

Seginer, Rachel; Mahajna, Sami

"Education is a weapon in women's hands". How Israeli Arab girls construe their future

ZSE : Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialisation 23 (2003) 2, S. 184-198



Quellenangabe/ Reference:

Seginer, Rachel; Mahajna, Sami: "Education is a weapon in women's hands". How Israeli Arab girls construe their future - In: *ZSE : Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialisation* 23 (2003) 2, S. 184-198 - URN: urn:nbn:de:0111-opus-57565 - DOI: 10.25656/01:5756

<https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0111-opus-57565>

<https://doi.org/10.25656/01:5756>

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ZSE Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialisation Journal for Sociology of Education and Socialization

23. Jahrgang / Heft 2/2003

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“Education is a Weapon in Women’s Hands”: How Israeli Arab Girls Construe their Future

“Education is a Weapon in Women’s Hands”: Wie weibliche israelisch-arabische Jugendliche ihre Zukunft sehen

This study analyzed future orientation regarding higher education of Israeli Arab girls in the context of (a) father’s level of education, (b) fathers’ beliefs about education and marriage, and (c) future orientation regarding marriage and family. Results of data collected from 11th grade girls (N=90) indicated no significant effect of fathers’ level of education. Empirical estimation of a future orientation path model was partly corroborated, showing (a) direct links between education future orientation and academic achievement, and (b) the pivotal role of family future orientation in linking perceived fathers’ beliefs and education future orientation, as well as having a direct link to academic achievement. These results are discussed in relation to human agency and the perceived instrumentality of academic achievement for valued goals. Keywords: Future orientation, Academic achievement, Israeli-Arab girls, Fathers’ beliefs

Diese Studie untersuchte Zukunftsorientierungen in Bezug auf die Bildung von israelisch-arabischen Mädchen im Zusammenhang mit (a) dem Bildungsstand des Vaters, (b) den Vorstellungen des Vaters über Bildung und Heirat und (c) den Zukunftsorientierungen in Bezug auf Heirat und Familie. Die Ergebnisse der Daten von Mädchen der 11. Klasse (N = 90) zeigten keinen signifikanten Effekt der Schulbildung des Vaters. Ein Pfadmodell zu den Zukunftsorientierungen wurde teilweise bestätigt und zeigte (a) direkte Zusammenhänge zwischen bildungsbezogener Zukunftsorientierung und Schulleistung und (b) die zentrale Rolle von familienbezogener Zukunftsorientierung sowohl für den Zusammenhang zwischen den Wertvorstellungen des Vaters und der bildungsbezogenen Zukunftsorientierung, als auch im direkten Zusammenhang zur Schulleistung. Diese Ergebnisse werden im Zusammenhang mit handlungstheoretischen Konzepten und der wahrgenommenen Instrumentalität von Schulleistungen für das Erreichen wichtiger Ziele diskutiert. Schlüsselwörter: Zukunftsorientierung, akademische Leistung, weibliche israelisch-arabische Jugendliche, Überzeugungen von Vätern

This study examines the quest for higher education by adolescent girls growing up in transition-to-modernity settings. Going through transition to adulthood while their society is undergoing transition to modernity, these girls experience a process of double transition (Seginer, Trommsdorff, & Essau, 1993).

1 The authors wish to express their gratitude to Rozalia Horvath of the University of Konstanz and Sandra Zukerman of the University of Haifa for their help in the preparation of this manuscript.

One of the characteristics of this reality for adolescents is discontinuity of adult roles, resulting in a dearth of role models and sources of relevant information. Given that women in traditional societies have lower education and fewer opportunities for encountering modernity, this discontinuity is greater among women than among men (Seginer, 1992).

In light of these developmental circumstances, the specific aim of this study is to analyze ways in which adolescent girls from transition to modernity settings tackle their quest for education, as reflected in their future orientation regarding higher education (termed here "prospective education") and its academic achievement outcome. A case in point is Israeli Arab girls. Their future orientation regarding education is analyzed here in relation to fathers' education and perceived fathers' beliefs about girls' early marriage and higher education, and future orientation regarding marriage and family (termed here "prospective family"), and its effect on their academic achievement.

