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Editorial

Palma Journal's special issue on migration aims at contributing to this area of study in a unique manner. By providing a forum for non-veteran scholars in the field to share their current research findings with a broader public, Palma has joined hands with the Lebanese Emigration Research Center in celebrating LERC's sixth anniversary serving international and interdisciplinary scholarly discourse between Lebanon and the rest of the world.

The migration special issue owes its inception to a conversation between Beirut und Buenos Aires, in which Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous, an Austrian-American researcher at LERC, and the eminent Argentinean migration scholar, Ignacio Klich, developed the idea for a special migration issue and presented it to the LERC research team. This Libano-Austro-Iberian link laid the foundation for an exciting collection of articles, which I have had the privilege to guest edit. The rest of the story is embodied in the volume at hand, made up of six submissions dealing with the various facets of Lebanese migrants' lives and their relations with their country of origin.

Some of the most insightful work currently being undertaken on Lebanese migration is presented here. This volume is made up of two articles on migration history and four on contemporary topics. The first historical piece, Anne Monsour's "*New century, old story! Race, religion, bureaucrats, and the Australian Lebanese story*", provides an overview of the history of Lebanese settlement in Australia and discusses these immigrants encounter with racial classification and discrimination. She starts with the current perception, common in Australian society, that the Lebanese community is somehow linked to rape, riots, and the "war on terror" campaign and maintains that this perception rests on a historically transmitted image that painted the Lebanese pioneers as "undesirables" or "enemy aliens." Mansour asserts that these pioneers attempted to overcome this 'categorization' process by emphasizing their "whiteness" at the expense of their "Eastern" characteristics. She argues that the restrictive Australian migration policies of the past continue to play a significant role in the lives of the Lebanese immigrants today.

The second historical article, "*The Transnational Imagination: XXth century networks and institutions of the Mashreqi migration to Mexico*", by Camila Pastor de Maria y Campos, addresses the issues of networking, institution formation, and role of the Lebanese community in Mexico from its inception until the present. It argues that migration networks and institutions were organized along confessional lines and through colonial ties mainly to the French Mandate, and that, following the founding of nation states in the Middle East, institutions became more sectarian as they became more 'national'. The author reasons that the "shifting boundaries of these networks reflect the overlapping transnational imaginaries and practices of migrants and colonial and

ecclesiastical authorities.” She contends that the Lebanese migrants to Mexico, whose loyalties in the past were cultivated politically and ecclesiastically and who were instrumentalized as transnational entities, were being cultivated and used in a similar manner following the end of the Civil War in Lebanon.

The first among the contemporary articles deals with gender. In “*Balad Niswen – Hukum Niswen: The perception of gender inversions between Lebanon and Australia*” Nelia Hyndman-Rizik addresses the issue of gender roles of male emigrants from the village of Hadchit in North Lebanon now living in Sydney. She maintains that their self-perception has been emasculated by the migration process. On the one hand, they are confronted with racism and subjugation in Australia, as well as with war and violence in their country of origin, about which they can do very little. On the other hand, changes in the roles of women within the immigrant communities, due to the education of their daughters and the participation of their wives in the Australian economy, further threatens the gendered status quo. Hyndman-Rizik found that these men “have come to imagine the Australian state as a matriarchal state, which is “*hukum niswen*”, ruled by women, as symbolized by the Queen of England as the Head of State.

“*Diaspora and E-Commerce: The Globalization of Lebanese Baklava,*” was written by Guita Hourani. The paper argues that new technologies allow small and medium enterprises in developing countries, especially those with “ethnic” or “nostalgic” merchandise, to carve a niche for their products in the international market. Taking e-commerce in baklava production as an example, this study shows how the main producers of this delicacy used ICT to tap into the Lebanese diaspora, as described in “business to diaspora” theory. The paper argues that shipping across international borders has required the producers to comply with international standards and to be creative in packaging and labelling their products. This process has also created the need for Lebanese financial institutions to facilitate credit card payment and verification. In conclusion, a case can be made for the need for a more enabling legal and telecommunication environment in this sector if it is to expand and thrive in the future.

Rita Stephan’s paper, “*Lebanese-Americans’ Identity, Citizenship and Political Behavior*” examines Lebanese-Americans’ political behavior in order to better understand the correlation between identity politics and ethnic minority citizenship. Stephan surveys how Lebanese, and Arab-Americans as a group, identify themselves and how they are identified by US society. She illustrates how the self-identification of Lebanese-Americans varies according to historical, political, ideological and cultural factors, how Lebanese-Americans vote, how they “frame their activism within the Arab-American framework in promoting their hyphenated community’s interest... and [how] Lebanese sovereignty and independence seems to be a common theme among many Lebanese-American organizations”. She suggests that “Lebanese-American political behavior offers ethnic studies a linkage between identity politics and ethnic citizenship by

contesting the permanency of individual and collective identities and linking voting behavior among ethnic minorities to their broader social identity.”

The final article on contemporary issues “*Pathways to Social Mobility: Lebanese Immigrants in Detroit and Small Business Enterprise*” was written by Sawsan Abdulrahim. Abdulrahim aims at understanding the roots of the Lebanese immigrants’ decision to engage in small-businesses in their new home. She reviews the “middle man” and “the ethnic enclave economy” theories and discusses the role played by social, physical, and economic capital as determinants in these decision making processes. Abdulrahim views these decisions in their relation to structural integration. She argues that “structural conditions and the ability to combine capital resources proved to be extremely important” in the Detroit context. She concludes, with respect to Lebanese small entrepreneurs, that while the move into the business world is the result of hard work and determination, it is likewise “an outcome of the structural discrimination they face and their inability to move into the professions they originally intended to work in.”

As guest editor of this special issue of Palma Journal, I wish to thank the editorial board for putting these pages at my disposal in order to expand discourse on Lebanese migration. In particular, I would like to thank Palma supervising editor, Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous, for initiating this process and accompanying me in the selection of articles and the arduous task of preparing this volume for final publication. I trust that the reader will discover many new insights into the field of empirical migration studies and the ongoing debates on migration theory and that this issue will further dialogue between scholars in the West and those in the Middle East.

Guita G. Hourani
Director of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center

“Balad Niswen – Hukum Niswen: The Perception of Gender Inversions Between Lebanon and Australia”¹

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Abstract²

This paper is in the uncomfortable nexus between racism and sexism. It aims to contribute to the broader conversation about the impact of migration, racism and war on gender relations. By drawing on ethnographic observations with immigrants from the village of Hadchit in North Lebanon, who live in Sydney, this paper will examine a discourse amongst the men that Australia is: “*balad niswen-hukum niswen*” or “a land of women ruled by women”. It will be argued that, like other immigrants, the migration process has been emasculating for the men in the Sydney Hadchiti community, because of the experience of racism and subjugation in the host nation. Furthermore, migration has been a challenge to gender relations within the Hadchiti immigrant community, due to the education of daughters and the participation of wives in the cash-economy. In their attempts to understand their experience of emasculation in Australia the Hadchit men have come to imagine the Australian state as a matriarchal state, which is “*hukum niswen*”, ruled by women, as symbolised by the Queen of England as the Head of State. Australia is depicted as a land of opposites to Lebanon, where male dominance is presented as the natural order of things. The perpetuation of male dominance in Lebanon could be understood by what Anthropologists have long referred to as the “patrilineal, virilocal complex”, whereby patrilineal descent, virilocality, war and male supremacy reinforce each other in a vicious cycle.

Keywords: Matriarchy, Patriarchy, Male Dominance, War, Migration, Emasculation

Introduction

This paper shifts between Sydney and Hadchit, N. Lebanon and moves between the past and present, and explores how gender narratives and roles get turned upside down in the course of war and migration. It starts by outlining the methodologies that have been deployed in this research project. An analysis is then presented of the tension between matriarchal and patriarchal power in the Lebanese village. The paper provides some background on the history of emigration from the village of Hadchit and juxtaposes Australia and Lebanon in a series of inversion discourses between the two. The role of violence in the Lebanese Civil War, of 1975-1990, is analysed in order to understand the construction of Lebanese machismo and how this has adversely affected gender

relations, both in Lebanon and in the diaspora, through the development of a kind of war machismo. The paper concludes with an analysis of the contemporary state of gender relations in the home village as compared to the Hadchit immigrant community in Sydney.

