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Angela Kahil
Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, Lebanon

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Angela Jurdak Khoury (1915-2011) as the First Woman Diplomat in Lebanon: Feminism and Education during the French Mandate

By Angela Kahil¹

Abstract

Angela Jurdak Khoury was born in 1915 in Lebanon and died in 2011 in Washington D.C. She was the first woman who studied in the Department of Sociology at the American University of Beirut, and the first to graduate with an M.A degree from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in 1938. She was also the first woman to teach and be involved in social services at the university. In 1945, Khoury joined diplomatic affairs to become the first woman diplomat in Lebanon, representing her country in the Commission on the Status of Women at the UN between 1946 and 1951. Unfortunately, her story is not really included in the history of Lebanon. For that reason, this paper contributes to “herstory,” to shed light on the role of women in social sciences through the study of individual experiences. It focuses on the status of Arab Protestant women in Lebanon under the mandate between the 1930s and 1940s, when they were considered to be subaltern citizens. From a subaltern subject during the mandate to a diplomat, Khoury has a very interesting path worth studying. As such, this article examines the place of women in colonial societies, using an institutionalist and poststructuralist feminist approach and network theory. Biographical tools help to draw the portrayal of an emancipated woman who braved the social biases of her time. Using the American University of Beirut archives and documents written by Angela Jurdak Khoury from 1935 to 1968, I aim to contribute to the feminization of the writing of history in the 21st century.

Keywords: American University of Beirut, Arab Protestant Women, Women Diplomats, Angela Jurdak Khoury, Lebanon

Introduction

Out of the Shadows of History: Angela Jurdak Khoury

Angela Jurdak Khoury is one of those women whose name has been forgotten by history. In Lebanon, where I conducted a major part of my research, her name is unknown to the public. She is not mentioned by scholars, who very proudly refer to Charles Malik's role in drafting the Universal Charter of Human Rights with Eleanor Roosevelt, waving the flag of Lebanon at the UN organization as early as 1945. At that time, Jurdak Khoury was secretary general of the Lebanese delegation to the San Francisco UN Conference. Even more, she was the only woman in the Arab world to be part of a delegation.

My research led me to the American University of Beirut (AUB), which had just celebrated its 150th anniversary. In 2016, AUB decided to celebrate those who made its history, by making history itself. It paid tribute to its former students who have become “History makers,” “who make AUB proud” (History Makers).

¹ Angela Kahil is a French and Lebanese researcher in gender and contemporary history, holding a PhD in History, Societies, and Civilizations from the Institute of Oriental Languages (INALCO) in Paris. She taught in the PSPA department at AUB between 2017 and 2019 and has been teaching at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) in Lebanon in the History and PSPA Departments since 2014. Kahil has been a Fulbright Scholar in 2016 and a visiting professor at Erfurt University in 2015. Her field of research is gender in the history and politics of the Middle East in the contemporary period. She can be reached by email at angelakahil@hotmail.com

Jurdak Khoury's name is listed in the "Great Scholars and Teachers" category, as the first female teacher at AUB's Sociology department.²

This research will narrate the story of Jurdak Khoury as a woman, her origins, her academic background, and her national and international role in the period of women's emancipation in the Levant (1930s-1940s). My initial interest evolved towards a political question concerning the identity, the representation, and the possibilities for political action that a woman could undertake in a world dominated by men. It is about exploring first the conditions of this set of actions, based on pluralism and equality, rather than the end itself. There are three types of activities: work, which corresponds to the biological process of the human body; craft, which reflects each individual's capacity to appropriate the world, and finally the action by which relationships between individuals occur (Arendt, 1983). In Lebanon in the 1930s, conditions were favorable to the emancipation of women, and their ability to act in society and politics left traces that remain in the historical record. Jurdak Khoury was chosen as an example of an emancipated woman, based on the following criteria:

1. She represents an example of a woman educated in Lebanon in a pioneering school for the education of girls.
2. Her academic achievements are considerable.
3. She made a career in the United States and contributed to tightening the links between Lebanon and the U.S.

First as an educated woman, then a diplomat, and finally as a Lebanese citizen, Jurdak Khoury is an important subject to research. This article employs postcolonial theories to analyze the status of Lebanese women during the French mandate. Were they a subordinate category? If yes, how did Jurdak Khoury overcome the subaltern status that was applied to women in her time?

Purpose and Objectives of the Research

This paper aims to "add women to History" (Meriwether & Tucker, 2018, p. 6), and by including ordinary women and their paths, the goal is to feminize the writing of history, or in other words, to make it more inclusive. Women's history, particularly in the Middle East, is new intellectual territory (Dakhli, 2009). Hence, I am focused on writing the history of women through individual paths and stories, instead of a wider focus on gender history of the Middle East.

