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Marriage across different migratory movements: exploring emerging perspectives on conjugal relationships in the Middle East and North Africa

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MARRIAGE ACROSS DIFFERENT MIGRATORY
MOVEMENTS: EXPLORING EMERGING PERSPECTIVES ON
CONJUGAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND
NORTH AFRICA¹



This special theme issue examines how different forms of mobility to and within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region shape new understandings of family structures and marital relationships within contemporary legal, religious, and socioeconomic contexts. By shifting attention to migration to and within the MENA region, the issue challenges dominant framings of the region as primarily a site of transit and emigration. Instead, it approaches the MENA region as a site of immigration, settlement, and intraregional mobility. In doing so, it brings together two bodies of scholarship that have often remained separate: family migration studies in Europe and studies of gender, intimacy, and marriage in the MENA region. Muslim women occupy a central place in both fields, but they are positioned differently. The former tends to examine them as migrants in global North societies, while the latter usually approaches them as citizens embedded in national, legal, and religious frameworks. By connecting these perspectives, the special issue explores how mobility reconfigures family life, marital relationships, and gendered forms of agency across and within the region.

Migration, characterized by a wide range of mobilities, has long been a prominent feature of the MENA region. Historically, this includes trade migrations such as those along the cross-Sahara trade routes and the Silk Road, as well as movements related to Ottoman expansion, European colonialism, and decolonization. In more recent times, significant migration has occurred due to labor migration to Western Europe and the Gulf countries; irregular cross-Sahara migration; student migration to diverse MENA countries; and substantial forced migrations in the twenty-first century driven by

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conflicts within the MENA region, such as the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, which generated displacement from the last century through to the present. Other large-scale conflicts include those stemming from the post-2011 uprisings in Libya, Syria, and Yemen, while conflicts in neighboring regions, such as the Horn of Africa and South Asia, have also driven patterns of forced migration into the MENA region.

Different types of migration bring significant challenges across various socioeconomic, political, legal, and cultural levels. While it is believed that migration reshapes family structures and gender roles defined by religious and cultural norms across both origin and host societies,² its broader sociolegal consequences are not yet well understood for the MENA, despite the evident migration flows into and within the region.³

It is important to study how migrants residing in the region and host governments address intimate life events for several reasons. First, the family is where some of the most intimate and consequential moments of human experience take place⁴ and it plays a central role in shaping identity, belonging, and social continuity. Migration does not halt major life events; births, deaths, marriages, and other pivotal moments continue to unfold in contexts of relocation. Moreover, in many societies, marriage also serves as a significant marker of the transition from childhood to adulthood. Given this profound implication, marriage and family formation are recognized as fundamental rights under Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms not only the right to marry but also the principle of equality between spouses during marriage and at its dissolution.

Second, for many individuals, sexuality and key life events are governed by religious prescriptions. This is particularly significant in the MENA region, where formal laws and regulations concerning life events, intimacy, and sexuality are often religion-based (with the partial exception of Türkiye),⁵ and where different rules apply to citizens according to religious affiliation. This, in turn, raises the question of how such frameworks apply to people on the move, whether they are non-citizens or, in the case of internally displaced persons, citizens of the state in which they are displaced.⁶ For migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons, the recognition or non-recognition of marriages, divorces, births, and deaths can shape access to residence, citizenship, inheritance, custody, family reunification, humanitarian assistance, and legal protection. Intimate life events are, therefore, not only personal or religious matters but also crucial spaces

through which legal status, social belonging, and vulnerabilities are produced.

