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writes concerning *zina* that, “Violent punishments for this crime, such as death by stoning, have been advocated by contemporary Islamic movements and incorporated into the legal codes of some Muslim countries as punishment for breaches of sexual morality in the name of a return to a more ‘authentic’ Islamic law”. Arguing that this is a misuse of history to justify an authoritarian political agenda concerning women and morality, Semerdjian writes: “Therefore, exploring the ‘actual’ historical position of women, gender and morality becomes even more pressing as it stakes out the ground upon which the battle over morality in Islamic law will be fought” (p. XX1).

Semerdjian’s book will be of interest to specialists in the field of Islamic law, women and gender, the social history of Syria during the Ottoman period, and Ottoman studies. The book can be used by undergraduate students with some background in the history of the region and by graduate students.

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Living Palestine. Family Survival, Resistance, and Mobility under Occupation,
edited by Lisa Taraki, Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press.

REVIEWED BY ANNELIES MOORS

Whereas much academic work on Palestine focuses on the political, the central theme of this book, in contrast, is the social reproduction of Palestinian society. Zeroing in on the everyday lived experiences of Palestinians under occupation, it analyses the strategies of households and families, and their individual members, to improve their chances for survival and social mobility. This book does not only highlight how families and households cope with ongoing processes of dispossession and repression, but also points to the limits of such endurance. More specifically, it underlines that certain households – the urban and rural poor and the refugees living in the camps, and certain family members – the young, the female, bear the brunt.

This book is first of all based on the findings of a survey conducted in the summer of 1999 of over two thousand households in nineteen communities in the West Bank and Gaza. Designed by the Institute of Women’s Studies at Birzeit University, where most of the contributors work, it aimed at going beyond conventional national surveys. Focusing on the household as a site of conflict and cooperation, the survey was designed to investigate the relations between household members, addressing such topics as the division of labour, marriage arrangements, living arrangements, wider kin networks, and educational levels, with specific attention paid to gender and generation. In order to capture the post-2000 (second *intifada*) period, characterized by separation of communities, re-invasions and wide-spread assaults on neighbourhoods, and far greater uncertainty and vulnerability, some of the contributions also make use of more recent sources, both quantitative (statistical information), and qualitative (oral narratives).

With most articles based on the household survey, this book can be read as a strong example of what can be done with such quantitative material. An in-depth analysis of such data can raise issues that have not yet been widely recognized. One example is the contribution of Lisa Taraki and Rita Giacaman which points to the significance of regional differences (that is between the north, the south and the center parts of the West Bank, represented by Nablus, Ramallah, and Hebron), rather than the more conventional division of the population of Palestine into camp, village and city

dwellers. They point not only to differences in terms of political economy, linked to the relationship of each city with its region, the character of its hegemonic groups and the diversity of the population, but also to differences in the social and moral order. The contributions of Penny Johnson and Jamil Hilal locate individual households within the wider world of kinship, and point to its ongoing importance in the lives of Palestinians under occupation. Whereas Johnson analyses the continuing importance of kin marriage and its multiple meanings, Hilal underlines how migration may lead to increased conservatism.

Two of the contributions deal more extensively with the war-like conditions of the second *intifada* as yet another phase in the ongoing colonization of Palestine. Eileen Kuttab's contribution on women's work argues for the use of the concept of a 'resistance economy', with economic strategies responding to highly volatile political conditions. Lamis Abu Nahla's contribution (written together with students) constructs six family histories. The original intention of this contribution was to supplement the 1999 household survey, yet in the course of collecting these family histories, everyday realities forced the researchers to focus on the impact of the post-2000 Israeli aggression. This contribution then provides major insights into how individual families and their members cope with these second *intifada* conditions. As these cases indicate, households are highly volatile and unstable, with families continuously trying to accommodate migration, imprisonment, and, more generally, the Israeli assaults on neighbourhoods, destruction of homes, and displacement of families as part of everyday life. One issue that stands out is the effects of the crisis on the male breadwinner, both in terms of economic loss, due to rampant unemployment, and in terms of inability to protect the family. The various cases highlight the diverse effects of such conditions on gender relations and those between generations, varying from greater rigidity to partial inversions of existing hierarchies.

These contributions point to the insights one can gain from household surveys when gender-sensitive questions on labour, education, marriage, and so on are included. Unexpected results come up and can in turn function as a source of inspiration for developing new research projects. Yet, survey material has its limitations, as it does not allow for a dialogical production of knowledge, and inevitably works with averages. With surveys, it is possible to point to particular correlations. However, to understand what particular contexts and developments mean for the people concerned and how these affect their everyday lives, we need to turn to more qualitative methods, such as a narrative analysis.

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