Methodology

This paper is part of a PhD research project entitled “Home and Place: Migration, (Re)production and Return between Sydney and Hadchit, North Lebanon”. The fieldwork methods have combined participant observation in two principle field sites Sydney and Hadchit. The majority of the research was conducted in Sydney where I conducted 50 structured interviews, six oral histories and a youth focus group with 20 participants in Sydney. I also undertook a 500 household survey by mail of the Sydney Hadchit community with the assistance of the St. Raymond’s Charities of Hadchit Committee and we received a 30 percent response rate. Additionally, I took detailed electronic field notes and conducted cyber-ethnography using contacts gained through the Hadchit village website guest book³. I made extensive use of text messaging for network building, as a variation on the research method of Snow Balling, which was well suited to contemporary Urban Anthropology. Several detailed migration chain maps were taken for key families within the Hadchiti migration hub in Sydney. I also made a visit to Hadchit in May 2007 to examine return visits. This research project drew extensively on archival and genealogical research, which has been done on the Rizk/Rask family using Family Tree Maker in order to connect the various branches of the Hadchiti diaspora via a transnational family tree.

Matriarchy versus patriarchy

All married people in Hadchit want children, and they want boys in particular. To have sons makes a woman a real woman. Prestige, respect, power, and success are linked with being the parents of sons. A marriage is not fulfilled until at least one male heir has been forthcoming. The onus is on the mother: it is she who is blamed for a barren union or one in which there are only daughters (Williams, 1958:24).

This quote, written down some 50 years ago by Williams (1958), who wrote an early ethnography on the village of Hadchit, captures the core set of values which underpin the Lebanese system of patrilineal descent. The link between the system of patrilineal descent and the second class status of women has long been a debate in Anthropology. Indeed, Anthropologists, such as Ortner (1974), suggests that women’s subjugation and second class status is a human universal. Likewise, Cranny-Francis et al (Cranny-Francis et al, 2003:2) argue that the binary opposition between male and female is almost universally

structured with the male being the positive and dominant side of the equation, while the female is positioned in the weaker and inferior position.

Is this always the case? Feminist Anthropologists and gender theorists have asked whether systems of matrilineal descent, by contrast, offer women a higher social status (Mernissi, 1977; Sanday, 1973; 1981; Webster, 1975). Starting with Engels and Bachoffen (1861) in the nineteenth century, social theorists proposed that matriarchy pre-dated patriarchy in human social organization and linked it to matrilineal descent, matrilocality and goddess worship (Seymour-Smith, 1986; Webster, 1975). The consensus in Anthropology is, however, that matrilineal societies are associated with, but don't automatically equate to a higher social status for women. Women are likely to have a higher social status if they play a strong role in the agricultural cycle or in commerce, as was the case with the Iroquois in North America (Harris, 1975:343; Keesing & Strathern, 1998: 194-195; Kottak, 1994: 244-246). However, nowhere have Anthropologists found a truly matriarchal society, where women absolutely rule the social order:

Whereas some anthropologists argue there are, or have been truly egalitarian societies...and all agree that there are societies in which women have achieved considerable social recognition and power, none has observed a society in which women have publicly recognized power and authority surpassing that of men...Everywhere we find that women are excluded from certain crucial economic or political activities, that their roles as wives and mothers are associated with fewer powers and prerogatives than are the roles of men (Rosaldo & Lamphere, 1974:3).

Anthropologists conclude, therefore, that matrilineal systems do not immediately equate to matriarchal power, as men still retain key positions of power and regulation within the kinship corporation (Harris, 1975:195). This has been referred to as the 'matrilineal puzzle', whereby the system of matrilineal descent actually reproduces the male line through the sister rather than through the wife, hence the importance of mother's brothers rather than fathers in matrilineages. The essence of the "matrilineal puzzle", therefore, is that the "woman's ties to her husband are potentially at odds to her ties to her brother" (Keesing & Strathern, 1998:195). Patrilineal systems of descent and residence patterns (virilocality), on the other hand, dominate human social organization, with Harris estimating they account for 71% of human societies globally (Harris 1975:343). Keesing and Strathern (1998:246) and Kottak (1994:246) argue that gender stratification is increased in patrilineal-virilocal societies and male supremacy is enshrined by the "patrilineal, virilocal complex", or what Harris has referred to as the "male centred warfare complex" (Harris, 1975:267-343),

wherein the system of patrilineal descent, virilocality, war and male supremacy are reinforced in a vicious cycle:

...the decline of matriliney and the spread of the patrilineal-virilocal complex is [linked to] pressures on resources...faced with scarce resources, patrilineal-virilocal cultivators such as the Yanomami often wage warfare against other villages. This favours virilocality and patriliney...such societies tend to have sharp domestic-public dichotomy, and men tend to dominate the prestige hierarchy. Men may use their public roles in warfare and trade and their greater prestige to symbolize and reinforce the devaluation or oppression of women (Keesing & Strathern, 1998:246).

In the case of Lebanon it can be argued that the system of patrilineal descent goes hand in hand with a system of patriarchal control in society, but not without some contradictions, particularly in the Maronite villages. That is, one kinship system does not always exist in the total absence of another or can even exist in combination with another kinship system. Harris (1975:348) has argued, for example, that there can be a contradiction between the residence pattern and the system of reckoning descent. In the case of Lebanon, it could be argued one kinship system was overlaid on top of another, resulting in the two existing alongside and sometimes in contradiction with one another.

The study, *The Lebanese Village: An Introduction* (Gulick, 1953), was written in the 1950's and gives an historical insight into the structure of the Lebanese village about the time of the migrations to Australia. Gulick (1953:371), one of a group of early ethnographers who studied the Lebanese village in the 1940's and 1950's, described the Lebanese kinship system at that time as "an endogamous local group which is segmented into patrilineages, which are preferably endogamous but often exogamous in practice". He suggests that the lineage itself is situated within a broader structure of village endogamy. Furthermore, he identifies four defining features of the Lebanese village: a devotion to land, a religious orientation, the predominance of kinship statuses and extreme localism (Gulick, 1954:297). In his description of the Lebanese kinship system Gulick alludes to the fact that there is often a gap between 'theory and practice' in kinship systems. This is referred to as an 'anomie' or a contradiction. Thus, while marriage within the lineage was preferred, marriage within the village (village endogamy) was more common and sometimes between villages of the same sect across the Lebanese villages in the mid-20th century. Likewise, Tannous (1942), who also undertook his research in the mid-20th Century, identified the patrilineage as the focus of the individual's broader sense of identification in the Lebanese village. Tannous cites the following Arabic proverb to demonstrate the shifting nature of

allegiances in the Lebanese village: “I am against my brother; my brother and I are against our cousin, my cousin and I are against the stranger” (Tannous, 1942:232).

In the case of Hadchit, Kepler-Lewis (1968) found almost total village endogamy in the 1950's. He described the kinship system in Hadchit as a lineage system, following the rule of patrilineal descent and patrilocality, whereby the male descendants of a lineage and their families tended to congregate in the same part of the village, known as a *hara*:

The patrilocal residence rule...keeps married sons in the house of their father or in the general vicinity of their parents has had the effect of building up localized aggregates of kinfold in various parts of the village. These localized kin-groups are made up of several households with the same family name. These clusters are lineages or unilinear kin-groups made up of one or more patrilineages. Their localized quality is recognized by the villagers who call such localities “*hara*” (plural *harat*) (Kepler-Lewis, 1968:144).

