PARENTING STYLES IN ARAB SOCIETIES
A First Cross-Regional Research Study

MARWAN DWAIRY
AFFILIATION?

MUSTAFA ACHOUI
King Fahd University for Petroleum and Minerals

REDA ABOUSERIE
American University, Cairo

ADNAN FARAH
Yarmouk University, Jordan

INAYA GHAZAL **OR ANAYA L. SAKLEH?**
Palestinian Counseling Center

MONA FAYAD
AFFILIATION?

HASSAN K. KHAN
AFFILIATION?

The Arab language version of the Parental Authority Questionnaire was administered to 2,893 Arab adolescents in eight Arab societies. Results show that all parenting styles differed across Arab societies. Cluster analysis revealed three combined parenting patterns: *inconsistent* (permissive and authoritarian), *controlling* (authoritarian and authoritative), and *flexible* (authoritative and permissive). The mean score of the authoritarian style was higher among males, whereas the mean score of the authoritative style was higher among females. First-born adolescents reported higher level permissive parenting than other adolescents. The effects of urbanization, parents' education, and the family economic level on parenting were minor.

Keywords: parenting; Arab; Muslim; culture; collective

This is the first study in this series that examines parenting styles among Arabs. As noted in the introduction (p. **PLS. INSERT**), parenting styles and practices of course have a significant effect on the psychosocial development of children. Studies that have investigated parental practice consistently revealed two basic dimensions: affection and control (Baumrind, 1975; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Schaefer, 1965). The first dimension concerns the emotional bonds between parents and children, whereas the second is related to the active role parents play in promoting respect for rules and social conventions as well as in ensuring social integration and success.

Baumrind (1966, 1967, 1991) identified three basic styles of child rearing: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative. The three parenting styles differ in two particular areas of parenting: the amount of nurturing (or warmth) a child receives and the extent to which a child's activities and behavior are controlled (Baumrind, 1991). Parents who practice the authoritarian style emphasize their control of the child and his or her obedience. They restrict the autonomy of the child and decree what behavior is appropriate for him or

her (Baumrind, 1966; Reitman, Rhode, Hupp, & Altobello, 2002). These parents favor enforced discipline, usually demanding unquestioned adherence to their wishes, and expect children to follow their orders immediately. They are the sole regulating authority in the child's life, using punishment to control him or her, and seldom explain the reasoning behind rules and regulations. The nurturing skills of authoritarian parents tend to be low. They rarely use words of comfort and are unlikely to demonstrate affection or to praise their adolescents.

Permissive parents encourage their children's autonomy and enable them to make their own decisions and regulate their own activities. They avoid confrontation and tend to be warm, supportive people and do not care to be viewed by a child as a figure of authority. The nurturing skills of parents who adopt the permissive style tend to be moderate to high, whereas their control of their children is poor (Baumrind, 1991; Reitman et al., 2002).

The authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are considered to be the two poles of a continuum, whereas the authoritative style lies somewhere in the middle. Parents who adopt this style tend to have good nurturing skills and exercise moderate parental control to allow the child to become progressively more autonomous (Baumrind, 1966, 1967, 1991; Reitman et al., 2002). Children reared in this style are not completely restricted but rather are allowed a reasonable degree of latitude in their behavior. Authoritative parents do enforce limits in various ways such as reasoning, verbal give and take, overt power, and positive reinforcements. Most Western parents adopt the authoritative style of child rearing. The authoritative parenting style has been associated with positive outcomes in terms of the child's psychosocial development. Numerous studies have presented evidence for the salutary effect of this style in North Americans (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1991). Children of authoritative parents have a high level of self-esteem and tend to be self-reliant, self-controlled, secure, popular, and inquisitive (Buri, Louiselle, Misukanis, & Mueller, 1988; Wenar, 1994). They manifest fewer psychological and behavioral problems than youth having authoritarian or permissive parents (Lamborn, Mants, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991). (For a review of parental discipline, see Maccoby and Martin, 1983).

Culture constitutes a strong factor in structuring parental practices because it can transmit guidelines about parenting. Chao (1994) has challenged the typology of Baumrind when applied to Chinese families. She claimed that authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive constructs are derived from Western culture. Chao proposed a typology that reflects Confucian parenting. According to her thesis, optimal parenting is characterized by close involvement with the child, devotion and willingness to make sacrifices for the child's well-being, and family-based control that is seen as supportive by both children and parents (Chao & Sue, 1996). Also, Kagitcibasi (1970, 2005), who has studied the Turkish and other collective cultures, disagrees with Baumrind's typology and suggests that parental control and warmth should be looked at as being compatible rather than competitive components. Indeed, Rohner and Pettengill (1985), for instance, showed that Korean youth associated parental strictness and control with parental warmth and a low level of neglect.

Despite the major role of culture in parenting, there are relatively few published studies on the parent-adolescent relationship from a cross-cultural perspective. The respondents of the research reported in most published articles were American adolescents, and only a few belonged to ethnic groups in the United States (Claes, Lacourse, Bouchard, & Perucchini, 2003). This article examines parenting styles in the Arab world.

