005) which results in difficulties in getting formal bank loans.

As a matter of fact, access to finance, mainly formal loans from banks, is one of the several constraints that face women entrepreneurs when trying to develop their businesses. Women generally use their own savings as well as loans from their family and friends in order to start-up an enterprise and their retained earnings in order to develop the business. Many businesswomen complain about their inability to take loans from banks due to the cumbersome paper work and the unavailability of loan programs targeting women (IFC & CAWTAR, 2007). This is coupled with the difficulty of access to land and property. In fact, according to *sharia* law for Muslim Sunnis

in Lebanon, a woman is entitled to one third of the inheritance while her brother is entitled to two thirds, putting Muslim Sunni women in a disadvantaged position vis-à-vis their male counterparts with regards to access to property. Even when the Lebanese laws guarantee the right of women to property, "the patriarchal system within the family means that the control of such resources – even women's wages – is frequently the preserve of the male members of the family" (ESCWA, 2008).

Women entrepreneurs have difficulties in accessing markets: internationally due to not registering their ventures (as mentioned earlier, women are more likely to be found in the informal sector), and nationally due to the lack of proper infrastructure and the high transportation cost (that they cannot afford due to their lack of capital) (GEM-IFC, 2007). Access to networks is another problem facing women. In fact, the major business networks and employers' organizations are male dominated, which restricts women's access to them. Furthermore, in a survey conducted by the Lebanese Business Women Association, the majority of women expressed their need for entrepreneurship training but said that they do not have information about available opportunities (GEM-IFC, 2007). Moreover women, even when they own businesses, still have to engage in their domestic and reproductive tasks, which makes it difficult for them to devote full time and energy to develop their enterprises. Finally, women also have no access to policy makers as they are underrepresented in governments, and no access to high positions in public institutions and mainstream employers' organizations. Accordingly, WED initiatives have been introduced to overcome these constraints.

Paradigms Governing WED Interventions

Women's entrepreneurship development initiatives have been widely promoted in the international development arena. However, practices differ according to the different paradigms adopted by WED support organizations. Thus, three main approaches can be identified: the neo-liberal market paradigm, the feminist empowerment paradigm, and the interventionist policy alleviation paradigm (Mayoux, 2001). These paradigms differ in their approach to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE), gender, and support to women entrepreneurs.

The market paradigm perceives economic growth as a stimulation of the market economy through the promotion of economic individualism and self-help. Thus economic growth will benefit the poor through a trickle down effect. In this regard, the market paradigm has paid attention to gender and women in particular as this paradigm perceives them in terms of economic efficiency. In other words, women's inactivity and exclusion from the labour market is considered as a waste of resources that could be employed for enhancing economic development. This translates into WED interventions focusing on providing business training and credit for women entrepreneurs. According to the aforementioned paradigm, the problem of women's disadvantaged position inside the household will be automatically solved when they start gaining income, and consequently become empowered (Mayoux, 2001).

In this regard, the women empowerment paradigm comes as a critique of the aforementioned. As a matter of fact, this approach aims at eliminating resource and power inequalities through a human rights approach, gender equity, and collective action. The focus on gender emanates from the objective of achieving women's economic, social,

and political empowerment. Therefore, WED intervention comes as a holistic approach focusing on empowerment and human rights, gender awareness, collective action to challenge gender inequalities, and welfare support to women (Mayoux, 2001).

Finally, the poverty alleviation approach emerged in order to conciliate between the above-mentioned contrasting approaches. In fact, this approach aims at reducing poverty through employment creation as a part of the market economy. It emphasizes socially responsible growth, human development, and social enterprise. In this framework, women are seen as both more disadvantaged than men and as promoters of their families' well being. Finally, women entrepreneurship development interventions have a special focus on poor entrepreneurs, the self-employed, and cooperative development (Mayoux, 2001).

In light of the above, it is worth examining these paradigms within the Lebanese context. As a matter of fact, throughout the interviews conducted with different NGOs and when examining the rationale expressed in their mandate, we notice the recurrence of such expressions: "women economic empowerment", "women economic participation", "gender equality", and "increasing women's bargaining power inside the household". This would suggest that support organizations are following the empowerment paradigm. However, when looking closely at their actions, our observations indicate that the interventions are missing out on the main tools of the women empowerment paradigm and tend to follow closely the market paradigm and sometimes the poverty alleviation paradigm: interventions often neglect growth-oriented ventures; gender stereotypes and power dynamics within the household are often accentuated; current WED intervention can increase women's vulnerability; and support organizations concentrate on addressing the constraints on individual women and neglect organizing and collective action.

Heavy Reliance on Microfinance Leading to Further Vulnerability

Despite the wide range of WED services that can be offered, very few of the support organizations which have been increasingly delivering microloans for beneficiaries are actively gender mainstreaming their services. On the one hand there is a trend among microfinance providers to romanticize the informal sector by seeing it as the backbone of the economy. On the other hand, there is a prevailing assumption that providing microloans to micro-entrepreneurs will lead to their expansion and formalization. However, experience shows that microfinance encourages informality as it is directed to non-productive economic activities, and discourages enterprises with growth potential since microfinance institutions give priority to short-term loans and emphasize quick repayment rather than financing long-term productive enterprises (Bateman & Chang, 2009). Moreover, the microfinance instruments used are quite traditional and do not go beyond credit to include different saving schemes such as micro-insurance that can serve beneficiaries in times of crisis.

Moreover, when women entrepreneurs are targeted, they are taking out loans directed at establishing micro-enterprises concentrated in the service sector that are mainly in traditional female occupations such as hairdressing, sewing, make-up, and embroidery. These occupations are saturating the market and leading to competition among women entrepreneurs, since creditors do not encourage diversification and

cooperation among entrepreneurs. Moreover, microfinance providers do not display in their reports the percentage of ventures that sustain themselves after three years of their establishment and only show the high repayment rates of the borrowers. Thus, the success of microfinance is only measured by the repayment rate, which can be misleading as some women can turn to informal lenders or other parties in order to borrow money to repay their loans which may lead to worsening their economic condition. Women are thus turned into own-account workers (i.e. owning enterprises with no workers) and thus considered by the ILO (2009) as vulnerable workers who engage in survivalist activities. Micro-finance institutions invest in a big number of enterprises that have little chance of developing in their local markets. This leads to an oversupply of enterprises, which will eventually decrease the chance of productive growth for efficient enterprises. Therefore, by turning women into vulnerable entrepreneurs in very low-productive activities, microfinance tends to increase poverty and encourage low productive activity that does not contribute to the economy or lead to empowerment (Bateman & Chang, 2009).

Underdeveloped WED Services that Neglect Growth-Oriented Activities

The focus of support organizations on encouraging microenterprises in traditional low productive services is coupled with low-quality WED services that cannot support growth-oriented enterprises. In fact, there is a high abundance of very basic services that are easily implementable and can reach a wide range of women such as vocational training and education in traditional "feminine" skills such as embroidery, hairdressing, sewing, etc. Moreover, there is a quasi absence in efforts in order to directly link women entrepreneurs to the markets to sell their products: the market linkages are often provided by the support organizations through organizing fairs or having a storefront for women to sell their products. This makes women entrepreneurs dependent on NGOs to assure the sustainability of their enterprises. Furthermore, support organizations often disperse their efforts on delivering several types of services on the account of specialization. Therefore services are delivered on an ad-hoc basis and are not linked or complemented and there are no established referral mechanisms among service providers. This leads to a fragmented delivery hampering the desired development of women-owned businesses and women's economic activity in general.

Furthermore, most organizations are very active in delivering vocational training courses for women. The abundance of this type of trainings accentuates the presence of women in low-productive service sectors which entraps them in "feminine" economic activities. The current practice in WED, through providing microloans and focusing on individual types of enterprises as well as the absence of efforts towards innovative businesses leads to neglecting women enterprises with growth potential where they have the ability to expand and increase productivity. These enterprises run by middle-income women who constitute the bulk of women's entrepreneurship are missing from all women entrepreneurship development services in the country. This is what we call "the missing middle phenomenon". Since Lebanon is considered as an upper-middle income country, it is surprising to exclude middle-income women entrepreneurs from WED interventions. These women are left without support. Nevertheless, nurturing and fostering the growth of medium enterprises through providing support to the middle-income target group is likely to lead to more formal employment and to the absorption of workers from the informal sector. The absence of such vision of WED services leads

to the increasing growth of one-woman enterprises and fails to see that "development requires a lot of collective and systematic efforts at acquiring and accumulating better productive knowledge through the construction of better organizations, the cross-fertilization of ideas within it, and the channeling of individual entrepreneurial energy into collective entrepreneurship" (Chang, 2010).

From Assistance-Receivers to Rights-Bearers

Despite the claims of most support organizations that they are working with women in order to counter gender-based discrimination in the economy and in the household, WED interventions often accentuate the existing gender dynamics. This is done through a two-fold process: first, as cited above women are oriented towards traditional, gendered occupations that hardly move them beyond survivalist enterprises. Second, WED services encourage individual forms of enterprise and tackle individual constraints while failing to shed light on the structural constraints on women and neglecting the effects of collective forms of entrepreneurship.

As noted above, women entrepreneurs benefiting of WED services are often found in non-productive traditional sectors with little growth potential, as there is hardly any effort towards mainstreaming gender in these kinds of services. Thus, women are entrapped in these activities, as they are not encouraged to venture into a male-dominated high growth sector that can generate considerable income. Despite this fact, many support organizations claim that women's economic participation will automatically lead to social and economic empowerment. This claim shall be questioned since survivalist activities generate little income for women, thus not allowing them to gain financial independence keeping in mind that their contribution to the household income is far less than that of their husband. Moreover, some organizations supporting women rural cooperatives encourage women to be involved in this economic activity during their free time in order to avoid conflict with their care work. In sum, women's entrepreneurship development initiatives end up adding more burdens on women's shoulders: in addition to their care and domestic work, women are engaged in economic activities. Therefore, in spite of claiming that their interventions aim to increase women's bargaining power inside the household, support organizations hardly encourage women and men to share care and domestic responsibilities. This situation is the result of the absence of a gender-analysis approach in WED organizations because women are seen as instrumental for economic growth or poverty alleviation without any consideration for gender-equality concerns.

Most WED interventions perceive the constraints facing women's economic participation as relating to the individual level (i.e. lack of skills, lack of confidence, etc.). Moreover, they fail to see the structural constraints that we noted above when it comes to the gendered occupational segregation, as well as the absence of social protection and collective organizing that protect women entrepreneurs in times of crisis or provide a space for them to advance their demands in a collective manner. This is mainly due to the fact that service providers view women as assistance-receivers in terms of skills development when responding to their immediate needs and not as rights-bearers. Therefore women are encouraged to seek their way out of poverty by themselves, which dissipates any demand for state social provisions such as social security and protection as these are reduced to social safety nets and assistance generated by WED support projects.

The Possible Path of Collective Entrepreneurship

Support organizations hardly consider adopting a rights-based approach where women could have a voice and gain a sense of agency and ownership. This is only achieved through economic organizing, where women can be enticed to form business groups, cooperatives, and business associations in order to advance their interests and demands as women entrepreneurs. Moreover, NGOs operating production units and storefronts increase women's dependency as they hardly consider the option of transferring their ownership to women through proper capacity building and training on various issues such as management, leadership, and economic literacy (specifically value chain analysis). Such options have the potential to advance gender strategic needs in terms of bargaining power in society in general and in the sphere of the household to a much larger extent than the commonly assumed link between economic empowerment through lending and women's empowerment. In order to achieve this, women beneficiaries of WED interventions ought to be viewed as active participants that have rights and not as passive vulnerable receivers of services.

In light of the above, future WED projects could engage in business group formation for women entrepreneurs in order to help overcome the constraints that face them collectively. In fact, business groups can offer several benefits to women entrepreneurs in terms of experience sharing, lessening the burden of care work, productivity, market access, and risk sharing.

Business groups allow for pooling of resources between women entrepreneurs who can combine efforts and share experiences in terms of running their businesses and passing skills and expertise in business management, marketing, etc. Moreover business groups allow women to specialize in the economic entity according to the different domains (accounting, market access, design, production, etc.). This can lead to gains in productivity especially through adding up capitals and combining vertical specialization along the production chain (Chang, 2010). Moreover, women entrepreneurs can acquire the necessary means to access markets, which is not possible without pooling resources in the case of individual forms of entrepreneurship.

In terms of social and economic empowerment beyond profit making, business groups can provide women with a space for social and economic development. In fact, business groups are not necessarily limited to economic activities as they can have the functions of a self-help group and secure a space for psychological and social support for members. Women members, through their association and joint work, can develop relations of support and help amongst each other; thus care work can seize to be an individual burden and might be shared among all the members of the business group. Moreover, as business groups are a pooling of efforts and resources, they require collective decision-making and management which implies having discussions, sharing, and exchange of ideas. Thus, with the proper mechanisms, these groups can secure an environment for a democratic form of management and practices. This space has the potential to grow into an advocacy group to advance the interest and issues of its members, thus enhancing the bargaining power of women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs' business groups can be a platform for collective action through which women will gain more voice to advocate their interest vis-à-vis their society and the authorities.

Finally, cooperatives are very crucial in the Lebanese context, although they are characterized by instability due to recurrent internal and inter-state (wars with Israel) armed conflicts. "They combine features of enterprises and membership-based organizations, and may provide a critical outlet for women's empowerment and economic independence, building the way for faster, fairer, and more sustainable socioeconomic recovery from the conflict" (Esim & Omeira, 2009). Cooperative enterprises as well as cooperative banking ought to be fostered in Lebanon. As a matter of fact cooperatives proved to be resilient during times of crisis, which is a constant in the Lebanese economy. Moreover, cooperatives minimize risks, allow for pooling of resources, and are a democratic form of enterprises. They only seek the interest of their members and are not profit maximizing. Cooperatives have a wider social goal aimed at serving the community. Therefore, cooperative banking and credit union could be of benefit for women who are unable to obtain loans from traditional banks (Birchall & Ketilson, 2009). Cooperatives could foster a safe and sustainable environment for the growth of small and medium enterprises in general, and specifically for women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article has argued that WED services provided by local and national NGOs in Lebanon are governed by a market approach in spite of claiming and appropriating the goals of the empowerment approach. In fact, WED interventions concentrate their work on individual entrepreneurship for low-income women without making effort to encourage the establishment of productive women-owned businesses with growth potentials. On top of that, women entrepreneurs are constantly oriented towards traditional female occupations that generate little income and are not encouraged to infiltrate male-dominated occupations that have significantly higher occupations. Adding to that, WED services provided are often underdeveloped and very basic and ad-hoc, thus not allowing low-income women entrepreneurs to escape from survivalist activities that deepen vulnerability.

Moreover, WED services in Lebanon hardly challenge gendered occupational segregation and the power dynamics inside the household, but rather accentuate them. The encouragement of individual enterprises through microfinance has placed additional burdens on women's shoulders, as this service is designed to permit women to work and to continue with their domestic and care roles without encouraging them to share them with their husbands. Thus, women are neither economically nor socially empowered. Furthermore, support organizations deal with women entrepreneurs as assistance-receivers and not rights-bearers. Therefore their constraints are tackled on an individual basis. They are not encouraged to economically organize in order to lobby for their demands and escape their conditions on a collective level. Therefore we have argued that these forms of entrepreneurship ought to be replaced with collective forms of entrepreneurship such as business groups and cooperatives. In fact business groups and cooperatives can be empowering entities for women as they provide them with benefits in terms of experience sharing, risk sharing, productivity, and sharing care burdens. Collective entrepreneurship permits the pooling of resources and the accumulation of capital for growth. Furthermore, business groups and cooperatives are democratic spaces that give voice, agency, and ownership for women entrepreneurs so they can become strong advocacy groups for women to address their concerns in a

structural manner. Finally, they have a high growth and expansion potential that can help absorb own-account workers in the informal economy in order to provide them with decent jobs and protection.

