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State Sponsored Liberal Feminism in Jordan

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"There is...no more important principle for all types of history than...that there is a world of difference between the reason for something coming into existence...and the ultimate use to which it is put"—Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals (Nietzsche 1996: 57)

Abstract: *The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), established in 1996, is the first expression of a state sponsored liberal feminist organization in Jordan. The JNCW, however, is not a manifestation of a transcendent 'Liberal Feminism,' as some would contend, but is a particular embodiment of it, with its own language, goals, and practical usages. Following this logic, this work contends that the JNCW (1) developed through contingent discursive movements made by the regime and (2) by accepting Jordanian nationalism and development logic as its own the JNCW promotes state desires and goals rather than, necessarily, the 'betterment of Jordanian women.'*

I. Introduction

The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) is an institution replete with structural, ideological and practical contradictions. At once it: creates state policy and functions independent of the governmental control; advocates for "the enhancement of the role of women in the reconstruction and progress of society" (JNCW 2000: 3) and contributes to state economic goals; advances women's political empowerment and depoliticizes women's issues; represents Jordanian women's interests in the public sector and depends on international aid for financial support; deploys neoliberal logic and feminist discourse; reifies Hashemite legitimacy and represents an abrogation of its power; believes in universal liberal feminist values and exposes their non-universal applicability.

Despite the opening revelations, this investigation is not motivated to demonstrate the JNCW's conflicted nature. Rather, the purpose here is to understand how and why JNCW discourse is commonsensical in and out of Jordan. Following Althusser's (1970) description of ideology as the practice(s) of an apparatus(es) (i.e. institutions), I see the JNCW as an ideological apparatus defined by its simultaneous vocalization of (Hashemite) Jordanian nationalism, neoliberalism, development logic and liberal

feminism. The JNCW brings these four logically discrete and historically separate 'language games' together in a novel way, privileging neoliberal state economic policy over positive change for women in Jordan.

Describing the JNCW as a discursive hybrid instead of as a mechanism for gender equality in Jordan goes against academic literature. In evaluating the JNCW Brand (1998), al-Atiyat (2004) and Lowrance (1998) conclude that while the JNCW is improving women's lives, its relationship with the state has made the JNCW accept a moderate liberal feminist platform. They see the JNCW as an important step in women's empowerment insofar as it represents a tacit acknowledgement by the state of its role in under-privileging women within Jordanian society.[1] For al-Atiyat (2004) and Brand (1998), however, the JNCW is a 'regime survival' strategy used to disempower independent (truly liberal) women's organizations by placing its objectives "within the framework of society's religious and cultural traditions (Brand 1998: 173). Although they don't see the JNCW completely outside dominant power relations, they do not: (1) evaluate the JNCW in terms of state economic policy or (2) comprehend the complexity of JNCW discourse.

These previous analyses do not include points (1) and (2) because they examine the content of JNCW discourse through a static notion of feminism. They assume the purpose of state feminism in Jordan is to 'better women's lives,' rather than support state ambitions; for them the Commission's meaning is pre-given. Thus, they miss the JNCW's most important operative concept, namely *leveling the (abstract) political concept 'Equality' to mean 'economic equality.'* This concept, I argue, is the logical

[1] Kobayashi (2004) sees this as part of state feminist institutions generally.

center of JNCW discourse, which gives it 'sense.' Defining 'Equality' in economic terms allows (forces?) the Commission to un-problematically advocate Jordanian women's full and equal entrance into the official economic sphere, and effectively close political discussion of the state's neoliberal economic policies. In turn, this discursive maneuver ideologically legitimates and materially funds (through women's vocational training, e.g.) the state's desire/need to grow Jordan's economic capacities through deregulation and foreign investment.

The Second Annual SERVE Women's Leadership Conference, sponsored by the Chick-Fil-A Corporation, other corporations and the JNCW, highlights the commission's political aims and strategies. The conference in question promoted the "'SERVE' leadership model" which is an "acronym [standing for]: 'See' and 'shape' the future, 'engage' and develop others, 'reinvent' continuously, 'value' results and relationships and 'embody' the values" (Nouman 2009). The event's whole purpose, it seems, was to encourage women's greater entrance into the workforce. Equating national participation and economic performance, the JNCW Secretary General noted: "women's participation in the community is still minimal" alongside the comment "'women's contribution in economic life is still insufficient'" (Nouman 2009).

Beside the event's blatant attempt to increase chicken sandwich sales, we can preliminarily assess the JNCW's action plan in Jordan through its example. (1) The JNCW does recognize the potentially negative impact of Jordan's great exposure to international market forces, such as the feminization of work,[2] insofar as the JNCW's

[2] According to Acker (2004) this term denotes "low-paid, temporary or part time" jobs with less job security and fewer benefits compared to the 'old-fulltime' employment men typically dominate (35).

broad goal is to increase women's participation in the national community via developing their 'human capital.' (2) In order to protect women against the bad situation described in (1), the JNCW prescribes paid wage labor as empowerment. And lastly, (3) the discourse equates wage labor with participation in the nation. The conference also implies my definition of JNCW discourse; (1) seems indicative of feminism values; (2) is consistent with neoliberal development discourse; and (3) advances national participation of women in line with Jordanian nationalism

To explain JNCW discourses I utilize discourse analysis and insights from Chandra Mohanty (1988) by distinguishing between the intention (content) of a statement and its effect on the political field (its meaning). Against the universalistic explanations of Third World women's 'oppression' espoused by 'Western feminists', Mohanty (1988) emphasizes the importance of context in assessing the 'meaning' or the effect of feminist positions on the Third World women. 'The average third-world woman', she writes, is not a pre-given category but is constructed through 'western feminist' logic positing a "monolithic notion of patriarchy or male dominance" as the root cause of all women's oppression. 'Oppression' for these feminist means 'sexual difference'; any variation in the role of men and women in a given society is taken as a sign of women's disadvantage (63).

The fact that men and women have different roles in a specific time and place, however, is not sufficient to support or explain 'women's oppression.' Rather, a 'sexual division of labour' can only be oppressive once a "differential *value* [is] placed on 'men's work' versus 'women's work'" (76). Instead of improving conditions in the 'third-world,' the political effect of this type of representation is to discursively disempower Third

World women and reify their western counterparts. Since there is more variation between the roles of men and women in the 'third world,' the logic goes, these women must be "ignorant, poor, uneducated [etc]," which in turn produces "western women [the former's other] as educated, modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the 'freedom' to make their own decisions" (65).

Moving beyond the 'western feminist' model, this work attempts to 'uncover' the effect of JNCW discourse on the larger social field, especially in relation to state economic goals. It attempts to 'de-universalize' state sponsored liberal feminism in Jordan by demonstrating how: (1) the JNCW came into existence and was promoted by the state through specific economic, discursive and historical processes; (2) Jordanian liberal feminism was re-defined, transformed and revised through its relationship to the state; the whole liberal feminist project, its goals, desires and definitions (of both women and problems facing women) was re-born and given new meaning and use through the JNCW; and (3) the JNCW's definition of equality was produced by Jordanian feminism's historic involvement with the state and the incursion of neo-liberal ideas into development policies.

A large part of this endeavor is to reproduce the historic development of the JNCW's four 'language games': development, Jordanian nationalism, neoliberal ideology and feminism. While the JNCW was established in an era (continuing to this day) in which 'economic growth' dominated political debates and developmental activities, along with Hashemite attempts to control the new opened 'public sphere,' it is not reducible to this context alone. The component elements of the JNCW each have a substantial political history in Hashemite political thought: political feminism extends back to 1954

(al-Atiyat 2004: 52-53), 'development' discourse began in the 1950s (Talal 2004: 42-47) and Jordanian nationalism rose to power in 1970 (Massad 2001). The JNCW, however, is not an extensions of earlier embodiments of feminism in Jordan, Jordanian state-feminism or development policies before adjustment. Rather, Jordanian nationalism, the language of development and liberal feminism were re-purposed by the state to re-secure its sovereign position (re-orienting itself in the process). Laying out the ideological and material shifts preceding the JNCW, I intend to demonstrate how Jordanian liberal feminism was 're-filled' or given a novel 'positive' content, i.e. a language, a plan, a vision of the world, and a different political use for the state through the JNCW's relationship with the regime and neoliberal ideology. I am not just trying to show the 'sense' the JNCW makes in relation to a given moment, but how it uses previously hegemonic discourses as 'raw material' for its discourse to become commonsensical.

Studying the relationship between liberal feminism and the state is an important task because of the incredible impact this union has on feminist discourses in Jordan, and the image of Jordanian women throughout the world. Not only is a member of the royal family (Princess Basma bint Talal) intimately connected with all feminist action in the country (al-Atiyat 2004: 86), but since 1981 the state has mounted a campaign to control women's action in the country through a series of state sponsored feminist organizations like the JNCW (59). The univocularity of liberal feminism in Jordan coupled with the JNCW's function to "serve as a 'reference body entrusted with drawing up general policies and identifying the priorities of women in Jordan'" (88), allows the organization (and the state) to set the parameters of feminist action in Jordan. Effectively, the JNCW "create[s] not only knowledge but also the very reality [it] appear[s] to describe" (Said

2008: 368), by reducing 'independent' feminist voices, expressed in books, newspaper articles, and NGO's to parrots of JNCW discourse. Scholarly works that explore the social position of women in Jordan must acknowledge the Commission's influence or risk working, unwittingly and possibly against their wishes, in concert with this hegemon.

II. Literature Review

A. Liberal feminism does not have a universal content.

This investigation is concerned with the meaning, use and materiality of Jordanian state feminism. For a person, a discourse or an institution to claim the 'liberal feminist' cause, I argue, does not necessitate supporting certain causes (state-funded daycare, e.g.), comprehending 'women's oppression' in any specific way (caused by patriarchy, e.g.), or holding any singular notion of women (as mothers, e.g.). There is a tendency in feminist scholarship[3] to accept liberal feminism as a 'transcendental' category, existing *a priori* for women's gain. This 'traditional' belief holds that liberal feminism essentially promotes positive views about women and advances fundamentally noble causes; in short, it equates *all* individual utterances of liberal feminism and holds each to the same standard. This conservative feminist construction is flatly rejected by this work.

In his work *Liberal Languages* Michael Freeden (2004) gives a general theory of ideology, supporting the former paragraph's assertions. He writes:

> "An ideology…is itself a distinctive type of political thought-practice…it effects a decontestation of the political concepts it employs by means of a combination of logical and cultural proximities among them, which priorities certain concepts over others, and certain meanings of each concept over other

[3] This will be the subject of section B of this works Literature Review.

> meanings...this practice arises from and indicates the existence of a plural world of meaning" (Freeden 2004: 243).

In Freeden's (2004) theory a specific ideology situates itself within a given political terrain by defining its abstract terms in ways that conform to its new discursive field. The liberal concept 'Equality,' for example, has no inherent meaning and thus can be filled differently in different political situations. The profanation of 'empty' ideologies is what Freeden calls "a practice within a practice" (243) insofar as an abstracted ideology is a practice and the ascription of definition and meaning based on its context of utterance, necessary for an ideology's political efficacy, constitutes another practice; we might call this movement the practice of making ideology practicable. To regard the JNCW as a *pure expression* of a universal 'Liberal Feminism,' then, denies the process undertaken to give its discourse 'sense.'

