STUDY ON GENDER AND SOCIO-CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN EGYPT

Japan International Cooperation Agency
JICA

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADEW   *Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women*
CAPMAS   *Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics*
CEDAW   *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*
CEDPA   *Center for Development and Population Activities*
CDA   *Community Development Association*
EDHS   *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey*
EHDR   *Egypt Human Development Report*
ELMS   *Egyptian Labor Market Survey*
FG   *Focus Group*
FGC   *Female Genital Circumcision*
FGM   *Female Genital Mutilation*
HIECS   *Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey*
IMF   *International Monetary Fund*
LFSS   *Labor Force Sample Survey*
NCCM   *National Council for Childhood and Motherhood*
NCW   *National Council of Women*
NGO   *Non-Governmental Organization*
PVO   *Private Voluntary Organization*
SSC   *Structural Survey Coordinator*
UEAED   *Upper Egyptian Association for Education and Development*
UNDP   *United Nations Development Program*
UNIFEM *United Nations Development Fund for Women*
USAID   *United States Agency for International Development*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

This study has been conducted on behalf of JICA between September 2004 and January 2005. It was carried out by a study team of NSCE on the basis of a study concept and methodology that was prepared by an external consultant who was also responsible for analysis and documentation. JICA staff in Egypt has actively supported all stages of the study.

2. Methodology

The overall objective of the study was to reveal the social and cultural diversity in Egypt as related to gender. The study concept focused on the following four sub-objectives: (1) to pinpoint cultural norms as relevant for gender, (2) to analyze the main effects of socio-economic change on gender relations, (3) to identify tensions between gender relevant norms and practices as well as (4) to analyze mechanisms to cope with change and its effects on gender roles.

The study consists of (1) a literature review, (2) a structured survey, implemented in five governorates (Cairo, Gharbiya, Alexandria, North Sinai and Qena) with 400 questionnaires, (3) a qualitative study including 16 focus group discussions (females and males) in five governorates and five in-depth interviews with personalities who have influence on public opinion (Priest, Sheikh, gender newspaper specialist and social university professor), and (4) a review of six gender-specific or gender-sensitive development projects of different organizations that are included in the annex. Five background variables have been used for analysis of the structured survey and focus group discussions: sex, class, region, age and religion. In view of the small sample size, results cannot be generalized or taken as accurate statistics but should rather be taken as indicators that complement the findings of previous studies.

The study gives an overview of women's status in Egypt, based on the review of the results of previous research and studies and complemented by results of the structured survey. In addition, the study investigated the influence of changing socio-economic conditions on gender perceptions and gender roles, both at the normative level and the level of practice. This was done by focusing on a number of key issues to trace how Egyptians adapt to change and how they cope when practice comes into conflict with prevailing norms and traditions. Key issues comprised the areas of gender and the family – with a focus on basic notions of gender roles, decision-making, the division of labor as well as disputes and violence – as well as education and socialization, women's freedom of movement and reproductive health. Most of these issues were both tackled by the structured survey, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Discourse analysis was used as the main instrument to analyze results of focus group discussions. This allowed for extracting key elements of prevailing gender perceptions while tracing the influence of different socio-political and cultural forces. Analysis shed also light on areas of conflict between norms and

practice and between men and women as well as on strategies to reconcile norms with practice and to negotiate conflicting interests.

3. Results of the Literature Review: Overview of Women's Status in Egypt

Egypt has signed most gender-relevant international conventions and human rights instruments but has made a number of reservations to articles that are by most Islamic countries considered to contradict Islamic sharia'. These reservations are particularly relevant to gender. Egyptian law contains a number of articles that discriminate against women according to international notions of equality.

Women's participation in public organization and decision-making bodies is much lower than that of men, particularly in politics, professional syndicates, trade unions and the judiciary. Women's participation in the labor force is also much lower than that of men. However, women are increasingly involved in wage labor, often in part-time, unstable and seasonal jobs. Women do also occupy many higher positions at the technical level of government agencies and also in the private sector.

Recent studies suggest that much progress has been achieved in the area of girls' education with female enrollment rates being sometimes higher than that of males. However, education has become costly for many families and the economic and social returns are being questioned. Boys are still often but not always privileged if family budgets are tight.

