

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of the English Language



**Algerian Working Women's Position between Social Dynamics and
Culture: a Case Study of Married Female Breadwinners**

Thesis submitted to the department of the English Language in Candidature for the Degree of DOCTORAT in Gender Studies, Languages and Sociolinguistic Diversity.

Presented by:

Miss. Imene BOUGUESRI

Supervised by:

Prof. Abdelghani NAIT BRAHIM

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DEDICATION

In memory of my father

To my mother and sisters

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ABSTRACT

A rising interest is nowadays on the self-reliant individual who assists her/himself without having to rely on the help of others. Many women have adopted this ideology pursuing a career and an independent lifestyle but found themselves dragged by similar policing forces to those of the system they sought to rebel against. Their present condition is actually the result of an alliance between two major forces patriarchy and market economy (what is later referred to in this work as neopatriarchy) that function in such a way as to reproduce strategies that offer seemingly empowering opportunities that later systematically contribute to disciplining and confining women into pre-established molds of femininity.

The present investigation is built around an underlying assumption that the empowerment game women have been involved in is bound by the same old rules that once governed their relationships as an oppressed category. Since women represent one of the most heterogeneous social categories; it is, therefore, one of the most controversial and problematic in research. We have narrowed down the scope of analysis to the educated female, who could earn a position in the job market which is considered a success in the contemporary economically-oriented environment and who happens to be a breadwinner in her household. It seeks to evaluate the degree of empowerment she has reached particularly through the power interplay within the family, and whether her status as breadwinner is part of the empowerment process.

The research work at hand consists of four chapters;

Chapter one provides a close insight into the feminist literature on the most controversial issues relating to the dichotomized and essentialized gender relations.

Chapter two attempts to contextualize the debate over the female condition in Algeria and unravel the systematic reconstruction of femininity in accordance with the dictates of the socioeconomic environment that utilizes strategies of governmentality to ensure the embodiment of normative conduct among women.

Chapter three is divided into two phases, the first one seeks to analyze working women's self-identification and realization through choice, and whether their actual situation is empowering and liberating or the realization of the new sexual contract (as an amalgam of patriarchy and the market economy). The second one teases out the impact of gender, status, and income on power relations within marriage.

Chapter four is informed with a need to frame an inclusive project of gender justice that redefines the relation of knowledge production to the actual application of policies and their implementation within the larger civil institutions to achieve tangible results and popularize gender awareness among community members.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

One of the questions that have intrigued humanity throughout ages is that of gender relations and whether males and females should adopt different characteristics and on which basis.

Gender theorists and feminists agreed upon the existence of inherent differences between the two sexes that are molded by society to prepare them for specific roles. As a result of the socioeconomic transformations, gender roles have undergone a process of redefinition, creating new linkages with other social traits in such a way to shape an understanding of gender identities that directly influence conceptions of citizenship.

Contemporary feminist literature relies on the multilayered gender identities. However, the patriarchal reality remains significantly operative and manipulative of gender roles and identity construction.

The division of labor, as a stark instance of the patriarchal basis of the distribution of gender roles, is largely based on an overarching ideology that renders women's status and activities trivial. The feminist movements and literature on the issue have to a large extent been characterized by a prominent stagnating *rejectionism* of the social arrangements that have not been of great service to women's lives and more importantly in influencing perceptions of gender inferiority and superiority within the collective consciousness.

A historicization of the feminist struggle is necessary for a full understanding of the present female condition for "*we can fail to adequately assess or even see the struggles of women from different cultures and classes as struggles that "count" from a feminist perspective*" (Cornell, 1992: 148). In fact, investigations on women and work started gaining ground in the feminist literature since the 1970s.

Binarism is a long-standing construct within feminist criticism. At its outset, a heated debate has been raised as to the reasons behind the construction of the female as Other. That is, why is the female (and not the male) category denigrated and often relegated to an inferior position compared to men. A poststructuralist analysis posits that the production of subjects is bound by material relations, "*Materialism here means a mode of inquiry that examines the division of labor and the distribution of wealth in the context of historically prevailing national and state interests and ideological struggles over meaning and value*" (Ingraham, 1994:205; Cupo, 2010:23).

It is, therefore, the reason why men have for so long occupied higher social status and recognition. Following this lead, women managed in recent years to occupy a remarkably empowered position within society as a result of their acquisition of education and access to material resources.

Feminist debates over the relationship between women empowerment and paid work have been characterized by continuous contestations and therefore an absence of insightful perceptions of the status of working women. Kabeer (2007:3) posits that they are mainly hindered by the variety of contexts and social environments women come from and the mutability of the key concepts animating these debates: empowerment and work.

For instance, the working conditions of men and women are segregated on a systematic pattern invariably accompanied by a division of labor within the home that represents a burden on working women and reduces their chances for a promising career path. In this regard, the analysis of the position of women in the paid work cannot stand as significant in isolation from the overall structure of the family which has a considerable impact on their identity that seems to be crucial for a thorough analysis of the female condition.

A realistic examination is required when engaging in an exploration of the inner structures involved in producing and sketching the traits of a whole social category. Fault of a range of feminist accounts on the MENA region that have portrayed a disturbingly victimized and an overwhelmingly homogenous picture of what women are enduring. This bulk of literature, generally qualified as '*misery research*' (Moghadam, 1992: 7), has eventually led to overlooking determining and equally important factors, mainly the economic one, its consequences and the challenges ahead.

The question of women's work may be perceived as stemming from a masculinist view of the world. That is, one rarely, if ever, hears of men's work issues or conciliation of work-family life for the simple reason that exercising any kind of work is in itself a human right with no distinction whatsoever. This indicates a deep binarization and a hierarchy inherent in the social system governing gender relations that are in alignment with the work market which is constructed on masculinist precepts.

The present research work, attempts to scrutinize the social manifestation of women's position from the angle of the power interplay between their status as breadwinners and wives, to fathom the complex construction of women's agency that constantly involves

negotiation, acceptance and assertion. This very perception stems from our observation of the significance of work (paid-work) among people, and of special interest to this investigation women, that has undergone a process of drainage off its essential purpose, that of value-exchange among the parties involved and its reduction into a mere source of material revenue. That is, a considerable number of people today enter the workforce for the financial revenue regardless of whether it represents a value for them.

At that point, the situation gets more complex and brings negative consequences on individuals and society as a whole.

A crucial and determining aspect of women's lives is the contrast between connectivity and autonomy. The former residing at the core of patriarchal relations within the Algeria family, encouraging its members to submit to the rules of the group and sacrifice for the collective good, and the latter gradually infiltrating into the construction of the Algerian female subject as a corollary of liberation and individualization.

Due to massive structural changes affecting the Algerian family, ranks within it have also been subject to reorganization. The label 'head of household' is entitled to the male father in the patriarchal family. Notwithstanding, nowadays this position has acquired a rather looser aspect to encompass other members of the household on the basis of economic factors.

In addressing the transitional period that Algeria and the Arab world are undergoing, caution is raised with regard to the descriptive concepts to be used. A clear cut distinction is to be made between "modernization" as a surface level and rather material process of change and "modernity" as "*a dynamic cultural project that is associated with deep structural and productive change which affects individual and society orientations both intellectually and in terms of organization and civilization*" (Shboul, 2004, cited in Hooker and Saikal, 2004: 48). In the context of this work, modernity is most suitable which, at its outset, is certainly facing resisting forces from existing traditional social systems creating ambivalent positions for individuals.

To study women as a category in whichever society is no easy task; it has always been fraught with cultural reductionism and determinism, arbitrary and hasty conclusions about their status and condition emanating from classifications of women as an ahistorical, monolithic and coherent social group enduring the same kind and level of subordination. Such an overlooking of fundamental disparities that offer genuine portrayals and may constitute the key to finding solutions, or at least explanations, that are context-specific. Thus, for the journey toward understanding the female condition to be substantial, it has to be “*analytically demonstrating the production of women as socio-economic political groups within particular local contexts*” (Mohanty, 1984:344).

In Jonasdottir’s (1994:13) critical study of feminist theoretical and conceptual apparatuses, she points to the necessity of taking account of the fact that in a male-dominated society women’s subordination does not suggest their lack of influence but their lack of authority. The problem that reigns in Arab societies is the masculinist perspective toward social life, many women have a male-directed view of themselves, they have rarely managed to transgress the boundaries drawn for them, and in many instances by them, to satisfy male lordliness. The principle site that has been most vulnerable to violation is their freedom of reasoning, to define and evaluate social phenomena, which is considered as *a performative act* in and of itself, away from any coercion and pre-packaged representations.

Speaking of the female role model presented to Algerian women in today’s society, implies the exploration of the very complexly embedded discourses that bring it into existence. The thesis advanced in the present work emphasizes the fact that the current gender atmosphere in the Algerian society relays a perturbation of the preexisting gender roles and therefore gender relations. Rhetoric flourishes in favor of the contention that a transformation in certain cultural roles is taking place. An important aspect of which is the breadwinner model that is undergoing significant internal alterations in terms of reference. Departing from this assertion, this work attempts to analyze the model of working women and the interaction between this status and the existing gender order that governs the household. This endeavor requires to excavate the surface layers and get deeper into the existing ideologies that regulate gender relations both inside and outside the walls of the household. However, this work does not attempt to reignite the debate over whether women should work outside the home or not, it is rather an endeavor toward fathoming women’s negotiation with the requirements of the market economy and family and how they come to construct their subject position therein.

This research utilizes concepts from a plethora of disciplines ranging from gender studies to political economy, economic sociology, ethnography, psychology and psychoanalysis, and feminist philosophy. It borrows concepts from these disciplines and attempts to appropriately apply them to the socio-cultural context of Algeria.

As Fraser pointed out in her analysis of the feminist approaches to understanding gender relations and their structural underpinnings, social phenomena can by no means be studied using a singular tool encompassing all their facets, because they *contain an irreducible signifying dimension and cannot be understood objectivistically*. (Fraser, 1995: 167)

Thus, for an authentic intellectual engagement, an eclectic neopragmatist¹ approach is used in this endeavor to construct a solid positioning from which to ensure a contextualized and multifaceted vision of the situation of working women in a dual-earner and female headed households (where women are married and are the primary breadwinners).

Additionally, this investigation devises the ‘intersectional approach’ to corroborate its theoretical reflection upon the different variables implied and to yield more validity to its arguments.

Intersectionality² is a metaphorical term, aimed at evoking images of a road intersection with an indeterminate or contested number of intersecting roads, depending on the various users of the term and how many social divisions are considered in the particular intersectional analysis (Yuval-Davis, 2011: 157)

The challenge that arises in intersectionality is the number of dimensions relevant for a pertinent analysis, feminist researchers agree that there are some social dimensions like gender, class, race that have defining effects on people’s social positioning more than others.

¹ This notion is used by Fraser (1995) in her approach to feminist theorizing that implies coherently combining aspects of Foucauldian, Habermasian and Lacanian-Derridean models of analysis. It carries postmodernist insights that deconstruct dualisms of the early nineteenth century and the favoring of one feature over the other (<https://www.iep.utm.edu/fem-prag/#H3>).

² The concept was devised by many analysts under different names; Bhavani (2008) used the concept ‘*configurations*’ instead of intersectionality to express its variability and the intermingled threads that constitute it. Cooper (2004) uses ‘*social dynamics*’ because she believes it conveys the way social relations (and especially relations of inequality) define our social life (Yuval-Davis, 2011: 157).

It is not the intention of this work to vilify or accuse one social party or factor for women's condition or the existing forms of inequality in our society, quite the contrary; it is deeply held that any form of domination certainly implies resistance in a certain manner.

It is worthwhile to note that throughout the history of nations, there has always existed persecuted as well as autonomous and emancipated individuals from both genders; in nowadays society it is rather unsound to group women within one social category that mirrors all their needs and concerns. The extreme immiseration of women in a number of feminist literature has often discredited the whole argument for women's rights and overlooked fundamental issues that, if rightly analyzed, would open new pathways for women's autonomy and equally important a more balanced family life for both men and women.

In line with this argument, one of the principal goals of this research work is to dismantle the years long maintained and rarely criticized notion of women's status as *absolute and eternal* victims of male oppression which is doing much more harm than good to their situation, this is neither implying the reverse condition nor the victimization of men. It is rather to open a new gateway for debating issues of social justice to promote a decent life for all members.

The main thesis of this work is that the formation of female subjectivity triggers a set of reactions that eventually lead to conforming to a restrictive gender order. That is, young women's attempt to form an independent subjectivity through access to employment induces a set of reconfigurations that reinscribe them into a '*new-old*' hermetic category of femininity that conceals the effects of the very patriarchal system they sought to subvert.

This work surveys the changing landscape of gender relations and specifically female subject formation in relation to the involved factors (the market economy and the patriarchal system).

At the core of this work is an investigation of the new gender identity assumed by working women overhauling economic capacity and increasing social mobility. Another facet of the issue to be focused is the analysis of the lived experiences of married female breadwinners.

In fact, at the stage of sampling, the identification of the appropriate informant that conforms to the criteria of 'breadwinner' is not straightforward. This entailed an urgent need for a more accurate definition of the variable. The concept breadwinner as laid by feminist theoretical discourse indicates the financial ability of a member of a household to cover all the

needs of his/her dependents, the problem arises when it is conflated with head of household and provider. In large-scale censuses, it is often demanding to identify the real provider of a family, a person may be considered, in accordance with societal and governmental norms, head of household whilst not the real primary provider. In the present research I considered women as primary financial provider to be the informant in the sampling procedure. This variable covers three defining characteristics: female exercising a paid activity, female out-earning male partner, holding full responsibility of household financial expenditures. The data collection tools devised are questionnaire and focus groups interview questions.

For the reliability of the variables' indicators, the researcher has devised the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and Naila Kabeer's indices for decision-making, attitudes on gender roles and self-perception in her large scale analysis of working women in many developing countries, in addition to other indices that have been observed to be increasingly part of today's Algerian women and crucial to studying them.

The household, as a concept utilized in this work, refers to the relationships that unite its members by kin and relations of mutual financial interest between the male and the female, the distribution of property and labor. It constitutes the unit of analysis in this research work as a microcosm and a unitary model of the larger economic, social and political systems that influence it.

Tavormina et.al (1978:432) in their revisionist analysis of research on power relations in the family, state that it has had its own pitfalls, this construct has been oversimplified or confused with other concepts 'authority', 'decision-making', 'influence' and 'dominance' leading to incoherent operationalization of the construct and thus unreliable results. In addition, the issue has been approached from the narrow angle 'who holds power' that has brought minor and unconvincing results. Departing from this standpoint, focus on the perceptions and behaviors of individuals and the influence exerted on them by the underlying structures is worth consideration for an accurate scrutiny of the status quo.

It evaluates the level of awareness among women of their status as part of the working force and its repercussions on their subjectivity (including self-perception, autonomy and their own productivity)

Bargaining power as Moe (2010) names it, is used to measure the amount of influence that a woman in the Algerian household can exert and the repercussions on the power relations between a husband and wife.

Getting a meaningful version of reality seems to depart from a relational perspective of social reality. In this work, we will refer to ‘global restructuring’ forces that reconfigure the social life of individuals.

The economic analysis developed in this work does not necessarily refer to a materialist approach³, it is rather devised as complementary and equally important tool as other approaches to analyze the seemingly gender-based interactions.

The difference in use between the concepts “family” and “household” and their strict contextualization are evident, however, I opted for using them interchangeably mainly because of the dual aspect of the present research work and that it attempts to reach both ends of the spectrum: the social and the economic. The family is defined here as “*a socioeconomic unit that includes household and as a system of interacting personalities (linked by kinship ties) which offers a cultural context in which the material relations of the household take place and are normatively regulated*”(Chaw and Berheide, 1994:14).

A unit that linked its members by kin ties that are in turn regulated by normative social networks, the household in Pilon’s study⁴ proved to be characterized by three main dimensions: familial, residential and economic. That is, an aggregate sharing the same family ties living under the same ceiling, acknowledging the headship of one member responsible for the economic expenses of the remaining members (Sala-Diakanda 1988; Pilon, 1996: 237). This model does not apply to the multitude of settings in Algeria, for there is multitude of cases and models of households to be taken account of.

The present research work is premised on the insight that women’s seeking economic independence involves an unconscious detachment from the man-dependence within the whole gender system that regardless of the overall patriarchal frame it takes, is ripping women off an important part of what constitutes their selfhood and at the same time creating an oppositionality with the social entourage.

⁴ He led a statistical analysis of the status of female heads of households in Africa.

Analyzing the breadwinner role women take not only from the empowering or disempowering angle but in terms of its influence on an important layer of their identity being femininity.

The transitional period that the Algerian society is witnessing has a significant impact on its members and the larger social practices. A vivid illustration is the alteration occurring in gender relations and the continuously growing female presence in the public sphere upheld by the government. This situation can be explained by women's determination to challenge the often subjugating roles attributed to them and pave a path characteristic of their own aspirations, the gateways open to them being mainly education and paid work. In this regard, statistical evidence demonstrates that more than 60% of university graduates and 38% of the workforce are females, and the state regulations promoted in our society are to a considerable extent "women-friendly" that may have as a corollary the severe disturbance of long standing social meanings; this raises the following questions:

How has the subject position been occupied by female breadwinners?

It spurs the following subsidiary questions.

- a. Does women's access to resources (income and education) contribute to their individualization and agency in other domains of life?
- b. In what ways has the new sexual contract impacted working women's incarnation of femininity?
- c. To what extent is the dichotomous divide to be overcome?
- d. How do these women negotiate their identity as higher earners?
- e. How does the income disparity within the couple impact the intrahousehold power relations?
- f. Does the process of disarticulation necessitate the undoing of gender?

To develop a reliable analysis of these research questions, the following hypotheses are advanced:

1. Women's economic independence constitutes a burden as much as it opens possible gateways for their liberation.

2. Women opt for ‘bargaining with patriarchy’ as a defense mechanism against patriarchal social constraints and as a way of preserving what has been gained.
3. The traditional characteristics of household headship apply to working women who take responsibility of their families, however, to maintain its power, patriarchy sought to adopt more resilience in dealing with the gradual withering of its order inducing the formation of a neopatriarchal system that incorporates aspects of modern social life within its traditional structure so as to bring into existence a new gender order that regains authority over its members.
4. Power in the contemporary Algerian household is shared by its earning members, which has deeply impacted the power relations between males and females, leading to behaviors fluctuating between confinement at times and exploitation at others.
5. The Algerian society is witnessing a transitory period in which a neopatriarchal social system emerges, this system allows women freedom outside the household but compensates for it inside. What the empowerment of females in the Algerian society has ensued is the advent of an identity crisis suffered by both parties males and females.
6. A reconfiguration of cultural understandings of gender identities is required for a balanced and solid ground of social relations to be constructed at micro and macro levels. This obtains through collaborative effort between the individual and larger social institutions.

The specific category of women referred to in this work is the ‘salariat’ educated woman, who contributes to the subsistence of the members of her family, excluding women in senior level occupations.

Women's status can be analyzed on three levels:

1. **The universal secondary status of women:** this is partly due to the woman's physiological formation that relegates her to a lower social positioning and aligns her as closer to and less transcendental of nature. Early feminist researchers have debated the issue of nature versus culture and contend that the female procreative abilities lack creative functions whereas the male seeks recognition outside the biological level, through shaping and changing the external world. Thus, the male contribution is more valued and accorded prestige by virtue of its transcendental aspect, that is, "*it is not by giving life but by risking it that man is raised above the animal*" (Ortner, 1998:30)
2. **Ideologies and social constraints specific to each culture:**

Women's association with nature entails their confinement within the circle of the family, which is ironically a microcosm of culture where women are the primary agents of socialization. This realm has always been a hotbed for structural alterations that determine both women's and men's roles and positions. In some cultures, women are granted a privileged social status than men and their biological difference is perceived as a source of power⁵

Gender ideology will be discerned from a micro as well as a macro level. the latter being the influence of socialization, economic and political structures, the micro level ideology as manifested through innovative acts individual pressure exerted to alleviate the power struggle and induce a sense of equity with regard the traditional distribution of gender roles. Notwithstanding, macro level structures can stand as an instigation for many of the individual actions that attempt to improve women's status.

⁵ The Targui family is an illustrative example of the matriarchal society where the notion of father is secondary to the child, the mother owns the land and it is the mother's origin that determines his/her status in the tribe. (<http://matricien.org/geo-hist-matriarcat/afrique/touareg/>)

Matriarchal societies existed prominently in ancient civilizations, Babylon under Sargon I and Indian castes were polyandric nations where women governed the household. (bensadon, 1999: 22)

3. Observable areas of women's influence that may be at odds with the existing ideologies:

Although the woman may seem to be more bound by nature than the man, she is still a full-fledged human being capable of 'transcending' that nature through her active participation in social life even through her role as an intermediary between nature and culture. This is in consonance with the fact that women in patriarchal societies have managed to earn recognition in traditionally masculine arenas.

These three areas of study need certainly to be elaborated for they tackle multidimensional issues, each of which can stand as a separate subject of research on its own. In this research work however, special interest is attached to the origins of the public/private division of labor and the extent to which women's access to the public is has impacted power relations and the construction of the female subject (ibid:34, Bensadon, 1999:18-19).

Research Methodology:

Considering the analyzed social categories in this work, a typology is proposed after decomposing the different roles occupied by men and women within the family frames. Based on Gill's study (cited in Gupta and Das, 1995:5) three types of relationships were noticed: the traditional provider-traditional contributor, egalitarian provider-egalitarian contributor and the helper-accountable roles.

In the first chapter and through the selection of a number of key concepts for the research work at hand, light is shed on the most extensively discussed areas of women's oppression and to track the locations of their interconnectedness and mutual influence. Marked with a dichotomized conceptual framework, I seek to find the most suitable position from which to define women's position in society in light of a transitional period. For instance, seemingly opposed concepts have come to be part of a reciprocal relationship under circumstances of social change such as the economic transformations that result in a deep impact on the structure of communities.

Chapter One: Framing the Empowerment Discourse in a Period of Transition

1.1. Introduction

Human beings have a natural inclination toward aggregating in groups that allow them to share common values. These groups develop certain norms and codes of conduct “*that find expression in traditions, customs, cultural practices, and informal and formal laws*” (Branisa et al., 2014: 31) and ensure the appropriate conforming behavior of each of its members. By means of a markedly regulatory principle, these social norms reach every aspect of daily life as they constantly construct and reconstruct meaning and influence the distribution of power among individuals.

Among these institutions is gender that is considered a long-lasting governing means prescribing roles for its members and setting railways for their application. In fact, it does not function independently from other equally determining systems (such as the economy) that shape the individual subject within society.

One of the most contentious issues in the feminist enterprise is knowledge production itself since western literature often uses its insights as an all-encompassing discourse attempting to analyze and improve women’s realities. The feminist analysis of gender relations cannot be totalizing, for women’s realities vary from region/historical era to another. Therefore, many feminist philosophers have called for cultural sensitivity for this enterprise to be fully operational.

To rationalize the debate, the history of women throughout the world cannot be encapsulated in constant grief, suffering, and victimhood. Women managed to play the power game in the direst conditions. For instance, Second Wave feminists reclaimed the position of the ‘personal’ in the public sphere, through addressing what was previously perceived as what Betty Friedan (1963) called ‘*a problem that has no name*’.

However, by the time the feminist movement started gaining a global ground and adherents from different social and political backgrounds, the eurocentric theoretical underpinning lost its suitability and representativeness of women’s realities. ‘The development’ discourse could not stand as a sufficient tool for analyzing the reality of Third

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World women, wherein many emergent concepts tend to be defined, shaped and functional from a western vantage point, which risks imposing a new oppressive system on non-western women portrayed as victims of the traditions of their societies and whose liberation can be obtained through the European model (Philips, 1996:17).

Charged with existential vigor, representations of women's status must deal with their actual 'participation' in different social arenas rather than restrictive and debased accounts on their roles and functions. Following this line of thought, it is imperative to undertake a critical analysis of the existing sex-power structure and the way it interacts with women's definition of femininity and the subsequent reaction of the structure within the Algerian context.

Therefore, such research requires great scientific prudence and dexterity to move through the challenging conceptual labyrinth in relation to the inherent dichotomization of gender relations and the increasing penetration of global capitalism within our society. Following this reckoning, this research endeavor seeks to join the three parts of the puzzle, the economic and the cultural both being packaged within political discourse, these three fronts are called by Fraser, *redistribution, recognition, and representation*.

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1.2. The Origin of the Private/ Public Sphere Distinction

The feminist critique of the public/private division followed two main paths: the classical where a clear demarcation between the domestic and the political realms is drawn and the liberal that revolves around the state/market division.

Numerous feminist critics refused the dichotomy altogether and evaluated it as more divisive and conducive to essentialised explanations.

Despite the rejection and deconstruction of the dichotomy, it remains one of the largely discussed issues within the feminist inquiry. It is based on two main motives, the first being the deconstruction of its ideological underpinning. The second which is an extension of the first, being explanatory of its function as *an explanation of women's subordinate position and as an ideology that constructed that position*' (Davidoff 1998: 165).

The Aristotelian model, that fixed categories of individuals in society, contained two major criteria for this classification: first, there exist natural and historical differences between individuals, and second, there is a distinction between the political and the private domestic sphere. The first criterion makes the *free adult male* a fundamental and fixed means of measuring human nature, and all other creatures different from him as deficient and inferior. This inferiority, according to him, *is marked by a lack of rationality*, therefore, it opens the way for other structural (historical) divisions among men that is, *all free males are equal in so far as they are equally free but unequal as regards wealth, virtue or nobility* (Cavarero, 1992:28).

The second criterion ensures the systematic continuation of the hierarchical model created by the first, in the sense that men are by definition (by nature) the only superior creatures. This nature demarcates separate spheres of life, the political sphere (*Politika*) for free adult men and the sphere of the household (*oikonomika*¹) for women which is meant to raise the male and prepare him for political life where he reaches his full potential to dominate and impose order in society. This model devises man's dependence on the woman to be born and raised who will build another dimension for dependency that relegates the woman to the state of the (socially) dependent.

¹ *Oikonomika* comes from the Greek word *oikos* meaning house, and private comes from *idiota* which meant deprived, lacking. It acquired a pejorative significance in the present time to refer to a lack of rationality which is a fundamental constituent of full humanness (and maleness) in the Greek model (Cavarero, 1992: 30).

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1.2.1. Sexual Difference as a Resilient Means of Categorization

According to Cavarero (2011: 35), female sexual difference, in the classical strand, has been treated on two levels, *exclusion* and *homologization*, which have both acted as systems of repression each in a different guise. The level of exclusion denies women the rights that elevate them to rationality, i.e. political rights of citizenship and participation in the public sphere. The homologization level departs from the postulate that men and women can be viewed and treated as sexless human beings and therefore applying supposedly neutral and universal rules on both. This model simply stands as a straw man, for the so-called universal, sexless subject does not exist except through the lens of its conceiver ‘man’ that would, by virtue of his self-proclaimed power, instill a paradigm adapted to his worldview which ends up suppressing sexual differences and precluding the very essence of the struggle for women’s rights:

“It is necessary to reflect upon the fact that every culture, every language and every representation of the world is a translation in figurative terms of the sexed subject that dominates it and has developed it.”(ibid: 34).

It is crucial to note that western, as well as third world feminist movements, have fallen prey to a divisive binarism, “difference versus equality”, delineated as separate camps that implies invariably that if we ascribe to one, we necessarily reject the other. Notwithstanding, equality being “deliberate indifference to *specified* differences” is tightly related to differences. In fact, arguments for the rightness of one and rejection of the other are incongruent (Scott, 1988:44). Caution is raised when accounting for the application of this combinative definition, if the difference is used to oppress a category of individuals, it becomes instrumental in effectuating and maintaining inequality. Hence, the contextualization of difference, which is still important in building individual identities, is crucial in such an endeavor. Scott (ibid: 46) continues in her argument opposing the antithesis of equality/difference:

The only alternative, it seems to me, is to refuse to oppose equality to difference and insist continually on differences- differences as the condition of individual and collective identities, differences as the constant challenge to the fixing of those identities, history as the repeated illustration of the play of differences, differences as the very meaning of equality.”

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The first wave feminist deconstruction of the private/public divide, by claiming ‘the personal is political’ and women’s gradual gain of political rights² has roughened the surface of this distinction and disturbed the gendered-foundation of the spaces. Conversely, the problem arises as to which extent they can merge.

The account that received much attention, though, is the liberal, that has been criticized on three main aspects. The first being the issue of subjectivity and normative androcentric stance that the liberal discourse holds, the second implies the impossibility of the application of the proposed model and the third suggests the failure of the liberal model to repudiate the patriarchal aspect that fuels it.

The first critique contends that the liberal construct is concerned with a prescriptivist notion of subjectivity that confines individuals to a singular unified mold. Therefore, all the structures and institutions involved govern the construction of the self accordingly. This self is by definition rigid in rationality and reasoning and essentially overlooking women’s role traditionally played in caring. This opposition ignited the second episode of criticism that posits that the state presents women with a sexual contract that does not uproot patriarchy but reshapes it and enforces it within the domestic realm.

Regarding the distinctive labeling of the institutions that govern citizens’ lives, Hegel classified “civil society and the state” within the category of the public sphere in opposition to the private “the family”. This division of spheres intrinsically holds a masculine character that rips the public world of citizenship and decision making from its necessary connection with the private, inducing the emergence of double standards in the treatment of women in both spheres.

Difference is not an inherently divisive concept that demarcates positions for individuals at the top of the social ladder and others at the bottom; it is rather an ideological

² Still, issues brought to the political arena are in many cases trivialized because they are ‘women’s issues’ and women are bound by adopting a masculinist voice to be seriously considered.

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tool employed to define and interpret historical situations of dominance. More precisely, it conceals and neutralizes the power relations involved in maintaining the subordination of a certain group of individuals in a given society (such as women) (Wittig,1992:29; Cupo, 2010:15). In light of this contention, when dominance is in place, it requires a justification for the divisions it creates within social systems. Hence, difference is the perfect justification for its unequal distribution of benefits.

Sexual difference constitutes a fertile ground for the emergence of divisions within the gender system; these divisions are instrumental in safeguarding the already existing power imbalances. In this regard, MacKinnon summarizes the whole process of unequal power relations between males and females as the precursor and primary cause of gender differences (MacKinnon, 1989:40).

The Sexual Division of Labor

The sexual division of labor in the Algerian society has its roots in the pre-existing notions of masculinity and femininity resulting from processes of socialization partly grounded on cultural interpretations of biological differences between the sexes, and on acquired social qualities.

In the Algerian society, men have not become aware of (or taken seriously) the issue of gender relations until the wide access of women to the public sphere and the successive legislative amendments that can be perceived, at least from one angle, as empowering women.

The starkest understandings of the gendered notions of private and public are still operative in our society, in the sense that relations within the household are subject to norms based on cultural and patriarchal models whereas the workplace is directly under the power of state laws. However, statist institutions are infiltrating within what people consider private matters to regulate the relations among individuals. Arguments may flourish against this contention for reality is not as simple. Along with women's access to the public sphere, their status has to a large extent been shadowed by acutely masculinist oppressive practices carried from the traditional private sphere.

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As women's presence in the public domain is increasingly visible, they tend to find a way out of their subordinate status in the sexual hierarchy. Nevertheless, it does not hesitate to seek confirmations of repressive beliefs in a society that seems very much imbued with male supremacy in spreading its toxins in the folds of social life. The necessity of order and concern for profit makes this coalition grow in strength and *form the political economy of society* (ibid: 208).

This elevates women to an individualized and freedom-oriented state, so patriarchy tends to rebalance the sexual order by curtailing their achievement through the role of the male in the family leading women, in turn, to use coping strategies (bargaining with patriarchy, a concept that will be elaborated in the next chapter) to preserve their position.