This study about Jurdak Khoury is also an opportunity to focus on an understudied group of women in Lebanon—Arab Protestant Women—and their unique culture and integration in Lebanese society. My research stresses individual particularities rather than considering all Arab women only through the prism of Islam and the paradigm of veiling/unveiling processes. Finally, the paper emphasizes the importance of education in the process of women's emancipation and the stages of women's integration in a patriarchal society.

Literature Review

The concept of gender began to emerge in the United States with Robert Stoller (1968), followed by sociologist Ann Oakley (1972), and the concept refers to the social and cultural classification of men and women. Gender is defined as "a constitutive element of social

² However, her name does not appear in the category "Activists and Public Servants," while Charles Malik's is. Charles Malik was the first Arab to hold a PhD from Harvard University before founding the Philosophy Department at AUB and becoming in 1945 the Head of the Embassy of Lebanon in Washington D.C. In 1956 he became the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs.

relations based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying power relations” (Scott & Varikas, 1988, p. 141). This emphasis on power can be found in Didier Bigo’s (2002) discussion of gender in international relations, associated with the exercise of power in a society by men and women (p. 2). Gender studies is also presented as an interdisciplinary field, and in this case, it is a question of studying gender in relation to diplomacy, education,³ and leadership to understand the role of women in the production of social change.

Research on gender started in Sociology with Mary Beard, considered a pioneer of the analysis of the social role of women, in particular Beard’s “Woman as a Force in History” (1946), “On Understanding Women” (1931), and “America through Women’s Eyes” (1933). Beard defended the idea that historical narrative is a function of the observer’s position. Beard engaged in methodological experimentation and a multiplicity of approaches, considering women’s history as a means of presenting women as social actors and responding to the privileged position of male history.

Women are almost absent from the writing of Lebanese history and the contemporary history of the Levant. A few American women researchers have taken an interest in Lebanese women in contemporary history, such as Elisabeth Thompson (2000a) who studied the condition of Lebanese and Syrian women during the mandate period as well as the notion of citizenship defined from social policies. Shereen Khairallah (1996) wrote a monograph in the form of a biographical dictionary of Lebanese women in history, and Mirna Lattouf (2004) focused her work on the place of women in the Lebanese educational system. Finally, Ellen Fleischmann (2009) and Christine Lindner (2009) sought to demonstrate how cultural institutions, particularly American and missionary ones, have influenced Lebanese women. In this same approach, Marie Azzi Sabri (1967) and almost half a century later Catherine Batruni (2019) were interested in pioneering women of the American Junior College of Women (AJC). Among these women is Jurdak Khoury. Sabri’s biography served as a first reference to guide my research, and Sabri’s work includes a small biography of Angela Jurdak Khoury written after the author interviewed her in the 1960s. But the biography is too focused on promoting the role of the AJC in the education of girls in Lebanon. Catherine Batruni’s thesis is also about the role of AJC in allowing girls to have access to higher education and includes, following the same methodology as Sabri, a small biography of Jurdak Khoury. Both works do not analyze women pioneers in higher education through the lens of gender analysis.

Betty Anderson’s (2011) book on AUB analyzes the issues of pedagogy at the AUB, with two chapters documenting the production of a particular male elite in the interwar years, as well as the dynamics and goals of coeducation. Jurdak Khoury is cited as an illustration of women getting through coeducation. But paradoxically, American education has succeeded in forming national elites. Jurdak Khoury certainly looks to the West and its model, but she also developed patriotism towards her own country, Lebanon. The role of the education of American institutions in Lebanese national history is therefore noteworthy. It is interesting to see how, as a woman, Jurdak Khoury uses the academic institution to show who she is and how she is the product of her own experience and strategies to become part of the new Lebanese elite. These strategies include continuing her studies at AUB after AJC, accessing campus space, and participating in extracurricular activities.

This list of scholarly work is not exhaustive, but it reflects the idea that the writing of Lebanese women’s history is dominated by English-language literature, and that there are few studies on individual women’s history, since the works focus on Lebanese and Arab women in general. This is also little scholarly research about women in diplomacy. In a symposium entitled “Femmes et relations internationales au XX siècle,” held in 2004, Yves Dénéchère and

³See “Gender and Education” published in 1989 by Taylor and Francis.

Jean-Marc Delaunay (2006) explain their approach by pointing out the absence of women in research on the history of international relations (p. 12).

This absence can be explained by a lack of interest on the part of researchers and historians in the history of women and gender in general, particularly in France and especially in the 1960s and 1970s. According to Duroselle and Renouvin (1964), the history of international relations is the history of deep forces and not the history of women. They were only interested in the case of diplomats' wives rather than women diplomats. The history of women diplomats reveals above all that women have often occupied unofficial functions, behind the scenes of negotiations as informal mediators.

