

**WOMEN AND POWER IN MOROCCO:
PERSONAL POWER IN PERSPECTIVE**

by

JENNIFER GOLDMAN

A THESIS

Presented to the International Studies Department
and the Honors College of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts

May 1994

APPROVED: _____

Dr. Anita Weiss, International Studies

An Abstract of the Thesis of

Jennifer Goldman

for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

in the International Studies Department

to be taken

June 1994

Title: WOMEN AND POWER IN MOROCCO: PERSONAL POWER IN
PERSPECTIVE

Approved: _____

Dr. Anita Weiss

Learning about different interpretations of power provides us with a deeper understanding of how it is used throughout the world. Through analysis of scholarly works that discuss the nature of power and various interpretations of it, as well as the lives and contributions of Muslim women, we gain a firm background on the issues involved in the dialogue regarding women and power. Living and working in Morocco provided me with a unique opportunity to interview and "give voice" to people who typically go unheard in the United States. Through analysis of the interviews, we find that Moroccan women possess many different ideas about power. Recognition of this diversity of voices helps us realize the depth and complexity of the issues surrounding power and how these differences both enrich and complicate the processes of international development and communication.

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my thanks to all of the people who participated in this process and made it possible, including the following: the Mouaddine family, who fed and sheltered and loved me while I stayed in Azilal, and especially Mustapha for his loyal assistance with the translations; my fellow interns in Morocco for their enduring support; my thesis committee members Professors Anita Weiss, Frances Cogan, and Barbara Pope for all their time and input, and to my mother who raised me to face challenges with an open heart and mind.

THESIS OUTLINE

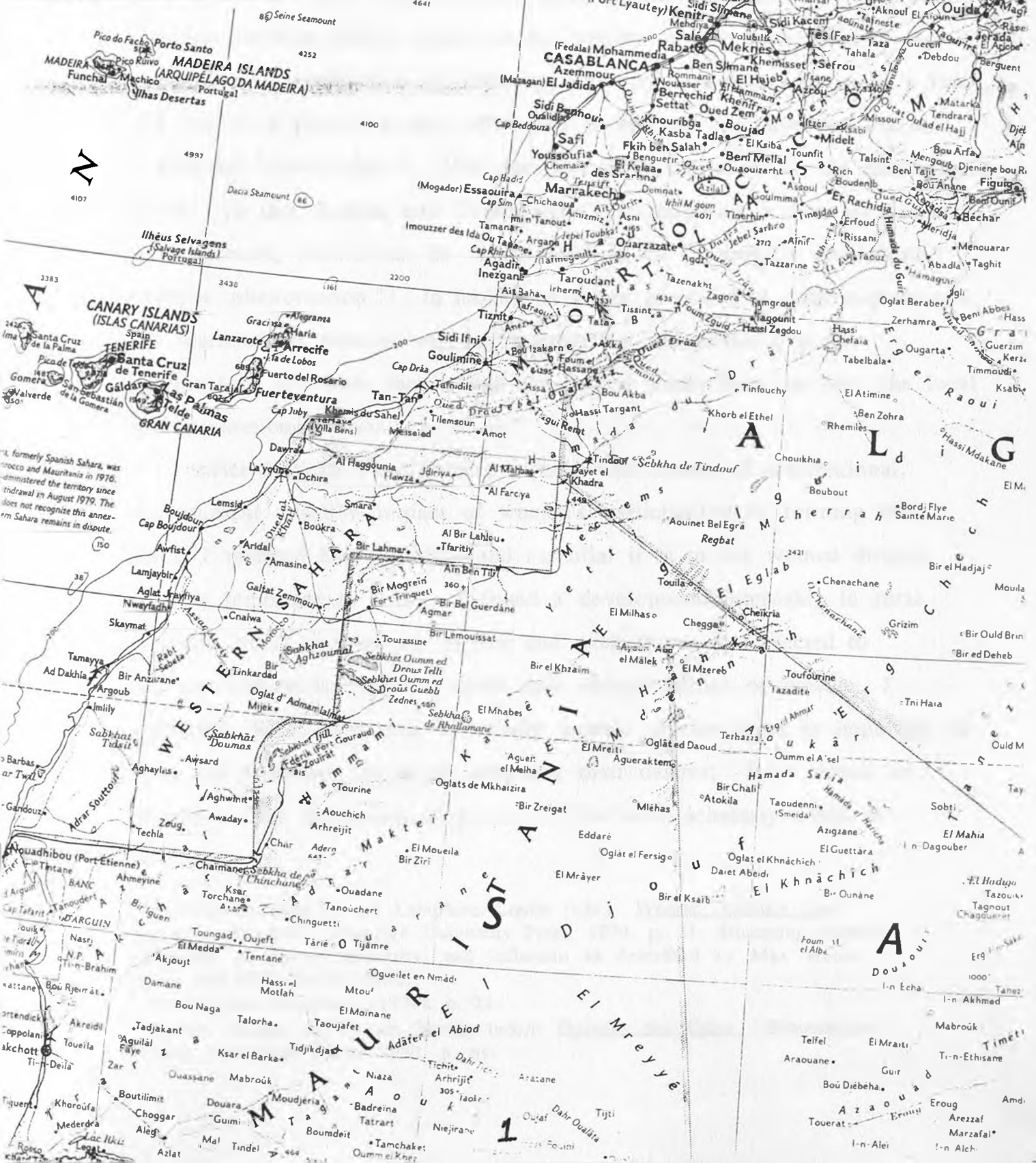
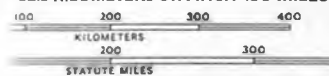
A. Map.....	p. 1
B. Introduction.....	p. 2
I. Discussion of women and power	
II. Overview of thesis	
III. Relevance	
C. Background.....	p. 7
I. Introduction to Morocco and Azilal	
a. geographical	
b. cultural	
c. historical	
d. economic/social	
II. Review of written works by pertinent authors	
a. definitions of women's power, roles, and relations	
b. demonstration of multiplicity of voice	
c. elements of change	
D. Methodology.....	p. 19
I. Getting to do the interviews	
II. Explanation of procedure and constraints	
a. language	
b. preparation of questions	
c. interview situations	
E. Interviews.....	p. 24
I. Introduction to participants	
II. Theoretical questions	
III. Personal questions	
IV. Summary and evaluation	
F. Conclusion.....	p. 43
I. Analysis of change	
II. Impact and significance	
III. Variety of perceptions	
G. Glossary.....	p. 45
H. Annotated Bibliography.....	p. 46

ORTHWESTERN AFRICA

Transverse Mercator Projection

SCALE 1:8,250,000

= 82.5 KILOMETERS OR 1 INCH = 130 MILES



INTRODUCTION

Power is an essential element in determining relationships between people, whether they occur on the interpersonal level or the international. Classical theorists define power as the "ability to gain compliance."¹ As opposed to the definition of authority, whereby a society recognizes a form and source of power, women often gain compliance in ways that are not "culturally legitimated."² That does not mean that they are not exercising power. In fact, Badran and Cooke argue that feminism, a form of women's empowerment, should not be "understood as an exclusively public and explicit phenomenon."³ In looking at issues of power in other cultures, we can learn about diverse ways of interpreting and utilizing power relationships and how they affect our mutual interactions on both the local and international scales.

After initially familiarizing myself with issues of international development and the impact of women's participation in forming these plans, I realized how valuable and essential it is to ask women directly what is important to them. I found a development internship in rural Morocco which enabled me to live and work there, so I elected to interview Moroccan women about their interpretations of power. I supported this information by having women discuss what is important to them and how they go about achieving their desires; these issues are inherent to the discussion of power. I also used scholarly works to

¹ Rosaldo, Michelle Z. and Lamphere, Louise (eds.) Woman, Culture, and Society. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974, p. 21; discussing classical definitions of power, authority, and influence as described by Max Weber (1947) and M.G. Smith (1960).

² Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974), p. 21.

³ Badran, Margot and Cooke, Miriam (eds.) Opening the Gates. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990, p. xv.

enhance my understanding. As a result, I have used this process as a means of "giving voice" to women whom we may not usually hear. Essentially, opening ourselves to this kind of discussion in which women define their own terms ultimately contributes to the improvement of international understanding.

Paying heed to complementary world-views not only furthers communication on the interpersonal level, it is also an essential factor in improving the process of international development. Though it has different meanings in different philosophies, international development can be understood in this context as a plan of action that aims at improving both women's and men's status world-wide through their active participation in the process. Although some leaders would argue that "...women's issues, at least as they might be formulated by an independent feminist movement, would promote tensions and derail the political struggle for national or social liberation,"⁴ we recognize that the problems of all people, whether in the "developed" or the "developing" world, concern and affect everyone (terms such as "developed"/"developing" or "industrialized"/ "Europeanized"/"Third World" facilitate our comprehension of the global situation, but it should be noted that they do not accurately indicate differences within or similarities between the classifications). For example, although the idea of global sisterhood has gained popularity among international feminists as a powerful tool with which women can represent their agendas,⁵ the efficacy of this tool

⁴ Tucker, Judith (ed.) Arab Women. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, p. xiv.