These issues are examined in a hierarchical model consisting of the following steps: fathers' education → perceived fathers' beliefs about daughters' early marriage and higher education → prospective marriage → prospective education → academic achievement. Its rationale is based on two main issues: the socio-cultural meaning of being an Israeli Arab girl and the conceptualization of future orientation.

1. Israeli Arab Girls: Socio-Cultural and Educational Aspects

The socio-cultural transition experienced by the Israeli Arab society has been influenced by global processes shared by the rest of the Arab world and by its close contacts with the Jewish population since the beginning of Jewish immigration to Palestine at the turn of the 20th century. These contacts have become more problematic with the establishment of the State of Israel when Israeli Arabs had become a minority, and many of them were dislocated and stripped of their property and land. Its consequences for the education of Israeli Arab youth in general and girls in particular are described below.

Close contacts with the Jewish population, the introduction of universal compulsory education in the early 1950s, and their understanding that education is a capital that may replace lost land, increased the value of their children's education for Israeli Arab parents and led to an improvement of the level of education of Israeli Arabs. To illustrate, between 1961 and 2001, the median years of education in the Israeli Arab population rose from 1.2 to 11.2, though still lagging behind the Jewish population whose median years of education rose during this period from 8.4 to 12.6 years of educations (Israel Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

However, as indicated by data regarding higher education, the Israeli Arab society, for many generations a rural community and presently a minority in an "ethnic democracy" (Smootha, 1990), still has not bridged the gap. In the 25 to 54 age group, 14% and 28% of Israeli Arab and Jewish women respectively, and 13% and 30% of Israeli Arab and Jewish men respectively completed 13-15 years of education.

Underlying the educational gap are smaller public investment in Arab education and limited professional job opportunities for Israeli Arab adolescents

curbed by high academic entrance requirements to prestigious university programs or by security restrictions imposed by some industries. In light of these conditions, Israeli Arabs have been seeking equal educational opportunities and alternative avenues of excellence (e.g., medicine), and altogether regarded academic achievement and the attainment of higher education as important means for narrowing the gap between the Israeli Arab minority and the Jewish majority, and for establishing an educated elite. Thus, for Israeli Arabs, as for other minorities, academic achievement and the pursuit of higher education serve both individualistic and collectivist goals.

1.1 The special condition of Israeli Arab girls

Girls' desire for education has been influenced by these cultural forces and bolstered by translating Arab national struggle for independence into a personal quest (e.g., Tawil, 1980), as well as by women who overcame the prescription for traditional women's roles, and models of emancipated Arab women in the mass media. These processes affected the tendency of Israeli Arab girls to score higher than boys and Jewish girls and boys on measures of future orientation regarding higher education (Seginer, 1988, 2001).

As early as the 1930s Arab leaders understood that to guard themselves against Jewish higher level of education they had to invest in the education of women (Woodsmall, 1936/1975). However, it is only as education became more available that girls' education has turned into an asset for Arab families in negotiating arranged marriage. At present, especially girls from rural areas are growing up under conflicting demands to gain high grades at school and get married at an early age thus obstructing their prospects for university education. Fathers' beliefs about higher education and early marriage of their daughters should be understood in light of these circumstances.

1.2 Perceived fathers' beliefs about their daughters' prospective education and early marriage

The inclusion of perceived fathers' beliefs about their daughters' education and early marriage in this model rested on several considerations. (a) Parental beliefs about issues related to their children play an important role in their children's development (McGillicuddy-De Lisi & Sigel, 1995). Like attitudes and values, parental beliefs guide parents' behaviors (Seginer, 1986) and hence are considered an important aspect of children and adolescents' family environment. (b) Parental beliefs are child- and culture-specific, reflecting parents' ideas about their child's relevant characteristics, ideas of how the world works, and culturally prescribed role-related expectations. As their daughters approach high school graduation and minimal marriage age (17, according to Israeli law), the question whether their daughters will follow the traditional path of early marriage and devotion to family *or* will pursue a progressive path of higher education becomes most relevant to the family. (c) Given that adolescents' outcomes are directly related to their experiences of parental behavior (e.g., Paulson, 1994), the conceptualization of parenting as *perceived by adolescents* has become the common approach in research on adolescents' parenting (e.g., Gray & Steinberg, 1999). (d) The focus on fathers in this study, rather than mothers or both, arose from the fact that Israeli Arab fathers are