Third, and relatedly, while family formation and marriage are often experienced as intimate and private matters, they are also sites of political intervention and state interest. States have long sought to regulate intimate life for political purposes, a process conceptualized as intimate citizenship.⁷ Intimate citizenship is especially important in contexts where demographic balance is perceived as politically sensitive. This was evident in the colonial metropole⁸ and remains relevant today,⁹ including in contemporary MENA countries such as Lebanon (where census-taking is highly sensitive due to sectarian balance), Jordan (where Palestinians form a large minority), and Israel (where Palestinians with Israeli citizenship form a large minority group). In many Gulf states, where migrant populations greatly outnumber citizens, the regulation of marriage, citizenship transmission, and family reunification is closely tied to concerns about maintaining a particular citizen-noncitizen ratio.¹⁰ Examining how states respond to contentious issues related to marriage and family formation allows us to detect patterns and differences not just in well-studied global North countries but also in less-studied global South contexts, past and present.

Finally, studying intimate life exposes the limits of humanitarian and state-centered approaches to displacement. While humanitarian responses often focus on shelter, food, documentation, and security, displaced people continue to form families, seek divorce, give birth, and make claims to care and obligations. By foregrounding these life events, this special issue shifts the analysis from crises management to the everyday social lives through which migrants rebuild continuity and belonging.

There is an extensive body of research on gender, marriage, and sexuality in the MENA region.¹¹ This scholarship has examined both historical and contemporary transformations in family life. It has also analyzed legislative and judicial approaches to Islamic family law, personal status reform, and everyday negotiation of marital rights and duties.¹² In so doing, it has focused mainly on the experiences of female Muslim citizens. The perspectives of men, non-Muslims, and non-citizens remain, therefore, comparatively underexplored.¹³ This gap is significant in light of major migratory flows to and within the MENA region. It also limits our understanding of whether and how mobility generates new norms and practices around conjugal relationships in a region where religion continues to play an important role in the formal and informal regulation of marriage.¹⁴

In studies on family migration in Europe, Muslim women have also been a frequent focus. They are often discussed through policy and public debates on fraudulent, arranged, and/or forced marriages, including concerns about marriages involving minors.¹⁵ While some studies reproduce these victimizing portrayals, others explicitly contest political narratives that depict women as gullible and vulnerable and migrant men as predatory and calculating.¹⁶ However, both approaches often remain confined within the same gender-essentialized framework, centering the debate on whether women are victims while analytically neglecting a broader spectrum of gendered positions, identities, and experiences.

In this special theme issue, we build upon these two bodies of literature to examine marriage and migration to and within the MENA region. We depart from the trend of policy-driven scholarship by exploring regions, issues, and categories of migrants that are not prioritized on the agendas of Western migration policymakers.¹⁷ Rather than focusing on the Muslim female citizen in the MENA or the Muslim female migrant/the Muslim female citizen with a migration background in Europe, this special issue focuses on individuals from diverse class, gender, religious, professional, and economic backgrounds who have migrated to and within the MENA region for various reasons (e.g., education, economic opportunities, war, conflict, lifestyle, marriage). We conceptualize migration not only as geographical mobility but also as a mental or existential process,¹⁸ enabling an examination of how feelings of being “stuck” in life are experienced and how intimate relationships, whether marriage or cohabitation, may help individuals navigate or overcome such conditions (Kolman, this issue; Sonneveld and Smaili, this issue). Using postcolonial theory, we argue that these matters are significant aspects of empirical reality that warrant scholarly attention. Ignoring them limits our understanding of how families from different backgrounds engage in the politics of intimacy and family formation. This is particularly important in the case of North Africa, a region more often studied through the lens of outward migration to Europe or the Gulf than as a region in which migrants settle and build lives. The special issue focuses instead on migrant groups who move to North Africa rather than away from it. These include Syrians and migrants from various East African countries (Ayoub, this issue), as well as migrants from the Middle East, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa (Van Uden and Heddane, this issue). In doing so, it foregrounds empirical realities that are often overlooked in policy-driven narratives, aligning with the “decentering” approach advanced by Fakhoury et al. in this issue.