Thus, at the outset, the distinction between the private³ and the public spheres attributed socially constructed 'masculine' traits to the public sphere (production) and 'feminine' traits to the private sphere (reproduction). This model has survived throughout history despite organized rejection. The private sphere, for instance, has been opened to public services that offer nursing and housekeeping to allow women access to the sphere of production. Ironically, these services are majorly performed by females. Thus, it deeply marks female sexual difference as the most appropriate for domestic labor preserving the essence of the cultural model of the home, although taken to the public market, it creates what is called 'a care chain'.²

This, along with the emergence of global capitalism and the commodification of services, has widened the gap between the private and the public leaving the private sphere unrecognized, establishing the labor market as a field of social achievement and people seem to be bringing everything to the '*cash nexus*' (Touraine; Elliott 2007:186).

Okin (1989) pointed to a positive correlation between women's position at home and that of the workplace emphasizing the remarkable influence exhibited by the one on the other in what she labels 'cycles of vulnerability' which is a concept developed to

³ The public sphere here is understood as the labor market and the private sphere as the household.

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1.3. The Private/Public Division in the Algerian Context

It seems important to note that the Algerian household has generally been characterized by, but certainly not limited to, the domesticity of women, who are the caregiver who stands by the family and provides a comfortable space, especially for the male, be it the father, the brother or the husband...

Women's work alongside men in agriculture occurred in harmony in the pre-Ottoman era. But during the Turkish presence, the separation of society into two spheres, one female and one male, started to dominate. To maintain its legitimacy, the Ottoman state attempted to strengthen its military force which required the recruitment of males as 'Janissaries' and their separation from their immediate familial and tribal entourage and celibacy, as women had no place in that field⁴. Even though local history conveys stories of female warriors, they were either secluded or occupied roles of caregivers in their families and transmitting traditions (Adamson, 1998:58).

Wealthy women were literate and received special education in religion, Letters, and the arts. They also tended to have servants of both genders? mainly from rural areas. Both wealthy and poor women performed similar activities in the public as well as the private sphere. Ironically, it was the poor women who worked outside the household, in less socially valued fields than those allowed to their male counterparts.

The urban centers were the most affected areas by changing gender patterns. The rural areas preserved a supple sharing of labor between men and women. The French colonization emphasized this division and created new spaces where economic governance was handed to the colonizers, the fact that entailed two major consequences: the sharpening of a class division between the ruled and the ruling populations and severe restrictions on the Algerian domestic unit where the woman is secluded (Ibid: 61).

⁴ Although history gives striking evidence of women's active participation in the military such as the heroic figure of El Kahina who conducted ferocious battles against the Muslim conquest, and Fatma N'Soumer who organized a resistance against the French colonizers in 1854. (Lazreg, 2014:16)

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Algerian women also played a crucial role in the war of independence, their status had been targeted by both the French colonizer and the FLN, each to legitimize its agenda. On the one hand, the French claimed to advance emancipating values to liberate Algerian women from the shackles of Islam and patriarchal domination. On the other hand, the FLN, even though gaining female adherents, responded with dissent to what they considered ‘colonialist attempts into assimilation to western culture’ promoting the narratives of indigenous culture and traditions, including the model of the modest woman who acts as a gatekeeper of the Algerian and Islamic moral values and would cherish them in two manners (Leonhardt, 1996:6, Djerbal et al. 1992:108).

They praised them, as ‘*patriotic mothers*’, to the younger generations, supported male veterans through providing food, nursing which are by far conforming to the existing gender role at the time. They also acted as revolutionaries in the battlefields as bravely as men, making use of the very aspects of their culture perceived as secluding them and transforming them into instruments of liberation and resistance against the colonizer. This becomes manifest in the use of the veil as a means to conceal their operations, such as smuggling weapons and carrying weapons and passing unnoticed by the French soldiers⁵ (Leonhardt, 1996:6).

“The discourse on Algerian women was an important weapon in combating the French government’s depiction of a nationalist struggle as a minority movement led by religious fanatics with a pan-Arab agenda” (Vince, 2010: 454; Leonhardt, 2011:11)

The model of the female caregiver in the family has been preserved throughout the history of the Algerian society, it has been a focal point of the different modernist and traditional discourses (in their most unproblematic sense). In socialist Algeria, women were granted the right to education and work however, the particular sanctity of the family was held as a prerequisite for their recognition. That is, women’s relative independence was one of the standards of a patriarchal androcentric state.

⁵ Algerian women’s role was praised by the media and gained international recognition, for instance the newspaper El Moudjahid published diaries of a female fighter which altered the portrayal of women from docile victims of Muslim men to fierce revolutionaries fighting side by side with men (Leonhardt, 2011: 5).

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Algerian women benefited, although to a limited extent, from the global industrialization project, the expansion of educational opportunities, and formal recognition of their rights under the constitution (Djerbal and Ait Hammou, 1992:109).

In post-independence Algeria, the adopted policy for development was social communist reflecting the egalitarian aspect of the Algerian revolution and rejecting the capitalist model perceived as imperial and destructive.

The private/public debate constitutes a pivot within the arsenal of feminist critique. Although both spheres intersect and diverge in accordance with multiple considerations, they offer insightful accounts of the power interplay wherein individuals and groups are involved.

The new wave of liberalism has caused the dichotomous distinctions to intermingle, consequently, the sharp conceptual divisions are facing instability of signification and although the basis of such conceptions remains largely the same, it becomes a demanding task to distinguish between them. Hence, the public/private division exists at a conceptual level but empirically they intersect and one cannot be analyzed in isolation from the other. Studies revealed a strong connection between economy and patriarchy in defining the relationship between the family and work as representatives of the public and the private.

1.4. The Rallying of Capitalism and Patriarchy

Gender relations take different shapes but the single timeless aspect is their existence within systems that undergo processes of reproduction. Patriarchy, as a system that has undergone outward transformations, still carries the seeds of the structures that favor norms and social relations restricting individuals' freedom. Addi (cited in BenAli, 2009:93) stresses the continuous presence of the patriarchal culture in a different fashion. Patriarchy is no more an end in itself, it is rather an instrument to justify certain acts or as a unit of analysis against which we position different modes of behavior that serve to destabilize and overturn what was once considered universal and immutable.

Nancy Folbre (2003) mentions the Marxist political analysis of "coercion and exploitation" that draws upon the class analysis of the division of labor and leads to the conclusion that it serves the interests of the ruling class. This analysis proved to be

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sufficiently adequate in understanding the structure of the gender division of work which implies that this division is but a system serving economic efficiency (Folbre, 2003: 4).

Fraser describes contemporary capitalism as an institutionalized social order on a par with feudalism; this insight is further reinforced by an overall image of the status of women in today's society by Pateman.

“Women’s political standing rests on a major paradox; they have been excluded and included based on the very same capacities and attributes.”(Pateman; Bock and James, 2005:16).

Feminist and Marxist researchers have often pointed to the relevance of the ‘reserve army hypothesis’ relying on the premise that women are capital’s substitutes for male workers in less skilled, temporary, and stereotyped jobs as associated with what is labeled feminine attributes. Precarious jobs are actually occupied by women who are perceived as more docile and easier to be disciplined than males. women’s likelihood to choose part-time jobs is partly determined by the sexual division of labor, the fact that obliges them to devote a great deal of their time to the unpaid job (housework) resulting in a very poor occupational accomplishment and minor upward mobility in the professional ladder.

This model was originally provided as part of the literature on the alliance between patriarchy and capitalism to explain women’s inferior position, a more sophisticated extension of it could offer a counter-argument through bringing to the fore the emerging shift in gender roles in and outside the household since women’s presence in the workplace requires filling in some empty spaces (roles) that are in an increasing number of cases filled by men or by women who provide care services in exchange of money.

Post-independent Middle Eastern states have gradually infiltrated into the family structures in an attempt to control the socialization of its citizens, this is what happened with women in Algeria who have been provided rights for education then recruitment into the workplace as agents of capital⁶.

⁶ Iraq for example created programs for the ideological absorption of women such as the General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW). The goals of this organization were to: work for and fight the enemies of a socialist, democratic Arab society, ensure the equality of women and men in rights in the economy and the state, to contribute to the economic and social development of Iraq by co-operating with other Iraqi organizations and by raising the national consciousness of women, to support mothers and children within the family structure. This organization involved peasant women into political

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Women have become career-minded, as a result of capitalist temptations that succeeded to drag them to the workforce and make of them the ‘reserve army’ of capitalism, in part to extend the class of the ‘salaried’ and ensure the existence of consumerism.

1.5. Production and Reproduction: The Patriarchal Sexual Contract

As previously stated, social research in human behavior has identified a strong influence of society on the actions of individuals. The underlying structures that create categories for each individual to fit in, contribute later to their reproduction, it is a perpetual mechanism that preserves the character of each social group, and ensures its survival. This very process indoctrinates people to emulate the same predestined pattern according to the social category they belong to.

Gender, for instance, as a system that instrumentalizes sexual attributes to be interpreted into cultural traits that produce what we know as masculinity and femininity. At this stage, the reproduction of individuals begins through socialization and the distribution of gender roles, patriarchy plays a crucial role at this stage to introduce another pattern which is *reproduction* of which the major part is relegated to the woman since the hierarchical structuring of the position of men and women starts from the household which is the microcosmic incarnation of the macrocosm ‘society’. The reproduction of social roles is determined by the sociohistorical conditions of each society, in Algeria gender roles used to be, and are still⁷, distributed along with patriarchal norm which has taken many different shapes throughout the history of the country. The tribal structure highly reliant on kin ties sets strict rules functioning in favor of its survival demanding the individual’s loyalty and submissiveness, granting them affiliation and the *tribe's collective responsibility for the individual's actions* (Sharabi, 1988,29). There was no sharp distinction of male and female realms at the time, work was rather shared by the tribe

work and allowed them the implementation of the amendments in the laws of personal status (Kandyoti, 1991:182).

⁷ There exists a modernized version of patriarchy, of course keeping all the regional specificities, whose wilderness has been tamed to some degree throughout historical evolution and by state regulations, this will be further detailed in the second chapter.

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(settled ones) members to accumulate a common interest, marriages were arranged to reinforce the clan ties and therefore preserve the strength of the tribe and its customs, traditions, and beliefs. The tribal council '*Djemàa*' represented by the male elder of the tribe ensures the appropriate application of the tribal dictates and adjusts any misconduct at a group as well as an individual level. Ruling status in each household is granted to the patriarch (the father), under his watchful eyes, the family honor incarnated in its female members is expected to be seriously handled by its male members, women had no right of inheritance or ownership but were allowed a certain degree of authority within the family when reaching an older age, who takes the responsibility of decisions related to sons, daughters and later daughters-in-law and the socialization of grandchildren.

Touraine (1988) distinguishes two types of societal formation, societies capable of self-formation, independent of any *extrasocial order* and becoming their foundation, and societies that are reproduced by *metasocial guardians* such as religion and monarchy. Industrialized societies have attained a level of autonomy and have become the product of their actions whereas patriarchal societies still rely on *metasocial guardians* as foundational pillars.

In the Marxist tradition, social relations are considered as productive forces of gendered beings, but at the same time, '*they are inherently conflictive and subject to developmental change*' (Peet and Hartwick, 2009:148).

If approached from an economic standpoint, the thriving global market has commodified every aspect of our lives, even the most domestically produced goods are now industrially manufactured, the traditional producers of this kind of labor-women- are now incorporated as part of the equation being introduced into the so-called male realms and occupying highly ranked job positions⁸.

Moreover, as events are more globalized and transgress borders, many believe that social processes shaping their lives are largely influenced by forces external to their territorial

⁸ The market of the body has sharpened the objectification and devalued the humanity of women, it has appropriated the male body into a large scale public sphere to nurture the culture of consumerism (Tripp, 2006:168).

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states, making the issue of social justice not only a matter of internal consideration but of external forces as well (Fraser, 2013:192).

Such contexts require viewing social justice from a wider angle, Fraser (ibid:193) employs a useful conception to address obstacles to participatory parity, distributive injustice or maldistribution as impeding the full participation of some individuals in social life through economic structures. Misrecognition or status inequality refers to the deprivation of equal participation by cultural constructs.

The trap of 'reproduction' in which the women's movement has fallen into is one of the most misleading pathways in the pursuit of their rights. It is characterized by the desire to replicate what men have achieved without considerable contributions, the domains that have historically been dominated by men are now witnessing an increasing number of women accessing them. Reproduction can be viewed from a different angle, women have allowed the processes of their subjugation to persist and pervade through their roles as mothers who ensure the distribution of patriarchal family roles, they have made of themselves *'the inferior versions of the male subject'*.

It is paradoxical to see women reproducing the structures of their own subjugation, for instance, they raise the males who later dominate the public sphere and overtly abuse (verbally and physically) females. This is one of the major characteristics of a patriarchal social system.

Along with women's gradual access to the public sphere, they began gaining power and exert it in various social experiences.

In the same vein, Butler introduced the figure of the 'phallic lesbian' as the political picture of a woman who can transgress the heterosexual frame and become an active agent, McRobbie borrowed the term in the form of the 'phallic girl' who is endowed with a kind of *licensed mimicry of their male counterparts* (McRobbie, 2009: 83). To adapt the phrase to the Algerian context, the 'emasculated girl' is presented to Algerian young women who are encouraged to accept male hegemony and adopt so-called masculine traits such as assertiveness, actively involved in decision-making, being a provider for dependent others...

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Managing the dual shift figures as working women's responsibility to be resolved implicitly eliminating any critique of the patriarchal structure and presenting this new mode of feminine activity.

What constitutes a crucial part of the construction of the female model is making 'reproduction' a constituent of femininity, giving birth, performing care work and transmitting patriarchal beliefs and practices through generations and in contemporary time replicating what men have already created and overpassed such as occupying professional positions historically dominated by men, which is not an *avancée* in the history of their struggle for emancipation.

Pseudo sex positions are what feminism promotes as the common problem and status of women which is occulting the real disparities existing among women of different social classes who certainly do not share similar preoccupations.

Therefore, the creation of society has already been made based on a difference that celebrates the male subject and that implies the female deficiency, the job market as is currently known, is designed by men to fit men's needs. When women entered it and to be absorbed by the system, they were faced with great obstacles that hindered their career achievement and life stability, such as the sacrifices they have to give on behalf of their family life to get hired and ensure upward mobility in the professional realm.

Nevertheless, a Marxist analysis allows us to infer that society's cultural mode of existence is defined by its *mode of production*⁹, it is deeply influenced by the level of development of its productive forces¹⁰ (the economic structure).

For Delphy, domestic labor is production in itself but it has been marked as secondary according to the established capitalist norms in society and relegated to the sphere of reproduction borne by women and therefore unpaid. Accordingly, she categorized husbands and wives into classes one exploiting and expropriating the labor of the other due to the

⁹ Some African societies, such as the Mbuti, are still operating on the hunting-gathering style of life. They represent an interesting model of equality between the sexes 'the communal mode of production' wherein women enjoy the same level of authority over economic and political matters as men. (Turnbull, 1961; Hendrix and Hussein, 1988 :438)

¹⁰ In the Marxist tradition; forces of production indicate the labor power and the tools necessary to transform the natural environment and relations of production are the social relations that ensure the continuity and reproduction of social order such as kin, class and gender. (Hartwick and Peet, 2009: 156).

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capitalist and patriarchal modes of production. Her approach has been criticized (mainly by Brownmiller (1976), Hanmer (1978), Stanko (1985)) for its use of a single economic concept 'class' to analyze such a deeply assorted issue as gender relations in the household and for downplaying other significant non-economic factors involved in the determination of gender inequality. The instrumentality of her work lies in the emphasis it draws on the intersection of class and gender-defining husbands and wives as classes which are quite typical of patriarchal societies.

For Marx, this whole process is suffused with social, political, and ideological struggles generated by contradictions at the very heart of society—in the relations that bind social actors together as collectivities of producers (Hartwick and Peet, 2009: 156).

Domestic production has gradually been absorbed by the state and regularized into formal economic sectors. This infiltration favors systematic control over women's life patterns and sharpens the division between the public and private arena.

Women have been assigned the role of reproducers of the cultural traits that fall within the boundaries of national collectivity which define gender relations and identities. Paradoxically, they have been involved in their oppression for centuries by reinforcing patriarchal domination in society.

Edholm et al. (1977) distinguish three types of reproduction¹¹, reproduction of social roles, human or biological reproduction, and reproduction of the labor force (Yeoh et al., 2015: 30).

The reproduction of social relations ensures the survival of a society, it creates-and recreates the fundamental pillars that mark its distinguishing features, for instance, women give birth to children who will later be the workforce that capitalism needs. It constitutes a supply chain in which each individual is expected to fulfill a specifically assigned task according to the needs of the mode of production. The second aspect is the reproduction of the labor force which seems to be closely associated with the sexual division of labor, which is

¹¹ The reproduction of inequality unfolds in *cognitive bias* (Risman, 2011:19) which affects the individual's judgment based on previously internalized norms and values as regards a particular social situation.

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the reproduction of male wage earners and female housewives. This mechanism has undergone significant alterations that follow the changing economic atmosphere that will be thoroughly discussed in the second chapter.

The aforementioned types of reproduction are determined by an essential third type; biological reproduction which is often accounted for as natural and unbiased, or in the best cases as affected by political or economic factors, it is, in fact, primarily determined by the patriarchal relation of men to women and further enforced by other ideologies. So, for example, *the survival of the family in capitalism is not a relic from a former mode of production but the way human reproduction is controlled under capitalism (Mackintosh; in Meulenbelt, 1984:55)*

Reproduction ensures the continuation of a patriarchal system as it can function in favor of the alliance of two systems the capitalist and the patriarchal.

“... the form taken by a society at any point in its historical development is “conditioned by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labor on the one hand, and of the family on the other” (Engels, 1884; Brewer, 2004: 9)

Both production and reproduction relations cease to be oppositional (in the interests they serve) and begin to interlace to form a very strong thread that connects family and society to provide mutual interests via the exploitation of working women. In incorporating their roles as producers and reproducers capitalist and patriarchal systems make the maximum profit to maintain their continuation. This typical coalition is called by Eisenstein *Capitalist patriarchy*, which *breaks through* the aforementioned *dichotomies* and makes reproduction become subsumed by production.

1.6. The Family as a Hotbed for Reproduction

It is important in assessing the particular relation of women to the sexual division of labor to underscore its origin and the ideological complexity of its formation. The historical materialist analysis reveals that historical events have gradually involved the family in the process of demarcating divisive lines based on sex. This by no means rejects the claim that through its patriarchal structure and ideology, the family can structure society. Thus, *it is a*

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reciprocal relationship that involves *production and reproduction that define the lives of women* (Eisenstein, 1999: 201). From a radical feminist standpoint, patriarchy is the system that maintains power asymmetries between men and women utilizing several social institutions as operative mechanisms of self-support and control of individuals' behavior. These mechanisms concretize in marriage and the sexual division of labor that ensues. *Sex roles themselves are understood to be units of power and oppression* (ibid: 202). Such an account stands as monolithic, modest, and runs the risk of overlooking other equally important and pivotal dimensions in the determination of the social status of women, namely the economic dimension that has come to be a crucial element in reshaping gender relations within the family. Moving toward an economic materialist analysis of the subordination of women necessitates passing through a feminist Marxist theory of 'capitalist patriarchy', as named by Eisenstein, that points to the alliance between patriarchy and capitalism as a force of keeping women in a controlled position either as producers (workers in the labor market) or reproducers (as sexual beings within the family). As a consequence, they became trapped in an intersection of two axes that expropriate their 'work': production and reproduction.

In her attempt to bridge the capitalist system with patriarchy, and more precisely reproduction to production, Mitchell (cited in Eisenstein, 1999: 207) argues that:

“The family supports capitalism economically in that it provides a productive labor force at the same time that it supplies the market with an arena for massive consumption. The family also performs an ideological role in that it cultivates the notions of individualism, freedom, and equality, albeit they are at odds with social and economic reality”

One of the most prominent forms of the coalition of patriarchy and capitalism in the early twentieth century is the emergence of the family wage, which though it opened a gateway for some independence for women, represented an extension of the very oppressive system in the form of the sexual division of labor transposed from the domestic sphere to the labor market. Women working in traditionally women's jobs, which are generally low-status and low-paid, mirrors the still intact patriarchal essence “the material base” (as called by some feminists) *from family-based to industrially-based patriarchy* (Mann and Patterson, 2016: 192).

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The feminist movement of the 1980s was committed to acknowledging the role of the private realm and protecting it from state interventions and feminist manipulations. By doing so, it sharpened the gap between the public and the private. Others (Fraser, 1990, Dietz, 1988, Hernes, 1985) called for a feminist political theory that brings ‘private’ issues to a *non-state dominated public* sphere where it is possible to reconstruct a discourse that takes account of private morals and values and public norms.

A complete elimination of the division of spheres risks naturalizing the uniqueness of individuals. The existence of both poles is vital to the extent that they contribute to balancing the relationships among individuals and between the individual and the social. Ultimately, these realms are subject to reciprocal influence and the proper connectedness of the two implies the presence and celebration of the individuality of each gender.

1.7. Dependency and Household Headship

Late second-wave feminism and postfeminism were marked by a burgeoning literature hypostatizing psychological dependency as a female trait. This argument posits that despite women’s ability to immune themselves, even temporarily, from dependency to others, they are still enticed by facilitating the “dependency” of others on them. The concept of dependency epitomized feminine characteristics, laying the path for its stigmatization and eventual debasing of “caregiving professions” and pathologizing¹² ‘dependent’ behavior. (Fraser and Gordon, 1994:326)

In its economic sense, dependency has acquired multiple and often completely opposing meanings throughout its history. Its frame of reference changed from someone working for someone else to earn a living into individuals relying on government’s support and charity, this leads us to conclude that today’s wage laborer (in its capitalist sense) is considered an independent individual. (ibid:331)

¹² The American Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (1980) defined dependency as a personality disorder of which the essential feature “*is a pervasive pattern of dependent and submissive behavior beginning by early childhood ...people with this disorder are unable to make to make everyday decisions without an excessive amount of advice and reassurance from others, and will even allow others to make most of their important decisions...the disorder is apparently common and is diagnosed more frequently in females*”(American Psychiatric Association, 1987:353-54; Fraser and Gordon, 1994: 326).

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Fraser posits that the psychological attribute of dependency is the earning that triumphed over other connotations. Individual males and females become imbued with the social roles assigned to them, this becomes manifest in the instance of the male breadwinner whose *'ideologically interpreted economic role'* becomes naturalized and part of his personality and the female care work becomes a major characteristic of her personality.

Support obligations (as labeled by Mc Lanahan and Sorensen, 1989) and dependency are measured concerning the balance between the individual's income and his/her share of the whole family income.

'if the former exceeds the latter, the individual is coded as being a supporter of other family members. If the share of the total family income is greater than the individual's own income, he/she is coded as being dependent on other family members. If the share of total family income is equal to that of the individual's own income, the individual is coded as being independent'.

They estimate that total dependency is the state of receiving one's income from other family members (Mc Lanahan and Sorensen, 1989: 8). The term dependency is not utilized in this endeavor to justify for women any form of victimization, it is however a way to exemplify how women have used it and transformed it into an instrument of empowerment. Although dependency positions may function as impediments to individual achievement, the breadwinner role is more likely to encourage better career opportunities and enforce the authoritative status of the man within the family, dependency can be enjoyed purposefully by women and support obligations may constitute a burden on men as well.

Breadwinning is defined in terms of the financial capacity of the individual to fulfill his/her own needs and those of other dependents. Despite the connectedness of the concept of headship with breadwinning, the definition of headship varies across cultures, and in patriarchal societies, it maintains a social and patrilineal aspect, elder males are often the household heads they feature authority and economic responsibility. The current economic transformations have spurred a destabilization of these patriarchal norms; a growing number of Algerian households are now supported financially by females. Headship is relegated to the female as a result of widowhood, divorce, or disability of the male head; in this case, the household is both economically and socially vulnerable.

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The female breadwinner may remain under the male adult's (very often the husband or the father) headship while still being the primary financial provider for her household.

1.8. Care and Women's Work

The debate on women's work has overlooked many important aspects of women's lives, notably housework as a *heterogeneous activity* that on their way to overgeneralization and abstraction dropped fundamental issues mainly childcare. Equality in the workplace has long constituted a subject for heated debate, but rarely do we take as seriously the issue of gender equity in the household. Although both are complementary and neither sex thrives without balance between the two.

Baudrillard stresses the penetration and control of labor over individuals dominating their social lives and becoming more of a *reproduction*, he states that social formations are determined by the code of a 'structural law of value' in which labor is one sign among many. It is a site where social institutions merge and are reinvested to maintain the hegemony of capitalism with the contribution of culture, creating a sense of alienation. In his conclusion on the way critical theory tackles the notion of work, Dante (2003: 61) confirms that "*work has developed into a cultural form that has moved out of the sphere of production to affect all aspects of modern life*".

"Labor...pervades every aspect of life in the form of control, a permanent occupation of spaces and times, regulated according to an omnipresent code. Wherever there are people they must be fixed,... or being retrained. ... such labor is not, however, productive in the sense of the 'original': it is nothing more than the mirror of society, its imaginary, its fantastic reality principle. Perhaps its death drive" (Baudrillard, 1993a:14, cited in Dante, 2003: 57).

Caring necessarily suggests the existence of a dependence relation between two parties, one performing economic and non-economic activities (providers) to meet the needs of dependent children and adults (recipients). Care work exists in various forms: the care performed by women for their children is called "caring", by human service organizations is

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called “formal support” or “care work”¹³ and for elderly or disabled relatives “informal care”(Traustadottir, 2000:256).

The only instance in which it is referred to as “work” was the formal one performed by an organization for remuneration, however, the one delegated to the family is devalued and unrecognized publicly. This gender-based perception of caring can be undermining to one’s self-development and inimical to the autonomous ideal. Therefore, a reevaluation of what constitutes an autonomous and active social agent is required.

1.9. Individualization as a Performative Act

Berger and Luckmann¹⁴ posit that the reality that imposes itself as the reality *par excellence* is that of everyday life. It is defined in terms of two dimensions ‘here’ (place) and ‘now’ (time) and we experience our daily life with varying degrees of *closeness* and *remoteness* in relation to the outer world, the closer the person is to a given situation the better s/he can manipulate it. This everyday life is also an *intersubjective* world where people differ in many respects and share a common-sense¹⁵ about its reality. According to them, social reality constitutes three moments; *externalization*, *objectivation*, and *internalization*.

Externalization represents the world as already established and preceding the individual’s existence. Therefore, a human being has to actively engage in it and learn from it.

Objectivation: the very external world that an individual has to experience, is in fact a human creation that attains an objective aspect and becomes the external world that we know, thus, the objectivation and externalization are processes that undergo continuous reproduction.

¹³ A growing phenomenon of defamilialization of child care is noticed within the Algerian society to allow mothers more space and time for paid work, this phenomenon involves the transfer of care from the familial entourage into the market, in such a way as to complement family care.

¹⁴ Their position to the construction of the individual is constructionist and has been widely criticized for devaluing the impact of bodily nature on identity.

¹⁵ Common-sense knowledge is the knowledge shared by a group of individuals about the situations in everyday life that by repetition become unproblematic and taken-for-granted (Berger and Luckmann, 1966 :37).

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Internalization is the stage at which the individual finds personal meaning in the institutionalized world s/he finds him/herself in. (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 120)

The individual is not wholly subject to the socialization processes; there is always some space for adaptation and subjective reality. It is through *alternation*, which is a sort of re-socialization that old forms of socialization of individuals are reversed to be dismantled and replaced so that individual reality can change (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:176).

Fraser (2013) provides a comparative analysis of structuralist and pragmatics conceptions of identity as a discursive practice, by criticizing the structuralist model as essentialist and providing a rigid 'symbolic order' and praising the pragmatics model as pluralistic, context-dependent and dynamic allowing for more complex and discursively constructed social identities.

However, she cautiously draws from the pragmatics model in the sense of creating an equilibrium in criticizing essentialist perceptions of femininity and gender identity in general without being postfeminist. She takes the example of Kristeva who breaks away from the conformist conceptions of the subject to still norm-governed but not all-powerfully constraining '*signifying practices*' and complements it with the '*speaking subject*' which exists in a social and historical context but who has the capacity of '*innovative practice*'. Kristeva gives these innovative practices an absolute sense which risks taking the wrong direction and having detrimental consequences on both the individual and society. Butler celebrates these individual diversions from the laws as 'performative acts', the angle from which Algerian women's identity expression is most useful to this work. Such as their access to areas traditionally occupied by men and their assertiveness and even their ability to exercise authority from socially low positions (ibid: 143).

According to Beck and beck-Gernsheim (2000: 33), individualization is a metamorphosis of a socialization process that has changed the social meaning of life and work and community relations and reduced into the quest for securing one's life through access to the labor market and the maximization of individual material gains. Individualization is fueled by the three dimensions of the labor market; education, mobility, and competition.

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For Marx, the processes of individualization led to the formation of classes, because capitalism continues to ‘uproot’ workers and contributes to the deterioration of their living conditions transforming *the working class from a ‘class in itself’ into a ‘class for itself’* (ibid).

However, Max Weber (cited in Beck, 2002:23) argues that individualization processes are still governed by pre-capitalist traditions, mainly by status within them.

1.10. Education as an Individualized and Competitive Value in Constructing the ‘Female Careerist’ Model

In research undertaken in 2002 on the education of girls in Algeria, 87.6% affirmed that girls should not only go to school but pursue their studies at the university level. The reasons put forth by this group were self-assurance, finding a well-paid job, guaranteeing upward social mobility, and the ability to better educate one’s children. The remaining 13% justified their position by restricting women’s roles and capacities to founding a family and housework.

Women and girls consider the educational system as “a chilly climate”, suitable for asserting their identity (Hall and Sandler (1982), Allan and Madden 2006; Paludi, 2010: xiv).

‘The employment code imposes on Employers in both the private and public sectors are bound to provide three months of paid maternity leave, two hours per day for breastfeeding, and retirement benefits. Women are eligible for retirement at age 55, compared with 60 for men. Women can also receive one year of early retirement for each child (up to three children) that she raised for nine years.’ (Kelly, 2010:46)

According to a World Bank compiled statistic, literacy rates among women have risen from 60.1 percent in 2004 to 66.4 percent in 2007, university enrollment is estimated by 25.4 percent for girls and 18.4 percent for men, in 2006. The female labor force participation was 38.1 percent in 2007 compared to 35.5 percent in 2004 (Kelly, 2010: 44).

The government is investing a good deal in girls and young women as the class that could be seen as the example of successful integration policies of a social class that was once secluded and underprivileged. There is an exceptionally high rate of activity among them in

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gaining educational degrees and qualifications to become more competitive and visible in the labor market.

1.11. Feminization as an Unintended Consequence of Individualization

Ever since women decided to create a movement to fight for their rights and blame men and social institutions for their misery, they lost more than what they gained and every time they get a right, they give up many others and entrap themselves within an endless vicious cycle of dissonance.

The promotion of the gender equality model has led to a feminization of society where roles have become neutralized (theoretically), it also induced a blurring of cultural perceptions of gender relations. Still, in reality, men either react violently or withdraw from assuming some responsibilities within the household to be filled by women who are later blamed for men's 'degrading' social status.

The feminization of society, if it is ever to be true, is viewed through a masculine lens longing for its 're-masculinization'. Actually, what is to be considered as the feminization of society is the misfortunes of feminism, the misinterpretation of what gender equality consists of and what it requires from individuals applying it. In line with this contention, the treatment of the feminization phenomenon in this work will be as the abuses of certain freedoms and rights given to women and their clash with males' interests and perceptions.

If we analyze women's condition in society throughout history, we conclude that women have experienced improvements and gained recognition. As the two genders are highly interdependent, such a change affects members of both groups. This has induced men's worries about their status. This perceived threat to men's group identity is labeled a *social identity threat* that characterizes Algerian men's response towards the amendments granting women more social security and better status as compared to theirs which seems to have stagnated.

Social identity theorists have opted to expound this issue concerning intergroup inequality and social change. That is, gender relations are entrenched within a historical context which affects men's and women's perceptions of each other and their group identity. (Spoor and Schmitt, 2011:24)

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Thereby, research in this area has discerned two areas of comparison between men and women:

1- Intergroup comparison i.e. comparing men's and women's statuses in the present.

