

Female Breadwinners in the Algerian Household: the Paradox of Empowerment

Received: 11/08/2020 ; Accepted: 02/02/2022

Abstract

In Algeria, an increasing number of females are facing the reality of being the primary or sole earner in their households in addition to bearing the responsibility of domestic labor that remains static within the family. In the present research work, we hypothesize that women empowerment through access to education and finances may have a positive impact on women's personal well-being but inflict negative outcomes on their family well-being when they are the primary breadwinner or higher earner. The quantitative findings reveal that women's psychological well-being is positively impacted by their status given that it guarantees them independence and fulfills their sense of achievement. Whereas the family well-being variable was found to be negatively impacted by their status. We further elucidated women's interaction patterns within the household through the qualitative findings that report the existence of techniques of governmentality that keep women's subordination within the household.

Keywords: breadwinning, female well-being, governmentality, agency.

Imene BOUGUESRI ^{1*}

Abdelghani NAIT-
BRAHIM ²

1 Abdelhamid Ibn Badis
University of Mostaganem
(Algeria)

2 ENS Oran (Algeria)

Résumé

En Algérie, un nombre croissant de femmes sont confrontées à la réalité d'être le principal ou l'unique soutien de leur ménage en plus d'assumer la responsabilité du travail domestique qui reste statique au sein de la famille. L'hypothèse dans ce travail est la suivante : l'autonomisation des femmes par l'accès à l'éducation et aux finances peut avoir des conséquences positives sur le bien-être des femmes mais infliger des conséquences négatives sur leur bien-être familiale. Les résultats quantitatifs révèlent que le bien-être psychologique des femmes est positivement influencé par leur statut, car il leur garantit leur indépendance et leur sentiment d'accomplissement. Alors que la variable du bien-être familial a été jugée négativement affectée par leur statut. Nous avons en outre élucidé les modèles d'interaction des femmes au sein du ménage grâce aux résultats qualitatifs qui démontrent l'existence de techniques de gouvernementalité qui maintiennent la subordination des femmes au sein du ménage.

Mots clés principal, bien-être des femmes, gouvernementalité, agency.

ملخص

في الجزائر ، يواجه عدد متزايد من الإناث واقع كونهن المعيل الأساسي أو الوحيد في أسرهن ، بالإضافة إلى تحمل مسؤولية العمالة المنزلية التي لا تزال ثابتة داخل الأسرة. في العمل البحثي الحالي ، نفترض أن تمكين المرأة من خلال الوصول إلى التعليم والتمويل قد يكون له تأثير إيجابي على الرفاهية الشخصية للمرأة ، ولكنه يؤدي إلى نتائج سلبية على رفاه الأسرة عندما تكون المرأة المعيل الأساسي أو أعلى دخل. من الرجل. وتكشف النتائج الكمية أن الرفاه النفسي للمرأة يتأثر بشكل إيجابي بوضعها ، حيث إنها تضمن لها الاستقلال وتحقق إحساسها بالإنجاز. في حين وجد أن متغير رفاهية الأسرة يتأثر سلبًا بوضعهم. لقد تم كذلك توضيح أنماط تفاعل المرأة داخل الأسرة من خلال النتائج النوعية التي تشير إلى وجود تقنيات الحكومة التي تحافظ على تبعية المرأة داخل الأسرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المعيل للأسرة، رفاه المرأة، الحكومة، القدرة على الفعل.

* Corresponding author, e-mail: i.bouguesri@gmail.com

I- Introduction :

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. 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 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 (Kabeer, 3).

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 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.

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 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 roles within the collective consciousness.

The present research endeavor 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 in the Algerian context, 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 women today enter the workforce for the financial revenue regardless of whether it represents value for them which has a direct impact on their well-being.

II. 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.

Agency lies at the crossroads between the individual's proclivity to undertake actions and the underlying societal codes that function as road signs directing 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* (Bresser and Knittel, 14).

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

Assad 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 (Assad, 8).

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, 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

II.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 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 structure) may take, social structures act on people and people act on social structures (Giddens, 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* (Taylor, 1991 ctd in Marcon and Furlan, 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 (453, cited in Inhorn, 7), family relations in Arab societies are further nurtured under 'patriarchal connectivity' in which kinship bonds that relate family members are taken advantage of to reproduce patriarchal power. That is, individuals in a social 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 through 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 institutions 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 culture 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 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 position.