While *hara* refers to the physical locality of the lineage within the village, which was even breaking down in Hadchit in the 1950's due to population growth and emigration, the *bayt* is a term which refers to both the house and the lineage (and in the 19th Century to women as the embodiment of the kinship system itself), which transcends time, space and emigration (Kepler-Lewis, 1968:146). In Hadchit there are said to be twelve lineages and, at the time of the Kepler-Lewis study, he found that 25% of marriages took place within the lineage (Kepler-Lewis, 1968:147-148). The transcendental quality of the lineage or *bayt* places women in an ambivalent relationship to it. While the *bayt* depends upon women to reproduce it, do women really belong to a *bayt*? This is the existential question, which strict patrilineal descent systems impose upon women and might be referred to as “the patrilineal puzzle”. Oppenheimer (1980), in his analysis of the patrilineal ideology amongst the Druze, noted that women embody society's contradiction through the ambiguity of their group membership:

Women, always dependent upon their attachments to particular groups through men, are thus never fully incorporated but never really free. They are often blamed, by men, for causing intrigue and dividing allies through gossip, but they also link men through affinal alliances and provide their husbands with sons (Oppenheimer, 1980:628).

Thus, the localism of the Lebanese village was expressed by the expectation that women more than men would marry within the village. Furthermore, women who married outside of their birth lineage or *bayt* often

found themselves positioned as the eternal outsider or the *gharibi* (foreigner), hence the logic for women to marry within the *bayt*. In the case of Hadchit this can also be explained by the system of land inheritance, whereby girls inherited a half-share of land and their brothers a full share (Kepler-Lewis 1968:138). The marriage of daughters beyond the lineage and village might lead to the devolution of land holdings, already small and fragmented, which would be undesirable in a community dependant upon land for its subsistence. I have outlined the main features of the kinship system which operated in Hadchit and in the Lebanese villages more generally in the period prior to the migrations to Australia. One must ask to what extent have these kinship principles been transplanted to Australia and to what extent have they broken down in Lebanon since that time?

Furthermore, does the system of patrilineal descent always equate to male patriarchal control? On face value all leadership positions in Hadchit and beyond, were traditionally and still are dominated by men, starting with the position of the man as the head of the family and the eldest man as the head of the patrilineage. However, not all patrilineages had equal prestige and status, so there were power differentials between them. Beyond the patrilineage Kepler-Lewis (1968) suggested that Hadchit had two main domains of power: political office and religion. In the domain of politics the office of *Mukhtar*, or village headman/mayor, and the position of *Rais al Baladiyyi*, Chief of the Municipality, were and still are male dominated positions. Hadchit falls within the sub-district (*kadas*) of Bcharre, North Lebanon, one of the 18 sub-districts in Lebanon, each headed by a *Kaimakam*, who is usually male (Kepler-Lewis 1968:164). Beyond the sub-district, Lebanon is divided into seven provinces each headed by a *Muhafiz* or governor, also a male dominated position. On the national level the three peak positions of political office in the country, the President, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the House, are exclusively male preserves. In the realm of religion, in the case of the Maronite tradition, the village Priest, or *Khouri*, is always a man. The Church hierarchy is almost exclusively male, except for the nuns, and the Church itself is headed ultimately by a Patriarch.

Where do women sit within this system of male dominated power relations? Mernissi in her classic study, *Beyond the Veil* (Mernissi, 1987:97-98), has examined male-female dynamics in Morocco. She argues that the spatial segregation of the sexes in Islam served to contain the power of women and to confine it within the domestic sphere. I would argue that there are many parallels between the position of women in the Christian and Muslim Middle East. In both traditions, women were/are trespassers in the male public domain of society, power and prestige (Mernissi, 1987). It can be said that the domestic sphere was/is, for the most part, the locus of female power and that matriarchal tendencies exists as a counter hegemonic tradition alongside the patriarchal one.

Gulick noted this contradiction and highlighted the tendency to maintain close relations with one's matrilineal kin and even to marry matrilineal cross and parallel cousins despite the pre-dominance of the patrilineal system of reckoning descent and kinship ties, particularly among the Lebanese Christians. He surmises that:

This indicates an apparent conflict with the two firmly established patterns in Arab culture; the dominance of patriliney and the preferential marriage of the closest possible relatives outside of the nuclear family...the problem involves the Christian Arabs, and...reflects a sort of compromise growing out of the cultural conflicts which arose when the pagan Arabs were Christianized (Gulick, 1953:369).

Tannous (1942:232) similarly emphasised the tendency for relationships to be maintained with one's mother's kin, despite the prevalence of patriliney and patrilocality in Lebanese kinship systems. Mernissi suggests this contradiction or "anomie" within the Arab kinship system derives from the pre-Islamic period known as the "*Jahaliya*" (Mernissi, 1987: 62-65). She argues that Islam actually institutionalized the transition from marriage patterns based on matrilineal descent and uxorilocality (residence with the mother's kin) during the *Jahaliya* to a system of patrilineal descent, which would guarantee and enshrine male paternity:

The new social structure of Islam, which constituted a revolution in the mores of pre-Islamic Arabia, was based on male dominance. Polygamy, repudiation, the prohibition of *zina*, and the guarantees of paternity were all designed to foster the transition from a family based on some degree of female self-determination to a family based on male control (Mernissi, 1987:64).

It might be surmised that Christianity similarly supplanted a pre-Christian system of matrilineal descent. Thus, the contradictions within the Lebanese system of kinship between matrilineal and patrilineal modes of social organization reflect similar tensions for Christians and Muslims alike. It might be concluded, therefore, that patrilineality overlays, but has never completely eradicated aspects of matrilineal social organization, which might account for the latent matriarchal tendencies in Lebanese social organization.

Mernissi suggests, therefore, that paternity is ultimately a social construction that depends upon the regulation of female sexuality through the segregation of the sexes and the spatial containment of women within the domestic sphere (Mernissi, 1987:46-64). This is the fundamental project of Arab patriarchy, Muslim and Christian, (and, indeed, all patriarchies) and it is

reflected in and reproduced by the brother-sister relationship, according to Joseph (1999:117). Joseph argues the brother-sister relationship in the Arab family is an extension of the father-daughter relationship, where the honour of the patrilineage depends upon the modesty of 'daughters'. Joseph suggests, however, that it is through the connectivity in the brother-sister relationship that women learn that to be loved by a man is to be controlled by a man and the brother, conversely, learns that it is his role to control and regulate the sexuality of the women he loves (Joseph, 1999:139-140).

It can be seen, therefore, that female power exists in the Lebanese kinship system as a contradiction to and in despite of the predominant system of patrilineal and patriarchal power relations that contain it. It can also be both enhanced and compromised by modernization, war and migration, as we will see later in this paper. There are several traditional domains of female power, the first is within the 'domestic sphere' as the 'mother in law', *marta 'am* (translation: wife of paternal uncle, assumes patrilateral parallel cousin marriage as the norm, whether or not it is in practice). The power of *marta 'am*, first and foremost, only accrues to the mother of sons, not daughters, which links us back to the opening quote for this section, which highlighted the centrality of sons for the prestige of women. This is because *marta 'am* rules vicariously over the women within domestic space on behalf of her son and the patrilineage. Mother in laws are the deputy sheriffs for the interests of the patrilineage. Daughter in laws speak often of being 'broken in' by their mother in laws and of living under the inescapable gaze of *marta 'am*. Thus, the power of *marta 'am* ultimately derives from successfully ruling over her daughter in law and is based upon seniority, as every *marta 'am* was once a daughter in law herself. Mernisi (1987), likewise, suggests the mother in law's power is pervasive in domestic space and is a more significant source of oppression for the daughter in law than her relationship with her husband. I would add that one consequence of virilocality in transnational marriages and migration is that the power of *marta 'am* becomes concentrated as the bride sometimes lacks access to her matrilineal kin.