TRENDS IN STUDIES ON MARRIAGE AND MIGRATION TO AND WITHIN THE MENA REGION

The Middle East has emerged as a major hub for international migration, which is evidenced by the fact that several Gulf states and Jordan rank among the five countries with the highest proportions of international migration in their populations.¹⁹ Yet, scholarship on migration to and within the MENA remains limited compared to the extensive body of work on migration from the region. The latter often focuses on the position of migrant Muslim women in relation to religion, integration, and gender norms associated with their countries of origin.²⁰ Research on migration to the Middle East region tends to focus on migrants primarily as domestic and essential laborers in Gulf countries (and, to a lesser extent, in Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon). As noted by several scholars, this research largely reduces migrants to their economic functions, thereby overlooking their transnational family responsibilities, emotional attachments, and intimate lives.²¹

In the context of North Africa, many studies focus on international relations and migration governance, particularly how the externalization of European border management and control has shaped the legal and regulatory frameworks governing migration in this region.²² Similar to the literature on labor migration to the Gulf, this body of work rarely engages with questions of sexuality, marriage, family formation, and other forms of intimacy. Important exceptions include studies of mixed marriages in Morocco, migrant intimacy within illegalization, and emerging research on migration and family law in Morocco.²³

Despite the limited space for questions of migrants' intimacy within the larger body of literature addressing migration to and within the MENA region, a small but growing space is taken by the topic of marriage, either as a topic in and of itself or in the context of state policies on migration governance.

In the period following the Arab uprisings, the number of studies on marriage and migration increased, with considerably scholarly attention for Syrian forced migrants in Jordan,²⁴ and, to a lesser extent, Lebanon²⁵ and Egypt,²⁶ including a dominant focus on marriages of Syrian females below the age of eighteen,²⁷ and, less so, on difficulties with registration.²⁸ While studies often address the negative impacts of minor marriage, Dina Zbeidy shows these unions can also be chosen out of love and romance, echoing earlier criticism that intimate relations form a continuum from forced to consensual.²⁹

While Syrian forced female migrants in both Europe and the MENA region receive substantial scholarly attention, research on family formation and marriage strategies among other displaced populations is comparatively limited, despite their numbers or prolonged displacement. Notable exceptions include Zbeidy's comparative study on Palestinians and Syrians in Jordan,³⁰ Stephanie Latte Abdallah's on intimate relationships in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan,³¹ Melisanda Genat's on Iraqi displacement,³² and Shifra Kisch's on mixed marriages among the Bedouin of the Naqab desert.³³

Although most forcibly displaced people in the region are internally displaced, research on family formation and marriage strategies among this group remains very scarce, with notable exceptions examining formalization of intimate life events, such as marriage, among Syrians and Iraqis under the Islamic State (IS) or post-IS rule.³⁴

An van Raemdonck highlights another under-researched area: the situation of male forced migrants in Jordan, who face "double waithood" as they wait for both residency permits to work and opportunities to marry.³⁵ Magdalena Suerbaum similarly shifts the perspectives to the experiences of Syrian refugee men by exploring how they navigate economic challenges, changing gender roles, and the loss of their traditional identities as providers and protectors in a context of forced displacement in Egypt.³⁶ Lewis Turner's work on Syrian refugee men as objects of humanitarian care further complicates dominant gendered frameworks by showing how men can also become subjects of vulnerability, dependency, and humanitarian intervention.³⁷ By doing so, the authors challenge dominant narratives that often marginalize men's experiences in discussions on forced migration.

THE SPECIAL ISSUE

Given the above overview, the contributions in this special issue enrich the study of marriage and migration in the region in three important ways. First, the contributions are grounded in empirical research, with all contributors having spent considerable time in the field. This emphasis on empirically grounded scholarship is also echoed in Fakhoury et al. (this issue).