⁵ See: Sen, Gita and Grown, Caren. Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987.

remains limited until women can learn to recognize and work with their diverse voices. Judith Tucker explains,

...the fact that western women's experiences, however, do not necessarily provide a universal framework for analyzing gender oppression elsewhere in the world. Many of the misunderstandings that have developed between women in the west and in the Arab world can be traced, I believe, to our assumption that the symbols and content of women's oppression are constant across cultures, that how women look and act has a similar meaning everywhere, that the issues of women's liberation as they developed historically in the West should prove to be the same in the Arab world.⁶

Thus learning as much as possible about different aspects of development, including those that directly relate to women and women's power, can help us become more useful and effective participants in shaping a better form of development, one that is holistic and empowers all people.

Weber defines power as "...the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action."⁷ Although I agree that power involves the realization of one's will, power as used throughout this paper should be understood as the process by which a person selects a set of values and then is able to use them to make decisions regarding her (or his) life's direction. When discussing Arab feminism, Badran and Cooke describe this as the attempt "to interpret their own experiences and then to improve their own position or lives as women."⁸ This can be interpreted on the individual level, as well as the communal that Weber discusses.

⁶ Tucker (1993), p. viii.

⁷ Weber, Max, with H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1947, p. 180.

⁸ Badran and Cooke (1990), pp. xv-xvi.

Power is also the capability of a person to convince those who are affected by decisions to go along with them. Oversimplified, power is the ability to decide what one wants and then to get it.

It is understandable that people may utilize certain values of their own when exploring issues of power in a cross-cultural setting. For instance, most women in the U.S. tend to view veiling, as practiced to varying extents in the **Muslim**⁹ world, as a negative characteristic of that society. However, some **Arab** women find advantages to veiling, for it offers them a means by which they can protect their honor, a virtue highly extolled in Arab society. Leila Ahmed discusses how Malik Hifni Nassef (also written Malak Hifni Nasif in Badran and Cooke, and appearing under the pen-name of Badiya Bahithat) "was opposed to unveiling" because it acted as a means for women to protect themselves from "adulterous glances" and shameful interactions.¹⁰ A related idea is that many Arab women disagree with the amount of bodily exposure that Western women display. For example, a Moroccan woman commented on French apparel, "Women's clothes don't cover them...that's shameful".¹¹ In examining this point of contention, we begin to see the many sides to an issue that cultural relativism reveals. Therefore, in pursuing a proper venue for understanding Moroccan women's points of view, it is conducive to withhold judgments and instead simply to recognize the existence of the alternative values and decisions by which these women live.

⁹ All words appearing in bold text indicate that they are listed in the Glossary of this paper.

¹⁰ Ahmed, Leila. Women and Gender in Islam. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, pp. 179-180, and Badran and Cooke (1990), pp. 228-238. For further discussion of veiling, see Mernissi, Fatima. Beyond the Veil. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

¹¹ Lamsouf, Fatima (1993).

The issues of power as used in this paper deal with women's daily lives, covering such topics as the work arena, the family, financial independence, neighborhood influence, education, and religion. Though these range in the extent to which a person can directly influence the shape of her society, together they embody the realm of personal power. The constant shifting and growth of personal powers echo the processes through which cultures change. Even though these powers may not influence society in a directly observable manner, they do embody the slow but potent forces that cause societal norms and values to evolve over time. As Judith Tucker explains,

Despite the fact that the ideal of female seclusion and the practice of sexual segregation is ingrained in the Middle East, women have not been entirely closed off from political power, thanks to a multiplicity of techniques of influence-mongering and manipulation. The political importance of marriage alliances, for example, given that marriage arrangements are often controlled by women, has accorded women considerable power in the sphere of informal politics.¹²

Therefore it is prudent to look upon personal power not as a trivial matter, but as the basis for significant change.

To learn about Moroccan women's views of power, it is useful to gain a sense of Moroccan society. Accordingly I will first present a brief overview of the forces that have been influential in patterning Moroccan culture, as well as a short survey of the scholarly and fictional works that enhance our understanding of Moroccan women's lives and positions in society. Then I will recount the results of interviews with Moroccan women, in which I ask them to define power and to explain how they use

¹² Tucker (1993), p. xiii.

it in their daily lives. In this way we will be able to get a strong sense of the varieties of perspectives that compose women's power in Morocco.

BACKGROUND

Among the major elements that influence contemporary Moroccan society are geographic factors, cultural heritage, and post-colonial experiences. Known as *al-Maghrib*¹³ in Arabic, Morocco's name indicates its geographical position on the western end of the Arab/Muslim world. As the northwestern point of continental Africa, it lies to the south of Spain along the Mediterranean Sea. It shares its eastern border with Algeria, with whom there has been a significant dispute over the desert lands directly south of Morocco and north of Mauritania. Although any Moroccan map would claim this piece of land as its own, it is currently a disputed area. The physical characteristics of Morocco range dramatically, from coastal plains to the Atlas and Rif mountain ranges to the Saharan Desert in the south. The country can get very hot during the warmer seasons, although the climate varies greatly between regions and seasons.

Moroccans, on the other hand, do not vary extremely in their cultural composition. Originally populated by various groups of **Berbers**, the country came under Arab domination during the thirteenth century. These cultures mixed extensively, embedding most noticeably the Islamic faith into Moroccan belief systems. Although Morocco tends to be more liberal in its interpretation of **Islamic** laws than other Arab countries, and even possesses certain vestiges of Berber folk religion, it is still officially a Muslim religious state, and the society is thus thoroughly permeated with Islamic as well as Arab influence.¹⁴

¹³ Words appearing in italics denote a foreign language.

¹⁴ See: Abun-Nasr, Jamil. A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987; Eickelman, Dale. Moroccan Islam. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976; and Geertz, Clifford. Islam Observed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, for more information on the background of Morocco.

Beginning in 1912, France claimed colonial power over Morocco. Although Morocco regained its independence in 1956, French colonization extensively modified Moroccan society. Most noticeable in urban areas, French influence permeates the governmental structures that form the basis of Moroccan socio-economic interactions. With health, education, and agriculture systems, for example, revolving around a national plan, the power that France exerted through its development of these structures is enormous. In addition, the presence of French cultural values caused noticeable shifts in Moroccan values. For example, it is common in cities, the areas most affected by colonial influence, to find women active in public and even political positions. Internationally, Morocco claims a strong alliance with industrialized countries, and Moroccans have adopted many European tastes and values. Additionally, Morocco's king was the first to recognize the independent existence of the United States. Morocco's historical link to Europe and the United States has led to a significant level of societal change.

As a result of the swirling currents of values and goals, Morocco can seem rather chaotic. Many people, following the examples left by French colonists as well as global media influences, are seeking new roles for themselves. Young men often try to leave Morocco, drawn by the lure of better education and lucrative job opportunities in foreign countries. Although it is socially less acceptable for women to leave the country, some females have become more financially independent, taking jobs outside the home. Additionally, a number of women have modified their traditional garb to echo European fashions. Although they have made gains in diversity of acceptable roles for themselves, women have also lost

the social stability that accompanied their more traditional lifestyle in which sexual roles were clearly defined and separated.

Though this kind of change produces the most obvious effects in urban settings, the rest of the country is not immune. Therefore, despite their location in a fairly rural setting, the interviews I conducted reflect these compelling forces of change in the wide variety of answers that respondents gave. The interviews used in this paper all took place in the Azilal province. Azilal is located in the High Atlas Mountains on the eastern side of the country. Because the province extends slightly into the Middle Atlas Range, it has a more mixed culture than in the southern portion of the High Atlas Mountains, where the Berber groups tend not to be as highly integrated with each other. Although Berbers and Arabs can be found throughout Morocco, Azilal is predominantly Berber. Berbers consider themselves to be friendlier and more open-minded than their Arab counterparts. Likewise, Arabs possess certain stereotypes about Berbers lacking sophistication and manners. The Azilal region is predominantly rural, with numerous towns and villages but no large cities. The town of Azilal, which is the provincial capital, contains all the main governmental buildings of the region, and thus has a higher proportion of residents who have moved there from other provinces for employment within the government system. These "immigrants" have brought with them differences in culture and language, making Azilal an interesting mix of both lifestyle and heritage, which contributes to the high level of diversity that the interviews reflect.

In order to facilitate a deeper level of understanding of Moroccan women and their views of power, it is beneficial to examine the scholarly writing in this field. The substantial amount of research that concerns

women in Morocco is both theoretical, discussing the nature of women's power, and personal, exploring women's lives and contributions to society. In developing a strong sense of Moroccan women's power, it is essential to gain a firm understanding of the various ways women have been represented in these scholarly writings.

