

(politics, the economy, families and households, and voluntary societies) over the course of the “‘long nineteenth century’ (1780–1914)” (p. 230). Her discussion provides historical contexts for these concepts; furthermore, it reminds the reader that these constructs and metaphors were embedded in power relations and had very serious implications for those, such as women, Jews, blacks, or the original inhabitants of British colonies, who were seen as “mired in their biology” and supposedly lacked the “manly independence” that was central to full civic participation (p. 264).

If there are absences in this collection, they are predominantly ones of race and ethnicity. Davidoff’s work seems based in a conception of an England in which class and gender are the dominant relations of power — even though her concluding remarks suggest that other nineteenth-century hierarchies might have had equal meaning and import. She points out in her final paragraph that the spread of imperial power across the globe during this period means that the hierarchies worked out in the English context reached beyond the borders of “England” (p. 264), but, as a number of Davidoff’s colleagues have demonstrated, relations of empire also “came home” and left their mark on English society. Despite these concerns, *Worlds Between* should be part of the collection of both present and future generations of historians concerned with investigating the complex relations of gender and class.

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Diane Singerman and Homa Hoodfar, eds. — *Development, Change and Gender in Cairo: A View From the Household*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996. Pp. xl, 195.

Development, Change and Gender in Cairo explores the cumulative significance of the choices and practices of millions of individual households in Cairo for broader social, political, and economic change. The editors, Diane Singerman and Homa Hoodfar, situate lower-income families within the context of the wider international political economy and examine the coping strategies and struggles of Cairo’s most vulnerable groups to the intended and unintended consequences of policy changes made by the elite. In turn, they observe the impact of these groups’ reactions for the success or failure of state policies. Central to their analysis is the household or family as the primary political and economic institution representing collective interests. This “bottom-up” approach to politics begins with an examination of the ongoing negotiation of individual roles and positions within the family undertaken by family members in response to changing circumstances both inside and outside the household. The premise of this edited volume is thus rooted in the understanding “that collective behavior in Egypt is heavily influenced by the needs and demands of the household and that the household and intrahousehold relations are a crucial and central variable in development” (p. xix). While the lens is undoubtedly micro in perspective, the significance of “bread and butter” issues for macro politics is clearly drawn.

Within this framework, the main thrust of Singerman and Hoodfar's book lies in its focus upon women as central agents within the household, in the wider social context, and ultimately in national political and economic trends. As women are primary actors within the household economy, the authors seek to integrate women into their study of society as a whole. What emerges is an interesting volume that effectively challenges both the notion of a public/private dichotomy between male/female worlds in the Middle East and the marginalization of the study of women from the study of society.

In chapter 1, "Survival Strategies and the Political Economy of Low-Income Households in Cairo", Hoodfar presents a comprehensive explanation of contributions to the household economy. Only one of these contributions, related to cash-generating market activities, is generally dominated by men. Hoodfar illuminates the importance of non-market activities, typically dominated by women, to the economy of the low-income household. These include housework or home-produced food-stuffs, the appropriation of subsidized public goods and services, gift exchanges and inheritance, and strategies for household management and expenditures. The issue is not who contributes more or less, but rather that the household unit could not viably function and reproduce without both sources of visible and invisible contributions. More importantly, Hoodfar's chapter demonstrates how national policies such as the withdrawal of subsidies, as well as the process of commercialization, have affected men and women differently, based on their different forms of economic contributions. This impact has, in turn, repercussions for their relative power within the family.

In chapter 2, Arlene Elowe MacLeod challenges the assumption that "progress" and women's cash-generating work outside the home lead to greater power and influence within the family and society. Her study explores the tensions that educated lower-middle-class women, often working in government offices, face between their roles as worker and mother/wife. These women are caught in a double bind between economic and Islamic ideologies. They face the disappointment of tedious office jobs with little authority and falling wages, while they have lost traditional sources of power within the home. On one hand, they have coped by transforming the workplace into a more informal arena where they can accomplish household chores in addition to their work. On the other, however, MacLeod argues that some women have reacted by resisting men's help within the home — viewing it as a further encroachment upon their power — and many have adopted Islamic dress as a means of reclaiming traditional respect.

In chapter 3, Hoodfar examines the diverse impact of male migration upon women in terms of their power in relation to their husbands both during the migration period and afterward. Contrary to expectations, Hoodfar finds that, while traditional and less-educated wives improved their position, better-educated wives lost power to their husbands. White-collar women, whose positions of relative equality were based on equivalent cash contributions to the family, lost ground to husbands whose wages increased dramatically abroad. In other words, migration increased the decision-making powers and skills of less-educated women by forcing new challenges and opportunities upon them. Yet, at the same time, it has

strengthened the more traditional marriage ideology in which the husband is the main breadwinner and the wife the dependent mother/housewife.