Further demonstrating how and why liberal feminism is 'empty,' meaning it does not assume much about women or the types of political action to be carried out in its name, I propose a definition of 'liberal feminism' that combines Coleman's (2008) definition of 'feminism' and Sa'ar's (2005) formulation of 'liberalism.' Coleman (2008) understands political feminism (as opposed to feminist theory, e.g.) as a "movement that seeks to assess the material and imaginary conditions of women's pasts and presents and propose and progress toward different futures" (Coleman 2008: 86). In order to be a feminist or a feminist institution one has to have a political focus on women and in so doing define their (unfair) plight, and thus propose ways to overcome their (bad) situation. Because feminism is proposing progress—implying a movement toward something better than the present-- the definition takes the unsatisfactory condition of women as its ontology; it presupposes that all women (under its gaze) exist in a less than

'ideal' condition in some fashion (and usually by fashion itself). Since feminism is predicated on obtaining an 'ideal future' for women it cannot but see the condition of women as somehow lacking; feminism's political legitimacy is not based on the good it can do for women, but on the fact that women's situation is 'less' in some way, and that there is a way to fix it (feminism's assumptions, however, put the possibility of 'fixing' in question).

Amalia Sa'ar (2005) defines liberalism "as an umbrella term for political orders that promote the idea of civil society, where people are entitled to certain freedoms, rights, and protection from arbitrary power" (Sa'ar 2005: 683). While the ideals of liberty and justice are readily apparent in Sa'ar's (2005) definition, there is no corresponding necessity for a 'commitment to equality'; the definition states: "people are entitled to certain freedoms, rights, and protection[s]," but not that these must be bestowed equally. Of course there is a large body of academic literature explicitly positing equality as a principle of liberalism (Mouffe 1993: 23-40; Yual-Davis 1997: 6). But the ambivalence in Sa'ar's (2005) formulation begs the question: what kind of equality? When feminists reference 'equality,' what do they mean: the unconditional equality between persons, equal access, equal in rights/protections/freedom, or equal insofar as persons are members of the same political community? And furthermore, what is 'civil society', 'justice', 'rights', etc? If we cannot answer these questions in a satisfactory or definitive manner, then we must accept: for someone or something to be 'liberal' it or they must only articulate the concepts liberty, equality, and justice in making certain demands--nothing more.

The ambiguity in Sa'ar's (2005) definition and the 'emptiness' of Coleman's (2009) suggest that liberal feminism can be articulated in many different, even contradictory, ways. For this paper then, liberal feminism is an adherence to a discourse which posits the 'unsatisfactory' conditions of women's lives and progresses toward an 'ideal future' in which women are in a 'satisfactory' condition through the deployment of 'freedom/liberty,' 'equality,' and 'justice.'[4]

B. Evaluating the JNCW

The aim of this section is to develop a rationale for this work's method by assessing the drawbacks and failures in the relevant literature. The dogmatic attachment to liberal feminism's principled ideals, briefly discussed in the last section, is an unstated assumption in scholarship on the JNCW. This dogma "restricts the exploration of political thought to its intentional manifestations [thus] neglect[ing] some of its most interesting practices" (Freeden 2004: 242), and paints a picture of state/feminist interaction that denies how and why liberal feminist discourse is utilized in a given political context, specifically its economic significance.

Brand (1998), al-Atiyat (2004) and Lowrance (1998) are three of the few works that concern themselves with the JNCW. These works investigate the Commission's potential impact on women in Jordan by evaluating the content of JNCW discourse in relation to the liberal feminist agenda. For all three, the JNCW has a coherent liberal feminist content through which they examine its political significance. In line with Franceshet's (2003) method of assessing state-feminism in Chile, the JNCW is evaluated

[4] The discourse of the JNCW does count, under this definition, as 'liberal feminism', a point taken up in the Findings section of this work.

"according to two features: (1) policy influence: the extent to which they influence feminism policy and (2) policy access: the extent to which they open up access to societal actors (like women's movements)" (Franceshet 2003: 19). Following their logic, state-feminism in Jordan is a bargain between two autonomous actors: women's groups and the state. This compromise put the feminist demands on the national agenda, with all the political and financial benefits attached, but its platform, unfortunately, was diverted to a 'moderate course.' On this point Lowrance (1998) writes: "Critics of the state-feminist experiment...point out that goals and activities of the apparatus do not go far enough to further women's situation in Jordan" (94-95). While her statement expresses discontent with the JNCW's work, it only takes issue with the amount of work or the number of liberal projects undertaken. Her lens cannot, however, scrutinize the *qualitative* change(s) in feminist discourse resulting from this 'bargain.'

Al-Atiyat (2004) and Brand (1998) level more substantive claims against the JNCW, claiming the state uses the JNCW to maintain dominant power relations (al-Atiyat 197, Brand 163). This, I should point out, is one of my broader conclusions as well, one that I reach for very different reasons. Brand (1998) sees the JNCW as the result of a larger 'reformist' program "appeal[ing] to both the religiously conservative and the more secular, but none the less still socially conservative, camps" (173). Evidencing her point she refers, in passing, to the JNCW's National Strategy for Women in Jordan (NSJW) which claims in 'Fundamental Principle' number one: " to build on the provisions of the Jordanian Constitution and the Jordanian National Charter...[and] on the principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, the values of Arab and Muslim society, and the

principles of human rights" (JNCW 2000: 2).[5] Al-Atiyat (2004) makes a similar point, noting the JNCW's political context is characterized by the state's desire to "attract foreign aid and investments," exude a 'modern and liberal' vibe on the one hand and a need for the state to work with "Islamists...tribal and conservative forces" (197); 'tribalism' and 'Islamism' being the "to main detriments" to women's action (166). While both works see the role of state power in JNCW discourse, they fail to recognize the importance of neoliberal economic logic in it.

Although more critical, the concerns brought up by these two authors retain a content-oriented outlook with reference to liberal feminist ideals. Liberal feminism has historically been associated with an 'unconditional' variant of equality:

> "Liberal feminist theory rests on the assumption that women's and men's essentials are similar and belittle the differences between the sexes...[holding that if] women were evaluated equally with men, participation of women in the existing male-dominated public spheres would be realized...The main strategy of liberal feminism [then] is to appeal for the elimination of gender inequality through legal and legislative actions" (Kobayashi 2004: 17).

Holding with the liberal feminist tradition, these three authors believe that any difference between men and women is a sign of women's oppression. For them, the JNCW maintains a moderate liberal feminist agenda because it adopts 'conservative' ideologies or at least has to contend with them. In light of this connection, they conclude, it cannot possibly promote total gender equality.

Orientalist epistemology aside, another body of work highlights the negative impact that political focus on women in colonial and post-colonial countries has had on women, and state feminism's positive effect for authoritarian rulers. Ahmed (1992)

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[5] See Brand (1998) p. 163, 173.

writes that "the emergence of women themselves as a central subject of national debate" and "the treatment and status of women [being] intertwined with other issues...important to society, including nationalism and the need for national advancement for political, social, and cultural reform" (128) decreased women's freedoms. For Ahmed (1992), 'colonial feminists,' and later Arab nationalists, discursively sanctioned their control over the state via politicizing women's issues, while also confining women to their 'natural place' inside the private sphere either as enlightened (modern) mothers or "custodians of tradition and managers of the nation's moral life" (Massed 2001: 82).

Former evaluations of the JNCW are unable to comprehend or simply envision the conflation of national economic goals with women's goals. By uncritically accepting liberalism's benevolence, they limit their insights to the Commission's 'policy influence' and 'political access;' because the JNCW promotes 'equality, liberty and justice' for women the goals themselves cannot be questioned, only the breadth, depth and method utilized. Following the insights provided by Ahmed (1992), then, the role of state power in feminist articulation must be taken into account.[6]

[6] Note: 'colonial feminist' and Arab nationalist discourses about women are not necessary illiberal because they posit gender divisions. Both ideological conceptions of women can be viewed as 'liberal' if women and men are both considered equals insofar as both are/were national participants. Similarly, if feminist promote total gender equality intending to help women, this does not mean the utterance is not used for national ends other than feminist desires.

III. The JNCW

A. Description of the JNCW

To give you, the reader, a better understanding of the JNCW the following is a brief description of the JNCW. The JNCW is a 'paragovernmental organization' in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan headed by Princess Basma bint Talal, member of the royal family and aunt of the current King, Abdullah II. Originally created in 1992 by the government to formulate policy meant to "mainstream women's issues in the development process" (JNCW 1998: 4), its role was 'enhanced' in 1996 through a cabinet mandate, making it answerable only to the Prime Minister (JNCW 2004: 24). The Commission's objectives are:

> "to amend legislation obstructing women's participation in development, enacting new legislation and policies that will guarantee the completion of a legal legislative framework emphasizing and accentuating their full participation; create public awareness regarding the importance of women's roles and their status in the progress of the Jordanian society; and increase women's participation in development and to create opportunities for them in the public and private sector (al-Atiyat 2004: 89).

Additionally, the JNCW is "the authority on women's issues and activities [in] the public sector" and "represent[s] the Kingdom in bodies conferences, and meetings related to women's affairs at National, Arab and International levels" (JNCW 1996: 2). As such, the JNCW works with other "government ministries and public institutions for the purpose of facilitating cooperation in pursuit of the Commission's objectives" (JNCW 2004: 25), and with NGOs for a similar end (JNCW 2000: 11). One of its main purposes is to help various government agencies implement 'gender mainstreaming' plans, meant

to encourage equal employment throughout the state bureaucratic machine (JNCW 2004: 26). The JNCW also dedicates much time to drawing up plans of action, and writing reports evaluating the progress of its public and private partners and itself (JNCW 2000: 11-12).

In 1995 the JNCW added the Jordanian National Women's Forum (JNWF) as part of its organization. The JNWF is composed of several local committees spread throughout the country to carry out the National Strategy for Women (NSWJ) at the local levels. Through these committees and JNCW patronage of other NGOs in Jordan, it provides vocational training, employment, political training courses, child-care, advice centers, income-generating programs, and at least one orphanage.[7]

The JNCW is touted as "the first of its kind in the Arab region" (al-Atiyat 2004: 89) partly due to the "unconditional freedom of activity [it enjoys]" (JNCW 2004: 24). One of those freedoms is an exemption from laws governing NGOs. In accordance with welfare Law No. 33 of 1996, NGOs must register with the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) and submit "a detailed record of all activities" most important being financial ones. NGOs are also not allowed to work for 'political gain.' Additionally, NGOs in Jordan cannot receive money from foreign donors like USAID (which funded the NSWJ (al-Atiyat 2004: 71)).[8]

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[7] For a complete list of the JNCW's activities see "National Programme of Action for the Advancement of Jordanian Women 1998-2002" Annex III pgs. 44-51

[8] For an overview of NGOs and laws governing them in Jordan see Wiktorowick (2002) and Simadi (2008).

IV. Practicing Theory (Methods)

To avoid the caveats exemplified by Brand/Lowrance/al-Atiyat's analytical lens, this work employs discourse analysis and Althusser's concept of ideology. At its base, discourse analysis seeks to observe and comprehend the "ways language produces and constrains the meaning of the world it represents," (Yilmaz forthcoming: 10) and the effect such constraints have had on the political in relation to systems of power; discourse analysis examines how reality is created and shaped by discourses about reality. If the relationship between "language and reality" or 'signifier and signified is arbitrary, then, every discourse which gives coherence to the world must come from somewhere (Yilmaz forthcoming: 11). The purpose of discourse analysis is to define that 'somewhere.'