authority figures and chief decision makers within their families. Following such reasoning, other researchers (e.g., Serpell, 1993) working in traditional societies used similar considerations and focused on fathers only. (e) Finally, earlier findings indicated the effect of family environment on several adolescent outcomes (Steinberg, 2001) and particularly on future orientation (Nurmi & Pullianen, 1991; Pulkkinen, 1990; Trommsdorff, 1986).

In sum, growing up in a cultural-political minority setting, Israeli Arab girls have experienced multiple tensions at the national (belonging to a minority whose loyalty to the State of Israel has been constantly examined), cultural-religious (tradition vs. modernity) and personal (conservative vs. emancipated definition of women's roles) levels. These have influenced various aspects of adolescent development, among them the construction of future orientation.

2. Future Orientation

Future orientation is the image individuals construct regarding their future, as consciously represented and self-reported. Its function is agentic (Bandura, 2001): to set preconditions for the pursuit of prospective trajectories. Hence, future orientation has notable value for development, especially during adolescence (Nurmi, 1991; Trommsdorff, 1986) when preparing for and planning the future is considered a developmental task (Dreher & Oerter, 1986).

2.1 Two approaches to the study of future orientation

The thematic approach. Earlier research focused on the cognitive representation of the future and analyzed the thematic structure of the future life space. This research yielded two main findings. (a) Adolescents of different cultures (Nurmi, Seginer, & Poole, 1995) and different social groups (Trommsdorff, Burger & Fuchsle, 1982) shared a common core of future life domains, consisting of education, work and career, marriage and family rearing, and self concerns (e.g., "To be happy"). (b) The construction of future orientation has been related to socio-cultural circumstances (Seginer & Halabi-Kheir, 1998) and to personal attributes (Seginer, 2003; Trommsdorff et al., 1982).

The three-component model. Earlier conceptualizations of future orientation as a motivational-cognitive construct (e.g., Nuttin & Lens, 1985; Trommsdorff et al., 1982) and an interest in the behavioral aspects of future orientation led to the expansion of the early conceptualization of future orientation to a three-component model, consisting of motivational, cognitive-representational, and behavioral components (Seginer, 2003). This model is generic in the sense that it can be applied to various prospective life domains.

The rationale for the *motivational* component drew on several theoretical analyses (e.g., Nuttin & Lens, 1985; Raynor & Entin, 1983; Trommsdorff, 1983) addressing the motivational forces of future orientation as well as general expositions of the cognitive bases of motivation. These, together with propositions drawn from personal agency analyses (Bandura, 1997) and expectancy-value models of motivation (Atkinson, 1964; Carver & Scheier, 2001) led to the delineation of three motivational variables: value, expectance (confidence about materialization) and internal control. Recent analyses (e.g., Seginer & Noyman, 2003) showed that of these, the expectance variable has been most consistently related to the cognitive and behavioral as well as to outcome variables.

The *cognitive* representational component depicts each future orientation domain in terms of relevant hopes and fears. Underlying it is the assumption that the frequency with which individuals imagine domain-related themes reflects its salience and centrality in the life-space representing the future. The *behavioral* component consists of exploration of future options that involves gathering information, seeking advice, and examining the suitability of various alternatives for the person, and the act of commitment to one specific option. Recent analyses showed that the effect of exploration and commitment was domain- and outcome-specific so that commitment was associated with task-oriented outcomes like academic achievement (Seginer & Mahajna, 2003), and experienced identity (Seginer & Noyman, 2003).