Philip Nash (2019) identified four approaches to studying women diplomats. The first is the exceptional women approach, highlighting women who have played an eminent role in diplomacy. The second is the women's work approach, which studies women who have worked to improve the status of women internationally, such as missionaries, nurses, or women activists. The third is the gender ideology approach, which explores how gender concepts and images have influenced relations between states. Finally, the fourth is the women in development approach, which is emerging more in the literature and consists of analyzing international relations through the prism of feminism. In my case study, I adopt the second approach focused on women's work.

Nash (2019) explains his initiative to honor these women by placing their individual stories in the history of the United States and international relations: "This is largely an act of historical recovery, capturing the experiences of these women, restoring them to their rightful places in the history of women in foreign relations. It contributes to the larger project of rendering women in international history visible" (pp. 1-4). It is therefore a question of making these women visible by researching them and integrating them into the history of international relations and foreign policy of states. Yves Dénéchère (2003) confided that it is useful for the researcher to resort to testimonies as sources to write the history of women in the diplomatic milieu to compensate for the lack of available or accessible resources, and therefore invites researchers to systematically record the testimonies of women diplomats.

Several U.S. researchers have been interested in the place of women in international organizations, with the question of gender being part of a post-structuralist approach. Since the end of the 1980s, two research works have seemed relevant to me: that of the US feminist sociologist Joan Acker (1990), who has developed a theory of organizations based on a reflection on gender, and that of the US researchers Deborah Kolb and Gloria Coolidge (1991) who were interested in the capacities of women to make decisions. The title of Kolb and Coolidge's study rather explicitly called for "Her place at the Table." The role of Jurdak Khoury in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) between 1946 and 1951 confirms that she deserved her place at the table.

Making Visible the History of Singular Women in Politics

The career of Jurdak Khoury is very interesting for a woman of her generation. This section deals with the biographical path of Jurdak Khoury as it was structured by educational, administrative, and political institutions between the 1930s and 1960s. While putting into practice her innate and acquired leadership qualities, Jurdak Khoury knew how to find the social matrices to foster her personal development. If she is not an exceptional woman by her actions and dedication, she is a singular woman who has imposed herself in circles dominated by men, whether at AUB or in diplomacy. I first analyze the career of Jurdak Khoury at AUB, which had just opened to coeducation and the recruitment of women staff. I then look at Lebanese diplomacy, where there is rather an absence of women despite the absence of legal discrimination (prohibition or quota for example) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Finally, I consider the circle of international diplomacy within the UN.

Women's history has been criticized for being descriptive rather than theoretical. However, in this paper I do both, and I use the case of Jurdak Khoury to identify how gender operates historically, and how women use integration strategies in male-dominated spheres.

Methodology and Theories

Women in Lebanon during the Mandate through the Lens of Postcolonial Theory

The feminist movement in Lebanon in the 1930s and 1940s was part of an anti-colonial process which involved demands against the paternalistic and confessional system, including nationalist demands in favor of the independence of Lebanon. The feminist movement was seeking to give women equal social and political status with men. Women in the colonial system had a subaltern status (limitation of rights in the society), which was applied to Lebanese women regardless of their sectarian identity. Subaltern citizens were those "who are systematically placed at a disadvantaged remove from direct state benefits, under the protection and control of privileged mediating elites, by virtue of their class, caste, gender, race, religion, or ethnicity" (Thompson, 2000a, p. 72).

The French authorities during the mandate aggravated social paternalism by reinforcing the hierarchy that already existed between men and women in the Ottoman Empire (Thompson, 2000a, p. 73). Article 7 of the Lebanese Constitution of 1926 nevertheless guarantees equality among all. However, within the sectarian communities custom prevailed, and thus, men enjoyed social privileges. Women, not yet having the right to vote, were classified in this category of subaltern citizens.⁴ During the Interwar period, society was divided between republican ideals related to popular sovereignty, paternalistic privileges, and the promotion of the spirit of brotherhood and solidarity. In the 1930s, feminist, worker, populist, and Islamist movements sought to challenge the pillars of paternalism that they wished to replace with new rules of mediation and a redistribution of power. Between 1920 and 1939, thirty-six feminist groups, largely with a religious tendency, were listed. As Edward Said (1989) said, "It was only when subaltern figures like women, Orientals, blacks and other 'natives' made enough noise that they were paid attention to and asked in so to speak" (p. 270).