Insofar as the JNCW is a state institution (even though it is not defined as such) and owes its existence to the state, the meaning and effect of its discourse must be understood in relation to the latter. Jordanian state structures give the JNCW 'sense'; without which it has "neither [an] extrinsic designation, nor intrinsic signification" (Deleuze 1972: 175). I propose that this relationship not only "[constrains] for the purposes of controlling the actions of" the JNCW, but also forms the "interpretative system through which [it] understand[s] [its] interests and desires" (Barnett and Duvall 2005: 54). By touting its "National Strategy for Women [as] complement[ary] [to] the national strategy for comprehensive development" (JNCW 2000: 2), for example, the JNCW adopts the epistemology of the state and promotes its ideological stance.

Althusser's (1970) notion of ideology extended with Wittgenstein's (1986) definition of meaning marks each particular articulation of liberal feminist ideology as *ontologically different* from its 'sister discourses.' Althusser (1970) succinctly states: "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material" (14). In conjunction with Wittgenstein's (1986) equally succinct assertion that "the meaning of a word is its use in the language" (Wittgenstein 1986: 20), it is clear that ideology has meaning only in its practice; ideology is only accessible to us, and thus we should say it only exists, through its articulation.[9] Not only should the JNCW be understood in the context of the state for it to 'make sense,' but through the JNCW the entire liberal feminist discourse in Jordan, every word and phrase, gained a novel meaning through this encounter.

Following the former logic we can also conclude that every articulation of liberal feminism, designated by an apparatus, has different uses and meanings. I assert throughout this work that the JNCW is used to promote state economic desires. This is not to say, however, that it does or does not promote Jordanian women's interests. Of course, no one can really claim to know 'what Jordanian women want,' if only because who politically counts as a 'woman' is debatable. It is empirically impossible to assess the JNCW's effect on 'Jordanian women's pursuit of abstract equality,' since equality has no static meaning. But it is possible to comprehend its ideological positions in relation to state desires, insofar as these desires are documented and verbalized.

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[9] Althusser's statement by itself does not preclude the possibility that ideology exists in apparatuses and somewhere else. So, although this seems to be against the thrust of Althusser's argument, ideology could exist apart from practice in some way. Because Wittgenstein (1986) equates meaning and use which denies in full a transcendental realm of Ideas from which meaning stems, for example, the assertion that "ideology is what is practice" can hold.

Furthermore, the JNCW and the creation of its brand of liberal feminism should be understood in a historical series of ideological movements precipitating its creation. The regime did not support liberal feminism out of nothing and for no reason, rather the correct material/ideological conditions had to exist which presented liberal state-feminism as an option toward this end. The concrete means and ideological formations that reproduce power dynamics changes over time as material and ideological conditions also change (Althusser 1970). The shift to Jordanian nationalism, for example, was a novel method for the state to maintain the status quo. Lowrance's (1998) conclusion that the presence of independent feminist groups constituted a threat to the monarchy facilitating the JNCW's creation, is insufficient because, as the history proves, this threat could have been eliminated in different ways.[10] Instead, I propose that the regime's switch to Jordanian nationalist ideology opened a 'discursive space' for liberal feminism in state ideology and later liberalization and neoliberal developmental efforts codified it.

The same ideological shift that unintentionally opened a place for liberal feminism in Hashemite thought, along with its adoption of development discourse in the 1980s, gave Jordanian state feminism a positive content (definitions, plans of action, a means to promote change, etc). As already noted, liberal feminism is not in itself able to maintain a definite form, so a third element, something that does not reference 'liberal feminist ideals' *only*, is required to give it positive form and political efficacy. The shift to Jordanian nationalism, for example, limited political contestation to geographic Jordan and established 'Jordan' as the dominant political referent through which politics in the

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[10] In her own work Lowrance (1998) shows that feminist organizations were shut down in the past either as part of general governmental crackdowns or for their support of Palestinian and/or Arab nationalism.

country had to be articulated. In this new political condition, for the first time, an official women's organization was established which painted women's issues as nationally important topics of conversation. Without Jordanian nationalism a *national* discussion would have been un-pragmatic for feminist pursuits since the Jordanian political sphere could not pre-exist Jordanian nationalism.

The overarching goal of this work is the goal of discourse analysis in general: to return possibility to the discursive situation. Michel Foucault (1990), a pioneer of this method, charts the development of Western sexuality not as an academic exercise, nor to describe the ridiculousness of any True sex or sexuality. Rather, he saw how those in power utilized notions of sex/sexuality to reproduce the status quo, and by exploring this topic he hoped "to counter the grips of power with the claims of bodies, pleasures, and knowledge's, in their multiplicity and their possibility of resistance" (Foucualt 1990: 172). *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1* is an attempt to alert people to the artificiality of sexual experience, codified in sexuality, in order to re-conceptualize 'intimate' life and de-center hegemonic power structures. Through this, Foucault opened a space and a way to expand the possible limits of experience. This ethics of discourse analysis guides the way and validates this experiment: by theorizing state-feminism's relationship to the state the ability of academics and feminist is increased to propose alternative ways to 'better' women's lives, and break down unitary concepts of Jordanian women in the process.

V. Findings, background and context for JNCW discourse

A. The Space for State Sponsored Liberal Feminism

To take the initial step in accounting for, in order to understand, state sponsored feminist discourse in Jordan, I give a historical account of its development in terms of broader historical movements. Locating a starting point for the JNCW's narrative is, at best, arbitrary, but for this work that point is 1970, indicating the advent of Jordanian nationalism. Jordanian nationalism opened a *logical* space for state-feminism by not inhibiting a 'liberal' discourse about women to exist; there is an ontological difference between Arab and Jordanian nationalisms, and the regime's switch to the latter created a discursive space for 'liberal' feminist discourses in Hashemite political thought. 'Liberal feminism' is not a necessary part of Jordanian nationalist ideology but became a possibility for the monarchy through Jordanian nationalism.

The monarchy's adoption of Jordanian nationalistic rhetoric in the 1970s enacted a determined initiative to Jordanize the state, the nation, and the politics of the geographic region known as the Hashemite Jordanian Kingdom. In this period the regime propounded Jordanization policies and discourses, intensifying (political) focus on, and limiting political contestation to, geographic Jordan (as opposed to region or the international realm); Jordan was accepted as the 'Master Signifier' of the political sphere. This nationalization scheme required and produced a Jordanian national consciousness non-existent before the 1970 civil war (Al-Mahadin 2004: 26, Massad 2001: 222-275).

Of course, this project progressed with a faith professing that the Hashemite dynasty was the center of the Jordanian nation, and the rightful rulers of the state (Massad 2001: 223).

In line with Althusser's description of State power, as both repressive and productive (Althusser 1970), the emergent 'East Banker First'[11] mentality was solidified through repressive measures. As such, the large population of Palestinians in Jordan came to be seen as a threat to national security (Brand 1995: 53). The adoption of Jordanian nationalism was a way for the monarchy to "stir up [and] exploit intercommunal tension" (59) so as to facilitate greater Jordanian unity, and produce a stronger connection between that unity and the regime. To this point, a number of administrative 'ethnic cleansing' practices in universities, the military, and state bureaucracies privileging the Transjordanian population over the Palestinians began during this period (Massed 2001: 198-217).[12] As many scholars have noted, the native 'Transjordanians' mainly located in the south and rural areas of Jordan, have been key to Hashemite rule (Joffre 2002: xix; Alon 2007; Rath 1994; Brand 1995). This bloc is known for their loyal support of the regime throughout the country's history, and they have been financially rewarded by the monarchy for said loyalty (Greenwood 2003: 249). The nationalist efforts worked so well that Laurie Brand (1995) states: "there is no question that a central part of what it meant for many Transjordanians to be 'Jordanian' was associated with employment by the state, especially in security services or the military" (49).

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[11] Before the legal separation of Jordan from Palestine the two were referred to as the 'East bank' and the 'West bank,' respectively, in accordance with thier positioning in relation to the Jordan River.

[12] Reiter (2002) gives a detailed description of this "un-transparent affirmative action policy" in Jordanian higher education.

As a spectacle, the Civil War provided the proper conditions for a long awaited sea change in the regime's political ideology that promised to reduce the longstanding threat posed by Arab nationalism and foreign actors. After the young King Hussein's flirtation with Arab nationalism in the mid-1950s, Nasser began to deride the monarchy for its ties to the West, and implicated it as a Zionist collaborator (Dawisha 2003: 135-159). The two countries were 'diametrically opposed' and Egypt's nationalist radio station "'Voice of the Arabs' became a primary agent of instability in countries such as...Jordan" (Dawisha 2003: 148). Furthermore, the political crackdowns of 1957, 1970, 1974 (Rath 1994), and 1994 (Brand 1999: 59) were rationalized by classifying them as a product of 'foreign' actors.[13]

The advent of Jordanian nationalism produced new projects and definitions of social life. Jordanian nationalism was differently oriented than Arab nationalism. Arab nationalists sought to validate the Arab nation by reifying 'tradition,' but also selectively modernizing in the process. Colonial powers legitimated their imperial rule, in part, through degrading the culture and people of the areas they wished to incorporate. Imperialist actors claimed that only they, as enlightened moderns, could bring these 'backward,' 'static,' and 'heathen' countries to the threshold of modernity through complete economic, social and political control/transformation (Samman forthcoming). When nationalists rose up, however, they "not only rejected the legitimacy of Western colonial rule but also often constructed a nationalist political identity by contrasting the

[13] A good example of the regime's anxiety over foreign influence is its reaction to the Eisenhower Doctrine, which supported state's independence from communist and Soviet threats via economic and military aid/cooperation (Howard 1972: 86). The King advocated Jordan's entrance into the Baghdad Pact (a mutual assistance agreement between Iraq, Turkey, the US and later the UK, constituting one element of the Doctrine) decrying communism as a 'new kind of imperialism' (Massad 2002: 191).

indigenous 'culture' and 'its values' to those of the West, calling for a rejection of the latter" (Narayan 1997: 14).

Conversely, from its inception 'Jordanian' took 'Palestinian' as its all-together Other, which was "instrumental in helping the formation of a Jordanian national self" (Massad 2001: 222). This is not to say that Jordanian nationalism every time, and always only posits Jordanian against Palestinian. Rather, the importance of this antagonism is that the monarchy's Jordanian nationalism is not necessarily addressed against colonialism, like Arab nationalism. Furthermore, the geo-political position of Jordan has created strong ties between the monarchy and Western powers, facilitating, and requiring, Hashemite nationalism to be "Western friendly nationalism" (198).

The concept of 'Jordanian' transcended, and re-defined, the private/public and the modern/tradition divides. It could no longer be that a Jordanian was a 'Western' during the day in public life and then revert back to his 'natural' state at home, but rather one was a Jordanian all the time and in everything the Jordanian did. Thus, women entering public life, not working at home protecting 'tradition,' was not as threatening to the national identity, insofar as whether a woman were public or not she was still Jordanian, and the trappings of 'Jordanianness' were on every street corner.

The burden to protect tradition was a reaction to the anxiety, degradation, and antagonism produced in the colonial encounter, not the empirical fact of colonial rule or its degree of influence. The veil, for example, became a sign of resistance, in both Egypt and Turkey, through political processes. For 'colonial feminists' and later Turkish nationalists the veil was a synecdoche for general 'backwardness.' Only after being inscribed with political relevance could the veil be defiantly worn to re-assert the

damaged identity, as has lately been the case (Cinar 2005: 53-98; Ahmed 1992: 129-168); without the first movement, the second is not possible.

Different from other Arab nations, the Bedouin lifestyle was ingrained in popular Jordanian imagination as representative of 'traditional' Jordanian life (Massad 2001: 80; Cole 2003: 236-237). The epic temporal drama was played in the distinction between rural and city, not only between 'men' and 'women' (the traditional/modern split, while part of colonial discourse about Jordan, was part of 'state' building in Jordan, not colonialism). Jordanian nationalism actually used Bedouin symbols and cultural displays to fill its content. As such, there was not the level of colonizer-colonized antagonism, or the political fixation on women that created the Arab nationalist reaction to 'liberal feminism,' as Ahmed highlights in the case of Egypt.