PARENTING STYLES AMONG ARABS

In contrast with reports on the effect of authoritarian parenting in the West, some studies indicate that Arab children and youth are satisfied with this style (Hatab & Makki, 1978) and do not complain of the abusive-aggressive behavior of teachers (Dwairy, 1998, pp. 43-61). Among Egyptian college students, 64.4% of women and 33.1% of men favored "absolute submission" to parents. As for differentiation from parents, 57.7% of female and 25.7% of male students favored children having the same character and morals as their parents (Al-Khawaja, 1999). In a study conducted among Saudi female college students, 67.5% of the sample reported that they were physically punished at various stages in their life. When their attitudes toward physical punishment were studied, it was found that 65.1% of the students justified it (Achoui, 2003). If these are the attitudes of college students, one can expect that similar or more pronounced results may be obtained in the general Saudi populace, although Saudi society is considered among the conservative societies as compared to other Arab or Muslim societies. Generally speaking, female Arabs identify more than males with the traditional norms (Al-Khawaja, 1999), even when they are the victims of some of the norms, which is exemplified by the justification by females of female circumcision (Al-Kaa'ki, 2000).

Some other studies indicated that authoritarianism is not associated with any detriment to the mental health of Arab youth (Dwairy, 2004a; Dwairy & Menshar, in press). It seems that authoritarian socialization has a meaning and effect different from that known in the West when it is applied within an authoritarian culture such as the Arab or Muslim. Within this culture, children consider application of the authoritarian style of punishment as the normal duty of parents and teachers (Dwairy, 1997).

Despite that the Arab society treats women more strictly than men (Zakareya, 1999), Achoui (2003) found that male children undergo more physical punishment than female children in Saudi Arabia. Studies on Arab-Palestinian adolescents in Israel indicated that boys perceive their parents' style to be more authoritarian than girls do (Dwairy, 2004a, 2004b). Palestinian boys in the Gaza Strip also perceived both their parents as treating them more negatively than the girls did; they perceived their parents as being more strict in disciplining, more rejecting, and hostile than did the girls (Punamaki, Qouta, & El Sarraj, 1997). Similar results were reported in Algeria (Fershani, 1998; Zegheena, 1994). A research study conducted in Egypt indicated an interesting interaction between sex and urbanization. Rural male adolescents reported a higher level of authoritarianism on the part of their parents than females, whereas urban females reported a higher level of authoritarian parenting than males (Dwairy & Menshar, in press).

Parents treat first-born children in a special way. Axelson (1999) claimed that first-born children "tend to receive more attention, are likely to carry the family's ambitions, and are assigned a dominant role with respect to later children" (p. 285). This description fits the Arab first-born children, too, who carry the parents' aspirations, on one hand, and enjoy more parental attention, care, and indulgence, on the other. Some research indicates that a first-born Arab child is treated more gently than the other children in the family (Achoui, 2003; Al-Teer, 1997). These differences between first-born and other children are expected to influence the process of individuation and the parent-child connectedness.

Some reports indicated that parental education, economic level, and urbanization influence the parenting styles and practices. This association between socioeconomic classes and a harsh style of parenting is universal, and not specific to Arabs. More educated mothers were less authoritarian and controlling than less educated parents in Saudi Arabia (Al-Mutalq, 1981),

Egypt (Hana, 1974), and Algeria (Sahrawi, 1998). Mahmoud (1997) reported that mothers of a higher socioeconomic level tend to be more authoritative and encouraging of their children's independence than lower socioeconomic-level mothers. In a comparison between gifted children and nongifted children, parenting of gifted Palestinian children was more authoritative and less authoritarian. It is interesting that authoritarian parenting was associated with poorer mental health of gifted but not of nongifted children (Dwairy, 2004b).

In those studies it was hypothesized that parenting styles vary across Arab countries (societies), with parenting styles in traditional countries such as Yemen and Saudi Arabia tending to be more authoritarian than parenting styles in modern countries such as Lebanon and Jordan; the parenting styles applied to girls tend to be more authoritative and less authoritarian than those applied to boys; parenting in rural areas tends to be more authoritarian; first-born children experience less authoritarian and more permissive parenting styles; and the socioeconomic level of the family has a positive correlation with permissive and authoritative parenting styles and a negative correlation with the authoritarian style.

METHOD

PARENTAL AUTHORITY QUESTIONNAIRE (PAQ)

The PAQ is a 30-item test developed to assess parental authority or disciplinary practices from the child's point of view (Buri, 1991). It is designed to reflect the three basic parenting styles: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative. Ten items treat each of the three parenting styles, and the respondents are directed to respond to each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 = *disagree* to 5 = *agree*). Three scores are obtained, reflecting the three parenting styles. The PAQ includes a questionnaire pertaining to mothers and an identical one for fathers. The author of PAQ reports very good 2-week test-retest reliabilities that range from .77 to .92, and internal consistency with alphas that range from .74 to .87 for the subscales. The construct validity was tested by self-esteem. Self-esteem correlated inversely with authoritarianism and positively with authoritativeness and was unaffected by permissiveness (Buri, 1991).

As the Arab society is collective, so too is Arab parenting, with fathers, mothers, and other adults taking part in child rearing and socialization. This collective educational unit is called *Ahel* and is responsible for caring for and disciplining Arab children and adolescents according to the collective paternal values (Weller, Florian, & Mikulincer, 1995). Within this context, mothers adopt and enforce the paternal rules in the case of both boys and girls. In a previous study (Dwairy, 1997), when methods of socialization adopted by Arabic mothers and fathers were compared, only minor differences were found in the self-report of Arab mothers and fathers concerning their methods of socialization. No significant differences between mothers and fathers were found in 13 out of 15 methods of socialization (Dwairy, 1997). Based on these cultural features, we decided at this initial stage of research to focus on the collective parenting of *Ahel*, and we therefore used one form pertaining to both parents instead of one each for mothers and fathers. This Arabic form of PAQ has been validated and used in two research studies conducted by the first author. The distributions of 21 (73.3%) of the items' responses were normal and do not show an acquiescent response set. The other 9 items (4 permissive, 3 authoritarian, and 2 authoritative) show either high or low scores. For further information concerning the two-way translation and the validation of the scale, see Dwairy (2004a, 2004b).