FGC is still prevalent in all social strata. Recent studies indicate a slow but remarkable tendency to abandon FGC, particularly in urban settings and areas where successful anti-FGC development projects have been implemented. Prevalence of contraceptive use has also increased considerably during the past decades. However, family sizes are still high in rural areas, among the poor and in parts of Upper Egypt, the delta and frontier governorates.

4. Results of the Structured Survey

Gender and the family
Findings revealed that female respondents married earlier than males, earlier in rural areas and provincial towns than in urban governorates and earlier in poor than in wealthy areas. Responses to opinion questions revealed that the preferred age at first marriage is today 22-25 years for women and 26-30 years for men with no major differences among areas and regions. Arranged marriages were most accepted in El Arish and least in urban governorates. A good reputation and the ability to provide for a family were considered as the most important features of male marriage candidates across all sub-groups.

Almost two thirds of the respondents wanted to have two or three children (65.5% for men and 63.0% for women). Larger family sizes were only preferred by a significant number of respondents in Qena and El Arish (For 31% in Qena, the ideal number of children was three, for 26% it was four children and 29% wanted more than four

children. The majority of respondents in El Arish, i.e. 58%, indicated four children as the ideal number). Findings suggest some preference for boys, particularly in families without male children.

Spending resources was most frequently mentioned by all sub-groups (59%) as a source of marital disputes, followed by child raising (40%), husband's work and income (27.3%), domestic tasks (27.3%), emotional negligence (23.8%), treatment by the spouse (22.8%), number of children (12%) and husband's behavior in public (98%).

Wife beating was condemned by 69.9% of all respondents with Qena showing the highest percentage of acceptance. Women and the educated were more opposed to violence than men, however, women's acceptance was higher the younger they were.

More female than male respondents appreciated changes in the law that make it easier for women to initiate divorce (58.5% versus 39.5%) and more females than males wanted equal footing or at least a higher share for women in inheritance to reflect their increased partnership with men in providing for the family (24.5% versus 16.5%).

Education and Socialization
More female than male respondents completed secondary school but more males than females enjoyed a higher education. Educational levels were highest in urban governorates and lowest in rural areas, Upper Egypt and a poor area in Cairo. Only 13% of respondents who finished school received any vocational training. Males tended to be trained in industry, mainly in workshops and factories, and females tended to be trained in commercial and service establishments.

90% of all respondents opted for equal rights to education for boys and girls with women in Qena and urban governorates showing the highest percentages in defense of girls' right to education. Economic constraints was indicated as the single most important reason for preference of boys in education. 75% of respondents reported that decisions on education are taken by both parents together.

Almost 100% of all respondents indicated that they have TV and radio at home and 58% reported to have access to satellite TV. 42% mentioned that they read newspapers regularly and around one third reported that they have access to the Internet. The most important sources of information on gender issues for female respondents turned out to be parents and relatives, followed by TV and radio. Males reported more diverse sources of information with peers and friends as well as religious authorities playing a more prominent role than for women.

Economic activities and reproductive labor
More males than females respondents were found engaged in wage labor (85.5% versus 45.0%). The lowest percentages of working women turned out to be in urban governorates (25.3%) and the highest in Gharbiya (72%). In Gharbiya and Qena,

more rural than urban women were found working (65.4% versus 54.2%). More than half of working female respondents were government employees.

Gender differences were very pronounced when it came to opinions on women's paid labor. More than three times as many male as female respondents (36.8% versus 11.2%) thought that women should not work. By contrast, more than one quarter of females but only 17.6% of males were convinced that women should have the possibility to work whenever they want. Males' opposition to women's paid labor was particularly strong in urban poor and middle class and in rural areas. Opinions on the most suitable jobs for each sex revealed that educating and care giving activities are preferred for women whereas positions that involve decision-making power are preferred to be occupied by men.

Food preparation, washing and cleaning turned out to be in almost all respondent households the principal responsibility of the wife or mother. Only in 2.8% of respondent households did husbands help their wives in fulfilling these tasks. Care giving tasks were also mainly performed by women while household maintenance was in most respondent households the responsibility of men. In urban governorates and Gharbiya, shopping for food and daily consumables was mainly found to be the task of women, while in Qena and El Arish men were usually in charge. Subsistence food production and animal husbandry were particularly wide-spread in rural Gharbiya and Qena and mainly the responsibility of women.