Second, within the relatively small body of scholarship on marriage and migration to and within the region, which has largely focused on the Middle East, these contributions instead center on

North Africa. In doing so, they highlight that North Africa should be understood not merely as a region of transit and outward migration but as a social space in which migrants settle for diverse reasons and sustain everyday life, including intimate practices such as marriage and cohabitation, even when onward migration remains a possibility. These practices unfold within specific configurations of time and space that are shaped not only by formal state policies but also by religious and sociocultural norms. This is reflected in all four contributions, including the two contributions that adopt a sociolegal perspective in exploring how people navigate administrative and legal frameworks rooted in norms other than their own.

Maysa Ayoub examines practices and attitudes toward marriage registration among refugee communities in Egypt, specifically comparing Syrian and African forced migrant groups. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction and social capital, she finds that Syrian forced migrants are more likely to pursue formal registration, a reality that reflects greater familiarity with state institutions and Egyptian marriage norms. In contrast, African respondents often face prolonged displacement, rely more heavily on informal networks, and are less familiar with the local context, consequently making formal registration of marriages both less accessible and less self-evident. The findings highlight that marriage registration is not merely bureaucratic but a practice shaped by cultural identities and lived experiences.

Moving to the other end of North Africa, Judith van Uden and Nada Heddane examine how sub-Saharan, Middle Eastern, and South Asian migrants navigate both the formal and informal aspects of marriage in Morocco. Using belonging as their analytical lens, they conclude that marital practices and strategies are shaped by a complex interplay of intersecting traits. Some traits, such as gender and place of birth, are difficult to change, while others, such as administrative status and religion, may be more fluid. The article demonstrates that intersectionality shapes belonging both as an emotional sense of feeling at home and as a politics of belonging, through which migrants are included or excluded across various social fields, including the nation-state, religious communities, and ethnic or family groups and communities. Belonging, they argue, is not limited to national affiliation but also encompasses social, cultural, and religious dimensions.

Third, the contributions examine women and men, both citizens and non-citizens, and individuals from different religious backgrounds. This helps clarify how intimate citizenship operates

across multiple axes of difference and opens up future research comparing the experiences of citizens and non-citizens. Iris Kolman's analysis of Tunisian students and young professionals in post-uprising Tunis already offers a useful starting point. As young citizens, they seek to counter feelings of being stuck in life by engaging in intimate relations that are meaningful to them, including cohabitation, a practice strongly condemned in Tunisian society. When cohabitation aligns with their romantic and professional aspirations, it gives these men and women the feeling of "going somewhere" in life, helping them avoid its opposite: a sense of existential immobility.

This perspective resonates with Nadia Sonneveld's and Reda Smaili's study of migrants from Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire who have moved to Morocco. Their respondents also engage in forms of intimacy that may be disapproved of in their countries of origin but that provide a sense of stability and security and offer an opportunity to learn how to become responsible adults and marital partners. Both contributions show that although a substantial body of literature argues that migrants are "stuck" in the region, "stuckness" also has existential dimensions. Respondents, whether citizens or non-citizens, do not simply endure this condition; they actively seek to overcome or prevent existential immobility through intimate relationship and life plans.

By shifting the analytical focus from geographical and economic mobility to existential mobility, this special issue challenges dominant policy-driven approaches that reduce migrants to economic actors or objects of governance. Instead, it foregrounds how individuals, both citizens and non-citizens, navigate uncertainty, belonging, and hope through intimate relationships. In doing so, the contributions collectively demonstrate that marriage and family formation are not peripheral to migration processes but central to how people make sense of their lives and futures within contexts shaped by mobility and change. This perspective expands and reorients migration studies in the MENA region by shifting attention from movement across borders to the intimate, legal, and existential practices through which migrants seek continuity, recognition, and livable futures.

NOTES

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Vollenhoven Institute for Law, Governance, and Society, Leiden University (PI: Nadia Sonneveld). See also the project websites in an audio-visual manner: <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/projects/sustainable-development-negotiating-relationships-redefining-traditions-syrian-iraqi-women-refugees-jordan/> and <https://www.livingontheotherside.org>.