Nabil Abdo, National Project Coordinator, International Labour Organization for the project "strengthening workers organization in Arab countries through economic, social and legal literacy".
Email: abdnabil@gmail.com

Endnotes

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Pay Equity in Jordan

In line with its mission to enhance networking and communication by extending ties with international organizations working on gender issues, Al-Raida will be reprinting policy and issue briefs prepared by the International Labour Organization in its upcoming issues. The purpose of this joint venture is to promote research on the condition of women in the Arab world, especially with respect to social change and development, and to reach out to women and empower them through consciousness-raising. This brief below is reprinted with permission from the International Labour Organization Regional Office for Arab States published by ILO, 2010.

A Longstanding Commitment[1]

Pay equity refers to the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value. Although it is a fundamental right enshrined in the International Labor Organization's Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), pay equity has remained largely unattained and women around the world continue to face pay discrimination (ILO, 2008).

Non-discrimination at work is a basic human right and thus should be pursued as an end in itself. The main benefit of implementing pay equity is recognition of women workers' rights, whereby their skills are recognized and their job tasks are accorded their true value, not only symbolically but in very concrete terms through pay adjustments (Chicha, 2008). Pay equity is a question of dignity and justice for women workers.

Jordan has a longstanding commitment to achieving pay equity. The Equal Remuneration Convention was ratified in 1966, and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) in 1963. In 1992, Jordan also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which asserts the right to equal remuneration for work of equal value. However, despite the normative action taken and Jordan's policy pronouncements, the application of comprehensive measures to ensure pay equity for women remains challenged by significant obstacles.

Legal Provisions for Equal Remuneration in Jordan

As discussed above, Jordan has ratified several international conventions which assert the right to

Box 1 Defining Pay Equity

There are two types of pay discrimination.

- The first type occurs when different pay is given to the same job, for example to a woman and man police officer with the same qualifications, seniority, and responsibilities. This form of discrimination contravenes the principle of equal pay for equal work and is realtively easy to identify.
- The second type occurs when different jobs that have equal value are paid differently. When men and women perform work that is different in content but of equal value, they should receive equal remuneration. Around the world, women-dominated roles such as cleaning and clerical work are generally paid less compared to men-dominated roles of equal value (ITUC, 2008).

At the heart of the concept of pay equity is the fact that jobs traditionally done by women tend to be undervalued in the marketplace. Generally speaking, both in the labour market and in organizations, the most poorly paid occupations are those where women predominate, while better paid occupations are those dominated by men.

According to Chicha (2006, iii)

> Pay equity is not about men and women earning the same; nor is it about changing the work that women do. Pay equity is about redressing the undervaluation of jobs typically performed by women and rewarding them according to their value.

Source: Chicha 2006

equal pay for equal value of work. In addition to these conventions, it is also worth noting that Section 23(ii)(a) of the Jordanian Constitution specifies that all workers shall receive wages appropriate to the quantity and quality of the work achieved. However, this does not explicitly prohibit pay discrimination that occurs in situations where men and women perform different work that is nevertheless of equal value, as the ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) has pointed out. Moreover, there are no provisions in Jordan's Labor Law stating the principle of equal pay for equal value of work.

Extent and Nature of Gender Pay Gap in Jordan

The gender pay gap (GPG) is defined as the percentage difference between the average hourly earnings of women and men employees. In Jordan, the average monthly wage for a woman is JD 314 (US$ 443) compared JD 364 (US$ 514) for a man (Department of Statistics [DOS], 2010a)[2]. After adjusting for the average number of hours worked by men and women, this represents a GPG of 7 percent. Jordan's GPG compares favorably to other middle income countries and even to advanced industrialized nations (ITUC, 2008). However, the low figure is misleading, since women in Jordan have low levels of labor force participation and tend not to participate in low-skill, low pay employment. Over 90 percent of Jordanian women with secondary education or lower are economically inactive, while nearly two-thirds of Jordanian women with a university education are economically active (DOS, 2010b).[3] Most of those in low-skill occupations are men (DOS, 2010a).

Hence, in evaluating the Jordanian GPG, it is important to take into account the fact that women employees tend to be more skilled than men employees. When skill level is taken into account, it becomes evident that women in Jordan are often paid much less than men. For example, women professionals in Jordan are paid a staggering 33 percent less than men professionals.

The main challenge in determining GPGs is to distinguish between wage discrimination due specifically to gender and differentials in female/male wages that result from different labor market characteristics (hours worked, skills, experience, etc.). It is informative to compare hourly wages between men and women with broadly similar skill levels. Table 1 presents wages in Jordan by four broad skill levels, following the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88).

Women employees in Jordan are paid less than men in the same skill category. There is a considerable GPG for employees at all skill levels. Importantly, almost half of employed women in Jordan are

Table 1
Gender Pay Gap by Skill Level in Jordan, 2008

Skill level	Corresponding ISCO-88 GPG category	Men's hourly wages (JD)	Women's hourly wages (JD)	GPG	Share of women employees	Share of men employees
1	Elementary occupations	0.91	0.84	8%		
2	Clerks, service workers and shop and market sales workers, craft and related workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers	1.02	0.83	19%	28%	54%
3	Technicians and associate professionals	1.54	1.25	19%	15%	10%
4	Professionals	2.48	1.65	33%	47%	17%

Source: DoS, 2010a.

professionals (skill level 4) and earn considerably less than men professionals. The average hourly wage for women professionals is 33 percent less than men professionals. A further 28 percent of women employees fall under "skill level 2" and earn 19 percent less than men in the same category.

It is worth noting that the low GPG in low-skill elementary occupations ("skill level1") partially reflects the nature of the DOS Employment Survey, an enterprise-based survey that does not include data on domestic workers employed by private households. Domestic workers make up around three quarters of women employed in elementary occupations in Jordan[4] and tend to earn less than other workers in elementary occupations. In 2008, the Government of Jordan raised the minimum wage for most economic sectors to 150 JD ($211), with the exception of (women-dominated) employment in domestic work and export-processing zones (QIZs), for which the minimum wage remained at 110 JD ($155). Thus, the exclusion of domestic workers from the Employment Survey leads to a significant overestimation of the average wage of women in elementary occupations, at 196 JD ($277).[5]

Until recently, domestic workers in Jordan had been excluded from the provisions of the Jordanian Labor Law. In July 2008, the Jordanian parliament passed an amendment to the Labor Law that provides for the drafting of legal regulations that set forth the terms of domestic workers' employment. These legal regulations came into force in October 2009.

Pay Equity and the Public Sector

Although there is a GPG in both the public and private sectors in Jordan, the GPG in the private sector appears to be significantly larger. In particular, it is worth noting that the GPG for professionals in the private sector (41 percent) is much higher than that in the public sector (28 percent).

Despite this, it is important to note that there is gender-based discrimination in the wage structure of the public sector. Under the Jordanian Civil Service Regulations (No. 30 of 2007), a man employee is automatically entitled to a family allowance if he is married. However, a woman employee only qualifies for this allowance if she falls under one of the following categories:

- She is a widow
- Her husband is disabled
- She can prove that she is the family's primary "breadwinner"

This creates a situation whereby women civil servants have a disadvantage with respect to their entitlement to family allowances and are often paid less for work of equal value.

Pay Equity and Gender Segregation

The above figures give an indication of gender-based pay discrimination among employees with similar levels of skills. However, skills are only one of the various dimensions that determine job value. Thus, the above analysis does not present a complete picture. In many countries, women are concentrated in low-wage economic sectors. Thus, it is important to look at levels of pay in sectors predominated by women.

Table 2
Gender Pay Gap by Skill Level in Jordan, 2007 (Private versus Public Sector)

Skill level	Private Sector GPG	Public Sector GPG
1	21%	2% (in favor of women)
2	25%	10%
3	23%	14%
4	41%	28%

Source: DOS, 2010a.

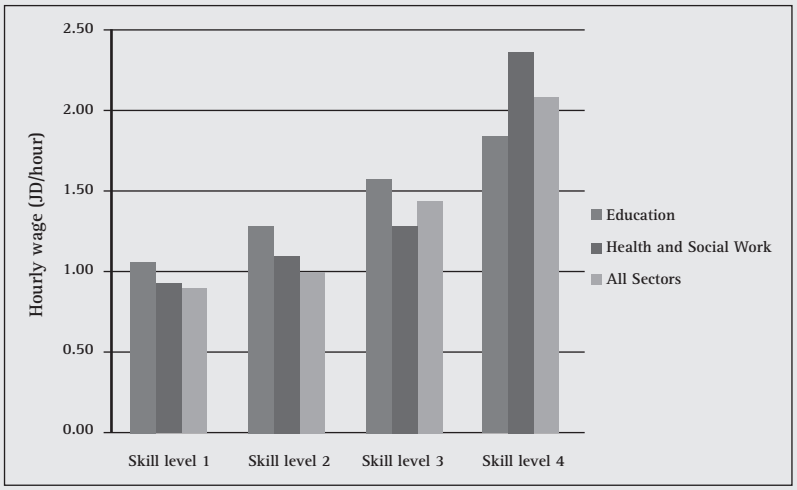
In Jordan, almost three quarters of women workers are concentrated in three economic sectors: education, manufacturing, and health and social work (DOS, 2010a). Because only 23 percent of workers are women (DOS, 2010a), they constitue the majority only in one sector: education(56 percent women) (DOS, 2010a). The health/social work sector also has a high proportion of women workers (49 per cent women) (DOS, 2010a).

In Jordan, contrary to many other countries, wages in feminized sectors do not have particularly low wages (see Figure 1). However, initial analysis reveals a GPG within feminized sectors. Women professionals employed in the educational sector earn one third less than men professionals in this sector. This large pay gap presents a considerable challenge, given the high proportion of women employed as education professionals. Almost 80 per cent of women employed in the educational sector are professionals, and one third of all employed women in Jordan are educational professionals (DOS, 2010a).

Significant pay differentials are also evident in the field of health/social work where women earn 30 per cent less than men. The GPG is especially pronounced amongst professionals (31 percent) and technicians/associate professionals (20 percent) (DOS, 2010a). There are also high pay differentials in the manufacturing sector, where women earn 37 percent less than men. This high figure is partly due to the concentration of women in lower skilled manufacturing jobs. Even when skill level is accounted for, women earn considerably less than men in this sector (DOS, 2010a). Women manufacturing professionals earn 21 percent less than men. Women in skill levels 2 and 3 in the manufacturing sector earn 36 percent and 37 percent less than men respectively (DOS, 2010a).

Although Jordan has made enormous strides towards achieving gender parity in education there are important differences in educational choices between men and women. Gender segregation in education may lead to gender segregation in occupations, and could be related to lower levels of pay among women. On the one hand, the country has achieved gender parity in enrolment at both basic and secondary levels of education (MOE, 2009), while women higher education students now outnumber men students. However, in 2007-2008 over half the women in universities (53 percent) were in educational sciences, humanities, and health and social services compared with 28 percent of men.

Figure 1
Wage levels in feminized sectors in jordan, 2008



Source: DOS, 2010a.

Good Practices in Promoting Pay Equity

Governments across various regions have adopted different strategies aimed at promoting pay equity with mixed results. In order to support an evidence-based policy-making process, this policy review will focus on experiences from countries where the effectiveness of pay equity policies has been rigorously evaluated.

Importantly, the implementation of effective pay equity policies involves the establishment of comprehensive legistlative and institutional frameworks. The establishment of such frameworks in Jordan will require several phases over a substantial period of time. In the short term, it is possible for Jordan to adopt selected aspects of the policies described below. Policies to promote pay equity can broadly be categorized as belonging to one of three models (Chicha, 2006).

Model 1

The first model is exemplified by policies adopted in Canada and Sweden. This model involves tackling the three elements of pay discrimination:

- Comparing women-dominated jobs with men-dominated jobs for the same employer or in the same establishment.
- Evaluating these jobs using a gender-neutral method of analytical job evaluation.
- Estimating the pay gap between these jobs.

In Canada and Sweden, employers are legally required to undertake this process with clear timeframes pre-established for every phase. If the process reveals a discriminatory pay gap, this must be rectified through pay increases within a specified period.

Model 2

Under the second model (e.g. UK and the Netherlands), the government provides employers with detailed guidance on using job evaluation to inform pay practices. However the implementation of this guidance is voluntary. Studies conducted on the efficacy of the voluntary model have found it to be ineffective in reducing pay discrimination (Chicha, 2006).

For example, a survey carried out by the UK government indicates that compliance with the

Box 2 Gender Neutral Job Evaluation

The undervaluation of women's work can be demonstrated and eliminated by assessing the economic value of different jobs through the use of gender-neutral job evaluation systems. These evaluation systems usually compare jobs using four dimensions:

Skills: The qualifications, skills and knowledge required to perform the job. This is measured by factors such as the experience, ability, education, and training needed. Importantly, this refers to what is required for the job, not the qualifications/ skills individual employees may have. For example, two secretarial jobs could be considered equal even if one of the job holders has a master's degree in mathematics, since the degree is not relevant to the requirements of the job.

Responsibility: The degree of accountability required to perform the job. For example, a salesperson with the duty of determining whether to accept customers' personal checks has more responsibility than other salespeople.

Effort: The amount of physical, mental, or emotional exertion required to perform the job. For example, a factory worker's job may require greater physical effort than a teacher's while teaching may require greater emotional effort. A gender-neutral job evaluation takes all forms of effort into account when assessing effort levels.

Working Conditions: This encompasses two factors: (1) physical surroundings like noise, temperature, fumes, and ventilation; and (2) occupational safety and health hazards.

Source: Chicha, 2008.

government's Code of Practice on Equal Pay is very limited. In the sample under consideration, three quarters of respondents were unable to state the average earnings of men and women in their organization. Only 11 per cent of organizations declared that they had carried out a complete Equal Pay Review (Adams et al, 2006). This low level of compliance led the British Equal Opportunities Commission to conclude that the voluntary approach has proved a failure and that a new approach is required (EOC, 2006).

Model 3

The third model (e.g. France and Switzerland) seeks to correct pay discrimination but focuses on results rather than gender neutral job evaluation. In France, for example, organizations with 50 employees or more are required to negotiate agreements on equality at work between men and women. An annual report comparing the situation of men and women in the organization must be submitted by employers and made available to works councils' members or to union representatives. The report must include figures disaggregated by sex and job category (classification table) based on the following elements:

- Remuneration range
- Average monthly remuneration
- Number of women in the 10 highest-paid positions

The first two indicators provide a general insight into pay discrimination, but do not specifically relate to the value of corresponding jobs. The third indicator illustrates how difficult it is for women to attain the highest positions, but tells us nothing about pay discrimination in jobs of equal value.

A major limitation of this approach is that it does not involve revaluing occupations in a gender neutral manner (Aebischer and Imboden, 2005). The valuation of jobs using only formal qualifications and occupational classification as criteria is problematic because it excludes other important competencies related to the value of a job. For example 'feminine' jobs, such as childcare and nursing, often require good caring skills, a competency which this methodology does not take into account. Research shows that only an examination undertaken specifically to identify sex-based pay discrimination is likely to produce a significant outcome (Marry & Silvera, 2005).