Income and assets
Female respondents had less access to sufficient income and assets than their male counterparts. 75% of females depended mainly on their spouse or family for subsistence even if they worked. Qena showed the highest percentages of female economic independence (35%) and urban governorates the lowest (16.1%). Decisions on spending women's income were in most cases reported to be taken by husbands and wives together. Only one third of female respondents indicated that they have exclusive control over their income with percentages being highest in El Arish and Qena.

Female respondents inherited land and buildings as often as males. However, only 11% females as opposed to 28.5% males were found to own their apartment. Females owned gold, jewelry and cattle but much less often than males vehicles, bank accounts and valuable tools and machines. 50% females versus 45.5% males did not own any of the above mentioned assets.

Gender and the public sphere
More male than female respondents were found to be engaged in public and community activities. In parent teacher councils, boards of youth centers, religious organizations, political parties and professional syndicates, participation rates of males exceeded those of females by at least 50%. Donor projects turned out to be an exception since more female than male respondents reported to be involved in activities that are sponsored by donor agencies.

Water pollution, followed by excessive use of fertilizers in agriculture and pollution of public space by garbage were mentioned by all sub-groups as the most important environmental problems. Unemployment, rising prices, poverty and family breakdowns were considered as the main social and political problems. Finding suitable marriage partners and the high costs of marriage were characterized across sub-groups as the main problems of both Egyptian men and women in addition to unemployment for men and the inability to realize personal ambitions for women.

5. Results of the Qualitative survey

Focus Group Discussions

Opinions on critical gender issues
Results showed that prevalent notions of gender depict men as the stronger sex, the provider of the family and its representative towards the outside world. while women were primarily assigned the role of supporters, nurturers and caregivers.

Women's paid labor turned out to represent a particular challenge to patriarchic norms since it shatters the economic basis of men's claims to superiority. Women's education was widely supported in principle by both sexes, however, higher educational attainment of wives was widely perceived as a potential source of tension in marriage relationships. There was a general agreement that women should enjoy freedom of movement as long as this does not contradict prevailing notions of decent behavior whereas perceptions of what decent behavior means in detail differed among various social strata. Men's claim to control women's movements was in principal accepted by almost all participants across focus groups. Violence against women was clearly more rejected by female than by male participants across focus groups. Women focused on the devastating effects of violence on their self-esteem and social standing while men were more concerned with the negative effects on the stability of the family. The principal importance of family planning was widely endorsed, mainly with reference to economic constraints and women's health. FGC turned out to be the most controversial issue with no unified opinion in any focus group except for El Arish where FGC was considered an unquestionable tradition by all participants.

Differences according to background variables
Focus group discussions revealed that differences in perceptions and opinions on basic notions of gender cannot be attributed clearly and consistently to region, socio-economic status, level of education, age or religion. Opinions were usually more divided within than across focus groups. This was particularly true concerning opinions on gender roles, women's status and decision-making in the family. The most remarkable denominator of difference was clearly gender. This is not withstanding the fact that there were clear variations as to how certain shared norms are translated into practice since practice reflects significant socio-economic differences. Wealthy, educated urban women have certainly much more freedom of movement than illiterate poor rural women. However, the basic notion of men's right to control women's movement was widely shared among all social groups.

Patriarchy and the influence of modern Islamist discourses on gender perceptions
Results suggest that radical Islamist discourses of recent decades have had a remarkable influence and have re-enforced patriarchic notions of gender. This applies not only to their arguments and rationales but also to their methods of argumentation, i.e. the fragmentation and re-arrangement of selected elements of religious texts. The influence of extremist Islamist currents could be traced in participants' attempts to refer to religious texts in order to equate gender with sex and sex with nature and thus unchangeable as the basis of claims to male superiority and reference to women's alleged lack of reason. Islamist methodology was reflected in many statements of interviewees who frequently extracted and re-assembled fragments of different discourses to support their respective opinions. This made it, for example, possible to both defend and reject FGC with reference to religion. Other than the Islamists, however, focus group participants did not only refer to religion but to different frameworks of reference including regional traditions and development discourse.

Results of in-depth interviews

In-depth interviews revealed that personalities with influence on socialization and the formation of public opinion largely defend the same notions of gender that prevail in popular culture in general. Their own sources of information did not differ much from those of participants in focus groups although they were exposed more intensively to public discourses. None of them fully adopted the official positions on gender questions of the institutions they were affiliated with. Similar to participants in focus group discussions, the interviewees picked up elements and fragments of different discourses and re-arranged them according to their personal experience and opinion.