While women were accorded a certain position as symbolic protectors of all that was Arab, resulting in an antagonism between it and 'liberal feminism,' Jordanian nationalism created the opportunity for a different position of women in national life. The situation, however, is more complicated than I have presented it here. Certainly soon after 1970 both women and Bedouins, both national markers of tradition, achieved a certain level of 'co-national' status with non-Bedouin Jordanian men. In 1976 all special laws regulating the Bedouins were canceled and the state began a long process of settling the tribes, both were attempts to bring Bedouins into the (modern) Jordanian nation. Similarly, during the early nationalist era "women were increasingly entering the urban public sector through employment and education" (Massad 2001: 215); in 1971 a women's police force was established (215), in 1974 women received the right to vote

and the first *Jordanian* women's organization was established (al-Atiyat 55), and in 1979 the first female cabinet minister was appointed (56).

Even after 1970, however, women in Jordan were still under different legal restrictions than Jordanian man, creating a 'nationalist paradox.' Massad (2001) writes: "on the one hand, political ideology seems to have informed codification women's status as inferior in the private sphere with minimal state intervention, and a steady expansion of women's presence in the public sphere as nominally equal citizen-nationals with state-protection" (98). Jordanian nationalism began a process of making public what needed to be kept private under Arab nationalism, one of them being women. This does not mean, however, that Jordanian nationalism was not predicated on certain assumptions that also de-privileged women in Jordan. Remember: Jordanian nationalism only carved out a negative space, vis-à-vis Arab nationalism, for liberal feminism to occupy.

B. Changing concepts of women in national life

The next sections provide a historical overview of the state's relation to women in the context of Jordanian feminism, development policies and the economy. The following is an attempt to locate the different ideological tenets JNCW discourse employs in Jordanian history, and to provide an analysis of their original 'intention' or meaning. In sections C and D I will expose how the JNCW utilizes these various discursive elements and gives them new meaning.

In the 1970s there was an explosion of development discourse in Jordan: In 1971, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) created a development department (65), the Ministry of Education, for the first time, linked its goals to the national development

policy (Roy 1992: 181), and in 1972 the MOSA set up their first community development centers (137). Before the 1970s, according to Talal (2004), "development terms did not exist and social work used to be charitable. Public perception of the [MOSA's] role was delivering in-kind assistance" (114).

The political and economic arena in which development logic entered instructs the movement's intent and motivation. The Civil War ended in 1971, giving the regime incentive to adopt Jordanian nationalist rhetoric. The logical 'fact' of the Jordanian nation certainly provided the ground for a discourse about developing Jordan, but it also provided a means to solidify and popularize the nationalist feeling. Before 1970 the Hashemite regime secured loyalty through an extensive patronage system, such as stipends and governmental appointments (Greenwood 251). Afterwards, since the Hashemite monarchy shifted the terms of its legitimacy to the Jordanian nation, a new need arose to establish a stronger connection between palace and people: Hashemite authority was now predicated on the Jordanian nation, rather than just connections to tribal elites.[14]

In the context of Jordanian nationalism the patronage system did not disappear, but became popularized. Historically, the government's extensive welfare system, including impressive educational (Roy 1992: 180-189) and health systems, was part and parcel of the same 'regime security' strategy as elite patronage; "the [Jordanian] state gain[ed] legitimacy in the eyes of the population through redistributing wealth, [and through its] welfare system" (Nsour 29). In lieu of any democratic institutions involving citizen-subjects in decision-making process (political organizations were illegal from

[14] The 'nationalization' projects described in section A, provides additional support for this argument.

1957 until 1989 in Jordan), the "authoritarian bargain...provided a stable base for state-society relations until the 1980s" (Greenwood 250). Development, although seeming separate from the welfare system, achieved the same effect; its stated purpose was to provide and extend services to needy populations in Jordan, but it also could be used to build loyalist support. In 1978, for example, after a year of research into the 'social sector,' the Queen Alia Fund (QAF)[15] defined its first priority: "to act as a catalyst in the field of social work among private voluntary organizations, governmental agencies and international organizations in order to improve the quality and quantity of basic services available in Jordan" (119). Evidencing this sentiment, one of the first projects the QAF undertook concerned the handicapped in Jordan, enabling the establishment of "fourteen centres for the disabled in different governates" (127). The 'real' result of these measures, according to Talal (2004), was that "families with disabled children began to feel that they were not isolated and that disability was a national concern" (ibid). In context, extending services to previously unaddressed areas or persons meant discursively locating it or them in the Jordanian nation (since they are now on the 'national agenda') and developing a tangible, positive link between Jordanians and the regime.

From the mid-1970s until structural adjustment in 1989, the domestic labor shortage and the regime's financial dependency on Jordanian worker remittances from abroad defined the character of development (Talal 2004: 57, 62-64, Roy 1992). Marking the change, MOSA became a department in the Ministry of Labor in 1976, whereas

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[15] The QAF was set up in 1977 and was one of the first royal NGOs (RONGOs or RINGOs) established by the monarchy. While it was, and still is, separate from government action, its actions can easily be seen through the same lens. This will be discussed later on.

before it was the other way around (Talal 2004: 66). During the 1970s and 1980s the state relied on foreign grants from Arab governments for financial security. Arab aid accounted for between 58 percent and 30 percent of the regime's expenditures from 1970 to 1983, and Jordanian workers in the Gulf state contributed one-quarter of GDP through remittances over the same time period (Brynen 79-80). While annual growth from 1973-1983 was stable and impressive at 6 percent a year, the government "represented more than 68 per cent of GDP...with direct domestic taxation typically financing only 10-20 per cent of state expenditures and import duties another 20-30 per cent" (ibid).

Responding to the "shift from unemployment in the early 1970s to full employment by the end of the decade" precipitated by Gulf State labor demands (63), the Ministry of Education promoted and enhanced vocational training in the country, while simultaneously intensifying higher education (Roy 1992). These changes were consistent with the first Five Year Plan's (1976-1980) goals to increase "Arab financial assistance and loans...and growing demand for Jordanian manpower in the Gulf countries" (Jreisat 1989: 95).

The movement to 'participatory development' in the early 1980s also fits with my schema viewing development as both a desire to increase nationalistic attachment and an economic tool. With the establishment of the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) in 1980 (124), development started to promote 'participatory development,' the goal, according to the Five Year Plan 1981-1985, being " 'to increase popular participation and widen the base of decision-making in the development process'" (135). The Plan was also meant to "achieve high growth rates and increase the share of the commodity producing sector" (62) and "bring about a change in perceptions of the government's role

as the sole service provider" by promoting 'self-reliant development' (136). 'Participatory development' promoted Jordanian nationalism insofar as it created an active attachment to the nation; "given the absence of parliamentary life in Jordan at this time...[the community development centres (CDCs) established as part of the 1981 Plan] provided an outlet through which nationalist feelings at the local level could be expressed"[16] (65).

Accounting for the move in economic terms, there was a growing awareness in the state that "increasing reliance on Gulf States for economic assistance and labor markets...[would] result [in] greater uncertainty and less control over the directions of domestic development" (Jreisat 1989: 96). From 1981 to 1987 "external grants fell from more than one third of state expenditure to less than one sixth" (Brynen 1992: 85). To make up for the loss of revenue while also maintaining its growth rate and extensive welfare system, the state began to borrow heavily and by 1985 "external debt reached 71% of GNP" (Jreisat 1989: 96).

The economic goal of 'participatory development' policies, then, was to "stem...the negative effects of the high increase in public and private sector spending during the boom period in Jordan" (Talal 2004: 126). Shifting the burden of financial success from the state to the individual or community while also advancing 'the people's' role in the prestige of national development, gave the state a way to balance financial needs with its commitment to social (political) unity. Furthermore, I should note,

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[16] Intended as evidence of the state's commitment to promote 'participatory democracy' which I have labeled as a mechanism to maintain Hashemite hegemony, Talal (2004) recalls: "in 1982 the Municipalities' Law No. 29 of 1955 was amended to facilitate popular participation in the municipal elections" (136). This legal change, I believe, serves my thesis as well and perhaps more so.

although "national policies...placed significant emphasis on participation...the aspiration has not always been achieved in practical terms" (139). Rather than see continued 'top-down' decision-making as a policy failure with Talal (2004), we might conclude that this was actually a success insofar as the discursive shift did not reduce centralized state power.

The 1970s also saw the state's first interest in fashioning women into 'productive members of society.' The policies directed at women were directly tied to the labor shortages (Hajib 1988: 95) and reducing foreign (meaning non-Jordanian) labor in the country (Layne 1981: 19, Roy 1992: 184). Ushering in this new focus, the state created a Women's Department in the Ministry of Labor in 1977, its stated purpose being "to facilitate women's entry into the labour force in the face of a serious shortage in the domestic labour market" (Talal 2004: 136). In 1981 with the Department's move to MOSD and the introduction of the second Five Year Plan 1981-1985, discourses concerning women's employment were subsumed under developmental initiative (ibid, Hijab 1988: 95).

Further attempting to increase women's participation, the government advanced several legal reforms and increased training programs for women. In the 1980s the labor law was revised "to reduce the conflict between reproductive and productive mother by increasing maternity leave, increasing pay levels during maternity leave, and requiring institutions that employed a minimum number of women to provide a day-care center" (Miles 2002: 414). Furthermore, the law allowing a husband to withhold funds from his wife if she got a job was annulled (Massad 2001: 84). The 1980s also saw an increase in

women's participation in higher education and state sponsored vocational training programs (Layne 1981, Roy 1992).

The General Federation of Jordanian Women's (GFJW) discursive inclusion of women in development policies must be seen relative to broader changes in developmental discourse and shifting government perception from viewing women as 'custodians of tradition' to an economic variable. The GFJW was an umbrella group for feminist organizations in the country and represents the state's first sponsorship of a feminist organization.[17] Most importantly, the GFJW added to the feminist agenda: "women should play an active role in the comprehensive development of society" (83). Before the GFJW feminist organizations did not use the language of development in their rhetoric. Rather, like the AWF and the WFJ, they saw women's empowerment in gaining a political voice through rights. Of course the GFJW did this, but in the terms of national development.

Brand's (1998) conclusion that the GFJW was created "to displace the Women's Federation in Jordan and bring women's activities more closely under the control of the Ministry of Social Affairs" (150) is decidedly lacking in perspective. Rather, the GFJW was, if nothing more, meant to channel women's activity into an economically beneficial and politically non-threatening discourse. Furthermore, the combining of labor issues with developmental logic (whereas before they were at least partly separated) apprehends the government's ideological intention not only to increase national attachment but also to equate national participation with (productive) economic activity.

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[17] The GFJW was part of MOSD.

Continuing with the discussion of Jordanian nationalism, it is clear that the negative spaced opened for feminist discourse in Hashemite thought was 'filled' through economic logic. The state's attempts to include women in the workforce created the incentive to reform previous laws that differentially located women in society, not Jordanian nationalism. I should also add that state discourses about women's productive capacities and later developmental significance, do not represent a change in Jordanian feminist perspective. These were seemingly blatant attempts by the state to tap the army of Jordanian women not employed in the official economy, as opposed to any feigned or actual desire to empower women. Rather, the creation of the GFJW signifies this new condition for Jordanian feminist via the collusion of development discourse and feminist motivation. The JNCW would later pick up and re-purpose the legacy of the GFJW, for its neoliberal agenda.