Studies evaluating the effectiveness of this policy option have found a low level of compliance among employers. It has been argued that this low level of compliance is related to the lack of a precise methodological framework provided, as well as lack of support from a specialized equality body (Chicha, 2006).

Policy Options

An international review of policies promoting pay equity reveals that the most effective approach to reducing pay discrimination is the Swedish/Canadian model. This model places specific and time-bound requirements on firms to improve pay equity. Implementation of such a model requires a comprehensive legislative and institutional framework to be established. Instituting such a model in Jordan will require time and should be undertaken in several phases.

In the short-term, elements of the above-described policies could be adapted and implemented in Jordan. This can be done through pilot projects on the firm and/or sectoral level. The sectoral pilot approach has proved successful in improving understanding of pay equity issues and raising awareness of pay discrimination in Portugal, where the ILO and EU carried out a joint project in the restaurant and beverage sector.

On the national level, a starting point could be the formulation of a tripartite action plan on pay equity. The Jordanian social partners have already committed to the formation of a National Committee on Pay Equity (NCPE) whose role it will be to develop and oversee implementation of a national action plan to promote pay equity.

Consultation with the Jordanian partners has yielded the following recommendations for promoting pay equity in Jordan:

1. Create a strong institutional framework for action on pay equity. Effective action to promote pay equity requires a strong institutional framework. The social

partners in Jordan have already committed to the formation of a NCPE whose role it will be to develop and oversee implementation of a national action plan on the issue.

2. Formulate evidence-based policies. The knowledge base on pay discrimination in Jordan is underdeveloped. Studies and surveys on pay discrimination are needed to facilitate the development of evidence-based policies.

3. Raise awareness of pay equity issues in Jordan. An awareness-raising campaign can pave the way by improving understanding of pay equity issues and creating momentum for further action. In particular, an awareness-raising campaign should aim to:
• Raise awareness of pay equity as a core labor right among ILO constituents and the general public.
• Raise awareness of the need for a pay equity article in the Labor Law among government decision makers and employers.
• Raise awareness of the business case for pay equity.

4. Working towards amending legislations to provide for equal remuneration for work of equal value. Although Jordan has ratified several international conventions stating the principle of equal pay for equal value of work, there are no provisions asserting this principle in the Labor Law. Moreover, provisions in the Constitution are narrower than the principle as laid down in the Equal Remuneration Convention. In the words of CEACR, this "hinders progress in eradicating gender-based pay discrimination against women at work".

5. Promoting pay equity in public sector employment. The government can take the lead in pay equity promotion as "best practice" employer in the public sector. Given that almost half (47 percent; DOS, 2009a) of women employees work in the public sector, the direct impact of this alone would make a large national impact. Moreover, fair wages in the public sector can impact on the wage rates of private sector employees. Guidelines for implementing pay equity measures are set out in the ILO's Equal Remuneration Recommendation, 1951 (No. 90).
6. Organizing women and men workers for pay equity. Workers' organizations have an important role to play in promoting pay equity by:
• Engaging women workers to increase their representation in the membership and leadership of trade unions.
• Raising awareness of pay equity issues amongst union members and collective bargaining teams.
• Negotiating and bargaining for pay equity. An internal union action plan to promote pay equity is an important starting point.

7. Engaging employers' organizations in pay equity issues. It is important to engage private sector employers on the issue of pay equity. Drafting an Employer's Code of Practice on Equal Pay could be one way to engage with employers on this issue. The British experience with the voluntary Code of Practice on Equal Pay suggests that it has limited effectiveness in terms of actually reducing pay discrimination, but it can be a useful tool for raising awareness. Private sector organizations with an interest in adopting the Employers' Code of Practice on Pay Equity should be identified and provided with technical support.

8. Ensure all women workers receive the minimum wage. Anecdotal evidence from the media and Jordanian labor inspectors suggests that many women teachers do not receive the minimum wage. Ministry of Labour's Women's Work Directorate and the Jordanian trade unions perceive this as major challenge to achieving pay equity in Jordan.

9. Ensuring gender-responsiveness of education, training, guidance, and counseling. Measures to tackle gender segregation in the labor markets need to be introduced early in the lives of women and men.

10. Ensuring gender-responsiveness of official Jordanian wage data. Wage data need to cover domestic workers employed by private households in order to provide an accurate picture of pay equity in Jordan.

ENDNOTES

1. The ILO has prepared the following policy brief on pay equity in Jordan in partnership with the Jordanian National Commission for Women.
2. Wage data are from Jordan's Employment Survey 2008, which contains information on both Jordanian and non-Jordanian workers.
3. All data from Jordan's Employment and Unemployment Survey refers only to Jordanian nationals.
4. Author's calculations based on figures from Ministry of Labour (MOL) (2009) and Department of Statistics (DOS) (2010a). Official figures indicate that about 45,000 migrant women and 12,000 migrant men were employed as domestic workers in 2009.
5. The Government of Jordan's reasoning behind the lower minimum wage set for domestic work and export processing zone sectors is the fact that workers in these sectors often receive free food and accommodation. This is considered a wage element both under Jordanian law and according to the definition of remuneration in C100. Yet all workers may receive non-monetary emoluments financed by employers, such as transportation and food. Ideally, comparisons for pay equity should include the full meaning of remuneration. But available wage data does not permit that.
6. With the possible exception of skill level 3 in the health/social work sector, and skill level 4 in the education sector.

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Stories from the Field

Introduction to the Six Stories
The six stories reported by Carole Kerbage and Omar Said are spread across a wide range of experiences from the world of work in Lebanon and shed light on widespread and fundamental problems of gender stereotyping, worker-life balance, gender wage gap, gender based discrimination, and overlapping discriminations based on gender and disability. The stories were originally prepared for a Sub-Regional Initiative of the ILO on Promoting Gender Equality in the World of Work in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.

The story of the Syrian agricultural laborer family working in the tobacco fields of Lebanon where underpaid women's and children's labor abounds, stands out from the others in terms of its rural setting. The exploitative terms and conditions of work are two-fold in this story both from the side of the land owner and that of the family patriarch. The other stories when read together paint a bleak picture with only small glimmers of hope for change. The resilience of the women is remarkable considering the widespread endemic injustice. We see this in the story of the young woman where her employer blatantly discriminates against her for getting married and becoming pregnant. In another story, a health care sector worker accepts conditions of work that under normal circumstances would be intolerable, in order to secure a future for her children. We feel the rage and disappointment suffered by the young woman architect in the face of a blatant gender gap, despite the same level of education and even more years of experience, as practiced by her employer who clearly has a bias towards male bread-winners. The story of the handicapped woman underlines how gender discrimination and discrimination of people living with disabilities can overlap to create increased exposure to exploitation. Finally on a more positive note, we read about an employer who is aware of the issues facing workers with family responsibilities and demonstrates this awareness by making the necessary arrangements, such as teleworking, in order not to lose a talented worker to family responsibilities.

As one finishes reading these stories one cannot but help ponder how many more of these stories are needed in order to change perceptions and attitudes in the world of work.

Simel Esim

For My Children's Future..

Reported by Omar Saïd

This story puts in perspective the dilemma of a woman worker who accepts conditions of work that, under normal circumstances would be intolerable, in order to secure a future for her children.

"In times of hardship, it is important for parents to think about their children's future". Lubna

Lubna is a clinic assistant in a private medical center in a hospital in Lebanon. Her work experience exceeds fifteen years. She has been working in the clinic for just five years. She works from seven a.m. till five p.m., except for two days when she works overtime until seven p.m. (one day is done on a voluntary basis in order to get a raise). Her salary is LBP 700,000 (US $466) including overtime and the children's social security.

Lubna is a mother of three. Her eldest son is twelve, and the youngest is eight months old. In spite of her relatively stable working conditions, taking care of

her kids is her biggest concern. She says: "We are asked by the administration of the hospital to give a detailed schedule of our annual leave, but how can I plan my days off ahead when I have such young kids?" Lubna's concerns become more relevant when we learn that over the past five years she did not enjoy a single day off for relaxation or for fun. All her days off are taken in emergency cases when one of her kids gets sick.

Lubna recalls waking up one morning to find her youngest baby extremely weak, with a 40 degrees body temperature. Of course, she had no choice but to stay with him. But the administration of the hospital was very annoyed with this fully justified short-notice absence, and deducted it from her annual leave. At her astonishment, she was warned by the management that such a sudden absence might lead to her dismissal from the job.

Lubna says: "The worst thing that happened to me was when I gave birth to my second baby during my first year as a clinic assistant. Then, I was only entitled to 49 days of maternity leave". But owing to health problems, she had to rest for twenty days before giving birth, and therefore had to reduce her maternity leave, put her 29 day old baby in the nursery, and gave up breast feeding after the first month.

"My husband works for a government department on an hourly basis. He is paid LBP 6500 (around US $5) per hour. The fact that he gets paid by the hour is very convenient given that his work is flexible and he can compensate for my absence when necessary". Maybe this is what prevented the family from collapsing. In cases of emergency, the husband is able to sacrifice a six hour working day. So the couple is sharing the household responsibilities and the upbringing of their children. Here Lubna explains: "otherwise it would not have been possible for me to keep on working".

Raising children is not a matter of improving their daily life, but of securing their future too. This is how Lubna sees things. The hospital contributes to the children's school tuition fees, and later, it will fully pay the university tuitions, on condition that they pursue their higher studies at the university that the medical center is affiliated with. Lubna's days are restricted to working and sleeping, in order to secure her children's higher education.

Lubna, 34 years old, married, hospital clerk, Kaskas.
Traslated by Rada Soubra

My Supervisor is an Advocate of Workers' Rights and of Gender Equality

Reported by Carole Kerbage

It is important to have an employer who is aware of the issues facing workers with family responsibilities. By making the necessary arrangements, such as teleworking, this employer was fulfilling a win-win scenario: a happy and productive worker who did not have to forego her professional goals or her family responsibilities.

She is an instructor of political sociology at one of Beirut's universities. One can see her preparing her baby's feeding bottle in one hand, while carrying her eight month old baby girl in the other. She also tries to calm down her two year and a half firstborn telling her: "honey, please try to draw mom and dad". Rita is putting her professional career on hold for a few years until her two daughters are ready to go to school, while keeping her job at the university as faculty and staff member in charge of both the students' exchange program between Lebanon and foreign countries, as well as the M.A. curriculum. When she accidently got pregnant, she was not ready to be a mother or to put her social and

academic life on hold: "I was preparing my Ph.D., but now all my notes and books are in a closet somewhere in the apartment. Apart from working hours, I dedicate all my time to my kids". In the beginning, this was quite a shock to her, but she decided to carry on fully with her maternal responsibilities. According to her, "Now I am really enjoying motherhood. I got over it. I have to forget about myself for a while".

In addition to her husband sharing the household chores with her whenever possible, favorable working conditions, not to say "exceptional" ones, were very helpful. Knowing that the labor code provides for a 49-day fully paid maternity leave, Rita explains that her boss believes in social justice and in gender equality, so she was able to get three months fully paid maternity leave without even having to negotiate for it.

Rita used to work Mondays through Fridays, but she resigned after giving birth to her first child, because she could not cope with the standard working hours of the office. The chairperson of the faculty refused to accept her resignation, and she modified Rita's contract in a way that complies with her family responsibilities: "So for the same pay, I started going to work twice a week with no regular office hours; the most important thing for me was to finish the assigned job"!

Rita was blessed to have a female boss that was supportive of workers' rights while banning gender discrimination in the workplace. At the same time, her boss was aware of the international labor standards concerning maternity protection and the righs of workers with family responsibilities to benefit from flexible working hours. In addition, Rita had previously assisted her boss in establishing this faculty in 2002, giving much of herself in the early stages of the project. So this exceptional favor was partly in recognition of Rita's contribution to the success of the faculty.

Also, the couple's sharing of the household chores constituted a positive factor. Although the husband works from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., he always tries to look after the kids and to help with domestic chores. In emergency cases, he does not hesitate to draw on his annual leave to help out.

Rita cannot afford leaving anything to chance. She gets up early to prepare breakfast and to get her eldest child ready for school. As for the little one, she only sends her to the nursery on her working days. She welcomes them home at 2:30 p.m.; they have lunch and then spend the afternoon together: "I think this was my sacrifice ... The age when the child is totally dependent on you is critical and very important for the child's mental development". She is silent for a moment then she admits: "I have not been able to read a single book, or attend any lecture for the past three years".

Rita, 33 years old, married, instructor of political sociology and administrative assistant, Ashrafiyeh.
Translated by Rada Soubra

The Difference between $500 and $850 ... A Young Man who is Securing his Future

Reported by Carole Kerbage

The gender wage gap that a young woman professional suffered from despite the fact that she has the same educational background as her partner and even more experience points to the predominant male bread-winner bias in the world of work.

Jihane was extremely happy to learn that her newly graduated fiancé had been hired by the same engineering firm that she had been working for for a year. But soon, she was disenchanted and her smile disappeared to be replaced by signs of shock and disappointment. Her fiancé was immediately

assured by the boss that his starting salary would be $850 to be increased a month later depending on his competence. Noticing discontent on Jihane's face, the boss looked at her saying: "As you know, he is a young man who has to provide for his family".

After graduating from the School of Engineering, Jihane started her career as an interior decorator. As a student, she used to work for an engineering firm on a part-time basis, then she was hired by the same firm as a full-timer, i.e. from 8:30 a.m. till 5 p.m., for a monthly salary of $500. Two months later, her salary was raised to $700.

Same degree, same position, same working conditions, but despite her greater work experience, her salary was $350 less than that of her fiancé. But because of her upcoming wedding, she could not protest. Her fiancé did not believe that his salary would be so high, so he kept quiet. She did not want to hurt him, and she shut her mouth, brokenhearted. But she kept wondering: "we are equal, as we are both financially contributing to establish our home, why would his salary exceed mine by $350? Why should there be any difference?"

As a young woman, Jihane accomplished every task assigned to her. She did not hesitate to visit the "construction site" during her working hours, in spite of the difficulties she encountered. She was at the site, with all the necessary tools, a measuring tape in one hand, her files in the other, supervising the construction works, giving the necessary instructions, and avoiding smiling, in order to be taken seriously by the workers.

"I am doing my job, but the workers have a problem with me; they look at me as a woman, and it is hard for them to accept the fact that I am an engineer!" She adds: "They make me feel that I don't belong here". One exception is a construction worker who welcomes her whenever she visits the construction site, and facilitates her task as much as possible, "because his daughter is an interior decorator like me. He probably sees her through me".

Whether in their love relationship, their career, or their common aspirations, Jihan and her fiancé are equal. They are "evenly" deprived of any social security coverage or health insurance because the "bylaws of the firm" do not approve of registering the employees for social security. Equal in everything except for this salary issue...

Jihane, 24 years old, engaged, interior decorator, Baabda.
Translated by Rada Soubra

The Farmer, His Wife, and the National Tobacco

Reported by Carole Kerbage

This is the story of the Syrian agricultural laborer family working in the tobacco fields of Lebanon where underpaid women's and children's labor abounds. The exploitative terms and conditions of work are two-fold in this story both from the side of the land owner and that of the family patriarch.

M.M: supervisor.
Nationality: Syrian.
Place of work: Tarayya, in the Bekaa.
Number of children: 22.
Number of Wives: 2, Umm Ali and Umm Husain.
Type of work: picking and piercing tobacco leaves.

The landlord is Lebanese. The workers are Hanane (Umm Ali), the wife, along with eight kids, and the daily benefit ranges between LBP 30,000 (US $20) and LBP 40,000 (US $27) for a family composed of a man with two wives and 22 children.