6. Summary of conclusions

Cultural norms and gender relations
Results show that patriarchic gender perceptions are astonishingly similar and prevalent across all social strata - although their translation into concrete practice varies according to different socio-economic conditions, regional backgrounds, sex and age. Patriarchic notions of gender are derived from cultural as well as religious sources that are frequently mixed and confused in popular culture. Three discourses turned out to have an influence on gender perceptions of the participants. _Modern Islamist discourse_ tends to reinforce conservative notions of gender as being rooted in the essentially different nature of men and women. _International development discourse_ has introduced a set of rights-based notions of gender that challenge to a certain extent traditional gender stereotypes. _Official state discourse_ has incorporated elements of both.

Gender practices in the light of changing socio-economic conditions
In practice, rapidly changing socio-economic conditions have eroded traditional gender roles and have caused considerable uncertainties among both men and women. Results confirmed that many women work, have access to education and new experiences through increased movement in public.

Results revealed also that state and development discourses have penetrated all regions and social groups. Their slogans on family planning, FGC and girls' education were reflected in the statements of participants and have obviously forced them to rethink traditions that were previously followed unquestioned.

Tension between norms and practice

Tensions between norms and practice were most pronounced concerning women's work and violence. Results showed that the erosion of the economic basis of men's claims to superiority through women's work represents a particular challenge to traditional gender relations and gender roles.

Female participants were well aware that they share with men the burdens of providing. Although most women did not challenge men's claims to superiority and dominance in principal, many demanded recognition of their sacrifices and more participation in decision-making. Men were more trapped in traditional gender identities that link masculinity to exerting power over women. This was reflected in justifications of violence and claims to control women's movements.

Coping mechanisms and the re-negotiation of gender roles

Patriarchic values enjoyed a high degree of hegemony across all focus groups – at least at the normative level. However, results suggest that beyond the surface, Egyptian men and women are engaged in a constant process of re-negotiating roles, status and access to resources and decision-making power. Rather than calling traditional norms and values openly into question, participants preferred to deconstruct and re-arrange elements of culture, tradition and religion to suit their needs for change. In doing so, they had a rich pool of discourse fragments at their disposal that allows for justifying opposite behavior by referring to the same frameworks of reference, be they rooted in religion or culture.

This became not only obvious in statements on women's role and status but also on FGC which was both defended and rejected on religious as well as on traditional or secular grounds. The consequence was often ambiguity and contradiction, which reflects considerable tension among conflicting norms, between norms and practice and between as well as among men and women.