SAMPLE AND VALIDATION OF PAQ

The Arabic form of PAQ, in addition to other scales, was administered to 2,893 Arab adolescents in eight Arab societies (for more details, see the introduction). Before analyzing the parenting styles in the Arab societies, it was necessary to ensure that the tool used in the study is valid among Arabs. To achieve this, the internal structural validity of the PAQ was tested by a principal factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha. A principal factor analysis was conducted on the 30 items of PAQ with varimax rotation, a priori three-factors solution, and a .20 loading criterion. The three factors explained 30.04% of the variance. All items of each subscale were loaded in one factor. Only Items 1 and 24 were loaded in both the permissive and the authoritative factors (see Table 1). Factor analysis conducted for each country separately revealed similar results. The explained variance of the three factors varied between 27.46% in Egypt and 39.44% in Palestine. In each country, only a few items ($M = 1.87$) did not load appropriately in the expected factor. These items were not the same for various countries.

The internal consistency of each subscale was tested by Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The coefficients of the Permissive, Authoritative, and the Authoritarian subscales were .61, .79, and .72, respectively. Taking the coefficients and the factor analysis results together, a clear distinction can be seen between the items composing the different subscales. Based on these results, PAQ seems to have satisfactory internal construct validity among Arab adolescents.

RESULTS

PARENTING STYLES ACROSS ARAB SOCIETIES

One-way ANOVA was conducted to test the differences in parenting styles between Arab societies. Permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian styles of parenting were different across Arab societies: $F(7) = 31.57$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .070$; $F(7) = 8.21$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .022$; and $F(7) = 25.75$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .051$, respectively. LSD post hoc revealed that most of the differences between the countries were significant (see Table 2). Out of 28 pair comparisons, the differences in the permissive and the authoritarian styles were significant among 22 and 24 pairs, respectively. The differences in the authoritative parenting style were significant only in 15 pairs of countries. The societies that were above the average ($M = 26.78$) plus 1 standard error ($SE = .11$) in the permissive parenting societies were Algeria ($M = 28.67$, $SD = 5.26$), the Palestinian society in Israel ($M = 28.58$, $SD = 5.63$), Egypt ($M = 27.10$, $SD = 4.91$), and Jordan ($M = 26.97$, $SD = 4.90$) (see Table 2). The societies that were above the average ($M = 37.11$) plus 1 standard error ($SE = .13$) in the authoritative parenting societies were Lebanon ($M = 39.01$, $SD = 5.85$), Algeria ($M = 38.51$, $SD = 6.00$), Palestine ($M = 37.79$, $SD = 6.27$), and Egypt ($M = 37.68$, $SD = 6.34$). The societies that were above the average ($M = 27.09$) plus 1 standard error ($SE = .13$) in the authoritarian parenting societies were Yemen ($M = 30.68$, $SD = 6.56$), the Palestinians in Israel ($M = 28.50$, $SD = 6.56$), Saudi Arabia ($M = 28.09$, $SD = 6.21$), Egypt ($M = 27.30$, $SD = 5.92$), and Algeria ($M = 27.28$, $SD = 7.13$) (see Figure 1).

It is interesting that the Egyptians, Algerians, and Palestinians in Israel scored high in both authoritarian and permissive styles. The correlation between the two styles was very low ($R = -.073$), suggesting that some of the respondents who reported high-level authoritarian

TABLE 1
Factor Analysis Loadings Limited to Three Factors With a Varimax Rotation

Subscale	Item No.		Factors		
			1	2	3
Permissive	1	My parents think that in a well-run home the children should have their way as often as the parents do.	.37	−.25	**.23**
	6	My parents think that children have the right to make up their own minds and do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with their parents' opinion.		−.22	**.54**
	10	My parents do not think I need to obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority had established them.			**.46**
	13	My parents seldom give me expectations and guidelines for my behavior.			**.48**
	14	My parents do what children in the family want when making family decisions.			**.39**
	17	My parents think that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they are growing up.			**.29**
	19	My parents allow me to decide most things for myself without a lot of direction from them.			**.49**
	21	My parents do not view themselves as responsible for directing and guiding my behavior.	−.25		**.55**
	24	My parents allow me to form my own point of view on family matters, and they gradually allow me to decide for myself what to do.	.30		**.48**
	28	My parents do not direct the behaviors, activities, and desires of the children in the family.			**.46**
Authoritative	4	Once family policy has been established, my parents discuss the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family.	**.58**		
	5	My parents encourage verbal give and take whenever I have felt that family rules and directions were unreasonable.	**.62**		
	8	My parents direct activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline.	**.59**		
	11	I know what my parents expect of me in my family but also feel free to discuss those expectations with them when I feel that they are unreasonable.	**.57**		
	15	My parents consistently give us direction and guidance in a rational and objective way.	**.64**		
	20	My parents take the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but they do not decide on something simply because the children wanted it.	**.58**		
	22	My parents have clear standards of behavior for the children in our home, but they are willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of us in the family.	**.39**		
	23	My parents give me direction for my behavior and activities and expect me to follow the direction, but they are always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss that direction with me.	**.63**		
	27	My parents give me clear direction for my behaviors and activities, but they also understand when I disagree with them.	**.56**		

(Continued)

TABLE 1
(Continued)