There are numerous sources concerning the Arab world, including those specific to Morocco, but many of these neglect the topic of women in society. Because women were traditionally less active participants in the public arena, their contributions to society were not as obvious and were thus often left undocumented. More recently, as new theories of international development have begun to take hold, a growing number of people are not only recognizing and acknowledging women's participation in society, but are also increasingly focusing on explaining the significance of their contributions.

For many Westerners in their initial look at the Middle East and North Africa, it is unclear how women participate in society. Traditional values promote a patriarchal society in which women depend on men financially to support their families. Women are expected to stay outside of the public sphere in order to protect their honor, which is the most valued resource of the family. In Morocco, these ideals persist, although not as intensely as in more traditional Muslim societies, such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq. So, although one finds some women working outside the home, going to school, and venturing to the market, freedoms such as these are not afforded every woman. Recent scholarship discussing women's roles in Moroccan society thus illustrates enormous variety.¹⁵ Grounded in

¹⁵ See works by Mernissi, Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, and Susan Schaefer Davis, for example.

a feminist perspective of development which insists upon viewing women in their wide array of roles and power configurations, these authors combine to create a well-rounded image of Moroccan women's lives and world-views.

The most widely renowned author of those concerned with women's issues in Morocco, Fatima Mernissi offers a number of useful works that show a great deal of original insight into Moroccan mentality.¹⁶ Doing Daily Battle (1989) contains a series of in-depth interviews which attempt to let the reader experience Morocco through the eyes of Moroccan women. It stresses the many activities in which women participate that are integral to Moroccan life, yet that usually go unrecognized. The book also discusses the societal problems that Moroccan women face, including poverty and unemployment, lack of understanding, unequal rights, and control over their lives and decisions. Mernissi's book illustrates the need for better understanding of women's struggles and contributions to their society.

Mernissi's Beyond the Veil (1987) contains an in-depth critical analysis of the important issue of spatial separation by gender that is such a noticeable component of life throughout the Arab world. It talks at length about the traditional and historical background of sexual separation, and about the effects of modernization and changing lifestyles, issues that are integral to understanding how Moroccan women regard power. The book also offers a different conceptualization of Arab women's power than most Western sources perceive. Mernissi suggests that sexual separation of space actually stems from a male attempt to contain the powerful force

¹⁶ Other important works by Mernissi that are not discussed here include: The Veil and the Male Elite (1991), and Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World (1992).

that women possess, that is, the power they have over the family's honor. Therefore, as women begin to move outside their traditional realms and into more public ones, they will be better situated to have an effect on society due to their inherent position of power. Mernissi finds that this is especially interesting when juxtaposed with the image of Western women, who, in their societies, are considered inherently weaker and therefore must overcome a "glass ceiling" in order to obtain real equality. This is truly a radical approach to defining women's power, especially considering the perception that Westerners have of Arab women's lack of power and conversely, of the superiority that Western societies have in the realm of equality. Although Mernissi's view of Moroccan women's power is controversial, it is also a provocative insight that must not be overlooked.

Mernissi's article entitled "The Patriarch in the Moroccan Family: Myth or Reality?" (1978) explores the effects of modernization on the powerful Moroccan patriarch figure, and suggests that women have been moving into more powerful positions through their contact with the state. Remembering that French policies and traditions have heavily influenced the government in Morocco, we see how Mernissi perceives it as having overstepped the boundaries of traditional male responsibilities and positions. Throughout the article she argues that the state now acts as the sovereign source of power, thus reducing the primacy of the direct power that men have over women. Another essay by Mernissi which appears in Barakat's Contemporary North Africa (1985) discusses the historical roots of women's roles in Muslim society. Although she can be very critical of Moroccan society, Mernissi has clearly established herself as an outspoken, innovative, and deeply insightful commentator on women in the Arab world.

Another author that has contributed extensively to the field is Elizabeth Warnock Fernea.¹⁷ Fernea, a respected anthropologist at the University of Texas, spent around two years living in Morocco while her husband was conducting research there. During that time she recorded her experiences, which she later developed into a book called A Street in Marrakesh (1975). This book explores how an American woman, even one already familiar with Arab culture, learns to understand and adjust to her neighbors in an Moroccan community. This book also contributes to our general knowledge of what Moroccan women do from day to day. One unusual and refreshing facet of this book is that Fernea writes as a friend rather than a social scientist; she makes no pretenses of objective insight. Rather, she views the main characters as her companions and teachers, which is a lesson to anyone who intends to describe another culture.

Fernea has also compiled a collection entitled Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak (1977), which contains selections by and about Arab women. It starts by creating an historical basis, including passages of the Qu'ran that pertain to women; then discusses the transitions that women have undergone, especially focusing on the effects of colonialism and nationalism; and finishes by discussing future directions for Arab women. Containing biographies and essays as well as poetry, it is an insightful resource that encourages Arab women to speak for themselves in their multiplicity of voices.

An important anthropological work that also contributes to this area of study is by Susan Schaefer Davis. Her book called Patience and Power (1983) describes life in a Moroccan village. Although the work itself is

¹⁷ Other important works not used here include: Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voices of Change (1985), and Guests of the Sheik: An Ethnography of an Iraqi Village (1965).

fairly straightforward, the author's definition of her terms is very useful. She discusses the differences between private and public spheres of life and the formal and informal roles that people play, and applies these differences throughout her work in a highly illustrative fashion. As these concepts of private-versus-public and formal-versus-informal are so integral to understanding women's roles in Morocco, Davis acts as an important addition to the writings that describe these women.

A Moroccan sociological study directed at the status of women in rural families concerns itself directly with many of the issues presented in the interviews. Malika Belghiti's article, "Les Relations Féminines dans la Famille Rurale " ("Feminine Relations in Rural Families"), discusses the main concerns of rural women from three villages. She identifies three prominent categories of difficulty in these women's lives: a) the power of the imminent threats of polygamy¹⁸ and repudiation¹⁹, b) the relationship between mother- and daughter-in-laws that is so crucial in a patrilocal²⁰ society, and c) the factors of validation and guardianship in relation to women's work. Except for "*les tâches domestiques et les activités d'artisanat* " (domestic tasks and artisan activities, i.e. work done in the private or familial sphere), women's work is perceived in a negative light,

¹⁸ Polygamy, as used here, denotes the practice of having more than one wife at a time. The *Qu'ran* allows up to four wives per husband on the condition that he can treat them equally.

¹⁹ Repudiation: the act of casting off, or divorcing, one's spouse. The *Qu'ran* indicates that men may divorce their wives merely by thrice announcing the annulment of their marriage; however, this has been modified in Moroccan practice. Regardless, women still perceive it as a threat.

²⁰ Patrilocal: refers to living arrangements that center around the male line, i.e. a bride would move into her husband's father's home.

for it reflects poorly upon a family when women are forced to help support themselves.²¹

Another Moroccan article, "Ce Que Disent 296 Jeunes Ruraux" ("What 296 Rural Youths Say"), by Pascon and Bentahar (1978), provides additional insight into the lives of rural Moroccan youth. This article approaches the topic of change in society. It explains that the young people express a desire to transform society through increased education, industrialization and stability of employment, freedom of expression, freer sexuality, reduction of corruption, etc. Yet they confront an obstacle that they identify as "*la résistance vaine, retrograde, cupide et parasiteuse des adultes, vestiges de la société patriarcale*" (the vain, retrograde, greedy and lazy resistance of the adults, vestiges of the patriarchal society).²² In this conflict we see evidence of the forces of social change and the struggle to adapt daily life and social norms to this change.

Daisy Hilse Dwyer's Images and Self-Images (1978), which looks at thirty-five Moroccan folktales, discusses power relations among the sexes and identifies transmission of cultural norms and values as occurring within the sexes. She argues that subordination of women in Moroccan society uses women as the key perpetrators of these values. For example, she shows that older women can use their position as non-sexual beings to assert their power over younger women²³, for women beyond their child-bearing years essentially pose little threat to familial honor and therefore

²¹ Belghiti, Malika. "Les Relations Feminines et le Statut de la Femme dans la Famille Rurale" in Khatibi, Abdelkebir. Etudes Sociologiques sur le Maroc. Morocco: Le Bulletin Economique et Social du Maroc, 1978, p. 292.

²² Pascon, P. and Bentahar, M. "Ce Que Disent 296 Jeunes Ruraux" in Etudes Sociologiques sur le Maroc. Morocco: Le Bulletin Economique et Social du Maroc, 1978, p. 286.

²³ Dwyer, Daisy Hilse. Images and Self-Images. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978, p. 77.

have more freedom in their interactions with others. She also identifies the role of the *'arifa*, a female acting as an official liaison between the sexes who verifies issues of honor such as virginity and pregnancy, and then takes this information to the courts.²⁴ These examples illustrate Dwyer's assertion that women perpetuate the very systems that are considered to subordinate them.