MAPS OF FIELD SURVEY AREAS

Map Of Egypt
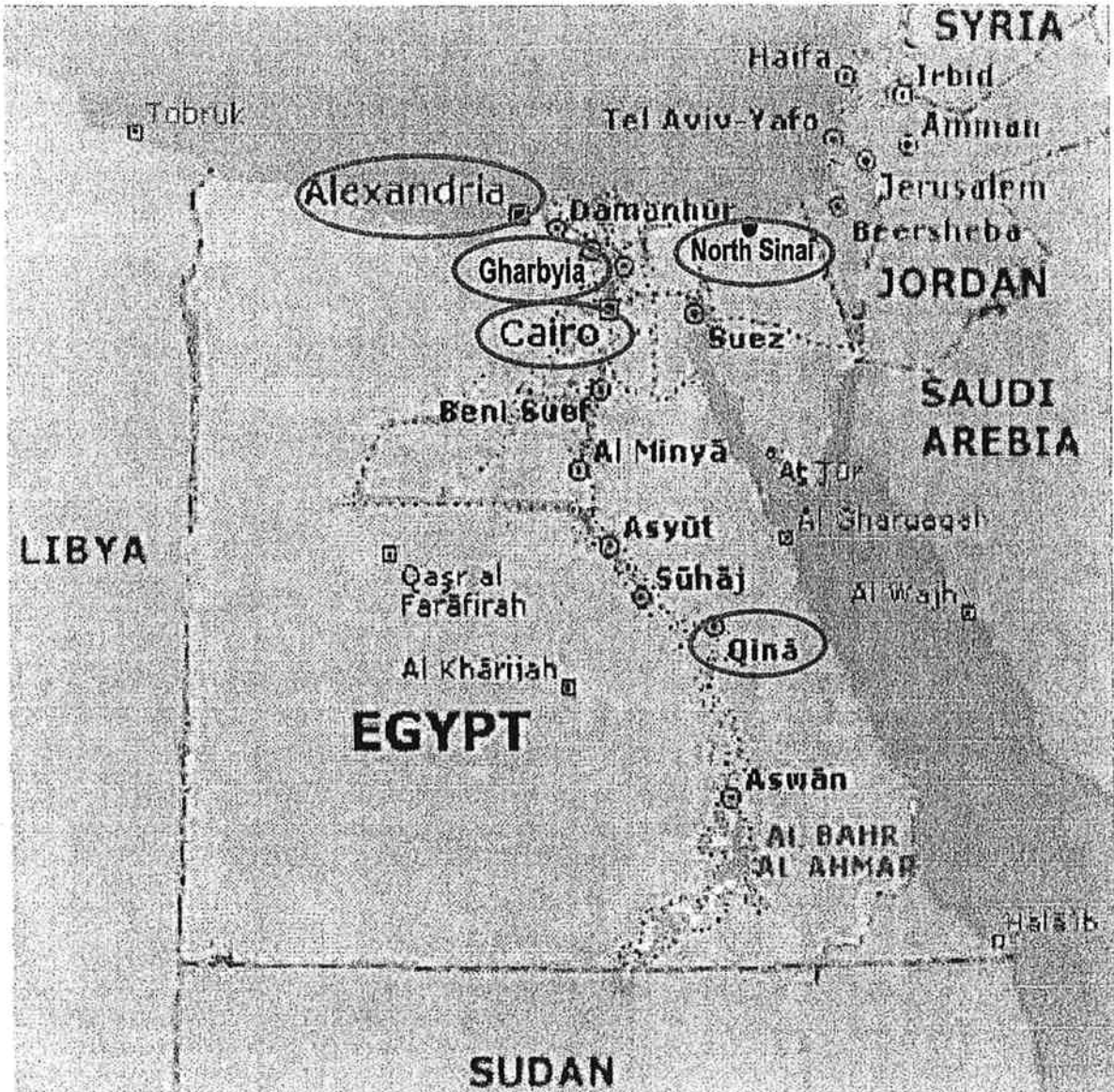
1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   *Background*

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has requested North South Consultants Exchange (NSCE) to conduct a study on gender and socio-cultural diversity in Egypt. The study was carried out from September 20 through November 28, 2004. It aims at providing JICA with an in-depth insight into gender issues and gender roles in contemporary Egypt, taking into consideration differences according to sex, class, age, geographic area and religion. The study is intended to provide background information that shall help JICA to identify complementary and gender specific activities for its development projects.

Socio-cultural norms and practices are fluent in any society. They are not static across space and time but change according to shifting socio-economic, political and environmental conditions as well as new technologies. Egyptian society has been subjected to rapid socio-economic changes during the past decades that are mainly due to urbanization, spread of formal education, labor migration to the Gulf States, structural adjustment programs, regional conflicts, globalization and the influence of new communication technologies. These factors have produced changes in labor markets, an increase of commerce and wage labor but also un- and underemployment, particularly among youth, the erosion of the extended family as well as new consumption patterns and role models.

Both individuals and collective units such as the family have to adapt to these new developments. This has significant effects on social practice as well as prevailing normative and value systems whereas practice tends to change at a much faster pace than norms and values. As the general sense of insecurity increases, many Egyptians try to hold on to traditions that give orientation and a sense of belonging. This is reflected in the fact that dominant public discourses with reference to modern Islamist interpretations of religion appeal to a wide range of social groups and partially reinforce conservative constructions of gender roles.