			Factors		
Subscale	Item No.		1	2	3
	30	If my parents made a decision in the family that hurt me, they are willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit if they made mistake.	**.48**		
Authoritarian	2	Even if their children do not agree with them, my parents feel that it is for our own good if they force us to conform to what they think is right.		**.48**	
	3	Whenever my parents tell me to do something, they expect me to do it immediately without asking any questions.		**.54**	
	7	My parents do not allow me to question any decision they made.	−.26	**.46**	
	9	My parents feel that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.		**.44**	
	12	My parents feel that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.		**.43**	
	16	My parents get very upset if I try to disagree with them.		**.55**	
	18	My parents let me know what behavior they expect of me, and if I don't meet those expectations, they punish me.		**.58**	
	25	My parents feel that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to.	−.23	**.48**	
	26	My parents often tell me exactly what they want me to do and how they expect me to do it.		**.64**	
	29	I know what my parent expect of me in the family and they insist that I conform to those expectations simply out of respect for their authority.		**.57**	
Explained variance			12.76	10.07	7.21
Eigenvalue			3.83	3.02	2.16

PLS. ADD NOTE EXPLAINING BOLDFACE ENTRIES.

style reported high-level permissive style and some others reported low-level permissive style. These respondents seem to experience an inconsistent parenting style. To identify parenting patterns, we conducted a K-means cluster analysis with an a priori three clusters solution. The clusters revealed were as follows. (I) Permissive and authoritarian: High-level permissive and authoritarian styles and low-level authoritative style. This cluster, which pertains to 31.3% of the sample, seems to be inconsistent and confusing to the children. (II) Authoritarian and authoritative: High-level authoritarian and authoritative styles and low-level permissive style, pertaining to 29.2% of the sample. (III) Authoritative and permissive: High-level authoritative and permissive styles and low-level authoritarian style that pertains to 39.5% of the sample.

To test the frequency of each pattern (cluster) in each society, a cross-table of society × pattern and a chi-square test was conducted. The Pearson chi-square, $\chi^2(14) = 133.23$, $p < .0001$, indicated significant differences between the observed and expected frequency.

TABLE 2
Significance of Differences (α) Between Countries
in Permissive, Authoritative, and Authoritarian Parenting

	Country	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Permissive								
1	Egypt							
2	Algeria	.003						
3	Lebanon	.009	.000					
4	Jordan	ns	.001	.021				
5	Palestinian	.000	.000	.001	.000			
6	Saudi Arabia	.000	.000	.030	.000	ns		
7	Yemen	ns	.001	ns	ns	.000	.007	
8	Palestinians in Israel	.000	ns	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Authoritative								
1	Egypt							
2	Algeria	ns						
3	Lebanon	.014	ns					
4	Jordan	.062	.006	.021				
5	Palestinian	ns	ns	.001	.033			
6	Saudi Arabia	.001	.000	.030	ns	.000		
7	Yemen	ns	.034	ns	ns	ns	ns	
8	Palestinians in Israel	.001	.000	.000	ns	.000	ns	ns
Authoritarian								
1	Egypt							
2	Algeria	ns						
3	Lebanon	.000	.000					
4	Jordan	.000	.006	.004				
5	Palestinian	.000	.005	.002	ns			
6	Saudi Arabia	.010	ns	.000	.000	.000		
7	Yemen	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
8	Palestinians in Israel	.004	.033	.000	.000	.000	ns	.001

The frequency of the permissive and authoritarian pattern was higher than expected among the Palestinians in Israel ($n = 283$ vs. 210.4) and in Yemen ($n = 44$ vs. 34.8). The frequency of the authoritarian and authoritative pattern was higher than expected in Palestine ($n = 159$ vs. 112.8) and Saudi Arabia ($n = 110$ vs. 84.5). The frequency of the authoritative and permissive pattern was higher than expected in Jordan ($n = 164$ vs. 132.2), Lebanon ($n = 133$ vs. 93.9), and Algeria ($n = 63$ vs. 52.9). Figure 2 shows the within-country percentage of each pattern.