The identical name and similar content of exploration and commitment to the 'building blocks' of the conceptualization of ego-identity (Marcia, 1993) calls for underlining the differences between them. Briefly, in the theoretical framework of ego-identity, exploration and commitment are the *observable indicators of intrapsychic processes* of identity formation whose *combined* presence or absence defines the identity statuses (Marcia, 1993). In the conceptualization of future orientation each behavior is treated separately, active engagement in it is assumed to lead to the materialization of prospective hopes and plans and influence behavioral and developmental outcomes. However, the relationship between future orientation and ego identity (e.g., Erikson, 1958; Marcia, 1993; Seginer & Noyman, 2003) suggests that exploration and commitment prepare the ground for continuing the work of identity into adulthood.

2.2 *The cultural context of future orientation*

Future orientation, as a developmental process, is a Western notion. Its special significance for adolescents rests on the contention that the adult community expects its adolescents to negotiate their passage into adulthood by considering and preparing for the future. Underlying this approach are two premises relevant mainly to Western societies: that adolescents are autonomous to pursue their passage into adulthood, and that this pursuit is facilitated by accessible role models and opportunities for vicarious learning (Seginer & Halabikheir, 1998).

However, as recently noted by Seginer (2002), since all societies share a concern for continuity and for the welfare of future generations, future orientated thinking, facilitated by humans' abstract thinking, is universal. Human groups differ in their preference of the past, present or future (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961), and as noted above, in the extent to which they permit members of their society, and particularly adolescents, to independently chart their future and use future orientation to guide their behavior.

Hence, earlier research predicted that Israeli Arab adolescents would invest less in the construction of goal-oriented domains like higher education, work and career, marriage and family than would Jewish adolescents. This prediction was borne out, with one exception: compared with Israeli Arab boys and Jewish girls and boys, Israeli Arab girls expressed more hopes and fears regarding prospective education (Seginer, 1988, 2001). The focus of the present study on prospective education and prospective family draws from these findings.

2.3 *The meaning of prospective education and prospective family for Israeli Arab girls*

The findings presented above were interpreted as indicating Israeli Arab girls' desire to break away from women's traditional life course (Seginer, 1992), and as noted earlier, a gradually growing recognition in the value of women's higher education in the Arab world (El Guindi, 1986; Woodsmall, 1937/1975). However, in a study conducted a decade ago among 11th graders (just one year before graduating from high school) (Seginer, Karyani, & Mar'i, 1990), Israeli Arab boys endorsed traditional women's roles whereas girls affirmed more liberal women's roles emphasizing educational and occupational equality between women and men.

The tension between traditional role expectations on part of the Israeli Arab society and Israeli Arab girls' quest for higher education had not relaxed in recent years. This has been indicated by official data on the education of Israeli Arab women and in fears expressed by Israeli Arab girls in the last 15 years. The gender gap within the Israeli Arab population is particularly evident in the highest level of education: 9% of the women vs. 15% of men in the 25 to 54 age group obtained 16 or more years of education (compared to 26% of women and men in the Jewish population) (Israel Bureau of Statistics, 2002). The underlying theme echoed in the Israeli Arab girls' fears was that the materialization of their desire for university education would be thwarted. These fears are illustrated in the following narratives: "My future husband will not allow me to continue my education", "I will discontinue my education because I'll get married", or "I will not be able to balance marriage and university studies" (Seginer, 2003).

2.4 *The hierarchical model*

Drawing from the socio-cultural aspects of the developmental setting of Israeli Arab girls, the conceptualization of future orientation and its cultural meaning, the following predictions were formulated.

(a) Fathers' level of education would be positively related to perceived beliefs about the desirability of higher education for their daughters and negatively related to perceived beliefs about the desirability of early marriage. (b) This prediction had two parts. (1) Perceived fathers' beliefs about the desirability of early marriage would be positively related to prospective family and negatively related to prospective education. (2) Perceived fathers' beliefs about the desirability of higher education would be positively related to prospective education and negatively related to prospective family, each indexed by one motivational (expectance) and one behavioral (commitment) variable.