In today's Egypt the dynamics of change are very pronounced and complex. They produce increasing discrepancies between social norms and social practice. Nowhere is the tension between the normative level and the level of practice as significant and complex as in the area of gender relations and gender roles. This can be partially explained by the fact that changing gender roles deeply affect the construction of an individual's identity and his/her perception of the "self/we" and the "other". The question of identity and self-perception is in itself linked to the increasing penetration of the logic of capitalist market economies into Egyptian society. This logic undermines the traditionally prevalent construction of personhood as a relational self that is part of a broader collective. It produces instead new needs of self-assertion as an individual that is acknowledged according to its ability to perform or at least survive in an increasingly anonymous world where individual consumption

prevails over the constant reproduction of community and collective support schemes. Significant changes in gender relations have thus an impact on the whole traditional system of loyalties, mutual dependencies and solidarity networks. As everywhere under similar conditions, Egyptians are struggling hard today to re-balance traditional values and social norms with rapidly changing social practice.

In order to arrive at an in-depth understanding of gender dynamics and gender-related development needs of different social groups, it is important to study changes at the normative level as well as the level of practice and also the area in between where practice influences norms and vice versa. This includes coping strategies in case prevailing norms and customs contradict new, strongly felt personal and collective needs as well as solidarity and sanctioning mechanisms that promote or constrain attempts to act counter to tradition. Understanding these issues is crucial for development assistance. It allows identifying potentials and obstacles to enhance women's participation and status as well as appropriate ways to support tendencies of social change that may lead to a better adaptation of gender relations in accordance with the changing needs of both men and women.

Development assistance is always an intervention and never neutral. It contributes to a change of framework conditions and offers chances for those who are looking for support to their own aspirations of change. This may include individuals who have long tried to find socially acceptable ways to break out of the narrow frame of established norms and practices and who eventually play a pioneering role in development projects. However, development assistance has to bear in mind that it is always them who have to bear the consequences, both positive and negative. It is, therefore, crucial that development agencies understand the dynamics of change as well as the tensions and imbalances between norms and practice when designing and implementing development projects. Otherwise, they are likely to fail, produce unintended negative results or at least miss opportunities for affirmative action as well as effective participation, ownership and sustainability.

1.2   Structure of the Report

Section 2 gives a detailed description of the study concept and the methodology. It presents the objectives of the study, the study components, the sampling frame and the concept and framework of analysis for focus group discussions and in-depth interviews.

Section 3 gives an overview of the status of women in Egypt that is based on a review of the results of previous studies. The section contains information on the legal and constitutional framework, women's representation in public, women's participation in the labor force and access to assets, information on selected gender indicators and an outline on key issues related to socialization and the construction of gender roles.

Section 4 presents the results of the structured survey with information on the sample profile, gender and the family, education and socialization, paid and reproductive labor, income and assets as well as participation in public and community activities.

Section 5 presents the results of the qualitative part of the study, i.e. the results of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Statements made in focus group discussions were mainly analyzed with instruments of discourse analysis. In order to provide a more in-depth understanding, a sub-section has been included that explains how certain opinions are related to and have been influenced by Islamist discourses that represent one of the main frameworks of reference for socio-cultural discussions on women's status and gender roles in Egypt today.

2 METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Objectives and Study Components

The overall goal of this study is to reveal the cultural and social diversity of Egyptian society from a gender perspective. This includes the investigation of gender roles and interactions of men and women with various regional, socio-economic and religious backgrounds. In addition, set of specific objectives was defined to analyze tendencies of change in gender relations, to pinpoint the underlying factors and to illustrate the potentials and constraints that define individual and collective options to constantly adapt gender roles to the ever changing socio-economic reality. These specific objectives of the study are listed below:

- pinpointing of prevailing cultural norms as relevant for gender
- investigation of the main effects of socio-economic change on gender relations
- identification of tensions between gender relevant norms and practices
- analysis of mechanisms to cope with change and its effects on gender roles

Four research instruments have been used to achieve the objectives of the study:

(1)   A review of relevant literature on gender issues in Egypt

(2) A structured survey with 400 questionnaires that was implemented in the five governorates of Cairo, Alexandria, Gharbiya, Qena and El Arish. The questionnaire contains 13 sections with questions on personal status, family composition, education, work and employment, access to resources,

(3) participation in decision-making and public activities, sources of information and opinions concerning selected gender-relevant issues

(4) A qualitative study including 16 focus group discussions, each with 7 participants, and five in-depth interviews with public figures who have an

(5) influence on the formation of public opinion on national or local levels (two sheikhs, a priest, a university professor in sociology and a TV moderator)

(6) A review of the approaches and experiences of existing gender-specific and gender-sensitive development interventions, focusing on selected projects of two donor organizations, one governmental agency, one Egyptian development NGO and two religious NGOs (Muslim and Christian).