2-Temporal comparison tends to trace a more historical line of the characteristics of the two gender groups, typically focusing on different points in time.

Spoor and Schmitt's study (2009: 33) revealed high-status members' resentment, insecurity, and loss of a great deal of authority as a dominant social group, especially in temporal comparisons due to women's evolving social status.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that the identity of the member earning or controlling the financial resources of the family is absolutely crucial to patterns of resource allocation. That is, parents' care for members of the family's food, health,...etc is strongly linked to women rather than men (Kabeer,1994: 104).

Feminist scholars have not only stressed the particularity and complexity of women's experiences, but they have related them with issues of social relations and their impact on women's experiences as well. Locating women's status within hierarchical relations of domination, *not necessarily all masculine*, entails exposing the entangled macro and microlevel structures that determine women's and men's positions (Gorayshi and Belanger, 1996: xi).

At a macrolevel, it is important to note that the current economic flows are but the latest stages of a global capitalist system. The study of the micro-level everyday experiences spots some individualist instances through which women are active agents in the process of the creation of their realities.

1.12. Agency

This concept is not single and unitary, it has undergone a process of redefinition as a result of the fluctuations in the theoretical and empirical approaches that addressed it.

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Agency lies at the crossroads between the individual's proclivity to undertake actions and the underlying societal codes that function as road signs that direct her/his choices. Within these codes exist both empowering and disempowering discourses depending on the individuals' use and the position from which they relate to them, here lies real agency. The materialist wave stresses the immersion of the subject (represented in the material body) within a web of power relations, specifically, the relation between *the object, subject, and apparatus* (Spiegel, 2005; Bresser and Knittel, 2013: 14).

Agency is therefore *multiple and situated* and to generate knowledge on it, one must take account of its uniquely contextualized character.

Assad (2003) rejects any understanding of agency from the perspective of pain (resistance) and empowerment, this, to his view, is a single-direction and narrow definition that encapsulates human agency within the frame of decreasing pain and increasing self-empowerment while agency transcends this dichotomized thinking being vested with different definitions following the social networks where it emerges. Avishai's investigation of Jewish women's doing religion comes in convergence with Assad's assumption, he refers to individuals' enactment of agency and the play with regulatory threads as *self-authoring projects* that can only be realized within an institutional framework.

Agency is thus operational within the very schemas that seem to limit its operation. The agent navigates through these structures to attain a favorable condition, this navigation functions under three main assumptions; the first one being compliance that relays the idea that individuals may adhere to certain presumably restrictive practices as a shield against the negative impact that may be engendered by another set of practices.

Secondly, noncompliance that filters normative social structures and subjects them to personal interpretations and adaptation.

Thirdly, strategic appropriation and use of social structures as a *dynamic tool kit* that opens possibilities for interaction between spaces of possibles and object positions which in turn allows agents performative and autonomous acts (Avishai, 2008: 410).

Contemporary social constructivist theories load the concept with the responsibility to power, that is the actor is endowed with the ability to take action but carries the burden of morality and the subsequent penalty or reward.

1.13. Autonomy

Mackenzie (2014:16) believes that there are many conceptions of the word autonomy which are often confounded with what she refers to as its dimensions (self-determination, self-governance, and self-authorization); self-determination involves two elementary components, *freedom* conditions and *opportunity* conditions.

“Freedom conditions identify the kind of social and political constraints that interfere with the exercise of self-determination and the kind of personal liberties that enable it. Opportunity conditions specify the kinds of opportunities that need to be available to agents in their social environments for them to have choices about what to value, who to be, and what to do” (ibid:17).

Self-governance is having the capacity to make decisions that reflect one’s practical identity¹⁶. It includes competence and authenticity conditions that are crucial for autonomy. *Self-governance* spells out the freedom for making one’s life choices, practicing control over the values that contribute to one’s identity formation, it consists in having the skills that allow the individual to express one’s practical identity.

Self-authorization is a sine qua non condition for the realization of the two previous dimensions, it constitutes the ground on which an individual stands to be self-determining and self-governing (ibid: 18).

An individual’s exercise of autonomy occurs at three different levels: *“locally, with respect to specific decisions or choices; programmatically, with respect to domains of a person’s life, such as her finances, at work, or in her family or intimate relationships; or globally, with respect to a person’s life overall”*(ibid: 19).

This is to contextualize a woman’s ability to govern her life and impact her entourage, however, this conception cannot stand as absolute, autonomy is *‘relational’* and can only be adequate regarding social relations of care, and interdependence. Individuals need to create relational circles that maintain mutual intersubjectivity, to abolish oppressive socialization that has devalued activities performed by women and privileged men’s attributes which

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caused a massive tendency to aspire for individualistic, self-helping and self-serving activities, mainly attributed to masculinity, and move away from what is considered a feminine attribute.

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1.14. Conclusion

Algerian women's status has been subject to varying waves that have contributed to the formation of their identities. The economic parameter has proved to be the most significant in redefining constructs of femininity and masculinity, however, the preexisting social arrangements cannot be escaped or overlooked easily for they constitute the very foundation of individuals' selves. Domestic arrangements in our society are still to a great extent defined by traditional and religious norms that are deeply involved in determining gender relations within the household and in certain be at odds with the individual's autonomy and life choices.

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2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, light is shed on the construction of female subjectivity on two levels; the level of the social which is first disclosed as a sign system that positions individuals in their immediate social environment ‘the family’, in the workplace as a site of economic encounter and on the level of the self and how it relates to these two levels, together they are underscored within the framework of what Kandyoti theorized as ‘patriarchal bargains’. In order for these levels to be fully operative in the construction of subjectivity, an intermingled web of mechanisms are involved, including the political, the cultural and the economic.

2.2. The Cultural Construction of Women's Otherness: joining cultural relativism with semiotics

It is important to acknowledge that research on contemporary societies exhibits their internal heterogeneity and their tendency toward dynamism more than any time before. Notwithstanding, cultures¹ bear other elements that ensure their continuity, '*stabilizing properties*' which are inherent in the practices of their social reproduction (Friedman, 1994:76; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Miller and Wilford, 1998:42).

Reproduction, as a pivotal element, guarantees the construction and strengthening of cultural boundaries assertive of certain values and moral codes that draw the line between the self and the other. Definitions of womanhood and manhood, associate attributes that form binary constructs within a system of signs. A deconstruction of the discourse on otherness reveals the multifarious nature of the 'sign'. For instance, displacements of referents and signifiers are possible since "*in a discursive realm, we may consider that signifiers do not bear a relationship to anything real, they have a relationship only to other signifiers and are understandable only through other signs within the same system*" (Cupo, 2010:15). As the female category has been established by relating femininity to weakness and violability, different coordination is possible; the referent masculinity can be associated with weakness. Representations of women as caregivers have been legitimized in the work market, thus increasing their presence in professions such as education and healthcare that have later come to be stereotypically associated with women (Tickner, 2013:82).

In the social sign system, women are considered as the bearers of community boundaries and expected to carry the burden of the responsibility of these communities' survival as part of practices such as marriage and the traditional reproductive role of mothers as transmitters of collective identity, which is partly reinforced by the state allocation of these practices to the religious authorities that often nurture customary beliefs maintaining further, or at least legitimizing control over women. Women, in this case, act as signifiers of their communities by way of their conduct outside the immediate social environment. The enmeshment of family

¹ In her analysis of the transitional period in the Algerian society, Lazreg contends that the perturbation in cultural identity caused by industrialization has conjured up desperate attempts at preserving old constructs of womanhood and manhood. To relieve this "cultural anxiety", numerous plans have been put in place, among them is the reproduction of gender order (Lazreg, 2009).

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and religion and its legalization has reinforced the patriarchal threads within the family and subdued women's citizenship into a doubly masculinist hegemonic rule.

Still, the feminine is constructed as the "other" to be mastered and controlled, despite the relative independence that young women acquired, access to higher education, the ability to earn a living, and to demarcate a territory of their own in public life. However, the dragging forces of the Symbolic still curb this progress by primarily determining their position within the structure of the family.

Lorber (1994:282) posits that gender as a social institution possesses similar mechanisms that secure its continuity as is the case of other institutions (family, religion, economy) in significance and consequences. They work in tandem to maintain the same control system. Despite the drastic shifts in gender relations and women's lives, there still exist representations and practices fossilized in the very psyche of individuals and communities that obstruct the flow of social progress.

"Wherever there is hegemonic discourse, there is resistance discourse, gender is highly complex and dynamic that it is impossible to be shaped by a monolithic ideology despite being a model shaped by the state, there is a multitude of counteractive ideologies that continue to wield significant changes in constructs of womanhood. Redefining these constructs depends in large part on the cultural habitus" (Blackwood,2008: 151).

One of the most blatant manifestations of the hegemonic discourse is patriarchy that stands as a dynamic system of definition and redefinition of positions within the gender order.

2.3. Patriarchy as a Constantly Transforming System that Defines Subjectivity

The patriarchal system in its most traditional sense is undergoing a forceful process of transformation as a result of economic conditions and government policies in favor of a more open and autonomous aspect of society. This wave of change is readily apparent at a group level, the nuclear family is actively gaining ground over the extended pattern, with young couples increasingly managing their family budget independently of parents and collaterals. At an individual level, the image of an individualized female cannot be fully envisaged without serious consideration of constraining social arrangements given that the weight of patriarchal social practices (that exert their impact even on the legal system) still impedes the maturation of the individual, especially the female whose sexual identity remains fashioned under the watchful eyes of society. Her sexuality is subject to strict moral codes and she still symbolizes the honor of her family. On the other hand, women and girls are encouraged to come forward, to pursue pathways that grant them recognition and a degree of freedom, the most visible of these pathways being education and employment.

This pattern of individualization induces a strand of changes, notably the reconfiguration of constructs of womanhood within the heterosexual matrix. It is worth noting that the increasing number of employed women is accompanied by a significant indicator of quality as the majority of women in the labor force are university graduates and better ranked in their positions and even surpass their male counterparts in some institutions. The fact that imposes necessary accompaniments to keep pace with these socioeconomic mutations. The required accompaniments here are not political and judicial. Rather, they must stem from adjusting the whole system of representations and perceptions that are often in collision with developmental practices.

Hartmann (1981: 375) contends that the emergence of nation-states was responsible for strengthening and sharpening patriarchal gender roles within the household. Through transforming the relation of individuals to production, the family became an instrument of the state, an apparatus governed by a number of external factors. The shrinking of the extended family into a nuclear one, co-occurring with the state formation and the upsurge of state capitalism, have actually devised a structure that granted the household male headship and legitimized his role in other state institutions. Hence, capitalism contributed to some degree to

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the creation of a system that carries the seeds and internal logic of a patriarchal aspect mixed with superficial aspects of modernity that seemingly gave women a pathway for liberation and self-fulfillment, providing options that guarantee less resistance and more willful adherence. This is what Sharabi (1985) labeled neopatriarchy which requires scrutiny to be fully fathomed.

Materialist feminists adopt a conspiratorial stance in defining patriarchy holding that men ally with capital to keep women out of the labor. The transition into a labor market-oriented mode of production and a more individualized lifestyle entails radical changes inside the nucleus of society the family and inevitably on individuals, the fact which imposes rethinking the related theoretical arguments. Engels, in his preface to the *Origin of the Family*, points to the shift from the feudal mode of production to the capitalist, transforming it into “a society in which family relations are entirely subordinated to property relations”(<http://isj.org.uk/theories-of-patriarchy/>). Similarly in the Algerian context, one of the most prominent transformations is the gradual break away from traditional² forms of female economic dependence on the male and the collapse of the patriarchal extended form of family into smaller nuclear families that have female wage earners, leading to the gradual decay of the superiority of the male figure within the family.

For the purpose of this study, the definition of the patriarchal system as a hierarchy wherein certain people fill particular places. It is *rooted in economic, legal, and political structures and cultural institutions, that oppresses women through the assertion of male power, dominance, hierarchy, and competition*” (Tong, 1989:3 in Inhorn, 1996:2)

Inhorn brings to light the existence of the patriarchal DNA in virtually all institutions of social life first “*experienced within the family which serves as a template for the reproduction of patriarchal relations in other realms of social life*” (Inhorn, *ibid*: 3). By the same token, Gordon (1996:7) evaluates the patriarchal attitudes and practices in Africa as a whole operational class³ system that privileges men and disadvantages women and which “*continues to permeate African societies from the level of the family up to the state*”. The family as a

² The word ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ are used in this work in the sense of ‘old time’ and ‘present time’ but with respect to what old includes in terms of traditions and cultural specificity of social practices and what present carries in terms of illuminating modes of thinking and practices.

³ In Jaber’s conception, class oppression here is equated with gender oppression (2001:101), put differently, it is a double oppression exerted on women; the more class oppression is aggravated the worse women’s situation belonging to the lower social classes get.

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hotbed for the patriarchal system to operate is typical of the Arab world since it still constitutes the first legitimate unit of male/female encounter where gender socialization takes place and out of which the “father figure” emerges and is replicated in larger societal levels.

Yet, the social reality in today’s Algeria is rather complex, that is, the patriarchal system is not as simple as a materialist theory of patriarchy suggests (all men dominate all women). In this regard, Jonasdottir (1994:51) rightly states that a balanced analysis of the patriarchal system in any society must be undertaken not only in terms of relations of oppression but also in terms of appropriation. The idea of appropriation is further elaborated in this work using the *patriarchal bargain* as a strategy of dealing with limiting social norms, adopted by working women to curb the tension that arises between the requirements of modern life and the resisting current of hegemonic masculinity⁴.

Patriarchy carries many contradictory facets since it has been stretched over a variety of social contexts and disciplines. For Pateman (1988), it originally *refers to a form of political power*. However, it has largely been overlooked in the political theory of the twentieth century for the simple reason that it itself constituted the fundamental base of political thought at the time. It was revived only with the advent of the feminist movement as a central hindrance to women’s emancipation, and consequently, it occupied a large space within the academic debate and among activists. The several disagreements and confusions around this term stem from the failure to take an independent stand from the masculine source of epistemological reasoning, resulting in a dysfunctional concept that glosses over many patriarchal mechanisms. In Pateman’s terms (1988: 20), “*patriarchy has yet to be disentangled from patriarchal interpretations of its meaning*” if a productive analysis is to be conducted. To do so, she calls for tracking the historical evolution of the concept.

In a pragmatic model, as mentioned in the first chapter, social practices are viewed as discourses rather than structures. For a feminist political analysis, *discourses are contingent* and therefore susceptible to circumstances of change, (Fraser, 1992: 185), to position the subject within this model, it is relevant to note that s/he assumes different positions in different discursive strands. Departing from this contention, we can assess women’s

⁴ The term was first utilized by R.W. Connell (1980) to identify a set of regulatory and normative practices to be embraced by a category of males that guarantees to them differential access to power and concomitantly builds a hierarchy within the category of males and among males and females.

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accomplishments in the public as a transgression of gender norms while being incapable of such a performative act in the private.

Mehdid contends that women's relationship to the state *is mediated by patriarchy and history*. In her article on the role of gender politics in the process of state formation, she emphasized the feminine symbolic aspect of the modern nationalist discourse, be it a liberal discourse or a conformist one. She used the term '*en-gendering the Algerian nation-state*' through these discourses. The modern Algerian nation-state building compelled a shift in the symbolic representation of the feminine form reproducing patriarchal values into reproducers of "*nation and of gendered meanings of resistance*" (Mehdid, 1988:81). The post-independence⁵ period marked a profound redefinition of identity in an attempt to create a unitary homogenous model of the citizen enforced in the name of an egalitarian system. The principle of equality inscribed at the legal abstract level is translated, in the everyday world of individuals, into the dissolution of one into the other, and the transformation of one into a function in the world of the other (Cavarero, 1992: 40).

Modern conceptualizations of patriarchy have delved deeper into the origins of structures of sexual domination to determine the position of women within it. Feminist scholarship on the Middle East suggests that the major site where patriarchy is most pervasive and operational is the family. Clearly, traditional forms of patriarchy (patrilineality, endogamy, ...) have significantly been reduced in Arab societies (although such observation remains largely context-dependent) as a corollary of diverse entangled factors that will be detailed later in this chapter. Notwithstanding, a more dangerous and destructive form of patriarchy is resurging, carrying a liberal figure that obscures an oppressive essence. The liberal female role model presented to women across the globe, and that has reached Third World women recently, seeks to create an individualized young female subject through economic processes that set new rules of femininity and conditions for compliance and offering a chimerical sense of

⁵ The immediate post-independence period of the Algerian state was marked with a blatant establishment of a patriarchal policy that deprived women of many of their political rights as citizens; their case was considered as secondary for the state agenda. Additionally, women's organizations were virtually nonexistent except the National Union of Algerian Women (UNFA) that was officially acknowledged by the state. The feminist movement stirred into action in the 1980s as a reaction to the accumulation of the restrictive state practices that eventually crystallized in the 1984 Family Code that justified the dominion of patriarchy as a social and political system (ibid).

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satisfaction and independence from subordination to males. The reproduction of patriarchy in the Algerian context is manifest at the state-society level and the person-to-person level⁶.

Sharabi's extensive analysis of the patriarchal structure of Arab society⁷ offers a satisfying understanding of the evolution of social forms. Social ties emerged from tribal affiliation deeply engrained among individuals. This tribal system functions based on individuals' identification, loyalty, and abidance reciprocated with *the tribe's collective responsibility for the individual's actions* (Sharabi, 1985:29), communal relationships represented suffocating forces that used women as a commodity to be exchanged in the marriage market. Notwithstanding, the inescapable socioeconomic transformations later entailed the dissolution of many hierarchical relations and to relinquishing the extended family model into the nuclear family that represents "*an outcome and a motivation of economic transformation*" (ibid: 31). The nuclear family has endowed subordinate members' independence from the dominating figure of the father in exchange for a somewhat democratic relationship among them, attenuating the pressure of vertical linkage into a horizontal one. By extension, this condition is favorable for women since it overthrows the dual domination of the father over the family and the male over the female thus, leading to emancipating opportunities such as education and work.

To him, Arab societies are societies that have absorbed some of the aspects of modernization from the west preserving all the essential constituents of traditionalism, making it a society incapable of standing on its own, building an independent economy and culture. At its outset, modernity was marked by constant agitation, rapid change, and transformations of social relations at all levels.

The Arab nationalist vision propounded by twentieth-century leaders has been adopted at a narrow scale (the family, the clan, the religious group...) preserving members' unity within the boundaries of the community where they feel security, whereas it did not concretize at a larger state-level mainly because of the lack of a sense of harmony and integration that the

⁶ Regarding the conceptualization (measuring) of patriarchy, Walby distinguishes two dimensions of patriarchy, private and public. Private patriarchy as a category that covers marriage, divorce, mobility and inheritance, whereas public patriarchy resides in the public sphere in employment sites, politics and education.

⁷ Attempts at analyzing the class structure of Arab societies yielded a great disparity among research results given the complexity of each social context. However, the indisputable truth on these societies is the pyramidal shape of the social structure with a large section occupied by the poor. Algeria was found to be one of the most pluralistic societies with a prominence of *class and communal cleavages* (Barakat, 1993:20).

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masses experience in Arab countries. Consequently, individuals may pride themselves with conserving what used to keep them united within the family;

Society in fact lives on the differences/inequalities that distribute different roles, functions and destinies among persons. It would therefore seem that modern society, as a sphere distinct from the state, reflects the pre-modern system of power. But this is not the case. In fact the modern political model has itself worked out the concept of society in accordance with its own special logic, making it, too, emerge from the presupposition of the state of nature (Bock, 2010:36).

The transition from a community-governed pattern of social formation into the state-managed one is compatible with the social contract theory. The discourse of modern nationalism itself straightforwardly utilizes ‘the home’, ‘mother’, ‘guardian’ of cultural values as symbols of collective national identity that are significantly related to kinship ties, the traditional role of women and the family. Constructions of nationhood are therefore tightly related to gender, and women are seen as the gatekeepers of the symbolic identity but since their position is determined by state regulations and for the interests of the group, i.e. politicized, it may all easily be downgraded or submerged for the same reasons during a different stage of nation-building (Kandiyoti, 2004:26).

In addressing the reasons behind the maintenance of a patriarchal system so intact and resistant to change in the Algerian society, Islam is brought to the fore as a major factor. A glance at the history of the establishment of the Islamic tradition exposes a divergence of opinions as to the status of women. One claiming the emancipation of women with the advent of Islam and its degeneration with time, the other maintaining that rights endowed to women at the time were undeniable⁸ but no more suitable for contemporary society.

A distinction between classical and modern patriarchy seems imperative at this stage since patriarchy has transmogrified throughout history and developed mechanisms that have undergirded its survival, notably; religion, political institutions, and social customs (Elsaadawi, 1997 cited in Shihada, 2007:167).

⁸ Historical accounts on the situation of women in pre-islamic pagan era point to a number of acts women were allowed, including the ability to have more than one husband, they were not veiled nor segregated by sex, they were actively involved in political and military life (Ankerberg and Caner, 2009: 15).

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Although features of classical patriarchy are still visible, contextual discrepancies are undeniable. It is a somewhat demanding endeavor to discard the criteria based on the level of intrusion of patriarchy is determined. Social class, religious affiliation, education may stand as the major determinants of the degree of patriarchal influence.

Neopatriarchy as a Modernized Form of Patriarchy

Before embarking on a formal definition of neopatriarchy, despite its elusive character, it is worth noting that *it refers equally to macrostructures (society, the state, the economy) and to microstructures (the family or the individual personality)* two facets of the same coin that make it instrumental in the present research work. Neopatriarchy can be defined as a reshaping of the same patriarchal, traditional social order into a modernized⁹ one, however, this process occurs at a surface level allowing the inner layers of the patriarchal system to operate and be reinforced. It represents a transitory period of the majority of Arab societies¹⁰ where no particular characteristic of modernity or patriarchy is fully settled, that is, it is shaped by both external and internal factors. Sharabi (1988) points to two basic terms that are constitutive in its formation: dependency (as the Arab society's economic form) and patriarchy (as its cultural construction). The formation of a neopatriarchal society is featured by an incapability to perform any autonomous action due to the immense incompatibilities between its inner traditional components and the external modern forces imposed on them.

⁹ The term modernity or modernized as used in this work denotes a phenomenon that emerged as a result of the contact between imperialist Europe and Arab countries, its major revolutionary aspect is its transcendence of political and religious horizons. It is manifested in everyday actions, and in larger scale institutions: parliaments, subcultures, cultures and societies. The modernized version of the Arab societies is a distorted one based on (Sharabi, 1988 :22).

¹⁰ The political system in the Arab world is built on a history of exploitation, one of the recent instances of such a weakening and divisive power of exploitation is global capitalism that has created a hierarchy of nations, core nations (the developed countries) that exploit peripheral nations (developing countries) and keep them in a state of dependency which persists in modern day society. Therefore, many Arab economies are still manipulated by western capitalist rules, and what is imposed on men and women does not correspond to the preexisting social arrangements. For instance, a woman's access to the workplace allows her very limited freedom to undertake decisive actions in the private sphere. This is partly due to the strong kinship networks and religious affiliations.

2.4. Governmentality: the Infrastructure of Neopatriarchy

The notion of power and its pervasiveness in individual and institutional life has preoccupied social research and philosophical theorization throughout the history of human intellectual reflection.

The twentieth century was marked by heated debate around the issue. One of the most prominent figures that tackled it was Foucault, whose theoretical and empirical analysis of power took different shapes and matured throughout years of his intellectual development. In 1980, he revisited the analysis of governance utilizing a range of underlying structures that devise mechanisms of conditioning subjects. These are labeled as techniques of governmentality. Social structures are produced and reproduced along with rules of governmentality that ingrain the seeds of freedom and self-control (coercion and self-technologies) within individuals. As a mode of subject production, it relies on three major pillars:

- First; **liberalism** being the decomposition of the state government into micro-level institutions that keep track of individual behavior. This principle is highly dependent on the autonomization of individuals (also emerging from the principle of neoliberalism) amounting to the production of determined and goal-oriented subjects (as ‘entrepreneurs of the self’), undermining any sense of community and implementing a sort of conditional freedom so as to reach the ultimate objective of governing through the very instrument of liberation (Dean, 2002: 131; Lemke, 2001: 201; Rose, 1999 cited in Vintges, 2012:5).
- The second pillar is **pastoral power** that arises from Hebrew and Christian pastorate system that relies on knowledge of individuals entrusted to the pastor. The strength of this mode of governance lies in the ability not only to know subjects’ deeds but in the spiritual connection, the pastor establishes with them in an attempt to earn their trust and guide their souls. The figure of the pastor is encountered in various aspects of social life notably in the household.
- The third being **security** which is a concept that revolves around providing a solace within a plethora of discourses of danger that are said to surround subjects.

The pastor in the Algerian society stands for the patriarch who is endowed with the capacity to provide protection and allow a limited space of freedom for individuals under his guardianship, a concrete instance of this is the family.

2.5. The Sexual Contract as a State Tool for the Creation of the Female Citizen

The normative order¹¹ of “classical patriarchy” has been subverted mainly as a result of the withering away of the patrilineal extended household, fragmenting, and distributing authority between the husband and the wife in the nuclear family.

At a political level, the patriarchal model of the political order was supplanted by the contract theory. As Pateman (1988:32) puts it: “*the father is (metaphorically) killed by his sons, who transform (the paternal dimension of) the father’s patriarchal right into civil government. The sons alienate this aspect of political power into the hands of representatives, the state*”. Here, two types of contractual relations abound; a contract among individuals (one of parenting, one of marriage...) and a contract between the state and individuals (between the state and women, between the state and men). The reason behind such division lies in the inappropriateness and a failure of the traditional social contract theory to delineate the position of the female within the story. At this stage, the nature of the individual’s relation to the state in modern civil society is to be illuminated with particular reference to pivotal factors all operating under the banner of what Pateman labels ‘*the sexual contract*’. For the original social contract portrays the contractors as equal partners, while it is hard to hold such an account as valid in light of its blunt marginalization of women and failure to secure equal relations among citizens in practice, that is, it is a contract that is undemocratic and patriarchal. To have a close look at the Algerian reality, one would assume that despite the modernized character society is inscribed with, it remains governed according to patriarchal standards which, in order to secure their existence, are actively involved in the production and reproduction of the most important element in the contract: individuals.

In developing countries, the state plays a crucial role in designing and regulating social relations in addition to directive policies that in turn feature the life expectancy of women. Its role can be either a facilitator for their integration as citizens in public life or reinforcement of

¹¹ A borrowing of the Lacanian expression of “the symbolic order” is made here with caution, as it conflates the linguistic structures with cultural traditions and kinship structures as fixed determining factors of subjectivity formation. It presents the subject as the passive reproducer of the language system. His account encloses the individual into a timeless and rigid binarism of identity that erases tensions and transformations. The only site that allows change for a gender identity is its susceptibility (*precariousness*) to *repressed libidinal drives* which ultimately lead to psychosis. Hence, it is not a dynamic process of change but an inherent condition accompanying the individual since a very young age and haunts his stability (Fraser, 1992: 183-184).

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discriminatory practices. It can also have contradictory goals; offering more egalitarian and emancipatory chances to women and preserving traditional gender roles within the family. For instance, the modern apparatuses of the state managed a deep infiltration within the family gaining some of its members' fidelity at the expense of others: women have received considerable attention by the state starting from large access to education meritocratic policy in job opportunities to the quota system and the legal amendments, while at the same time keeping vital points of decision making in both private and public spheres in the hand of hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, in this type of polity, the Algerian government functions as a paternal power that regulates the behavior of its citizens who in turn may adhere to social values that are different from and could even contradict state rules. From this vantage point, one would infer that the Algerian individual endures moments of instability and role conflict during several of his/her public and private interactions. Family responsibilities as caregiving constitute a burden for working women who struggle to balance them with financial security demands. This is what Austin, Kahn, and Farmer (1984) analyzed as part of "*the structure of opportunity (the career demands) and structure of expectation*" (socialization model).

A revised version of the sexual contract is taking place in Algeria along with the gradually dismantled ideal of the male breadwinner. It is becoming a process of negotiation of meanings; women attempting to secure a place amidst the tide of fast shifts that characterize economic life and assert their own being within the household.

Kandiyoti (1991:2) posits that to make an accurate analysis of women's position in any country, it is fundamental to address the political background both historical and contemporary. According to Moghadam (2011), 'the political opportunity structure' has a significant role in helping women to barge through the tide to obtain their rights.

Along similar lines, Joseph (2002b) observes the Middle Eastern version of the sexual contract as an institutionalization of the gendering of citizenship. In considering the analysis of the family as part of politics, she replaces the concept of the sexual contract with what she calls the 'kin contract' which, she argues, is most suitable to the existing relationship of women and citizenship in the Arab world. Indeed, it is the patriarchal aspect of the Middle Eastern families that are still plaguing most political practices. State and family are perceived as mutually constitutive, the state shapes the family structure through regulating legal

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practices such as marriage, the existence, and authority of the state hinges on the formation of individuals from the family into citizens (Freidman, 2005:166).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the domestic is the invention of the state in both Western and Middle Eastern societies. States created the public/private separation to exert more control on citizens. The difference manifests in the space allowed for the domestic to be occupied and its control over members then the absorption of the domestic by the public in the Middle East. It is because spheres are in reality interwoven by patriarchal relations, that women are faced with similar obstacles that are transported into the various threads of the social fabric.

Despite the evident gender inequality within the family system and resistance of its members, they may often favor a resilient negotiation with oppressive patterns concretizing in the care activities they provide in exchange for the freedom to access public domains.

While many, if not most, Middle Eastern states acknowledge the idea of the social contract (Swirski 2000) or give lip service, on paper, to the idea of citizenship as a set of contractual relationships between “the individual” and the state, political practices, and legal realities subordinate the citizen-subject to “the family” in most of these states (Joseph, 2005:158).

In this sense, women and also men’s identities are constructed in relation to the kin contract that empowers the family to become a ready instrument in the hand of the state to mediate citizenship. The blurring of boundaries between the private and the public, the recurrent appraisal of the family metaphor in political discourses rendered the situation of women as citizens delicate swaying between recognition and undervaluation.

In such an undertaking, it is imperative to disclose the underlying power structures that define the emerging discourses regulating people’s relations. That is, people tend to ascribe to some discourses which do not have a clear nature (Ilcan; in Belanger and Gorayshi, 1996: 115).

2.5.1. The Construction of the Female Agent

The construction of the agent does not occur outside the boundaries of the social context, it is first taken in charge by the immediate circles (the family) then by the larger ones (the workplace).

Giddens (1991), in his in-depth analysis of gender as a social structure, refers to the simultaneous interaction between the individual and the social, describes the process of a social formation as effectuated by humans themselves. It is their innovative actions that determine the pathway that a social structure (in this case the gender structure¹²) may take, social structures act on people and people act on social structures (ibid: 11).

Empirical research in family studies and social change suggests that the individualization thesis has gone too far in expecting social actors' liberation from all social ties. In real life, it cannot fully concretize, since individuals are not 'self-seeking' or exhibit extreme '*selfish individualism*'. They are rather more attentive to the needs of others and operate in '*a moral individualism*' fashion because they are connected through various kinds of social ties and defined according to cultural prescriptions that *ensure the survival of the collective* (Charles et al, 1994:15). This leads to the moral drive in women's identity construction despite transcending some of the pulling forces of patriarchy. To maintain a socially acceptable image, they build self-censoring obstacles in their career pathways such as moral obligations within the family (care work) and restrictions on movement and conduct outside the family. Furthermore, as noted by Joseph (1993: 453, cited in Inhorn, 1996: 7), family relations in Arab societies are further nurtured by virtue of 'patriarchal connectivity' in which kinship bonds that relate family members are taken advantage of to reproduce patriarchal power. That is, individuals in a social

¹² Risman suggests that any social structure must be defined in consideration of two parameters; constraint and action. The former being the external force that exists beyond individuals' reach and that limits or directs their actions. The latter is the individual choices that social agents opt for and eventually compare their own choices with those in similar positions within the structure. A social structure is thus the vacuum that functions as an enclave determining and shaping people's beliefs, perceptions and eventually actions. Giddens completes the picture by elucidating the individual performative role in shaping society in return.