C. Neoliberal development and the state's focus on women

Before the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank forced neoliberal adjustment policies on the state, the state, along with other actors concerned with women's issues, *uncaringly* located Jordanian women subordinately vis-à-vis Jordanian men.[18] In contrast to the 1970s and 1980s, after mandated structural re-adjustment developmental discourse came to be solely concerned with increased

[18] I emphasis the word 'uncaringly' not to chastise Jordanian society, but to provide a point of comparison between JCNW discourse and those previously existing regarding women. I also wanted to avoid saying that men and women *actually* became equal after adjustment or through JNCW politicking.

economic growth; indeed 'development' and 'economic growth' became synonyms in this context. Indeed, previously development plans were economic policies designed to meet the changing domestic, regional and global situation, but its political effect was to nurture popular support for the Hashemite monarchy within economic constraints. Building off the prominence of labor calculations in development during the 1980s, the era of neo-liberal development flattened 'Equality' to mean 'economic equality.' It is under this type of 'sense-making' that the state 'unconditionally' included women in the nation. Also, however, feminist goals such as educating women, promoting women's political activism, battling domestic violence, and increasing women's health took on a novel purpose: to increase women's participation in the (official) economy (much like the state included feminist goals to achieve the same end). Even though women's organizations before 1989 did work for these same basic goals, *the state's vocalization of these demands inside the discursive shift to neoliberal development imparted a new meaning and use to them that cannot be equated to previous articulations of said goals.*

With a large budget deficit, the burst of the oil bubble, and Arab aid subsiding, the Jordanian government was forced to accept IMF re-adjustment in 1989. As part of the deal, subsidies on food were cut, welfare projects reduced and public employment decreased (Brynen 1992: 84-94, Nsour 2002: 25, Karsay 2002: 50-52, Wiktorowicz 1999: 608, Greenwood 2003: 249). Across the 'developing world', re-adjustment logic emphasized privatization and "upward redistribution of national income" (Benin 1999: 18), with a focus on promoting exports and the agricultural sector (Richards 2008: 220) to achieve economic growth.

After re-structuring, economic growth was the only determinate of development. In this context, "economic issues [as in the rest of the world were] now receiving more attention as critical mechanisms through which the security...[of Jordan could] be realized over the long term" (Nsour 2002: 23). Now "purely economic concepts such as increased productivity, economic growth, economic reform, the integration of regional and international markets, and protection of income sources [were] becoming part of the national security lexicon" in Jordan (ibid). Of course, before 1989 the state was focused on economic growth as was evident in development policy, but, as noted in the previous section, the state did not rely on the domestic economy for its financial security, giving it little incentive to actively promote 'growth.'

Re-adjustment policies forced the government to sink or swim on domestic economic performance alone. Not only did the state lose its main form of support, popular and elite patronage,[19] but the IMF and World Bank, through their neo-liberal logic, expounded privatization and economic openness (*infitah*) as a means toward economic growth. The state begrudgingly entered into free trade agreements with the US and the EU and created a number of Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs) to attract foreign investment (El-Said 265-271, Baylouny 2005, Greenwood 259-263). These measures were designed to tie its political legitimacy increasingly to guiding/promoting economic growth; development, regime stability, and state security now meant economic growth.

According to the literature, official state development halted between 1989 and 1993, due to adjustment, but afterwards national development activities emphasized economic growth as opposed to 'expanding services.' In a clear sign of this logic the

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[19] See part V, section D.

Economic and Social Development Plan 1993-1997 "sought to reinforce the structural adjustment and economy recovery programme by addressing social aspects. The targets of the plan were to alleviate poverty, reduce unemployment and strengthen the democratic process" (Talal 2004: 82). Successive developmental initiatives have all stressed economic growth as the critical factor in development (Talal 82-84).

Up until the early 1990s there were still major blockages to women's full equality with men in Jordan, namely that Jordanian women were female citizens, not simply citizens. Massad (2001), Sonbol (2003), al-Mahadin (2004), and al-Atiyat (2004) point out that despite large percentage gains in educated and/or working women in Jordanian society, Jordanian women's equal right to: marry, divorce, obtain a passport, pass on Jordanian citizenship, sustain retirement benefits and even to work, were limited compared to men. Development organizations and actions themselves designed their efforts work within pre-given gender norms by "gear[ing] [their efforts] toward preparing a woman for her traditional role as a 'better mother,' a more 'competent housekeeper' and to become a more 'understanding wife'" (Talal 2004: 166).[20] Even women in the workforce were seen as a temporary situation, soon to be replaced by men (Layne 1981: 22).[21] Moreover, state provided women's vocational training was limited to "dressmaking, spinning and child care" (20). In fact, state measures during the 1980s were directed at the low level of domestic skilled and semi-skilled labor and the high numbers of unemployed college graduates (Hijab 1988: 95, Roy 1992). The actual and

[20] This quote directly references the QAF.

[21] Layne (1981) compares workingwomen in Jordan to American women during WWII.

perspective condition of women in Jordan at the time until (and after) the 1990s was, and is, considered less than ideal.

The period after adjustment, however, saw the regime take an 'unconditional' stance on women's equality in Jordan, although not necessarily to the benefit of women as one might assume. Extending women's political rights fits within the current academic discussion referring on the monarchy's 'democratic bargain' of the 1990s. In this view, the bargain was designed to lessen "opposition to needed economic changes, thereby maintaining [regime] stability" (Wiktorowicz 2002: 115); the state gave in to some democratic reforms to keeps its sovereign role in Jordan. Thus, the alterations to the National Charter in 1991 legally establishing women and men as equal under the law, amendments to the passport, nationality and divorce laws, along with the governments adopt of the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), can be seen within the bargain's framework: "you [women] get equality, we [the state] keep our authority." What this really meant, however, was: "go to work, and you will get a political voice (or at least the impression you have one)."

Democratic reform and economic development, however, are not discrete policy categories as one might think. Rather than constituting a 'democratic bargain,' the regime seems to have used the idea of 'democratic reform' and popular participation in order to lessen criticism against its economic policy. Under a popular ideology linking democratic reform, economic success and state security, adjustment policies, and later international NGOs, pushed democratization in Jordan. Instead of instituting meaningful change consistent with the language of democracy, the monarchy put controls on the political space and enlisted a developmental discourse that defines democratic 'spiriting'

inside economic growth. Wiktorowicz (1999, 2000 and 2002), Greenwood (2003) and Singh (2002) demonstrate that the regime uses "authoritarian tendencies in the midst of democratic change...as part of an attempt to channel political participation into a discrete, state-delineated space" (Wiktorowicz 1999: 607). These tactics include: post-adjustment election laws privileging Transjordanian loyalists (Greenwood 2003: 254-259), prohibiting 'civil society' organizations, including NGOs, from political activity and visa versa (Wiktorowicz 1999: 609-612, 2000, 2002), and the creation of the Jordanian National Charter in 1991[22] which forces (legal) opposition parties to reify Hashemite authority in Jordan (Singh 2002: 78-79). Furthermore, the close connection between big business in Jordan, the US government, NGOs/RONGOs, and political leaders to the monarchy does not provide "a clear impetus for democratic reform...[such a motivation] is lacking in Jordan today" (Singh 2002: 80).

Apparently, democracy is not useful to the regime, and it seems that most 'liberalization' measures are met with equally (if not greater) 'repressive' measures by the government. The language of democracy encoded with neoliberal values, however, allows the regime to grow its economic performance and accept international funding promoting 'democratic' values at the same time. Ostensibly, the New Policy Agenda,[23] adopted during adjustment, is a 'paradoxical juxtaposition,' advancing both a

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[22] The Jordanian National Charter is a piece of non-binding legislation that sets the parameters for appropriate political action in the country, in return for the monarchy's commitment to 'pluralism and democracy.' It creates the ground for 'loyal opposition' in the elected parts of government (Dieterich 2002: 131-132).

[23] "The New Policy Agenda is seen to comprise two strategic principles—marketization/privatization of economic and social sectors (such as health and education) and democratization of civil society" (Kamat 2004: 170).

concentration of power and resources through market reforms and a diffusion of power through democratization (Kamat 170). Against the 'paradoxical juxtaposition' thesis, Kamat (2004) argues: the New Policy Agenda "foretells [of] a reworking of democracy in ways that coalesce with global capitalist interests...at stake is not the struggle between state and civil society, but a revaluation of private interest and public good" (156).

The process that Kamat (2004) describes, with varying degrees of awareness, is a discursive shift; neoliberal social and economic policies (as if the two could be separate) assign new meaning and use to 'time honored' democratic-liberal concepts. Democratic reforms and economic growth are not separately defined 'policy areas' in neoliberal development, rather international campaigns for democracy collapse the former into the later through 'human development.' Talal (2004) evidences this trend in Jordan noting: "to reinforce the structural adjustment and economic recovery programme by addressing social aspects" (83).

Turning to the international field Robert Young (2005) describes democratization policy as one of 'osmosis,' where investing in people and promoting few markets somehow leads to democracy. International agencies, Western governments and worldwide developmental NGOs are the biggest drivers of democratic reforms in Jordan, making their policies of special import. Jordan joined the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in 1997 (later joining the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) as well), signed the Middle East Free Trade Agreement (META) and the United States-Jordan Free Trade Agreement in 2001, entered the MCC's Threshold Program in 2006, and, as of 2006, ranked number four in aid received from the US and second in per capita assistance from the EU (Choucair 2006: 17-18).

All these programs take the 'osmosis' approach to democratic reform. America's National Security Strategy from 2006, for example, outlines the intersection between economic growth and democracy:

> "Sometimes regimes have opened their economies while trying to restrict political and religious freedom...This will not work. Over time, as people gain control over their economic, they will insist on more control over their political and personal lives as well. Yet political process can be jeopardized if economic progress does not keep pace. We will harness the tools of economic assistance, development aid, trade, and good governance to help ensure that new democracies are not burdened with economic stagnation or endemic corruption" (US 2006: 4).

The report continues on this theme emphasizing "advancing development and reinforcing reform" through the Millennium Challenge Account, promoting debt sustainability, 'private capital markets,' 'investing in people,' 'unleashing the power of the private sector,' and 'fighting corruption and promoting transparency' to build the 'infrastructure of democracy' (30-32). The EMP's purpose is similar: "to development of a wide range of social, cultural and economic cooperation...deemed to provide for the self-enlightenment of Arab actors exposed to European norms" (Young 2005: 2). Rather than 'impose' democracy (a big No-No) the 'osmosis' approach characterized by USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the EMP, and ENP, promote democracy mainly through neoliberal economic policies (previous described). In another report by Young (2006) he demonstrates that beside economic provisions, EU initiatives focus on curtailing illegal immigration, military intelligence sharing, strengthening diplomatic ties, supporting human's rights legislation, promoting " 'dialogue between civilizations,'" and good governance projects "focusing on providing equipment and training" in Arab countries. None of these, he suggests, are effective.

The shift to neoliberal development took up and re-purposed development and Jordanian nationalist sentiment to grow the national economy, to which the state was now financially tied. In this new place, the state's articulation of Jordanian nationalism combined with developmental logic in such a way that it allowed the regime to maintain control over the economic, social and political transformations by: (a) Jordanizing developmental discourse and (b) deploying 'modern' administrative techniques of discipline. The shift toward locating development as a prerogative of civil society, then, did not necessarily represent an abrogation of power for the regime as some have suggested. Jordanian development schemes utilized nationalism's capacity to engender people, places, and institutions with a "strong community [whose] 'ongoing existence is an important value in and of itself' and becomes one, if not the most, important imperatives of the [national] 'moral community'" (Yuval-Davis 1997: 6). This kind of 'patriotic' attachment to the nation produces national goals as personal goals, which can be manipulated by the ruling powers.