M. received us with a smile, insisting that we come in. He was surrounded by his children, whose ages ranged between 10 months and 18 years. The family lives in a tent made of tree trunks and canvas covered with vegetable bags, and surrounded by a

hole around the tent to ward off rain from coming in during winter times.

The landlord pays LBP 1000 (US$ 0.6) only per tobacco thread, which is over 2 meters long, and takes nearly two hours to be finished! Who does the job? M. answers: "Umm Ali, my wife, and initially eight of my eldest children, but this little girl does the piercing sometimes", pointing to his 4 year-old daughter. When asked how many threads he finishes a day, he answers with a smile while his wife serves coffee: "I cannot forbear the piercing process. I just supervise the work and deal with the landlord". The landlord receives 25 dried kilograms of pressed dried tobacco leaves wrapped in canvas. He is not responsible for any work accident that might occur to any of the farmers, under the pretext that "Syria is close, so they can go there to seek medical treatment!"

In addition to the abuse of the landlord who owns the means of production while exploiting the farmers' labor, abuse takes place within the family too, in line with the prevalent patriarchal mindset.

Rosy-cheeked Umm Ali, whose face is marked by signs of fatigue, relates her life conditions. Umm Husain, the other wife, is in Syria with the rest of the kids, so she has to raise twelve kids on her own, with three of them less than four years old. Of course, she has to do the daily cleaning and the cooking, and to finish five threads of tobacco, therefore she constantly juggles the double role of reproductive care work, and the productive one of being a tobacco worker. Meanwhile her husband's work consists of supervising the work of his wife and children, and dealing with the landlord, i.e. cashing their daily wages.

Whereas the father elaborates on the abuse he and his family are subjected to by their employer, who is accumulating more and more money, he does not know that he is also exploiting the labor of his wife and children. This, in short, is the manufacturing journey of the national cigarette that poor people buy.

Hanane, 38 years old, married, tobacco farmer, Chmistar.
Translated by Rada Soubra

The Price of Motherhood

Reported by Carole Kerbage

This story is one of many in the world of work in Lebanon, where employers blatantly discriminate against women workers who marry and become pregnant.

Razane is a working woman who was fired from her job. The reason for that is not the financial crisis, the closing down of the firm, or incompetence on her part. It had to do with her personal life, namely marriage and pregnancy.

She had been working for seven years for a private Lebanese firm as an assistant in the marketing department. She benefited from her 40 day fully paid maternity leave (before the amendment to the labor law), but she kept on working until the last moment before giving birth, i.e. just a few hours prior to her admission to the delivery room! The last stage of pregnancy was very difficult because she had to spend long hours in the toys warehouse in a windowless basement without any ventilation shaft.

She did not dare to contest her work conditions although she knew that, according to the labor law, maternity leave should be split between the three phases: pregnancy, delivery, and breast feeding. She understood then that the boss was not happy with the situation, and did not feel comfortable with pregnant women and with mothers: "I felt as if I was a burden to the firm, and to the boss in particular, so I started avoiding him, even when I got back to work. He told me sarcastically "That's it!? It is over?" Although the nursery was close to her work, Razane did not

breastfeed her baby daughter properly after getting back to work. According to her, "I want to deprive the boss from any alibi he might use to fire me".

Upon returning to work following the maternity leave, the decision to fire her was already taken, although in an indirect manner, because dismissing a pregnant employee from her job is penalized by the Lebanese Labor Law. Thus her employer "suggested" to her the dismissal decision a week after she resumed work: either she works 4 extra hours to be added to the standard 8 and a half working hours (from 7:30 a.m. till 4 p.m.), a total of 12 hours and a half per day, or she quits her job "with a two month bonus" and without an end of service indemnity.

She was the only one to be asked to work an additional 4 hours. Therefore she quit her job because she considered this "suggestion" to be an arbitrary dismissal in disguise, as her employer knew very well that she cannot leave a newborn baby until 8 o'clock in the evening. In any case, asking her to work for 12 and a half hours, and putting an end to her seven-year service without indemnity were illegal decisions. She had to quit her job at a time when she was in need to meet the baby's additional expenses. Thus she decided to file a lawsuit against her boss in the labor court. The country was paralyzed then due to the vacancy in the presidential post, so the procedure lasted two and a half years without any glimmer of hope. Her employer suggested to her to accept a settlement consisting of LBP 7,000,000 instead of the LBP 18,000,000. Owing to the financial difficulties she was going through, she decided to take his offer.

Three years later, Razane is still looking for a job. She describes the psychological and financial problems she faces as a housewife and is quite aware that marriage and motherhood are limiting her chances to be hired. During job interviews, some firms ask about her marital status, most of the times taking it as a pretext for refusing her candidacy, while others blatantly reply: "we don't hire married women". This is what happened to her colleague in the department of marketing. The employer hired her under one condition: not to get pregnant before she finishes her first year!

Razane, 38 years old, married, marketing attendant, Saïda.
Translated by Rada Soubra

The Problem Seems to be with the "Cane"

Reported by Carole Kerbage

The story of the disabled woman recounted her underlines how gender discrimination and discrimination against people living with disabilities can overlap to create increased exposure to exploitation.

He stares at Sawsan's feet then looks at the cane in her hand, finding it odd that she should apply for a job. His answer is: "just fill in the form, and we will contact you later". This took place in one of the public sector institutions she knew were looking for accountants. She applied for the position along with some of her acquaintances, all of whom ended up being hired, except herself. The problem seems to be with the "cane"...

Sawsan has suffered from polio since she was a child. She studied accounting, got married, then gave birth to a baby girl, who is six now. What's wrong with that? Everybody studies, gets married, and then has kids. The problem is that whenever she applies for a job, the employer does not take her degree or her competences into consideration, he just stares at her limp!

But she insisted on finding a job. She found a position at the watch department in one of Lebanon's consumer store chains, COOP. She did not hesitate to give it a shot. But this time, the boss was quite straightforward, and did not ask her to "fill the

application form, but said abruptly: "how will you be able to sell?" She answered confidently, "try me for a week of unpaid work, and hire me if you are satisfied with my work". And this is what happened. She worked at the watch department as a full timer for four years, for a monthly salary of LBP 575,000 (around US $383), with no social security.

Then she became a cashier at the COOP for the same salary, but with a promise to benefit from social security. "Here I was doing almost everything: cashier, accountant, secretarial work, marketing, attendant at the toy department... They exhausted me, literally". She was also forced to do extra hours without overtime.

"Not-discriminating against women with disability does not mean keeping them standing in the marketing department for 8 consecutive hours". Then she added: "if overworked, a worker cannot fulfill properly his/her duty"! Sawsan resigned or was "made" to resign, after she was asked by her boss to work until 11 p.m. for the same salary. She tried to explain to him that she had a baby and that she cannot go out at night. After resigning, she discovered that she was registered with the social security four years after becoming a cashier (i.e. eight years after starting to work at the COOP!).

Following this, she decided to assist her husband who works as an account manager in a grocery shop for a monthly salary of $200. She maintained that although she started as accountant her job became diversified i.e. dealing with customers, selling, taking charge of the merchandise... But the salary remained unchanged: "I worked for four years in the grocery, doing everything... I asked for my own salary, but they refused to pay me, so I refused to stay".

She tried to work from home, doing some canvas painting and glass painting to sell it to her friends and relatives, but the doctor asked her to stop this kind of work due to some inflammation in the spinal column. Sawsan has been looking for a job since the grocery store episode. She had gotten used to working and to being financially independent: "I am not used to asking my husband for money, neither is he used to be asked for money. This is the first time since our marriage I have this feeling of helplessness, I am upset because of my disability".

Sawsan, 38 years old, married, jobless, Corniche al-Mazraa.
Translated by Rada Soubra

"Here are the Women"

Farah Kobaissy

Introduction:

This article sheds light on the labor movement in Egypt, examines the vital role of the Egyptian female worker within it and tries to analyze how her active contribution in the past few years has led to the emergence of women leaders who played a prominent role in strikes and protests in a number of factories and assembly lines. It also examines how much women are capable, in the midst of the said movement, of breaking the barrier of sexual discrimination.

Methodology

In this paper, I document the events of the famous real estate tax collectors' strike, by gathering, presenting and analyzing the views and attitudes of some of the participating employees. For that purpose, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 2 male and 7 female employees who led the real estate tax collectors' strike, in addition to interviewing a focus group of 6 female employees from several governorates. These interviews aimed at examining the role of women in the strike and the union, as well as the gender dynamics that were playing out during the strike. This qualitative approach was complimented by reviewing local media coverage (news articles and blogs in Arabic and English). Moreover, I did a series of interviews with 2 labor journalists, 4 researchers, and 3 human rights' activists and labor leaders. The research was conducted between November 2010 and January 2011 as part of my Master's thesis.

Women launch the "Winter of Labor Discontent"

Since 2004 a wave of workers' strikes has rolled through the spectrum of the nation's industries and across both the public and the private sector as a response to the disjointed, unregulated, "liberalized" economy, marked by a privatization push since the late 1990s and the rise of worker contestation (Ricciardone, 2008, p. 1).

By the end of 2006, a wave of protests known as the "Winter of Labor Discontent" began to rise in Egypt starting with a strike in the Misr Spinning and Weaving Factory in Mahalla al-Kubra, in which 27,000 workers participated, sparking the biggest series of strikes Egypt has ever known since the 1940s and paving the way for a flood of labor protests.

Workers at the factory were waiting for their pay packets. Former Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif had promised all public sector workers an annual bonus equivalent to two-months pay. Disappointment quickly turned to fury as workers discovered that they had received only the standard bonus.

Some 3,000 women garment workers then stormed into the main spinning and weaving sheds and asked their male colleagues to stop working, shouting what will become later a slogan for thousands of female workers all over Egypt: "Where are the men? Here are the women!" The purpose of the shouting was to shame men into leaving their work and joining the women who were demanding their rights and those of their male colleagues. Hearing the chants, male workers joined the women and around ten thousand people gathered in the factory courtyard and once again women were at the forefront. The phenomenon expanded and spread so fast that workers from several labor sites simultaneously carried out sit-ins in central Cairo, waiting for their demands to be met.

The snowball of labor protests, since the strike of Al-Mahalla workers in January 2006, rolled from one factory to another until it became a phenomenon worthy of being noted and studied.

It's not surprising that the textile female workers are the ones who sparked this wave of labor strikes. The majority of workers in the textile sector are women who are often concentrated in the lowest-paid and least-skilled jobs. Garment workers at the Mansura-Espana factory, for example, earn as little as $30 per month.

Women Crossing the Red Line

During the stage where the labor movement was taking root and expanding, women's participation was obvious since they played a major role in organizing their fellow workers during the protests and challenging the state-run unions. Women also initiated many of these events, led them, and had a great impact on the success of these protests and the realization of their demands. This huge female participation is due in large part to some factories relying exclusively or predominantly on female workers.

The Mansura-Espana garments company in the town of Talkha in the Nile delta, for example, has 284 workers, three-quarters of whom are women. In April 2008, 150 female workers went on strike, after rumors spread that the land on which the factory stood had been sold to a property developer and that the main shareholder, Egyptian United Bank, was planning to shut down the company. Fearing that they would be fired and the factory closed, strikers took over the shop floor, sleeping between the machines at night.

Female workers faced a lot of defamation attempts during their struggle. One of the managers threatened to frame them on trumped-up charges of "prostitution" because they were spending the night in the company of their male colleagues who were also on strike. These attempts went as far as inciting factory managers to harass women workers in order to break their will and prevent them from striking (Izzat, 2009, p. 4). Despite increasing social pressure and the pressure coming from the police, officials from the state-run Textile Workers Federation, and management, the female strikers held out for two months, ending their occupation only after an agreement was signed guaranteeing the future of the factory. Management and government officials also conceded to other demands including the back payment of some unpaid bonuses, no indictments, and payment for the period of the strike.

The Mansoura-Espana Factory strike and occupation "was not instigated by a grass-roots women's movement, but it was effectively implemented by women's collective efforts and sustained by the convergence of their motivations" (Ricciardone, 2008, p. 70). It shows how the workers' collective power can undermine the oppressive relationships that structure society. Previously, it was unthinkable for women to spend nights away from home, sleeping on a factory floor with male colleagues. Many habits such as deference to bosses, fear of the police, and passive acceptance of the role of government trade union officials were challenged.

The importance of that step taken by the women workers cannot be understood unless we factor in their economic power within their families since many of them are the main breadwinners. In spite of the strict prevailing norms which shape male and female gender identities, class affiliation has complicated traditional gender roles and pushed many of these women to take on the struggle and play leading roles in the labor movement. As one of the male workers put it: "We don't talk about 'women' and 'men' . The women at the factory are braver than a hundred men. They are standing shoulder to shoulder with the men in the strike" (Alexander & Koubaissy, 2008).

The prominent role of women was not limited to factory workers, it was witnessed in the public sector as well, where women played a leading role in one of the major events in the history of the trade union movement in Egypt: the strike that led to the establishment of the first independent trade-union: The Real Estate Tax Authority Union (RETA).

Real Estate Tax Collectors: From a Strike to an Independent Trade Union

On 3 December, 2007, thousands of real estate tax collectors in the governorates, among them 750 women, led an eleven-day strike in front of the People's Assembly, the Ministry of Finance, and the

Cabinet of Ministers, demanding equal treatment with their counterparts working under the Ministry of Finance. Many believe that the real estate tax collectors' movement wasn't only one of the most important labor protests that has spread in Egypt since 2006 but it has also become a milestone in the labor movement, especially since it led to the formation of the first independent trade union. Thus, real estate tax collectors were able to change the concept of unionism and impose trade union freedoms as a fact.

The reasons which prompted women to participate in the real estate tax collectors' strike and sit-ins don't differ much from those of the industry sector. Women's participation was economically driven and largely related to their traditional role within the family. At a time when women were facing the double burden of home and work responsibilities, the high cost of living only increased the pressure, prompting them to defend their livelihood.

This "economic necessity" discourse which motivated them to get out has helped them avoid obstacles when shedding their traditional roles and gave legitimacy to their movement. It was also a response to an opposing discourse which considers that women have nothing to do with public affairs or outside the family circle. Women's participation in the strike would not have been acceptable unless it was out of "necessity". In "normal" times, the same action would have been considered to be socially unacceptable or offensive. The best way then for women to legitimize their decision to participate in the strike was to resort to the image of the long-suffering mothers who are willing to do anything to improve the livelihood of their children. They didn't feel that they could defend their actions on the basis of a frank discourse related to their personal needs (i.e. independence, self-assertion, or autonomy).

Real estate tax collectors' leaders tried to draw women to the strike on purpose by emphasizing the workers' living conditions and the humiliation real estate tax collectors face when they learn that they are not equal to their peers working under the Ministry of Finance. However, the discourse to motivate female employees wasn't based on their status as women who suffer from specific forms of discrimination at work, and the burdens they carry as women – an approach which would have equated between women and men without addressing their different experiences. The discourse used largely succeeded in attracting them to participate in the strike, and their presence was sometimes even prominent in sit-ins, like the one held in front of the Ministry of Finance where female employees led the scene. Their participation however decreased at night.

Strike leaders were also consciously seeking to involve women. Some of their reasons included protecting the strike from security forces, attracting sympathy, and social solidarity with the strikers. The participation of women was also used as a means to urge men to participate, by belittling the men who didn't participate and showing that women were more courageous than men. And so, the prevailing traditional views of women were used first to protect the strike from security repression: a security man wouldn't "hit a woman," because that, according to custom, is an insult to his position as a man. It was also used to consciously exploit the gender role stereotype:

> If women are leaving their main traditional position in the home to participate in a strike, how can men not play this role too? And since the strike is usually the work of men, women who participate, are given masculine qualities such as 'X' woman was manlier than he was.