The next prediction drew from the observation that traditionally the prescribed path for girls was marriage, and that the marriage and family rearing and higher education paths were viewed as conflicting. Hence, (c) prospective family would have a direct negative effect on prospective education, and (d) prospective family would be negatively related and prospective education would be positively related to academic achievement.

The predictions on the links between family and education future orientation drew on the notion of *perceived instrumentality* (Nuttin & Lens, 1985), which

according to Husman and Lens (1999) pertains to "...an individual's understanding of the instrumental value of a present behavior... for valued future goals" (p.116). The prediction on the positive and negative links between education and family future orientation and academic achievement has been based on the assumption that academic achievement was instrumental to a future orientation emphasizing higher education but incompatible with that emphasizing marriage and family.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

Participants were 90 girls. All were 11th graders in college-bound classes from all-Arab high schools. They grew up in relatively large families (M number of siblings = 4.80, SD = 2.05). Their fathers' education was higher than their mothers' education (51% of the mothers and 31% of the fathers completed no more than 8 grades and 16% of the mothers and 33% of the fathers obtained university education). The majority of fathers (86%) were holding a job and the majority of mothers (77%) were not working outside their household.

3.2 Instruments

Perceived Fathers' beliefs about girls' higher education and early marriage (Mahajna, 2000). This Likert-type questionnaire (1 = does not describe him at all, 5 = describes him very well) consisted of two parts, namely: beliefs about girls' education and early marriage. The education scale pertained to the importance of education for women in general and its value for the target girl. Example: My father thinks I should continue my academic studies at any cost (8 items, $\alpha = .89$). The marriage scales pertained to beliefs about early marriage in general and of the target girl specifically. Example: My father thinks getting married is more important for me than continuing my education (8 items, $\alpha = .88$).

The Future Orientation Questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of two parts: the Prospective Life Course questionnaire, and the Hopes and Fears protocol. *The Prospective Life Course Questionnaire* (Seginer, Nurmi, & Poole, 1994): The version used for this study consisted of two sections: higher education, and marriage and family. Each section included Likert- and semantic differential-type items (all ranging from 1 = low to 5 = high). Since this analysis consisted of one motivational (expectance) and one behavioral (commitment) variable for each life domain, only the scales assessing them will be described. The *expectance* scale consisted of 3 items, as were .72 (prospective education), .73 (prospective family). Example: How likely do you think it is that your marriage and family plans will materialize? The *commitment* scale consisted of 4 items, as were .76 (prospective education), .86 (prospective family). Example: To what extent does the following sentence describe you: I have clear plans concerning my future education.

The Hopes and Fears Protocol (Seginer, 1988; Trommsdorff, Lamm & Schmidt, 1979) is an open-ended questionnaire where respondents write down their hopes and fears for the future (in two separate sections). Analysis consisted of coding the narrative units into seven life domains (high school, high-

er education, work and career, marriage and family, self concerns, others, collective issues) and calculating the density score (i.e., the ratio of the number of narrative units per domain to the total number of narrative units) of each category, for hopes and fears separately.

Academic Achievement. Based on earlier findings that self-reported grades were highly similar to school reported grades (e.g., Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbusch, 1994) academic achievement was self-reported. Adolescents reported their mean grade, as appearing on their last school report on a 1 (mean final grade below 60) to 5 (mean final grade in the 90 to 100 range).

3.3 Procedure

Girls responded to the questionnaires during one class session (Spring, 2000). The future orientation questionnaires were developed in English. The Arabic version was created by translation (and back-translation) of the questionnaire into Arabic by two native speaking Israeli Arab graduate assistants and used in earlier studies (e.g., Seginer, 2001). The perceived fathers' beliefs scale was developed in Arabic.

4. Results

Hierarchical links between fathers' beliefs, girls' future orientation and academic achievement.