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. Some external powers may indeed 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).

I.1.2. New Visibilities among Women

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 manipulated by a collectivity of ideological forces that present these women '*not as forms of objects, nor even forms that would show up under the 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, 52, cited in McRobbie, 60). Women take the opportunity of employment to gain more visibility in society contributing to the creation of 'feminine citizenship' tailored following 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, The Beauty Myth 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), 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'.

I.2. Breadwinning

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.

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.

I.3. Gender roles and wellbeing

Rose et al. (1993, *Gender And Labor History*) point to the transfer of family models from complementary where the husband is the breadwinner and the wife is the caregiver, into the parallel model where both partners are involved in paid work and contribute to housework. They stress through empirical evidence the impact of compatibility between social identity and social role on the psychological wellbeing of both spouses. A more recent study conducted by Brown and Roberts (21), results show that in cases where couples have 'traditional' views, if the wives work, the impact is negative on both partners. The adverse effect is reported only on their husbands if they work part-time. The opposite proved to be true in couples who both state that they hold 'modern' views on gender roles, and where the wives are the higher earners but still perform household chores, then these wives have lower well-being even if they work part-time. However, contrary to their husbands' well-being that seemed to be higher.

I.4. Governmentality

In 1980, Foucault revisited the analysis of governance employing 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 to reach the ultimate objective of governing through the very instrument of liberation (Dean, 131; Lemke, 201; Rose, cited in Vintges, 5).
- The second pillar is **pastoral power** that arises from the 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.

II- Methods and Materials :

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

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. It exposes the power interplay among married female providers within their households as a result of disturbing traditional gender norms. It attempts to single out the impact of gender, status, and income on power relations within marriage.

A cross-sectional study was conducted to describe the sociodemographic characteristics that distinguish each group. A questionnaire form was distributed to 50 married working females in different sectors, 42 forms were filled and returned to the researcher. 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 based on the degree of contribution to household expenditures, the reported personal characteristics of respondents and their spouses.

The domains of interest in 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 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	

II.1. Sample

We utilized convenience sampling with a group of females from the Mascara province in Algeria. 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 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.
- The second category was that of female providers: who contribute to the household income with 70% and more.

II.2. Measurement Scales

Bargaining power, the independent variable, covers a variety of interrelated indicators: access to a 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).

II.3. Operationalization of Constructs

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:

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).

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 (<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11836>).

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 to align with the present research objectives. These domains include a financial contribution to household income, access to employment, and mobility.

The decision-making[4] 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.

Decision-making indicators (1-2) were adapted from Alesop et al. (*World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*) later utilized in a comparative study of empowerment measures on an international scale by Ibrahim and Alkire (*Agency and Empowerment: A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators*). 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, the action of delegating the decision to someone else).
- The third level that informs the analysis of intrahousehold decision-making about 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).

The Well-being Variable

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

- The individual level (personal well-being) links the female's access to resources with their self-perception, personal control beliefs, and satisfaction with their achievements.

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

II. 4. Data Analysis Tools:

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

Cronbach's Alpha

This test (more precisely 'reliability coefficient') is used to determine the reliability of the research measures by estimating the average correlation among the items constituting every 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/>).

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

Table 2. Reliability of the Research Variables

Variable	Cronbach's alpha
Access to resources	.71
Agency	.69
Outcomes	.76

The results in a table (2) demonstrate a relatively high level of reliability coefficient which indicates a connectedness and coherence in the items provided in the questionnaire, and accurate measuring of the variables.