Friedl (1967:97), in her classic study on the Greek village *Vasilika*, discusses the gap between appearance and reality in power relations between men and women in Greek society. She argues the public prestige of men can sometimes mask the control that women exercise within the domestic sphere, which is ultimately contained by the male public domain. But, Friedl also sees the family as the centre of Greek society, not the public domain. The underlying source of women's status, however, is their ownership in property and the trousseau they bring to their marriages. These both derive from the dowry system (Friedl 1967:105). Consequently, the husband of a wife who brings substantial property to a marriage is viewed as 'emasculated', because of the superior leverage of women in this circumstance. Conversely, the woman who

has no inheritance or property is often forced into a hypergamous marriage (a marriage in which the husband has a higher social status than the wife). Thus, Friedl (1967:107) concludes:

The power of women over household economic decisions and over the marriages of their children is dependent on property control.

We can see from Friedl's argument how important economic control is for women's status. Thus, the second traditional domain of women's power in Hadchit, depended upon a woman's ability to contribute to the economic life of the family. Women in Hadchit, during the peasant subsistence period were traditionally productive in the fields. While they were structurally contained with the home and within the village, conceptually the domestic sphere included the fields that the family owned, which were usually scattered, individually named small parcels. Kepler-Lewis (1968) described the gendered division of labour in the agricultural cycle in Hadchit as follows: Men ploughed the fields and repaired the stone terraces, while the women and children were responsible for the planting and maintenance of the crops. They also worked in the harvest and processed the crops.

If women's role as active agents in the agricultural cycle were an important aspect of their traditional access to status, Joseph and Hamadeh (1999; Joseph 1999; Joseph & Slyomovics 2001) have argued that the rise of capitalism in Lebanon and the demise of subsistence agriculture led to the demise of women's traditional role in the subsistence economy and magnified their dependence upon men, particularly when combined with urbanisation. Migration has also impacted on women's economic status, an issue I come back to later in this paper. Hamadeh (1999: 157), like Friedl, has argued that economic independence is fundamental to women's power within the family and concludes that husband's are more central to the lives of urban women than rural Bedouin women, who retain greater economic and social independence from their husbands in Lebanon.

The third traditional domain of women's power is through female religiosity. There are aspects of Maronitism, for example, that draw upon sacred feminine traditions, such as Sade, Our Lady, and the devotion to female saints, in particular *Adissi Shamouni* (Saint Shamouni) in the case of Hadchit, who is associated with female fertility. In general women are the religious keepers and protectors of the family, a point Bottomley (1992) has also made in her study of the Greek family. Women draw upon religion to assist them in their trials and tribulations. Many women in the Hadchit community will say that "you must learn to carry your cross", which is a parable for the implicit role that religion plays in enabling women to carry their burden in life. Through the strength of Mary they can tolerate their lot. Mernissi (1977) also argues that women use

their religious devotion to saints as a form of symbolic resistance to the predominant patriarchal spiritual, social and political order. My research into female religiosity similarly shows that women call upon the power of saints to regulate their fertility and to protect children. Typically they pray to female saints, such as *Adissi Shamouni*, for conception. Interaction with saints typically occurs through dreams, where women are shown symbols; such as the fig sliced open to show its seeds, to indicate their fertility. Mernissi, likewise, has concluded that the regulation of fertility and sexuality is central to the devotion of women to saints:

Women in an unflinchingly patriarchal society seek through the saint's mediation a bigger share of power, of control. One area in which they seek almost total control is reproduction and sexuality, the central notions of any patriarchal system's definition of women (Mernissi, 1977:107).

To summarise this section, the case of Hadchit shows that women's power in the Lebanese village, in the period before the migrations to Australia, invariably existed in contradiction with and in despite of the broader patriarchal and patrilineal structures which contained it. It was dependant upon the ability of women to manipulate these structures and to find gaps, counter currents and loop holes. Almost invariably women's power hinged upon the oppression of other women, notably their daughter in laws. But, by bringing financial resources to a marriage, or working outside the home they could moderate the power of husband's and mother in laws over their lives. Additionally, the maintenance of contact with matrilineal kin moderated the power of patrilineages. Furthermore, through religion, women attempted to influence the lives of their family and, most importantly, to control and regulate their own fertility. In the next section I look at how this system of gender relations has been affected by the migration process and modernization. But first I will briefly discuss the history of migration from the village of Hadchit.

Migration from Hadchit

The population of Hadchit has been emigrating for about 120 years. According to Kepler-Lewis (1968), emigrants from Hadchit are to be found in at least 14 countries, with North and South America, Australia and Canada being the principle destinations. Early emigration from Hadchit went mostly to the USA as part of the first wave of Lebanese/Syrian⁴ emigration from the 1890s-1920s, 95% of this group were Middle Eastern Christians from the villages of Mount Lebanon (Naff, 1994). It is estimated 100,000 Lebanese emigrated to the USA before WWI (Naff, 1994:24). Hourani and Shehadi (1992:4) surmised that the first and most basic reason for the first wave of Lebanese emigration was population growth. This was supported by Kepler-Lewis (1968) who observed that the mountain villages of Lebanon experienced considerable population

growth and that a land-population balance had already been achieved in Hadchit and the other mountain villages by the latter 1800s. According to Wigle (1974), it was not always the poorest who were the most likely to emigrate, however, as often only the landowning families were able to raise the money to sponsor a family member abroad. Migration, therefore, was a broader family investment to access cash earnings from overseas as each migrant sponsored would provide long-term remittances to the home village. The village of Hadchit experienced, therefore, a process of deterritorialization, with the boundaries of the village expanding to include all those in the diaspora (Kepler-Lewis, 1968:34).

Letters from the American Hadchitis were anxiously awaited in the home village back in the 1950s for the possibility that they might contain some remittances. The essential problem for the village of Hadchit then, and as I have observed in Sydney now, is that the 2nd generation tends to discontinue repatriating funds, a similar pattern was also noted by Kepler-Lewis (1968:34). It appears, therefore, that diminishing remittance flows inevitably led to the migration of a new generation from the village. Hence, another wave of migrants left Hadchit at the end of the 1950s for Australia, about the time the remittance flows from North America dried up and Australia became the post WWII migration pathway. The second and third waves of migration from Hadchit have arrived mostly in Sydney since the 1950s, where a geographically concentrated Hadchiti immigrant community, of some 500 households, has formed in the suburbs surrounding Parramatta. It is part of a broader Maronite diasporic community, which significantly re-established itself in Sydney in the aftermath of the Lebanese Civil War. We will now look at the experience of migration to Sydney.

Australia: the upside down land

I came to Australia in 1972. At that time in Lebanon from 1967 was the peak period; Lebanon was top of the world. People had a house in the village and a house in the city. At that time Lebanon was called the Paris of the Middle East. Everything that was in Europe was in Lebanon. When I came to Australia, really I was shocked, because I was expecting it to be something like Lebanon or better and it was worse. Australia was not a fashionable country it was a hard working country. I arrived at Sydney airport from Lebanon wearing a beautiful suit, with perfume/cologne...thinking that I was arriving somewhere like Europe and I was disappointed.

The above first arrival narrative by a Hadchiti male immigrant provides the over-riding impression of Australia as a backward and unsophisticated country. It is also an inversion discourse, which describes the subject being converted into a social inferior in the context of Australia. Not only is he dressed better than the Australians, but in his view they did not appreciate his

superior dress sense, and even worse, quite possibly he was perceived to be effeminate and lacking in the trappings of Aussie masculinity for being over dressed and wearing perfume or cologne. It is just the first step in what becomes a whole series of experiences, where Australia is seen as an upside down land, a land of opposites. There are parallels to this in European perceptions of Australia as the antipodes, a sunburnt, “bright and savage land” and disappointment was a common first impression (Martin, 1993:vii). For many Hadchiti men Australia was a land of opportunity that Lebanon didn’t offer them, but Australia demeaned them, while in their eyes it was utterly inferior to them and to Lebanon in many respects. This has led to the construction of four key inversion discourses between Lebanon and Australia which places the two in binary opposition to each other (see the binary opposition table below).