SEX, URBANIZATION, AND PARENTING STYLES

To test the effect of sex and urbanization, a 2×2 multivariate analysis of variance was conducted. A significant main effect of sex was found on the authoritarian, $F(1, 2854) = 14.21$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .006$, and the authoritative parenting style $(1, 2854) = 21.14$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .008$. The mean score of the authoritarian style was higher among men ($M = 27.54$, $SE = .21$) than women ($M = 26.52$, $SE = .17$), whereas the mean score of the authoritative style was higher among women ($M = 37.69$, $SE = .17$) than men ($M = 36.46$, $SE = .21$). No significant effect of sex on the permissive style was found. Also, no significant effect of
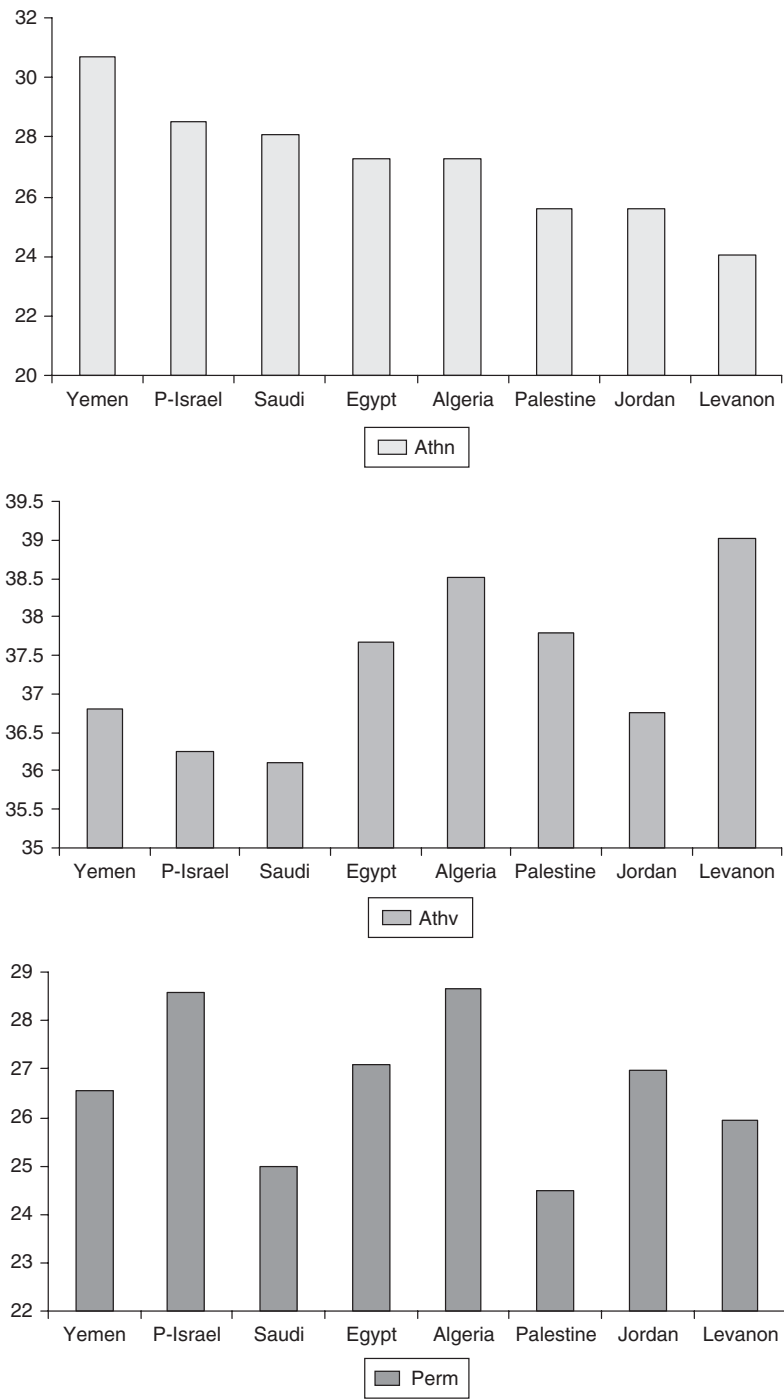
Figure 1: **Means of Authoritarian (Athn), Authoritative (Athv), and Permissive (Perm) Styles in Each Society**
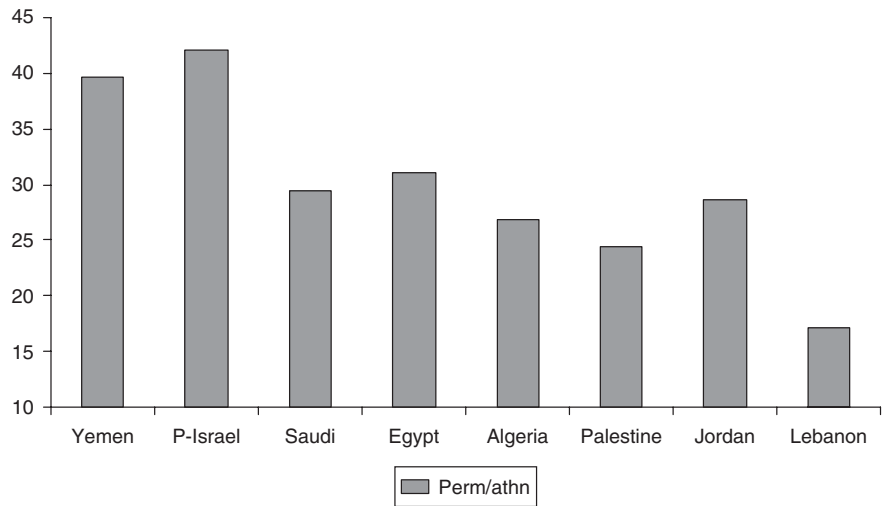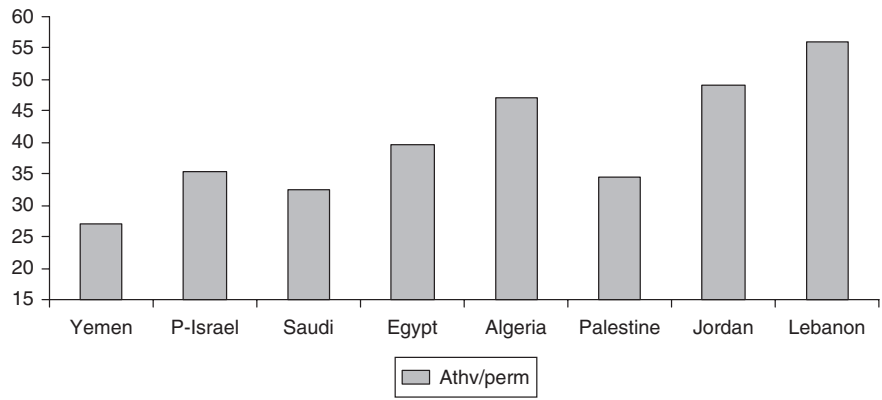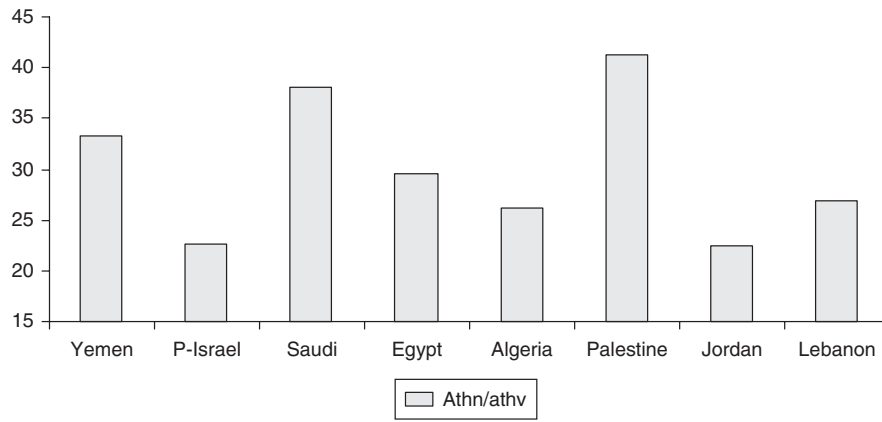
NOTE: P-Israel = Palestinians in Israel.