In that context, the path of Jurdak Khoury shows that she did not accept the status of subaltern citizen in Lebanon, as she assumed her role in Lebanese diplomacy once Lebanon was independent. This allows me as a scholar to study her from the perspective of postcolonial theory. Indeed, the theory examines the ways in which figures from colonized countries attempted to articulate and even celebrate their cultural identities and reclaim them from the colonizers. Jurdak Khoury took part in the Women's March for independence on November 13, 1943, in Beirut and encouraged women's right to vote through the UN Commission on the Status of Women (1946-1951). Employing the concepts of otherness and resistance, I use postcolonial theory to analyze Jurdak Khoury as an emancipated woman liberated from the bias of men and colonial authority

The Challenges of Biographical Writing

Working on Jurdak Khoury means first writing a biography of a woman who knew how to stand out in the student environment of Beirut in the 1930s, but also in the world of diplomacy and American/Lebanese relations until the 1980s.

The chronological framework is predefined by the period in which Jurdak Khoury lived, namely 1915-2011. There are two temporalities in my article: the first one being an individual story and the second a socio-historical time frame (Balan & Jelin, 1980). The study is through the perspective of the "homunculus mundus" (Passeron, 1989), which means that a human's life is the mirror of the world and considers that it is fair to read a society through a biography

⁴ Women's right to vote was established in 1952 in Lebanon.

(Ferracotti, 1983). The paper deals with writing the biography of a woman in an era dominated by social paternalism in which the representation of women was generally reduced to domestic life. Thus, the individualization of research within the framework of a microhistorical approach is necessary because it allows us to better understand why Jurdak Khoury – like other female figures of the Arab community in Beirut – managed to establish herself in circles reserved until then only for men. It is important to consider Jurdak Khoury as a “singular individual subject” (Joseph, 2012, p. 13) who belonged to the educated Protestant microcosm and even to the “Anglo-American island” of Ras Beirut (Abunnasr, 2013, p. 22). This paper aims then to study the influence of her environment on her identity construction as an emancipated woman in the 1930s.

Women's Emancipation through the Prism of Network Theory

The initial idea of a biography evolved, as my research progressed, towards investigating both the feminism in Lebanon from 1930-1940 and the membership of Jurdak Khoury in a network of intellectuals. I identified four levels of networks which enable me to study Lebanese society from a close angle: the Arab-protestant network, the intellectuals' network, the network of diplomats, and the Arab American network. This study is through the vision of Khoury, who understood Lebanese foreign policy through the lens of a woman in the Arab-Protestant community of Beirut. Thus, the topic brings new perspectives to gender studies as it highlights another perception of the history of Lebanon and deepens our understanding of it. The paper examines the integration of Jurdak Khoury in the AUB intellectual network through poststructuralist feminism (Kristeva, 1995), which sees gender subjectivity as the result of a process of interaction between individuals and societies. These networks enabled Jurdak Khoury to pursue a career in diplomacy and to belong to the Arab American community in the United States from 1945 until her death.

Post-structuralist Feminism

In her work, Julia Kristeva (1995) identified three feminisms, and rejected the first two. The first is liberal feminism, with women demanding the same rights as men, in a context of denial of these rights. Second is radical feminism, with women representing themselves as superior to men. Thirdly, post-structural feminism advocates for a development of gender subjectivity as a result of interaction between individuals and societies.

Post-structuralist feminism aims to contest and deconstruct patriarchal discourses in social studies. It challenges the way we think about society, dominated by men's discourses, especially in Middle Eastern societies, and it emphasizes the social construction of gendered subjectivities. Using post-structuralist feminist theory in my article is a way to question how certain accepted facts (such as diplomacy as a field for men, or women's role in domesticity) reinforce the dominance of actors (men) within international relations. Hence, it encourages scholars to consider women as diplomatic actors. As a post-structuralist researcher, I aim to speak about subjectivity rather than identity. Writing a biography of Jurdak Khoury is to consider her subjectivity, asking “how we know what we know” (Razack, 1993, p. 95).

Post-structuralist feminism provides ways to examine available discourses and opens the possibility of change (Davies, 2000) in the reading of Lebanese contemporary history. Jurdak Khoury's career helped her to create a discourse serving some universal interests (Davies & Harré, 1991/92, cited in Barron, 1995, p. 109), promoting human rights, women's rights and equality with men, and a vision about Lebanon's Foreign Policy (Jurdak, 1946; Khoury, 1968). The biographical approach is based on oral sources and personal documents (Sigrid, 1979) of Khoury. Oral history refers to the use of testimonies. In women's history, archives are sometimes absent and constructing an oral history becomes a necessity (Thébaud, 2007).

The discourse analysis highlights the way Jurdak Khoury thought and perceived the society in which she evolved. The discursive language is mainly English, which shows the importance of environment to one's cultural perception, as Jurdak Khoury was acculturated to the American environment. The poststructuralist approach considers that language allows women to emancipate themselves, emerge from oppression, and impose their own identity.