The first of these inversion discourses constructs “Australia as only work and Lebanon as life”. This discourse represents Australia as being life sapping. What is it about Australia that makes life so dull and tasteless? Arriving from Lebanon as an immigrant sub-class into a rule based society, such as Australia, could be read as a pacifying experience. There are rules and fines for everything: speed limits, traffic lights, traffic infringements, littering, J-walking and even the bins have to be put out front in a straight line at the same time every week. People form queues. The legal system runs every aspect of society and orders everyone’s life. Everything works like clock work, including the trains. The rhythm of life in Australia is the rhythm of industrial capitalism, not the seasons, as was the case in the village. For there to be order there must be submission, the population must comply and migrants, in particular, must learn to live within the law. Some have described this process as a “suffocating experience”, like being stripped of your free-will (read masculinity). Bottomley (1992:85-86) has made a similar observation about Greek immigrants who make frequent comparisons between the countries where they emigrate to work and Greece where they can “live” and find the capacity for enjoyment. A central aspect of being able to “live” is what she has described as the “spirit of resistance”, which is encapsulated in the circle dance, the dance of life. I, likewise, have made a similar observation about the performance of the Lebanese dance *Dabki* during return visits to Lebanon (Hyndman-Rizik, 2008).

Australia: Balad Niswen	Lebanon: patrilineal virilocal complex
1. Only work: land of industrial capitalism/secular	Lebanon is life: spirit of resistance/confessionalism
2. Balad niswen: land of women, Queen/matriarchal state/rule of law	Balad rijel: patriarchal state/ failed state and lawless
3. Hukum niswen: fitna – social chaos/women rule inside and outside of domestic space/hen pecked	Hukum rijel: men control women and the social order inside and outside of domestic space

husbands	
4.Land of peace/state monopolizes the means to violence/male impotence	Land of war/rule of the gun and hyper-masculinity/male virility

Binary opposition and inversion between Lebanon and Australia

Australia, on the other hand, must tame the unruly immigrant and colonize them, but in the process it robs them of their vitality, which for men can also translate as their potency. Migration is so emasculating, according to Hage (2006), that some Lebanese men have even experienced it bodily as sexual impotency. Likewise, Mahler has written that the experience of emasculation amongst male immigrants is a common account in the broader literature on migration (Mahler 2006). What brings about this loss of status? Much has been written internationally about the subjugation and marginalization of immigrants as an underclass in the developed world, their experience of racial and religious difference and the way in which post-Fordist capitalism has left them behind as the chronically unemployed (Borgeois, 2002; Chavez, 2007; Harvey, 1989; Kivisto, 2003; Ong, 1999; Schiller et al, 1995). In the Australian context the experience of chronic disadvantage amongst Vietnamese and Lebanese immigrants has been the focus of most of this literature (Bottomley, 1992; Collins et al, 2000; Hage, 1998; McKenzie, 1999; Noble & Tabar, 2002; Poynting, 2004). However, there is a particular way in which the experience of racism and economic marginalization combines with changing gender roles in migration to displace the male immigrant's sense of manliness, which is central to understanding how migration and emasculation articulate with each other (Abulrahim, 1993; Hirsch, 2003; Mahler, 2006). Migration can both accentuate and unravel traditional gender roles. This is largely because migration challenges traditional gender relations in a number of ways. Firstly for immigrants like the Hadchitis, migration marked their transition from rural peasants, *filiheen*, to urban proletariats in Sydney. It also marked the entry of many women into the workforce, both in the factories and in the hospitals (an issue I return to in the last section of this paper). However, the Lebanese on the whole, experienced a crisis in their migration because of the collapse of the manufacturing sector in Australia after the mid-1970's, which has led to high male unemployment rates (Humphrey, 1984). How do immigrants, such as the Hadchitis, make sense of their experience of marginalization and how do they imagine Australia as the host nation?

In the dominant discourse of the nation, the rule of the Queen of England has been depicted as bringing order to Australia as a colonial dominion (Martin, 1993; Millar, 1978). As a former penal colony the project of pacifying an unruly criminal class in a wild colonial frontier established Australia as an intensely rule based society with a militaristic ethos (Hughes, 1987). Additionally, the stereotyped representation of Australian men as beer-swilling and sexist tends to

support a masculinist view of the Australian character (Bennet, 1988:4). These aspects of Australian life, along with the mateship tradition forged through Australia's participation in the Great War and WWII are supposed to reveal the male focused, militaristic history of Australia (Millar, 1978). Likewise, the law and legal system in general has in the past been conceptualised as an extension of patriarchal power.

Hage (2003:32-38) has theorized that the nation state is alternately imagined as a motherland or fatherland. In the motherland conception, he argues, the state, for those in the interior, is typically imagined to be a nurturing feminine state that supports the populace through their attachment to its breast. Thus, milk is the symbol of the motherland. The fatherland, on the other hand, is imagined to rule the borders of the country in order to protect the interior. It is the hard face of the state and the one that imposes order and regiment upon the populace, or defends the nation. Blood is the symbol of fatherlands (Cohen, 1997:105). Hage goes on to argue that the neo-liberal state in Australia has brought about a crisis of attachment to the nation state, because of the absence of nurturing or hope, which he has called "Paranoid Nationalism" (Hage, 2003:42). However, immigrants, as a subaltern class, commonly don't experience a nurturing or feminine attachment to the host nation. In fact Cohen theorizes that diasporic subjects typically imagine their country of origin to be their motherland, in an idealised form (Cohen, 1997:106). Thus, the relationship of the immigrant to the host nation is inherently ambivalent, with the immigrant typically experiencing it as a harsh and unloving fatherland.

My research with Hadchiti male immigrants in Australia, however, suggests that they have developed a particular conceptualisation of their oppression under the Australian state, in which the Australian state is imagined, not as a competing patriarchy, but as a competing matriarchy, which fails to offer them sustenance. Hadchiti male immigrants have turned the dominant representation of the Australian nation on its head, in a subaltern inversion (Guha, 1987), and instead, they have conceptualised the Australian state as a feminising force which actually robs them of their masculinity. At the highest level they have conceptualised the Queen of England as a symbolic representation of the Australian nation as a matriarchal state, which disproportionately bestows privileges upon its female populace. What could be worse than oppression under a competing patriarchy than oppression under a ruthless matriarch who has robbed the men in general and migrant men in particular of their power and masculinity and converted them into hen-pecked husbands? Perhaps, their impression of Australia relates to deeper fears of the civilisational demise that befalls a society where the traditional order of power has been inverted and, thus, in the Australian case, the women now are feared to have grown so powerful that they actually rule over the men.

Thus, the second inversion discourse between Lebanon and Australia constructs Australia as a “*balad niswen*”, a land of women, and more importantly, it is actually “*hukum niswen*” under the rule of women. To what extent is this perception amongst Hadchiti male immigrants shared more generally by male immigrants from Lebanon? The following interview with a Maronite Lebanese male immigrant from Beirut suggests that this is a broader perception in the Lebanese community in Australia:

Q. Why do Lebanese men talk about Australia as a “balad niswen?”

A. Because the women here got the right like the men and because of the Queen...

Q. What gives them this impression? How is it perceived to be different to Lebanon in this respect?

A. Because in Lebanon and the Arab countries the men are everything and the women cannot do what they can do here in Australia...But not every one is like that who is coming from Lebanon, mainly the Muslims and the Christians who are coming from outside the cities.

In this interview it is clear that women are perceived to have a higher social status in Australian society than in Lebanon and that this is most commonly a view held by rural male immigrants. What is it about Australia that gives them this impression? I would argue it is the sexual desegregation of the public domain, the emergence of educated women that occupy high status public positions (we now have a female Deputy Prime Minister, Governor General and State Premier) and, worse still, the education of their own women. The most important influence, however, is the dominant role of the Australian state, which has appropriated the role of the provider and displaced the male as the head of the family. This is particularly important in the context of high male unemployment rates in the Lebanese community (Humphrey 1984). Mernissi (1987:172) came to a similar conclusion in her analysis of why modernization is such a threat to male supremacy in Morocco. Indeed, she argues that modernization is ultimately “castrating” for Arab men because:

The state constitutes a threat and a mighty rival to the male as both father and husband. The state is taking over the traditional functions of the male head of the family, such as education and the provision of economic security for members of the household...The increasingly pre-eminent role of the state has stripped the traditionally powerful family head of his privileges and placed him in a subordinate position (Mernissi, 1987:172).