She divides the gender structure into three main levels of interaction: the individual level, interactional level (the deeply ingrained patterns and meanings), institutional level (macro level discourses, *formal organizational schemas*) (Risman, 2011:10).

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system feel the need for emotional connection and involvement with others, a crucial component in the construction of the self. As it happens to exist in a patriarchal system, the figure of the patriarch takes primacy in directing the lives of relatives by means of gender and age. One of the most manifest instances of that is the brother-sister relationship, since a very young age, the brother exerts a certain form of power over his sister. Interestingly, this situation may be reversed if other parameters are added. When a female starts to earn social status either by aging (inside the family mothers-in-law have power over their sons' wives) or obtaining economic status (building an occupational identity in the employment market). What is problematic here is that mandatory community membership leads women to surrender to patriarchal gender order and negotiate their relations as individuals in the larger social context.

Pateman's insight on the sexual contract elucidates the entrenchment of the factors involved. Despite her emphasis in this approach on the western and more precisely the Anglo-Saxon milieu, it carries a significant pertinence to Middle Eastern societies. She argues that individuals become part of institutions via contracts that are part and parcel of the institutional context, *these contracts create relationships within institutions*, thereby, the existence of institutions¹³ is highly dependent on these contracts and how influential they are on individuals. In the institution of marriage, there is an intricate relation between contracts, the legal contract that offers equal status to both the male and the female, the family code that still practices some restrictions on women, and the cultural contract involving customs and traditions. As the marriage institution is relegated to the private sphere, it is most likely to abide by the rules of the most influential contract in this context: the cultural, that has precedence in interpersonal relationships.

Admittedly, the preexisting social structure functions as a coercive power on the individual (such as the process of socialization). The recurrence of this enforcement

¹³ Martin extended Lorber's (1994) use of the term "institution" in her argument that gender should be conceptualized as such. She identified the criteria for a social institution as follows: (1) Characteristic of groups; (2) persists over time and space; (3) includes distinct social practices; (4) constrains and facilitates behavior/action; (5) includes expectations, rule/norms; (6) is constituted and reconstituted by embodied agents; (7) is internalized as identities and selves; (8) includes a legitimating ideology; (9) is contradictory, rife with conflict; (10) changes continuously; (11) is organized by and permeated with power; and (12) is mutually constituted at different levels of analysis (Risman, 2004:431).

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becomes habitual, commonsensical, unconscious and internalized. This triggers particular behavioral responses in social interactions. However, actions can 'rebel' against structure and meet different expectations to the normative ones. They may gradually become the norm if they gain collective power. This process often requires a grassroots transformation of the constitutive layers of a structure. The feminist protests in Algeria led between 1981 and 1984 to demand abolishing the family code project stands as a significant example for a vigorous challenge to the existing dominant structure that relegated women to a minor and secondary position¹⁴.

Departing from this perspective, one would recognize the actual construction of women's gender identity and how they have actively been involved in influencing the very structures that once oppressed them. It is true that some external powers may be involved, for instance, if we tackle the issue of the workplace and the increasing need for more labor force participation, women have found a way to support and liberate themselves from economic dependency. As they managed to create an occupational identity (what is often called the bottom-up approach).

2.5.2. New Visibilities among Women

The very systems responsible for the functionality of the different spheres of social action bear the seeds of its dysfunctionality. They intertwine care and control, submission and power, kinship, and state. It is the orientation and the direction their action takes that determines their effects. To bring it back to the point at hand, the relation between the family and the state as a materialization of such an intermingled web of mutually shaping and constantly changing factors. The recognition of citizens as autonomous individuals corroborates the idea of individualism, however, recognizing compliance by social and community norms may undermine the existence of real gender equality in citizenship. This is by no means a rejection of the existence, variability, and dynamicity of the family/state

¹⁴ Numerous anthropological researches (Brown, 1975; Weiner, 1976; Sacks, 1979; Sanday, 1981) have underscored the structural organization of gender roles in social contexts different to the patriarchal ones, many of the analyzed matrilineal households exhibit a great deal of autonomy and prestige enjoyed by women, Peletz (1996) contends that "prestige differentials" (systems of prestige or status, hierarchies) lie in cultural assumptions of similarities and differences between men and women originating from cosmology (as the case of Malay societies he analyzed), religion or other belief systems, as a consequence institutions of marriage and kinship follow naturally.

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connection, but to indicate that the path of the formation of the female (and male) agent in society must be paved on the basis of a sane and well-established relationship between the involved parties. Since this connection is contractual, individuals must be actively and equally involved.

Individualization processes of young women brought women to the fore, to positions of social visibility with new modes of conduct. This condition may seem as empowering and suggestive of gender equality, but on the other hand, power is not in their possession. In light of Deleuze's analysis of what Foucault referred to as '*visibilities*' and their misleading essence, they are actually manipulated by a collectivity of ideological forces that present these women '*not as forms of objects, nor even forms that would show up under light, but rather forms of luminosity, which are created by the light itself and allow a thing or object to exist only as a flash, sparkle or shimmer*' (Deleuze, 1986:52, cited in McRobbie, 2009:60). Women take the opportunity of employment to gain more visibility in society contributing to the creation of 'feminine citizenship' tailored in accordance with a state-governed market economy. Their determination is, therefore, not fully stemming from an independent will but is mediated and manipulated by external forces. Woolf, in her analysis of the myth constructed on femininity in the American society, states:

"The informal currency system of the marriage market, formalized in the workplace, was enshrined in the law. Where women escaped from the sale of their sexuality in a marriage market to which they had been confined by economic dependence, their new bid for economic independence was met with a nearly identical barter system" (Woolf, 1991:21)

"...women were open to accepting a direct financial reward system that replaced the indirect reward system of the marriage market" (ibid:30).

One of the paradoxes created in relation to adherence to a particular strand of discourses is women's adherence to narratives of consumerism. Besides the existence of the family as a social institution that has historically been in charge of reproducing male and female subjects molded-in agreement with pre-established norms. It seems to be enormously reductive and itself influenced by the emergence of the global market that provides a plethora of models enforcing certain aspects of femininity (and masculinity),

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promoting so-called empowering slogans for women and of gender equality, freedom and independence of women and concomitantly dragging them gradually into the ‘consumer culture’.

2.5.3. Bargaining with Patriarchy

A range of social, political, and economic factors are involved in the construction of the female subject. Interestingly, the economic factor is now widely recognized and responded to by young women. As the growing opportunity to make a handful of life choices; work and consequently having an income of one’s own to participate in the consumer culture, reduce economic dependency on the male, and provides an opportunity for control over one’s life. This contract is not without its terms and conditions.

Early researches on the power interplay in gender relations have often portrayed women as mere subordinates and victims of male domination, more recent feminist analyses began to deal with some overlooked aspects of power relations in which women play a hidden but active role. This is what Macleod labels “*accommodating protest*” which refers to the role played by women within the gender power game. On the one hand, they attempt to resist the constraints imposed by patriarchy¹⁵, on the other, they still comply with some ‘immutable’ gender roles and seem to reinforce them. For instance, marriage is still a prerequisite for a female and she is obliged, by patriarchal rule, to get married before reaching a certain age. Her duties as a wife and a mother, ‘a caregiver’, have never changed and any incompetency or refusal to fulfill them appropriately would subject her to stigmatization and denunciation of her identity as a woman in society. The subsequent weakening of traditional restrictions lead to admitting that women have accomplished better than what was expected, they have even outpaced men in certain respects. Notably, given the relative economic independence they have obtained, they started to contribute a great deal to the family income but forms of collective power based on gender persist. Despite the fact that attitudes have changed nowadays, social institutions and practices leave women a small room of prearranged choices that induce a sense of insecurity and alienation.

¹⁵ Sharabi (1988) identified the primary form of a patriarchal society as follows: *the pristine patriarchal family in the tribal formation, the tribalized social formation, the clan in the Islamic city and the family in the context of merchant capitalist relations.*

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In line with this argument, women who join the work market for salvation from patriarchal constrictions are entrapped back into the same system that utilizes different mechanisms of control with the same primary purpose.

Political feminist analysis of the evolution of family structures posits that the transition from a patriarchal family into a more “egalitarian” one necessitates the abolition of all that is patriarchal. But the characteristics of the Algerian family remain manipulated by a patriarchal material base consisting of control over women’s work in the family both inside and outside the household, leading women to cooperate with the current status quo and maneuver for the desired self-fulfillment. This is what Kandiyoti calls *patriarchal bargains* or what is referred to as an *accommodating protest* by Mcleod.

The patriarchal bargain is a result of an array of cultural and political practices rearranging constructs of womanhood to satisfy the needs of the labor market and to be in perfect match with the social environment. It is a version of the sexual contract that molds a female subject capable of competing, succeeding and asserting herself in public domains but that has failed to wipe away traces of a reductionist system forcing her to comply with its rules in private domains and to bargain with it for more gains or at least to preserve what is gained thus far.

At this stage, it seems to urge to narrow down the scope onto patriarchal bargains that provide various scenarios of a woman’s ‘rational choices’ or ‘coping mechanisms’, each dependent on the options (political, cultural...) available to her. “*Patriarchal bargains do not merely inform women's rational choices but also shape the more unconscious aspects of their gendered subjectivity, since they permeate the context of their early socialization, as well as their adult cultural milieu*” (Kandiyoti 1987a, 1987b; cited in Kandiyoti, 1988: 286). Kandiyoti supplements further her account when she outlines the life cycle of patriarchal bargains by using ‘the sexual paradigms’¹⁶ as a set of rules for acceptable sexual conduct but that are “*also vulnerable to change when existing rules fail to operate, when anomalies can no longer be evaded, when the real world of everyday experience*

¹⁶ The term was originally used as “scientific paradigms” by Thomas Kuhn (1970) and borrowed by Janeway (1980) in her analysis of ideals of female chastity and transmission of property to legitimate heirs in the West, but she uses it as “sexual paradigms” for analogy to portray the changing norms for sexuality as a result of socioeconomic transformations in these societies (Kandiyoti, 1988: 285).

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challenges accepted causality” (Khun, 1980, 582, cited in Kandiyoti, 1988:285). One of the most vociferous manifestations of women’s bargaining with patriarchy is the veil that allows them more liberties such as freedom of movement and a secure presence in the public sphere. It symbolizes a perfect bargaining tool for women to guarantee a safe position between the requirements of modern life and the pulling conservative forces of society. It is a culturally-established practice more than a religious one; in other words, it seems to be appropriated by women and utilized as a shield against misogynistic sexual harassment and assault in the public space and to reduce the tension of seclusion and restraints to the private sphere for the same reason and in a society that often reduces women to their bodies.

McRobbie (2009: 63) contends that the disruptions brought about by the capitalist consumer system constituted a real threat to the pre-established Symbolic system of patriarchy responsible for defining and channeling a crucial notion in the life cycle of both males and females, that of time. The pattern of control remained intact but the outward form has been transformed into a new cajoling package of femininity, that of self-care, work, success, and enjoyment of accomplishment. These reframing features entailed remarkable social and economic changes; delayed marriage, a drop in child-birth, the emergence of dual earner-families, the disturbance of traditional gender norms in the household. Although the modern pact of femininity seems at least reducing the significance of marriage as an exchange market with an economic centrality (not to reduce the essence of marriage to mere economic interest parties but to pinpoint the elevation of women from a state of reliance on a male relative for subsistence into one of self-reliance). This situation entails a plethora of cultural antagonisms and urges thinking of a new female subject overcharged with new life projects and opportunities that are not without their costs.

Part of what economic capacity provided women with is a sense of insecurity with the power accruing to them, this sense is regulated by channeling women’s attention toward excessive femininity celebrated by the beauty and fashion industry. The whole process is a replica of the patriarchal system in that it re-instates modes of normative femininity but this time as a matter of free choice that women now long for and then pay for, being misled by the assumption that it is a way of undermining hegemonic masculinity or as simply

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asserting and supporting oneself independently of any male coercion which is actually trapping women back into patriarchy.

2.6. The Family as a Site for Contested Regulating Forces

The family has always been in a tight relationship with the economy and politics. Christine Delphy summarized the situation: “ *patriarchy is the socio-political system that organizes women’s oppression. Its economic basis is the domestic mode of production*”(Delphy, 1997; Autin et.al, 2000:158).

The Arab family in general, and the Algerian family in particular, is essentially patriarchal, pyramidal, sex and gender-reliant in status distribution (Haddad, 1985, Abudabbeh 2004, Joseph, 1994, Moghadam, 2004). These determinants are justified through patriarchy that establishes patrilineal, patrilocal, and endogamous¹⁷ ties, in ideal situations. Nevertheless, this structure *can be readily challenged when unsupported by economic, political, or social resources* (Joseph, 1994:196). The residence of a married couple, for example, is no more determined by patrilocality as it complies with socio-economic pressures. The family, then, constitutes a locus of a plethora of political, cultural, and economic influences all carrying the same patriarchal genome. It manifests in the different spheres of life; *the state (public), civil society (private), and the family (domestic sphere)* (Joseph, 1994: 198) in which women face the same disadvantaging treatment.

The history of research on the family departs from the perception that it is a unit of common interest that connects members through kinship and affect, this definition stands as oversimplified and curtailing if the factors involved in its configuration and

¹⁷ Patrilineality is a kinship system where both male and female family membership is defined through the male line but only males are included in the generation of the same lineage. Patrilocality refers to the rules of residence, where the man remains in the father’s house and brings in his wife. Endogamy is the pattern of marriage within the father’s immediate and even extended social group, ethnic group, clan, tribe...
(<https://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/tutor/descent/unilineal/patri01.html>).

manipulation are downplayed (Hartmann, 1981:369). Therefore, the family cannot stand as a separate institution when analyzed empirically; it must be understood in relation to legal, economic, social, and political structures contributing to its formation and transformation over time and in different social and historical settings.

At the apex of its mutation, the Algerian family is confronted with a number of uncertainties striking its balance and internal coherence. An intricate set of power relations is informing the processes of the reorganization of gender relations.

2.6.1. The Legal Codification of the Family Structure

The family institution is governed by the family law which in turn implies gender-biased mandates either from patriarchal interpretations of the religious scripture or from customary cultural practices designed by paternalistic state regulations.

The very site that clearly defines women's status which is the personal status and the family code, has been considered the most inimical to their interests and therefore needs most attention and reform. The Algerian government proceeded a number of legal amendments to improve women's rights and elevate them into a status of fully-fledged citizens equal to men in rights and obligations. Despite the fact that they take the guise of an enlightened gender-aware politics, they still have not granted full equality nor disrupt and transcend socio-cultural barriers.

The Algerian family code has countenanced the instilment of the patriarchal practices already existent in society and thereby exacerbated the situation of women, by building its constructs on a *judicial pluralism* as Graba (2013) calls it. The organization of the family code is based on Islamic Sharia law which is said to be the general divine dictates to Muslims, and which is believed to be in blatant contradiction with the constitution that affirms full equality between female and male citizens. Since its first promulgation, it has been faced with rejection and demands for its abrogation by secular feminist organizations and intellectuals.

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Recourse to fault Islam for women's oppression lacks empirical evidence. Also, Islam is not the direct cause of the perpetuation of patriarchy but it could be understood as a sociostructural instrument to maintain the gender order. Applications of Islamic teachings, like any religion, have been subject to interpretations of the Koran and Hadith. Therefore, Classical interpretive approaches toward the Koran have been masculinist and determined by the sociocultural environment of interpreters. Patriarchy maintains its position by having recourse to hegemonic masculinity discourses that are most voiced through religion.

The representation of women as subordinates to men and incapable of managing a household is grounded in interpretations of Islam. The religious discourse has significantly changed throughout the history of the Middle East, and among the most heatedly animated debates is that of gender relations in Islam for the simple reason of the equality and the way the scriptures ordain the norms that govern the relationship between the sexes. The problem lies in conflating 'those who speak in the name of Islam' with 'Islam', overlooking the fact that the former is a mere interpretation of the latter, *the result is the pervasive polemical and rhetorical tricks of either glorifying a faith without acknowledging the horrors and abuses that are committed in its name or condemning it by equating it with those abuses (Mir-Hosseini,2006:4).*

The Koranic affirmation of men's 'qiwama' (maintenance-charge) over women emanates from the presumed man's social role as the family head and provider, it carries an economic implication relegating the financial sustenance of the family to the man and the majority of modern and traditional exegetical commentaries agree on evaluating 'qiwama' as 'responsibility' rather than 'privilege' (Mohammed Val,2013:66).

Different interpretive scholarships in Muslim countries entailed divergent and often contradictory models of laws based on patriarchal representations of gender identities and repressive traditions governing the relation between the sexes. Due to this poor human rights record, organized opposition of both women and men activists pressured governments for improvements; they stressed the necessity of integrating women into the development equation. Revolutionary movements in post-independence Arab states enlarged their agendas to comprise the woman question as key to a balanced liberation of

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peoples and regeneration of the national resources such as the Kemalist model in Turkey or the Bourguiba regime in Tunisia. The 1984 implementation of the Shari'a inspired family law stirred lively protest¹⁸ and opposition notably from the women feminists' side as it was "*seen as the state surrendering to the pressure exerted by emergent conservative groups, most significantly the Islamist movement*"¹⁹(Mehdid, 1996:86).

Chereit reckons that the 1970s was a hotbed for the upsurge of rival movements, the Berbersit, the Islamist, and the Feminist that came into concrete existence in the 1980s attempting to uproot the cultural²⁰ and political apparatuses for the hope of the 'democratization' of the country.

The adoption of the Family Code marked a blatant institutionalized inferiorization of women that implied an ideological strategy to maintain the legitimacy of a monolithic and homogenizing system that favored a stereotypical vision of women as silent and subservient and more importantly as reproducers of the state rhetoric that guarantees its authority. So, in a sense, the family code symbolized a patriarchal rule over the female as a subordinate to the male representing the power of the state and ensured her relegation to a private sphere where she reproduces and nurtures the dictates of patriarchy.

Since its creation, the family code has been a battleground among numerous parties starting from a very restrictive nature in 1984 derived from a literalist interpretation of the Quran. The friction between secular and Islamist principles is still present in the Algerian society. This stands clear in the opposing opinions in relation to the family law content. Islamists insist on maintaining a conservative aspect of the laws that stands in agreement with traditions and an orthodox rendition of Islamic teachings while secular activists call for a readjustment of laws according to universal human rights (for example articles related to the

¹⁸ Women from different backgrounds organized large-scale marches to bravely oppose this downgrading law even four years before its promulgation, even Islamist women criticized it as derived from a patriarchal interpretation of the Quran and serving men's interests at the expense of women

¹⁹ The reinscription of male domination through the Family Code, based on a patriarchal interpretation of the Quran, was actually a desperate attempt by the government after a severe economic crisis that ravaged the country during the socialist time. Therefore, in order to re-gain control on individuals and maintain social order in this transitional period, this model was implemented. (Mehdid 1996:86)

²⁰ The major areas of crisis in the Algerian society back then revolved around identity, history, language and culture.

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compulsory presence of *al wali* (guardian) for a woman in marriage, divorce and equality in inheritance as stipulated by article 16 of the CEDAW Convention) (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article16>). It is noteworthy that most demanded amendments targeted the Islamic source of legislation in the Algerian family law. However, in retrospect, one might deduce that the legal texts of the Algerian family code have, to some extent, been manipulated to fit the economic and political situation of the country. The religious texts have by no means been a hindrance to such audacious amendments as restricting the role of the guardian for the female in the marriage contract. This was difficult to implement in 1984 but not in nowadays society.

A succession of amendments came about afterward, a ratified version in 2005, then 2010, and the latest one being in 2015 including reforms in the penal code concerning sexual harassment in the public sphere and conjugal violence, gradually improving the status of women and children within the family. However true these ratifications may be, the pervasiveness of the patriarchal system still penetrates the daily lives of women concealed with an ostentatious garment of religious teachings to discriminate against them and maintain the status quo.

The delegation of the family law to religious institutions is the manifestation of what Hatem (1986; Joseph, 2005: 176) calls the “enduring alliance of nationalism and patriarchy”, subsuming individuals to the reign of local patriarchies since the source of religious legal codification of laws is the interpretation of the Quran which is a male-dominated discipline that despite recent amendments still represents a blatant act of gendering citizenship. Sexual politics and the weight of cultural norms still hinder women’s choices and advancements under the banner of religion, modesty, and social acceptability. A woman cannot transcend the gender order even if she is allowed some freedom of mobility and practicing some activities outside the private sphere, otherwise, she undergoes severe sanctions and deprivations from certain rights that she may be entitled to if she refuses to comply with them.

2.6.2. The Family as an Economic Unit

To outline an economic approach for thinking about the family, we may consider it as an economic unit that reproduces social injustice. Capitalist and patriarchal systems are hybridized (Folbre, 2010) to induce determining influence on many social structures and institutions, namely the family that has been subject to deep alteration due to the transformation of its mode of production. The relationship of domination that existed in the traditional Algerian family has been challenged with the rise of capitalism and the subsequent inescapable change in gender relations. The rights gained through women's access to the laborforce placed them in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, the actual situation grants women more freedom and autonomy through their insertion into the non-domestic sphere, on the other hand, what aggravated the situation was the corollary intersection of gender and class, a disproportional distribution of women within the class strata is taking place; a large number of women in the workforce are working class. Although women benefited from these economic changes, they remain torn between the subsequent binarisms created by neopatriarchy.

The industrialization of societies and the separation of private and public lives have yielded the isolation of the family and its institutionalization based on state rules that function both as a supply of social services and as a regulating force of the family's controlling power on individuals. (Moraletat, 2009:5, Joseph, 2005: 150). The state's ability to restrict the family domination over individuals is rather hindered by the existing kin contract (Joseph, 2005) that functions at two levels: as a monitor and social determiner of family relations and as a state apparatus to regulate these relations.

Algerian families nowadays aspire for higher standards of living for upward class mobility. These can be attained by the contribution of women to the family income. Despite the fact that women have often been associated with low status and inferior condition jobs, not because of the male-capitalism conspiracy but mainly because the job market is gradually requiring large numbers of workforce with low pay, cutting down wages ..etc.. This explains in part women's presence in large numbers in low paid, traditionally feminized, and

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precarious jobs, generally what is called pink-collar jobs (teachers, nurses, secretaries, daycare workers...).

The increment number of female paid work participation, and especially in this specific category, is induced by the shift from the industrial era to the information and services era that offers conformity-requiring and low-ranked professions to be predominantly occupied by women. Those pink-collar workers are shoved by the force of traditions and the exploitation of the economy²¹.

The state policies and economic ideologies²² have contributed greatly to the creation of this reality, along with the economic independence or at least *co-determination* that were brought to many Algerian women through salaried work as a more balanced distribution of resources within the family, however, it is not without its trade-offs. The social construction of the Algerian family relegates the female into indoor tasks rather than outdoor ones, therefore a working woman is not exempt from household chores, additionally, she contributes to family expenditures especially in low-income households, keeping gender injustice in place.

²¹ The intensification of the feminist discourse calling for more women to the workforce spurred a wave of counter-discourse claiming the feminization of society and blaming women for men's increasing unemployment. Connell (2001) argues that when hegemonic masculinity is threatened in a social setting, structural arrangements are reshaped to bring things back to order. The inevitable transformative power of the capitalist economic system widened the gap between cultural ideals and cultural reality creating what Mernissi calls '*sexual anomie*' in Arab societies that fuels most conflicts between men and women. By extension, the state is also responsible for failing to promote egalitarian strategies that ensure the evolution of all aspects of social life in parallel which have serious consequences on women's enfranchisement.

²² The current narrative of the existing policy of favoring women over men in both the private and public sectors, namely in traditionally female occupations, is due to the availability of females and their willingness to build a safer and a more stable life pattern away from economic dependence on male relatives, in addition to the '*socially acceptable suitability*' of the working environment of some jobs such as teaching, health care and work in administrations. Statistical evidence confirms that women constitute 26% of the workforce in the public sector, 40% of the working force in healthcare, 38% in education and 34% in justice (WWW.ONS.DZ).

2.7. The Principle of Economic Redistribution within the Algerian Family

Redistribution is part of the social justice model advanced by Fraser that sets forth the egalitarian allocation of resources among members of social classes.

Recognition rests on the Hegelian understanding of identity that determines the existence of the subject solely in the reciprocity of recognition from to the other.

In fact, recognition is an extension and revisited form of redistribution and seeks to address challenges unsolved previously by redistribution, they are complementary in action:

“Properly conceived, struggles for recognition can aid the redistribution of power and wealth and can promote interaction and cooperation across gulfs of difference” (Fraser, 2000:109).

One of the most determining parameters of recognition is that it is predicated on the importance of institutions in reframing the boundaries to establish status equality.

The misrecognition of a given social group may function as a trigger for the collective struggle to create a self-representation of a collective identity that secures a space within the dominant social group, thus, leading back to the recognition of status.

The construction of the Algerian family is still largely defined by patriarchal precepts that have accompanied women and men in their entrance to the capitalist labyrinth. Women’s participation in the paid work has doomed them to compensate for leaving housework (the job ‘culturally’ designed for them) and opting for outdoor labor through providing a material contribution to the household expenditure.

In the Algerian and in most Arab states the public and the private spheres are inherently hierarchical and are involved in a mutual shaping process (Etim and James, 72:1999). The private/public division²³ is rather more theoretical than real, particularly in the issue of the family that stands as the merge of both. Joseph contends that the state infiltrates into the family sphere and absorbs it into politics. However protective and beneficial for citizens it might be, it controls civil society which means much less

²³ Assumptions about the sexual division of labor have largely been criticized for being primarily stereotypical and essentializing in addition to positioning women’s and men’s labor on relations of authority rather than on need or mutual dependency.

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autonomy and independence for women. Hence, the connection between the private and the public is “*both a source of protection and repression*” (Joseph,2005:164).

It is evident that women are well aware of their status, but they live the day to day experience without any serious endeavor to change. They also seem to lose their feminine solidarity especially when discrepancies are increasingly visible among women of different socioeconomic backgrounds.

2.8. Conclusion

The construction of the female subject is not only determined at an individual level, it is actually a whole process that involves political and economic parties. This is by no means a negation of women's ability to navigate through the waves of structures that can at best be described as highly unstable. It is, instead, an indication of the existence of a power interplay between the individual and the social. (The negotiation of women's position as part of the workforce and as members of families will be empirically analyzed in the next chapter).

Women's attempt for self-fulfillment and attainment in life is evident but the manner they use to obtain them may hinder this endeavor. The history of their battle for recognition has recorded an insistence on reproducing and replicating the male pattern, the success pattern available to them, which led women to think of it as a salvation and a way to pave their path and embroil themselves in a situation of unequal powers with men and society. The principle of difference between men and women has been interpreted as an entrance to an endless labyrinth of women's dissatisfaction and men's continuing domination. This scenario has not worked in women's interest. On the contrary, it caused them to become dissected and alienated from their own selves and lag behind men. Light will be shed on this issue in the empirical section of the present research work.

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3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analytical phase of the research investigation wherein we attempt to harness methodological and theoretical instruments so as to discern the interplay between patriarchal constructs and economic status involved in the construction of the female subject.

When the topic of female empowerment and freedom of choice is tackled, emphasis is usually directed to the achievements but rarely to the side-effects. Economic empowerment has alienated as much as benefited women. While they grapple to affirm their identities and transform societal notions of gender and family roles, they have been embroiled into intricate positions that might appear as free choice when in fact, they have further stifled them and impaired their motion toward full recognition.

The account of gender justice set forth in this work hinges on Roland Dworkin's theory of 'equality of resources' in an attempt to test its validity within the Mascara community. In the first phase of this empirical work, we intend to analyze working women's self-identification and realization through choice, and whether their actual situation is empowering and liberating or the realization of the new sexual contract (as an amalgam of patriarchy and the market economy). We hypothesize that one of the consequences of the empowerment model is the increasing visibility of "female breadwinners/higher earners" social category that is the subject of investigation in the second phase. This phase exposes the power interplay among married female providers within their households as a result of disturbing traditional gender norms. It attempts to tease out the impact of gender, status and income on power relations within marriage.

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3.2. Method

The research at hand is conducted on the basis of a primary interest in the possible impact of the multilayered social roles married working females embrace on the construction of their subject position. In order to fathom the interplay between the status of educated working females and their subjectivity, an exploratory design was assumed to be best suitable for this purpose.

Given the heterogeneity of women's realities, we opted for analyzing the particular situation of working females as primary or sole providers within the Algerian household. Initially, a cross-sectional study was conducted to describe the sociodemographic characteristics that distinguish each group. A questionnaire form was distributed to married working females in different sectors and those who meet the criteria were selected for the exploratory investigation.

The questionnaire included a section on the socio-demographic information of the subjects that would later allow a categorization on the basis of the degree of contribution to household expenditures, the reported personal characteristics of respondents and their spouses.

The second part was devoted to the measures of the respondents' experience related to being a family breadwinner and female. In this phase, a focus group as an analysis technique was utilized given its particular sensitivity to cultural variables.

The focus group data was coded into verbatim transcripts and analyzed as one data set. Data were then classified into headings (categories) covering excerpts from participants' answers (codes). Account was taken of the actual situation of the female (breadwinners) respondents whether it was a transitional or persistent period. On the basis of that, they were categorized into committed and accidental breadwinners.

Committed breadwinner refers to the state in which one partner takes up the responsibility of being the primary provider for the household.

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Incidental breadwinner is a situation that happens as a result of the committed breadwinner's abrupt inability to fulfill the role of the provider. Consequently, the partner is obliged to take this role instead.

Questions on the overall gender order that govern the lives and interactions of the female subjects, have been included in the research.

The domains of interest in the first phase of the present study are:

1. Personal and family decision making, (need explanation)
2. Psychological well-being
3. Family well-being

The research methods devised in the present research are summarized in the following table:

Table 3.1. Research Methods

Research method	Nature of data	Method of analysis
Questionnaire (closed item responses)	Nominal, ordinal and continuous quantitative data	Thematic content analysis
Focus group	Transcribed text	

3.2.1. Sample

We utilized convenience sampling with a group of females. However, the number of subjects who meet the criteria set for the analysis was limited. Therefore, a snowball sample that relied on suggested subjects with characteristics pertinent to the study was opted for.

The sample unit constituted of 42 female informants from different working sectors (education, medical and banking).

The sample was divided into two categories to discern the level of impact of the economic status on the subjects' well-being.

- The first category: represented by the whole sample.

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- The second category was that of female providers: who contribute to the household income with 70% and more.

The focus group sample was composed of 10 married female breadwinners aggregated into 2 groups. Each group constituted of five participants with whom meeting were arranged.

3.3 Measurement Scales

Bargaining power, the independent variable, covers a variety of interrelated indicators: access to material resource which may refer to earned-income (paid job) or non-earned income (remittances, transfers, property income) and asset ownership as well (Doss, 2011:25). Questions related to the dependent and independent variables were coded according to the Likert scale including the following response categories:

- Not at all true (coded as 1)
- Not very true (coded as 2)
- Neutral (coded as 3)
- Somewhat true (coded as 4)
- Always true (coded as 5)

These items are scored so that high scores represent a high level of agency (a concept defined in chapter two).

3.4. Operationalization of Constructs

3.4.1. Access to Resources

The agency and achievements are considered dependent variables impacted by the independent variable access to resources: economic and educational.

The dependent variable for this investigation is the access to resources containing three dimensions economic, educational and political:

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1. The economic domain is measured using the labor market participation of the respondents and their access to income.
2. The education domain is measured through the females' informational assets. Education is further divided into two sub-domains: literacy, gender equality attitudes and access to information.
3. The political domain corresponds to the existence of statutory rights, entitlements and services provided by the government for women's profit . This is distributed along three major dimensions;
 - a. The enabling environment (existence of facilities and services).
 - b. The supply side (actual accessibility of legal aid)
 - c. The demand side (legal awareness i.e. knowledge of rights).