The "Women Worthies" Approach in Gender Studies in the Levant

The "women worthies" approach constitutes the prism of my work, allowing me ask these questions about the evolution of Jurdak Khoury's life and the changing institutions in Lebanon that surrounded her:

1. By what means did Jurdak Khoury, a Protestant woman in Lebanon under the French mandate, become the first female diplomat in Lebanon?
2. In what way is Jurdak Khoury a woman with a particular if not exceptional career?

In answering these questions, I underline the importance of Protestant and US institutions in the intellectual production of Jurdak Khoury. The thread of the research is, therefore, the history of social mobility in Lebanon within the institutional Arab-Protestant community, and a consideration of the emancipation of women through education and work. My work seeks to individualize the object of research, in an approach close to biography, without wanting to make it a model for a comparative work. Davis (1976) noted that "the study of individual lives was the more frequent form, however, and it had the advantage over that of the Women Worthies in being able to embed a woman more carefully in her culture and society" (p. 83). If Davis distinguished between a biography of an individual woman and the history of "Women Worthies," this biography of Jurdak Khoury does not fall into the category of traditional biography that sets a historical figure in her cultural context. I use the term "history of Women Worthies" in a broader sense as Jurdak Khoury is an exceptional woman in her time. Jurdak Khoury's biography is in between both categories – traditional biography and the history of Women Worthies.

In the case of Jurdak Khoury, the perception of women as victims of the patriarchal system did not seem to apply to her educational experience. Jurdak Khoury chose to assert her autonomy and unabashedly integrated herself into the largely male-dominated university. Suad Joseph (2012) considered that "the study of families, in their pluralities and multiplicities, is positioned in many ways to challenge the study of Arab women as singular individual subjects and repositions them in the relational context of familial matrices that are so crucial to Arab societies" (p. 13). Women who managed to make a career, especially at university, ended up adopting an asexual model (Smith, 1998). Jurdak Khoury, from the angle of this concept of "third sex," did not complain of any kind of discrimination by men. On the contrary, she was perfectly integrated within institutions where men were in the majority and their domination was affirmed by the institution.

Arab women must become a historical subject, as a distinct category with a social identification (Joseph, 2012). Among Arab women, there are Jews, Kurdish, Muslim, and Christian women. Studying each category is needed to study sub-cultural social structures that affect Arab women.

Findings/Results

Social Determinism and Access to Education

The father of Jurdak Khoury, Mansur Jurdak, was more than just a father. He was the first in the family line to access higher education and became a prominent professor of astronomy and mathematics. The study of the vocation and career of Mansur Jurdak helps to

establish the framework in which Angela and her five siblings grew up. Daughter of a recognized scientist and an AUB Alumni, Jurdak Khoury could only become an AUB student too, following in her father's footsteps, according to Bourdieu's sociological approach (Bourdieu, 1966). In 1921, the AUB pioneered coeducation (Faculty of Arts and Sciences), which was the turning point in giving women greater access to education in the Arab world, and thus promoted the role of women in state-building in Lebanon and allowed women to imagine diverse futures for themselves (El-Cheikh et al., 2016).

AUB wanted to make education more flexible according to new social, economic, and political changes. It prepared students for professional life to produce a social change in the societies where the American Syrian Mission was established, but also was in line with the service of American interests: educated women could diffuse within society the principles inculcated by Protestant education. The students at American Protestant missionary schools, like Jurdak Khoury, were characterized by a hybrid identity (Batruni, 2019), a high educational level, and an ability to adapt in cosmopolitan societies. Jurdak Khoury fed on intercultural contacts and representations that had contributed to her identity construction as a young woman whose Eastern identity had been protestantized.

Jurdak Khoury graduated from AUB in 1937 (B.A). She was the only woman from the FAS to receive her M.A., in 1938. It is through the concept of integration that I analyzed the university career of Jurdak Khoury. Along with social integration, there were other forms of non-social integration, such as academic integration, which refers to the academic performance of the student, her level of intellectual development, and the perception she has of having a positive experience in terms of intellectual development (Sauvé et al., 2006, p. 789). There are three spheres of integration: social, university, and institutional. The two latter correspond to the student's ability to belong to the university community and to master its codes of conduct and intrinsic values.

Education and Women's Emancipation

Education is an essential means to promote the emancipation of women. But the acquisition of knowledge is not enough to become a person who is cultured and appreciated by society. Jurdak Khoury clearly insisted on the use of knowledge as a tool for social development: "I believe that university education is just as bad as absolute lack of education if we are unable to make use of what we have acquired. Then, the second and most natural step to follow, in the realization of our ideals [human rights], would be, making the best use out of what we have learned or are learning" (Ghussayn & Jurdak, 1940, p. 222). Jurdak Khoury was a product of what she learned in college and fit right in with the sociology department project. She presented herself as a role model for students, motivating them to engage in social work, as "it is upon you the educated youth of the land that our national progress depends" (Ghussayn & Jurdak, 1940, p. 222). Convinced of the importance of education, Jurdak Khoury is, according to my analysis, a "new woman" (Amin, 1899, 1992), liberated from paternalism and invested in a national mission.