Based on earlier analyses, the empirical model consisted of one motivational (expectance) and one behavioral (commitment) variable. The cognitive representational variables were excluded from the analysis due to low and non-significant correlations with the other variables (rs ranging from .02 to .16). To test the model hypotheses, we performed hierarchical multiple regressions (correlation coefficients are presented in Table 1). The correlation coefficients between fathers' education and all other variables were low (rs ranging from .08 to .20) and non-significant. Hence, fathers' education was excluded from the regression analysis, and the first prediction regarding its links to perceived fathers' beliefs about higher education and early marriage was rejected.

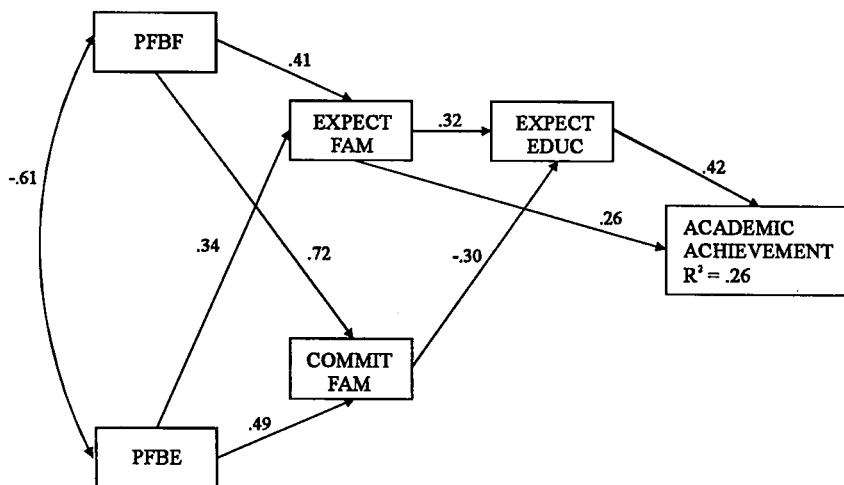
Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations (SDs) and Correlation Coefficients (rs) for Perceived Fathers' Beliefs, Girls' Future Orientation and Academic Achievement

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Perceived Fathers' Beliefs Education							
2. Perceived Fathers' Beliefs Family	-.69***						
3. Expectance Family	.03	.14					
4. Commitment Family	-.05	.35**	.54***				
5. Expectance Education	.10	-.19	.12	-.18			
6. Commitment Education	.08	-.14	-.02	-.05	.46***		
7. Academic achievement	.07	.07	.33**	.20	.38**	.10	
Means	4.25	2.20	3.78	2.15	4.28	3.78	4.38
SDs	1.1	0.92	0.77	1.16	0.56	0.78	0.66

p ≤ .01 *p ≤ .001

Path analysis to test the direct and indirect links between the model variables was performed using series of regressions, combining hierarchical and step-wise procedures. First, separate regressions were performed to determine the effect of fathers' beliefs about higher education and early marriage on the expectance and commitment variables of the prospective family and prospective education, respectively. Next, regressions were performed to determine the effect of the prospective family expectance and commitment and fathers' beliefs on the prospective education expectance and commitment. Finally, regressions were performed to determine the effect of the prospective education variables, the prospective family variables, and fathers' beliefs on academic achievement. Significant paths are presented in figure 1, indicating that prospective education commitment was excluded from the analysis.

Figure 1. Empirically estimated model of future orientation in context.



PFBE = Perceived fathers' beliefs about education, PFBF = Perceived fathers' beliefs about early marriage, EXPECT FAM = expectance prospective family, COMMIT FAM = commitment prospective family, EXPECT EDUC = expectance prospective education.