3.4.2. Control over Personal Decisions

This indicator assesses agency at the individual level i.e. the intrinsic basis and the independence of external coercion that might hinder women's actual exercise of actions. It is adapted from the 'Moving out of Poverty' World Bank survey (2009) adding one item to properly cover the angles subject of study.

3.4.3. Domain-Specific Autonomy

The whole process is labeled Domain-Specific Autonomy. This indicator is adapted from the World Bank research on developing women empowerment indicators. The questions have been preserved with a slight modification of the related domains so as to be in consonance with the present research objectives. These domains include financial contribution to household income, access to employment and mobility.

The decision-making¹ variable has been measured not only in terms of the female ability to take part but in terms of the degree of its positive impact within the household.

¹ Questions provided to the female subjects in this research depart from the standpoint of togetherness or cooperative couple model where the dimension of 'decision-making' for instance emphasizes the role of the female within that model.

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Decision-making indicators (1-2) were adapted from Alesop et al.(2006) later utilized in a comparative study of empowerment measures on an international scale by Ibrahim and Alkire (2007). Given the context of the present research, only domains (a), (c) and (e) were perceived pertinent.

At the household level, the following aspects were determined:

- Women's decision-making as a process where the possibility of making choices is a preliminary step (existence of choice).
- Second the actual use of this choice (choosing to decide/or not, action of delegating the decision to someone else).
- The third level that informs the analysis of intrahousehold decision-making with regard to the motivation behind the female's decision. This question leads to identifying the relevance of each decision in the respondent's life and thus the value she accords to it (what Alkire and Ibrahim (2007) call 'positionally objective views' of respondents).

3.4.4. The Well-being Variable

The third indicator reveals the degree of satisfaction measured at two levels:

- The individual level (personal well-being) that links the female's access to resources with their self-perception, personal control beliefs and satisfaction with own achievements.
- The household level (family well-being) links access to resources with the degree of satisfaction in conjugal life.

It evaluates the ability to change aspects of one's life which is considered a stage in the process and a continuation within the agency spectrum. It includes three questions:

- The first one addresses the female's willingness to change aspects of their personal lives
- The second is related to the desired aspects for change

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- The third one measures the actual ability to induce that change (Alesop et al., 2006; Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007).

3.5. Statistical Analysis Tools

The obtained results from the survey questionnaire were entered into the SPSS programme applying the following procedure:

3.5.1. Cronbach's Alpha

This test (more precisely 'reliability coefficient') is used to determine the reliability of the research measures through estimating the average correlation among the items constituting each single measure. That is, how closely related the items are and therefore whether the variable is suitable for the study (<https://stats.idre.ucla.edu/spss/faq/what-does-cronbachs-alpha-mean/>).

The following formula indicates how Cronbach's Alpha is calculated:

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N - 1) \cdot \bar{c}}$$

N is equal to the number of items,

C-bar is the average inter-item covariance among the items

V-bar equals the average variance (Ibid).

Values above .50 are acceptable and convey high consistency levels among the items of the single measure.

Table (3.2): Reliability of the Research Variables

Variable	Cronbach's alpha
Access to resources	.71
Agency	.69

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Outcomes	.76
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The results in table (3.2) demonstrate a relatively high level of reliability coefficient which indicates a connectedness and coherence in the items provided in the questionnaire, and an accurate measuring of the variables.

3.5.2. Descriptive Analysis

To identify the specific characteristics of the research sample, the percentages of each demographic information were reported and analyzed.

The mean and standard deviation for each variable have been calculated to determine the level of agreement of the respondents with the proposed statements.

Pearson's correlation was used to determine the existence of correlation among the dependent and independent variables.

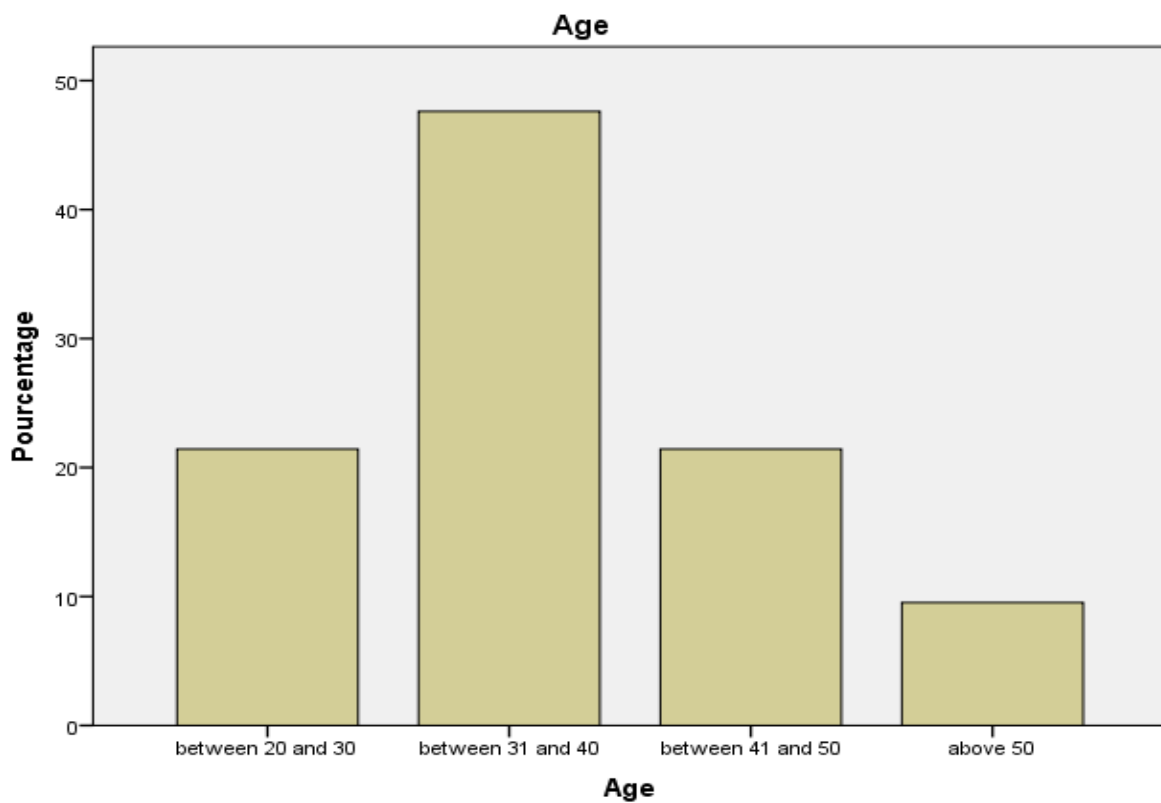
3.6. Results of the Descriptive Analysis

3.6.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Age:

Bar Graph (3.1): Respondents' Age Range

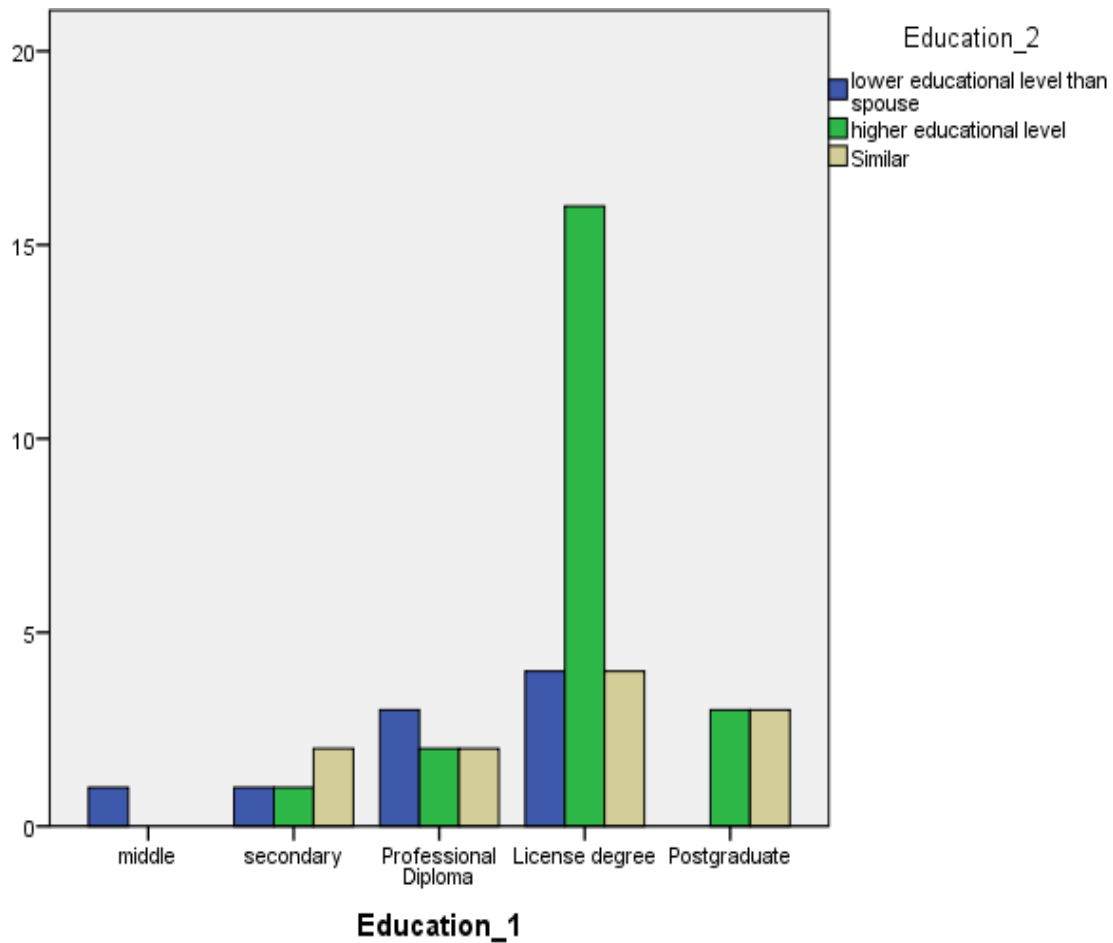
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As demonstrated in the bar graph the informants' age range falls between 20 and 50 years old with a majority of young adult women (58% between 31 and 40). The research sample belongs to a relatively young generation of women who are part of the female working population.

Bar Graph (3.2): Comparing the Respondents' and their Spouses' Educational level.

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Education_1 (women's education)

We sought to identify the existence of any educational discrepancy between the females subjects and their spouses, which would provide clarity in the interpretation of the level of agency they report. The table shows that the majority of the respondents had a BA degree (24 females), out of which 16 had a higher educational level than their husbands. That is, 52.38% of the whole sample are better educated than their spouses.

Table (3.2): Household Type

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Household Type	Number	Percentage
Nuclear (owned)	13	31,0
Extended	19	45,2
Nuclear (rented)	10	23,8
Total	42	100,0

The household type is a crucial determinant of the power dynamics within the couple. Respondents report living in three different kinds of households which are the major types existing in the Algerian context. 45.2% of them live in extended households, with a slight variance among the categories.

Table (3.3): Dependents under the Respondents' Responsibility.

Dependents	Frequency	Percentage
None	10	23,8
Children	28	66,7
Adults	3	7,1
Both	1	2,4
Total	42	100.0

It is apparent from table (3.3) that the majority of the respondents are mothers with a response rate of 66.7% for the children category.

Assets

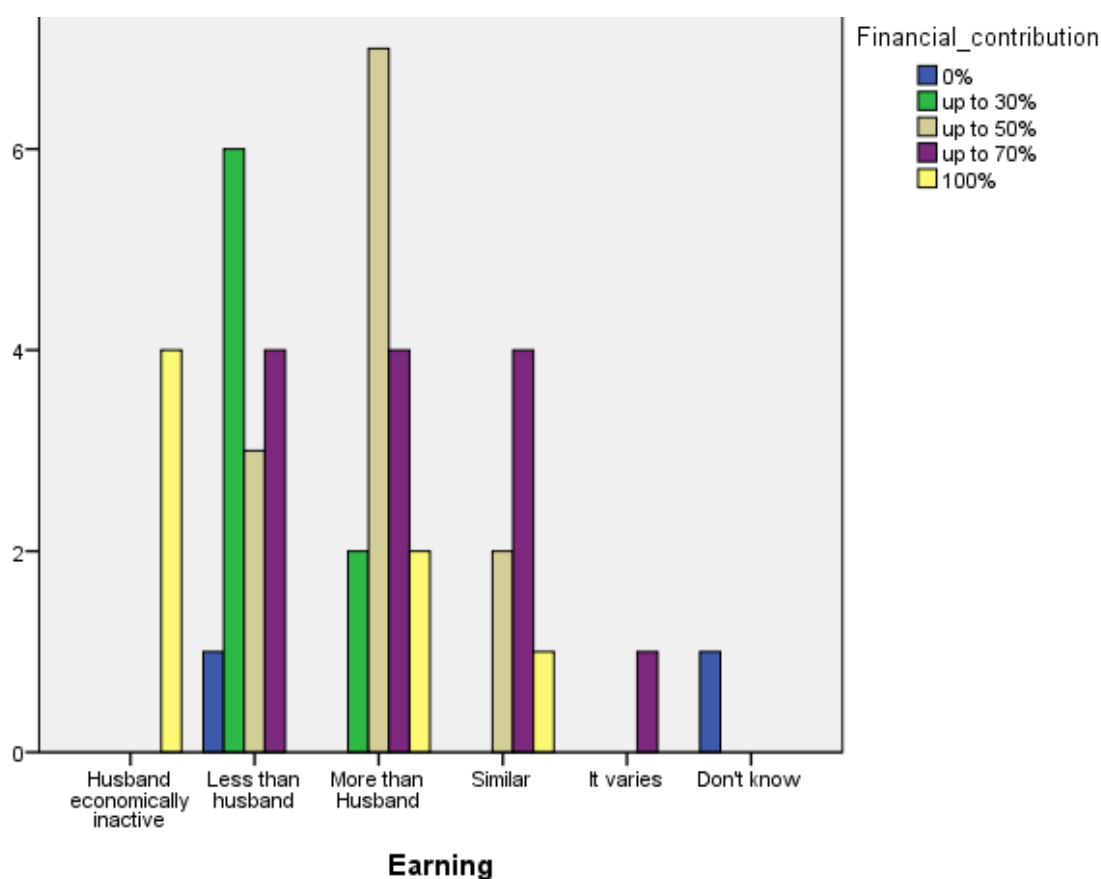
As to the ownership of material assets variable, table (3.4) reveals that more than half of the sample do not have any assets, since they belong to a relatively young age category and to the salaried class.

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Table (3.4): Respondents' Ownership of Assets.

Assets	Frequency	Percentage
No	24	57.1
Yes	18	42,9
Total	42	100,0

Bar Graph (3.3): Crosstabulation of Respondents' Contribution to Household Income in Comparison to their Spouses' Income.



In order to fathom the relationship between women's contribution to household income and husbands' economic situation, bar graph (3.5) presents a crosstabulation of these variables demonstrating that the more the female earns the more she provides for her family, that is 50% of the whole family income and above.

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3.7. Independent Variables

3.7.1. Access to Resources

Education

In this section we derived the mean and standard deviation of the research variables independently to measure the level of agreement among respondents on the provided questions (mean ≥ 3 reflects an acceptable level of agreement and hence the actual existence of the variable under study in the respondents' lives)

The standard deviation refers to how widely scattered the values are from the mean, the smaller the SD value the more reliable the mean value is.

The first independent variable measured was women's access to education, the respondents showed a general agreement with the questions asked which is statistically reflected in the mean $M=4.0025$ which is above the hypothetical mean and a standard deviation of 1.12 (table 4.1). The results demonstrate the actual existence of the education dimension within the sample subject of the study. In addition to the control variable 'educational level' (which actually addressed the dimension of literacy within the education measure), a large number of the informants reported being university graduates and postgraduates. Relative to the three items (professional skills, informational assets, and gender attitudes) their answers indicated a considerable level of awareness and knowledge of general and gender-related matters.

Table 3.5. Informants' Responses to the Access to Education Measure

Access to Education	Mean	Standard Deviation
EDUCATION_RESOURCE_1	4,3571	,90585
EDUCATION_RESOURCE_2	3,7381	1,25055
EDUCATION_RESOURCE_3	3,7381	1,30775
EDUCATION_RESOURCE_4	4,1667	1,03398

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Average	4.0025	1.12
valid N (listwise)	42	

Economic Resources

The category of women studied in the present research work belongs to the double track pattern designed by Sorenson (1983:313; Khoury and Moghadam, 1995:39) where he registers working married women's life accommodation in accordance with their status as employed.

The second measure of the same variable (economic resources) provided only one item on contribution to household income (bar graph 3.6). Respondents consider themselves important contributors to the household income since:

- 30.1 % said the fact that they provided for the household was 'always true'
- 35% said it was 'somewhat true'
- Those who replied with 'not very true' and 'not at all true' scored only 27% combined.

Bar graph (3.4): The Economic Resources Variable

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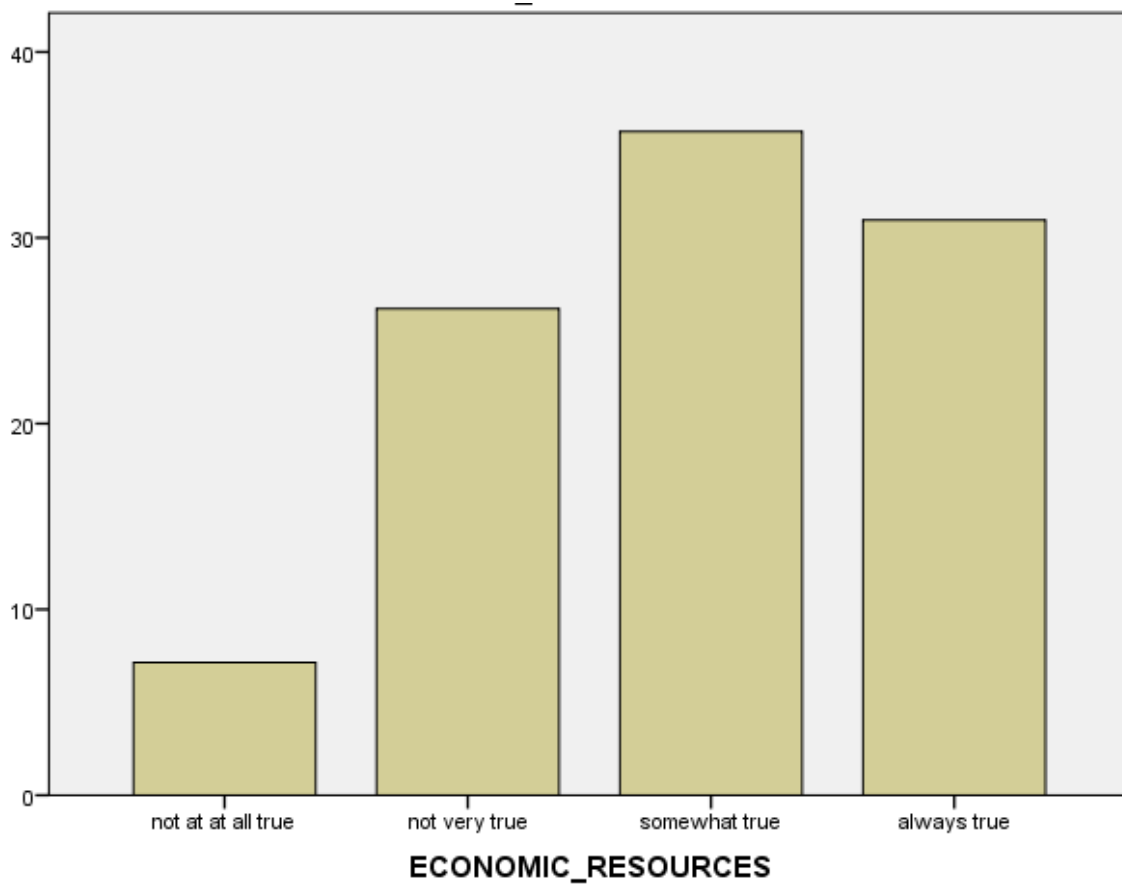


Table (3.6): The Gender Knowledge Variable.

	N	Mean
8. Gender_Knowledge_1	42	3,74
9. Gender_Knowledge_2	42	4,17
10. Gender_Knowledge_3	42	3,57
11. Gender_Knowledge_4	42	3,93

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12. Gender_Knowledge_5	42	3,90
N valide (liste)	42	19,31

The third measure also reflects the respondents' awareness of the existence of laws, and their adherence to gender egalitarian attitudes. The table above demonstrates women's actual knowledge of their rights as the mean scored for each question is above the average revealing a general agreement among the respondents on the necessity of gender justice and that gender roles are taking a different turn.

Table (3.7): Control over Personal Resources

	N	Mean
13. C_O_P_D	42	4,07
14. C_O_P_D	42	3,76
15. C_O_P_D	42	3,45
16. C_O_P_D	42	3,88
N valide (liste)	42	15,17

The indicator control over personal resources resulted in an $M=3.13$ mean which demonstrates an agreement among the subjects on the existence of the opportunity to decide for themselves in personal matters including control over income.

Table (3.8): Domain-Specific Autonomy.

	N	Mean
M_O_T	42	2,88
M_O_T	42	2,71
M_O_T	42	3,05
N valide (liste)	42	8,64

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As to the Domain-specific Autonomy, data indicate a relatively low mean (M=2.79) reflecting the informants' lack of participation in household decision-making activities and even when action is taken, it is rather biased by the socially acceptable image and avoidance of sanction than what the individual values.

Table (3.9): Intrinsic Motivation

Motivation to take Action	Mean	STD deviation
MOTIVATION_3	2,6667	1,28151
MOTIVATION_6	2,7857	1,27902
MOTIVATION_9	2,9286	1,23748
Average	2.78	1.26

The variable motivation has been divided into four categories:

1. **External motivation** implies that women's behavior is regulated by external forces (the existing gender system where they live) and that they comply for fear of judgment, sanctions or exclusion.
2. **Introjected motivation** stems from contingent consequences individuals set for themselves (such as pride, avoidance of shame)
3. **Identified motivation** is independent of regulatory principles, it constitutes behavior as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.
4. **Intrinsic motivation** indicates that women's actions are driven by personal goals and values (Deci and Ryan, 2000: 60).

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Identified and intrinsic motivation are considered relatively independent kinds of motivation from external influence.

We provided nine items to analyze this dimension, and table (3.10) reveals the results for the intrinsic type of motivation (items 3, 6, 9 in the questionnaire). The mean for this variable ($M=2.78$) is lower than the hypothetical mean ($M=3$) which is evidence of women's lack of intrinsic motivation and therefore, their actions are determined by external forces.

Many of the women's decisions do not stem from personal values (intrinsic) and they end up subsiding to the patriarchal rule, e.g. instead of speaking up against the husband's violence, they abide by his will. They decide to stay within an unsuccessful marriage for fear of social exclusion.

3.8. The Dependent Variables

3.8.1. Personal Well-being

Table (3.11) demonstrates the mean score of the personal well-being variable ($M=2.99$) in an attempt to determine the impact of the existence of agency in women's life on their self-esteem, self-efficacy and personal goal-achievement. The results reveal a poor sense of well-being among the respondents.

Table (3.10): The Personal Well-being Variable Mean

	N	Mean	Std Deviation
34. P_W_B (1)	42	2,55	1,173
35. P_W_B (2)	42	3,19	1,153
36. P_W_B (3)	42	2,98	1,334
37. P_W_B (4)	42	3,26	1,191

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N valide (liste)	42	11,98	4,85
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3.8.2. Family Well-being

The data obtained through analyzing the family well-being variable also give evidence of a low level of relational well-being among the females subject of study (M=3.18), indicating negative impact of the lack of autonomy in women's choices on their family life.

Table (3.11): The Family Well-being Variable Mean

	N	Mean	Std Deviation
29. F_W_B (1)	42	2,93	1,197
30. F_W_B (2)	42	2,93	1,218
31. F_W_B (3)	42	3,24	0,958
32. F_W_B (4)	42	3,10	1,122
33. F_W_B (5)	42	3,71	0,995
N valide (liste)	42		

3.9. Correlations

Table 3.12: Correlation Results among the Research Variables

			wellbeing
Spearman's correlation	Financial_contribution1	Correlation coefficient	-,338*
		Sig. (bilateral)	0,029
		N	42
	Education	Correlation coefficient	0,059

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	Sig. (bilateral)	0,710
	N	42
Gender_knowledge	Correlation coefficient	0,275
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,078
	N	42
Control over personel decisions	Correlation coefficient	0,152
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,336
	N	42
Domain-specific autonomy	Correlation coefficient	0,204
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,194
	N	42
Motivation	Correlation coefficient	0,293
	Sig. (bilateral)	0,059
	N	42
	Sig. (bilateral)	
	N	42

*. Correlation is significant at 0,05 (bilateral).

**. Correlation is significant at 0,01 (bilateral).

H1: Working women's subject position is mediated by strategies of governmentality².

As displayed in table (3.13), working women's agency is positively correlated with their personal well-being. The results of correlation between the agency and personal well-being indices reveal a positive correlation between the dependent and independent variables. The females subject of the study exhibit a considerable level of satisfaction with regard to their access to resources and therefore is considered as a means of empowerment.

Overall, the study subjects expressed a positive implication of their status as workers for their self-worth. The pathway chosen by women has certainly brought positive impact in

² Foucault (1972: 225; Golder, 1991 : 161) described governmentality as nothing more than "the encounter between the technologies of domination of others with those of the self".

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giving them a degree of independence. However, it has created new constraints by the very means of their liberation. As they face increased financial burdens and repressive practices from their surroundings in the household, it generated negative repercussions on their satisfaction with family relations.

3.10. Strategies of Governmentality

To excavate the process of subject formation, the strategies of governmentality have been further divided into three categories and empirically analyzed using open-ended questions in the questionnaire:

3.10.1. Liberalism

A crucial aspect of liberalism is individualization, the subject is presented with a well-delineated space for action, choice and self-expression and then indulged into a process amenable to self-(re)formation.

The surveyed women reflect a shared longing for a particular image of femininity to which the path is already paved through the plethora of instruments made available by the beauty industry. They are now leaning toward the perfect body shape, the most fashionable outfit, the most varied gastronomy, art and decoration that constitute a considerable amount of the household budget making these women the slaves of the culture of consumerism par excellence. In the following testimonials, the respondents share this part of their experience:

“ I don’t like to be downgraded by people, especially as a working female. This is why I spend a considerable amount of my income on buying clothes, cosmetics and I have recently registered in a gymnasium.”

“It is necessary that women take care of themselves...After all what we face at work and at home, we need some time for ourselves, That’s why a group of friends and myself have decided to take some time out, and if I get all the housework done before I go, my husband turns a blind eye to it.”

“if a woman earns money, so she has the right to spend it on herself”

Within this confessional space, it is clear that women exhibit a determination to ascertain their own feminine territory, to labor into finding an outlet for the day-to-day

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pressure. In this case, the apparatuses of governmentality are the entertainment facilities that unfortunately represent a concealed solace convincingly appearing as a free choice that eventually drags these women into the abyss of consumerism and an endless void ripping them off their true selfhood and facilitates their regulation into an imposed form of normative femininity.

The patriarchal traditional discourse sets women as objects and excludes them from agentic expression. Work and education have created a space for women to speak back to that discourse and transform it. They are reclaiming the physical environment and gaining more ground.

3.10.2. The pastoral power

As women are inserted in diverse positions within the household, they are attributed regulating roles to be applied on other females to render them responsible for adjusting their conduct in accordance with the prescribed patriarchal discursive constructions of gendered subjectivity. This technique however, relies on three major principles for its functioning;

1. The analytical responsibility
2. Exhaustive and instantaneous transfer
3. Sacrificial reversal
4. Alternate correspondence

A respondent claimed living in a household where individuals are deeply invested into mutual service, regulation and care to ensure the smooth circulation of interests:

“My mother-in law distributes the tasks and keeps an eye on us, she does not miss any detail on our comportment and relationship among each other, she even plans for our lives”

Participant aged 32.

As a corrective behavior, it is often imputed to the parents, a religious authority or a counselor.

The same process occurs at the macro level, the state apparatuses aim at providing services to secure the subjects needs, how these needs are obtained, their amount, how they are used and whether they should be elevated to a higher quality is determined by the governing force.

As a technique of resistance the woman agrees with the husband to create boundaries against any interference into their private life.

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3.10.3. Security

It deals with the possible events following an act and presenting the most appropriate and acceptable, from a patriarchal perspective, within a bandwidth of allowable actions, for the sake of managing any concomitant risks from a wrong decision and that may engender any malfunctioning of the gender order. Foucault attributed three main characteristics to this technique: *firstly, it deals with series of possible and probable events; secondly, it evaluates through the calculation of comparative cost; and thirdly, it prescribes “not by absolute binary demarcation between the permitted and the forbidden, but by the specification of an optimal mean within a tolerable bandwidth of variation”* (Gordon, 1991, p. 20).

Extracts:

“ I am allowed mobility outside the house but with conditions, I have to wear the face veil, and sometimes be accompanied by a relative”

In nuclear households, females report being more involved in decision-making than in extended households, where couple decision making is influenced by filial norms whose involvement ensures the appropriate “doing gender”.

Forms of gender regulation will never cease to appear and reappear, disguised under new shapes or transmogrify to become more difficult to discern.

3.11. Female Breadwinners’ Focus Group

Any study of close relationships takes account of the everyday lived experiences as structured events that have reciprocal spillover effects. Hence, a one-sided analysis of women’s lives in isolation from others is debased and leads to unsatisfactory conclusions. To unearth these potential inconsistencies, in the qualitative part of the present research, three interrelated domains of the participants’ experiences have been analyzed. These domains are: higher earner role attitude, work-family balance and bargaining strategies.

Directed content analysis was devised to code and analyze the data. Participants’ statements were transcribed and grouped according to codes used to identify the

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covered themes (categories). For example: a respondent may claim: “In my case, the major part of my income is saved for big projects, I mean buying a house or a car and everyday expenditures are covered mainly by my husband’s income” . The category is decision making and the code is income division.

The research not only focuses on wives as “sole” workers but also on dual earner couples with wives out-earning their husbands.

The very strength of the focus group technique has also been the limitation. The interactional aspect allowed an abundance of thoughts and a multifaceted analysis of the themes raised but at the same time, it precluded emphasis on one aspect. Another limitation that arose was the domination of one or two participants in the conversation and the emergence of socially acceptable views.

Focus group data were not wholly translated into English but selected transcripts (relevant to the research objectives) were translated in full for the purposes of analysis and interpretation.

Before opting for the focus group data analysis, the respondents were asked specific questions to define their sociodemographic profile demonstrated in the following table:

Table (3.13): a Typology of the Female Breadwinners’ Households

Respondents	Age	Type of family
R1	48	Persistent female breadwinner family
R2	32	Accidental female breadwinner family
R3	50	Persistent
R4	39	Persistent
R5	34	Gender-equal
R6	29	Persistent
R7	41	Accidental

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R8	42	Accidental
R9	36	Persistent
R10	32	Persistent

3.11.1. Focus Group Results

The Higher Earner Status

The focus group discussions started with questions on the participants' and their partners' perceptions about their actual status.

In the first domain of analysis, the sampled subjects were asked what their status as a female breadwinner represented for them and whether their jobs were mere sources of material income. The following table displays the responses suggested.