Angela Jurdak Khoury: A Woman in an Arab-American Network

The AUB represented Jurdak Khoury the privileged place for the constitution of her social capital, namely all the resources mobilized through her social network. Thus, the greater the social capital of a person, the more this person is integrated into social dynamics, because "relationships matter" (Field, 2003).

Pierre Bourdieu (1979) defines social capital as all the current or potential resources that are linked to the possession of a lasting network of institutionalized relations of mutual knowledge and mutual recognition. Thus, for Bourdieu (1979), social capital takes on the meaning of relational capital and is placed at the service of economic capital (fructification of

profits) and cultural capital (increased knowledge, sense of reflection, critical thinking). He describes three states of cultural capital: capital in the incorporated state, in the form of dispositions, knowledge and know-how, relating to the habitus; in the objectified state (cultural goods); and in the institutionalized state, in the form of school degrees. These three states fully qualify the cultural capital of Jurdak Khoury. Furthermore, the habitus favors the appearance of a lifestyle of a social class, in particular the bourgeoisie (Bourdieu, 1980). Jurdak Khoury is indeed disposed to incorporate cultural capital thanks to her father, a bearer of scholarly culture who also made it a lifestyle. Finally, the educational qualifications accumulated by Jurdak Khoury, from the baccalaureate to the master's degree, constitute cultural capital in the institutionalized state which served to determine her future career. The social environment of Jurdak Khoury was built as an ego-centered network (Padget & Ansell, 1993). The individual network in the process of socialization and construction of a social identity matters, as each relationship further opens the little world of the individual, made up of their relationships and new ideas (Bidart, 2008).

In this small world, the role of significant others is essential (Mead, 1934, 1963). The intellectual network that surrounded Jurdak Khoury was made up of academic personalities, Arabic speakers, and specialists in the Arab world, who contributed through their research, their interventions, their publications, and their activism to put into practice their rational philosophical thought and their vision of a modern Arab society. Charles Malek, Constantin Zurayq, and Albert Hourani were considered by students to be the three big-brain musketeers of the campus. These men followed the same academic trajectory after the AUB, directed either towards Great Britain and then the United States, or directly towards the United States. All of them were guided by the prominent figure of Philip Hitti, who became well-known at Princeton University. Thanks to her network Angela Jurdak met Shukry Khoury, prominent American lawyer, president of the Syrian American club, and member of the Arab National League in the U.S. Shukry Khoury belonged to the network of Arab professors around Philip Hitti at Princeton University, which became denser in the 1940s with Farhat Ziadeh, Faris Malouf, and Richard Bayly Winder as Arabic language specialists.

A Woman of Her Time

In 1938, Jurdak Khoury became an alumna of AUB, but she did not cut ties with her university. Having just completed her master's degree in sociology, Jurdak Khoury decided to engage in active life and work at AUB as the first female teacher in the Sociology Department. She seemed to be following in her father's footsteps, through an almost similar academic path, punctuated by administrative duties and commitment to community service. From June 1938 to March 1945, she held various administrative and academic positions at AUB: secretary to the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, secretary to the Registrar, and teacher in the departments of Sociology and Psychology (from 1938 to 1945). The role of the Rockefeller Foundation in encouraging the careers of women in the social sciences also contributed to the opening of the Sociology department at AUB (Rossiter, 1982). In 1943, while continuing to teach at the university and serve on the Civic Welfare League committee, Jurdak Khoury was appointed by Stuart Dodd as deputy director of the Allied Powers Radio Poll for Syria and Lebanon (Dodd, 1943). This was a committee in charge of producing a survey questionnaire for radio listeners in Lebanon and Syria during WWII and analyzing the responses. The objective of this survey was to identify and count the number of people who listened to the radio of the enemy, namely Nazi Germany and its allies in the Levant region. Also, Jurdak Khoury was the only woman in the Radio Poll team, which showed the great confidence that Stuart Dodd had in her on a professional level. In a letter of recommendation, addressed to the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, dated November 27, 1944, Stuart Dodd praised the qualities of Jurdak Khoury within the Radio Poll: "She organized an office of forty employees