VI. Findings, effects of Jordanian nationalism and neoliberal development policy on liberal feminism in Jordan

A. Jordanian feminism, the JNCW and Jordanian nationalism

Besides providing an 'empty space' for liberal feminist to occupy, Jordanian nationalism created a new ground for feminist action. During and after the Jordanian nationalist period women's organizations took up the national language, leading to a

specifically *Jordanian* feminism. Jordanian nationalism was at once not unreceptive to liberal feminist initiative and, due to its dominance in the political arena, was an advantageous rhetorical device for the effective promotion of women's goals; after the 1970s, as in other post-colonial contexts, "nationalism...play[ed] an important instrumental role in advancing [the feminist] goal" (Herr 2003: 148). This movement exemplifies the state's initiative to define and shape the political sphere through this new ideological device. Establishing Jordanian nationalism as the means through which to make political demands forces actors to articulate politics through it; in making political appeals through Jordanian nationalism actors confine themselves to making demands on state structures *only*, tacitly reifying the monarchy and Jordan in the process.

The first Jordanian nationalist organization was the Society of the Women's Federation in Jordan (WFJ) established in 1974 during a political opening. As the reincarnation the Arab Women's Federation (AWF), which was closed in 1957 along with the rest of political life in Jordan, the WFJ was independent. Before it the AWF advocated for women's "equal rights and responsibilities [along with] liberating Palestine, and full Arab unity" (al-Atiyat 2004: 53). The organization was very active in political life demanding "change in the electoral law to give women the right to vote and run for office" (ibid). They were also "in the forefront of demonstrations of support for Palestine and against Zionism...[even] demanding women receive first aid training" to help in the fight (ibid).

Al-Atiyat (2004) concludes that in the context of 'national struggle' women's issues were pushed to the side on the Jordanian national agenda (54). Against her assertion, however, we might conclude that perhaps women's issues were not on such an

agenda because Jordan as a nation did not exist in the 1950s. Rather, the AWF articulated their demands for equality in relation to *Arab* men, while the WFJ did so in relation to *Jordanian* men. Evidencing the move (unintentionally), al-Atiyat notes that the WFJ was to "serve as Jordan's representative on the pan-Arab and international level" (55). The fact that Jordan had to be represented and was not solely defined by its Arabness, I think, awards some weight to my argument.

The shift seems almost insignificant, but it is not. Replacing the 'Arab world' with 'Jordan' as the dominate political referent required the WFJ (as all the Jordanian feminist organizations after it) to posit its demands in relation to Jordanian men, accepting male positionality as empowerment. Because women were a historical site of civilizational conflict in the Arab world, the position of women in Arab societies was evaluated in reference to Western women: whatever Western women were (unless it was part of State national desires), was not what Arab women should be. With the shift to Jordanian nationalism, however, the Western women had to ostensibly disappear from feminist discourse, since politics was confined inside of Jordan[24]. Furthermore, Jordanian women were now discursively equivalent to one another, so poor women, for example, could not negatively signify Jordanian women as a whole insofar as they were poor *Jordanian* women. Rather, since men and women did have different structural roles in the social before and after Jordanian nationalism,[25] Jordanian men acted as the Other for Jordanian women.

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[24] I have no good evidence for this claim. I do, however, think it is an idea worth exploring and discussion, thus I have left it stand.

[25] The fact that women and men occupied different roles within the Jordanian community acted as the 'raw material' necessary for a modern notion of 'equality,' on which meaning could be inscribed. Before, however, the gendered ordering of society had a

The designation of maleness as the height of feminist desire produces a non-threatening ideological construction in relation to the State. Compared to feminist theories calling for a complete re-ordering of gender relations or the de-signification of 'male' and 'female' (Butler 2006: 1-46), Jordanian feminism maintains a relatively benign stance, insofar as male positionality is taken as empowerment. And because Jordanian nationalism does not foundationally prohibit men and women's equality, even this demand does not constitute a 'threat.' While this discourse may challenge women's place in society, it does not question the gender system in which women are symbolically situated (Rubin 1975: 157-210). Nor does this "demand for equality, and even legal guarantees of equal treatment...*seem to be sufficient either to transcend women's 'difference,' or to transform it into their strength*" (Markus 1987: 106).

The JNCW takes up the language of Jordanian nationalism from the WFJ via the GFJW and understands 'male positionality' as empowerment by seeking women's economic and political progress within state confines. For Kobayashi (2004), state feminism in general "assumes that the state's activities can rectify gender inequality together with social groups" (22). Rather than call for fundamental changes in social organization, the JNCW calls for women's inclusion in already existing social structures. It seeks to eliminate 'discrimination' against women through legislation (3) and "developing social attitudes which strengthen the role of women in social development" (7). Most significantly the JNCW seeks women's economic equality with men, the topic of the next section.

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different meaning before national feminist intervention and in that sense the situation was not (necessarily) 'oppressive' before the oppression was named and politicized.

B. Economic equality and the JNCW

This section will demonstrate how the JNCW conforms to neoliberal logic with Jordanian nationalism as its background ideology. Most of the 'evidence' provided so far has been *contextual* rather than textual. The context previously described is meant to facilitate the uncovering of JNCW discourse's meaning and expose its novely, explicitly laid out here. To go about the textual analysis of JNCW discourse I use its 2000 NSWJ.[26] The NSWJ is the mission statement for the organization and as such it has special significance for comprehending the organization's meaning. The goal of this section is not to show that the JNCW does not empower women at some level but only to illustrate how neoliberal and Jordanian nationalist logic are present in its ideological positions.

In line with Jordanian nationalism's effect on the political sphere, NSWJ, and thus the JNCW, promotes a 'national management' scheme to promote women's empowerment. The Strategy's 'fundamental principle' number five states: "the role and status of women are legislatively, politically, socially and economically the product of a comprehensive developmental process at both the national and pan-Arab levels" (JNCW 2000: 2). While we might take the Strategy's assertion that women's role is a product of pan-Arab development processes as a sign against my proposition, the only other reference to organizations outside Jordan comes on the last page of the report, where it calls for "open[ing] up channels of communication with the various regional and international organizations and bodies, particularly Arab and Islamic ones" (12). The rest

[26] Appendix A contains the 1992 NSWJ. While it is not the same document this section describes it is extremely similar with only a few minor variations of a stylistic nature. The 2000 NSWJ is not provided because it was recently removed from the internet.

of the report describes initiatives to change existing legislation, the educational system and social perceptions of women in Jordanian society.

Bergerson (2001) discusses the adoption of a 'national management' approach to the increased IMF initiated restructuring policies. In the national management approach to feminist organization, "the underlying assumption here is that national economic policy is the most effective and the best hope for women's resistance against the negative aspects of globalization" (Bergeron 2001: 992). The JNCW's 'national management' strategy also means it calls for women's inclusion full inclusion in capitalist (neoliberal) markets. In this belief, the JNCW assumes "the tendency of pure capitalism would have been to eradicate all arbitrary differences of status among laborers, to make all laborers equal in the marketplace" (Hartmann 1976: 139). Taking up neoliberalism's definition of national participation, the Strategy advocates for the "participation of women in the labour force" through education, expansion of rights, and breaking down discrimination (JNCW 2000). The Strategy also stresses: "widening the provision of vocational education and training for women, particularly in those fields which urgently need the participation of women, such as agriculture, industry and the service sector" (9).

I have already described how 'development' in Jordan now means 'economic development' only. In the case of the JNCW this logic is best seen through improvements they suggest in education and health. To better women's education in Jordan the report espouses "curbing truancy among school girls," expanding educational services, "encouraging female students to pursue postgraduate studies," "making more prominent the image of the productive working woman " in text books, and lower illiteracy rates (9). In line with the contextual evidence presented, however, it seems that "optimizing the

effectiveness of the educational system" for women (8) is a means through which to increase women's role in the countries economic development, rather than for their own benefit; "the qualitative and quantitative development of the educational process and the promotion within such a process of self-sufficiency, effectiveness and equitable distribution are basic preconditions for the optimal effectiveness of the contribution and role of women in society" (2). Furthermore, increasing educational levels also makes women less likely to engage in the informal economy (Tzannatos 2003: 66), certainly not part of national development.

In the field of health the report promotes actions that also increase women's economic capacity. Economist and women's activists note that high levels of fertility correspond to women's low economic participation and employment (Olmsted 2003). Decreasing fertility, for them, constitutes increasing women's economic role in society. Thus, we should understand the Strategies objective to "[develop and improve] the quality of health services with which women are provided throughout the Kingdom" (10) through this economic logic. Adding more weight to this suggestion is the government's stance on population matters, evidenced through the "The Updated National Population Strategy: Concepts, Foundation, and Goals 2000-2020" published by the National Population Commission (NPC) in Jordan. The National Population Strategy (NPS) casts 'the citizen' as the focus of 'socioeconomic development,' is ostensibly concerned with 'human development' and "population-related problems" (NPC 2000: 3). This Strategy attempts "to balance population growth with economic development and environmental concerns" (ibid) and "to rationalize population growth so that the annual growth rate is consistent with sustainable development" (10). One focus of the NPS is reproductive

health with a section dedicated to "gender equality and the empowerment of women" (9). Here the NPS suggests the need to "encourage men to be responsible for their reproductive health," "include gender in the teachings of social values to children," "ensure equal job opportunities for women," increasing women's education, and "enact[ing] laws...to enable women to tap economic resources on an equal footing" (10). Again all this is meant to activate "[women's] potential and guarantee their contribution to sustainable development, policymaking, labor, income generating activities, [etc]" (ibid). The comparison, I feel, stands on it own.

It is apparent that neoliberal economic logic is infused in JNCW ideology. It is not yet possible to conclude that the JNCW promotes 'economic equality' only as the basis for overall equality, for the Strategy does contain sections pertaining to women's political involvement and women's place in the society. Again, however, both are discussed in terms of development: including women more fully in political life is meant to "[consolidate] the development of democracy and the progress of society" (4) and later "strengthen women's role in development" (7) which is important for the state's overall development plan. Furthermore, even when demanding women's 'equal participation' in political life, it does not go beyond the government's flaccid 'democratic bargain' described in section V C, and it reaffirms male positionality in line with the discussion of Jordanian nationalism in section VI A. Additionally, beside legislative changes, the Strategy only suggests "utilizing mass media, the convening of seminars and workshops and the use of public forums and institutions and channels of democratic action, in order to enhance the participation of women in all spheres of political action" (JNCW 2004: 4).

The best way to increase women's political relevance here is to 'raise women's awareness,' seemingly very close to the non-initiatives described by Young (2005).

The JNCW does not hide its intention to put women in the service of the state. In fact it celebrates King Abdullah's Jordan First campaign "which reaffirmed the importance of striving to enlist women as partners in comprehensive national development and enhancing their status" (JNCW 2004: 2), an extension of the 1998-2002 Socio-Economic Plan which "incorporated the main elements of [the NSWJ] and Beijing Platform for Action" (al-Atiyat 2004: 87). The NSWJ explicitly locates its plan inside the government's larger developmental goals saying: "well-balanced development requires that women play an active role, equitably sharing both rights and obligations" (JNCW 2000: 2). The problem is not that both are focused on 'enhancing the status of women' but that said 'enhancement' is relative, judged and formed, through the state's economic policy not the 'progress' of women. Here, it is important to empower women so that they can play an improved role in development, which informs how 'empowerment' is actualized, namely through economic activity and having fewer children.