Table (3.14): The Higher Earner Status

Category	Code	Statement
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<p>Breadwinner status attitude</p>	<p>Provider Status: The wife's perception</p>	<p>It's a matter of agreement, ..I'm a superwoman, we are multitasker, (sigh), it's a burden for me", "we as women have very poor exit options in marriage ...", "I think it's an advantage because I provide a decent life for my children." It's a burden for me...</p>
	<p>Husband's perception</p>	<p>"... they're sometimes jealous of women's success "he's very open-minded,... I got promotions with the support of my husband" "He becomes violent especially when we discuss financial matters."</p>

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	<p>Perception of Status as working woman</p>	<p>“I feel productive, I feel myself.”</p> <p>“I love my job and I chose to work in this domain although I can’t deny my need for the paycheck,”</p> <p>“I really wish he could find a better job ...so that I can quit”</p> <p>“Employment is a protection for women nowadays.”</p>
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The majority described their lived experiences as family breadwinners as imposed on them as a result of the employment and underemployment crisis. The marriage composition with the emergence of hypogamic couples where the female is more educated, with higher earning potential on the one hand, and the requirements of modern life nurtured with on the other.

One of the participants in the focus group reported that she had been part of her husband’s “business plans”:

“When I got married, my husband told me that we had to think about our future by starting to think about buying a house, and I agreed and as his income was unstable, I am the one who saves for buying the house beside covering my children’s daily needs”.

Another one reported being exploited and sometimes blackmailed by her spouse. One of them said that since she got married, her income goes to her husband and he is the one in charge of household expenditures. Although she did not accept it, yet, she complied out of fear of ruining her family life.

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For breadwinners in gender-equal couples, it was less of a burden and more a matter of free choice and convenient arrangement.

As to their perception vis-à-vis their jobs, accidental breadwinners claimed they opted for work as a result of financial need, while interestingly, there was a considerable agreement among the others for a rather positive view of their jobs as adding a value to their lives and being a haven from their family-work load.

Work-family Conflict

Another important issue raised during the discussions was the tension-causing work and family pressure if not well-managed. These women are the primary providers for their families and multiple roles may be demanding and run the risk of failing women to fulfill their duties in both domains leading to role strain.

A key parameter to create work-family balance is the flexibility of time schedule and the appropriate distribution of care activities. The majority of the women agreed on arguments related to their inability to reconcile their work-family life. They described it as a constant battle and the major cause behind their arguments with their spouses. Excerpts from their experiences are displayed in the following table:

Table (3.15): Work-family Conflict

Category	Code	Statement
Work-family conflict	Flexibility of time schedule	“I tend to adjust my home activities according to my work hours” “We try to do our best, but I don’t think any working wife is able to handle both perfectly, it’s impossible unless she gets the appropriate help”

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	Care work	<p>“Before going on a maternity leave, I have to secure my children’s needs because no one else would care about them while I am at home”</p> <p>“..my husband does not do much to help, he says this is not his job”</p>
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The redistribution/recognition model elaborated by Fraser (2004) is present in this case as maldistribution and misrecognition as a two-dimensional paradigm affecting women rather than conflicting or antithetical. The redistribution of material goods to the category of women by means of access to education and employment has not guaranteed them recognition. Rather, it has trickled down the goods to men and contributed further to injustice between the genders as *‘an institutionalized relation of subordination’* (29).

Marital Quality

The results obtained for this variable reflect a lack of the required support for personal and professional growth on the part of the husband. The group discussion revealed a disconnection between the professional and personal aspects of the sampled women’s lives, which they did not directly blame on the spouse but disclosed several other reasons, mainly related to their own lack of motivation or their responsibilities as wives and mothers.

The themes raised in communication ranged from discussions over economic decisions , relationship and children’s matters mainly to make a decision or settle a disagreement. The point of emphasis in this variable was the power negotiation between couples with regard to relative influence (discussing matters of interest, decision making,) and relative benefit (ending the discussion for mutual good).

Decision-Making

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According to the respondents' statements, the couples are being just in dealing with their daily household issues, the most knowledgeable in the domain is autonomous in the decision making process, taking into account the partner's wishes so that both parties benefit. For instance, in case the female is better in finances, she takes care of the household expenditures and distribution of goods, even though she might be traditionally considered unfit for the task. This case reveals other parameters influencing the power negotiation among couples in the decision-making process. Knowledge of the domain and communication strategies are strong determinants of the decision-making process.

Marital dynamics remain influenced by cultural residues. This is what draws women to more subtle strategies to influence decision-making and other relational aspects.

Table (3.16): Decision-Making

Category	Code	Statement
Decision-Making	Individual-related decisions	<p>“Before going on a maternity leave, I have to secure my children’s needs because no one else would care about them while I am at home”</p> <p>“..my husband does not do much to help, he says this is not his job”</p> <p>“...if there is a decision to be made, he trusts my knowledge.”</p>
	Material decisions	<p>“I think he’s using me to get the money and spend it the way he wants,…”</p> <p>“Before all, it is a partnership, our finances are</p>

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		<p>combined and it does not pose a problem for me or my husband, he contributes as much as he can and I do the same..”</p> <p>“...the major part of my income is saved for big projects.., he is the one who provides for the household.., but a working woman willy-nilly contributes to her household expenses..</p> <p>I cover all my household financial needs, he occasionally helps.</p>
--	--	--

According to some testimonies, the male partner regards his wife’s economic status as a threat and attempts to recreate a patriarchal gender order where he occupies the superior position because he considers his wife’s status as a deprivation of his masculinity and authority. This has deleterious repercussions on both partners. As a consequence, the female is not only ‘*misrecognized*’ but lacking *self-realization*. As a response to that, the female may have recourse to strategies that attenuate the situation.

The traditional sexual contract that binds women and men into feminine and masculine roles within the family does not only separate spheres (public and private) but it reinforces the patriarchal ideology of masculine domination as well. Status has changed over the decades but the principle remains the same. Females face a great difficulty in exchanging their income contribution for domestic services, although they share more of it with men than in the past but do not reach the proportional level.

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Bargaining Strategies

1. Retraditionalization as a Deviance neutralization strategy

The gender division of work exacerbates the situation for a working woman and when she earns more, it gets further complicated. The patriarchal structure of the Algerian family endows status to females through domestic activities and to the male through earning. However, since gender roles have not remained static constructs, female earners strive to secure themselves a place and overemphasize their presence within the family. This might be explained by a sense of guilt toward and dissatisfaction with what she offers in her family life. Therefore, she compensates by adhering to the gendered model of the housewife increasing the effort of doing the household chores, increasing her emotional investment with the children, or even re-asserting her femininity by creating her own enjoyable rituals nurtured by the consumer culture. Therefore, the woman seeks a re-confirmation of her status replicating the very model she sought to rebel against. Retraditionalization is the corollary of role reversal.

The couple may have recourse to 'traditional gender roles', i.e. the higher earning wife adjusts the power asymmetry that may ensue from her economic superiority, leaving more floor to the male in household decision making and for herself in doing more care activities.

Analytical approaches in family studies have a considerable contribution to elucidate the aforementioned issue. According to economic theories on the gender division of labor in the household, the relative resource approach, which is based on the exchange of inputs and outcomes (earning and housework), the more the individual brings resources to the household the less housework s/he does, which is supposed to bring proportional decreases in women's housework as a result of the increase in their income. Notwithstanding, the analysis of the interviewed women's responses proved no shift in the traditional model of housework as women's work. It is possible to surmise, then, that gender ideology is still at work, which is what Brines (1994) labels 'deviance neutralization' where couples who violate the male breadwinner model tend to rectify the mismatch with stereotypical roles and conform to the prescribed ones to achieve 'gender accountability' (acceptance) in their social environment. One of the mechanisms of neutralization and naturalization is the adoption of oppositional behavioral patterns to their actual roles.

Additionally, the in-laws play a pivotal role as a third party in ensuring the reproduction of doing gender as dictated by patriarchal authority, in return for cultural recognition.

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Table (3.17): Bargaining Strategies

Category	Code	Statement
Bargaining Strategies	Retraditionalization (Re-doing gender)	<p>“I do not feel doing enough and therefore I always try to create family time activities.”</p> <p>I try to offer things other than money ...things that give me a sense of my femininity”</p> <p>“I try to give enough time to look after myself”</p>
	Un-doing gender	<p>“...he does the housework, he looks after the children..</p> <p>“we agreed upon marriage that I take up the financial part and he takes care of the children. until our financial situation improves.”</p>
	Social impact and overcoming social sanctions	<p>‘..friends and family admire us, they perceive us as a strong couple”</p> <p>“..he transforms into a totally different person in front of our relatives, he says it makes him less manly in their eyes”</p> <p>they feel they lost their manhood</p>

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		and that they'd be viewed as less manly if they can't bring enough money to the house. a man is recognized by his ability to provider. , it is part of our traditions and our religion,... "quiwama" is for the male"
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The women subject of the study embrace their true femininity at home. Despite all inconveniences they might face, they still consider it a conservative feminine empowerment and to stifle its fading away, they battle to put it back in place. To gain weight and stature, they contend that they necessarily pass through the home.

Women have today found themselves ensconced within the work field that seems to be ripping off their femininity. Hence, they reinstate and secure their identity through leaning toward hyper-feminine values promoted by the consumer culture (what Mcrobbie calls the new traditionalism). Interestingly enough, 7out of 10 respondents believed in the strength, sense of independence and achievement their status brought them. Paradoxically, this very status was at the origin of a somewhat distorted interpersonal relationship. They experience and develop a complex and unique communal identity in providing for their dependents financially and emotionally.

2. Undoing Gender Disparity

Gender ideology occupies a large share of Algerian common consciousness, and any transformation has to occur in a subtle way. Individuals are more prone to accepting to adopt behavioral patterns different from their socialization in private settings than in public ones. One of the respondents claimed: "my husband has no problem with me being a breadwinner, he does the housework, he looks after the children but he transforms into a totally different person in front of our relatives, he says it makes him less manly in their eyes." Another one

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stated: “he would only help out if he wants to; it all depends on his whim, he says he feels like I’m dictating to him what to do.” Social image is a crucial component in the construction of identity, this is why males may well be in favor of gender justice among members of the household but refuse to jeopardize their socially acceptable masculinity. Some of the respondents stated that their partners felt emasculated by their (wives’) status and they did everything it took to create a gender order that guarantees them authority. Sex roles remain socially determined, and as these males have lost their ability to effectively fulfill the breadwinner role, they experience a sense of emasculation that could be compensated by an exaggerated masculine behavior.

When the husband is unemployed, the situation gets more dire for both spouses. The supposed work-family enrichment can suddenly transform into a conflict threatening the household stability. It may be caused by the inability to fulfill an expected gender-role and a worker role that each is determined by distinct social institutions. In addition, the interviewed women referred to their husbands as the household heads throughout the discussions, and stated that they actually wanted their husbands to play this role, on the one hand, as a conflict avoidance strategy respecting the patriarchal hierarchy of status, despite the fact that these women are the actual breadwinners, on the other, to satisfy an unconscious desire to be under the headship of a man.

Women’s responses overlapped to convey a single voice and agreement regarding the topic of status differential among spouses. Many of the interviewed women are unable or unwilling to negotiate their income for more egalitarian relationships with their spouses.

3. Social Impact and Overcoming Social Sanctions

In this case, women come to gradually understand their role as primary earners and rise above circumstances of patriarchal perceptions and expectations, and have transcended traditionally-set gender roles.

Considering the information derived from both focus group discussions, the major concern for participants was an image of masculinity based on narratives of economic and personality strength and any disruption of this model would lead to misrecognition and stigmatization of the male, despite the fact that the image of role reversed couples is timidly

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gaining ground as a result of the educational and labor market opportunities available to females.

Gender role ideology persists in our society and yields a heavy burden for both husbands and wives in female breadwinner families. Husbands may experience a masculinity crisis as they attempt to fit in the mold of the male provider or they may turn into some sort of “gigolo” males benefiting from the luxury of not having to bear this responsibility, and the women who accept or find themselves obliged to accept the status quo, are simply complying by social norms that favor marriage, at times, under debilitating conditions over others.

In reality, many of the interviewed women were not aware of their role as breadwinners; they considered themselves as sharing the financial responsibilities with their partners. They even stated that traditional gender roles should be abided by outside the home and that their status was not something to vaunt about.

“it’s so hard for us to cope with the situation, he keeps taking loans to secure the family needs.”

They admitted not willing to fulfill the role of primary provider if they had the choice.

The informants admitted that their work took precedence over their home life since it is the engine keeping their lives moving (financially).

Contrary to the image advanced about the successful self-reliant female breadwinner, most of the females in the studied group, attribute their current situation to necessity and economic limitations.

The results reveal the relative stability of the gender order. Earning does not guarantee a free ticket to equality, it may be a necessity but not sufficient to restructure the very system that governs its members’ actions.

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3.10. Conclusion

In this chapter we analyzed the current situation lived by working women. In actuality, the findings reveal that the available opportunities to women have contributed to their progress and emancipation. Notwithstanding, these opportunities are incongruent with the existing downgrading practices in the worst cases and at best allying with them to further limit women. The results demonstrate that the very discourse of empowerment constitutes a new form of enslavement and indoctrination of women through strategies of governmentality that carry a delusional narrative of free choice and subjectivity while in fact drowning women in the dimness of subjection to the dictates of the market (consumerism of all forms).

The emergence of the female provider represents the flip side of the empowerment coin that is hypothesized to increase the female's status in the family, yet the reality of the sampled women shows the opposite. As women's status gets higher, they confront inimical consequences due to the exertion of power within the couple. This situation is far more restrictive than it offers pathways for free choice.

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4.1. Introduction

The discourse of empowerment is conceived as a space of resistance and self-assertion available to women; yet, it drags them into a new net of subordination, since women's resources become assets for their families and husbands. The recognition aspect of empowerment is, therefore, missing or mispositioned in the equation.

Specifically, breadwinning raised dilemmas for women in terms of demarcating the boundaries of the subject's agency in relation to the power regulations (more precisely discursive practices). The female breadwinner is therefore entangled within a system that guarantees her certain privileges but besets her with confines on other aspects.

The discourse of empowerment, thus, needs to be revisited, as it carries degrading and infantilizing precepts that paternalize women and enclose them within pre-established categories. The major question addressed in this chapter is how to challenge dominant narratives as gendered social agents.

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4.2. The Negotiation Discourse

The fact that women are considered the gatekeepers of the patriarchal system endows them with knowledge of its labyrinths and therefore mastery of negotiation strategies. As demonstrated throughout the present investigation (conducted with female higher earners), and as “*negotiation is a consequential social endeavour, affecting people’s salaries, career advancements, and relationships*” (Thompson, 2009), bargaining with patriarchal and market rule has had beneficial outcomes for women. They have developed the capacity to cope with restrictive practices and earn power in both spheres of life.

Notwithstanding, the expansion of the narrative of female autonomy and empowerment resulted in a destabilized gender order (based on masculinity and femininity), as the postfeminist sensibility transformed the female position within this order from objectification to subjectification, which as described in chapter two, is a process of shifting the power of controlling and defining femininity from the male gaze to the female gaze.

The emergent female subject is self-scrutinizing and self-transforming. She internalizes the expert (*the panoptical male connoisseur*) where the male gaze still lingers somewhere in the background and may be even more judgmental than that of women, to regulate not only herself but members of the same group i.e. women.

To adopt and reproduce cultural ideals of a normative feminine model labeled by feminist analysts “*the postfeminist gaze*” (Riley, et.al. 2016: 2) that determines the conformity and appropriateness of the female to fit in the pre-established ideal femininity. She is therefore simultaneously the subject and the object of her own and other women’s judgment, not only in terms of appearance but also in terms of agentic choice and personal achievement. This politics of looking (that is an ever-present phenomenon among women but presently further amplified by the modern visual culture) reshaped the dialogism of ‘the gaze’ as to what constitutes a genuine woman and ingrained within women three main elements;

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1. **The role of surveillance:** that is applied to keep women under control.
2. **The desire for validation:** is the sense of belonging that members of any given community long for, it leads them to opt for certain behavioral patterns.
3. **Fear of failure:** it may be defined as a motivation for the previous parameter in some cases, since individuals are prone into aggregating in communities and comply to fit in.

In our case study, female breadwinners managed to climb the social ladder but incarnated a form of compulsory femininity that incorporates different traits in one subject and ultimately overloaded women with tasks that have traditionally been accomplished by men and left men with a remarkable void leading not only to a masculinity crisis but a gender crisis since whenever one sex wins both sexes lose.

Women have lost what Paglia (2017) calls the “agrarian solidarity” in the age of community life, by the time they entered the workplace and became obliged to navigate the waves of public life. What is also alarming is the feminist ideological attempt to eradicate (or at least weaken) genuine masculine traits that are required within the new sexual order.

This misimplementation may trigger the emergence of emasculated men who are struggling to identify with the roles demanded from them and adapt with the changing pace of life, a number of them tends to exploit the emancipation of women and draw the maximum benefit from it.

Alterations in certain patterns adopted by either males or females should not yield a total reversal of roles¹. The family must preserve an image of masculinity, with a certain degree of resilience, and femininity that are fundamental in the preservation of the spousal relation and in the correct upbringing of children.

¹ The obsession with the professional woman has downgraded an important aspect of the gender relations. Motherhood which is a gate toward a more connected experience for women and men remains desired but is delayed and restricted among career women with a very limited space to be practiced. Homemaking is also perceived as a non-lucrative activity and therefore lower in status compared with paid work. This is one of the severe consequences of the feminist movements that blinded women from a complete vision of the social interaction that are part and parcel of their identity construction.

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In this case, it is mandatory that feminist activists and academics address the masculinity crisis or more precisely the gender crisis faced in our society. Biology-based research on sexual differences and their impact on subjectivity must be given its fair share as foundational within feminist literature. It is on anthropological and historical grounding that doing research in gender essentially acquires meaning and finds its track toward advocating change in society.

Gender justice and empowerment programmes too have to be articulated with this filter to enact suitable policies for the integration of both males and females within social life.

It is true that the agentic activities women engage with, in the investigated case of this thesis opting for education and a stable career, are actually a seized opportunity in a country where gender justice is at its embryonic stage and women have little access to a relatively economically secure life path. Yet, this advancement should always be observed cautiously.

The premise of equality of opportunity and empowerment could be further substantiated by evidence from research conducted in Nordic countries where egalitarianism has reached an advanced stage. These studies reveal that women have a lesser proclivity to opt for a choice within the realm of the opposite sex. For instance, women in these countries are less likely to choose a career in a STEM field than women in less affluent societies. Researchers, from Leeds Beckett University and the University of Missouri, conducted a study across 67 countries, found out that from an early age, girls tend to be tilted toward non-STEM subjects even though they might decide on a STEM -related major at university. The results of comparing countries with greater gender equality and those with less, demonstrate that females in countries with less gender equality tend to be significantly represented in STEM fields. The cause of that is related to the financial security that such a career grants. Whereas in gender equal societies, welfare provisions relieve that burden, thus, women's choices are more motivated by enjoyment and interest in the field (<https://www.thejournal.ie/gender-equality-countries-stem-girls-3848156-Feb2018/>).

This unveils an important trait of societies, the more equality is endorsed, the more gender differences among men and women abound.

The number of females in the job market in Algeria is disproportionately peaking as teachers, doctors, office workers but very poorly represented in senior levels. Consequently,

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the government is applying a quota policy in sectors overwhelmingly occupied by women to get more women into higher positions.

If the gender equality policy is to be implemented by the state on society, it will ultimately create a fertile ground for gender differences to resurface and become mostly self-evident.

4.3. Narrative Identity and the Female Individual (joining social identity with agency)

Identity politics emerged as a reactionary movement to the grand narratives that marginalized certain social groups. Theories of identity politics advocate the premise of individual action as a result of personal interest and orientation rather than an internalized set of values or pre-established categories.

The female breadwinner is an identity trait that long remained underexplored, even within disciplines informed with identity politics. Throughout the empirical phase of the present research, each of the female participant's story revealed a uniqueness in significance and appeared as an appropriate empirical research tool that enables the evaluation and explanation of gender relations that would be based on narrativity positioned in a spacio-temporal ground. This ground creates connections among sequences of events and has a proclivity of allowing the researcher to track down narratives of oppression as well as emancipatory ones. Narrativity hinges on four aspects to be functional: ontological, public, conceptual, and metanarrativities (Somers: 618).

Narrativity provides an understanding of women's experiences but it risks marginalizing others' stories. Hence, it is primordial to balance the narrative premise of such an analytical tool by giving the opportunity to men's voices while being alert to the potential biases of subjects and researchers alike. It also takes account of the points of disjunction between individual experiences and dominant social narratives and, even equally important, the genealogical background (family history, childhood...), to retrieve informative, particularistic and realistic data. Embarking on such an endeavour guarantees a functional feminist discipline that enlarges circuits of connectivity between active and passive, intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of identity. Following this line of thought, feminist narrativity undermines any essentializing version of human identity and accentuates the highly variable position occupied by individuals throughout their lifetime.

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The question that arises however is which narrative will prevail, this depends on the power position occupied by the social actor. It is therefore crucial to challenge the dominant and silencing narratives and give voice to the invisible ones to alter the damage that may ensue from single narratives. It is also worthwhile that representations of individuals and even groups must hinge on a stance of the agents' relational settings, that is, the individual exists within a matrix of representations that shape her/his identity.

Narrative agents are more inclined toward negotiating interests rather than abiding by institutionalized patterns of interaction. One of the strategies that women may effectively use is motivating the male into finding an earning opportunity. Essentially, this strategy connects with the male's primal proclivity into hunting and attempt to prove their ability to bring something worthy to the household, in order to create a well-established and safe territory and gain recognition within the dominance hierarchy².

The current expansion of state feminism is leading sexual difference astray and my very well complicate the situation for males. Women have benefitted drastically from the amendments that have impacted every field of social life but amounted to an unstable psychological and social state. On the other end of the spectrum, men started to have a sense of alienation and loss of sight and what behavioral pattern to adopt, all these combined are entangling the threads that form the foundational net of sexual relations in society.

The post-modern identity politics allowed the emergence of intersectionality as a lens that disentangles the threads of the social web. If we delve deep in it, we would reach the conclusion that the end point of diversifying and categorizing society is the individual. Therefore, feminist literature in Algeria must be predicated on a minute analysis of lived experiences with a historical and de-westernized underpinning that guarantees a connected and realistic account of gender relations experienced in real life. Also, the introduction of 'narrativity' to the social sciences to constitute an appropriate ground for a de-essentialized observation of human experience in its most natural state.

² **The Dominance Hierarchy:** is grounded on a form of multistage pyramid to mount by men and when he finally reaches its summit he earns social and women's acceptance. This ladder sets a number of masculine traits that culturally signify success to measure men's adeptness, for example industriousness, professional and financial attainment. Once a male fails to conform, he loses attractiveness to the opposite sex and eventually a decent position within the heterosexual matrix. Along this theoretical line, the dependent husband portrays the image of a male who remained as a grunt member (at the bottom) of the hierarchy.

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Knowledge of the sexual differences and management of gender relations have been subject to individual whim and experimentation and led to the emergence of countless troubles among couples. As a solution to that, marital and financial counseling are primordial parameters prior to the institution of marriage. This works as a platform that allows women and men to be well-informed and fathom the functioning of the gender enterprise to build a secure relationship and personal well-being.

4.4. Re-conceptualizing Agency

A hermeneutic perspective into the construction of the subject is essential to underscore its active dimension. As McNay (2003) posits, it reveals the difficulty of formulating a liberatory framework for agents because of the persistence of the pervasive inequalities that characterize the gender profile of society.

She gradually disconnects the definition of agency and the positioning of the subject from a dualistic casing into a background with multiple possibilities. Her philosophical premise is underpinned with Bourdieusian concepts ranging from the *habitus* to the emergence of *regulated liberties*. The habitus, as the formation of the body within cultural regularities and the incorporation of *temporal structures* into the body, is conducive to the inception of *embodied practice* that incarnates a flexible mode of action which expresses and anticipates regularities and tendencies. In this model, practice is generated within a highly variable and unstable setting dependent on the power relations governing it. She essentially points to the temporality of structure as an important parameter in the determination of the agency and the highly transformative nature of social interactions that allows a multitude of possibilities for agentic autonomy and creativity while remaining within the confines of structure. This is what Bourdieu terms “*regulated liberties*” that are catalyzed by the contact between object positions and the space of possibles. There are thus, endless encounters between the habitus and social schemes that make it prone to constant renovation, but a radical change is rarely to take place. Benhabib holds a similar stance in what she labels *narrative agency* where the subject is able to assert herself within the system of gender norms despite her inability to subvert it altogether.

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In the same token, Zerilli holds a radical formulation of agency where the agent is capable of moving outside expectations of conventional action and bring up something new (Lucas, 2016:58). In fact, this contention allows us to fathom the prominence of the intersubjective nature of the relationship that binds subjects, carries the unique contribution of each member, their ability to think of the 'unthinkable'³, act upon it and very likely change the course of events and gradually transform the existing hegemonic network. At this stage, Lucas brings in the concept of narrative agency first coined by Benhabib, which is at its starkest meaning; stories lived and shared by individuals. She develops its significance through reference to five main characteristics:

(1) It is primary to narrative content; (2) it is grounded in uniqueness; (3) it is non-sovereign; (4) it is essentially communicative; (5) it is (theoretically) infinitely generative (2016:60).

To put it more precisely, narrative agency is the capacity to make sense of the world which unfolds the specificity of each individual's experience that derives meaning from the situated interactions obtained from the intersubjective relation created among social agents that eventually generates new stories at every encounter. Though not every narrative is possible in all circumstances.

Narrative agency implies that the individual contributes actively in writing her/his life scenario, thus, the 'I' always matters in the construction of the self.

The problem with women's narrativity today, though, is their inclination toward a common narrative, their striving to conform with a socially constructed narrative. These women are enslaved by their modern lifestyle.

The relational aspect of narrative agency balances the process of agency and identity formation, because the individual story is never fully intelligible without reference to the social group the teller belongs to. Yet, what is paramount here is the ability of the individual to exist within society preserving his/her individuality, since this will determine future choices (what Korsgaard labels 'authorial agency'), experiences and critical interpretations thereof; this brings us to the practical aspect of narrative agency.

Individual identity is ineluctably built on a ground of political and social narratives but there is always a personal experience of this formation. everyone has a unique conception and

³ The term is used here as explained by Arkoun .

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interpretation of the various life events s/he goes through that involves multiple interactional possibilities with other members. Departing from this standpoint, the female breadwinner and worker in general is capable of escaping the shackles of dominant narratives (such as the modern compulsory femininity) and creating new meaning. Being a process, narrative agency is a constant activity of formation and transformation. We contribute to the construction of the self and the norms that later govern us as we can challenge them through the same relational means.

The female breadwinner as a social agent, who enjoys narrative agency in certain aspects of her life, devises it to bargain with patriarchy as demonstrated in chapter three, by the female respondents as ways in and out of the patriarchal labyrinth that itself enfolds possibilities for agency. Despite remaining within the confines of the dominant gender order, everyday interaction must be characterized by such moments of unconventional behavior as vivid evidence that negates any static aspect of social structure. Within the household, Moore (1994:87) contends that members are involved in negotiations and bargaining and may even have competing interests.

The difficulty that manifests with the assumption of the self-determining individual is the paradoxical situation that arises between an essentializing and western neo-colonialist tendencies at formulating it. That is, any attempt to account for female individualized reality is met with an opaque ground of theorizations and analytical tools designed for different forms of subordination/resistance, that although seemingly similar and in many cases intermingled, may be misleading.

The exercise of resistance by the female subjects of study, within the (neo)patriarchal system through bargaining was compatible with the pervasive and limiting nature of the established order and allowed them more agency and contestations with domestic rules although at a restrained level (the household) but engendered positive impact. Notwithstanding, the same aspect that provided a breathing space and light at the end of the turmoil represents a hindrance in long-term aspirations for radical transformation, in the sense that the actual move to resist is determined within a frame of a pre-established contract. In fact, resistance acts, as contended by Kandiyoti (2013) and White (1986), are intrinsic in social orders and necessary for their continuity and not as signs of performativity and agency.

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The persistence of the status quo is often relegated to the relative stability of the gender order that could be best characterized by the traits of *'doxa'* that is inherently endowed with polarized activity. On the one hand, it indoctrinates the privileged social actors to support it and ensure its existence, on the other, the disadvantaged are working to find ways out of the conundrum or at least reach out possibilities for self-expression. Approaches to investigate the status quo have taken a phenomenological guise that has for goal the development of gender relations but rarely delving deeper within those constructions and questioning them. The whole endeavor is, therefore, typified with a gap between theory and practice.

In her revisionist account of patriarchal bargains, Kandyoti questions the theoretical underpinning devised to analyze women's negotiation and demarcation of territory within their respective contexts. She remains skeptical to the fact that gender as a social category and a constitutive element of power is treated as a stark notion of social attribute investigated with a plethora of conceptual apparatuses that may be inconvenient and even misleading. This, in her view, diminishes the accuracy of any feminist analysis and thwarts attempts to overturn the dominant ideology or at the very least expose its subordinating and manipulative techniques and transmit that to the masses.

The growing presence of women in virtually every arena of social life and their portrayal as competitive, successful and even fierce in pursuing their goal is no more an issue of equality or militating for their rights. It has extended to mainstream institutions as the new incubators of the cause which means that it has never existed outside the control of society.

Happiness and freedom may be prerequisites for each other, yet, it is incongruent to confound them as one thing. Women have paid a big price for their economic prosperity particularly those who belong to disadvantaged socioeconomic strata. Despite the gains earned along the way to empowerment, they remain ambivalent and still live contentious meanings of femininity and masculinity and even when believed to be autonomous within the social order, the situation spirals down to more subjugation and confinement to equally oppressive and pervasive system.

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The real obstacle to any genuine liberation⁴ of women is their internalized desire for assimilation to a particular model for which they compete over a long track that makes available to them certain options to reach their ultimate goal.

The detraditionalizing effect of the socioeconomic transformations has complexified gender relations, and created ambiguous positions that are not fully emancipatory but do not reinforce gender inequality. It entails a serious engagement with a reconceptualizing enterprise of agency to address the fluctuations that have impacted gender identity.

Gender identity is mutable and thus prone to be refashioned by external as well as internal factors, this is conducive to conformity with dominant norms at times and also to resistance, and subversion at others. Identity is formed through negotiation on two axes: subjection and liberation, however, in several theoretical arguments the subjection aspect received much attention and debate leaving very little room for the liberation process. The former impinging on a deeply entrenched bulk of dichotomized premises (gender/sex, feminine/masculine...), seems too deterministic in defining agency and gender identity yielding a one-dimensional construction.

It is then, necessary to reformulate the notion of gender agency within well-defined lines *of power relations to understand how acts deemed as resistant may transcend their immediate sphere in order to transform collective behavior and norms* (McNay, 2000: 4). McNay calls for a *dialogical understanding of the temporal aspects* of subject formation that offers a dynamic account of agency that elucidating individuals' creative and autonomous respond to constraining structures. The notion and state of motherhood also need to be addressed seriously by Algerian feminists, sociologists and psychologists through a transdisciplinary lens, it is by achieving '*conscious intellectuals*' (Sharabi's words) that the slavish adherence to debilitating social models is possible.

The economic and social transformations have created a new atmosphere for identity formation among males and females. Contemporary female subjectivity is determined within a frame of a plethora of freedoms, and antagonisms. The female individual is deceived with

⁴ In our society it is very difficult to speak of subjectivity but the possibility of the formation of social agents is always relevant.

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the availability of material goods, significant visibility in the public and the freedom of mobility but the horizon of patriarchy is not decidedly replaced by that of consumerism, individualism, and competitiveness, the reality is that they have joined efforts to create agents imbued with the characteristics of both systems and perpetuating their existence.

Breadwinning represents an important determinant of female identity construction, it is certainly empowering on multiple levels. It enables the creation of a subject capable of being actively involved in the reconstruction of gender patterns and hence, family formation and dynamics. Notwithstanding, this could engender a conflictual situation.

Moghadam adds enriching insights into the discourse on social reproduction, she posits that to preserve its operational aspect, it attributes the role of preserving cultural and political values of the community and the state at large.

Women are living a state of dereliction (Irigaray's word), a state of obsession with the compensation for the phallus that makes them become aggressive in positions of leadership.

4.5. The Adaptation of Feminist Research to the Changing Social Environment

The paradoxical situation that some Algerian working women live in has been conducive to precarious positions within society. Required to adhere to ideals of meritocracy that enveloped them with a chic wrap of hyperfemininity (by contemporary labor market standards) and accomplishment to keep them desirable and employable.