when I made a Radio Poll in Lebanon and Palestine, and handled all its records, files, book-keeping, recruiting of personnel, planning of the work and other aspects of organizing that office most capably” (Dodd, 1944, cited in Sabri, 1967, p. 196-197). Jurdak Khoury's professional experience between 1938 and 1945 gave her many assets, as if the Second World War constituted a sort of transition in her career. After the end of the war, Lebanon was one of the first independent countries seeking to gradually assert itself in the new world order. The AUB instructed its men and women to serve the new independent state, particularly on the international scene (Report of the President of the American University of Beirut, 1944, p. 6). Jurdak Khoury's interest in International Relations was confirmed in 1937, when she joined Alfred Zimmermann School of International Service in Geneva and in 1940 when she again obtained a scholarship, this time in the United States at the University of Michigan. Indeed, she was the only woman in the Arab world to benefit for the year 1940-1941 from the Barbour Scholarship in Ann Arbor.

Elisabeth Thompson (2000b) analyzed the situation of women during this period with optimism: “women entered World War II armed with charitable, educational, and political organizations that would mount incessant protests claiming not only their right to bread but their political rights and right to national independence” (p. 70).

Diplomacy and Professional Achievements

Jurdak Khoury's career in diplomacy was on both national and international levels. On the first hand, Jurdak Khoury was the first woman to be appointed in 1945 as attaché to the Legation of Lebanon. Before her appointment in Washington D.C., she was a member of the Lebanese delegation to the U.N. San Francisco Conference as a general secretary in 1945. Jurdak Khoury was appointed, for a brief period in 1951, to be Consul of Lebanon in New York. The embassy secretary is part of the diplomatic team within the embassy. Thus secretaries are not chosen by default; their training and experience are essential criteria for their selection. Observing Jurdak Khoury's journey, I can say that her leadership style was rather a communal one, which manifests itself more in the interpersonal management of problems, support for others, and self-sacrifice (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

In the letter of recommendation that he wrote for Jurdak Khoury to the Foreign Office, Stuart Dodd listed the qualities needed to embark on a career as a diplomat:

1. Leadership qualities: “She has unusual leadership in organizing welfare work;”
2. Communication skills: “She is a good public speaker;”
3. Organizational skills: “She organized an office of forty employees [...] recruiting [...], planning [...];”
4. Secretarial skills: “She is an excellent teacher and also an excellent secretary. Her short-hand and typing are of the best. Her reliability in secretarial work makes her an invaluable personal assistant to any public personage in whose office she may work.”
5. Sense of responsibility: “It is with extreme reluctance that the Department and the University will release her and only if she is needed in a responsible post in the service of her nation” (Dodd, 1944, cited in Sabri, 1976, pp. 196-197).

The career of Jurdak Khoury is significant for several reasons: the first is that she was the first Lebanese woman to enter the diplomatic corps, but also one of the rare women to occupy a post in an embassy in Washington, D.C. Indeed, she was the only secretary, appointed to the legation, then to the Lebanese embassy, to remain so long (twenty-one years) within the same diplomatic representation abroad. This was due to the following skills: her mastery of English, her experience, and her knowledge of the United States and American-Lebanese

relations. The conquest of ranks did not seem to be the subject of a long struggle, as it could have been for other women in the same period, such as Suzanne Borel in France (Gaspard, 2000). On the contrary, she was able to benefit from a Lebanese context in favor of the emancipation of women, and from valuable contacts who encouraged her to pursue her career, as she herself noted.

On August 19, 1959, Jurdak Khoury was awarded the gold medal of the National Order of Cedar, for service to the nation of Lebanon, nearly a year after the 1958 crisis. Jurdak Khoury is the only woman, along with singer Fairuz, to receive this distinction in the 1950s in Lebanon. She thus acquired what Bourdieu (1979) called symbolic capital, referring to prestige and social recognition, as if this recognition was part of this logic of transmission or determinism thanks to her father, Mansur Jurdak, who received numerous decorations from the Lebanese government.

The award given to Jurdak Khoury certainly recognized her contribution to resolving the political crisis in Lebanon in 1958, helping to set up the Lebanese Embassy in Washington, promoting values and Lebanese culture abroad, and her overall commitment to Lebanon. All of this was shown both during her diplomatic career (Commission on the Status of Women, support for Lebanon affected by the earthquake two years earlier, etc.) and recent years spent in Lebanon (social work within the framework of the CWL in the service of basketboys, delinquents or others destitute during the Second World War).

On the other hand, Jurdak Khoury was a pioneer of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and among the founding mothers of the United Nations in 1946 (Pietilä, 2007). As a diplomat, she represented Lebanon on the CSW. She recalled that the CSW was a means of studying political issues in practice, far from academic circles. She said at the end of this first meeting that the commission is determined to put into practice the demands of women for equality (Wright, 1946). She was indeed very optimistic at the dawn of this new UN mission for the promotion of women's rights (Foster, 1946).

