



Suliman S. Olayan School of Business



KIP Research Project

Family, Adulthood, Citizenship and Queer Subjects

Principal Investigator

Zeina Zaatari, PhD

Lecturer and Research Associate

University of California, Davis

Research Assistant

Ramona Abdo

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Olayan School of Business

American University of Beirut

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Executive Summary

This research project interrogates heteronormativity in Lebanon and investigates the policing by families and negotiations that queer subjects use to carve out spaces for their daily existence. The project investigates the ways in which heteronormativity is reproduced through families and their policing practices, and the resurgence of the discourse on ‘the family’ in Lebanon and regionally and how this discourse contributes to and reinforces a set of policing strategies of normative gender identities and sexualities. I specifically focus on the ways in which families socialize and police the practices and bodies of their queer children and relatives to uphold heteronormativity. I discuss the kinds of pressures the women face from their families in particular and the ways in which they resist or negotiate such pressures. To gather data for this research, I conducted fieldwork in Lebanon in June/July 2016, primarily utilizing participant observation and in-depth modified life history interviews. From August 2016 to April 2017 I continued to conduct interviews online and analyze the writings of queer women in online and print publications around these issues. Most of my interviewees experienced a range of policing strategies that intensified as they gained puberty and entered high school. These strategies focused on their bodies, their behaviors, and their words in an attempt to gently cajole or violently coerce (or a range in between) into conforming to particular standards of hyper femininity that would allow them to eventually reproduce the heteropatriarchal norm of marriage and motherhood. My interviewees negotiated through direct confrontations, avoidance and lying, and ongoing engagement to resist such pressures.