Descriptive Analysis

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

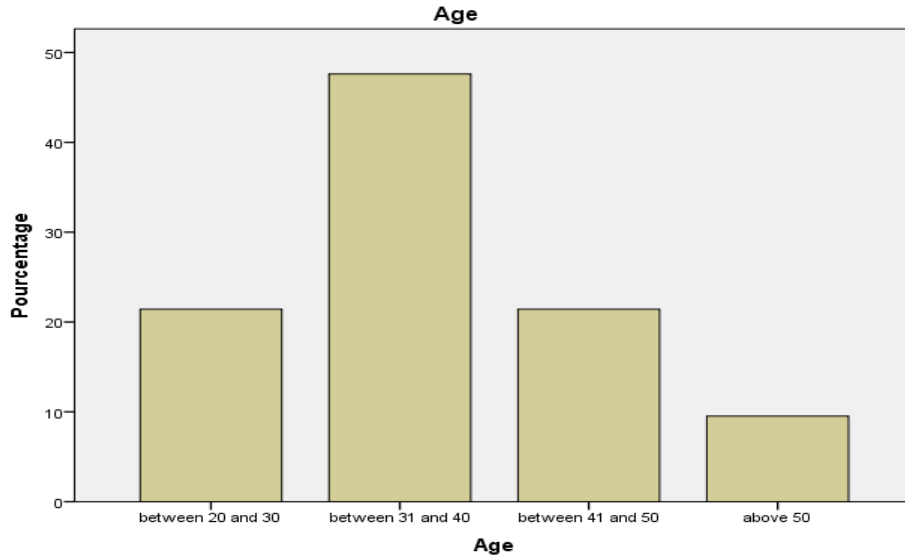
The mean and standard deviation for each variable have been calculated to determine the level of agreement of the respondents with the proposed statements.

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

III- Results and Discussion:

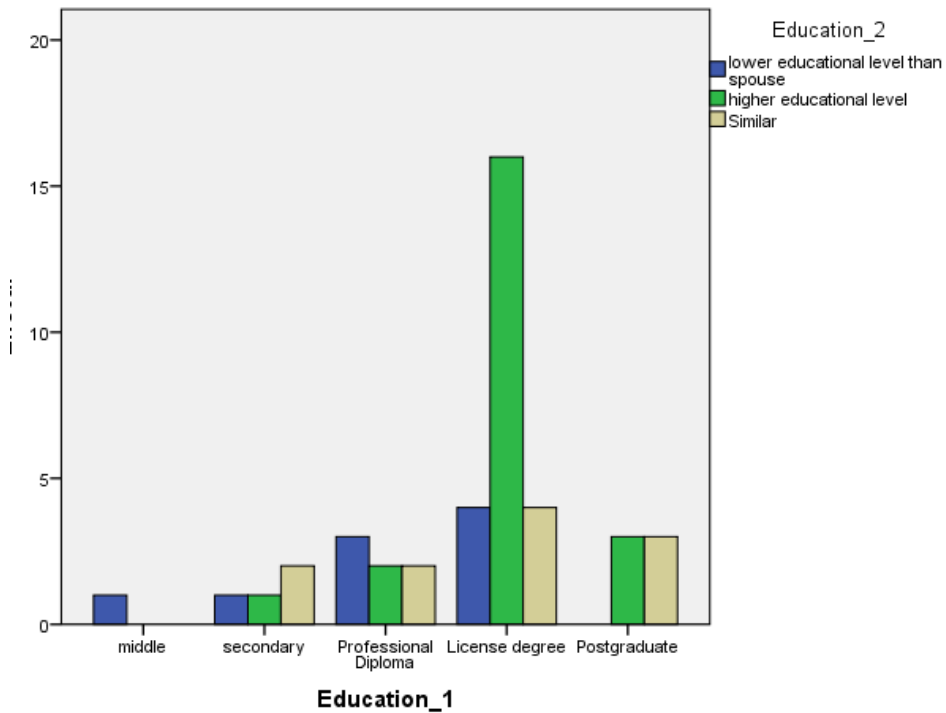
III.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Age



Bar Graph 1: Respondents' Age Range

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 (2): Comparing the Respondents' and their Spouses' Educational level.

We sought to identify the existence of any educational discrepancy between the female subjects and their spouses, which would provide clarity in the interpretation of the level of the agency they report. The table below 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. Household Type

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 4. 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 the table (4) that the majority of the respondents are mothers with a response rate of 66.7% for the children category.