Specifically, prospective family expectance was uniquely related to both fathers' perceived beliefs about early marriage ($b = .41$, $p = .01$) and perceived beliefs about higher education ($b = .34$, $p < .05$). Prospective family commitment was also uniquely related to fathers' perceived beliefs about early marriage ($b = .72$, $p < .001$), and perceived fathers' beliefs about higher education ($b = .49$, $p = .001$). Prospective education expectancy was uniquely related to prospective family expectance ($b = .32$, $p < .05$) and uniquely but negatively related to prospective family commitment ($b = -.30$, $p < .05$). Academic achievement was uniquely related to prospective education expectance ($b = .42$, $p < .01$), and to prospective family expectance ($b = .26$, $p < .05$). This model explained 26% of the variance of academic achievement ($R^2_{adj} = .26$).

By performing hierarchical multiple regression we were also able to determine if prospective education expectance mediated the effect of prospective family

expectance and commitment and perceived fathers' beliefs or only linked between them. To determine it we performed hierarchical multiple regression in which prospective education expectance was entered first, prospective family expectance and commitment were entered second, and perceived fathers' beliefs were entered third. This analysis showed that the R^2_{adj} of the first step was .16, the R^2_{adj} of the second step was .25 and the R^2_{adj} of the third step was .26. Hence, it has been determined that prospective education expectance linked but did not mediate (i.e., did not explain all the explained variance of academic achievement) the effect of prospective family expectance and commitment, but the three future orientation variables mediated the effect of perceived fathers' beliefs. Altogether, the hierarchical model was partly confirmed.

5. Discussion

The effect of fathers' level of education

Results of this study showed two important tendencies. One is a no-difference finding: unlike other findings on the effect of socio-economic status on parents' beliefs (e.g., Seginer, 1986) and future orientation (e.g., Trommsdorff et al., 1982), fathers' level of education (as an indicator of socio-economic status) had no effect on perceived fathers' beliefs about higher education and early marriage or on future orientation. This finding indicates that psychological changes lag behind demographic changes. Specifically, opportunities for higher education (that lead to better jobs and smaller families), were unrelated to fathers' beliefs as perceived by their daughters, or to their daughters future orientation. A similar tendency is portrayed in a short story by an Egyptian journalist and writer, depicting a young man who was educated in France and returned to Egypt.

I thus discovered that all my so-called 'civilized self' was nothing but a sort of a book tucked in my pocket ... All this enlightenment, all this modernity, have no impact upon my soul. They are just goods I have bought. (Al-Quddus, 1984, p.56)

Empirical estimates of the path model.

The second tendency was the discrepancy between the theoretical model and its empirical estimates, suggesting that the reality experienced by Israeli Arab girls was more intricate than conjectured by our model. Underlying the theoretical model was an assumption that fathers' beliefs and adolescents' orientation to the future regarding education and marriage have competing rather than complementary tendencies, so that each would be positively linked to the comparable future domain and negatively to the other domain. Our findings diverged from these predictions in several ways. Notable among them were positive relationships between (a) perceived fathers' beliefs about higher education and prospective family variables (expectance, commitment), (b) expectance regarding both future orientation domains (i.e., prospective education and prospective family), and (c) family expectance and academic achievement.

The finding on the positive links between perceived fathers' beliefs about higher education and variables representing prospective family is not easily explained. Our interpretation rests on the interface between Israeli Arab girls'

high desire for higher education and the traditional cultural prescription of early marriage. The resultant tension could be resolved by pursuit of one of two alternative paths, both positively associated with perceived fathers' beliefs about higher education.

One was opting for the *traditional* trajectory of early commitment to marriage which in turn lowered the prospects of materializing educational plans (expectance) and thus was indirectly associated with lower academic achievement. The second path reflected a *progressive* trajectory, in which both family and education expectance were represented. It linked perceived fathers' beliefs about education and girls' academic achievement via family expectance and higher education expectance.

To explain the finding about the positive relationships between expectance about prospective family and prospective education, two motivational mechanisms can be considered. One is related to the power of confidence about the materialization of plans (expectance) to facilitate academic achievement, and in general terms to human agency (Bandura, 2001). The second is related to the perceived instrumentality (Nuttin & Lens, 1985; Husman & Lens, 1999) of academic achievement for both prospective higher education and prospective family, and more generally to the power of goals (Locke & Latham, 1990).