Whether the men leaders who were urging women to participate were driven by equality principles or pure pragmatism, they ended up recognizing the need for women to support the strike. Leaders adopted, consciously or unconsciously, the principles which unify the working class in order to tip the balance of power dynamics in favor of the workers, both men and women, against the government. Therefore, significant efforts have been made to widely involve women, especially since leaders are aware of the huge numbers of women in the labor force.

The Strike and Task Distribution on the Basis of Gender

Female employees in the real estate tax collectors' strike took on many organizational roles; some of them were leaders who participated in negotiations with government officials and talked to the media about their cause. Their opinions were also heard among their colleagues. They also made plans for subsequent steps and participated in the decision-making process within the strike committee.
They were an intrinsic part of this democratic experience owing to several factors:
1. Female employees continuously present in the strike are Greater Cairo residents, which gave them more room to move and participate, compared to women who live in remote governorates.
2. The presence of female employees in the real estate tax collectors' protests as strike leaders was the result of continuous struggle for the rights of employees over the years, and helped them form a sense of community based on mutual confidence with their male peers who believe in women's role. It should be noted, in this respect, that the women who played a prominent role as leaders were old colleagues of one of the most important leaders of the strike, Kamal Abu Eita.
3. The 24/7 presence of women in the sit-in or strike site allowed them to be part of the strike leadership as a result of their effective participation.
4. These female employees are college educated which qualified them to assume managerial positions in their workplace where they gained leadership skills. Some of them also have experience in trade unionism, which gave them skills that helped them in making decisions or in contributing to them.
5. Age was an important factor; the overwhelming majority of the female leaders were in their fifties or older. They're also married and have adult children. As a result, they earned their colleagues' respect. This social status also helped them to be partially free from household chores and child care. Therefore, among the women leaders I've interviewed, parents weren't generally an obstacle for their participation in the strike. They all described their husbands as "understanding" and "accepting".

Although some women took on leadership roles, their organizational tasks mostly revolved around rations. They were responsible for preparing meals and tea for thousands of strikers daily. Even though this role wasn't imposed by any of the men, women automatically sensed that it was within the frame of their responsibilities. Preparing food for large numbers of people does not require additional training but is linked to the type of responsibilities assumed by women at home since an early age. The women felt that by doing so they were participating in their own way in strengthening social solidarity and familiarity between strikers and in providing basic survival means to achieve labor victory.
However, women's participation in the strike wasn't a smooth ride; even though patriarchy wasn't very noticeable on the workers' side, government officials tried to use it in different forms through security and administrative powers. They first tried to make the sit-in nearly impossible, going as far as not allowing strikers to go to the bathroom by forbidding nearby residents from receiving women and closing the bathrooms of the nearby mosque. This measure, seemingly targeting all workers, affected women in particular. Women had to walk the distance of two metro stations in order to use a gas station's bathroom.

In addition to security pressures, the then Minister of Labor, Aisha Abdul Hadi, contacted a number of female leaders to convince them to return to their homes and break the sit-in, saying that women strikers aren't only challenging the socially acceptable definitions of male and female roles, but that they are also compromising their honor. But the women defied the minister; they were aware of her tactics aimed at breaking the movement and isolating men. More importantly, they realized that by liberating themselves from fear, they were also liberating men as well and they were breaking the chains of guardianship which bind both genders:

> By doing that, she [the minister] showed us that we hit a raw nerve with the government. We [women] then understood that she wants to get rid of the women so that they can get their hands on the men, scare them, and break them up. But they won't succeed as

> long as we [women] are sitting here, I mean, the men themselves are protected by us. (Mervat, female employee)

That's why women in the strike were shouting the slogan coined by women workers in the Mahalla factory at the beginning of their strike in 2006: "Where are the men? Here are the women!" to express the feeling of their increasing power as women and their awareness of having challenged, through their activism and their strike, the "ideal" female behavior which typically depicts women as less aggressive and more "obedient" and "polite" than men. As union leader, Madiha explains:

> Women in the real estate tax collectors' strike changed the history of all labor protests that followed. Because it was well known that women do not sleep out, do not participate, and do not leave their family and children in order to take to the street and demand their rights. It is known that if they are given one cent they will accept and if they are given ten they would accept as well. But it was the first time they said: 'Where are my rights?' Side by side with men. So when we felt that security forces were going to attack us, we women used to stand in a certain way in the front row to protect the [male] strikers.

Women Employees: From Strikers to Union Leaders

The employees' strike resulted in the establishment of the first independent union in Egypt, setting a precedent which was quickly adopted by workers in different production companies in both the public and private sectors. This trend increased during the revolution and after the fall of Mubarak, leading to the declaration of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions in 2011. This led to trade union pluralism after years of monopoly by trade unions sponsored by the old regime which had imposed one organization on Egypt's workers, in violation of international conventions signed by Egypt. These conventions were meant to provide trade unions with freedom and give workers the right to found their unions and not force them to join an imposed entity. Thus, the events of the revolution of 25 January 2011 inspired thousands of workers from different sectors to create their independent trade unions, such as the public transport workers, the textile workers, the information centers workers, and many more.

Women's contribution to the activities of the Real Estate Tax Authority (RETA) independent union increased significantly. The women I had met believe that this is important because it gives them social strength after having been excluded from public activities in general which had resulted in a lower status for their gender. Madiha Morsi Hamid's example underlines this aspect.

Madiha is the one who worked on establishing the RETA committee in Cairo, with a 100 percent participation rate; "from the mailman to the managing director," she says. She was elected by the workers as chief of the trade union committee in Cairo. Even though she had no prior trade union experience, participating in the strike, following up on the negotiations with government authorities and being close to experienced trade unionists such as Abu Eita gave her considerable experience in trade union activism and increased her interest in political and economic public affairs. Her legal background enabled her to play a prominent role in following up on all legal affairs related to the independent trade union that was formed. She was also an important legal reference for other trade union leaders.

In the context of her trade union work, she began holding meetings in the 29 governorates in order to establish a women's committee. In Cairo, she meets regularly with about 14 women weekly to address work issues which concern them as women.

Although women's work situation in the public sector is better than it is in the private sector, they still feel discriminated against in many respects. The view which sees women's role in making a living as secondary and their reproductive role as essential is entrenched in the state establishments. Based on this premise, legislation denies working women equal rights in their family insurance coverage and there is hesitation to promote them or provide

them with training opportunities. So women's entitlements in the government sector is based on patriarchal values.

In order for Madiha and some other women to be able to take on leading trade union roles, they had to take on many additional roles and tasks (inside and outside the household). They had to deploy more effort than men in order to make their voices heard and impose their legitimacy as unionists.

While all the women I met are balancing between domestic responsibilities and trade union activities, it was only natural to ask: shouldn't that have affected the power dynamics within the patriarchal infrastructure of the family? There were many answers to this question. The gains acquired increased the economic independence of women and provided them with somewhat greater leverage vis-à-vis their male partners, making them aware of their greater status within the family. The increasing economic power, which came as a result of the success of the strike, enabled them to ease their financial burden within the family: "My life changed completely after the establishment of the trade union, but I continue to devote a large part of my time to my home and children," says Madiha. She continues:

> I must arrange their lives. Because I'm too busy, I couldn't fully follow up on their studies, so I hired a teacher, thanks to the financial compensation. After that, I dedicate my time to seminars, conferences and meetings. But union work has become essential to me. Before each meeting or sit-in, the number of phone calls I receive shows my husband the importance of my work which he respects and admires. But sometimes he feels a bit jealous; however he did not prevent me from being active, because he's jealous for a reason: he believes I was limited within the confines of my home but now I'm free. And my trade union activism has changed me a lot, to tell you the truth. Before, I used to give up on my rights with my husband in order to avoid problems but now, through the rallies, sit-ins, and strikes, I understand that nothing comes easily... so you have to demand your rights, especially since I spend my salary on the household. This is the change that has occurred: previously, I used to shut up to avoid problems, but now I make demands.

Nevertheless, the tension between accepting and rejecting one's "proper" role, rights, and obligations as a female remained largely unresolved. So even if these women realized that the power dynamics within the family are unfair, they admitted that this realization is one-sided and therefore didn't lead to restoring some balance to these relationships. During their struggle, they changed a few stereotypes about their roles as women, but for the vast majority of them, this didn't change the traditional task distribution within their families.

Generally though, most women I interviewed were aware and critical of gender constructions, especially since they work outside the home, were effectively present and seen during the strike, and are currently active in trade unions. This has made them aware of the unequal social relations within the family which have a negative impact on work relations or their ability to fulfill the requirements of their trade union activities.

Conclusion

The strong presence of women in the Egyptian revolution and subsequent events was not incidental. Anyone following the events can easily see that the years prior to the revolution saw a strong participation of women in various movements in Egypt. Women's presence was not limited to political parties and intellectual circle. They were active in union and labor movements as well.

The attractive research component here is that despite the emergence of some voices in recent years calling for the return of working women to their homes, raising obstacles against hiring them, and relegating them to less skilled and less paid jobs without contracts or with temporary contracts, in addition to being subjected to sexual harassment and the like, some female workers emerged as initiators, leaders, and organizers of their colleagues in strikes and protests and as essential participants in the success of these movements. This is one of the factors

which enhanced their status and gave them back some of the respect and influence in society that they deserve.

This reality doesn't reflect the evolution of a feminist movement or consciousness in the ranks of the working class itself, but the struggle dynamics have made the workers, both male and female, more open to ideas which defy the prevailing "common sense". The experience of women's involvement in the protests provided an opportunity to fight against gender discrimination on the one hand and pushed women to break free of some of the restrictions on their participation in public life on the other. With their movement, women went past a number of prevailing social constraints and gender stereotypes, such as assuming leading organizational roles in different places and showing perseverance despite attempts by security and management to vilify and defame them.

The women workers' struggle has also increased their political awareness and interest as a result of the expansion of their circle of activity from the limited confines of their demands (inside the factory) to the general political, social, and economic fields. In some places, women were the most radical and daring, as shown in the example of the real estate tax collectors. The struggle for economic issues – wages in this situation – pushed them to participate in union activities, supported sometimes by progressive male trade union leaders. Their victory in the battle to increase wages also gave some of them greater power to negotiate within the family, without necessarily reversing the power dynamics within it. It earned them the respect of male workers as well, through their effective participation by challenging gender stereotypes and authority and by resisting the police and threatening state-controlled unionists, and allowed some of them to assume leadership positions within unions.

In conclusion, the integration and participation of large numbers of women in the different struggles strongly suggest the possibility of building and establishing a militant feminist movement. The revolution has opened the door for that, and we have already seen the inception of such a feminist movement when tens of thousands of women broke into Tahrir Square during the 20 December 2011 demonstration, touting the slogan "The daughters of Egypt are a red line," in reaction to the army targeting female revolutionaries using all kinds of oppression and abuse. This demonstrates that the presence of groups of women, especially in the working classes, at the heart of social and political movements has become a reality and cannot be overlooked. For the first time, a popular organized feminist movement is possible in Egypt, because there are blocks of women ready to integrate into the struggle. Such a movement which includes wide sections of women presents itself as a priority, especially with the most recent rise of right-wing groups and parties hostile to women's participation in public life in Egypt.

Farah Kobaissy is a researcher specialized in gender and labor issues. She worked as a coordinator of Nasawiya anti-sexual harassment campaign The Adventures of Salwa. She currently works at the Lebanese Labor Watch.

ENDNOTES

1. For many decades trade union activism was monopolized by the state run Egypt Trade Union Federation (ETUF), as the Egyptian law (number 35 in 1976) severely restricts the establishment of trade unions outside the umbrella of the aforementioned federation. In 2011, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions, lead by the Real Estate Tax Authority (RETA) independent union, was established, breaking the monopoly of ETUF. references

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"Killing of Women in the Name of Honor":
An Evolving Phenomenon in Lebanon

Azza Charara Baydoun

A one-day expert group meeting called for by Rashida Manjoo, the UN special rapporteur on violence against women(hereafter VAW), was convened in the UNFPA New York headquarters on Wednesday October 12, 2011. Sixteen experts from different countries across the globe presented papers that portrayed the regional idiosyncrasies of the manifestations, root causes, and consequences of gender-motivated killings (femicide or feminicide). In addition to papers that presented concepts and related conceptual challenges, the presentations covered case studies from selected countries from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, South East Asia, Canada, and Europe. Following is an updated version of the paper presented by Azza Charara Baydoun, a Lebanese researcher on women and gender issues.

Manifestations

Although "crimes of honor" is the phrase commonly used to describe the killing of women within the family in Lebanon, these killings are drifting further away from the classical form of what is known in our part of the world as "honor"-based crimes.

In my attempt to highlight the manifestations of family femicides[1] in Lebanon, I will delineate 3 categories:
The so called "honor" crimes whose occurrence has become rare[2] in Lebanon. For instance, among the 66 trials concluded in the court of cassation between the years 1999 and 2007, only 16 had to do with "honor killing" and were executed mostly in rural areas. I am referring to the well documented[3] scenario featuring a male family member, preferably a minor, who is delegated to kill his[4] female relative, usually his sister, who by her "loose sexual behavior" has brought shame upon her family and sullied its "honor". The victim's behavior involves a heterosexual liaison, whether imagined[5] or real, where she might be a willing or an unwillingly participant (incestuous rape is not uncommon). The act of killing is described as "cleansing the shame" of the family and restoring its "honor". This act is deemed necessary and is hailed as heroic by family members who encourage it.

It is common knowledge that "honor"-based crimes are underreported. But the widespread urbanization, the proliferation of media, and the changing roles of women in Lebanon have made it difficult for such crimes to go unnoticed. Accordingly, those crimes that are reported are thoroughly investigated,[6] and the accused is tried in a court of law. With respect to the previously mentioned 66 trials, article 193 of the penal code that mitigates the sentence of the accused on the basis of his being motivated by "honor" was used 3 times only (that is less than 5 percent).

The nature of the crime has made it almost impossible for researchers on femicide to study systematically the repercussions of the crime on the killer and other members of the family of the victim. Anecdotes about family members and interviews conducted with some of them or their neighbors in Lebanon and Palestine are probably the only documented "evidence" of the impact it may have had on them.[7] Under-reporting impedes the collection of hard data. In Syria, for instance, the figure reported by the media varies between 40

and 300 femicides per year! In Yemen for instance, it is practically impossible to come up with a figure as a corpse may be buried by the family without obtaining a license from health authorities; hence no comprehensive official cause of death is available. Furthermore, some countries (Kurdistan-Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt for instance) report a very high incidence of female suicides. Women activists suspect that this figure hides behind it "forced" suicides/femicides.

It is to be noted, however, that the judges' attitude to the "honor" killings is linked to the geographical location of the murder site. The judges who preside over courts in rural areas are more "understanding" of the motives of an honor crime. They tend to acknowledge the power of the dominant values that condemn the victims' "wrongful act" and deem the violent reaction of the accused as "necessary" and hence inevitable, thus leading them to extenuate the sentence of the accused in accordance with their discretion or "the power invested" in them to assess the situation. By contrast, the panels of judges in urban areas dismiss the effect of these values on the killer's motives. This is particularly evident in cases where the accused claims an "honorable" motive for his crime whereas the court finds nothing but "unadulterated selfishness" in the motive and a deviation from the values of our times.