Figure 2:   **Within-Country Percentage Of Authoritarian/Authoritative (Athn/Athv), Authoritative/Permissive (Athv/Perm), and Permissive/Authoritarian (Perm/Athn) Patterns in Each Society**

NOTE: P-Israel = Palestinians in Israel.

TABLE 3
Means of Parenting Styles According to Sex and Urbanization

			Males	*Females*	F	p	η^2
Authoritarian	Urban	Mean	27.34	26.57	0.21	.0001	.006
		Standard error	.29	.24			
	Rural	Mean	27.75	26.46			
		Standard error	.30	.25			
Authoritative	Urban	Mean	36.28	37.50	21.14	.0001	.008
	Rural	Mean	36.63	37.89			
		Standard error	.30	.25			
Permissive	Urban	Mean	26.61	26.67	*ns*		
		Standard error	.24	.20			
	Rural	Mean	27.23	.25	26.70		
		Standard error	.25	.21			

urbanization on any parenting style and no significant interaction between sex and urbanization was found (see Table 3).

SEX, FIRST-BORN CHILDREN, AND PARENTING STYLES

To test the effect of being a first-born child, the respondents were sorted into two categories: first born and later born. To test the differences in parenting styles according to the respondent's being a first-born child and male or female, a 2×2 multivariate ANOVA was conducted. Being a first-born child had a significant effect on the permissive and authoritarian, $F(1, 2774) = 6.14$, $p < .013$, $\eta^2 = .004$; $F(1,2774) = 4.43$, $p < .035$, $\eta^2 = .003$, respectively, but not on the authoritative style of parenting. First-born adolescents reported higher level permissive style ($M = 27.21$, $SE = .21$) than later born adolescents ($M = 26.59$, $SE = .14$), and lower level authoritarian ($M = 26.60$, $SE = .25$) parenting styles than later born ones ($M = 27.23$, $SE = .17$). A significant interaction was found between being a first-born child and male or female only in the authoritative parenting style, $F(1, 2774) = 5.07$, $p < .024$, $\eta^2 = .003$. Male later-born children reported a lower level authoritative parenting style ($M = 36.07$, $SE = .26$) than male first-born children ($M = 37.25$, $SE = .37$), and than both first-born and later born female children ($M = 37.58$, $SE = .32$; $M = 37.73$, $SE = .21$, respectively).

PARENT'S EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC LEVEL AND PARENTING STYLES

As mentioned earlier, the parents' level of education was rated in five categories that ranged from 1 to 5. The average of the mother's and the father's education was computed to indicate the parents' education. The economic level of the family was rated subjectively by the participants on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 = *very low* to 5 = *very high*, as compared to the participant's school peers. The correlation between the economic level of the family and the mean of the parents' level of education was significant but low ($r = .15$). To test the relationship between the parents' level of education and economic level, on one hand, and the parenting styles, on the other, Pearson's bivariate correlation coefficients were calculated. The only significant coefficient found was between the economic level of the family and the permissive style of parenting ($r = .06$, $p < .006$): the higher the parents'

economic level, the more they applied the permissive style. No significant coefficients were found between education and economic level and the other parenting styles.

DISCUSSION

The results support our hypothesis and show significant differences in parenting styles across the Arab societies. The differences were more noticeable in the level of permissiveness and authoritarianism and less in the authoritativeness (see Table 2). Based on the low percentage of the explained variance of PAQ and the cluster analysis, it seems that much of the variance of the items is shared, and that parenting styles among Arabs do not categorize exclusively in the three factors. Figure 1 shows that the Palestinians in Israel, for instance, scored high in two contradicting styles, authoritarian and permissive. Our results are consistent with other studies that found that only 26% of Korean American (Kim & Rohner, 2002) and about a third of African American families (Rohner, 2000) fit into any of Baumrind's (1966, 1967, 1991) parenting categories.

Cluster analysis has identified three mixed-parenting clusters; each indicates a wide-range orientation rather than a specific parenting style. To differentiate these wide clusters from Baumrind's specific parenting styles we labeled them as parenting patterns: *controlling*-oriented parenting pattern that is a combination of authoritarian and authoritative styles and *flexible* parenting pattern that combines authoritative and permissive parenting. The third cluster, which consists of permissive and authoritarian styles, is labeled *inconsistent* parenting pattern because it combines two opposite styles. These clusters indicate, first, that the parenting styles among Arabs are not as distinct as in the West, and second, that the three original parenting styles are not spread on a linear continuum where authoritarian and permissive styles are its two poles. Rather, they constitute a closed triangular continuum in which authoritarianism and permissiveness together constitute one style (see Figure 3). These findings agree with Chao (1994) and Kagitcibasi's (1970, 2005) criticism of Baumrind's typology and support their theory that parental control and warmth may be compatible in some collective societies. These findings support the idea that parental warmth (acceptance-rejection) and control (permissiveness-strictness) are two independent factors (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Rohner & Pettengill, 1985).