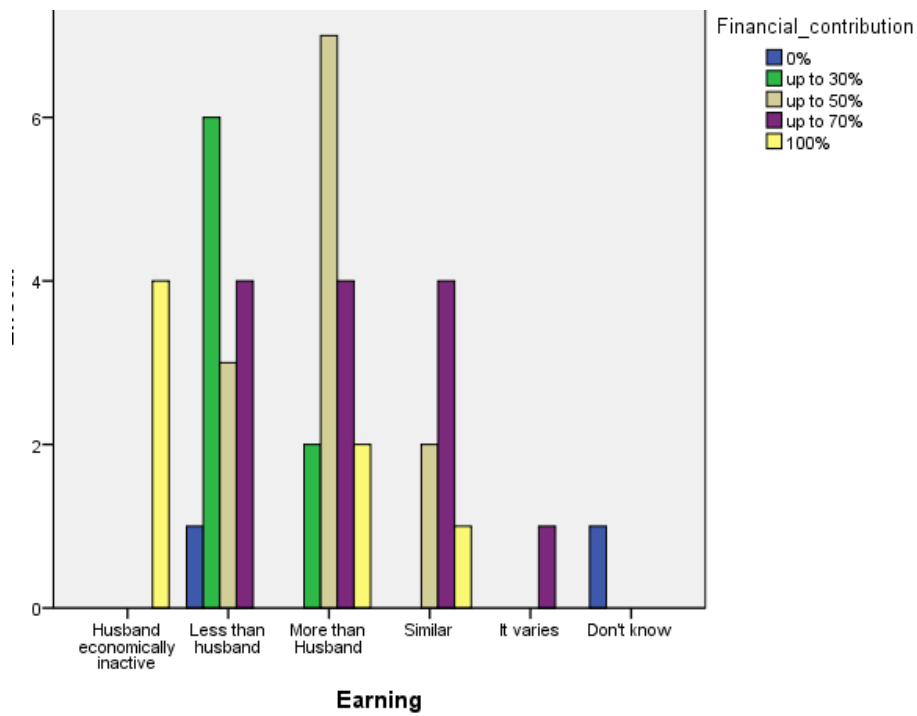
Assets

As to the ownership of the material assets variable, table (4) reveals that more than half of the sample does not have any assets since they belong to a relatively young age category and the salaried class.

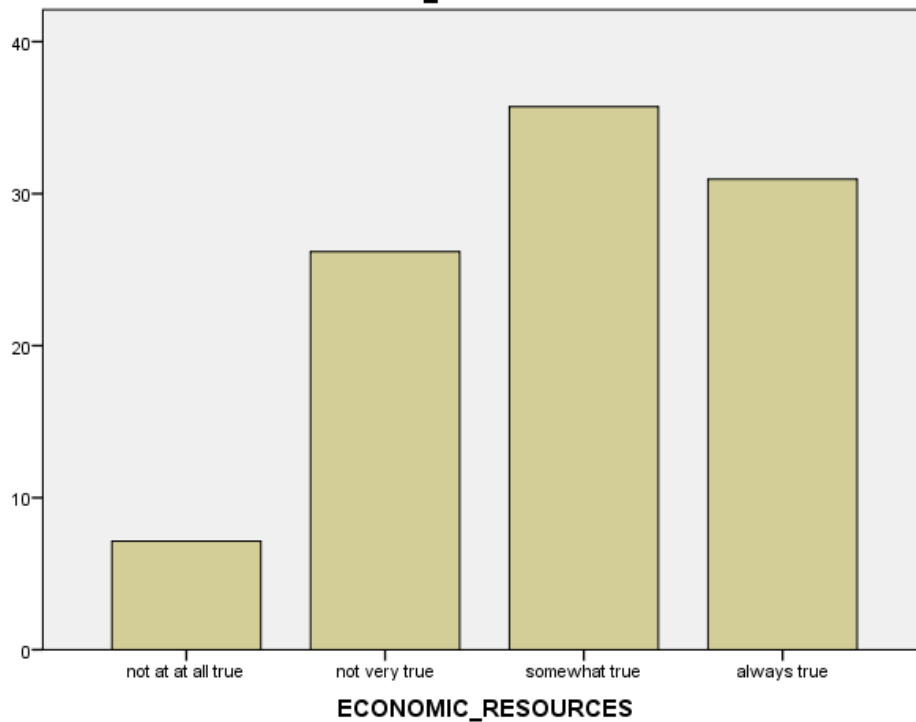
Table 5. Respondents' Ownership of Assets.

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

In order to fathom the relationship between women’s contribution to household income and husbands’ economic situation, bar graph (4) 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.