The perceived instrumentality of academic achievement for family expectance is less obvious to the Western eye than to transition-to-modernity girls (Mernissi, 1985). The hopes expressed by participants (in response to the open-ended hopes and fears questionnaire) illustrated the association between marriage and education for the Israeli Arab girls in this study. "Get married and be a college student, both at the same time"; "That my [future] husband will be well educated and allow me to attend college during our engagement period"; "I am getting married after high school graduation. I hope to continue with my education and have a happy family". "[I hope to] work in the area in which I received my [higher] education and take care of my family". "[I hope to] develop a career that will help me and my community and be a good mother to a generation of educated children".

As indicated by these narratives, in constructing their future orientation Israeli Arab girls viewed higher education as contingent on marriage and family plans. This tendency had been identified previously in hopes and fears expressed by Israeli Arab and Druze girls and described as an intertwining strategy, suggesting that these girls, and possibly other transition-to-modernity girls, employ it for negotiating permission to pursue higher education. In this study, we identified two kinds of arguments: the pragmatic and the idealistic. The first conveys the simple message that higher education could fit into the traditional path of early marriage ("... continue with my education and have a happy family"). The second points out that by pursuing higher education the girl will serve family and community interests ("...develop a career that will help me and my community and be a good mother to a generation of educated children").

The third finding is related to the positive and negative links respectively between academic achievement and prospective family expectance and commitment. To reiterate, prospective family expectance positively linked fathers' perceived

beliefs and academic achievement directly as well as indirectly via prospective education expectance. Prospective family commitment also linked fathers' perceived beliefs to prospective education expectance, albeit negatively.

These findings elucidate the meaning of expectance and commitment regarding marriage and family rearing for our respondents, and indicate their relevance as an intrapersonal context for prospective education. While both expectance and commitment relate to realization of prospective plans, making a decision (commitment) about marriage reduced confidence in the materialization of higher education plans, and was indirectly negatively linked to academic achievement. By comparison, confidence in the materialization of plans (expectance) for marriage promoted academic achievement directly as well as indirectly via a link to higher education expectance. It is plausible that as high achieving girls strive for academic success they use it as an argument indicating that they will be able to combine marriage and higher education.

Altogether, the complexity of the future orientation of Israeli Arab adolescent girls whose prospective education and prospective family are interdependent reflects the intricacy of these girls' process of transition to adulthood. The path analysis and the content of their hopes and fears for the future suggest that girls hoping to obtain higher education understand its dependence on early marriage (the progressive trajectory). Other girls opted for early marriage (the traditional trajectory) and hence renounced their strivings for higher academic achievement.

The issues presented in this study call for further research drawing on three shortcomings of the present analysis. The first emanates from a methodological weakness related to its relatively small sample size and one-point data collection. Hence, future research should use data collected from larger samples at different time points, so that conclusions about directionality would depend not only on the theoretical model but also on the order in which the data were collected. The second shortcoming pertains to the design of this study limited in two respects: perceived beliefs of fathers only, and one gender one nationality sample. By including in the design (a) perceived mothers' beliefs and (b) Arab boys and Jewish girls, future research could examine perceived beliefs of both mothers and fathers as they apply to Arab adolescents (girls and boys) and adolescent girls (Arab and Jewish), respectively.

The third weakness of this study relates to the theoretical framework. Contending that parents' influence their children via multiple channels and that the socialization setting of adolescents include other participants such as siblings, peers, teachers and other adult mentors, several additional issues may be examined. Specifically, future research should include such aspects as parent-adolescent relationships, the beliefs parents hold about the target adolescent's abilities and personality characteristics, and the effect of information from siblings, peers, and other adult mentors on adolescents' construction of future orientation.

Finally, an issue for a long-term longitudinal research is the role Arab girls will play in their society as they grow into adulthood. Specifically, the question is how their strivings for equality of opportunities encapsulated in the belief that "education is a weapon in women's hands" will be maintained and serve as an impetus for facilitating the emancipation of the next generation of girls.

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