This brings us to the third inversion discourse between Lebanon and Australia, that of the failed patriarch or the “hen-pecked husband”. The expression *hukum niswen*, as well as meaning the rule of women in Arabic can also refer to a hen-pecked husband, which is a matter of great shame and stigma in Lebanese society. A failed patriarch, or a man that is ruled over by his wife, is seen as the ultimate failure, stripped of his virility and masculinity. That is, masculinity itself is defined by the capacity to “rule over women” and in its absence a man by default cannot really be a man. Humphrey (1998:93) suggests that the regulation of women is central to the construction of manliness in Lebanon:

“In honour men’s regulation of women is a measure of their social standing. According to men, social order requires them to assume responsibility for women to prevent social chaos” .

What happens, then, when a man is seen to be a failed patriarch and cannot regulate his women, or even worse is ruled over by the women in his house? The hen-pecked husband is a suppressed reality that is not supposed to occur in a patrilineal and patriarchal society, such as Lebanese society, but in truth it is a common aberration. Hence, there is a gap between appearance and reality (Friedl 1967), or what Gilmore has referred to as Mediterranean dualism (Gilmore 1982). In the Hadchiti immigrant community in Sydney the emasculating experiences of migration itself have contributed to the inability of husbands to unequivocally rule the roost and it has become a matter of common banter and gossip, as the following comment made by a Hadchiti female immigrant in Sydney, referring to a marriage between an Australian born Lebanese wife and a husband who was born in Hadchit illustrates:

It is bad enough that she rules over him inside the house, but can’t they keep it inside the house, does everybody else have to know about it?

This was said with a great deal of ridicule for the husband’s inability to run his wife. This exchange captures, firstly, how important the appearance of control over women is for a viable masculinity. Conversely, it reveals how emasculating it is for the husband who is ruled over by his wife, as captured by the following derisive insult used to describe a hen-pecked husband in Arabic: “*houwe cuss*”, which likens him to the female sexual organ as the ultimate source of sublimation and, thus, symbolically castrates him. It also shows how women can be complicit in their own subjugation through their promulgation of the very gender ideology that oppresses them. Women discipline each other into line through shaming and gossip. Having looked at the origins of the expression *hukum niswen* in Lebanese society, it is possible to make the logical leap to see, when it used to describe the Australian state by Lebanese male immigrants, it

converts the Australian state into a feminising and emasculating presence, which robs them of their capacity to rule over their women.

There is a perception, therefore, that the men have lost their right, in Australia, to rule over their family inside domestic space. Thus, Australian society is represented as being a threat in every respect to the reproduction of the traditional patrilineal and patriarchal Lebanese family. In relation to Sunni Muslim Lebanese in Australia, Humphrey (1998) argues, that the Australian system of independent family law is perceived to be a direct threat to male power within the family (Humphrey, 1998:89). The areas of encroachment include: the custody of children, the provision of the sole parent's pension, female entitlement to property in the case of divorce, and the provision of women's refuges (Humphrey, 1998). These, in addition to the state endorsed campaign condemning domestic violence against women, are all perceived to intrude upon the rights of the man as the head of household. These are all contrasted with the 'order of things' in Lebanon, where the state is largely absent in matters of family law, marriage and divorce, which are relegated to the jurisdiction of the religious confessions and the rights of men over property and children in the event of divorce are upheld (Humphrey, 1998: 93). If the state in Australia has appropriated aspects of male patriarchal control within the family, it has also pacified male violence through monopolizing the means to violence, which has led to an absence of war within its borders.

This brings us to the fourth pivotal inversion discourse between Lebanon and Australia: that in Lebanon there is war and chaos and in Australia there is peace. What is it about war that leads to the construction of Lebanon as a space of naturalized male dominance? The warring mentality itself plays upon binary oppositions between 'us and them', 'good and bad' and between 'men and women' (Cooke, 1994-95; Elshtain, 1987: 3). Elshtain discusses in, *Women and War*, the typification of women as "the life bearers and men as the life takers" or that men are the "Just Warriors and women the Beautiful Souls" (Elshtain, 1987:4). What effect does the polarization of war have upon gender relations and the perpetuation of male dominance? Harris argues that war intensifies the cultural devaluation of women:

Thus, war may be responsible for creating or intensifying the widespread cultural devaluation of women, certainly this devaluation cannot be regarded as natural (Harris, 1975: 267).

Indeed, as we saw in the first section of this paper, the "patrilineal, virilocal complex", or the "male-centred warfare complex", as argued in Anthropological theory, posits that incessant warfare, the system of patrilineal descent and male supremacy reinforce each other in a vicious cycle⁵. It seems, therefore, that war zones create a type of machismo, where virile masculinity itself becomes inextricably linked to acts of violence and the rule of the gun. Petee (1994)

examines this phenomenon in the Palestinian case, where she argues violence has become central to acts of resistance against the Israeli state, but also in the construction of masculinity for Palestinian men, she writes:

While femininity is no more natural than masculinity, physical violence is not as central to its construction. It does not reproduce or affirm aspects of female identity, nor does it constitute a rite of passage into adult female status (Peteet, 1994:44)

There is a Lebanese expression for this type of machismo, “*mitil antar*” or “*abaday*”, meaning macho and strong. In Lebanon’s Civil War (1975-1990) participation in militias became central to the lives of many men and a key way in which they were able to perform their masculinity, accumulate status or even contest and subvert their social position. Humphrey has argued that the collapse of the Lebanese state during the Civil War led to a world of terror and rumour that seem to target civilians more than combatants (Humphrey, 2001:123). In this context masculinity became defined by fearlessness in the face of adversity, defending your family, village or sect and by the unfettered access to ammunition and military hardware. Humphrey writes this about gender relations during the war:

Throughout the course of the war, men were regarded as politically active and as representatives of families and communities. Women, by contrast, were generally seen as politically passive and retained their cultural position as *hareem*, under the protection of men...the exception being in the case of massacres (Humphrey, 2001:124)

It is true that women also received training in Lebanon’s militias and there are accounts of how the war allowed women to break out of traditional roles, because of the general dissolution of Lebanese society itself in the course of the war (Cooke, 1987). Some women became female heads of household in the absence of their husbands and others were able to defer the age of marriage through their participation in the war. There were also cases where women had greater physical mobility in Lebanon than their husbands, brothers or fathers in navigating military check points controlled by opposing militias (Sabbagh, 2003b:102). Cooke discusses how “mothering” became the dominant form of female resistance to the Lebanese Civil War (Cooke, 1987; 1994-95). It became a way of countering the tendency for war to become an arena for the display of manliness and heroism (Cooke, 1994-95:10). In particular, mothering became “staying and looking after Lebanon”, while the men either fought in futile battles or emigrated to the “*mahjar*”, the lands of emigration (Abu Nassr, 2003:96). Thus, the migration of Lebanese men, in the mothering discourse of the women who stayed in Lebanon throughout the Civil War, according to Cooke, became

associated with manly cowardice and vacillation (Cooke 1987:56). Cooke writes:

Men had always been the dominant class, to whom obedience had been an unquestioned duty, had proven themselves weak and unworthy. As the patriarchal structure was falling apart, as the country was collapsing, women were finding a voice (Cooke 1987:56).

But, for all of these narratives of how war can liberate women, there is plenty of evidence to suggest the opposite (Abu Nassr 2003; Maksoud 2003). In fact, the men that fought in Lebanon's Civil War are sometimes referred to as the "*jeil el harb*", or the war generation, a term that carries with it an implication of the damage done by the culture of uncontrolled violence that dominated Lebanon for a decade and half. We should consider how this culture could actually have perpetuated male dominance and the spatial containment of women. Women were often forced to withdraw into the tiny social worlds of their neighbourhood or village and the fear of harm itself became the main leverage men held over women to contain them there (Abu Nassr 2003:96). Fear can be a very Machiavellian tool of social control. Of course, the spatial containment of women is not a new pattern for Lebanese society, but was reinforced and perpetuated by the social chaos of war.