The very value of work, thereby, seems to be determined by the market economy that ponders on high productivity levels and is subject to strong imperatives that demand commitment on the part of the individual. Moreover, it is worthwhile to note that these regulations hinge primarily on masculinist standards that set out the scenery to normalize women's behavior. The female individual is required to conform in order to be recognized.

Reconsidering female breadwinner roles within the context of this modern economic environment is crucial given the extensive contributions brought about by their growing presence within the formal and informal sectors. It is of equal pertinence that the implementation of policies that recognize female employees as the primary source of income

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for their families. Restructuring patterns of employment and occupation is also primordial to address issues pertaining to childcare, sexual division of labor and all sorts of sexual violence.

To put it into practice, collective struggle functions as an effective medium of voicing people's needs particularly when established on social grounds. Organized social movements (feminist associations) and academics play a pivotal role in articulating, interpreting and addressing the needs of both men and women and also securing a sane and well-established gender order that contributes to constructing balanced gender identities and ultimately a relatively harmonious social fabric.

To win the battle of needs interpretation, satisfaction must be obtained, and this is realized by paving the way for participatory parity which in turn should be applied across the sexual spectrum (for both females and males).

The data obtained from the research subjects reveal that women in large proportions believe their primary and genuine role is inside the household fulfilling the traditional caring role. This could be the result of early socialization and the weight of cultural norms that have been deeply engraved within their psyche and dominated their beliefs, their financial situation and education, however seem to be leading them to work just for the sake of securing a financial revenue that guarantees a decent life, this condition developed a sense of discomfort and resentment among most of them.

Rehabilitating the value of work especially for women must constitute an essential prerequisite in the women empowerment agenda. This may start at young age as they experience and receive the appropriate training to discover their passion in life and develop it to become the ground for their future career. This provides the opportunity to thrive in their career patterns and divert their primary motive for work to its core, its value.

Real revolutionizing change does not occur by longing for utopian images of society, it stems from the lived reality of people, with a critical perspective on history and a waging of the struggle for an egalitarian future.

Neopatriarchy is not a cataclysmic system that can be shattered by a sleight of hand, it brought some considerable positive impact on society *liberation need no longer be linked to the classical revolutionary seizure of power.*

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It is the product of an extended process of transformation and change occurring in three basic areas: in the material infrastructure (e.g., rational economic development); within social institutions (e.g., the progressive nuclearization of the family); and in political practice (Sharabi, 1988:150).

The feminist movement must be a preventive instrument against retreat to aggressive and repressive forms of patriarchy and precipitation toward forms of postmodernism.

4.6. Joining the Autonomy Approach with Feminist Voice Theory

Feminist and empowerment theories are important perspectives for social work (both micro and macro practice), they both advance human rights and social justice and add to critical awareness of individual and sociopolitical contexts. These theories are primordial in practice as they provide insights into evaluation and reformation of applied models. The core concepts in both theories—mutuality, critical self-awareness, collective action, conscientization and collaboration—are important tools in working with individuals, families, groups and communities.

Yet, canonical approaches to autonomy have always carried the seeds of their own refuting and de-individualizing of subjects, that is, they over-victimize them and trivialize or conceal these individuals' ability to react, setting the stage for larger social structures to envision emancipatory avenues. To prevent such a debased endeavor, an urgent distinction must be made between an oppressed and an emancipated voice. To achieve an emancipated voice women need to be supplemented with the skills⁵ that allow them to connect with themselves and their own values and goals and neutralize any subordinating practice.

⁵ Self-determination theory suggests the following protective measures to ensure women's exercise of agency:

1. Introspective skills: to recall the individual's personal experiences and scrutinize their origin and effects and therefore be able to filter what allows development from what debilitates it.
2. Communication skills: individual development depends largely on peer insights and perceptions.
3. Memory skills that enables individuals to derive important lessons from life experiences,
4. Analytical skills to envision possibilities for future opportunities.

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This standpoint on autonomy and women's voices does not pigeonhole people as free agents or incompetent dependents. On the one hand, it acknowledges that women achieve a level of self-determination despite male dominance, for these agentic skills and their application requires no esoteric knowledge. Still, since proficiency with respect to them is a matter of degree, and autonomy often depends on whether or not one's chance circumstances are conducive to exercising these skills and on whether or not one is motivated to exercise these skills, it is safe to assume that women experience autonomy fluctuation.

Self-determination is inseparable from speaking in one's own voice. If people are unable to articulate what they are doing, and what they stand for to themselves, their control over how they are engaging with the world is diminished. Additionally, they need to communicate what they are doing and what they stand for to others. Otherwise, people will rely on stereotypical images and scenarios to ascribe needs to them and to interpret their conduct. As a result they may withhold respect and cooperation for no reason. Therefore, the interpersonal skill is of paramount importance for achieving an autonomous state.

There is also a significant consonance between feminist voice theory and the autonomy approach in the sense that the individual's immediate ecology has a significant impact on her/his ability to be agentic. Many theorists have emphasized solitude as a means of autonomous action, others on organizations and political activism, but agency is a continuous endeavor that connects both relational and individualistic undertakings.

Any tenable theory of self-determination must accommodate the realities of enculturation and unconscious desire. Since enculturation shapes both the body and the psyche, and unconscious desire influences both conduct and thought processes. Thus, the starting point for a successful autonomous individual is the embodied, socially situated and

-
5. Self-nurturing skills that represents an auto-corrective tool that assures guidance and perseverance along the way
 6. Volitional skills that allow women maintain their commitment to their self-portrait.
 7. Interpersonal skills that joins forces to challenge and change cultural regimes and institutional arrangements (Meyers, 2000:21)

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divided self and the objective is to gain a rich understanding of what one is and what one aspire to become.

The autonomous individual is an evolving subject, a subject who is in charge of her life, a subject who fashions her self-portrait and shapes her self-narrative through a process of self-discovery, self-definition and self-direction. Although pretending to have transcended the impact of an oppressive social regime is a masculinist idea, agentic skillfulness ensures that women's voices are not wholly subsumed by internalized ideology.

4.7. Women's Self-determination within a Neopatriarchal Culture

Michelle Moody Adams (1994) asserts that successful cultures must preserve people's capacities for the exercise of judgment and discretion. *"Any culture that worked to impair these capacities, would be creating the conditions of its own demise"* (307).

This premise alludes to the necessary equilibrium that need to be preserved by any culture. A thriving culture evolves and it persists as well. If cultures are self-perpetuating systems, they must have built-in mechanisms that protect their beliefs and practices from criticism. Notwithstanding, people in all cultures, prefer the known over the unknown, this trait is particularly exploited by cultures to secure their existence and therefore, impair individual's autonomous reactions. An instance of that could be despite the female's economic independence and intellectual level, she may all too readily convert to the very system that was most inimical to her autonomy.

So, the two main weapons in the hands of culture that destroy autonomy, according to Meyers (2002) interpretive schemas and valorizing certain agentic skills over others. Culture utilizes common concepts to form meanings that will be ascribed to self-portraits and become part of self-narratives. They also manipulate people's perceptions of which skill to adopt depending on their social acceptability, that is, they certainly match social roles ascribed to individuals and conceal any skill that would potentially lead to questioning social arrangements.

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4.8. A Two-dimensional Gender Approach: Redistribution and Recognition

Females, who on their way to create a successful career portrait, find themselves with a staggering load of household responsibilities *caring* and *providing* for dependents not by mere *choice* but by necessity. Some enjoy the privileges this may entail for a while but the long run consequences may be deleterious. The unbalanced and flawed situation created by the market economy is conducive to the emergence of a dependent male class of society unable to make a significant contribution (by contemporary standards).

According to the redistribution/recognition model advanced by Fraser (2013), any attempt to adjust inequality cannot be successful unless it addresses the two pillars economic structure and the status order.

She adopts a proposal to redress the disparities resulting from cultural and economic changes in society, she first contends that women still suffer a subordinate status due to institutionalized patterns of injustice that intersect in a way that has exacerbated the situation (as detailed in the previous chapters).

She points to the deficiency of the policies aimed at improving the female condition and qualifies it as one-dimensional and short-sighted, since their implications in social life have handled one aspect on the detriment of the other. The two determining aspects of gender injustice are economic maldistribution and social misrecognition that are both at the core of a corrective feminist politics (redistribution and recognition) which, if properly conceptualized would come in perfect compatibility with the two-dimensionality of gender.

Notwithstanding, the very two-dimensional aspect of the reifying approach may lose sight of its objectives in attempting to adjust one aspect and disregard the fact that it happens at the expense of another. The redistribution of resources may result in a status that devalues and degrades the woman. To resolve this problem, she refers to a redistribution/recognition project to attain gender justice.

The economic empowerment of women has opened new gateways for recognition and redistribution, however, along that road, many inconveniences arise. Women, and amidst the current socioeconomic environment, have lost sight of their true agency and renounced it to the neopatriarchal system to define it and inculcate an individualistic ideology and therefore

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shifting the burden of failure away from society to the individual. Redistributive amendments may entail negative consequences on the recognition aspect of gender justice.

Reformist endeavors are liable to the charge of being merely symbolic. To redress the situation, a reevaluation of the cultural paradigms that attribute downgrading signifiers to the feminine is primordial to facilitate later the enactment of an effective strategy. The remedy impacts both the status and the class structure (Fraser, 2013:171).

A diagnosis of women's gains is required for the sake of tracking the outcomes of redistribution and recognition of that social category.

Gender as a social system is given its dynamicity by other social systems (class, religion, ethnicity...), ultimately, women's role in production and behavior in reproduction is shaped by their position within their immediate social group. For instance, a working mother has a different performance than a single woman, although it does not negate the biological determinant⁶ that may at times be superseded by patterns of social change or reinforced thereby.

4.8.1. The Role of Redistribution and Recognition in Defining Gender Justice (Participatory Parity)

Gender norms are unthematized background for individual choice and expectations. This is a poorly investigated area of gender justice. Women are neither a class nor a status group; they are both, on the basis of that principle, a redefinition of gender as a two-dimensional social trait (Fraser, 2013:162) rather than one dimension among many.

At the redistribution level, gender justice is based on two main conditions: the just distribution of resources and the second on the equal opportunity of all participants in acknowledgment and questioning the institutionalized reductive aspect of status order (patriarchy).

⁶ The primacy of biology in the study of gender identity and behavioral patterns should not be overlooked, since assigning arbitrary social attributes runs the risk of being a catalyst for identity defects and dysfunctional gender relations. Numerous researches from Scandinavian countries reveal a significant tendency toward presumed traditional gender roles, whether in the family or as educational or occupational preferences.

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Braidotti, in her work *Nomadic Subjects* (1994), devises a multilevel analysis of sexual difference and she posits that the dominant literature establishes an irreversible and irreducible asymmetry between not only the sexes but the female Other and the desirable Symbolic masculine subject, that is, feminine traits have been reduced to devalued ones. Modern emancipatory policies, including Algeria, have built on that construct creating a homologized female subject (heralding freedom of choice, assertiveness, career achievement), even when the policymakers or the scholars are departing from a difference stance or third wave feminist premise, in conformity with a male-dominated model. Ultimately reproducing and reifying the same old system of inequality. The challenge is to resituate subjectivity within the intersecting levels of lived experiences, through taking up modes of representation not defined by the social environment as much as by the self. Certainly, repainting the picture cannot easily be incarnated, it is a demanding task that requires at least identifying representational models defined by neopatriarchy and imposed on the self as naturally given, put it into question and eventually be able to connect and engage with what is naturally given.

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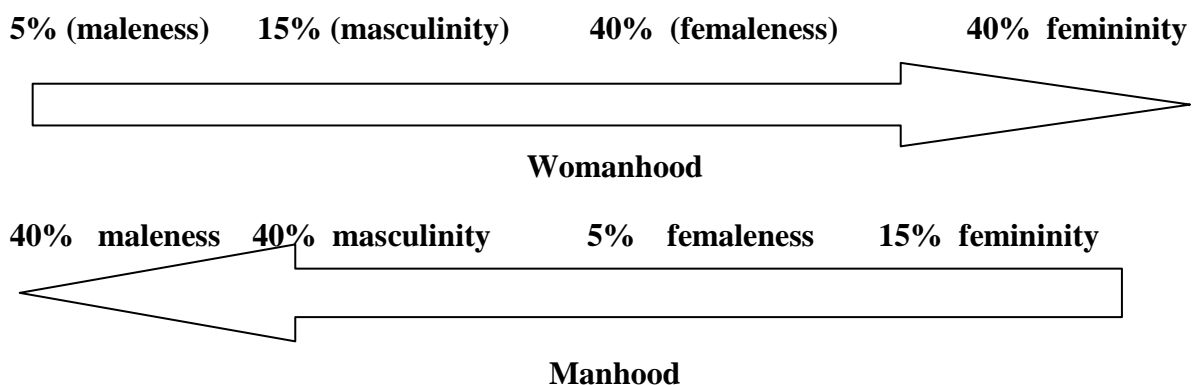
4.9. A Redefinition of Manhood and Womanhood

A sane upbringing of a man or a woman takes account of balancing the four categories and maintains the connection between the biological and social, in the sense that each social trait complements its biological counterpart (more details are displayed in the table below):

Table 4.1.: A categorization of masculine and feminine traits

A man		A woman	
Maleness	Masculinity	Femaleness	Femininity
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strength 2. Dominance 3. Rapidity 4. Clarity 5. Inclined toward limiting and imposing borders 6. Provision 7. Abundance 8. Diversity 9. Randomness 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Linearity 2. Activity/interaction 3. Result-oriented 4. Incarnation (transforming the tacit into tangible) 5. Singularity 6. Protection 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weakness 2. Flexibility 3. Slowness and graduation 4. Internalization 5. Concealment 6. Reception 7. Confinement (able to deal with limits) 8. Singularity 9. Bearing 9. Production 10. Orderliness 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to surround (convolution) 2. Care 3. Acceptance 4. The ability to unveil the qualities involved in anything 5. Diversity and plurality

Source: Sabry, 2016.



The percentages displayed are by no means extensive, they, rather, represent the existence of each given characteristic within the individual.

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4.9. Conclusion

Emancipation is not a ready-made piece of garment tailored to the size of women, it is rather a journey of self-discovery and learning, it is the ability to take responsibility of one's own flourishing, recognizing personal flaws and external manipulations. The power of governmentality has certainly limited women but within every power game lies resistance, women have always had room to negotiate the rules of the game, which has been done in certain cases, but the system remains far more influential than individual efforts. As a result, it is indispensable that society participates in such an endeavor to rebuke and redress institutionalized oppression that hinder its evolution, as heralded by early feminists '*the personal is political*'.

Human agency is a continuum that despite structural constraints exists and can find its pathway through this intermingled net to be fully operative. In addition to the external condition, women's real empowerment does not lie in material possessions, it rather about being capable of transgressing internal constraints.

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4.1. Introduction

The discourse of empowerment is conceived as a space of resistance and self-assertion available to women; yet, it drags them into a new net of subordination, since women's resources become assets for their families and husbands. The recognition aspect of empowerment is, therefore, missing or mispositioned in the equation.

Specifically, breadwinning raised dilemmas for women in terms of demarcating the boundaries of the subject's agency in relation to the power regulations (more precisely discursive practices). The female breadwinner is therefore entangled within a system that guarantees her certain privileges but besets her with confines on other aspects.

The discourse of empowerment, thus, needs to be revisited, as it carries degrading and infantilizing precepts that paternalize women and enclose them within pre-established categories. The major question addressed in this chapter is how to challenge dominant narratives as gendered social agents.

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4.2. The Negotiation Discourse

The fact that women are considered the gatekeepers of the patriarchal system endows them with knowledge of its labyrinths and therefore mastery of negotiation strategies. As demonstrated throughout the present investigation (conducted with female higher earners), and as “*negotiation is a consequential social endeavour, affecting people’s salaries, career advancements, and relationships*” (Thompson, 2009), bargaining with patriarchal and market rule has had beneficial outcomes for women. They have developed the capacity to cope with restrictive practices and earn power in both spheres of life.

Notwithstanding, the expansion of the narrative of female autonomy and empowerment resulted in a destabilized gender order (based on masculinity and femininity), as the postfeminist sensibility transformed the female position within this order from objectification to subjectification, which as described in chapter two, is a process of shifting the power of controlling and defining femininity from the male gaze to the female gaze.

The emergent female subject is self-scrutinizing and self-transforming. She internalizes the expert (*the panoptical male connoisseur*) where the male gaze still lingers somewhere in the background and may be even more judgmental than that of women, to regulate not only herself but members of the same group i.e. women.

To adopt and reproduce cultural ideals of a normative feminine model labeled by feminist analysts “*the postfeminist gaze*” (Riley, et.al. 2016: 2) that determines the conformity and appropriateness of the female to fit in the pre-established ideal femininity. She is therefore simultaneously the subject and the object of her own and other women’s judgment, not only in terms of appearance but also in terms of agentic choice and personal achievement. This politics of looking (that is an ever-present phenomenon among women but presently further amplified by the modern visual culture) reshaped the dialogism of ‘the gaze’ as to what constitutes a genuine woman and ingrained within women three main elements;

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1. **The role of surveillance:** that is applied to keep women under control.
2. **The desire for validation:** is the sense of belonging that members of any given community long for, it leads them to opt for certain behavioral patterns.
3. **Fear of failure:** it may be defined as a motivation for the previous parameter in some cases, since individuals are prone into aggregating in communities and comply to fit in.

In our case study, female breadwinners managed to climb the social ladder but incarnated a form of compulsory femininity that incorporates different traits in one subject and ultimately overloaded women with tasks that have traditionally been accomplished by men and left men with a remarkable void leading not only to a masculinity crisis but a gender crisis since whenever one sex wins both sexes lose.

Women have lost what Paglia (2017) calls the “agrarian solidarity” in the age of community life, by the time they entered the workplace and became obliged to navigate the waves of public life. What is also alarming is the feminist ideological attempt to eradicate (or at least weaken) genuine masculine traits that are required within the new sexual order.

This misimplementation may trigger the emergence of emasculated men who are struggling to identify with the roles demanded from them and adapt with the changing pace of life, a number of them tends to exploit the emancipation of women and draw the maximum benefit from it.

Alterations in certain patterns adopted by either males or females should not yield a total reversal of roles¹. The family must preserve an image of masculinity, with a certain degree of resilience, and femininity that are fundamental in the preservation of the spousal relation and in the correct upbringing of children.

¹ The obsession with the professional woman has downgraded an important aspect of the gender relations. Motherhood which is a gate toward a more connected experience for women and men remains desired but is delayed and restricted among career women with a very limited space to be practiced. Homemaking is also perceived as a non-lucrative activity and therefore lower in status compared with paid work. This is one of the severe consequences of the feminist movements that blinded women from a complete vision of the social interaction that are part and parcel of their identity construction.

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In this case, it is mandatory that feminist activists and academics address the masculinity crisis or more precisely the gender crisis faced in our society. Biology-based research on sexual differences and their impact on subjectivity must be given its fair share as foundational within feminist literature. It is on anthropological and historical grounding that doing research in gender essentially acquires meaning and finds its track toward advocating change in society.

Gender justice and empowerment programmes too have to be articulated with this filter to enact suitable policies for the integration of both males and females within social life.

It is true that the agentic activities women engage with, in the investigated case of this thesis opting for education and a stable career, are actually a seized opportunity in a country where gender justice is at its embryonic stage and women have little access to a relatively economically secure life path. Yet, this advancement should always be observed cautiously.

The premise of equality of opportunity and empowerment could be further substantiated by evidence from research conducted in Nordic countries where egalitarianism has reached an advanced stage. These studies reveal that women have a lesser proclivity to opt for a choice within the realm of the opposite sex. For instance, women in these countries are less likely to choose a career in a STEM field than women in less affluent societies. Researchers, from Leeds Beckett University and the University of Missouri, conducted a study across 67 countries, found out that from an early age, girls tend to be tilted toward non-STEM subjects even though they might decide on a STEM -related major at university. The results of comparing countries with greater gender equality and those with less, demonstrate that females in countries with less gender equality tend to be significantly represented in STEM fields. The cause of that is related to the financial security that such a career grants. Whereas in gender equal societies, welfare provisions relieve that burden, thus, women's choices are more motivated by enjoyment and interest in the field (<https://www.thejournal.ie/gender-equality-countries-stem-girls-3848156-Feb2018/>).

This unveils an important trait of societies, the more equality is endorsed, the more gender differences among men and women abound.

The number of females in the job market in Algeria is disproportionately peaking as teachers, doctors, office workers but very poorly represented in senior levels. Consequently,

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the government is applying a quota policy in sectors overwhelmingly occupied by women to get more women into higher positions.

If the gender equality policy is to be implemented by the state on society, it will ultimately create a fertile ground for gender differences to resurface and become mostly self-evident.

4.3. Narrative Identity and the Female Individual (joining social identity with agency)

Identity politics emerged as a reactionary movement to the grand narratives that marginalized certain social groups. Theories of identity politics advocate the premise of individual action as a result of personal interest and orientation rather than an internalized set of values or pre-established categories.

The female breadwinner is an identity trait that long remained underexplored, even within disciplines informed with identity politics. Throughout the empirical phase of the present research, each of the female participant's story revealed a uniqueness in significance and appeared as an appropriate empirical research tool that enables the evaluation and explanation of gender relations that would be based on narrativity positioned in a spacio-temporal ground. This ground creates connections among sequences of events and has a proclivity of allowing the researcher to track down narratives of oppression as well as emancipatory ones. Narrativity hinges on four aspects to be functional: ontological, public, conceptual, and metanarrativities (Somers: 618).

Narrativity provides an understanding of women's experiences but it risks marginalizing others' stories. Hence, it is primordial to balance the narrative premise of such an analytical tool by giving the opportunity to men's voices while being alert to the potential biases of subjects and researchers alike. It also takes account of the points of disjunction between individual experiences and dominant social narratives and, even equally important, the genealogical background (family history, childhood...), to retrieve informative, particularistic and realistic data. Embarking on such an endeavour guarantees a functional feminist discipline that enlarges circuits of connectivity between active and passive, intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of identity. Following this line of thought, feminist narrativity undermines any essentializing version of human identity and accentuates the highly variable position occupied by individuals throughout their lifetime.

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The question that arises however is which narrative will prevail, this depends on the power position occupied by the social actor. It is therefore crucial to challenge the dominant and silencing narratives and give voice to the invisible ones to alter the damage that may ensue from single narratives. It is also worthwhile that representations of individuals and even groups must hinge on a stance of the agents' relational settings, that is, the individual exists within a matrix of representations that shape her/his identity.

Narrative agents are more inclined toward negotiating interests rather than abiding by institutionalized patterns of interaction. One of the strategies that women may effectively use is motivating the male into finding an earning opportunity. Essentially, this strategy connects with the male's primal proclivity into hunting and attempt to prove their ability to bring something worthy to the household, in order to create a well-established and safe territory and gain recognition within the dominance hierarchy².

The current expansion of state feminism is leading sexual difference astray and my very well complicate the situation for males. Women have benefitted drastically from the amendments that have impacted every field of social life but amounted to an unstable psychological and social state. On the other end of the spectrum, men started to have a sense of alienation and loss of sight and what behavioral pattern to adopt, all these combined are entangling the threads that form the foundational net of sexual relations in society.

The post-modern identity politics allowed the emergence of intersectionality as a lens that disentangles the threads of the social web. If we delve deep in it, we would reach the conclusion that the end point of diversifying and categorizing society is the individual. Therefore, feminist literature in Algeria must be predicated on a minute analysis of lived experiences with a historical and de-westernized underpinning that guarantees a connected and realistic account of gender relations experienced in real life. Also, the introduction of 'narrativity' to the social sciences to constitute an appropriate ground for a de-essentialized observation of human experience in its most natural state.

² **The Dominance Hierarchy:** is grounded on a form of multistage pyramid to mount by men and when he finally reaches its summit he earns social and women's acceptance. This ladder sets a number of masculine traits that culturally signify success to measure men's adeptness, for example industriousness, professional and financial attainment. Once a male fails to conform, he loses attractiveness to the opposite sex and eventually a decent position within the heterosexual matrix. Along this theoretical line, the dependent husband portrays the image of a male who remained as a grunt member (at the bottom) of the hierarchy.

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Knowledge of the sexual differences and management of gender relations have been subject to individual whim and experimentation and led to the emergence of countless troubles among couples. As a solution to that, marital and financial counseling are primordial parameters prior to the institution of marriage. This works as a platform that allows women and men to be well-informed and fathom the functioning of the gender enterprise to build a secure relationship and personal well-being.

4.4. Re-conceptualizing Agency

A hermeneutic perspective into the construction of the subject is essential to underscore its active dimension. As McNay (2003) posits, it reveals the difficulty of formulating a liberatory framework for agents because of the persistence of the pervasive inequalities that characterize the gender profile of society.

She gradually disconnects the definition of agency and the positioning of the subject from a dualistic casing into a background with multiple possibilities. Her philosophical premise is underpinned with Bourdieusian concepts ranging from the *habitus* to the emergence of *regulated liberties*. The habitus, as the formation of the body within cultural regularities and the incorporation of *temporal structures* into the body, is conducive to the inception of *embodied practice* that incarnates a flexible mode of action which expresses and anticipates regularities and tendencies. In this model, practice is generated within a highly variable and unstable setting dependent on the power relations governing it. She essentially points to the temporality of structure as an important parameter in the determination of the agency and the highly transformative nature of social interactions that allows a multitude of possibilities for agentic autonomy and creativity while remaining within the confines of structure. This is what Bourdieu terms “*regulated liberties*” that are catalyzed by the contact between object positions and the space of possibles. There are thus, endless encounters between the habitus and social schemes that make it prone to constant renovation, but a radical change is rarely to take place. Benhabib holds a similar stance in what she labels *narrative agency* where the subject is able to assert herself within the system of gender norms despite her inability to subvert it altogether.

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In the same token, Zerilli holds a radical formulation of agency where the agent is capable of moving outside expectations of conventional action and bring up something new (Lucas, 2016:58). In fact, this contention allows us to fathom the prominence of the intersubjective nature of the relationship that binds subjects, carries the unique contribution of each member, their ability to think of the 'unthinkable'³, act upon it and very likely change the course of events and gradually transform the existing hegemonic network. At this stage, Lucas brings in the concept of narrative agency first coined by Benhabib, which is at its starkest meaning; stories lived and shared by individuals. She develops its significance through reference to five main characteristics:

(1) It is primary to narrative content; (2) it is grounded in uniqueness; (3) it is non-sovereign; (4) it is essentially communicative; (5) it is (theoretically) infinitely generative (2016:60).

To put it more precisely, narrative agency is the capacity to make sense of the world which unfolds the specificity of each individual's experience that derives meaning from the situated interactions obtained from the intersubjective relation created among social agents that eventually generates new stories at every encounter. Though not every narrative is possible in all circumstances.

Narrative agency implies that the individual contributes actively in writing her/his life scenario, thus, the 'I' always matters in the construction of the self.

The problem with women's narrativity today, though, is their inclination toward a common narrative, their striving to conform with a socially constructed narrative. These women are enslaved by their modern lifestyle.

The relational aspect of narrative agency balances the process of agency and identity formation, because the individual story is never fully intelligible without reference to the social group the teller belongs to. Yet, what is paramount here is the ability of the individual to exist within society preserving his/her individuality, since this will determine future choices (what Korsgaard labels 'authorial agency'), experiences and critical interpretations thereof; this brings us to the practical aspect of narrative agency.

Individual identity is ineluctably built on a ground of political and social narratives but there is always a personal experience of this formation. everyone has a unique conception and

³ The term is used here as explained by Arkoun .

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interpretation of the various life events s/he goes through that involves multiple interactional possibilities with other members. Departing from this standpoint, the female breadwinner and worker in general is capable of escaping the shackles of dominant narratives (such as the modern compulsory femininity) and creating new meaning. Being a process, narrative agency is a constant activity of formation and transformation. We contribute to the construction of the self and the norms that later govern us as we can challenge them through the same relational means.

The female breadwinner as a social agent, who enjoys narrative agency in certain aspects of her life, devises it to bargain with patriarchy as demonstrated in chapter three, by the female respondents as ways in and out of the patriarchal labyrinth that itself enfolds possibilities for agency. Despite remaining within the confines of the dominant gender order, everyday interaction must be characterized by such moments of unconventional behavior as vivid evidence that negates any static aspect of social structure. Within the household, Moore (1994:87) contends that members are involved in negotiations and bargaining and may even have competing interests.

The difficulty that manifests with the assumption of the self-determining individual is the paradoxical situation that arises between an essentializing and western neo-colonialist tendencies at formulating it. That is, any attempt to account for female individualized reality is met with an opaque ground of theorizations and analytical tools designed for different forms of subordination/resistance, that although seemingly similar and in many cases intermingled, may be misleading.

The exercise of resistance by the female subjects of study, within the (neo)patriarchal system through bargaining was compatible with the pervasive and limiting nature of the established order and allowed them more agency and contestations with domestic rules although at a restrained level (the household) but engendered positive impact. Notwithstanding, the same aspect that provided a breathing space and light at the end of the turmoil represents a hindrance in long-term aspirations for radical transformation, in the sense that the actual move to resist is determined within a frame of a pre-established contract. In fact, resistance acts, as contended by Kandiyoti (2013) and White (1986), are intrinsic in social orders and necessary for their continuity and not as signs of performativity and agency.

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The persistence of the status quo is often relegated to the relative stability of the gender order that could be best characterized by the traits of '*doxa*' that is inherently endowed with polarized activity. On the one hand, it indoctrinates the privileged social actors to support it and ensure its existence, on the other, the disadvantaged are working to find ways out of the conundrum or at least reach out possibilities for self-expression. Approaches to investigate the status quo have taken a phenomenological guise that has for goal the development of gender relations but rarely delving deeper within those constructions and questioning them. The whole endeavor is, therefore, typified with a gap between theory and practice.

In her revisionist account of patriarchal bargains, Kandyoti questions the theoretical underpinning devised to analyze women's negotiation and demarcation of territory within their respective contexts. She remains skeptical to the fact that gender as a social category and a constitutive element of power is treated as a stark notion of social attribute investigated with a plethora of conceptual apparatuses that may be inconvenient and even misleading. This, in her view, diminishes the accuracy of any feminist analysis and thwarts attempts to overturn the dominant ideology or at the very least expose its subordinating and manipulative techniques and transmit that to the masses.

The growing presence of women in virtually every arena of social life and their portrayal as competitive, successful and even fierce in pursuing their goal is no more an issue of equality or militating for their rights. It has extended to mainstream institutions as the new incubators of the cause which means that it has never existed outside the control of society.

Happiness and freedom may be prerequisites for each other, yet, it is incongruent to confound them as one thing. Women have paid a big price for their economic prosperity particularly those who belong to disadvantaged socioeconomic strata. Despite the gains earned along the way to empowerment, they remain ambivalent and still live contentious meanings of femininity and masculinity and even when believed to be autonomous within the social order, the situation spirals down to more subjugation and confinement to equally oppressive and pervasive system.

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The real obstacle to any genuine liberation⁴ of women is their internalized desire for assimilation to a particular model for which they compete over a long track that makes available to them certain options to reach their ultimate goal.

The detraditionalizing effect of the socioeconomic transformations has complexified gender relations, and created ambiguous positions that are not fully emancipatory but do not reinforce gender inequality. It entails a serious engagement with a reconceptualizing enterprise of agency to address the fluctuations that have impacted gender identity.

Gender identity is mutable and thus prone to be refashioned by external as well as internal factors, this is conducive to conformity with dominant norms at times and also to resistance, and subversion at others. Identity is formed through negotiation on two axes: subjection and liberation, however, in several theoretical arguments the subjection aspect received much attention and debate leaving very little room for the liberation process. The former impinging on a deeply entrenched bulk of dichotomized premises (gender/sex, feminine/masculine...), seems too deterministic in defining agency and gender identity yielding a one-dimensional construction.