A similar idea is portrayed in Deniz Kandiyoti's Women, Islam and the State (1991). In this, women are viewed as active participants in determining their own identities. It is argued that "...women are neither homogenous nor passive victims of patriarchal domination. They are full-fledged social actors, bearing the full set of contradictions implied by their class, racial and ethnic locations as well as their gender."²⁵ "Women do not merely submit to the strictures of religious fundamentalism as interpreted by men but are active participants with their own versions of the ways in which Islam might further their gender interests."²⁶ These statements remind us that women actively influence the world around them and use whatever power is available to them to shape their futures.

"The Experience of Muslim Women" by Jane Smith (1984) continues the discussion of women's power. She talks about different roles that women play and the powers that are associated with them. For example, she suggests that rural women often are left in control of the family's finances, and that their investments lead to their increased power over deciding who their sons will marry. This works to the mother-in-law's advantage, for traditionally a young couple would move into the

²⁴ Dwyer (1978), p. 19.

²⁵ Kandiyoti, Deniz. Women, Islam and the State. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991, p. 17.

²⁶ Kandiyoti (1991), p. 18, discussing Badran's ideas.

husband's parents' household, thus forcing the women into a significant relationship with each other. Smith also attends to other issues of informal power that women exert, such as the withholding of favors, or the power to embarrass one's husband in front of guests - powers that women can use to manipulate their situation in the home.²⁷ Smith's work is significant in that it highlights the informal ways in which women exert power in a society that is traditionally renowned for its subordination of women.

Another selection called Women and Development in the Middle East and North Africa (1992), by Joseph and Nancy Jabbra, discusses the more political aspects of women's power in Muslim society. Although our focus is on women's personal power, this book is very helpful, for it allows us to gain a sense of the blurred borders between personal and political powers. It presents a compelling argument to assign economic value to women's extra burdens and to avoid discrimination in property rights, laws, and employment. In moving from the personal to the political, from the interpersonal to the international, we can see that issues concerning power that women face on a daily basis extend into the larger realm, thus contributing to our understanding of the value of these fundamental matters.

The final work specifically on Arab women is a collection of in-depth interviews compiled by Bouthaina Shaaban. This book, titled Both Right and Left Handed (1991), offers numerous accounts of the lives and concerns of Arab women in a number of countries. Although not a scientific study, the book strives to ascertain how various Muslim women view their lives and their struggles. The author demonstrates sensitivity

²⁷ Smith, Jane. "The Experience of Muslim Women: Considerations of Power and Authority" in Haddad, Yvonne; Haines, Byron; and Findly, Ellison (eds.) The Islamic Impact. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984, p. 107.

and support for the women who took part in making the collection; each one is a teacher and a pioneer in her own right. It is essential for the social scientist to develop such deep and honest respect for her or his interviewees if she or he expects to be able to create an environment that is truly conducive to substantive exploration of the chosen topic. In "giving voice" to women in Morocco, this expectation will act as a trustworthy guide.

It is evident that there is a wealth of scholarly literature available on the subject of Arab women. Numerous sources contribute in their own particular way to creating a richly woven tapestry illustrating how these women interact within their societies. Each song, each story, each biography, interview, and scholastic work composes part of this picture and contributes to the understanding that Arab women have played an active part in shaping their societies, even when their individual contribution may seem insignificant in the overall context. By studying these works, we find that each of these women acts in the way that she feels to be the most effective towards getting what she desires. Whether that means following the constructs of traditional society, or identifying herself as a catalyst to change, women contribute in a variety of ways to shaping the society around them. In order to understand what moves them, it is fundamental to look directly at women's perceptions of their own power.

METHODOLOGY

In January, 1993, five eager students, including myself, landed in Morocco to spend the next five months pursuing development internships. After a month of training in Rabat, I eventually found a position in the Azilal province. The Ministry of Agriculture accordingly located a host family in the town of Azilal. I knew nothing about the region except that it was located in the Atlas Mountains and was predominantly Berber, two factors that I considered appealing. So I packed my bags once again and started the long bus ride from Rabat, the capital of the country, to Azilal, a provincial capital.

My bus ride took me across a remarkable variety of landscapes. During the first few hours, hills undulated out from the winding road. After a prolonged lay-over in the hot, dusty city of Beni-Mellal, a friendly driver picked me up and escorted me the rest of the way. The road to Azilal ascended significantly, as the plains suddenly gave way to the majesty of the snow-capped Atlas Mountains. The higher we drove, the narrower and more curved the road got, rendering me thankful that I had left behind the stench of nausea and cigarette smoke of the nine-hour bus ride. As we approached the town of Azilal, I noticed the red earth and the pinkish-red tint of the two-story buildings that lined the street. Because I ended up living at a quiet house in a mud field at the edge of town, it was not until Market Day that I saw the clutter of buildings and winding, rutted streets, as well as the jumble of people and wares that are found in the heart of Azilal.

Once I arrived, I was escorted to the house of Mohamed Mouaddine, who was in charge of the budget at the Department of Agriculture. It was his elderly father who eventually provided me food and shelter in his

nearby home for the next four months. After a few days of sitting around, drinking tea, and meeting numerous relatives, women, and children, I grew curious to find out about my internship. Unfortunately, what I had expected to do was not actually possible, and therefore I had to find another internship that was possible and then get approval from the appropriate ministry. This process lasted a total of three months, and I now consider myself a veteran of Third World bureaucratic red-tape. Although in the end I managed to spend several weeks tracking maternal and child health care programs in the province, the majority of my stay was spent "hanging out." I drank tea, fasted during Ramadan, helped bake bread, played cards, traveled, and spent time with my new, extended family. For my own personal edification, I questioned employees at the Department of Agriculture about their work, which, incidentally, is how I met two of my future interviewees. During this period, I was able to establish a fairly good rapport with almost all of the participants, which sensitized me to their needs during the interviews.

I found open-ended questions to be the best method for identifying how Moroccan women define power and use it in their lives. A number of questions asked for generalizations about the meaning and use of power in the home, at work, and in society. The remainder of the questions sought to discover what is important to these women, whom they admire, what is difficult and what is rewarding in their lives, etc. - these more personal questions substantiated the abstract ones, enabling me to gain a better understanding of Moroccan women's perspectives. I found that the participants answered in a variety of ways. Even with a small sample group from only one region of Morocco, the interviews reflect the enormous richness and diversity of Moroccan women. I was also able to

gain a sense of some fundamental differences between Moroccan women, and women in the United States and other industrialized nations. This information is very provocative and may lead the reader to explore not only the ideas of Moroccan women but also to examine her or his own thoughts and assumptions as well.

It may interest the reader to know exactly how I worked around the multiple language barriers and adapted the theoretical process to the actual situations. Before I arrived in Morocco, I envisioned carrying out all the interviews without a translator. However, although my Arabic dialect language skills improved considerably, they were insufficient for conducting interviews without assistance. Although I experimented with several ways of collecting data, at each interview I found that it was necessary to be flexible and to proceed by whatever measures were possible. Although I originally intended to ask all the participants the same questions, I found that by modifying the process slightly to fit the individual, the participants could have more control over the situation. This provided me with a broader wealth of information than I had expected. Therefore, when I abandoned my original desire of standardization, many new avenues opened themselves to me and led me in new directions that I could in turn explore with future participants. This contributed greatly to the process as a whole and helped create a stronger sense of personal story.

With the first participant, who was the most educated of all the interviewees, I conducted the interview in French. The second was translated by the first participant into Arabic and then back into French. My third interview required the use of a male interpreter, for none of the women in the Berber village of Tabia spoke French or even much Arabic.

Peace Corps Volunteer Pam Stephenson assisted during this interview to verify the accuracy of the translation. For the subsequent two interviews, I had the participants read a written translation of my questions in Arabic. I recorded their verbal responses onto a cassette and later translated from the Arabic into French with an assistant. The next interview was read in Arabic by one of the participant's children, and the three participants answered on tape. My final interview with an elderly Berber woman was read aloud by the same child, then translated from Arabic to Berber by her illiterate mother, and next, translated back into Arabic and tape-recorded. We later translated that into French (and then English).

I am aware that some of the authenticity was necessarily lost in translation. However, I impressed upon all of my assistants the importance of direct translation, and asked that they not provide any further explanation of the questions. In one instance, the male translator's act of clarifying a question led the interviewee to answer in a certain way, presumably different from how she would have answered if left unguided. Because I was making use of multiple translators during this difficult interview, I was able to acknowledge his use of leading questions and noted them in my translations. However, my active participation in the process prevented most interviewees from being influenced by others.