The three mixed patterns were found to be present in all the Arab societies. The controlling pattern seems to prevail mainly among the Palestinians in the occupied territories, and the Saudis. These results are not surprising, because Saudi Arabia is considered the most conservative authoritarian and collective Arab society and is the only Arab country in the sample whose political system is still far away from democracy. Besides this controlling, the other two mixed patterns are present in Saudi Arabia too, including the inconsistent pattern that Al-Mutalq (1981) and Hussain (1987) had already identified there. The Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are living under Israeli occupation, facing daily threats to their lives, and therefore may not be able to allow themselves the privilege of being authoritative or permissive. In addition, because the Israeli occupation is supported by the United States, rejecting the Western individualistic and liberal style of life may be considered by some of the Palestinians to be part of their struggle to protect and preserve their cultural and national identity.

The mixed flexible pattern seems to be prevailing in Lebanon, Jordan, and Algeria. These results also are not surprising, based on the fact that Lebanon and Jordan are among the few Arab countries in the sample that have adopted a multiparty, democratic political
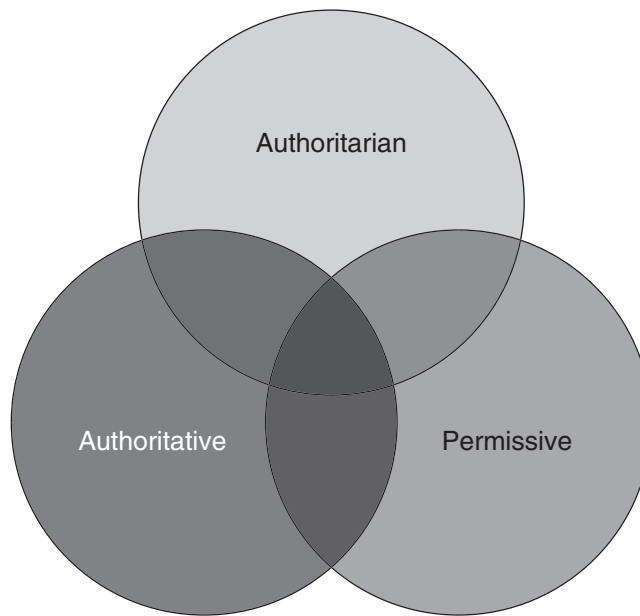
Figure 3:   Shared Variance Between the Three Parenting Styles Within a Closed Triangular Continuum

system (Kharboosh, 1994). In terms of social life, Lebanon is considered the most liberal and Western-oriented Arab country. Jordan has also been passing through a rapid process of democratization and modernization since the first Gulf War in 1991, during which thousands of wealthy Palestinian families moved from Kuwait to Jordan, influencing the sociocultural life of the country (Gadhban, 1994; Samha, 1990). As for Algeria, one should keep in mind that the Algerian sample was almost exclusively urban, which may explain the relatively high authoritative and permissive style. In addition, Algerian people were exposed for several decades to the French and other European cultures.

The mixed inconsistent pattern was at the highest level in Yemen and among the Palestinian citizens in Israel. This mixed pattern among the Palestinians in Israel may indicate the dual culture in which they live. On one hand, as Palestinians they share the Arabic authoritarian and collective culture, and on the other hand, as Israeli citizens they are exposed to Israeli-Western cultural influences. This dual culture may be expressed in this mixed and contradicting parenting style. The results obtained from the two samples of Palestinians indicate that the Palestinian Israeli citizens respond to exposure to the Israeli culture differently than the Palestinians under the Israeli occupation do. As citizens, they tend to absorb some liberal values, whereas under occupation they resist the Western influences. The inconsistent pattern in Yemen may indicate new, rapid, Western influences that started only in the past decade during which the country moved from being a tribal society to being a democratic state. This abrupt transition to democracy occurred within less than a decade in a rural, nonindustrial society (Zakareya, 1999). Consequently, the tribal system was not dismantled. This fast transition, which was accompanied, of course, by many other cultural, educational, and economic changes, created a strange coexistence between the two systems where the tribes continue to dominate the parliamentary political democratic system (Abdallah, 2001).

Egyptian society falls into moderate levels in all the three mixed-parenting patterns. This may indicate the gradual balanced and calculated changes toward democracy in Egypt.

Generally, it seems that parenting patterns are very much associated with the social-political system in the country. More democratic and liberal systems, such as those found in Lebanon, Algeria, and Jordan, are associated with a flexible pattern, and nondemocratic systems, such as those of Saudi Arabia and the Palestinians in the occupied territories, are associated with controlling pattern of parenting. Mixed and contradicting social-political systems, such as of the Palestinians in Israel and of Yemen, are associated with inconsistent parenting. Because cross-regional research on sociopolitical systems and values among Arab countries is almost nonexistent, this association between parenting style and the social systems in Arab countries remains speculative and needs further cross-regional research.

In both rural and urban areas, male Arab adolescents reported higher level authoritarian parenting than females, who reported higher level authoritative parenting than males. These results are consistent with former results reported among the Palestinians in Israel (Dwairy, 2004a, 2004b), the Palestinians in the occupied territories (Punamaki et al., 1997), and the Algerians (Fershani, 1998; Zegheena, 1994). These accumulating results seem to contradict other findings and reports concerning more strictness and oppression toward females, as compared to males, in Arab societies (*The Arab Woman Developmental Report*, 2003; Dwairy, 1997; Zakareya, 1999). This contradiction can be understood based on the tendency of Arab girls and women to identify more strongly than males with the traditional norms (Achoui, 2003; Al-Kaa'ki, 2000; Al-Khawaja, 1999). This identification may be considered as a defensive identification with the oppressor, and therefore, the females may not be aware of the real injustice, do not overtly challenge their parents, and do not dare to report the oppression in questionnaires. On the other hand, Arab males are actively daring to challenge their parents and to report the oppression they experience. Examination of parenting styles using different tools including observations or parents' reports may shed light on this issue.