Representing Lebanon as rapporteur for the Commission on the Status of Women at the UN between 1950 and 1951, Jurdak Khoury enjoyed greater notoriety. The issues raised were related to the participation of women in UN functions, equality between men and women in all areas, and the raising of the status of women in developing countries. In 1946 and between 1950 and 1951, Jurdak Khoury expressed positions on various subjects concerning women, three of which I consider in detail: polygamy, discrimination against women, and equality in rights between men and women in marriage. Among the topics hotly debated within the CSW was polygamy. The Commission adopted international measures on marriage (notably on the prohibition of polygamy), the free choice of husbands by women, and the possibility for women to divorce. Jurdak Khoury was formally opposed to polygamy, while Marie-Hélène LeFauchaux considered that the subject did not concern the Commission. Jurdak Khoury thought on the contrary that the objective of the commission was to create improved status for women that polygamy did not allow, insofar as it was a violation of the dignity of women ("Status of women," 1946). This debate led Marie-Hélène LeFauchaux to withdraw her opposition ("Polygamy Irrupts on Women's status," 1946). Within the other topics debated, Jurdak Khoury considered that discrimination was numerous and persistent, five years after the founding of the UN (Khoury, 1950). She described discrimination as deeply rooted, diverse, and unjust (Khoury, 1950). According to Jurdak Khoury, the role of the commission was to find the best way to eliminate these discriminations and thus encourage social progress. She assured that an "extreme sympathy, understanding, cooperation and accommodation of the representatives created a congenial, interesting, pleasant and fruitful atmosphere of work" (Khoury, 1950).

The third commitment of the CSW concerned equal rights in marriage and parental custody. The equality of men and women in private law started to be guaranteed in Lebanon in

1955, depending on the confessional communities. Finally, Jurdak Khoury insisted, during the sessions of 1950 and 1951, on the issue of regional and international cooperation for the promotion of women's rights. She addressed a message to Arab women, who must emancipate themselves by their own means. She pointed to Syrian and Lebanese women to serve as an example, being the only Arab women to have political rights. Lebanon and Syria were the only two Arab countries to be represented on the CSW. Jurdak Khoury was convinced that equality between men and women would only strengthen national unity, but above all the unity of the Arab world. She thus encouraged dialogue between the regions of the world, but above all she seemed to point the finger at the prejudiced idea that only developing countries were lagging in terms of feminist development.

Linksey (2013) has underlined that women as individuals are rarely cited in the context of UN commissions, insofar as they represent states, and not their own point of view. The case of Jurdak Khoury may then come as a surprise, since she was considered by the international and Arab press as an exceptional woman, whose opinion counted and must be disseminated as a forthright feminist.

Conclusion: Angela Jurdak Khoury as a Postcolonial Citizen

Postcolonial theory and poststructuralist feminism were used in this article to explain the ways Jurdak Khoury used institutional and structural tools in order to affirm herself in a world dominated by men. The study of her discourse and actions is part of the methodology to consider her subjectivity. The findings of the research are related to the importance of the access of women to higher education in an Arab society and attest to the fact that some women have decided to make a career, instead of staying at home and being good spouses according to the principles of domestic motherhood. Jurdak Khoury is an example of a “patriotic motherhood” (Thompson, 2000s, p. 98).

As a conclusion, Jurdak Khoury represents the image of a “postcolonial citizen” (Thompson, 2000a, p. 284-290). Postcolonial citizenship is defined as being the fruit of the socio-political dualism born of the French mandate in Lebanon and Syria, a civic order marked by both social paternalism and republicanism. Postcolonial citizenship gives an important place to the question of gender and to women, who are at the heart of the network of solidarity and of understanding between the classes. The postcolonial citizen thus plays a role in the stabilization of the social order, already begun under the mandate, by making the condition of women an important social issue, thanks to the associations founded and led by women for women. The construction of the process of postcolonial citizenship was done through the inclusion of those who were left on the margins of the political, social, and economic sphere, in particular through activism in favor of the recognition of specific rights (Sadiq, 2017). Thompson speaks of “Lebanon liberal paternalism” as Lebanon is different from other postcolonial states, in that paternalism and republicanism are embedded in social structures (2000a, p. 284). On the eve of the new world order, which triggered the liberalization of societies around the world, Jurdak Khoury's identity construction was mixed. She was characterized first by a liberal Protestant education, but also influenced by universal liberal values and principles, enacted by the U.N. on an international level. Postcolonial citizenship is a key concept to produce a gendered reading and writing of Levant history. Women became postcolonial citizens as active members of the society even if they did not get the right to vote until 1952. A gendered writing of history considers that women were major stakeholders who contributed to making history, and Jurdak Khoury is one of them.

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