In my preparation of this project as well as in the actual interviews themselves, I took preventative measures to avoid influencing the answers. I tried to refrain from leading the responses as much as possible, while still avoiding the overly vague question. In doing so, I followed the advice of Michael Patton's How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation (1987). He recommends seeking a goal-free evaluation in order to prevent bias, and to supplement all recorded data with one's personal

observations. However, I did utilize a few provocative questions in order to stimulate the discussion. Although it was unrealistic to suppose that I could completely avoid any influence over the material, I have been able to transcend this by remaining aware of the situation and by taking caution in applying my values to their statements. I also conducted the interview with Ms. Stephenson, who lived in the region, which augmented the validity of my observations.

I tried to avoid having extraneous people, especially males, present during the interviews; this was occasionally out of my control. However, when women began to ask the males for assistance during the interviews, I made a note of it. I received the impression that women are conditioned to feel insecure about thinking independently. I observed that a number of them seemed uncomfortable being the focus of attention and having someone directly ask for their opinions. More than once I had male assistants tell me that a prospective interviewee would not be able to answer because she would not understand the question. This attitude is unfortunate, for, as the interviews demonstrate, all of the participants were capable of providing great insight into their lives and ideas, giving the reader a valuable means to understand Moroccan women's notions of power.

Due to my numerous constraints, including length of stay and the time consumption of conducting and translating the interviews, I was unable to conduct a large number of interviews. Yet in limiting the survey I was able to spend more time proportionately with each interview. The participants were women who were either members of my extensive host family, their friends, women with whom I worked at the Department of Agriculture, or women I met through my internship in maternal and child

health care. Some were born and raised in the province; others had moved there for work or with their families. The women were both Berber and Arab (and mixed), which enriched the process. I did not intend this to act as a representative sample, yet I did manage to draw from a variety of socio-economic groups. None of them were wealthy, although several were comfortable by local standards. I was unable to find accurate and trustworthy demographic information in order to provide further information regarding these women's status. However, I believe that it is fruitful to let the women's responses speak for themselves, and not to judge the answer solely on the basis of their statistical ranks of wealth or education.

INTERVIEWS

In examining the interviews, I found two general categories for the questions. One involves theoretical, abstract information concerning women's power in society, at work, and in the home. The other group of questions is more personal, in which women discuss how power plays a part in their private lives. The following presentation of the interviews is similarly divided. But first, I would like to present a brief portrait of each of the eleven participants in order to provide the reader with a sense of personal story that helps us to achieve the relativity of perspective that strengthens our understanding of Moroccan women's views of power.

Please note: The family name appears first and indicates the natal family. It does not change with marriage.

Interview #1: Mouaddine, Aicha

Aicha was born January 13, 1968 in Telouguite, which is in the province of Azilal. She is single and is a third year geology student at the University of Marrakesh. She has the highest degree of formal education of all the females in her family, as well as out of all of the participants. I interviewed Aicha when she was home on vacation from school.

Interview #2: Lamsouf, Fatima

Fatima was born in 1944 in the *douar* of Tanoute in the Azilal province. She is married to 75 yr. old (approximately) *Ba* Hussein, has two children of her own, and is stepmother to 10 other children (including interviewees Aicha, Badiya, and Mustapha) ranging in age from 20-40. She is a

housewife and has never attended school. During the interview, Fatima was preparing dinner. Fatima does not leave the house very often, but she does go once every week to the market (which is not sexually segregated) and the bathhouse (which is), and she occasionally visits neighbors or relatives. Inside the home, like most women in the area, she wears layers of nightgowns, t-shirts, leggings, and head scarves, but outside the home she wears a *djellaba*, the traditional, concealing outer layer worn by many women and men.

Interview #3: Loutfi, Najat

Najat, age 18 at the time of the interview, lives in Tabia, a tiny Berber *douar* in the Azilal province. To get to Tabia, it is necessary to arrange an illegal "taxi" ride with a truck driver who leaves the village around 6 a.m. most days for the small town of Fougues and returns around 5 p.m. Typically women do not leave the village, and instead they take care of their homes. Najat likewise occupies her time with tasks around the house where only she and her mother reside. Her father is deceased, and a distant brother supports them. She attended 5 years of primary school. Unlike most women in her *douar*, the absence of males in her residence has forced Najat to play a more active role in public life, for example, by going to the weekly market which, in Tabia, is almost exclusively attended by males. Najat's level of education is considered high for women in her village.

Interview #4: Rguig, Ghizlane

Ghizlane was 23 at the time of the interview. She is single and lives with her family in the town of Azilal, although she was born in Marrakesh. She

works as a secretary at the Department of Agriculture. Her household consists of her parents, six brothers, and herself. She typically dresses in European-style shorter skirts and blouses, but during the holy month of Ramadan she, like the two other secretaries with whom she shares an office, dons the traditional outer layer of a *djellaba* and a head scarf. Ghizlane is very outgoing both with males and females, which is unusual for most women in the area.

Interview #5: Mouaddine, Badiya, 30, and Mouaddine, Mustapha, 23. This brief interview consists of one question that Badiya and her brother answered together, and is valuable in that it helps provide context for an answer given by their step-mother Fatima. Both of them are single; the reserved Badiya was employed in a nearby town as a cook and caretaker in the same facility where a man who was not yet commonly known to be her fiancé also works, whereas Mustapha was not currently employed. (Since the interview, Mustapha has gained employment through familial contacts at the Department of Agriculture.) Mustapha lives in his father's household along with his step-mother Fatima and her two younger children as well as occasional visitors, including myself.

Interview #6: Sadik, Hakima

Hakima, 32, is a pregnant newlywed living in the town of Azilal. She is employed as a civil servant at the Department of Agriculture, where she used to be responsible for the women's development program. However, since her marriage, Hakima has taken a less public position. She has also assumed more traditional garb and wears a *djellaba* when outside the home.

Interview #7: Yassine, Mbarka

Mbarka, age 39, is married with three young children. She was born in Beni Mellal. She is the second wife in her shared household. She completed the fourth year of the old schooling system, and speaks some French. She works as the Director of the Female Sewing Organization in Azilal the town.

Aytaddi, Fatima

Fatima is 32 and is married to the same man as Mbarka; however, she is the first wife. She has 2 children, a boy and a girl. She was born near the town of Azilal in the countryside. She is a housewife and has no formal education. She rarely leaves the house and goes to the weekly market in the company of her husband. Like many village women, Fatima's face is marked between the eyes and on the chin with decorative tattoos.

Ghallab, Halima

Born near the town of Tanant in the Azilal province, Halima has received no schooling. She is divorced with one girl child and lives in her parent's household. She is approximately in her early thirties. Halima is the only one of the interviewees who has very dark skin; her rich, chocolate tone stands out among the paler women whose color prevails in the region. Therefore Halima most clearly illustrates characteristics of the native African composition that Berbers possess.

During this interview, Mbarka generally answered for all three of them. Therefore her responses should be interpreted as their collective response. Although I had originally intended for them to answer

individually, they chose to have only one from among them respond to each question. Significantly, Mbarka was viewed as their representative; she was the only one of the three that worked outside the home. It can be inferred that they believed that her higher level of contact with the public world and her greater economic independence enabled her to better interpret the questions. Yet the three women recognized the complementary nature of their strengths, as demonstrated in that Mbarka and Fatima, who share a husband, each greatly respect and depend on each other as individuals.

Interview #8: Mouaddine, Fatima (She is the sister of *Ba Hussein*)
 Fatima is older than 75; she does not know exactly. She lives with one of her sons in Tugute, a small village in Azilal province. She has no schooling. I met her when she came to live in the same house with me for a while, and although we could not communicate verbally on our own, certain non-verbal interactions between us piqued my interest in her. She generally wore traditional clothing with an American-style nylon sports jacket over it. Fatima spent most of her time with us sleeping or watching t.v.

This provides us with a brief introduction to each person and allows us to see the variety among even the small sample of participants of the interviews. In order to maximize our understanding of the issues, I have organized the discussion around the questions rather than the interviewees. Although the context helps us to evaluate how each respondent interprets the questions, our primary focus is on perceiving the diversity that the interviewees express, not only among each other, but also in relation to us.

Theoretical Questions:

Although it was too awkward to begin the actual interviews this directly, our discussion opens with the key question: "What is the definition of power?" The first interviewee, Aicha, replied, "To do what one wants. To have a good personality, to make good decisions by oneself." Her step-mother Fatima L. believes that power is "...being able to ask your husband to do something and he'll do it. If I ask my husband to buy something very expensive, he'll send me back to my mother!" This epitomizes the discussion of power extending beyond the formally accepted routes and instead guiding daily interactions, even those between spouses. To Najat, who has none of the following, "Power is having a nice house, gold, clothes." Her statement demonstrates the aspect of power that involves determining what is important and then finding ways of obtaining it. Hakima finds that power involves manipulation, as she identified a powerful person as "...someone who tells you what to do, even if you don't want to or can't. That's *sultah* (power/authority)." Mbarka's definition indicates another aspect; she told us that "...power means to respect and to be respected. Respect needs to exist generally in the society; everyone needs to respect each other." In the words of Ghizlane, whose job gives her intimate perspective over hierarchical structures, "Power equals authority. If someone is in authority, that person needs to be wise. The people who are responsible are those who have authority over us [suggesting the government]." In this basic question, we can see the enormous variety of answers and interpretations that these women present, which suggests that the road to women's empowerment may not be a simple, uniform path to follow.