VII. Conclusion

The JNCW takes up and re-purposes Jordanian nationalism, developmental logic (via neoliberalism), and liberal (state) feminist ideology, already in step with state desires, to encourage women to enter the workforce. In the past, as we have seen, women were used by the state to fill in for male Jordanian workers abroad, in the neoliberal era

women are *required* to go to work to participate in national life. Furthermore, it took the massive change brought on by neoliberal policies for the government to adopt the 'unconditional' form of gender equality epitomized by the JNCW. This type of 'equality,' however, is predicated on economic rather than political success, a drastic change from early articulations of feminism in Jordan.

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings of this whole work is the political project neoliberalism, Jordanian nationalism and feminism all share: breaking down or at least re-doing the division between the private/public sphere. Feminism has long seen the private sphere as women's prison cell and have called for its demolition; Jordanian nationalism privatizes the public in order to establish a nation; and neoliberalism seeks to commodity ever facet of life, leaving nothing outside the purview of (official) economic activity.

The political effect of JNCW discourse is to constrain women's articulation of demands, and produce a non-threatening form of feminism in Jordan. In the first place, the JNCW controls independent feminist organizations and NGOs through its (unlimited) access to international funds. All NGOs in Jordan, except RONGOs, are not allowed to do this; however, because the JNCW can the door is opened for exploitation of its monetary power to fund projects adhering to its ideology. The fact that "women's organizations have directed a significant share (almost 70%) of their programs and projects to poverty elimination and economic empowerment" (al-Atiyat 2004: 195), while not proving my point, shows the JNCW's political influence.

Additionally, attributing women's differential position to 'patriarchal' structures (Sonbol 2003: 51), "discrimination against women" (JNCW 2000: 3), and "[the]

prevailing social situation" (JNCW 20004: 27) creates the impression that all women need to do is break down these andocentric barriers for women to participate in the nation on par with men. This discourse, however, "formulate[s] its demands solely in terms of 'raising' women to the level defined by the existing state of men" (Markus 1987: 106). Through this construction the JNCW validates the universal position masculinity claims for itself as true emancipation.

The 'culturalization' of women's issues thus closes any political demand regarding the nature of women's less than ideal position. The JNCW achieves a similar effect solely through its presence. With a government sponsored body taking up and seeming to advance women's equality, the motivation for "independent women's action still [struggling] to mobilize any interest" (59) is at least reduced. The problem, of course, is that the JNCW is not calling for women's Equality, but their economic equality. Thus, not only are women's opportunity to voice concerns outside a cultural lens decreased, but they are compelled to make demands in reference to economic equality, a very limited definition. What we should be concerned about, perhaps, is not that the JNCW might not succeed in its efforts, but that it might and produce men and women as equals *only in their subordination to capitalists!*

Instead of "the mere existence of a sexual division of labour...[as] proof of the oppression of women in various societies" with not exploration of "the *meaning* or *value* that the content of this sexual division of labour assumes in different contexts" (Mohanty 1988: 76), this work proposes that JNCW discourse does not help women. This vision of women's oppression has had a long presence in feminist discourse going back at least to the Victorian era (Melman 1992: 108-109) and gaining new traction with the raise of

women in development discourses of the early 1990s (Peet 1999: 176-186). Such a representation has also be met with criticism insofar as it does not question capitalist logic, reproduces the normalized gender system and puts more pressure on women to engage in wage labor (Peet 1999: 176-186).

Furthermore, women that do work in the home cannot be seen as economic producers in JNCW discourse, since economic activity is now equated with wage labor, despite structuralist arguments that posit capitalism as a total system in which every action is inherently economic (Wallerstein 2006: 23-41). The work that many women already do in the home is thus further devalued, along with their place in society, because they are seen as 'traditional' or 'backwards.' By promoting a discourse that agrees with masculinist assumptions that participation in the official economy is national participation, the JNCW discursively devalues 'housework.' "By...devaluing the work [women] perform [in the home]" the JNCW "thus ascrib[es] a lower status to their occupations" and justifies greater control of women by men (Acosta-Belen 1990: 311).

Inside of JNCW epistemology, however, it is impossible to conceptualize the ways in which this kind of economic logic itself produces violence against women insofar as housewives, inside their ideology, are of lesser stock than their 'active' husbands and male relatives. With a change in perception the general feeling that women are an economic 'burden' in Jordan, which precipitates women's dependence on the whims of male relatives (Sonbol 2001), might not have to exist.

Wage labor is not necessarily bad for women, but its objective goodness for women is thrown into doubt insofar as the evidence against such a move is sufficiently strong. I have already demonstrated that liberal feminist discourse colludes with

capitalist/state logic in promoting women to enter the workforce. But where does the belief that women are disempowered by differential economic positions come from in the first place? Hartmann (1976), for example, has demonstrated that differential roles for men and women among the Igbo of Nigeria actually gave women a good deal of power (144). Although this one example seems negligible, it does go against the universalistic feminist notion that "the roots of women's present social status lie in this sex-ordered division of labor" (137).

It is clear that the JNCW colludes with neoliberal state logic and does a certain kind of violence to women in Jordan. To end on a positive note, however, there is hope (maybe). Women have been positively rewarded for their compliance in the neoliberal era with many rights they did not have previously. The hope stems from this works logic: discourse and meaning change over time. While today women and men are silenced in the political field and economic activity is the sole definition of national participation, tomorrow this might not be the case. That step, however, is huge step that no amount of 'osmosis' can achieve. It will not come from the JNCW, international NGOs, or even, most likely, from independent women's organizations. We might actually conclude that the burden to be 'equal' or 'free' has unfairly been put on Arab men and women through imperialism and colonialism. So what then will this 'freedom' be and from where will it come? No one knows, and hopefully we will never find out (if only because any belief in an achieved freedom or equality probably means the exact opposite).

VIII. Appendices

Appendix A: the National Strategy for Women in Jordan, 1992[27]

Section Four
The National Strategy for Women in Jordan

Introduction

To optimize the participation of women in economic, social and political life, the Jordanian National Commission for Women was formed in 1992. Heading the list of priorities in the work of this Commission has been the drawing up of a National Strategy for Women in Jordan. Such a strategy is envisaged as the focal point towards which all national efforts, whatever their orientations and fields of activity, would ultimately lead.

The Strategy is distinguished by the fact that it was the outcome of a number of studies, meetings and seminars conducted throughout the Kingdom, in which a large number of men and women representing a wide sector of society took part. All these efforts culminated in a national conference held in June 1993. The conference adopted the fully integrated National Strategy for Women which combines modernity with respect for our national heritage. It endeavours to enhance the status of women in Jordan and support their role in the reconstruction of society, the consolidation of social progress and the realization of social development.

The National Strategy for Women in Jordan can be likened to a Strategic Plan and provides the policy framework for the Programme of Action. It sets out the principles, has six component elements all of which promote women's role and status in society and identifies implementation mechanisms. It articulates Jordan's public policy on advancement of women and is therefore an essential element in implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action.

[27] Source: JNCW, 2004

Fundamental Principles of the National Strategy for Women

1. The National Strategy for Women principally builds on the provisions of the Jordanian Constitution and the Jordanian National Charter. The Strategy is further founded on the principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, the values of Arab and Muslim society, and the principles of human rights.
2. In its aims, procedures and the mechanisms of its implementation, the National Strategy for Women is consistent with the genuine values of Arab society and its higher ideals, aspirations and desire for progress and development.
3. The National Strategy for Women seeks to promote the cohesion and unity of the family as the basic social cell on which society as a whole is based, and as the natural environment where the individual is nurtured and educated, and where his or her personality is developed.
4. Dealing with women's issues proceeds from the fact that women constitute half of society and that, within a framework of equality and balance between rights and obligations, they are the child-rearers and the partners of the other half of society.
5. The role and status of women are legislatively, politically, socially and economically an end-product of a comprehensive developmental process at both the national and pan-Arab levels. Consequently, efforts must be positively and systematically exerted in an endeavour to optimize the effectiveness of women's role, to enhance their status in society, and to remove all forms of discrimination against them.
6. The National Strategy for Women complements the national strategy for comprehensive development in all dimensions, social, economic, political and cultural. It is also consistent with other relevant regional and international strategies.
7. Well-balanced development requires that women play an active role, equitably sharing both rights and obligations. Development further entails taking cognizance of social and economic disparity in terms of the various social strata in all regions of the Kingdom.
8. The qualitative and quantitative development of the educational process and the promotion within such a process of self-sufficiency, effectiveness and equitable distribution are basic preconditions for the optimal effectiveness of the contribution and role of women in society.

Component Elements of the National Strategy for Women

a. **The Field of Legislation**

Objectives:

1. Raising awareness among members of Jordanian society in general and women in particular regarding women's legal rights and obligations, and the need to improve laws and regulations pertaining to the role of women both within the family and in society, and to enhance this role by all available means.
2. Enacting new legislation or amending existing laws in a way that contributes to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in all fields, and the enhancement of the role of women in the reconstruction and progress of society.
3. Seeking to enact legislation which ensures that women can exercise their political, economic, social and cultural rights as enshrined in Islamic Jurisprudence. This legislation would also safeguard women's legal and constitutional rights to equality, education, counselling, training and employment opportunities.

Measures:

1. Conducting a comprehensive study of the laws and regulations in force with the aim of identifying what legal amendments are needed in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. In this endeavour, a system of priorities will have to be worked out, and the participation in the process of both sexes from the public and private sectors is to be encouraged.
2. Seeking to amend laws and regulations which are prejudicial to women's rights and interests, with the aim of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women, enhancing their role in society and improving their situation in it. This legislation includes the laws pertaining to nationality, civil status, pension, social security, health insurance, labour and professional associations /trade unions.
3. Seeking to amend the law of personal status in such a way as to safeguard women's interests in harmony with Sharia'a law. This would be effected through independent interpretation and reliance on the opinion of legal experts, compatible with the requirements of the modern age and the current state of development.
4. Enacting legislation or amending current laws in such a way as to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to render these laws compatible with international covenants relevant to women's issues and rights, while preserving the unique cultural identity of Jordanian society. Official bodies would also be urged to sign and ratify all other relevant agreements.
5. Widening the participation of women, at both the local and national level, in the preparation of studies relating to the enacting or amendment of legislation.

6. Utilizing the mass media in raising the awareness of society in general and women in particular regarding issues of law and jurisprudence relevant to women, and regarding the necessary measures that would enable women to exercise their rights in a variety of spheres, including the convening of workshops and seminars and the production of bulletins and other publications.
7. Making more widely available facilities and services aimed at providing women with assistance in the fields of employment, investment and legal counseling.

b. **The Field of Politics**

Objectives:

1. Developing the participation of women in all aspects of political life, including participation in the policy-making process and appointment to leading public positions.
2. Raising awareness regarding the importance of increased women's participation in political life with the aim of consolidating the development of democracy and the progress of society.
3. Supporting the struggle of Arab women to gain their rights, and of Palestinian women under Zionist occupation to achieve liberation and self-determination.