K. R. Kamphoefner's chapter, "What's the Use?", examines the suitability of government literacy programmes for the needs of low-income women. She argues that Cairo's poorest of poor, precisely those women who would appear to benefit the most from literacy, make few attempts to become literate based on two calculated reasons. The first is the expense and time that education requires. The second and more important reason is that the literacy system does not empower these women. The system is geared towards training women for the formal labour force, yet lower-income women are predominantly engaged in the household and informal economy. Most precisely, the shift to factory or other forms of wage-earning work makes little sense in the context of increasing and massive unemployment in Egypt and the cultural priority placed on the man's role as breadwinner. It would hence lead to a loss of the woman's traditional source of power as housewife and mother with little compensation.

Nadia Khouri-Dagher's chapter on food and social order in Cairo traces in detail the informal ways in which women obtain food for their families. She examines the food subsidy programmes, women's use of the black market, and their reliance on social networks. In both Khouri-Dagher's chapter and that of Nawal Mahmoud Hassan on Cairo's housing needs, we see how women organize themselves to compensate for their economic and political marginalization. Hassan's chapter documents how various laws, including the rent control laws, have unintentionally resulted in the eviction of the poor from their homes. She focuses on the difficult struggle the displaced confront — despite help from concerned politicians and a committed non-governmental organization — in trying to obtain new and adequate housing from the state.

The book concludes with Singerman's chapter considering as political entities the family and the informal neighbourhood networks families create to promote their interests. Central to Singerman's argument is the "familial ethos", a set of norms and traditions that "pervades the community and is constructed by men and women to ensure and promote behavior which ensures the power and position of the family itself" (p. 151). According to Singerman, the familial ethos orders individual roles within the family, sets the parameters of behaviour in the community, and shapes the political vision of many Egyptians (p. 154). A divided and feuding family, for example, loses opportunities to provide better for its members and, as a consequence, diminishes its position in the community.

The volume is extremely well organized, cohesive, and persuasive. It is furthermore very revealing in its micro-examination of often overlooked dynamics and processes. It begins with a comprehensive introduction of the purpose and organization of the book and sets the political and economic context in which the individual studies take place. Similarly, Singerman's concluding chapter ties together many of the dominant themes. At the same time, each chapter is able to stand on its own. While this means that there is some repetition, particularly in terms of the elaboration of the political and economic background, it does allow the chapters to be read in any sequence. The volume is enjoyable and easy to read.

Some of the material can be found in previously published works. In particular, the chapter by MacLeod and the final one by Singerman are directly based on their respective books. However, there is certainly value in rereading their work within a larger comparative perspective on Cairo.

In sum, *Development, Change and Gender in Cairo* successfully serves both introductory and more advanced levels of readers. Most certainly, it can be used for undergraduate classrooms in political science, anthropology, sociology, development studies, and women's studies. It also offers advanced researchers in-depth detail valuable to anyone studying grassroots or informal politics and economics in Egypt or pursuing comparative work on the Middle East or the developing world.

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Roberta Hamilton — *Gendering the Vertical Mosaic: Feminist Perspectives on Canadian Society*. Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996. Pp. xvi, 261.

Roberta Hamilton has set herself a near-impossible task in this book — to convey, in a concise and accessible way, how Canadian society might be understood from a feminist perspective. Both historically and theoretically informed, it is a welcome contribution to Canadian feminist teaching resources. As she recognizes from the start, neither “feminist” nor “Canadian” are unproblematic terms, and she defines her project as a critical examination of “the very concepts that constitute the book’s themes, namely Canadian society and feminist perspectives” (p. 1). Her point of departure, as the book’s title suggests, is John Porter’s 1965 classic, *The Vertical Mosaic*. Porter’s legacy is to understand Canada as hierarchically organized in terms of race and class, and this frames Hamilton’s analysis. Rather than entitle her work “Gender and the Vertical Mosaic”, however, she insists on “gendering”, to press home the point that “gender is not a thing but a process”: “gendering may be understood as ongoing action that plays out on every terrain from the psychic structures of individuals to the ways in which power is deployed in all organizations, institutions, and relationships” (p. 3). Her introduction, which sets out this general framework, hints at just how difficult and complex doing justice to this perspective might be, and warns that it will be the reader’s task to “relate many of the different subjects in this book to each other” (p. 9). The warning turns out to be appropriate and, caveat aside, constitutes the main weakness of the book.

The first two chapters, on feminist theories and women’s movements, are broad, introductory overviews. Hamilton works hard to demystify the idea of “theory”, showing how integral it is to the everyday process of making sense of things and why the development of feminist theories has been important in enriching our understanding of all manner of concepts, from human agency to social change. Her substantive treatment of various theoretical perspectives is sketchy, however, with liberal feminism accorded only a couple of paragraphs (which do not go much beyond a brief commentary on Wollstonecraft) and brief outlines of one to two