A more pervasive family femicide in Lebanon is the murder of the intimate partner – wife, divorcee, cohabitant, etc. – who is invariably accused by the perpetrator of infidelity and/or promiscuity, whether real or imagined. These murders are similar to uxoricides (wife killing) or "crimes of passion", and are well documented worldwide.

The third category of crimes is the killing of women – whether spouses or blood relatives – which is motivated by the greed of the perpetrators. Upon investigation, it turns out that the killers were interested in the victims' possessions or their money and murdered them in order to inherit them.

In Lebanon, the last two categories are the most prevalent, and the murder is usually the culmination of a series of episodes of violent disputes. In cases of femicide that are tried before Lebanese courts, almost all defendants claim to have been motivated by honor (Baydoun, 2011 a). In many cases "honor" crime is a pretext to escape the well-deserved punishment of a regular crime. This is not specific to femicide cases in Lebanon. It was reported by the media in Jordan, for instance, that a man killed his sister and claimed that his deed was motivated by "family honor", but was prosecuted as a regular murderer when his other two sisters filed a lawsuit against him accusing him of killing their sister because she refused to grant him an inherited piece of land.[8]

Root Causes: Background

In the Arab world, Lebanon is perceived as being in the forefront with respect to women's advancement[9] where visibility in the public space is one of several indicators pointing to a change in the roles of women. Research studies conducted in Lebanon indicate that young women tend to perceive themselves as androgynous, thus rejecting partially the limitation imposed on them by the socially desirable image of women in our society and embracing the characteristics reserved traditionally for men. Furthermore, men are responding to this change and some research studies arrived at the conclusion that male college students, for instance, tend to be less attracted romantically to the traditional woman and tend to prefer an intimate partner who is partly, if not completely, similar to the self-image of his female college mate. A shift of attitudes towards issues raised by the feminist movement in Lebanon advocating for legislation towards gender equality and non-discrimination is also gauged among university students, albeit women students are found to be more egalitarian than men.[10]

In so far as sexuality is concerned, contradictory manifestations are noted in a series of studies (Rida-Sidawi, 2005, 2006, 2007; Baydoun, 2010). For instance, evidence gathered from group interviews points to changes in the notion of "honor" among teenagers, (both boys and girls), and among their parents especially among those belonging to the middle and upper classes; moreover, notions of "honor" affect a woman's behavior among lower

classes only. Yet guarding this "honor" is rarely seen by these teenage boys and girls of the lower classes (and girls more so) as a reason for their family to resort to fatal violence.[11] In an attempt to study the "socialization process to family honor" research conducted by Parre in 2002 using focus groups of parents of adolescents, showed a difference in attitude towards "honor" crimes in accordance with class, gender, geographical location (rural vs. urban), and level of education of parents. Transgression of prescribed sexual behavior was overlooked for males in all these social and demographic categories, while choice of sanctions for females ranged between forced marriage followed by an arranged divorce, forced hymenoplasty (hymen restoration), disowning and ultimately, but rarely, femicide, as we move from a more privileged social category to a lesser one (Parre, 2005).

In so far as pre-marital sex is concerned, rudimentary research points to a shift of attitude and practice among the middle and upper classes. For instance, in one study researching the sexuality of unmarried university students, 20 percent – both males and females – admitted to having been sexually active since their teen years.[12] However, widespread practice of hymenoplasty among young women (anecdotes reported by media, doctors, and some researchers) is an indicator of the lag of sexual ideology behind practice.

Family Femicide: An Expression of Extreme Disruption of Gender Arrangements in the Family

A salient finding in research on family violence against women in Lebanon, and irrespective of the method implemented and the population researched, indicates that the gender arrangements regulating family relationships has been disrupted. The dynamics of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is an expression of an extreme maladaptation to the changing roles of women and men in our contemporary world: accused men tended to refuse to adapt to the implications of the changing roles of women, and women victims are reported as having exhibited a defying and challenging attitude towards these men. This is amply verified when looking closely into trial documents of femicide cases. In these documents, the victim is portrayed as an impulsive, adventurous rebel and a capricious individual refusing to conform to the gender roles sanctified by her family/partner. She may be qualified as an "imperfect" woman when compared to the "perfect" one, i.e. the socially desirable feminine stereotype in a typical patriarchal society, where the woman is passive and compliant with her (male) guardian who "knows what is best for her". In Palestine, for instance, two contradictory images of the victim surfaced in the anecdotes told by their relatives and neighbors, one similar to the one described in the trial documents above and another portraying her as a "perfect victim".[13]

In many cases, these women are victimized by males who suffer from what may be described as a "deficient" manhood as they failed to meet the expectations of traditional manhood and the prescribed requirements of their gender roles. Overrepresented in the sample of femicide killers are marginalized men, presumably mentally ill, drug addicts, alcoholics, ex-militia fighters, and those with criminal records. This is not in any way different from family femicides all over the world. As intimate partners, these murderers tend to have their manhood tarnished or undermined socially. In cases of marital infidelity, their sexual potency is questioned and their manhood is compromised especially when this infidelity is publicized. If these men were unemployed, they are deprived of a major component of their manhood which is the role of provider for their family. If the murderer were a blood relative, then he would have failed to play a major gender role prescribed to him in our Middle Eastern Arab cultures, namely the power to exercise control over the sexuality of women under his "guardianship". This is the case irrespective of the age and social status of either party. Men are entrusted with the responsibility of controlling the women's behavior and to ensure their chastity and self-restraint. Thus, any threat to that role becomes a threat to the male's sense of self-worth and his manhood. In most of these cases a man's vulnerability and weakness is the main cause of violence against women. Eliminating the woman

who reveals the killer's deficient manhood and threatens his undeserved authority seems to him to be the means to restore his manhood.

The described vulnerability of men is not specific to killers of women. Researchers on masculinities contend that it is one of the characteristics of men in this age who are said to be experiencing a "masculinity crisis". Femicide is but a magnification of an open aggression and enmity against women by a significant number of men in contemporary societies, and the prevailing violence against women is but the defense mechanism against their sense of their own vulnerability. This vulnerability is not related to women and the maladaptation of some men to their changing roles alone, but rather women are, by the dictates of the gender arrangements, the accessible scapegoats to men; men are thus allowed to vent their frustration over their continued marginalization in a world that boasts much promise and offers little to meet them.[14] The male's self-esteem heavily depends on ensuring the proper, so called "honorable" behavior of those in his immediate social milieu and under his guardianship, a necessary condition for bringing order to his inner self and subsequently to the clan/family. Disruption of this order is serious and the person responsible for this disruption must be eradicated to restore order to both, the male individual as well as the clan/ family. That is why if the immediate guardian of the "defiant" woman refrains from his "duty" to kill her when she violates the sexual dictates of the family, someone else will. This would be the case in a typical "honor"-based kin femicide.

Femicide and Violence Against Women

Furthermore, studying the files and court documents of family femicide cases shows that women killing is no more than a maximization of a blatant and ongoing violence against women which has long been perceived and dismissed as "natural". The murder itself is no more than the inevitable outcome, an end point of a continuum of this escalating violence.

Women organizations in Lebanon argue that enacting a comprehensive law for the protection of women from family violence is the effective strategy to prevent femicide and will serve to criminalize all forms of family violence. The most important components presented in the draft law prepared by KAFA[15] and adopted by human rights organizations in Lebanon include the following: criminalizing all forms of family violence against women and girls; ensuring that all investigation, court sessions, and trials remain confidential and private; establishing a specialized unit for family violence issues within the Interior Security Forces; securing a court protection order for victims; allowing for complaints of family violence to be made by verbal notification; requesting the perpetrator to seek rehabilitation; and requiring that the perpetrator secure a safe housing for the victim and her children, and paying alimony. Given the overarching and binding power of law, it will provide deterring, pre-emptive, preventive and punitive measures and consequently will be effective in reducing incidents of women killings.[15]

The State and the Religious Confessions

In Lebanon, unlike most Arab states, NGOs and private organizations have been almost always ahead of the state in addressing social problems. This phenomenon was reinforced during the fifteen years of civil strife during which the confessional communities instituted faith-based organizations that replicated and, in some instances substituted, the functions of the state, and have continued to appropriate the public space and dominate Lebanese political life. This was manifested, for example, by the loss of the state – backed by the civil society – to religious authorities of what became to be known as "the battle for the law of civil marriage" in the spring of 1998. The Islamist organizations and the church (albeit not overtly) launched a vicious campaign against the proposed law which failed to obtain a majority from the council of ministers. The loss of this battle before the religious authorities was a bitter reminder to the women's movement and activists working under the banner of human rights of the obstacles these authorities erect whenever they attempt to introduce laws that the religious authorities perceive as infringing on the powers given to them by the Lebanese constitution. It is worthwhile noting that there is no unified

personal status law in Lebanon. Instead, Lebanese citizens are subject to the personal status laws of their respective religious sects in which they are born. This system has led to a legal and judicial "plurality" in the matter of personal status and family law and it is sanctioned by the Lebanese constitution. Each of the 18 legally recognized religious communities in Lebanon, belonging to the 3 major religions Islam, Christianity and Judaism, are given legal and administrative status and jurisdiction over issues related to their personal status. Needless to say, the personal status laws, and particularly family laws in Lebanon, discriminate between women and men in numerous matters: marriage, divorce, inheritance, custody of children, etc. This is the reason why the Lebanese government (and most Arab countries) have had reservations on some items of article 16 of CEDAW.

The "National coalition for the legislation of protection of women from family violence" prepared a draft to protect women from family violence. However, the political representatives of the Sunni and Shiite sects joined forces against the passing of the law.[16] The arguments of these opponents of the law, Islamist groups and their representatives, are rampant with fallacies and wrong information.[17] They know very well that their success in opposing the passing of the law does not lie in the logic of their rhetorical arguments, but that it is derived from the present political robustness of confessional communities, as well as the authority their institutions has over the legislative bodies of the weakened Lebanese state. Because of them, this law is being emptied of its human rights value as it moves from one legislative body to another. Before the draft law was approved by the council of ministers and passed to the concerned committees of parliament to discuss it, an article was added to insure that the law will not contradict the religious personal affairs codes. The draft law was discussed by a special parliamentary committee which presented its amendments to the Speaker of the House in the spring of 2012. The draft is to be presented to the General Assembly for voting, but its placement on its agenda is delayed due to the 'special circumstances that are ravaging our country'. It is worth noting that the mentioned parliamentary committee has given leeway to the Islamist members of the parliament and their allies – Islamist women groups – that are arguing against its passing. Consequently, the phrase 'violence against women' was removed from the title of the law, which became the 'law for protection of the family' and the article pertaining to 'marital rape' is removed. The phrase 'economic violence' had the same fate ... all in the name of 'protecting the family' and its sanctity.

Glimmers of Hope, Yet...

Positions being taken in court (by judges, witnesses, plaintiffs, and prosecution) in cases of femicide indicate a change of attitude towards women killings in our society and in the judiciary. This change, albeit small, heralds an egalitarian gender attitude within the judiciary. For decades now, Article 562 of the Lebanese penal code that mitigates the sentence of those accused of family femicides has rarely been referred to in the narratives of the court proceedings documents, let alone used by the judges.

Article 562 of the Lebanese penal code states that "a person, who surprises his spouse or one of his offspring or their offspring or his sister in the act of the sin of adultery or in an illegal sexual relation, and as a result, kills or injures one of them, without premeditation, can benefit from a reduced sentence". The formulation in other Arab states differs slightly: In some Arab countries the article refers only to accused men and female victims, in others it explicitly refers to both genders whether the perpetrator or the victim. In some countries, the article mitigates the sentence of the accused spouse but not the accused blood relatives. Furthermore, in most Arab countries, if the courts do not refer to this particular article, then other substitute ones are used for mitigation of the sentence of the accused. The reason for mitigation may be the "highly emotional state" of the perpetrator and/ or his being provoked by the "dangerous" or "wrongful" conduct of the victim.

This article (562 of the penal code) was repealed by the Lebanese Parliament from the Lebanese penal code in August 2011. Femicide will be treated by the

court, hereafter, like any other crime. It is true that these killers will benefit from other articles of the penal code that would mitigate their sentences, but the repealing of this article has a major symbolic value. It represents a breakthrough for the women's organizations who have been lobbying with decision makers, judges, and religious leaders to this end, for decades.[18] Yet, by passing sentences that will take into account extenuating circumstances for the accused, and assuming double standards in assessing the behavior of the victim ('wrong' and 'dangerous') and of the accused (his perceived motive and emotional state), these courts will be sending misleading messages that reinforce the tendency to resort to what has been referred to by human rights activists and researchers as 'private justice' not only in communities that embrace the "culture of honor", but everywhere else too (see Moghaizel, 2000).

Combating Violence Against Women and the Political Situation

As the uprisings move from one Arab country to another, we are witnessing contradictory manifestations in their new spaces of expression. It is true that the uprisings have increased the visibility of women in the public space (in public demonstrations but mostly in the social networks of the internet), but they have equally made possible the surfacing of previously oppressed and silenced societal forces – mainly Islamists – whose ideas and deeds have proved to be far from being women-friendly.[19]

In Lebanon, and in spite of the raging divisive political problems that are creating an atmosphere conducive to another episode of civil strife, the Lebanese women movement is in the middle of the battle for passing the "Law for the protection of women from family violence". In this country where political and security disruptions are ongoing events, women organizations (both governmental[20] and non-governmental) that combat violence against women tend to move on with their agenda without allowing the 'current extraordinary circumstances' to obstruct their work. This tendency has been predominant since the mid 1990s[21] because of the independence of most women organizations from the national political and confessional parties. These organizations have distanced themselves from the crippling political divisions and have adopted the UN approach to development on women's issues. Needless to say, the UN organizations'[22] support of and provision of technical aid and expertise to these women organizations have been a major impetus in more than one way; they have helped women activists in their endeavor to free themselves from the grip of the dominant political parties. In Lebanon this is crucial because throughout the 15 years long civil war, women were mostly trapped within the boundaries of their religious confessions and their respective organizations, or within the political parties and their agendas. They were thus unable to develop their own discourses. But the UN proposed approaches to women's issues provided these women with the conceptual framework and practical tools necessary to help them formulate their independent agenda and to choose their partners and allies accordingly.

Since its inception in the mid-nineties, combating Violence against women has been an all-inclusive endeavor. No social actors were excluded from activities executed to that effect. Among those targeted by women organizations combating Violence against women were groups and organizations such as religious personnel. Although known for their enthusiastic guardianship of the hierarchical patriarchal family, it was argued that it was 'beneficial' to engage enlightened *ulamas* who expressed their views on the matter and distanced Islam from the wrongly held belief that it justifies femicide. This inclusion may have slowed down the process (of combating Violence against women) but it ensured the wide circulation of the issue and we may say that violence against women has become more present embedded in mainstream media, both traditional and new, and in political and various cultural and social activities.

Media reports of femicides are becoming more and more common, mostly in the form of sensational stories. Although this reporting has been viewed with reservation by women activists combating Violence against women, it served to break the

silence surrounding the issue and was often the main source for gauging the prevalence of the phenomenon (as has been the case in Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon). Moreover, the media provided activists/commentators with a platform for awareness-raising and a means to disseminate widely their campaigns against the practice of 'private justice'. In our part of the world, addressing women's issues requires a great deal of perseverance that is proportional to the high level of entrenchment of sexist ideas and the degree of normalization of discriminatory practices. Vigilance is mandatory to preserve accomplishments in view of the fact that some forces are lurking to rob women of these accomplishments; these forces have much to lose if women were to live free from the threat of all forms of violence, fatal violence included.