It is then, necessary to reformulate the notion of gender agency within well-defined lines *of power relations to understand how acts deemed as resistant may transcend their immediate sphere in order to transform collective behavior and norms* (McNay, 2000: 4). McNay calls for a *dialogical understanding of the temporal aspects* of subject formation that offers a dynamic account of agency that elucidating individuals' creative and autonomous respond to constraining structures. The notion and state of motherhood also need to be addressed seriously by Algerian feminists, sociologists and psychologists through a transdisciplinary lens, it is by achieving '*conscious intellectuals*' (Sharabi's words) that the slavish adherence to debilitating social models is possible.

The economic and social transformations have created a new atmosphere for identity formation among males and females. Contemporary female subjectivity is determined within a frame of a plethora of freedoms, and antagonisms. The female individual is deceived with

⁴ In our society it is very difficult to speak of subjectivity but the possibility of the formation of social agents is always relevant.

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the availability of material goods, significant visibility in the public and the freedom of mobility but the horizon of patriarchy is not decidedly replaced by that of consumerism, individualism, and competitiveness, the reality is that they have joined efforts to create agents imbued with the characteristics of both systems and perpetuating their existence.

Breadwinning represents an important determinant of female identity construction, it is certainly empowering on multiple levels. It enables the creation of a subject capable of being actively involved in the reconstruction of gender patterns and hence, family formation and dynamics. Notwithstanding, this could engender a conflictual situation.

Moghadam adds enriching insights into the discourse on social reproduction, she posits that to preserve its operational aspect, it attributes the role of preserving cultural and political values of the community and the state at large.

Women are living a state of dereliction (Irigaray's word), a state of obsession with the compensation for the phallus that makes them become aggressive in positions of leadership.

4.5. The Adaptation of Feminist Research to the Changing Social Environment

The paradoxical situation that some Algerian working women live in has been conducive to precarious positions within society. Required to adhere to ideals of meritocracy that enveloped them with a chic wrap of hyperfemininity (by contemporary labor market standards) and accomplishment to keep them desirable and employable.

The very value of work, thereby, seems to be determined by the market economy that ponders on high productivity levels and is subject to strong imperatives that demand commitment on the part of the individual. Moreover, it is worthwhile to note that these regulations hinge primarily on masculinist standards that set out the scenery to normalize women's behavior. The female individual is required to conform in order to be recognized.

Reconsidering female breadwinner roles within the context of this modern economic environment is crucial given the extensive contributions brought about by their growing presence within the formal and informal sectors. It is of equal pertinence that the implementation of policies that recognize female employees as the primary source of income

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for their families. Restructuring patterns of employment and occupation is also primordial to address issues pertaining to childcare, sexual division of labor and all sorts of sexual violence.

To put it into practice, collective struggle functions as an effective medium of voicing people's needs particularly when established on social grounds. Organized social movements (feminist associations) and academics play a pivotal role in articulating, interpreting and addressing the needs of both men and women and also securing a sane and well-established gender order that contributes to constructing balanced gender identities and ultimately a relatively harmonious social fabric.

To win the battle of needs interpretation, satisfaction must be obtained, and this is realized by paving the way for participatory parity which in turn should be applied across the sexual spectrum (for both females and males).

The data obtained from the research subjects reveal that women in large proportions believe their primary and genuine role is inside the household fulfilling the traditional caring role. This could be the result of early socialization and the weight of cultural norms that have been deeply engraved within their psyche and dominated their beliefs, their financial situation and education, however seem to be leading them to work just for the sake of securing a financial revenue that guarantees a decent life, this condition developed a sense of discomfort and resentment among most of them.

Rehabilitating the value of work especially for women must constitute an essential prerequisite in the women empowerment agenda. This may start at young age as they experience and receive the appropriate training to discover their passion in life and develop it to become the ground for their future career. This provides the opportunity to thrive in their career patterns and divert their primary motive for work to its core, its value.

Real revolutionizing change does not occur by longing for utopian images of society, it stems from the lived reality of people, with a critical perspective on history and a waging of the struggle for an egalitarian future.

Neopatriarchy is not a cataclysmic system that can be shattered by a sleight of hand, it brought some considerable positive impact on society *liberation need no longer be linked to the classical revolutionary seizure of power.*

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It is the product of an extended process of transformation and change occurring in three basic areas: in the material infrastructure (e.g., rational economic development); within social institutions (e.g., the progressive nuclearization of the family); and in political practice (Sharabi, 1988:150).

The feminist movement must be a preventive instrument against retreat to aggressive and repressive forms of patriarchy and precipitation toward forms of postmodernism.

4.6. Joining the Autonomy Approach with Feminist Voice Theory

Feminist and empowerment theories are important perspectives for social work (both micro and macro practice), they both advance human rights and social justice and add to critical awareness of individual and sociopolitical contexts. These theories are primordial in practice as they provide insights into evaluation and reformation of applied models. The core concepts in both theories—mutuality, critical self-awareness, collective action, conscientization and collaboration—are important tools in working with individuals, families, groups and communities.

Yet, canonical approaches to autonomy have always carried the seeds of their own refuting and de-individualizing of subjects, that is, they over-victimize them and trivialize or conceal these individuals' ability to react, setting the stage for larger social structures to envision emancipatory avenues. To prevent such a debased endeavor, an urgent distinction must be made between an oppressed and an emancipated voice. To achieve an emancipated voice women need to be supplemented with the skills⁵ that allow them to connect with themselves and their own values and goals and neutralize any subordinating practice.

⁵ Self-determination theory suggests the following protective measures to ensure women's exercise of agency:

1. Introspective skills: to recall the individual's personal experiences and scrutinize their origin and effects and therefore be able to filter what allows development from what debilitates it.
2. Communication skills: individual development depends largely on peer insights and perceptions.
3. Memory skills that enables individuals to derive important lessons from life experiences,
4. Analytical skills to envision possibilities for future opportunities.

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This standpoint on autonomy and women's voices does not pigeonhole people as free agents or incompetent dependents. On the one hand, it acknowledges that women achieve a level of self-determination despite male dominance, for these agentic skills and their application requires no esoteric knowledge. Still, since proficiency with respect to them is a matter of degree, and autonomy often depends on whether or not one's chance circumstances are conducive to exercising these skills and on whether or not one is motivated to exercise these skills, it is safe to assume that women experience autonomy fluctuation.

Self-determination is inseparable from speaking in one's own voice. If people are unable to articulate what they are doing, and what they stand for to themselves, their control over how they are engaging with the world is diminished. Additionally, they need to communicate what they are doing and what they stand for to others. Otherwise, people will rely on stereotypical images and scenarios to ascribe needs to them and to interpret their conduct. As a result they may withhold respect and cooperation for no reason. Therefore, the interpersonal skill is of paramount importance for achieving an autonomous state.

There is also a significant consonance between feminist voice theory and the autonomy approach in the sense that the individual's immediate ecology has a significant impact on her/his ability to be agentic. Many theorists have emphasized solitude as a means of autonomous action, others on organizations and political activism, but agency is a continuous endeavor that connects both relational and individualistic undertakings.

Any tenable theory of self-determination must accommodate the realities of enculturation and unconscious desire. Since enculturation shapes both the body and the psyche, and unconscious desire influences both conduct and thought processes. Thus, the starting point for a successful autonomous individual is the embodied, socially situated and

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5. Self-nurturing skills that represents an auto-corrective tool that assures guidance and perseverance along the way
 6. Volitional skills that allow women maintain their commitment to their self-portrait.
 7. Interpersonal skills that joins forces to challenge and change cultural regimes and institutional arrangements (Meyers, 2000:21)

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divided self and the objective is to gain a rich understanding of what one is and what one aspire to become.

The autonomous individual is an evolving subject, a subject who is in charge of her life, a subject who fashions her self-portrait and shapes her self-narrative through a process of self-discovery, self-definition and self-direction. Although pretending to have transcended the impact of an oppressive social regime is a masculinist idea, agentic skillfulness ensures that women's voices are not wholly subsumed by internalized ideology.

4.7. Women's Self-determination within a Neopatriarchal Culture

Michelle Moody Adams (1994) asserts that successful cultures must preserve people's capacities for the exercise of judgment and discretion. *"Any culture that worked to impair these capacities, would be creating the conditions of its own demise"* (307).

This premise alludes to the necessary equilibrium that need to be preserved by any culture. A thriving culture evolves and it persists as well. If cultures are self-perpetuating systems, they must have built-in mechanisms that protect their beliefs and practices from criticism. Notwithstanding, people in all cultures, prefer the known over the unknown, this trait is particularly exploited by cultures to secure their existence and therefore, impair individual's autonomous reactions. An instance of that could be despite the female's economic independence and intellectual level, she may all too readily convert to the very system that was most inimical to her autonomy.

So, the two main weapons in the hands of culture that destroy autonomy, according to Meyers (2002) interpretive schemas and valorizing certain agentic skills over others. Culture utilizes common concepts to form meanings that will be ascribed to self-portraits and become part of self-narratives. They also manipulate people's perceptions of which skill to adopt depending on their social acceptability, that is, they certainly match social roles ascribed to individuals and conceal any skill that would potentially lead to questioning social arrangements.

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4.8. A Two-dimensional Gender Approach: Redistribution and Recognition

Females, who on their way to create a successful career portrait, find themselves with a staggering load of household responsibilities *caring* and *providing* for dependents not by mere *choice* but by necessity. Some enjoy the privileges this may entail for a while but the long run consequences may be deleterious. The unbalanced and flawed situation created by the market economy is conducive to the emergence of a dependent male class of society unable to make a significant contribution (by contemporary standards).

According to the redistribution/recognition model advanced by Fraser (2013), any attempt to adjust inequality cannot be successful unless it addresses the two pillars economic structure and the status order.

She adopts a proposal to redress the disparities resulting from cultural and economic changes in society, she first contends that women still suffer a subordinate status due to institutionalized patterns of injustice that intersect in a way that has exacerbated the situation (as detailed in the previous chapters).

She points to the deficiency of the policies aimed at improving the female condition and qualifies it as one-dimensional and short-sighted, since their implications in social life have handled one aspect on the detriment of the other. The two determining aspects of gender injustice are economic maldistribution and social misrecognition that are both at the core of a corrective feminist politics (redistribution and recognition) which, if properly conceptualized would come in perfect compatibility with the two-dimensionality of gender.

Notwithstanding, the very two-dimensional aspect of the reifying approach may lose sight of its objectives in attempting to adjust one aspect and disregard the fact that it happens at the expense of another. The redistribution of resources may result in a status that devalues and degrades the woman. To resolve this problem, she refers to a redistribution/recognition project to attain gender justice.

The economic empowerment of women has opened new gateways for recognition and redistribution, however, along that road, many inconveniences arise. Women, and amidst the current socioeconomic environment, have lost sight of their true agency and renounced it to the neopatriarchal system to define it and inculcate an individualistic ideology and therefore

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shifting the burden of failure away from society to the individual. Redistributive amendments may entail negative consequences on the recognition aspect of gender justice.

Reformist endeavors are liable to the charge of being merely symbolic. To redress the situation, a reevaluation of the cultural paradigms that attribute downgrading signifiers to the feminine is primordial to facilitate later the enactment of an effective strategy. The remedy impacts both the status and the class structure (Fraser, 2013:171).

A diagnosis of women's gains is required for the sake of tracking the outcomes of redistribution and recognition of that social category.

Gender as a social system is given its dynamicity by other social systems (class, religion, ethnicity...), ultimately, women's role in production and behavior in reproduction is shaped by their position within their immediate social group. For instance, a working mother has a different performance than a single woman, although it does not negate the biological determinant⁶ that may at times be superseded by patterns of social change or reinforced thereby.

4.8.1. The Role of Redistribution and Recognition in Defining Gender Justice (Participatory Parity)

Gender norms are unthematized background for individual choice and expectations. This is a poorly investigated area of gender justice. Women are neither a class nor a status group; they are both, on the basis of that principle, a redefinition of gender as a two-dimensional social trait (Fraser, 2013:162) rather than one dimension among many.

At the redistribution level, gender justice is based on two main conditions: the just distribution of resources and the second on the equal opportunity of all participants in acknowledgment and questioning the institutionalized reductive aspect of status order (patriarchy).

⁶ The primacy of biology in the study of gender identity and behavioral patterns should not be overlooked, since assigning arbitrary social attributes runs the risk of being a catalyst for identity defects and dysfunctional gender relations. Numerous researches from Scandinavian countries reveal a significant tendency toward presumed traditional gender roles, whether in the family or as educational or occupational preferences.

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Braidotti, in her work *Nomadic Subjects* (1994), devises a multilevel analysis of sexual difference and she posits that the dominant literature establishes an irreversible and irreducible asymmetry between not only the sexes but the female Other and the desirable Symbolic masculine subject, that is, feminine traits have been reduced to devalued ones. Modern emancipatory policies, including Algeria, have built on that construct creating a homologized female subject (heralding freedom of choice, assertiveness, career achievement), even when the policymakers or the scholars are departing from a difference stance or third wave feminist premise, in conformity with a male-dominated model. Ultimately reproducing and reifying the same old system of inequality. The challenge is to resituate subjectivity within the intersecting levels of lived experiences, through taking up modes of representation not defined by the social environment as much as by the self. Certainly, repainting the picture cannot easily be incarnated, it is a demanding task that requires at least identifying representational models defined by neopatriarchy and imposed on the self as naturally given, put it into question and eventually be able to connect and engage with what is naturally given.

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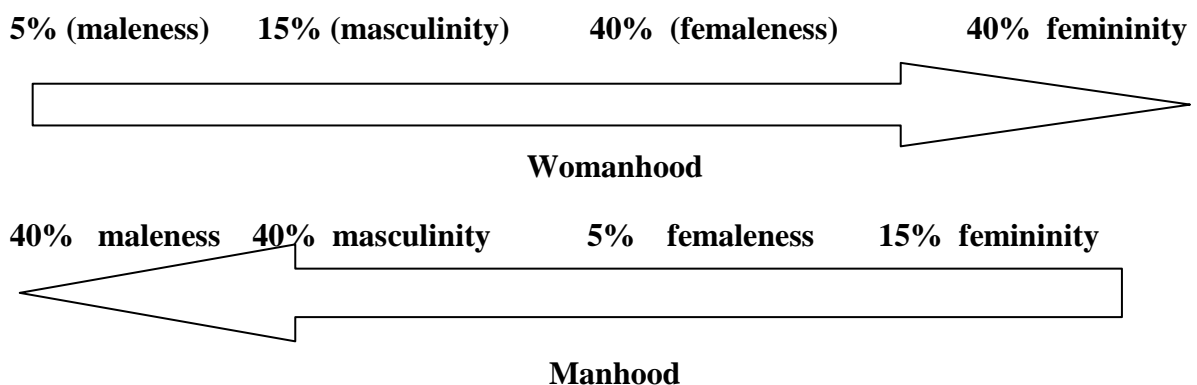
4.9. A Redefinition of Manhood and Womanhood

A sane upbringing of a man or a woman takes account of balancing the four categories and maintains the connection between the biological and social, in the sense that each social trait complements its biological counterpart (more details are displayed in the table below):

Table 4.1.: A categorization of masculine and feminine traits

A man		A woman	
Maleness	Masculinity	Femaleness	Femininity
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strength 2. Dominance 3. Rapidity 4. Clarity 5. Inclined toward limiting and imposing borders 6. Provision 7. Abundance 8. Diversity 9. Randomness 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Linearity 2. Activity/interaction 3. Result-oriented 4. Incarnation (transforming the tacit into tangible) 5. Singularity 6. Protection 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weakness 2. Flexibility 3. Slowness and graduation 4. Internalization 5. Concealment 6. Reception 7. Confinement (able to deal with limits) 8. Singularity 9. Bearing 9. Production 10. Orderliness 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to surround (convolution) 2. Care 3. Acceptance 4. The ability to unveil the qualities involved in anything 5. Diversity and plurality

Source: Sabry, 2016.



The percentages displayed are by no means extensive, they, rather, represent the existence of each given characteristic within the individual.

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4.9. Conclusion

Emancipation is not a ready-made piece of garment tailored to the size of women, it is rather a journey of self-discovery and learning, it is the ability to take responsibility of one's own flourishing, recognizing personal flaws and external manipulations. The power of governmentality has certainly limited women but within every power game lies resistance, women have always had room to negotiate the rules of the game, which has been done in certain cases, but the system remains far more influential than individual efforts. As a result, it is indispensable that society participates in such an endeavor to rebuke and redress institutionalized oppression that hinder its evolution, as heralded by early feminists '*the personal is political*'.

Human agency is a continuum that despite structural constraints exists and can find its pathway through this intermingled net to be fully operative. In addition to the external condition, women's real empowerment does not lie in material possessions, it rather about being capable of transgressing internal constraints.

General Conclusion

It is undeniable that the individual cannot exist outside a social network and that reciprocal influence is necessary for the continuation of both. Hence, the subject formation is bound by these two forces.

The present research work attempts to analyze the power relations that working women are involved in with the larger social structures, patriarchal and economic, and their contribution to forging their agency and the negotiation of power relations at both levels. Throughout this research work, we sought to bring to light the lived experiences of female breadwinners and their journey toward identity construction in the Algerian society.

The findings reveal that the narrative of the female agent capable of attaining material achievements has brought some positive outcomes, but it can sow the seeds of a model driving women down the abyss of ruthless objectification that represents the wrong path from a right cause of empowerment and self-determination. Women are prone to pay double the price of their slavish espousal of a neofeminism devoid of any commitment to and betraying the real cause of gender justice.

What further exacerbates the situation is the liaisons among politics, economy and the family, that are characterized by complacency whose impact has propagated throughout private and the public spheres in the Algerian context. The particular linkage of the family sphere to public life involves the influence of-often contradictory-factors on the formation of personhood in a systematic fashion. It leads to a tension between individualizing and subsuming to community. Notwithstanding, any power relation involves resistance and this has been invested by some women to strike a balance in their relationships.

As a miniature of larger social structures, marital relations are deeply influenced by the socioeconomic environment. As the female takes the role of the financial provider, imperatives that regulate these relations are also transformed in a society traditionally organized by separate gender roles. These roles have intersected to some degree but have not been fully conducive to a gender just household.

In this case, married female breadwinners face a paradoxical gender schema wherein desired educational and employment positions have been earned but emancipation from traditional gender norms has not. They make self-sacrifices in order to secure their autonomy.

In numerous instances, women have all too readily pursued the road of normative femininity pre-established for them, believing in its potential to emancipate them. While in reality, it indoctrinates them to become mere reproducers of neopatriarchy. It must be clearly understood that individualization reflects a macro level retreat from the earlier collective ideals into more private and restricted ideology.

The status quo consists of a denial of respective differences in favor of an inconsistent, one-size fits all view of egalitarianism. This 'new' model of equal opportunity for all genders is based on an idea that differences need not be accommodated and that they are a disadvantage. Rather, women should follow this new dominant script of fairness, which in actuality is still based on the hitherto dominant male breadwinner model of unfair distribution of unpaid labor in the home, and gendered division of labor in the workplace. Cognizance of past models and policies still practiced today, under the guise of modernity, are exposed in these women's discourses, as are the social ills that create the challenges they face in their everyday lives. Working married females have found themselves part of a sexual contract that determines their behavior in such a way as to conform to its precepts. It utilizes techniques of governmentality to ensure a generation that reproduces the system.

Women empowerment is a multistage process that affects different dimensions of life both individual and larger social levels. Access to education and paid work constitute only one aspect of empowerment which, if not invested appropriately, will certainly fail to uplift gender relations and women's status. This process cannot reach its apex without involving women as active agents in its realization rather than being its passive recipients. Therefore, in this research we attempted to shed light on the potential opportunities for improvement that not only access to resources (education and income) may allow women, but their actual control over them.

Women, and specifically young women, are the new subjects of meritocracy, the ethic of freedom, as called by Rose (in McRobbie, 2009: 262). They are invited to compete in education and the workplace. They are compelled to create their own individualized reality, making a life plan, earning their own living, making the so-called right choices that misleadingly appear as independent decisions but in reality are the outcome of a regulative regime that demarcated the limits and paved the tract of their conduct.

Modern feminism is compliant with modern requirements as its tone has been attenuated, the agenda has changed, and the outfit has also been stylized to look more

attractive and more importantly less threatening. Women nowadays are appreciating their adherence to feminism and feminist claims more than they used to in the 1960s. The modern feminist heralds her educational and professional achievements; she enjoys pushing the borders of sexual conduct and celebrates the equality obtained thus far. By doing so, they became less critical to the heterosexual matrix and have become doubly exploited by the patriarch and the market economy. Therefore, a fair academic knowledge production about women, and gender relations in general, necessitates a reconfiguration of the research tools, a redefinition and a recontextualization of theoretical constructs.

The female condition is undoubtedly of crucial relevance to the prosperity of the nation, now more than any time before. It is true that their recent visibility contributed significantly to balancing the different spheres of social life but it also allowed to discern lacunas in the empowerment discourse and its collateral damage. A sound interpretation of the current social transformations allows us to envision a strategy to mitigate the impact of fluctuating conditions. There is also an urgent need that women in contemporary society understand their condition and opt for skills for agentic action. A special focus can be given to both male and female exploitation of a room of resistance through their ability to bargain with patriarchy, that could open the gateway for a research avenue that completes the existing literature on subjectivity and individualized performative acts.

This thesis is not a women's rights account, it is rather an endeavor to configure a framework for sketching out the experience of constructing a feminine identity in light of the cultural background wherein the whole process takes place. Attempts to fathom subjectivity and agency in line with the dialectics involved through a dichotomized lens will impair to a great extent, any productive, informative literature as well as any praxis that generates positive change in society. The highly contingent nature of gender identity, it seems, requires a minute examination of the intermingled cases and spaces where individuals negotiate and assert their subject position as women and men without losing sight of moments of self-awareness and awareness of the other.

A clear understanding of the gender dynamics requires, therefore, a process and a multifaceted examination. It also leads to reaching consensus and finding solutions to the existing knowledge gap both in academia as well as in everyday life. The role of academics is of paramount importance at this stage, to transfer knowledge and contribute effectively in community life through promoting gender education that if ignored, may exacerbate the instability individuals face to become an identity crisis.

In an era of an excessive availability of information and representations, women are exposed to a wide variety of materials that prepare the female for the job market but have rarely been tempted by deep-rooted transformative gender education that enables better self-knowledge, and construct their own agency and self-assertion.

Additionally, the emerging market economy is rife with innovative insights that create opportunities for women and afford manageable and flexible conditions which open new avenues to thrive without having to struggle with the preexisting confines. Information technologies represent the perfect environment for female entrepreneurship which is already on the rise and women are achieving unprecedented success and bringing positive impact to the virtual as well as the real-world community.

Community leaders and researchers play a pivotal role in sensitizing women about gender issues and readjusting modes of knowledge production that are responsible for the establishment and maintenance of gender-related schemata. Community leaders including civil rights activists, associations, politicians and even females who have achieved personal wellbeing and brought about positive change to society bear the responsibility of accompanying their fellowmen/women toward building a sane nucleus for prosperous gender relations that would eventually allow more productivity among social agents.

The added value of research does not obtain without appropriate collaboration with governmental and civil institutions that assist the application of academic research findings and ensure a follow-up process of assessment, adjustment and elaboration into cross-disciplinary ramifications to unravel the way gender operates within a variety of fields.

Further research may follow the same line of thought to track women's search for economic independence through the virtual world, their access to the world of entrepreneurship (their leadership style within the corporate environment) and the contribution they bring to the economic sector and the consequent transformations within the gender order.

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APPENDIX I: Questionnaire (English Version)

The present questionnaire form is designed within the frame of a Doctoral thesis entitled “Algerian Working Women’s Position between Social Dynamics and Culture: a case Study of Married Female Breadwinners”. You are kindly required to fill it out, in order to obtain valid information about the aforementioned phenomenon.

1. Personal Information:

Age Range

- 1 Between 20 and 30 3 Between 41 and 50
2 Between 31 and 40 4 50and above

Q.2 Your Educational Level

- 1 primary 4 university level-BA
2 middle school 5 Postgraduate
3 secondary

Q.3 Your current job position

- 1 Public 2 Private

independent

outdoor

- 1 2

entitled to a full
position

- 1 2

entitled to a

temporary position

- 1 2

Q.4 Residential District

- 1 urban 2 rural

Q.5 your current marital situation

- 1 single 3 divorced
2 married 4 widow

Q.6 Reason for being family breadwinner

- 1 husband death 5 husband refusal
2 husband inability 6 absence of other provider
3 choice 7 other
4 divorce

Q.7 How much do you contribute from your income to family expenditures?

- 1 less than10% 3 50%
2 10%-40% 4 more than 50%

Q.8 do you have assets of your own?

- Yes No

Tick the appropriate case in each of the following statements:

Statement	Level of agreement				
	Not at all true	Not very true	Neutral	Somewhat true	Always true
1. I pay for most of everyday household purchases					
2. I pay for most of large household purchases					
3. I pay for most of my personal purchases					
4. I pay for my children's purchases					
5. I pay my husband's purchases					
6. I received education training to be qualified					
7. I regularly check global and local news					
8. There is no difference if the wife or the husband is the household provider.					
9. It is necessary for women to obtain a paid job to ensure their financial independence.					
10. National laws grant equal rights to both men and women					
11. Women in today's society have access to facilities to report injustices.					
12. Women occupy influential positions in legal system					
13. I have control over most vital personal decisions					
14. I have control over my income					
15. I have complete freedom to choose partner.					

16. I_am_free_to_decide_on whether to contribute financially to the household or not.				
17. I_would_still_work_even if it_is_not_necessary_for_income				
18. I_am_free_to_decide_on taking paid work				
19. I_am_free_to_decide_on movement outside of town				
20. my_mobility outside the home_is_motivated_by_desire_to_gain_reward				
21. my_movement_is_motivated_by_sense_of_duty				
22. my_movement_is_motivated_by_own_values				
23. my decision on what task to do is motivated_by_my values				
24. my_financial_contribution is motivated_by my own_values				
25. my_action_on_what_task_to_do motivated_by_desire_to_gain_reward				
26. my_action_on_what_task_to_do motivated_by_sense_of_duty				
27. my_financial_contribution_is motivated by a sense_of_duty				
28. my_financial_contribution is motivated_by_desire to gain_reward				
29. Being_a_family_provider_has strengthened_my_relation_with_spouse				
30. I_am_satisfied_with_family_life				
31. Marriage_helps_toward_personal_goals				
32. I have Never_been in intimate_partner_violence_thanks_to_laws				
33. during_marriage_unequal_gender_roles_decreased				
34. I_can_get_job_promotion_or pursue my studies without objection from husband or any other member				
35. It_is_fulfilling_being_a_family_provider				
36. It_has_positively_impacted my self-image				
37. My status has ensured me a better position within my family.				

Indices representing the variables:

Items 1-5: financial contribution

Items 6-7 education

Items 8-12: gender knowledge.

Item 13-16: control over personal decisions

Item 14- 19: domain specific autonomy

Item 20-28: motivation

Item 29-33: family well-being

Item 34-37: personal well-being.

Questionnaire (French Version)

Merci de votre collaboration essentielle à la réussite de cette étude menée dans le cadre d'une thèse de doctorat à l'Université de Mostaganem et intitulée 'L'état actuel de la femme algérienne, étude de cas : la femme chef de famille.'

Ce questionnaire a pour objectif de déterminer l'ampleur de l'impact de la situation économique des femmes sur leurs rapports familiaux ainsi que les facteurs qui y interviennent.

Afin de réaliser ce travail, vous êtes prié de répondre aux questions en cochant une des réponses proposées. Vous pouvez également ajouter des proposition ou remarques.

Ce questionnaire sera traité de façon anonyme et confidentielle.

Informations personnelles :

Catégorie d'âge

Entre 20 et 30 ans	
Entre 31 et 40 ans	
Entre 41 et 50 ans	
plus	

Niveau d'études

primaire	
moyen	
secondaire	
licence	
Magistère/doctorat	

Situation professionnelle	
Activité indépendante rémunérée (à domicile)	
Activité indépendante rémunérée (sur un lieu de travail public)	

	Secteur public	secteur privé
Fonctionnaire salariée		
Emploi précaire		

Situation familiale

Célibataire	
mariée	
divorcée	
veuve	

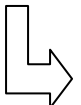
Avez-vous des enfants ?

oui	non

**Est-ce que vous
ménage?**

oui	non

contribuer aux dépenses de votre


**Si oui, à quel
pourcentage?**

20%	50%	70%	100%

**Indiquez la raison pour laquelle
vous contribuez aux dépenses?**

incapacité financière du conjoint	
Décès du conjoint	
Choix personnel	

Accord au sein du couple	
Divorce	
Refus du conjoint d'assumer cette responsabilité	
Autre	

Etre femme chef de famille	Tout à fait d'accord	Assez d'accord	Pas tout à fait d'accord	Pas du tout d'accord	Ni en désaccord ni d'accord
1-Me donne plus d'influence sur les décisions prises au sein de ma famille					
Me met sous pression psychologique					
3-M'a été imposé					

4-me rend plus indépendante					
Me donne plus de contrôle sur mes revenus					
7-me permet d'avoir de l'autorité					
3. Me donne plus de liberté de mobilité					
4. Me rend autonome dans la prise de décisions personnelles					
10-me réserve un statut et une reconnaissance de la part des membres de ma famille					
11-les membre de ma famille m'exploitent souvent					

العناصر المقترحة في قائمة الاستقصاء التالية ستستعمل في اعداد أطروحة دكتوراه بعنوان الوضعية الراهنة للمرأة العاملة الجزائرية و ذلك لأجل تحديد مدى تأثير الوضعية الاقتصادية للمرأة على علاقاتها الاسرية و العوامل المساعدة في ذلك ، لذا نرجو من حضراتكم المساهمة في انجاح عملنا هذا و ذلك من خلال الاجابة على هذه الاستمارة بوضع علامة (X) امام الاجابة التي ترينها مناسبة

سبب كون المرأة تساهم ماديا في نفقات اسرتها :

	عدم قدرة الزوج المادية
	وفاة الزوج
	اختياري
	طلاق
	تخاذل الزوج عن القيام بهذا الدور
	عدم وجود عائل
	اسباب اخرى

ما رايك في كون المرأة مساهمة في نفقات الاسرة بشكل عام في وقتنا الحالي

	يمنح مكانة افضل للمرأة
	ضرورة
	لا يناسب المرأة
	محايد

علما بان المعلومات المتحصل عليها تبقى سرية باعتبار ان هوية المجيبين غير معروفة

المعلومات الشخصية : الفئة العمرية

	ما بين 20 و 30
	ما بين 31 و 40
	ما بين 41 و 50
	50 فما فوق

المستوى الدراسي

	ابتدائي
	متوسط
	ثانوي
	جامعي ليسانس
	دراسات عليا ماجستير-دكتوراه

	الوظيفة الحالية
	الوضعية في الوظيفة الحالية
	عمل حر من داخل البيت
	عمل حر من خارج البيت
	موظفة مرسمة
	موظفة بصفة مؤقتة (غير مرسمة)
	القطاع
	الحكومي
	الخاص

دور الامراة مساهمة ماديا في الانفاق على اسرتها	اعارض تماما	اعارض	محايد	اوافق تماما
1- يعطيها كامل الحرية في التصرف في راتي				
2- حرية في اتخاذ قرارات شخصية				
3- مساهمتها في الانفاق على الاسرة نابعة من كامل ارادتي				
4- أي عمل تقوم به داخل المنزل يكون لاجل الحصول على التقدير				
5- لنفادي				
6-				
7- يعطيها حرية في الحركة والتنقل خارج المنزل				
8- يجعلها تشعر بانها ذات قيمة و نفع لنفسها و للاخرين (بعيدا عن الماديات)				
9- يضع على عاتقها ضغوطا نفسية				
11- يجعلها مصدر استنزاف و استغلال من طرف افراد اسرتها				
12- لا يؤثر على مكانتها داخل اسرتها				