² See, for example, Caroline B. Brettell, "Marriage and Migration," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 46 (2017): 81–97, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102116-041237>; Andrew M. Gardner, "Gulf Migration and the Family," *Journal of Arabian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21534764.2011.576043>.

³ Kerilyn Scheweland and Alix Debray, "Global Trends in South-South Migration," in *The Palgrave Handbook of South-South Migration and Inequality*, eds. Heaven Crawley and Joseph Kofi Teye (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 153–81.

⁴ Robin Fretwell Wilson, ed., *The Contested Place of Religion in Family Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

⁵ If Cyprus is included as part of the MENA region, this observation applies to Cyprus as well.

⁶ Tahir Zaman, *Islamic Traditions of Refuge in the Crises of Iraq and Syria* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

⁷ Ken Plummer, *Intimate Citizenship: Private Decisions and Public Dialogues* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt130hj4x>.

⁸ Lauren Banko, "A Stranger from This Homeland: Deportation and the Ruin of Lives and Livelihoods During the Palestine Mandate," *Contemporary Levant* 4, no. 2 (2019): 107–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20581831.2019.1668992>.

⁹ Perveez Mody, "Intimacy and the Politics of Love," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 51 (2022): 281, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102218-011401>.

¹⁰ Abdulhadi Khalaf, Omar AlShehabi, and Adam Hanieh, eds., *Transit States: Labour, Migration and Citizenship in the Gulf* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt183p1j8>.

¹¹ See, for example, Lila Abu-Lughod, ed., *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Mounira M. Charrad, *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Doris Gray and Nadia Sonneveld, eds., *Women and Social Change in North Africa: What Counts as Revolutionary?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Frances S. Hasso, *Consuming Desires: Family Crisis and the State in the Middle East* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); Marcia C. Inhorn, *The New Arab Man: Emergent Masculinities, Technologies, and Islam in the Middle East* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Suad Joseph, ed., *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse

University Press, 2000); Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹² See, for example, Mulki Al-Sharmani, *Gender Justice and Legal Reform in Egypt: Negotiating Muslim Family Law* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2017); Esther van Eijk, *Family Law in Syria: Patriarchy, Pluralism and Personal Status Laws* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016); Dörthe Engelcke, *Reforming Family Law: Social and Political Change in Jordan and Morocco* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Nadia Sonneveld, *Khul' Divorce in Egypt: Public Debates, Judicial Practices, and Everyday Life* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2012); Judith E. Tucker, *Women, Family, and Gender in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Maaike Voorhoeve, *Gender and Divorce Law in North Africa: Sharia, Custom and the Personal Status Code in Tunisia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014); Lynn Welchman, *Women and Muslim Family Laws in Arab States: A Comparative Overview of Textual Development and Advocacy* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

¹³ Betty de Hart, Nadia Sonneveld, and Iris Sportel, "New Perspectives on Gender in Shari'a-Based Family Law Studies: Moving Beyond the Women's Issue," *Religion & Gender* 7, no. 1 (2017): 42–52, <https://doi.org/10.18352/rg.10210>.

For exceptions, see Nathalie Bernard-Maugiron, "Divorce and Remarriage of Orthodox Copts in Egypt: The 2008 State Council Ruling and the Amendment of the 1938 Personal Status Regulations," *Islamic Law and Society* 18 (2011): 356–86; Van Eijk, *Family Law in Syria*; Engelcke, *Reforming Family Law*; Monika Lindbekk, "Between the Power of the State and the Guardianship of the Church: Orthodox Copts Seeking Divorce," in *Eugen Ehrlich's Sociology of Law*, eds. Knut Papendorf, Stefan Machura, and Anne Hellum, *Society and Law* 8 (Zurich: LIT Verlag, 2014), 179–202; Ron Shaham, "Communal Identity, Political Islam and Family Law: Copts and the Debate Over the Grounds for Dissolution of Marriage in Twentieth-Century Egypt," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 21, no. 4 (2010): 409–22; Nadia Sonneveld and Monika Lindbekk, "A Revolution in Muslim Family Law? Egypt's Pre- and Post-Revolutionary Period (2011–2013) Compared," *New Middle Eastern Studies* 5 (2015): 1–19; Mariz Tadros, "The Non-Muslim 'Other': Gender and Contestations of Hierarchy or Rights," *Hawwa* 7 (2009): 111–43.