Olujic (1998) has discussed how violence against women in war should be seen as an extension of pre-existing patterns that predominate during peace time. She argues that acts of sexual violence that occurred against women in war torn Bosnia-Herzegovina were an extension of the honour and shame complex that were enacted upon women's bodies (Olujic, 1998:31-32). In war the rape of women can become an act of war between men because "men suffer the shame of their failure to protect their property that includes women, family, bloodlines, and soil" (Olujic, 1998:39). But, even worse, rape can become a method of ethnic cleansing, according to Olujic:

"through forced pregnancy resulting from rape, aggressors can purify the blood of the attacked group by creating ethnically cleansed babies belonging to the group of the invading fathers" (Olujic, 1998:39).

Thus, war zones can accentuate the dichotomy between "good and the bad woman" and the fear of sexual dishonour becomes the central reason to restrict the movement of women in war situations. Thus, the social worlds of women can immeasurably shrink as society collapses through war. Furthermore, Maksoud (2003:93) has argued that the breakdown in state services in Lebanon, such as water and electricity, and the rise in fundamentalism forced women back into traditional roles and put the feminist movement on the defensive:

It has often been argued that because of the deconstruction of society as a result of war women can construct new roles. What happened in Lebanon, however, was exactly the opposite. The deconstruction of society led to the arrest of progress, the stifling of creativity, and to the reduction of concern to the basic needs. Women, instead of being free to construct new roles, were in fact consumed with old traditional roles and domestic duties (Maksoud, 2003:94).

The pattern of living in the pocketed and tiny social world of war has also followed many Lebanese women into migration and exile in Australia. There are many cases of women in the Hadchit community in Sydney who had never left their village before migration to Australia, especially if they grew up during the Civil War years. They married and migrated to Australia young, where living with racism in a migrant sub-culture has perpetuated their spatial containment within the home. But, the opposite can be said of young men from Hadchit who grew up in Sydney. Hadchit men continued to visit Lebanon throughout the Civil War, mostly to arrange marriages, but also because participation in the militias became a right of passage for the construction of masculinity for young Hadchit men in Sydney.

Field notes: Sydney June 2007

The following is an account of a return visit in the late 80's during the Civil War. Fouad returned to Hadchit in the late 80's and hung out with his cousins who were in the militias. He wore military attire and handled Kalashnikovs. He described the excitement of going to see "The Green Line" in Beirut. He then showed me the photo albums where I saw the war chest, the militia photos, the army fatigues and the photos posing with military hardware.

It is here that we can get a picture of how participation in violence during return visits to Lebanon has become a way to resurrect Lebanese migrant masculinity. It is interesting to consider this male right of passage as a tradition, because it is possible, that war tourism provided a counter-balance to the emasculating experiences of migration itself, where young men were able to regain their lost masculinity through the gun as the ultimate phallic symbol.

The culture of violence I have described in Lebanon can also provide an insight into why Australia might be perceived by some Lebanese men as a "*balad niswen*" or a land of women, because it is a pacified land where the state has monopolized the means to violence and there are strict gun controls. Cooke (1994-95) has discussed how war zones create a binary opposition between "war as the domain of men" and "peace as the domain of women". Therefore, the

absence of war in Australia, according to this logic, would, by default, define it as the “domain of women”, which perhaps explains the conceptualization of Australia as a “*balad niswen*” by some Lebanese men, particularly of the “*jeil el harb*”, or the war generation. Thus, the experience of migration can be a double disempowerment for some Lebanese men. Not only do they experience subjugation under the Australian state, but migration has also pacified and disarmed them.

Migration and changing gender relations between Sydney and Hadchit

Whilst I was in Hadchit doing fieldwork in May-June 2007 I came to see the Sydney Hadchiti immigrant community from the perspective of the home village. While the Sydney Hadchitis lament constantly the corrosive effects of Australian society in undermining the moral standing of their women, it seems that the same process of renegotiation has been occurring to gender relations in Hadchit, as this interview with a 37 year old, unmarried, educated woman about the status of women in the village reveals:

My mother went to school, but stopped when she was 14, but not all got to go. The women used to work in the fields. So the women who went to school were lucky. My generation is lucky because most of them had a chance to get to school and some to university and get jobs. I finished my university in 1995 and got a job in 1997. Most of my class got married and went to Australia. In Sydney the Hadchit community lives like they are in the Hadchit of twenty years ago and they have maintained the old fashion language and ideas more than we have here.

In this account we hear that the Hadchitis in Sydney are actually behind Lebanon and the home village, caught in a migration lag. Perhaps the Hadchit men in Sydney are nostalgic for an idealized male dominated social order in Lebanon? This is why you often hear how disappointed they are with the moral standing of the women when they return to Lebanon. In the following interview extract the same woman explains how she sees the role of the man and woman in a modern marriage in Lebanon:

I had a dream when I was young that I would study, get a job and when I married my husband would share the work, I watched American movies, and you see the guy help his wife. But, in Lebanon you do not live alone and if you get married the man has to buy the house. I like a man older than me – 7-10 years, but when I get married I want to stay in work.

Meanwhile, in Sydney the migration process has placed tremendous strains on gender relations in the Hadchit community, because it offers opportunities for women to re-negotiate their status through access to paid employment and education. In the period when the Hadchitis first started arriving in Sydney in the 1960's the women went to work at the Royal North Shore Hospital. They recruited and supported each other to work shifts and pooled their efforts for childcare. However, when the families became more established there was a tendency for the men to insist the women stop working and return to the domestic sphere. There is also an expectation that if women do become educated that they will stay at home after they get married and that the priority is for the men to get an education and advance their careers, as this interview with a young 2nd generation man reveals:

It still lingers in the background that men are the bread winners and women stay at home. There is more emphasis on the male to mature and advance the career, because the women are going to stay at home. You see a lot of girls go to uni, but then after they get married they see it as something to fall back on. I have only met one Lebanese girl who has gone to uni and graduated. In my first cousin generation there isn't many who have gone to uni. On my dad's side in Sydney I will be the first to go to uni and on mum's side I am the first to go to uni.

This interview shows that women staying at home after marriage is still his ideal, however, reality often falls short of it. Another dimension to the problems of emasculation the Hadchit men face in Sydney is that while some have experienced unemployment the women sometimes are more employable than the men. This has been the case in some of the transnational marriages between Australian born Hadchit wives and their husbands who were born in Hadchit and often served for considerable periods in the militias during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). Many of these men arrived in Australia poorly equipped for civilian life and sometimes found themselves in the position of the house husband, while their educated wife earned the family income. This interview explains how limited education amongst the men creates competition between the families:

There is a competition between the families. Some people are still struggling because the men didn't have high education. If they got a trade they did better than those who didn't get a trade. My father isn't an educated man – but he has provided the basics.

These contradictions underpin the discourse amongst the men that Australia is “*balad niswen*”, a land of women, because it reflects their experience of emasculation in the host nation and the fear of losing control over

their women in the context of the liberties of Australian life. Much of the gender conflict in the Sydney Hadchit community concerns access to female education and the fear of the transformative potential of it. There is now a broad movement amongst the women in the 35-45 year age group who married early and missed the chance for an education to attempt to acquire it now that their children are school age or grown up. They do so through the system of TAFE Colleges, which offer courses tailored to women who wish to return to education and work after a lengthy period raising children. There is tremendous resistance from husbands to these initiatives amongst the women to improve themselves, get an education and find a life beyond the home. The men want their wives to remain absolutely dependant and contained within the domestic sphere, the only problem is that they simply can't afford to keep them there, with the record costs of living in Australia's largest city demanding two incomes to keep the household afloat (single income households are another reason why Lebanese Australian households are in a disadvantaged position socio-economically in Sydney). In this interview extract with a woman who migrated at age 18 to Sydney she reflects on the tensions generated by female education:

Q. Did women have access to education when you grew up?

A: No, no, no. Most of the families didn't want to spend for female education they just wanted them to get married. I am starting to see that husbands don't want an educated girl they just want to marry a simple girl. Most of the men don't want an educated woman, they are stronger you can't manipulate them they can't do whatever they want with them. They seek just simple girls; they can keep them under control.