In order to gather a fuller picture of how the interviewees view power, I found it a natural extension of the process to ask, "Who is powerful?" Aicha believes that must be "...someone with a strong, good personality. Someone who works well, at home and the exterior, does good things." As a married woman herself, Fatima L. thinks that a powerful woman is "...a girl who knows the guy she will marry, all of her life, will have more power, can get him to do things she wants." Mbarka described a powerful person as "...someone who confronts all the problems of life and doesn't lower his head. He never feels weak when facing all problems, even if all the circumstances are against him, he never lowers his head." Similar to the person she described, Mbarka has taken a difficult role of being second wife and turned it to her advantage by sharing responsibilities and respect with her co-wife, Fatima A.

A related question asked, "Who are the female decision makers?" Aicha, whose own position places her in a more public realm than many of her relatives, answered that these are the working women, for "...they are more used to the idea. They have the attitude that it's the woman's right to make decisions, more so than the women who never studied, who leave decisions to others." Her stepmother Fatima L. likewise identified power with work, as illustrated in her response that female decision-makers are "...women whose husbands have left to work in France, etc. who are left at home and they do lots of work - men's work, hard work."

When asked what women they most admire, again the answers varied. Hakima responded, "My mother...My father was the head of household, made the orders, hit my mother a lot - she was illiterate. Even so, she withstood all that and educated and raised her children. She lived in a large family [her husband's]. My mother was very sociable; my father

was mean - how he hit my mother!" This implies that she finds power in being able to overcome one's restrictive surroundings. The scholarly Aicha replied, "Hanan el Achraoui. [She is]...active in community organizations and the government. She is a woman who works like a man - hard work." Her statement indicates a sense that it is unusual for women to be in positions of formal power. Fatima L. answered, "A woman whose husband is the school director. She has power because her husband only does what she says, buys her what she says; if she wants to go out, he'll go too, without saying anything." In reaction to Fatima's response, two other interviewees, Badiya and Mustapha, contributed a further description of this "powerful" woman, who also happened to be a neighbor to the Mouaddines. They explained, "...[That] woman stays at home, does all the work. The husband comes home and is able to rest; it's tranquil. The woman has a good conscience and educated the children well; she and her husband get along well." Their statement reflects a widespread attitude among both women and men that women's behavior in the home affects their power relationships.

Another, more provocative question helps us to see what women dislike about their lives and what they would like to change. When asked, "When are you most angry to be a woman?" Fatima L. explained, "The woman has to give birth - it's difficult. She has her period every month; she has to give the child milk. I would prefer to be a man with all that stuff. How disagreeable!" Her husband's sister Fatima M., who is an elderly woman, said, "I get upset when I have nothing, because I'm poor. I only sell bread and I don't make much. I live alone and that upsets me. I have two children and one works and lives with his children, but the other doesn't do anything." Although her lazy son does, in fact, live with

her, one can conclude that her loneliness stems from living in a tiny household in a society in which large families act as a kind of social security network. As mother of three, Mbarka's difficulties with being a woman arise "...when I have a lot of problems - with the children - with the babies - with the noise. If there's a lot of work to take care of the babies [also, children], and the man doesn't do anything and the woman does it all, I get angry."

Following this theoretical line of questioning, I asked, "In what way could women gain more power for themselves? Is this a good idea?" Once again, responses varied enormously. Mbarka answered, "Yes, it's a good idea. Since the women live with the children - know how to raise them - they know all about their needs - everything in the home. Their role is larger than the men's, even in the house, and in life generally." This response is especially interesting when we note that Mbarka works outside the home, and her co-wife takes care of the children and the household duties. On the other hand, Hakima disagrees with people who want to give more power to women. She explained, "If they are given more power, there would be a lot of problems. It's the religion - the Prophet said. There's no goodness in a country where the common law is in the hands of the women. If the women were in command of an Islamic society, one could say '*Adieu*'. That would be it; it would no longer be an Islamic society." Unmarried Ghizlane declared, "If a woman wants more power, she needs to be good with her children and husband. That's a good idea." Typical of her relatively individualistic ideas, Aicha explained that "...each woman must show to men that she is capable, that she has power. Yes, it's a good idea."

A similar line of questioning asks what would happen if women were in the place of men. Aicha rationally explained that this would not be good, for men and women "...should be side by side, not one better than the other. They should both have power." Yet Najat, another youthful interviewee, ruled, "It would be exactly the same." Turning to the *Qu'ran*, Ghizlane explained that "...the religion gave men more power, thus women can't be in the place of men. It's always the men who are responsible." Hakima contributed her opinion by disagreeing "...with people who think that women should be in the place of men because women are women and men are men. That's nature. Everyone was created to achieve a goal." This question expands our understanding of how women view power in that it demonstrates that even women living under similar circumstances cannot be expected to develop the same ideas about power.

Following this hypothetical line of questioning, I asked the participants what one thing they would change in society, if they could. Although generally the women found it difficult to imagine making such alterations, their answers still provided insight into what parts of the social order disturbed them. Aicha felt that it would be most important to change the idea that women do not work as hard as men. She added, "I want the women to do good work - hard work - that to be a man or woman is the same thing; there's not much difference between the two. They both have the same spirits; they're both capable of thinking the same way. You can find brilliant women as well as men." Also centering on issues involving women's participation in society, Hakima voiced her concerns, "Society has a lot of need for change, but I can't really be precise. Now there's more women's liberty - the woman now has a right to divorce. They work; they can travel alone [not all of them!]. Now women can do

lots of things." In these two comments, we see that at least some women recognize the need for greater societal acceptance of women's participation and freedoms.

In examining the responses to the theoretical questions discussed above, it is possible to see how varied the thoughts and ideas of the participants really are. One notices that some women feel that power has to do with controlling or overcoming someone else, and others feel that power is an internal quality, a sort of self-control and self-improvement process. Female decision-makers are identified as women whose circumstances place them outside the traditional role, yet the women who were most often admired by the participants were the traditional housewife characters who, despite their lack of education and their dependence on men, raised their children and took care of the family. Women tended to get upset at things that either reflect the physical aspects of their gender or the roles that they are placed in because of their gender, and that men accordingly manage to escape. It is viewed as necessary for women to improve their relationships with others, especially with men, in order to gain control over them. Yet not all of the interviewees believed this to be a good idea, not only because Islam demands that men are more powerful than women, but also because they have been conditioned to believe that women are not inherently worthy of much power. Gaining power is viewed as a process which may (or may not) be undertaken by an individual; no one referred to group empowerment efforts. Similarly, the concept of women exchanging places with men brought about a torrent of negative responses; not one woman actually liked the idea enough to try to imagine it. Instead, they either stated that it would be a fundamentally bad idea, or that both sexes should

have equal opportunity in regards to power. Although the respondents disagreed on how society should proceed with social change in regards to women's rights, they did cite the need to give these issues attention.

After having gained some insight into what Moroccan women think about power and its manifestations in an abstract sense, it is logical to take a look at how these women live - what's important to them, what limits are placed on them, how they influence others and who influences them, their general satisfaction with life, and when they feel most powerful. In doing so, one can begin to fill in the gaps between what women express as their concepts of power, and how power is actually manifested in their daily lives.

Personal Questions:

In asking more personal questions, I hoped to improve the communication in the interviews. Although most women provided answers for the general questions, they seemed uncomfortable, especially with the more abstract ones.²⁸ I started by asking women what is important to them in their own lives. Predictably, Aicha listed, "Studies and work - succeeding at them." Ghizlane, the secretary, replied, "To help my parents, and to work. And also to marry a man of good status." Mbarka, who always seemed a little tired upon getting home from her own work, identified, "The home - the family - the children - that they study well, have decent clothes to wear, good food, and have a good life." Fatima

²⁸ I believe this stems from a cultural disapproval of independent thinking on the part of women. Commonly voiced by males in the community, this feeling extended most significantly onto housewives, who were generally uneducated. Yet all of the women answered almost all of the questions, and there was no one question that less-educated women typically skipped. I tried to keep the questions as simple as possible, and I told the participants that I was interested in their answer and that there were no "wrong" or "right" replies. This seemed to put them at ease.

M., whose status as the oldest woman in the family allows her to spend her time sleeping, praying, eating, and watching t.v., sagely responded, "To live very well, eat very well, and always do the prayers until death. 'There's no god but Allah and Mohamed is His prophet'." Najat, who constantly desires those things not available to her, said, "Money, so I can buy kitchen things." When Najat gave this answer, the male translator interjected, "What about a husband?", to which she snidely replied, "What husband?" This exchange emphasizes that women do think independently from men and create their own set of values and desires, regardless of the fact that men often believe otherwise.