¹⁴ Julie McBrien and Annelies Moors, eds., *Muslim Marriage and Non-Marriage: Where Religion and Politics Meet Intimate Life* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2023); Nadia Sonneveld, "Migration and Law in the Middle East and North Africa," in *The Routledge Handbook of Religion, Gender and Society*, eds. Caroline Starkey and Emma Tomalin (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2022), 222–33.

¹⁵ See, for example, Saskia Bonjour and Albert Kraler, "Introduction: Family Migration as an Integration Issue? Policy Perspectives and Academic Insights," *Journal of Family Issues* 36, no. 11 (2015): 1407–32; Saskia Bonjour and Betty de Hart, "A Proper Wife, a Proper Marriage: Constructions of 'Us' and 'Them' in Dutch Family Migration Policy," *European Journal of Women's*

Studies 20, no. 1 (2013): 61–76, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506812456459>; Katharine Charsley, Marta Bolognani, Evelyn Ersanilli, and Sarah Spencer, *Marriage, Migration and Integration* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); Ralph Grillo, “Marriages, Arranged and Forced: The UK Debate,” in *Gender, Generations and the Family in International Migration*, eds. Albert Kraler, Camille Schmoll, Eleonore Kofman, and Martin Kohli (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 77–98; Sherene H. Razack, “Imperilled Muslim Women, Dangerous Muslim Men and Civilised European: Legal and Social Responses to Forced Marriages,” *Feminist Legal Studies* 12, no. 2 (2004): 129–74; Yafa Shanneik, Schirin Vahle, and Bandar Shanneik, “‘Forced to Divorce’: Syrian Refugees and the Act to Combat Child Marriage in Germany,” in *Arranged/Forced Divorce*, ed. Péter Berta (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, forthcoming).

¹⁶ See, for example, Yafa Shanneik and Norma Deseke, “Embodied Virtual Reality: Redistributing Narrative Power in Contexts of War and Displacement,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 25 (2026): <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069261430198>; Anna Wyss, “Illegalisation, Masculinity and Intimacy: The Impact of Public Images on Male Migrants With a Precarious Legal Status,” *Swiss Journal of Sociocultural Anthropology* 23 (May 2018): 121–26, <https://doi.org/10.36950/tsantsa.2018.23.7315>.

¹⁷ Zeynep Sahin Mencütek, *Refugee Governance, State and Politics in the Middle East* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2019), 5; Nadia Sonneveld, Nada Heddane, and Judith van Uden, “Policy-Driven Migration Research? A Systematic Literature Review of Migration in Morocco,” Working Paper No. 164 (Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford, July 2023).

¹⁸ Ghassan Hage, “A Not So Multi-Sited Ethnography: The Promise of a Transnational Perspective,” *Anthropological Theory* 5, no. 4 (2005): 471; Hage, “Waiting Out the Crisis: On Stuckness and Governmentality,” in *Waiting*, ed. Ghassan Hage (Carlton: Melbourne University Publishing, 2009), 97–106.

¹⁹ In the UAE, migrants constitute 74 percent of the population, in Kuwait 67.3 percent, followed by Jordan (45.7 percent), China, Hong Kong (41.3 percent), and Saudi Arabia (40.3 percent). “Top 25 Destinations of International Migrants,” Migration Policy Institute, 2024, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/top-25-destinations-international-migrants>.