The central dilemma is that the participation of women in work outside the home provides challenges of supervision for migrant men which has been broadly cited in the migration literature (Borgeois, 2002; Humphrey, 1998; Salzinger, 2002). It is a double edged sword as the family needs the income, but the husbands fear losing control over their wives. This has resulted in the development of a "paranoid patriarchy" (Hyndman-Rizik 2008) amongst the men who seek to enforce the spatial containment of their daughters and wives, in reaction to the pressures of Australian society. In practice, the men, who themselves feel restricted in the context of anti-Lebanese racism; severely restrict the movements of 'their women', in the name of protecting them from racism and moral corruption. In fact, living under siege undermines gender relations in Lebanese communities, like the Hadchit community, and women often experience this as a "double burden of oppression" (King 1988). This interview extract from an 18 year old teenager describes her reaction to living under constant surveillance:

Me and my cousins we're not allowed out...towards the end of my schooling I didn't do well because I had nothing else to look forward to. I went crappy in my HSC for the fact that it was all about HSC and I was never allowed out and I was sick of it. If they would have just given me a bit of what I wanted and let me out a bit throughout high school. Now all I want to do is go out, party, spend money, have a phone – kill it –you know, and I can't do it. Because, I didn't have it. They tell me I'll get over it. But you're over it, I'm not – I haven't even started to experience it – I'm a very emotional person because I was never allowed to do stuff and I'm resentful for those times I wasn't allowed out and nobody understood it

Female dress-style, especially for unmarried daughters, is one of the most contentious fields of struggle in many Hadchit households and brothers are often recruited to supervise sisters and determine what is acceptable for them to wear, as this 25 year old brother describes:

In the Lebanese community Australian girls are seen to be loose or tardy. Sex before marriage and exposing bodily parts in public is no good. The Lebanese girls don't wear clothes like that outside the house. Those girls that are educated don't expose themselves – do you only want to be seen as a sexual icon, or do you want to be seen for your intelligence? In my family the male has the say – if the brother or father doesn't like the clothes the girl has to get changed. If my sister is wearing something I don't like – I tell mum and dad and she has to get changed. I am a male and I am out there picking which girls to be sexually active with and which to consider as marriage material and I don't want guys thinking that about my sister.

The notion of the 'community gaze' is central to the ideology of control and women's reputation is linked to the construction of family honour. There is an Arabic saying for young women to keep them mindful of appearances 'You have two eyes, but there is 1000 eyes watching you'. In the Hadchit community in Western Sydney it is 6000 eyes, because they have around 3000 people living in four suburbs, so surveillance is paramount. Young men have become the moral police for their fathers and mobile phone surveillance is the method of choice to keep track of their sisters. The community of brothers also extend their surveillance to other female relatives, thus, if they are out and meet one of their female friends/cousins they will ring her brother on the spot and ask "where is your sister?" It is a mark of the male's honour to know their sister's location at any given moment, as this interview extract with a young man demonstrates:

If I am out and see some friends, if they are girls, the first thing I do is ring their brothers and say – do you know your sister is out here? Last time my sister was in Parramatta a friend of mine didn't see that our cousin was with her and the first thing he did was ring me and say “do you know where your sister is” and I said “Yeh – I think she is in Parramatta”. He asked me “Who is she with”? and I said “With one of my cousins” and he replied “Oh I just wanted to let you know where she is” – it is just a male thing.

Deconstructing the gender relations within the Hadchit community is complicated by the current political climate in Australia, in which the status of Lebanese women is seen as indicating their lack of integration into Australian society⁶. This debate has taken on a racist dimension, with overtones of civilisational superiority dominating the representation of gender relations in Lebanese communities by the host nation. In this context any attempt to critique gender relations within Lebanese society can quickly be construed as justifying the dominant representations of Arab men as backward. Other Arab feminists have written of this dilemma (Hussein, 2006; Sabbagh, 2003a). The effect is to silence the debate all together, how do we find a space in this context to discuss the corrosive effects of racism in heightening gender oppression? In order to examine gender relations, within Sydney's Hadchit community, I situated this paper in the nexus between racism and sexism and in the context of migration and made a comparison between Sydney and the home village. By framing the analysis in these terms, it becomes clear that the “*balad niswen*” discourse of the Hadchit men in Sydney derives from their experiences of emasculation in migration, and the time-capsule mentality that commonly besieges migrant communities (Bottomley, 1992). However, when we make a transnational comparison to Lebanon and to the home village we can also see that many of the issues encountered during the migration process are likewise the subject of contestation in the context of modernization in the home village.

Conclusion

This paper began with an analysis of matriarchy versus patriarchy in the Lebanese village. It showed how intensive patrilineal, virilocal societies reinforce male supremacy, while female power exists as a contradiction to and in despite of the predominant patriarchal structures which contain it. Four key binary opposition and inversion discourses between Lebanon and Australia were presented, which explain the experience of male emasculation in migration, as exemplified by the Hadchiti experience. Consequently, Australia is imagined as a pathological inversion of the natural order of gendered power in Lebanese society, which hinges upon male dominance for the regulation of society against

sexual chaos/fitna. The paper then linked male emasculation in migration to the presence of a strong centralized state in Australia, the brutalizing experience of war in Lebanon, the phenomena of migration lag in migrant communities and to changing gender roles. Thus, it is a combination of these factors which leads to the discourse that Australia is *balad niswen-hukum niswen*, a land of women ruled by women, with a Queen as the Head of State. Furthermore, as Mernissi (1987:165-177) suggests, modernity itself causes a castration effect amongst men in the Middle East, which highlights that the issues at stake are not confined to migrant communities. This is because modernity in the Arab East and migration to the West is leading to the displacement of the man from the position of head of the household, sexual desegregation, the intrusion of women into the male public domain and the ability of women to renegotiate the ground rules for marriage and, thus, attain a degree of self-determination. Perhaps, as Mernissi (1987:166) aptly points out, modernity is the new *Jahaliya*.

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² A version of this paper was presented at the Australian Anthropological Society National Conference at the ANU, November 2007.

³ [Hadchit - hadchit.8m.com - Lebanon](http://hadchit-8m.com)

⁴ In the 1890s the state of Lebanon didn't exist so "Lebanese" were then known as "Syrians", as they came mostly from Mount Lebanon which was located in the "Syrian province" of the Ottoman Empire.

⁵ I recognize that Lebanon has broader historical and political causes for the various wars that have plagued its history, but for the purposes of this paper I am approaching the topic from the point of view of the impact of war on gender relations, kinship and male dominance.

⁶ See the following articles:

1. Cook T. 2006. Australian Treasurer Peter Costello joins anti-Muslim bandwagon. In *World Socialist Web Site*, pp. 1-4Cook, Terry. 6 March 2006. 'Australian Treasurer Peter Costello joins anti-

Muslim bandwagon'. In *World Socialist Web Site*, pp. 1-4.

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2006/mar2006/cost-m06.shtml>

2. This link quotes an Opinion piece by the Prime Minister, John Howard, published in the *Daily Telegraph*, 2 September 2006, with reference to immigrants and women's equality.

<http://catchthefire.com.au/blog/2006/09/05/pm-john-howard-and-peter-costello-speak-out-on-muslim-integration/>

3. Steketee, Mike. 20 September 2007. 'Muslim integration still a simmering discontent'. *The Australian*.

Following the Cronulla riots in Sydney in 2005, John Howard rejected the idea that there was underlying racism in Australia.

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,22447255-25072,00.html> | [similar pages](#)

4. Franklin, Mathew. 1 January 2007. 'Fraser warned on Lebanese migrants'. *The Australian*.

... warned the Fraser government in 1976 it was accepting too many Lebanese Muslim refugees without 'the required qualities' for successful integration. <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,20996448-601,00.html>