The next question aimed at finding out what women's power has not enabled them to achieve. I asked, "What kinds of things do you wish you could do but cannot? Why not?" Studious Aicha explained,

Of course there are things one cannot do, for example, to study with certain friends who are guys. I believe that here in Morocco it is not allowed because people think that they are going to 'do' something - here in Morocco, there are thoughts like that. It's like that; it's in the education. Girls only talk to girls. They have to talk to guys occasionally, but only '*Bonjour*', things like that. It's in our religion, our education. Me, personally, I couldn't do that. There are certain girls who study with guys - they're crazy! For the girls who do that, everybody who sees them together believes that something's going on between them. It's the same thing for girls and for women who work, but for the married women it's even worse.

Fatima L. answered, "If there is something I can't do, I just don't think about it. I don't have the money to buy what I want or to go to Rabat, for

example."²⁹ Vivacious Ghizlane replied, "I can't spend the night elsewhere or go out without my parents' authorization," again citing the restrictions placed on fertile women. Hakima, though content with her situation, explained, "Before I was married, I could do whatever I wanted. I could wear clothes other than a *djellaba*. Before I was married, I was free. It's not that I can't, but at the beginning of my marriage, my husband and I decided that I would never again dress like that." Halima, always somewhat blunt, immediately responded, "Go out at night." When I asked for further details, the women explained that it is dangerous to go out at night because of "bad men."

The next line of questioning tried to determine how women use power in their daily lives. I queried, "How do you influence decision-making at home, at work, or in society?" Aicha responded,

I'm old enough; it's my responsibility to make all my own decisions. It's the same at home; my father understands my situation, so if he wants to do something, he must always find out my opinion, about work, marriage; my father can't make me do anything I don't want to. For example, if I say I don't want to study - I want to stay home - I don't believe he would not allow me to do that.

Though she appears very confident, it is important to notice that she selected an option unlikely for her father to dispute, as opposed to

²⁹ I do not know why she specifically chose visiting Rabat as an example of something she could not do; perhaps my frequent journeys into the city that lay many hours by bus from our house made her believe it is worth visiting. Fatima does not have the option to travel, except into the countryside when her mother falls sick. Before I left the family to return to the U.S., we decided that one day I would return and rent a car and take her to the waterfall in the province that she has never seen, and that is a major tourist site for the region. When I press her to tell me why we must wait until I return, she hints that by then her seventy-five year old husband will have passed on, thus easing restrictions on her mobility. She also is nearing the end of her fertile years, so that presumably by the time I return she will not be considered a sexual, and therefore threatening, entity.

something less traditional, like living with a boyfriend. Thus she followed the same line of thinking expressed by Fatima L. when she explained that she just does not think about things she cannot do. This internalization of cultural norms contributes to a general suppression of desires that otherwise would be considered inappropriate or anti-social. Fatima L. reiterated this concept with her reply, "I just do my work." Hakima explained,

I can't make decisions alone; I make them with my husband after a discussion.

I can recommend decisions that concern my work, otherwise I don't concern myself with it. I live [in society] like a member of a family; if I want to make a decision, I have to see that it won't cause problems for the whole. Also, I would consult with those who are more aware and those who are older and have more experience.

We see that all three of these respondents tend to follow the dictations of society rather than to independently determine what is acceptable and what is not. This reflects the strong cohesion found in Moroccan society, enhanced by their homogenous religious beliefs.

In making another attempt at finding out how women identify power, I asked, "Who is the most powerful woman in your family?" Najat replied, "Both my mother and myself. I have power in the kitchen and housework, but my mother tells me what to do and buy." Ghizlane identified her cousin's wife, explaining, "If she tells her husband to do something, he does it without saying anything. I think she works [outside the home]." It is interesting to note that the concept of family tends to much broader than it is in the U.S., thus Ghizlane's selection of her cousin's wife as "family" is understandable.

The next question sought to identify power distribution by asking, "Who is dependent on you? For what exactly?" Hakima expressed, "I'm dependent on my husband and he's dependent on me...We form a family together." Her status as a married woman accords her more power than unmarried women such as Aicha, who replied that she has no influence on others because her brothers are all older than her. Her step-mother Fatima L. said, "I make decisions for the kids, but when they grow up, I don't know what will happen." This illustrates that there is a built-in hierarchy of power in the family that is determined by one's gender, age, marital status, and status as a parent or sibling.

Although this next question is hypothetical, it remains very personal in nature. I asked if the women ever wanted to be someone else. Fatima L. answered, "I want to be another woman - rich, etc...but not a man!. My husband hasn't got the money so that I can live how I would want." This expresses her desire to have more control over and access to finances. Aicha solemnly explained, "I never wanted to be anyone else. I'm not happy to be me, but not happy to be anyone else, either." Like most of the hypothetical questions, this one was not easy for many of the interviewees.

One question that I posed to Aicha elicited an interesting answer. I asked how she gets what she wants, and she replied,

There is a difference between what I can do at home and at school. It's important to me what my family thinks. When I'm sure of what I'm doing, I don't worry about what others think - when I'm sure of myself and that I'm making a good decision. For example, I can talk to guys because I know there's nothing going on with them.

When asked if there were things she would like to change about her life, Najat stated, "I don't always want tiring work, which is always given to women, like getting up early to milk cows." I continued by inquiring what were the obstacles to her avoiding this kind of tiring work. She explained that the work is necessary.

To conclude, women were asked when they feel the most powerful in their lives. Aicha replied, "When I succeed in my studies, it makes me feel that I have a stronger personality, more capable of making decisions for my life." Fatima L., Aicha's step-mother, volunteered, "I always feel like I don't have power." The feisty Ghizlane quipped, "When I argue with someone and win." Hakima, the doting wife and mother-to-be, responded, "When I succeed; when I achieve something I want." Mbarka evenly replied, "Now I feel powerful. I have everything in my home. The children are well and everyone's healthy, and everything's good."

Once again, one can immediately see the variety of answers that the Moroccan women presented in the interviews. Yet the more personal qualities of these questions help provide deeper insight into the realities of how power affects the lives of these women. We notice immediately that the family, in addition to the society as a whole, plays a large role in shaping the roles and standards by which women live and judge themselves. Moroccan women are very concerned with getting along with the people who are most important to them, often at the price of their individuality.

The most impressive aspect of doing these interviews and in getting to know Moroccan women was discovering the importance of family in all aspects of life. Rather than express oneself as independent individual, Moroccan women were very concerned about their families and how their

actions affected their families. Women cite the lack of attention given to families in Europe and America as one of the biggest problems that society faces in the "developed" world, as shown in the following statement:

[referring to the U.S. and France] They're very developed countries, not like those of the Third World. But...Moroccans live better - always live like large families - visit the families - live with grandparents until their deaths. But, in the U.S. and Europe, there are residential homes where people leave their old parents. But, the things concerning technology, etc! The people who live in foreign countries [referring to the Moroccans who work abroad] regret that - leaving their countries and living as foreigners. When they come back to Morocco, they don't want to leave again, which shows it's good. Therefore it's better to live here, even if there are hospitals-anything you want there, there's not the family. The family always stays together.³⁰

Although this may be a bit optimistic in regards to the wonders of the cohesive Moroccan family, it does express the general feeling that family is the most important part of life. Even as societal pressures are becoming more and more important in shaping women's lives, as they grow more independent of their families, women have come to view society itself as a sort of large, extended family, deserving of the same deference that women have traditionally rendered their relatives. This is clearly reflected as Moroccan women in their varieties of lifestyles and status all repeatedly cite the importance of their families, both in the large and small senses of the word, in shaping the way in which they interact and grow in the changing world around them.

³⁰ Sadik, Hakima (1993)

CONCLUSION

As Moroccan society evolves, changes in women's roles occur. Not all people welcome this change. Yet, as women have entered the workplace and gained some financial independence, they have taken on new power. Some of this was by choice; some by necessity. Much like women in the United States who entered the workplace in lieu of men during war time, Moroccan women have taken on extra responsibilities as men have left their homes to seek income in urban centers or abroad. Educational opportunities have opened to women, enabling them to challenge themselves and to prove that they are capable (and sometimes outstanding) students, workers, and leaders. Yet the society restrains women's momentum by keeping them under the control of the men in their families - their fathers and brothers, their husbands, their uncles and grandfathers, and even their sons. Although women's roles are changing and expanding, Moroccan women still most strongly identify with the characters of daughter, wife, and mother. Perhaps, little by little, as women gain power outside the home, at school, in the workplace, and in society at large, they can carry it home with them in order to generate some of the advances in equality that many of them long for in their lives.