Bar Graph 4: Comparing Women’s Educational Level with the spouse’s



Bar graph (5): The Economic Resources Variable

III-2. Independent Variables

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 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 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
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 (313; Khoury and Moghadam, 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 5). 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.

Table 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
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 score 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 7. Control over Personal Resources

	N	Mean
13. C O P D	4 2	4,07
14. C O P D	4 2	3,76
15. C O P D	4 2	3,45
16. C O P D	4 2	3,88
N valide (liste)	4 2	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 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

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 9. Intrinsic Motivation

Motivation to take	Mean	STD deviation
Action		
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, 60).

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

We provided nine items to analyze this dimension, and table (9) reveals the results for the intrinsic type of motivation (items3, 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 subsuming 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.

III-3.The Dependent Variables

Personal Well-being

Table (10) 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
N valide (liste)	42	11,98	4,85

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 a negative impact of the lack of autonomy in women’s choices on their family life.

Table 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		

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
		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).			

H2: There is a positive correlation between working women's subject position and strategies of governmentality.

As displayed in table (12), working women's agency is positively correlated with their personal well-being. The results of the 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 concerning 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 a positive impact in 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.

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:

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 that 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 feminine territory, to labor into finding an outlet for the day-to-day 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.

The pastoral power

As women are inserted in diverse positions within the household, they are attributed regulating roles to be applied to other females to render them responsible for adjusting their conduct following 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 to live 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, 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 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.

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, 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”.

IV- Conclusion:

In this research endeavor, we investigated the new form of empowerment among female breadwinners and its impact on their well-being.

The findings demonstrate a positive correlation between personal wellbeing and access to resources (education and finances mainly), as to the family wellbeing variable, results

reveal a low correlation due to the fact that women become assets for their families with very little change in the domestic role as caregivers which may be exhaustive and a burden to carry. This situation induces certain strategies utilized by women to bargain with the neopatriarchal environment and survive therein.

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. Further research can invest in tracking the life path of young females and identifying the characteristics of each stage and their impact. The turbulence of the pre-established patriarchal order has definitely influenced men, thus, investigation of emerging masculinities and coping with gender expectations must also have its fair share.

Referrals and References:

- [1]. Alesop, Ruth, Heinsohn, Nelly. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, 2005. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/8856/wps3510.pdf?sequence=1>
- [2]. Assad, Talal. *Formation of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford, CA, 2003.
- [3]. Avishai, Orit. "Doing Religion" in a Secular World: Women in Conservative Religions and the Question of Agency. *Gender and Society*, 22(4), 2008. 409-433. Retrieved July 27, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/27821661.
- [4]. Bresser, Nina and Knittel, Susanne. On Matter of Agency: Saba Mahmood and the Postsecular Turn in Feminism, 2013. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/7728623/On_Matter_of_Agency_Saba_Mahmood_and_the_Postsecular_Turn_in_Feminism.
- [5]. Doss, Cheryl.. Intrahousehold Bargaining And Resource Allocation In Developing Countries. World Development Report, 2011. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/9145/WDR2012-0021.pdf?sequence=1>.
- [6]. Giddens, Anthony, *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. California: Stanford University Press, 1991.
- [7]. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11836>.
- [8]. Ibrahim, Solava. Alkire, Sabina. Agency and Empowerment: A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators. OPHI Working Paper, 2007.
- [9]. Kabeer, Naila. *Marriage, Motherhood and Masculinity in the Global Economy: Reconfigurations of Personal and Economic Life*. Sussex: University of Sussex, 2007.
- [10]. Marcon, Gilberto Hoffman, & Furlan, Reinaldo. The issue of identity in postmodernity: authenticity and individualism in Charles Taylor. *Psicologia*

USP, 31, e190048. Epub March 13, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0103-6564e190048>

- [11]. McRobbie, Angela. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. London: Sage Publication, 2009.
- [12]. Pateman, Carole. *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989.
- [13]. Rose, S. Gender And Labor History. *The Nineteenth Century Legacy*. *International Review of Social History*, Supplement 1, 1993, 145-162.
- [14]. Vintges, Karen. Muslim women in the western media: Foucault, agency, governmentality and ethics. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 19(3), 2012, 283-298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506812443476>
- [15]. Woolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth: how Images of Beauty are Used against Women*. USA: Chatto and Windus, 1991.