2.2 Sampling Frame

Previous research suggests that the most important determinants that influence gender perceptions and practices are sex, age, socio-economic status, education, regional differences and religion. In order to capture those differences, quotas have been introduced in the distribution of both questionnaires and focus groups. Consequently, half of the structured survey was implemented with men and half with women. Regional

differences have been captured by selecting areas according to standard categories of CAPMAS, i.e. Cairo and Alexandria (urban governorates), Tanta and Zefta in the governorate of Gharbiya (urban and rural Lower Egypt), Esna and Armant in the governorate of Qena (urban and rural Upper Egypt) and El Arish City (frontier governorates).

In view of the small size of the samples, it was not possible to measure all variables in all sample areas. The questionnaire was split according to sex and age: 25% women 18-25 years 25% women >25 years, 25% males 18-30 years, and 25% >30 years. It was assumed that the majority in the lower age brackets was never married and the majority in the upper age brackets is or was married. Quota according to age in focus groups have only been introduced in Cairo, assuming that age differences are most pronounced in the metropolitan centers where socio-economic conditions and labor markets are changing most rapidly and where the population is most exposed to different sets of values and life styles.

It was also assumed that the impact of class differences on gender is most explicit in Cairo and Alexandria. The extreme imbalances in the distribution of wealth in both cities as well as the influx of large numbers of migrants from all over Egypt, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s, have led to a considerable diversity of socio-cultural orientations and choices in life. The very size of these large urban agglomerations allows for heterogeneous life styles that exist side by side without major interference.

Formal education has a decisive influence on socialization and life experiences since educational levels co-determine access to information and labor choices. Many studies have proven the positive correlation between class and education even though higher education does not guarantee higher socio-economic status. It was thus assumed that differences according to educational levels can be captured indirectly in connection with class. Three different types of neighborhoods with distinct socio-economic population features have been selected:

▪   El-Mandra and Sidi Bishr in Alexandria as examples for old core urban areas with mainly lower middle and middle class residents and a high percentage of families who have been living in an urban environment since many generations

▪   Manshiet Nasser in Cairo as an example of a large urban informal settlement with mainly poor and lower income residents and a high percentage of families with rural or provincial urban origins

▪   Maadi and Zamalek in Cairo as examples of posh neighborhoods with a high percentage of upper middle and upper class families

Religion was assumed to be the determinant that least influences gender perceptions and practices since many studies have proven that culture and deep rooted social traditions tend to prevail over religion and that the most important social traditions and values are equally adopted and practiced by Christians and Muslims alike.

Differences according to religion have been captured by introducing a quota of 30% for Christians in Qena for the structured questionnaire since Christians are concentrated in Upper Egypt and under-represented in the Delta and the frontier governorates. The rest of the sample includes Christians at random so that the overall representation of Christians was assumed to roughly correspond to the national average of 10%. Two focus group discussions with exclusively Christian participants have been implemented in Qena and Manshiet Nasser/Cairo.

A detailed sampling matrix for the structured survey as well as a table that shows the distribution of focus groups is included in the annex.

Remark:
The sample of the structured survey is relatively small, particularly since results are correlated with different background variables. The introduction of quota to assure coverage of all variables does not really allow for true random selection of respondents. In addition, the attempt to capture differences according to class by selecting certain areas with distinct socio-economic features can only provide proxy indications of class differences. Results obtained from the structured survey can thus not be taken as accurate statistical data that can be generalized on a larger scale. Results should rather be treated as indicators that complement the findings of previous studies and the results of focus group discussions.

2.3   Field Work Implementation

Responsibilities
The methodology for the field work and the design of research instruments were developed by the principal investigator who provided also written instructions for the NSCE researchers who conducted the Focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews, the research on development projects and part of the collection of gender relevant literature as well as for the trainers and supervisors involved in the implementation of the structured survey. In addition, the principal investigator conducted the review of previous studies, the final analysis of quantitative and qualitative data as well as the draft of the final report. The NSCE Project Coordinator organized the implementation of the survey, the Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews and the investigation of development projects. The NSCE Field Survey Manager (FSM) was responsible for supervision and quality control of quantitative and qualitative raw data.