²⁰ See, for example, Saskia Bonjour and Albert Kraler, “Introduction: Family Migration as an Integration Issue? Policy Perspectives and Academic Insights,” *Journal of Family Issues* 36, no. 11 (2015): 1407–32; Victoria Montgomery, “Multicultural Ireland? Muslim Women and Integration in Ireland,” *Irish Political Studies* 28, no. 3 (2013): 434–49; Salam Adlbi Sibai, “‘Sometimes I Am Spanish and Sometimes Not’: A Study of the Identity and Integration of Spanish Muslim Women,” *Research in Comparative and International Education* 5, no. 2 (2010): 185–204.

²¹ Faisal Hamadah, “Kafala and Social Reproduction: Migration Governance Regimes and Labour Relations in the Gulf,” in *The South Asia to Gulf*

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For an exception, see the recently published *Handbook of Families in the Arab Gulf States*, which focuses on both Gulf families and migrant families residing in the Gulf. Md Mizanur Rahman, Kaltham Al-Ghanim, Ziarat Hossain, and Sharique Umar, eds., *Handbook of Families in the Arab Gulf States*, Gulf Studies 19 (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2025).

²² See, for example, Sadiki Abdelali, “Le Maroc face à la migration subsaharienne: Entre stratégie nationale, coopération européenne et enjeux de réintégrations,” *Geopolitics and Geostrategic Intelligence* 6, no. 2 (2025): 108–22; Younès Ahouga and Kunz Rahel, “ ‘Gendarme de l’Europe’ ou ‘chef de file’? Le Maroc dans le dispositif régulateur des migrations euro-méditerranéennes,” *Critique internationale* 74, no. 1 (2017): 95–115, <https://doi.org/10.3917/cii.074.0095>; Katharina Natter, *The Politics of Immigration Beyond Illiberal States: Morocco and Tunisia in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024).

²³ Nadia Khrouz, “Mariage binational et droit à l’unité familiale au Maroc: procédures, restrictions et facilités,” *Revue Hijra* 3 (July 2025): 1–31; Catherine Therrien and Catherine Phipps, “Persistent Gender and Racial Hierarchies: Marriage Migration and Mixedness in Morocco From the French Protectorate to the Present,” *L’Année du Maghreb* 29, no. 1 (2023): 63–89. In their forthcoming dissertations, Judith van Uden and Nada Heddane ask how migrants from the Middle East and South Asia (van Uden) and sub-Saharan Africa (Heddane) deal with the formal and informal aspects of marriage, birth, divorce, and death. See also the project website that features the findings of Heddane, Sonneveld, and Van Uden in an audio-visual manner: livingontheotherside.org.

²⁴ Ruba Al Akash, Marina de Regt, and Siham Al Masri, “A Double-Edged Sword? The Role of Digital Technologies in Marriage and Divorce Among Syrian Refugees in Northern Jordan,” *Refuge: Canada’s Journal on Refugees* 40, no. 1 (2024): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.41071>; Yafa Shanneik, “Displacement, Humanitarian Interventions and Gender Rights in the Middle East: Syrian Refugees in Jordan as a Case Study,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47, no. 15 (2021): 3329–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2021.1926944>; Dina Zbeidy, “Marriage, Displacement and Refugee Futures: Marriage as Aspiration Among Syrian Refugees in Jordan,” *Etnofoor* 32, no. 1 (2020): 61–76.

²⁵ Susan A. Bartels, Saja Michael, and Annie Bunting, “Child Marriage Among Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: At the Gendered Intersection of Poverty, Immigration, and Safety,” *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 19, no. 4 (2021): 472–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2020.1839619>.

²⁶ Dina Taha, "Double Immobility: Syrian Refugee Women Navigating the Voluntary and Forced Marriage Binary in Egypt," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 51, no. 9 (2025): 2357–374, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2024.2384999>; Dina Taha, "Marriage in Displacement: Gendered (Self)Resettlement Strategies of Syrian Women in Egypt," *British Journal of Sociology* 76, no. 1 (2025): 34–49, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.13145>.

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