Azza Charara Baydoun, professor of social psychology, Lebanese University and researcher in women and gender issues.
Email: azzabaydoun@gmail.com

Endnotes

1. I will mainly rely on the deconstruction of documents of cases of domestic femicides in Lebanon committed between the years 1978 and 2004 and tried in the court of cassation between the years 1999 and 2007. See my book Cases of Femicide before Lebanese Courts, 2011.
2. Between 1995 and 1998, 36 femicides were documented in Lebanon, 62 percent of which were committed by the brothers of the victims (Abdel Sater & Moghaizel, 1999) (in Arabic); whereas among the 12 femicides that were reported by the press between May 2010 and May 2011, only one was committed by the father of the victim. The remaining 11 were uxoricides (wife killings). (Compiled by the NGO KAFA (enough violence and exploitation), see www.kafa.og.lb.)
3. See for instance Zuhur, S. (2009).
4. The perpetrator is normally a male. In Lebanon for instance, women killers never exceed 5 percent of any sample of cases of Femicide studied.
5. The women activists in Egypt, for instance, maintain that the percentage of 'innocent' women that have been killed on the pretext of suspicion of sexual 'misbehavior' is around 79 percent. See, for instance, Fatima Kafagy (2005).
6. This is in contrast to the fate of similar femicide cases in neighboring countries – Jordan and Palestine for instance – until recently when, as an emotional response to widely reported murder of a female university student, President Abbas of Palestinian authority passed a decree eliminating the exemption of an alleged 'honor'- based crime from investigation and treating it like a regular crime. I am referring to the article 340 of the Jordanian and Palestinian penal code that grants killers impunity once they claim that their deed was a matter of family 'honor'. Their allegation prevents further investigation and allows them to be referred to the court directly which exonerates them or mitigates their sentence to a minimum.
7. See Hamdar, A. (2000).
8. See examples of motives in hidden behind alleged 'honour' on http://www.amanjordan.org/pages/index. php/openions/6083 .html
9. Yet it figures relative low on GDI (Gender Development Index) and HDI (Human Development Index): out of 156 countries with both HDI and GDI value 117 countries have a better ratio than Lebanon. (2009, see http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/124.html)
10. See for example Baydoun, 2004.
11. Of relevance, is a fatwah released by a widely followed and respected Shia' clerk in Lebanon (the late Muhammad Hussein Fadl-Allah) and in Egypt (Sheikh Al-Azhar), both prohibiting (pronouncing anathema) women killing on the pretext of preserving family 'honor'.
12. See Information International (2003).
13. See http://www.sawa.ps/ ar/ReportsN iew ReportDetail.aspx ?RepId=4
14. See author's book Baydoun, 2007. KAFA, a prominent NGO in Lebanon, launched a program, two years ago, targeting Lebanese young men in an attempt to sensitize them to this fact and implicate them in the campaign for combating violence against women. ABAAD (Dimensions), a newly founded NGO is currently addressing men under the slogan "Men and Women against violence against women".
15. For further information and for more on the amendments proposed to the draft law, refer to the KAFA website at www.kafa.org.lb. The preparation of this draft law goes back to July 2007. The Council of Ministers approved the draft law in August 2009 and the law was transferred to the Parliament in April 2010 for voting.
16. Articles and provisions in this law are inspired by the legislative model prepared by the UN special rapporteur on violence against women. submitted in accordance with the Commission on HR resolution 1195/85 and the Socio- Economic Council of UN (1996) and is thus comprehensive in tackling all preventive, protective, pre-emptive and punitive aspects and the regulation of concerned security and legal bodies etc.
17. The minutes of the general assembly meeting of the Lebanese parliament, for instance, reveals that members arguing for the repeal of article 562 were referring to arguments that had been formulated by the Lebanese women's movement, implying a definite impact of this movement's rhetoric on decision makers. (Baydoun, 2011 c).
18. Women organizations in Egypt, for instance, are worried that certain amendments in family and personal status laws that took painstaking efforts to achieve during the uprooted regime, are now being questioned based on the claim that Suzanne Mubarak - the wife of the former president - instated those amendments. Similar conditions prevail in Tunisia - the Arab state friendliest to women. Hence the challenges to be met by human rights activists and the women movements in different Arab countries are currently ambiguous and need to be reformulated.

19. The National Commission of Lebanese Women (women state machinery) sent letters to members of the Lebanese Parliament expressing its total support of the proposed law to "protect women from family violence" whose draft was prepared by the "National coalition for the legislation of protection of women from family violence". See www.nclw.org.lb

20. With the cessation of military hostilities following the civil war in Lebanon and the adoption of the Lebanese government of Beijing platform of action and the signing of CEDAW, in July, 1996.

21. Like other Arab countries activists for gender equality have been accused of adopting, without reserve, UN and western stances and approaches to women issues and disregarding our 'cultural specificities', but these accusations did not intimidate women activists nor did it hinder their efforts in combating violence against women.

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Mary Turner Lane Award

The Mary Turner Lane Award is a student paper competition established in honor of the late Mary Turner Lane, who founded the women's studies program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The competition is open to any currently enrolled female LAU student. The award, consisting of $500 and a certificate, will go to the best research paper on women/gender studies or original piece of writing such as personal or argumentative essay, (possibly but not necessarily) completed as one of the requirements of a class taken at LAU (literature, language, social sciences, cultural studies, philosophy, education etc.). Below are the two winning papers (2012).

Winning Graduate Research Paper

Women in Lebanese Politics: Discourse and Action

Patil Yessayan, Sawsan Khanafer, and Marie Murray

This research paper aims at addressing the issue of why women have limited leadership and representative roles in Lebanese politics, and why so few actually run for parliament. Due to time and resource constraints, our research does not aim to perform a comprehensive analysis of the problem, but rather to examine a few connected questions related to the problem. The main task in this research paper is to identify the constraints and factors preventing women from participating in political life in Lebanon (joining parties and running for parliamentary elections). We focused on the opinions of female politicians and female political science students in Lebanon regarding what they see as the greatest obstacle that women face when pursuing political careers. The purpose of our research is not to present an all-inclusive study, but rather to offer updated insights into what continues to prevent women from political participation in Lebanon.

We conducted four interviews: one with a female member of the Marada Movement (Vera Yammine), one with Lebanese Phalange/Kataeb (Rachel Moufarrej), one with Future Movement (Raya Al Hassan), and one with an employee at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants (Mira Daher Violides) respectively. We chose these specific parties for two reasons. The first is that we have contacts within these parties, and the second is that these contacts are in a position to answer the questions addressed to them. We tried to approach Rima Fakhry of Hezbollah but she refused to give us an interview on the grounds that the party is not currently conducting interviews on this issue. We realize that the limited scope of our methodology prevents us from a full understanding of the issues we deal with and that it may cause us to reach incomplete and inconclusive conclusions. We deal with these limitations by our

assertion that this project is not meant to be comprehensive, but rather to add further data to research that has already been conducted. We also want to clarify from the start that although we will be citing scholarly interpretations of factors constraining women's political participation, we will mostly be focusing on the opinions of the women we interviewed and surveyed on this matter.

We also conducted 20 surveys of female political science university students at the Lebanese American University. We have chosen this university because members of our group are attending it. We limited our research to female political science majors (either in MA or BA programs) because we decided that this is the best population to look into in order to find out whether or not female political science students aim to pursue political careers or run for parliament. Again, we understand the limitations of our research in choosing such a small, convenience sample from a selected university, and restate that the intention of this research is only to add some qualitative data to the overall, exisitng research on the subject.

Our research also analyzed the statistics that non-governmental organizations have conducted on this issue, as well as the information provided by the websites and marketing materials of the parties themselves. The non-governmental organizations we specified for our research are the Lebanese Women's Council and the non-governmental National Committee for the Follow-Up of Women's Issues. We chose these specific organizations because they deal with the issue of women's political involvement and participation in Lebanon. Some, such as the non-governmental National Committee for the Follow-Up of Women's Issues, conduct shadow reports following sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). We decided to use these resources to extend the scope of our analysis beyond the above mentioned three parties, and include all other political parties in Lebanon. The data we collected from non-governmental organizations and the political parties will also allow us to compare the results with the answers that we received from our interviewees.

Literature Review

Women in Lebanon were given the right to vote and run for parliament in 1952. However, 60 years have passed since and they are still represented poorly in decision-making positions. After an absence of 30 years from the parliament (from 1962 to 1992), three women were elected for a parliament composed of 128 MPs, earning 2.3 percent of the total number of seats (Abu Zayd, 2002). During the last elections of 2009, the number increased from three to four women deputies. But the core problem is that women, for some reason, do not run for the elections. Only 12 women ran for parliament in 2009, making the success rate 25 percent. In 1998, the Lebanese Women's Council organized a conference to address the paucity of women's political participation, and together with various NGOs they produced policy recommendations to the government (Freedom House Lebanon report, 2012). The recommendations included the implementation of a gender quota, but nothing has been done by the government to address any of the demands of this conference.

A combination of political, social, and economic reasons provide an explanation to the obstacles faced by women who want to participate in political activities. In order

to run for any kind of elections, candidates must have the financial means to advance their candidacy and promote themselves. In Lebanon, the financing is either provided by the candidate herself or the political party she represents. As political parties do not include women on their candidates' lists, few women have the means to finance their campaigns and run on their own (Abu Zayd, 2002). Moreover, the financing doesn't stop when a candidate is elected. As parliamentarians in Lebanon provide social services to their electorate, more financing is needed for a woman parliamentarian to be able to complete her term at the office.

According to a study conducted by the Centre for Research and Training in Development (CRTD-A, 2003), women's participation at the highest levels of decision making among six of the major parties in Lebanon, did not exceed ten per cent. The study further indicates that some women question the internal democracy of the political parties they belong to and complain that gender inequality prevails in different kinds of party activities.

The Future Movement, the Marada Party and the Amal Movement are considered to be among the largest and most influential parties in Lebanon. The Manifesto of the Future Movement contains several articles concerning the role of women in the movement and in Lebanese public and political life in general:

> Allowing women to participate fully in development, particularly in political, economic and cultural life, requires legal and administrative measures that encourage this participation. These include a modification of organizational and labor and social security laws which can lead to granting women the same access as men to political and administrative positions, improving their representation in parliament and the executive branch of government, and reserving a female quota to promote the political participation of women.

Vera Yammine, a member of the Marada Political Bureau, is one of the few female politicians in Lebanon who frequently represent the party through press releases and political talk shows. On the website of the party, there is a testimony by a female party member saying that women in the Marada party are present in all sectors: In activities, in committees, in the media, etc. According to the female party member, women are treated in the same way as men are, which has encouraged her to choose the Marada in particular (Women's presence in Marada is inclusive, Tony Gebrael Frangiyyeh, 2012).

Analysis

State System, Political Culture, and Legislative Explanations

The confessional composition of the Lebanese political system coupled with 30 years of civil war have "resulted in a political arena that is almost exclusively dominated by a small population of elite families" (Freedom House Lebanon report, 2012). Although it has been acknowledged that "prior to the war, women were quite active in the political parties, and even during the war certain parties specifically sought women's participation," the conflicts in Lebanon made politics an area dominated by narrow interests (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Lebanon 2012). The militarization of many of the political parties during the years of conflict meant that they "lost their democratic representative authority, and a large gulf developed

between them and the public they purported to represent" (Krayem, 2007). This in turn has served to tighten the exclusive nature of elite-based and family oriented politics. Reform of the electoral system can hardly be achieved in a confessional state structure where political parties and politicians cling to authority and seek control over their particular sect, preventing any unified national voice from emerging. Women in the Lebanese parliament have been labelled the "women in black," because many filled their positions by default after the death of a husband or brother who had formally held office (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Lebanon 2012). In 2009, Don Duncan of *Le Monde Diplomatique* reported that:

> Women in Lebanon regularly come to power in mourning clothes, stepping into a seat vacated by an assassinated father or spouse. The newly elected MP Nayla Tueni, 26, is the daughter of Gibran Tueni, a former MP and editor of the daily *An-Nahar*, who was killed in 2005. Strida Geagea was thrust into politics when her husband, the Christian leader Samir Geagea, was imprisoned for 11 years during Syria's occupation of Lebanon (2009).

Although this may often be the case, our interview with Vera Yammine of the Political Council of the Marada Movement yielded a different explanation. When asked how she became involved in her political party, Yammine answered: "I didn't come into the party because my family was historically affiliated politically with it; in fact I joined because of my conviction in what the Marada represents. I found myself in the beliefs of Al Marada" (personal communication, 9 May 2012). Yammine did not elaborate further on the path to her political position, but she lamented that in Lebanon, "a woman is a voter but not voted for" and "her voice counts in the elections but her voice has no impact at the decision-making level". She contended that although Lebanon's patriarchal society indeed hinders women, there is an even greater obstacle: "the real problem is deeper and lies in the absence of the role of the state and thus any vision for development".

Our interview with Rachel Moufarrej, the Head of the Lebanese Phalange Women's Department, both converged with and departed from the response we received from Vera Yammine. Moufarrej said that, in her opinion, "it is not fair to say that the Lebanese political system itself stands in the way of women's empowerment. The problem is that any coalition can block any draft law that it is not convinced about" (personal communication, May 6, 2012). She explains further that:

> Most laws come from law projects that the Cabinet sends to Parliament. What makes the Lebanese system particular is that some law projects may be labelled urgent by the Cabinet to stress their importance for the parliament to conduct fast voting. If a law project is not labelled urgent it may, however, be postponed for eternity by the parliament. This makes reform difficult if it is not supported unanimously by the parliament before being taken up for discussion. The most important instances in the legislative process are actually the 17 different committees where all the law projects are discussed and either sent for voting in the parliament or postponed. That enables the committees to keep on postponing projects as long as all parties do not agree on the proposed law. Another important actor in the legislative process is the speaker of parliament,

> Nabih Berri, who can choose whether or not he wants the parliament to convene for a vote. In the Lebanese context, having a law passed by the cabinet is in no way guarantee for getting it approved by the parliament. While the parliament is supposed to mirror the cabinet according to the law, this is not happening in reality.

In our survey of female political science students at LAU, we asked the students to state the obstacles preventing women from running for parliamentary elections in Lebanon. Students attributed it to the following factors: 30 percent cultural and religious obstacles, 25 percent political parties, 20 percent patriarchal society, and 10 percent absence of gender quota. Moreover, 7 out of the 20 students responded that the prevailing political culture in Lebanon is the main obstacle preventing women from winning parliamentary elections, whereas 4 respondents answered that it is due to the absence of a gender quota in Lebanon.

Sixteen students said that the implementation of a gender quota system is the best means of reversing the low percentage of women in parliament. 12 said that the minimum percentage of women needed in parliament to bring about political change is between 40 and 60 percent, whereas 6 respondents favored the 20-40 percent range. When this same sample was asked whether or not they think the current female parliamentarians were improving the status of women, 70 percent answered negatively. However, only a couple of these students were able to provide the names of all four women in parliament. In answering the question on whether or not these students would consider running in future parliamentary elections themselves, 8 said they would, 6 said they would not, and 6 said they were not sure. In another question, 15 interviewees answered that they believed women's increased political participation would translate into different political outcomes.