In contradiction to our hypothesis, our results do not show a significant influence of urbanization on parenting styles. This result fits some reports concerning urbanization in Arab countries. Although these reports indicate a fast process of urbanization within the past few decades (Al-Kathem, 1999; Bu-Makhloof, 1999), their authors claim that immigrant families to urban areas in Arab countries bring their rural traditions with them and maintain them in the cities, thus blurring the differences between rural and urban parental practices (Barakat, 1993, 2000). Many urban Arab families continue to maintain an extended family structure where three generations or more live together as one unit (Zayed & Lotfi, 1993). Our results found no significant interaction between urbanization and sex, as was found in an earlier study in Egypt (Dwairy & Menshar, in press). This discrepancy may be attributed to the relatively slow process of urbanization in Egypt, where 64% of the population still live in rural undeveloped areas far from the developed cities, whereas the majority of the population in most of the other countries in our sample, including the rural sample, are exposed more intensively and frequently to urban life (Bu-Makhloof, 1999; United Nations Development Program, 2002, pp. 46).

Regardless of their sex, first-born Arab children experience less authoritarian and more permissive styles of parenting. These results fit other studies in the world (Axelson, 1999) and the Arab countries (Achoui, 2003; Al-Teer, 1997). The relationship between parents' education and economic level, on one hand, and the parenting style, on the other, was minor. Only a low-level significant correlation was found between economic level and the permissive style. It seems that parenting styles among Arab families are influenced by the country

and sibling order and not by other social factors such as urbanization, parents' education, and the family economic level. Urban, educated, and rich Arab families seem to continue to deal with their children the same way as rural, less educated, and less wealthy families. This phenomenon may be attributed to the fact that the changes in these factors have occurred recently and therefore have not yet exerted an influence on parenting.

The cross-regional and large sample in our research is considered a major strength that gives our findings the validity and credibility to enable generalization to all Arab countries. The main shortcoming of our research is that it is based on one self-report questionnaire. This was done to facilitate conducting the first cross-regional research in the Arab world. More cross-regional research is needed to validate our results through other tools (interviews, observations, and other questionnaires) that target the parents and the adolescents as well. Given the shortcomings discovered in Baumrind's typology in relation to Arabs, there is a need to develop new emic, or contextually derived, measures of parenting styles to which Chao's (1994) and Kagitcibasi's (1970, 2005) models aspire. Because of the noticeable link between the social-political system and parenting styles in our findings, more research is needed to examine the relationship between processes of democratization and modernization in Arab societies and the familial relationships in the Arab families.

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Marwan Dwairy is an Arab-Palestinian professor of psychology. He is a licensed expert and supervisor in three areas: educational, medical, and developmental psychology. In addition, he is a licensed clinical psychologist. He received his B.A. and M.A. degrees in psychology from Haifa University, and his D.Sc. from the Faculty of Medicine at the Technion in 1991. In 1978 he established the first psychological services center for Arabs in Nazareth, Israel. He continues to serve in his capacity as a supervisor in different psychological centers. He has published several books and articles on psychology and culture in which he presented his models and theories concerning culturally sensitive psychology. His forthcoming book (in press) is titled Culturally Sensitive Counseling and Psychotherapy: Working With Arabic and Muslim Clients (New York: Teachers College Press).

Mustapha M. Achoui is an associate professor in the Department of Management and Marketing, King Fahd University for Petroleum and Minerals. He has a Ph.D. in organizational communication from Rensselear Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. His research interests are in educational and organizational psychological issues such as parenting styles, leadership, and decision-making styles. He has published several books and articles in Arabic and English.

Reda Abouserie received a Ph.D. in educational psychology in 1990. He is a professor of psychology at the American University in Cairo. His main research interests are in personality, learning, psychological assessment, learning and thinking styles, and memory. He is also interested in psychological stress and cross-cultural psychology.

Adnan Farah is a Jordanian counseling psychologist who received his Ph.D. in counseling psychology and M.A. in community clinical psychology from Texas Southern University. He is a professor of counseling psychology and the chairman of the psychology department at Yarmouk University in Jordan. His research interests include Internet addiction, work stress, Type-A behavior, psychology in the Arab world, and counseling supervision. He was a founder-member and former president of the Jordanian Psychological Association.

Anaya A. Sakhleh received her B.A. from the Jerusalem Open University in Nablus–West Bank, Palestine. She is a social worker in the Palestinian Counseling Center. She studied the effect of the Aqsa Intifada in 2000 on children's attitudes.

Mona A. Fayad received her Ph.D. in applied psychology from Paris V–La Sorbonne University in France. She has conducted research in a number of areas involving mental as well as social disabilities pertaining to the mentally handicapped, prisoners and the prison community, and juvenile delinquency. She has extensively researched aspects of social behavior and education from a cross-cultural perspective, the Arab
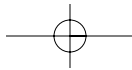
cultural values and their effects on adolescence, women, and family, specifically corruption, stereotyping, and gender and social discrimination.

Hassan Kassim Khan is a clinical psychologist. His research interests are cross-cultural psychopathology, behavioral health, mental health and child rights, and child health and violence.