As Morocco increasingly enters the world economy, its people must learn to adapt. The polarized influences placed on society, including the traditional values emphasized in the Muslim world as well as the increasing tendency to follow the cultural patterns of Europe and the United States, have forced Morocco to seek new ways of developing its society. International powers often have great influence over the direction of less powerful countries' development by controlling their access to funding and technology. In order to ensure that the process of

international development can succeed on a sustainable basis, it must take into account the values, ideas, and facts about the daily lives of the people living in the developing countries. A major component is thus to attend to the issue of perspective, and to form policies that address the real concerns of people in those countries. It follows that this entitles both men and women to share in the development process, for it affects them both. As development theorists recognize the necessity of women's participation in this process, they seek ways of making women's participation more visible.

As shown from the wealth of information revealed in the interviews and supported by scholarly evidence, women's perceptions of power vary greatly, and so do the ways in which they use power in their daily lives. We can see that there is no one way to define Moroccan women's power and participation in their society, yet we sense that there are fundamental differences from our own views as Westerners, varied as these too may be. Therefore it behooves all of us, as members of our increasingly interdependent global society, to begin to understand that the differences between us are not only precious, as they offer fresh insight into our own value systems, but also they are essential variables that must be accounted for in the processes of international development.

GLOSSARY

'arifa: a female acting as an official liaison between the sexes; gathers information for the courts regarding honor.

Arab: a member of the Semitic people of the Arabian peninsula

Ba: Moroccan familiar term for "father"; also used respectfully.

Berber: stems from the word "Barbarian"; is used as a general term to describe the several indigenous African groups that originally populated Morocco.

djellaba: a concealing outer robe with a hood, worn by both men and women. Women's djellabas in Morocco are usually made of bright polyester fabric with decorative embroidered trim.

douar: Moroccan term for "small village"; literally means "cluster of houses."

Islamic: pertaining to the Qu'ran and to the Prophet.

Maghrib: the Moroccan term that means "Morocco", "west", "sunset", and "the evening prayer"; "al-" is the definite article.

Muslim: an adherent of the religion based on the Qu'ran (Koran) that was founded by the prophet Mohammed.

Qu'ran: also "Koran"; the holy book of Islam.

sultah: Moroccan term meaning "power"; can also indicate authority.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abun-Nasr, Jamil M. A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

This selection is concerned with tracing the historical evolution of Morocco, and includes both pre- and post-French colonization.

Ahmed, Leila. Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

Discourse on the position and treatment of women in Arab history and how they have contributed to the formation of women's roles in society.

Badran, Margot and Cooke, Miriam (eds.) Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writing. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

The editors define feminism of Arab voices as involving three parts: awareness, rejection, and activism, and include selections pertaining to each of these.

Barakat, Halim (ed.). Contemporary North Africa: Issues of Development and Integration. London: Croon Helm, 1985.

A collection of essays, includes a pertinent article by author F. Mernissi.

Belghiti, Malika. "Les Relations Feminines et le Statut de la Femme dans la Famille Rurale - dans Trois Villages de la Tessaout" in Khatibi, Abdelkebir. Etudes Sociologiques sur le Maroc. Morocco: Le Bulletin Economique et Social du Maroc, 1978, pp. 289-361.

Discusses the main concerns of rural women in this area, including information on their daily lives and difficulties.

Dwyer, Daisy Hilse. Images and Self-Images: Male and Female in Morocco. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.

Discusses how 35 folktales from Southern Morocco portray the sexual relations and roles of women. Shows how women's subordination is often perpetuated through women.

Davis, Susan Schaefer. Patience and Power: Women's Lives in a Moroccan Village. Cambridge, Mass: Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc., 1983.

Presents a picture of Moroccan women's lives and outlines "a new approach to perceive women's roles in society, which have often been overlooked".

Eickelman, Dale F. Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976.

Discusses how religion shapes social order. Contains useful information about the structure of society.

El-Saadawi, Nawal. Two Women in One. Seattle, WA: Women in Translation, 1991(reprint; orig. 1985).

Fiction. Relates the story of a young female medical student as her life goes through a series of radical transformations and growth toward awareness of her social and political realms.

Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock. Guests of the Sheik: An Ethnography of an Iraqi Village. New York: Doubleday, 1965.

An account of her stay in a very traditional Muslim village; explores women's roles and issues of cultural adjustment.

Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock (ed.) Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977.

A collection of works - essays, interviews, fiction, poetry, songs, and biographical sketches. Past, present, and future.

Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock. A Street in Marrakesh. New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1975.

Account of the author's residence in a Moroccan city, and her relationships with the local women during this time. Also, see the film:

Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock (arranged by). Some Women of Marrakesh, which includes a visual treatment of same issues.

Geertz, Clifford. Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

A look at ways in which Islam has been interpreted on two geographic poles of the Muslim world. Good description of Moroccan societal structure.

Jabbara, Joseph G. and Nancy W. (eds.) Women and Development in the Middle East and North Africa. New York: E.J. Brill, 1992.

Discusses different trends and perspectives of women-oriented development programs and surrounding issues.

Kandiyoti, Deniz. Women, Islam and the State. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991.

Collection of essays that discusses the relationship between women, Islam and the state in the Middle East and North Africa.

Kardam, Nüket. Bringing Women In: Women's Issues in International Development Programs. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Assesses the role of attitudes and values that shape international development policy in regards to women. Also addresses the lack of data and resources that hinder development programs.

Mernissi, Fatima. Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society (revised edition). Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Focus on division of space according to gender in Moroccan society. Argues that Moroccan women inherently are powerful, but are limited by societal structure.

Mernissi, Fatima. Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989.

Discusses the role of Moroccan women in society as seen through their own eyes, in which they supposedly view themselves as "doing daily battle" against degrading socio-economic conditions.

Mernissi, Fatima. "The Patriarch in the Moroccan Family: Myth or Reality?" in Allman, James (ed.). Women's Status and Fertility in the Muslim World. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978, pp. 312-332.

Discusses the changing role of patriarchy in the Moroccan family, as well as the implications of the institute of family within its cultural context.

Mikhael, Mona. Images of Arab Women: Fact and Fiction. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, Inc., 1979.

Includes an historical overview of women's roles, laws affecting them, and short biographies of leaders of female emancipation, as well as a representative look at images of women in literature.

Momsen, Janet H. Women and Development in the Third World. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Discusses the themes behind women and development policies, and provides clear statistical analysis of the significance of women's roles in society. Primarily focuses on women's work and the relevance of this in development planning.

National Geographic Atlas of the World (Revised 6th Ed.) Washington, D.C. National Geographic Society, 1992, p. 92.

Pascon, P. and Bentahar, M. "Ce Que Disent 296 Jeunes Ruraux" in Etudes Sociologiques sur le Maroc. Morocco: Le Bulletin Economique et Social du Maroc, 1978, pp. 145-287.

An in-depth study which consulted young rural inhabitants about a variety of topics important to their lives.

Patton, Michael Quinn. How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1987.

Assesses desirability of qualitative analysis, and provides useful information on methodology.

Roberts, Helen (ed.). Doing Feminist Research. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.

Discusses the value of qualitative research, and attempts to trace how gender has influenced research.

Rosaldo, Michelle Z. and Lamphere, Louise (eds.) Woman, Culture, and Society. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974, p. 21.

This text contains a useful description of classical distinctions between power and authority.

Sen, Gita and Grown, Caren. Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987.

Discusses the development in the last thirty years of policies and politics that affect women economically, politically, and culturally. Demonstrates how women's organizations have contributed to the success of women and development.

Shaaban, Bouthaina. Both Right and Left Handed: Arab Women Talk About Their Lives. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

Contains a series of interviews with women in five Muslim societies; personal and poignant looks into the minds of her subjects.

Smith, Jane I. "The Experience of Muslim Women: Considerations of Power and Authority" in Haddad, Yvonne Y., Haines, Byron, and Findly, Ellison (eds.). The Islamic Impact. Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 1984, pp. 89-112.

Discusses how Muslim women manipulate their situation to obtain more power. Offers alternative visions to how outsiders would typically view the constraints placed on Muslim women.

Tucker, Judith E. (ed.) Arab Women: Old Boundaries, New Frontiers. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

This book includes a provocative introduction by Tucker, and contains a collection of essays on gender discourses, women's work and development, politics and power, and gender roles and relations.

Weber, Max, in Gerth, H.H. and Mills, C. Wright (eds.) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1947.

Describes the classical sociological treatises of Weber. Includes background on Weber as well as sections pertaining to science and politics, power, religion, and social structures.

Interviews (April/May 1993)

All interview were conducted through the author with numerous translation assistants. Languages used include: Moroccan dialect of Arabic, French, Berber, and English.

Aytaddi, Fatima.

Ghallab, Halima.

Lamsouf, Fatima.

Loutfi, Najat.

Mouaddine, Aicha.

Mouaddine, Badiya.

Mouaddine, Fatima.

Mouaddine, Mustapha.

Rguig, Ghizlane.

Sadik, Hakima.

Stephenson, Pam

Yassine, Mbarka.