Raya Al Hassan, who sits on the advisory board of the Future Movement, posited that the lack of a quota system was not the only legislative barrier. In her opinion, "the problem is that every political project or proposal has become a hostage to the existing political system. Quota and other laws are being delayed because of the consociational system" (personal communication, May 14, 2012). When asked about what the election outcomes reflect about women's political participation, Al Hassan responded: "I have mixed feelings about this. The way I see it is that women are ambivalent in the sense that they can make a difference but they are not present. In a sense the women are to blame; they need to assume responsibility and stop making excuses. In other words responsibility is not a gender issue". Although she made sure to place the responsibility on both men and women, she did admit that "women in political life have it harder than men. It is a double challenge. First a woman has to prove herself as a woman and second as a newcomer. The hard thing is to make men regard you as an equal and to push them to take you seriously especially in parliament". She also added that "it is not the sectarian system alone but the ugliness of political life that is a very discouraging factor. It is very dirty and needs exceptional courage by a woman to be part of it. Moreover, after the war women have become more discouraged and wary about participating in politics".

The Third Periodic Report produced by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms

of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on Lebanon in 2006 noted the legislative difficulties of seeking policy reform. In its recommendations for reform on the matter of women's political participation, CEDAW advised that "the attempt to place all legislation in one basket may hinder the possibility of amending any at all, considering that, based upon the experience of previous attempts, certain laws arouse latent sectarian sensitivities within the Lebanese context that cannot be ignored" (CEDAW/C/LBN/3). This is to say that the lack of national unity has restricted the process of policy reform. Safiyya Saade (daughter of Antun Saadeh, the political thinker, philosopher, writer and politician who founded the Syrian Social Nationalist Party) maintained that personal status laws in Lebanon are among the factors contributing to the minimal representation of women in the political arena: "the constitutional council, created in the post-civil-war era as a government monitoring mechanism, is not allowed to infringe on religious affairs, so religious leaders basically have the power to tell the government to stay out of their affairs. I cannot, therefore, call myself a citizen unless I call myself a Christian or Muslim. There is no Lebanese citizen in the civic sense" (2011). Because of this, the state is unable to offer universal equity to women, as it is always trumped by the statutes set forth in all the various religious laws.

Despite the legislative processes that Rachel Moufarrej claimed restrain women's political participation, she did point out that the Lebanese Phalange party exerted considerable effort in pushing the issue forward on a party-basis. Some of the achievements that Moufarrej listed were the implementation of a 30 per cent gender quota "starting from the Political Bureau until the lowest levels;" the organization of lectures and awareness campaigns in more than 20 different regions across Lebanon; and cooperation with women's associations and NGOs and securing media assistance to advertise their programs and projects. Moufarrej then added, however, that "other than conferences, lectures, and protests nothing much has been achieved". She noted that "in a country like Lebanon where everything is managed by politicians, women's organizations have to work hand in hand with them in order to be able to achieve anything, since political parties are the ones that assign candidates for elections".

Mira Daher Violides, the Diplomat Chief of Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants (MOFE), was critical of the limited role that women's organizations are able to play in terms of creating channels that facilitate greater numbers of female political candidates. She expressed the opinion that "the women's organizations are participating more at the social level; not much is done on the political level," adding that "of course the empowerment at the social level is very much needed and should lead to change in the long term" (Personal communication, May 14, 2012). Violides also voiced her view that "the main obstacle is the lack of political life and the lack of party politics. And since the state is completely absent, there are no policies being developed for men or women". She further added: "Here there are two issues. Discrimination in the practice of the law has become a habit in Lebanese politics. Moreover, social norms and practices are leading to an impasse as a result of which women are discouraged to participate in politics".

Socio-Cultural Explanations

Journalist Dahlia Mahdawi wrote that "women will only be able to play a greater part in the governance of Lebanon if the country's political system moved away from

the traditional status quo of a sectarian system towards a more secular meritocracy" (Common Ground New Service 16 June 2009). The Root Space conducted a 2009 survey of 50 Lebanese women over the age of 21. The majority of the respondents in the survey blamed Lebanon's patriarchal society for the absence of women from political or parliamentary positions. Unlike the responses from our interviews, which blamed the political and state system in Lebanon as the greatest obstacle and saw Lebanon's traditional values and patriarchal society as more fluid and subject to change and progress, the survey respondents were quick to point the finger at social values and norms. Some of the norms listed were perceptions that men "have more control and are more trusted than women," that "women are thought to be incompetent and are looked at as weaker," that women "are generally responsible for house care and educating children" and that the media only serves to perpetuate these pervasive stereotypes (Saadeh & Obeid, 2009).

The Root Space conducted parallel interviews with women in politics to gauge their takes on the major obstacles preventing women from acquiring political positions. Unlike the women interviewed in the course of our research, the opinions of these women focused on socio-cultural constraints. Ex-parliamentarian Solange Gemayal posited that "having a few number of women in parliament is related to the social issues rather than the political issues because Lebanon went through a lot during the past 50 years, which didn't encourage women to enter politics" (Saadeh & Obeid, 2009). MP Gilberte Zouein similarly explained that "men are dominant in our society and until today nobody accepts the idea of having a woman in politics despite her success in the social and economical fields" (Saadeh & Obeid, 2009). As Raya Al Hassan said: "women have other responsibilities like family and children, making it harder for them to balance between political and family responsibilities. Having said all this, this doesn't justify that women should be ambivalent. We have a role to play for our country and for our children". In Vera Yammine's opinion, there are many factors which prevent women from running for political offices. These include societal and cultural values, and religious mores which view the role of women primarily in the management of family affairs.

Conclusion

Contrary to what many believe, the main obstacle to women's political participation may not be the patriarchal or family-based culture itself, but rather the political culture, the state structure, and the sectarian divides inherent in it. For this reason, our recommendations do not focus on changing the state, but working within the system by focusing on what the parties themselves can do. Nevertheless, we found a good summarizing point in the words of Vera Yammine: "The path to change will not come from a man or a woman individually: the primary responsibility falls on civil society and the dynamics of political life that would provide security to all citizens, men or women" (personal communication, May 9, 2012).

The government should support and facilitate the work of civil society groups and the media to initiate public education campaigns that would promote the social acceptance of women's involvement in politics and civil society. Since most of the interviewees cited the lack of national unity as a main obstacle, the focus should be on the implementation of gender quotas within the parties themselves as a starting point.

Parties should eliminate the special committees for women to reduce the segregation of men and women in politics. Political parties should implement gender quotas within the student and youth sectors to ensure that gender equality starts at the base levels and that women are trained for leadership positions early on.

Patil Yessayan, Sawsan Khanafer, and Marie Murray are graduate students at the Lebanese American University.

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Winning Undergraduate Essay

The Freedom She Never Had

Leanne Abou Hassan

'She was contrasting her own life lived under the burden of traditions and restrictions, with the free, unfettered life enjoyed by the girls of the new generation' is a quotation that sums up the short story *The Breeze of Youth* by Ulfat Al-Idilbi. It is quite interesting how the short story starts out with the submissive grandmother denouncing her granddaughter's 'openness' and then gradually growing envious as she watches her, thinking of the freedom she was denied as a teenager. Ironically, the grandmother ends up breaking all the taboos that she had warned her granddaughter about earlier in the story. In a way, she was releasing the frustrations resulting from the restrictions that had characterized her adolescent years.

This short story mainly highlights the cultural contrast and clash of generations between our present day and those of our grandparents, showing how traditions and ways of life have evolved. It emphasizes differences in the roles women occupied then and now and the greater freedom that women today enjoy as compared to the earlier generations. It is written to further help us understand and distinguish women's expectations from a grandmother's point of view, one who has suffered from the burdens of rigid traditions. Moreover, we witness a loosening of restrictions as portrayed in the granddaughter's actions and lifestyle, even though she comes from the same family and background.

The first paragraph of the story starts with the grandmother scolding her granddaughter for 'beautifying' herself, as she herself was moulded into believing and accepting the fact that any attempt by a woman to catch a man's attention is 'taboo' and is considered an act of shame. Worse yet, it is considered a 'sin', as the grandmother scolds her granddaughter: "Have you no fear of God?" The grandmother goes on complaining and blaming her granddaughter ("your troubles affect us all"), saying that all the world's catastrophes are happening because of her, simply because she stood in front of a mirror and made herself 'pretty'. In addition to her granddaughter, her son too is held responsible: "yesterdays' men and today's are worlds apart". She recalls that when her father found her "making herself pretty", he gave her a good beating and asked who she's making herself pretty for. Can she not be pretty for the sake of being pretty and neat? Or is she relating to the old times when a lady would only beautify herself for her 'one and only man', which is in most cases on her wedding day? But still, her father "didn't have daughters who spend hours in front of the mirror", so from that day on, the grandmother learnt her lesson, submitted to her father's rules, and never again did she wear any makeup. What is most intriguing about this past event is that she is recalling it with pride, believing that her father was a man who was truly capable of raising and disciplining daughters! There are two aspects that need to be highlighted here. First, religion is used as a justification for the oppression and subjugation of women within a patriarchal society. We live in societies that are largely influenced by religion, and men have been very clever in putting religion in the service of their continued dominance. What has happened is that religions have given men the authority and freedom to understand and interpret religious texts in ways most beneficial to them. Since religious texts have been mainly interpreted by men and up until today most religious figures are men, then these notions are still persistent in the minds and traditions of many. Second, it is important to note how women, in many cases, uphold traditional patriarchal beliefs even more forcefully than men do. This, I believe, is a great danger. If any change is to be achieved, then it is essential that we work on changing women's attitudes towards their gender before changing men's attitudes. In my opinion, what is harder than convincing men of the importance of gender equality is convincing women of it. I cannot think of any large-scale change

or improvement as long as women are passive and compliant with the existing status-quo.

The grandmother ends her preaching by stressing that whoever said that "the worry over a daughter lasts from the cradle to the grave" is absolutely correct. She is blinded by the patriarchal belief that a daughter is a burden and always will be. Not only is she a burden, but a daughter is also the symbol of her entire family's respect and reputation, and as such, any wrongful act on her behalf brings shame upon everyone. Well, of course a daughter who has been raised with such a belief is going to be a burden because such daughters do not have the freedom to be independent, educated, or productive. On the contrary, they are raised to depend on their 'prince charming' and their 'significant other' and not enjoy freedom and not be able to accomplish anything that a man can and would accomplish. It is ironic that the grandmother has not learnt from her past and is unable to warn her granddaughter not to follow the same path that she had miserably led.

All this pressure by the grandmother doesn't affect the granddaughter who pays absolutely no attention to her and leaves the house, "humming a popular song". The grandmother watches her granddaughter from the balcony as she enjoys her freedom, blending with her friends and being herself, and she feels envious. At this point, she reverses what she had previously lectured her granddaughter about and starts cursing her father. Now, she no longer blames her granddaughter and her son for failing to raise his daughter. Instead, she blames her own father for depriving her of the freedom that her granddaughter enjoys. She probably felt this way after she realized how happily the youngsters are enjoying every bit of their freedom and comes to the realization that the restrictions her father imposed on her harmed her instead of benefit her. The granddaughter goes out and explores the life that her grandmother never had, while her grandmother sits at home with nothing better to do than blaming and letting out her frustration and anger at her granddaughter. Things have changed, mentalities have changed, and she has no security and no education to do anything useful in her life. Now the grandmother expresses her regret for the life she had led, deprived of freedom and happiness.

The grandmother sits down and starts reflecting on memories of her youth. The granddaughter reminded her of all the things she never had and was never able to have or experience during her childhood. She remembered only one thing: the love she could never have. She recalls the time she went with her mother to the market to buy shoes and how she was praised by a man for her pretty feet. It was the first time she had received compliments from a man, and she felt excited and overwhelmed. After all these years, she still remembers what it felt like when he held her foot between his hands. It was probably the first and last time she had ever felt something like that. Her husband had never complimented her on her 'beauty', and this is the reason why she still yearned for the touch of that salesclerk whom she only encountered once in her life. She goes on remembering how he stared at her with that sweet enticing smile and wondered how he could see anything through her thick veil while she could see every bit of him. It is obvious that she had lived in a strict conservative religious society where a girl is expected to be covered up because her 'beauty' should never be revealed to men and should remain a 'mystery'.

It is a universal instinct that we as human beings fantasize about the things that we are barred from, and we desire everything we cannot have. The grandmother is not allowed to expose herself and her society is very strict about it, so her instinct provoked her to do the opposite. She became proud of herself and she began walking 'erect' next to her mother's side, discretely lifting the edge of her robe so that her shapely legs are revealed, without knowing what she is about to get herself into.

As she raised her robe with the intention of attracting the young man, an ugly old man spotted her, yelled at her with his utmost voice and damned all girls! Hearing this, she no longer walked erect and proud as before, but walked shrunken and embarrassed behind her mom, dropping the edge of her robe. The old man completely robbed her of her pride and confidence and reminded her that she was not allowed the freedom to do what she wanted. She also got lectured by her father when she returned home as he recited the story of the 'Mi'raje': Those women who show their beauty to men end up in hell hung by

their hair. It is not surprising for a religious society to use God as a weapon to scare and plant fears in their daughter's minds. Why would God create women as attractive beings if they are supposed to cover up? And why would women who show their beauty to men go to hell? Why not the opposite? Why didn't the grandmother think about these questions when she was scolded by her father? Perhaps she was too scared that she might get hung by her hair like the other women who are in hell because they have exposed their beauty. Her dad used God and religion to terrorize his daughter so that she wouldn't embarrass the family with any wrongdoing, and his technique proved successful as fear, guilt, and longing for forgiveness haunted her ever since. However, she found a way to rid herself of this guilt and resorted to diverse tricks to show off her charms.

When young, the grandmother was evidently going through a phase of discovering herself and her body and was satisfied with the impact she had on men. She was haunted by desires that she could never satisfy and so she started drifting away from her family and spending time alone. Deep in her heart, she wished she could confide in her own mother and tell her all that she was going through but she did not because she was scared and ashamed. Instead, the passion of love for the salesman tormented her until she could no longer bear it. She was clearly tormented by love because she was not allowed to have it! Had she been given the freedom to love, she would not have really yearned for the salesman's attention. However, the fact that she was not able to have him made her want him even more.

She knew she was never going to meet him again until her shoes wear out because of course she would not dare tell her mother that she likes the salesman and that she wants to go back just to see him. Hence, she resorted to lying so she can get what she wanted. On her way to the shoe shop, she was filled with "great hope and dreams". However, the first disappointment came when she entered the shop and realized he had gone, followed by a second major disappointment when the old man who had previously yelled at her as she lifted he robe on the street came to her father and asked for her hand in marriage. What is more tragic is the fact that he had come with a 'dowry' for the daughter and her father accepted.

After remembering her youth years, "her eyes filled with tears, and she heaved a deep sigh for her lost youth and long life, which now seemed drab and worthless to her". It is clear that the encounter with the salesman still affects her and that her desires were never quenched. It is furthermore obvious that she never led a happy life, having the old man who bought her from her father as a husband. She never lived her youth properly, never enjoyed her beauty, and never felt love. As she gazes out the balcony and watches Um Anton with all the makeup on, she gets the urge to try to apply makeup on her face, even just once and probably for the first time since her father scolded her. In a way, she lives a moment of her lost childhood as she opens her granddaughters' drawer and starts smearing herself with cosmetics which she had never seen before. While she's doing that, she grows even more envious and frustrated at her lost youth and freedom which her granddaughter possesses.

While the grandmother suffers from the loss of her childhood, the granddaughter puffs away on an expensive cigarette and tells her friends what happened to her grandmother the day she walked into her room and saw her face smeared with makeup. They simply laugh about it and continue with their normal life. Such is the progression of life. After years and years of repression, the grandmother feels regret and remorse, looking back on a lost life- the life of a woman back then.

Leanne Abou Hassan is an undergraduate student at the Lebanese American University.

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