

***Lecture by Dr. Hyndman-Rizk on “Mixed Methods Research: Making The Best Of Both Worlds”***

*Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012, Abou Khater Auditorium NDU – Main Campus*

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As part of its ongoing lecture series, the Lebanese Emigration Research Center at Notre Dame University invited Dr. Nelia Hyndman-Rizk, American-Australian of Lebanese descent from Hadchit, North Lebanon, to discuss mixed-methods research, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. The event was moderated by LERC Director, Ms. Guita Hourani, who encouraged those attending to participate actively during the lecture by asking questions and sharing their own research experiences.



LERC Director Ms. Guita Hourani with Dr. Hyndman-Rizk

It is well known that the social sciences researchers face challenges that come almost by default when explaining any social phenomena. There are many variables to deal with when dealing with a social issue, each case having its particular approach. The question of which research method is appropriate for the study is a concern we all face, at one time or another. The most common method is the qualitative one, but, do we need quantitative tools to support our findings? How should we combine them, and to what extent? Dr. Hyndman-Rizk addressed this matter in her lecture at NDU.

Dr. Hyndman-Rizk is a trained Anthropologist. Her current research is inter-disciplinary and focuses on migration studies (economic and social dimensions), globalization, new media and social change in the Middle East. Her specific focus is the relationship between Lebanon and the Lebanese Diaspora and the role of transforming gender-relations in post-conflict societies, as part of the Fragile States Research Program in the School of Business at the University of New South Wales, Canberra, Australia.

With an audience of social researchers and students for bachelor and master degrees from the Political Science School at Notre Dame University, Dr. Hyndman-Rizk discussed the value of mixed-methods research when designing the methodology of a project. She started her lecture by acknowledging that when it comes to combining qualitative and quantitative research strategies arguments against a multi-strategy research can be found. However, if the research question is examined from multiple vantage points it will ultimately allow deeper insight. Next, she presented the audience with a very useful classification of approaches to mixed-methods research, focusing on the needs and concerns Lebanese students and trained researchers face day-to-day.



Attendees participate by asking questions.

Dr. Hyndman-Ryzk stressed that when conducting a research it is crucial to build up trust first, especially when it comes to interacting with difficult groups, identified by their ethnicity, their geographical location, their gender relations or their overall conditions.

Further, the planning of a multi-strategy approach divided into phases was recommended as well as triangulation in order to cross-check the results of one method strategy against the results of the other. It was also pointed out that the qualitative method can facilitate the quantitative and *vice versa*, thus, they both provide a more holistic approach to the research question.

Finally, the public shared with Dr. Hyndman-Rizk their current projects with the problems involved, focusing on data recovery and data-base building in Lebanon. Recommendations on how to get out of intellectual mine-fields were proposed. The lecture closed with a piece of general advice for the students: "A good research design is always simple and elegant."

Dr. Hyndman-Rizk presented the Lebanese Emigration Center with the book she published in 2007 entitled *My mother's table, at home in the Maronite Diaspora. A study of emigration from Hadchit, North Lebanon to Australia and America*. LERC's library enriched with the arrival of Dr. Hyndman-Rizk's gift, her book will be included into LERC's catalogue so it can be available for present and future researchers on the Lebanese migration.