Measures:

Utilizing the mass media, the convening of seminars and workshops and the use of public forums and the institutions and channels of democratic action, in order to enhance the participation of women in all spheres of political action and raise the level of awareness regarding the importance of women's roles in democratic life. This measure specifically involves:

1. Participating in the drawing up and implementation of government policies at all levels, and achieving equal status in making appointments and granting promotions to positions of leadership.
2. Participating in the membership of the various organizations and institutions within local authorities and the various administrative departments.
3. Exercising political rights and obligations, performing an effective role in the democratic process and encouraging the nomination and election of women to local councils and to parliament.
4. Raising the awareness of society in general and of women in particular regarding women's political, social, economic and cultural rights and their role in the sphere of political action.
5. Raising the awareness of women and persuading them to exercise an effective role in political parties and professional associations/ trade unions, so that they can become an effective pressure group in society. The level of awareness among women regarding issues of human rights and fundamental freedoms must also be raised.

The Field of Economics

Objectives:

1. Increasing the participation of women in the labour force, and guaranteeing that they are not discriminated against in employment in all spheres and sectors of work.
2. Extending the necessary assistance to encourage women's entry into and continued participation in the labour market by encouraging and developing support services.

Measures:

1. Embarking on media campaigns to make the concept of a working woman socially acceptable, particularly in non-traditional sectors, and providing women with the necessary training to work in such fields.
2. Encouraging government institutions to take the initiative in developing their own procedures and approaches with the aim of increasing women's occupational qualifications and helping them to reach higher administrative, leadership and political positions.
3. Reviewing employment procedures in government institutions so as to prevent discrimination against women in the making of appointments and to encourage women to apply for such openings.
4. Raising the awareness of employers, directors and heads of administrative units regarding the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in the spheres of employment, training, and occupational advancement. Upward mobility must also be encouraged, particularly among women who work in the middle and lower professional strata where the majority of working women are placed.
5. Ensuring the implementation of laws relating to non-discrimination between men and women with regard to wages when similar jobs are performed.
6. Making available to women counselling services relating to their sphere of employment, and the institution of proper legal channels through which women can achieve their rights.
7. Enhancing women's participation in professional associations and trade unions at all levels, and encouraging women's fora and publications.
8. Encouraging self-employment among women, making available to them wider facilities for loans, and taking the necessary measures to minimize investment and production risks.
9. Making available the necessary support services to working women, and in particular encouraging the establishment and development of nurseries and kindergartens which are to be provided with improved levels of supervision. These facilities would encourage women to opt for and continue in the job market, making use of the various legislative provisions contained in the Labour Law.

10. Safeguarding the rights of women working in seasonal, part-time and ad hoc jobs, which constitute a large market for the employment of poor women, particularly in urban areas. Adherence to suitable employment conditions, in accordance with the provisions of labour legislation, must also be guaranteed.
11. Providing women with alternative markets in which they can sell and control their own products.
12. Providing an infrastructure that supports the basic role of rural women in agriculture and livestock production, encourages them to take a more active part in satisfying the daily needs of the family, and channels the efforts of the various local community associations in promoting this trend by providing these organizations with the necessary institutional support: financial, technical, and administrative.
13. Putting on special programmes for the re-training and preparation of young women seeking employment with the aim of catering to the need for a qualified labour force in diverse economic sectors.
14. Attaching special importance to the participation of women in the planning and implementation of food security programmes, and the preparation of clear plans to achieve this aim within a national food policy that promotes self-sufficiency in the production of food.
15. Taking the necessary measures to secure safety and health among working women in their place of work, and creating the proper conditions for making this possible.

d. <u>The Social Field :</u>

<u>Objectives:</u>

1. Enhancing the status and role of women within the family and in society, and developing social attitudes which strengthen the role of women in social development.
2. Providing support to women in special categories such as women who head households and older women, and extending special care and attention to handicapped women.

<u>Measures:</u>

1. Attaching special importance to issues relating to the development of and care for women from childhood through adolescence to womanhood and motherhood.
2. Making more prominent the comprehensive role which women play in the development of society, encompassing both traditional and non-traditional dimensions, and gearing both school education and media attention to supporting this role.
3. Raising the awareness of women and educating them regarding the nature of their rights and obligations, promoting sound social concepts and behaviour and counteracting negative practices.

4. Raising the awareness of women and educating them in issues relating to environmental problems, in matters of energy, and rationalization in the use of water, by drawing attention to the role of women in the preservation of the environment and a more prudent use of energy.
5. Raising the awareness of women and educating them in issues relating to reproduction and positive practices in this domain. The school curriculum and the media will be used to achieve this aim, and families will be encouraged to opt for intervals between pregnancies and for breast feeding.
6. Examining problems relating to the social and health problems of ageing among women, with the aim of prescribing remedies by inititating the necessary policies and programmes of action.
7. Paying special attention to women-headed households and examining the issues relating to this social phenomenon with the aim of initiating policies and programmes that prescribe solutions. With the aim of enhancing the social and economic status of women who are single parents, attention must also be given to providing such families with adequate social support to enable these women to achieve and maintain economic independence, and to eliminating all obstacles that prevent these single parents from availing themselves of credit and loan facilities and other benefits.
8. Increasing efforts aimed at raising social awareness regarding manifestations of violence to which women can be subjected both inside and outside the home, including mental as well as physical harassment and bodily harm. Legal follow-up services will be provided when necessary, and legal advisory services will be extended to women in need of such assistance. Support services will also be provided where necessary, such as the provision of shelter and protection.
9. Providing handicapped women with special services, including social rehabilitation and professional re-training, with the aim of facilitating their participation in all aspects of daily life and their re-integration into society.
10. Providing poor women with special services with the aim of improving their social, physical and educational conditions and those of their families.

The Educational Field

Objectives:

1. Developing and improving educational services throughout the Kingdom.
2. Optimizing the effectiveness of the educational system in promoting a positive image of women and their status both within the family and in society, and in emphasizing the role which women play in social development.

Measures:

1. Endeavouring to present a more balanced view of the family in general, and of women and young girls in particular, in school textbooks and curricula. This will be achieved by making more prominent the image of the productive working woman who takes an active part in the various fields of development inside the home and outside, within the cultural framework of society. Such an image will be presented alongside that of the woman as a child bearer and rearer and as housewife.
2. Widening the provision of vocational education and training for women, particularly in those fields which urgently need the participation of women, such as agriculture, industry and the service sector.
3. Developing educational and professional advisory and counselling services in educational and public relations institutions in order to encourage young girls to choose educational, academic and vocational courses that are compatible with their individual abilities, on the one hand, and with the requirements of the job market on the other.
4. Widening the dissemination of educational and professional services and facilities as important elements of general education in the early stages for both boys and girls. These services will include basic vocational skills, information and trends in sectors as varied as agriculture, industry and the services.
5. Curbing truancy among schoolgirls, particularly in the early school years of basic education, throughout the Kingdom but especially in poorer and rural areas.
6. Supporting the Ministry of Education plan for lowering the general illiteracy rate among over-15s from 17% to 8%, and among females from 24% to 10%, by the year 2000.

7. Concentrating in particular on the various aspects of health, family, population and environmental education in scho

Implementation Mechanisms

The tasks of planning, implementing and assessing the various components of the National Strategy for Women are the responsibility of public and private bodies concerned with women's issues, each according to its competence and sphere of activities. This is achieved through drawing up plans, taking the necessary measures, embarking on a variety of activities and implementing the various programmes and projects. all of which would lead to the successful realization of the aims of the Strategy. The Jordanian National Commission for Women, on the other hand, will be responsible for following up and assessing the implementation of the Strategy through the following methods and procedures:

1. The Jordanian National Commission for Women seeks to enhance the role of women as an effective pressure group in Jordanian society. The Commission also seeks to gain the support of the various social strata, agencies and groups and to mobilize these as effective pressure groups working on issues of concern to women. This will be achieved by highlighting such issues, remedying negative aspects and promoting more positive ones.
2. JNCW seeks to include women's issues and the necessary measures for dealing with these issues in all social and economic development plans. To attain this objective, necessary contacts will be established and full participation in the drawing up of the various development plans secured.
3. JNCW draws up an annual executive plan of work which includes the various measures, activities and projects to be implemented during the year in the light of current priorities and conditions.
4. In accordance with the tasks with which it is entrusted, JNCW requires the various public and private bodies involved to submit regular annual reports. To facilitate follow-up, assessment, and the initiation of studies, these reports will outline objectives achieved and activities initiated, with the aim of realizing the ultimate goals of the Strategy. The reports will also include the various fields of activity relating to teaching, training, work, health, social and political development, public relations, legislation, etc.
5. Once every two or three years, JNCW carries out a periodic assessment of the plans and achievements made as well as the difficulties encountered in the endeavour to achieve the aims of the Strategy. This exercise is conducted through carrying out the necessary assessment studies and discussing these in seminars and specialist workshops in which relevant public and private bodies participate.
6. JNCW supports and encourages the convening of conferences, seminars and workshops relating to women's issues, and the commissioning of studies, data-gathering and the documentation of information in this field.
7. JNCW seeks to form committees and create working groups throughout the Kingdom, aimed at following-up on measures, activities and projects adopted in the endeavour to achieve the aims of the Strategy in the various domains.
8. With the aim of increasing work and training opportunities available to women and improving working conditions, JNCW seeks to initiate channels of communication

and dialogue with the various bodies concerned with women's issues from both the public and private sectors.

9. With the aim of exchanging information and experience and embarking on joint activities, JNCW seeks to initiate contacts and open up channels of communication with the various regional and international organizations and bodies, particularly Arab and Islamic ones, which address women's issues, seek to improve the situation of women and enhance their role in society.

Appendix B: the official mandate from 1996 'enhancing' the role of the JNCW[28]

Annex I
The Jordanian National Commission for Women

Jordan was one of the first Arab countries to respond to the United Nations' call for establishing a national committee concerned with women-related issues.

The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) was established by the Jordanian government (Cabinet decision on March 12,1992) to serve as a reference body entrusted with drawing up general policies and identifying the priorities of women in Jordan.

JNCW succeeded in pooling and co-ordinating efforts aimed at formulating a national strategy for women in Jordan through a series of public conferences in which all the Jordanian public and private institutions and individuals concerned with women's issues took part. The strategy was approved on June 29,1993, and was later endorsed by the government on October 30,1993.

To further enhance the role of JNCW, the Cabinet issued a decision on September 21, 1996, delegating it to carry out the following role and responsibilities:

1. Define general policies related to women in all areas and identify priorities, plans and programmes in both government and non-government sectors.

2. Follow up the implementation, revise and advance the National Strategy for Women.

3. Study existing legislation and any draft laws and other by-laws related to women to ensure that they do not discriminate against women, in co-ordination with the relevant concerned parties.

4. Propose laws and by-laws in all areas that advance women and are not discriminatory.

5. Strengthen contacts and exchange information and expertise, as well as carry out activities related to women's issues and the improvement of women's status at National, Arab, and International levels.

6. Participate in formulating plans and strategies aimed at fostering development and the advancement of women in all related sectors.

[28] Source: JNCW, 2004

7. Participate in committees, official and consultative bodies formed by the government dealing directly or indirectly with women related issues.

8. Follow up the implementation of laws and by-laws to ensure that they are implemented and do not discriminate against women, as well as to follow up the implementation of policies and activities related to women adopted by national plans and programmes.

9. Form a network between the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) and Ministries and public institutions in order to carry out the objectives of JNCW.

10. Form a committee of women's non-governmental organization (NGOs), known as the Co-ordinating Committee of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations, whose role, objectives, and methods of work will be drawn up by regulations issued by JNCW.

b: JNCW shall be considered the authority on women's issues and activities by all the public sector and in this regard, should be consulted by all Official parties before any related actions or decisions are taken.

c: JNCW shall be delegated to represent the Kingdom in bodies, conferences, and meetings related to women's affairs at National, Arab and International levels.

d: JNCW shall present its reports and recommendations for appropriate actions to be taken to the Prime Minister.

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