Structured Survey
NSCE adapted its Survey & Research Operation Manual for the structured survey. The manual included common procedures to be followed during the field survey, and defined formats to be used for all documents and reports produced.

Male and female Structured Survey Coordinators (SSCs) and enumerators were selected among resident applicants with previous experience in survey implementation. The FSM was in charge of training the SSCs on every aspect of questionnaire implementation. The SSCs selected a minimum of 10 male and female enumerators in

each governorate. They trained the enumerators and carried out the pre-test of the questionnaire under the supervision of the FSM who supervised also the initiation of the survey. The SSCs were also responsible for first level quality control of data collection which was supposed to be done on a daily basis. The FSM was in charge of the final review and overall quality control of quantitative raw data.

SPSS was used as a specialized computer program for statistical analysis of the raw data of the structured survey. A statistician was responsible for data entry, database cleaning, consistency checks and statistical analysis.

Focus group discussions
In-depth training of the PRA specialists, who carried out the Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, including a pre-test, was done by the principal investigator. Focus groups were restricted to 7-9 participants since less participants would not have produce sufficient dynamic in discussions and more would have been unmanageable for moderation and recording. The organization of FGs was facilitated by local NGOs that mobilized the participants. Persons who have been intensively involved in development projects were excluded from participation to make sure that results are as far as possible representative for the average population.

The field work team was made up of two PRA specialists (male and female) as well as two research assistants (male and female) with experience in PRA research. Focus group discussions with female participants were implemented by female and male focus group discussions by male researchers. The PRA specialists moderated the discussions, the research assistants were responsible for recording according to a standardized format that was provided by the principal investigator and included non-verbal information and observations during and after focus group discussions. Focus group discussions lasted for altogether 3 hours and were implemented in NGO premises, health centers, youth or cultural centers, schools or other appropriate places.

2.4   Concept and Framework for Analysis of Focus Group Discussions and In-Depth Interviews

The qualitative part of the study is more complex than the other parts since it focuses most on capturing the multiple layers of norms and practices as well as discrepancies, conflicts and tendencies of change. The concept and framework for analysis of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews will, therefore, be presented here in some detail.

Focus group discussions were designed to provide more in-depth information on how gender relations are constructed today in normative terms and on how they are translated into practice. Potential discrepancies and mutual influence of both levels have been traced exemplarily by focusing on the following three issues: (1) gender roles and decision-making within the family with a focus on women's work, girls' education and women's freedom of movement, (2) violence against women with a focus on the definition of violence as well as its justification and felt effects and (3) reproductive health with a focus on family planning and female genital circumcision (FGC).

Gender perceptions are at the center of social norms and culture the normative system in Egypt. They have a decisive influence on the daily routines, social relations and behavior patterns of both sexes. Changing socio-economic conditions produce new needs which may contradict the prevailing value system that prescribes certain roles and behavior patterns. The degree of acceptance of violence is an important factor that co-determines an individual's options to break out of the framework of accepted social practice and the underlying norms and values.

Gender roles are one of the core areas where socio-cultural norms and values manifest themselves and violence is the ultimate instrument to impose these norms. The same socio-cultural norms are inscribed in gender roles and in practices of violence and both are intertwined and mutually dependent. Violence is not possible without a normative system justifying it and power imbalances in gender roles - manifested by discrepancies in the possibility to realize one's aspirations and satisfy one's needs - cannot be maintained without resorting to violence. The incidence of violence tends to increase when normative systems come into conflict with requirements to adapt to changing socio-economic conditions.

The preparedness to use or at least tolerate violence is acquired throughout the process of socialization and the degree of individual and collective acceptance of the concept of violence co-determines the probability of its use. The knowledge about the possibility to use or be subjected to violence for the sake of maintaining existing power relations is deeply engrained in the sub-consciousness of both sexes. Women, in particular, will always consider the possibility of being exposed to violence when thinking about deviating from the path of socially accepted practice, if only at the level of the sub-conscious. The investigation of gender roles and violence and their mutual relation can thus illustrate tendencies of change, re-negotiation of new modes of cooperation and power struggles in gender relations in Egypt today.

Reproductive health, particularly family planning and FGC, are most prominent among those areas where massive development interventions included intensive attempts to change traditional behavior. International donors and primarily USAID have effectively managed to pressure the Egyptian state to shift its family planning policy from a more structural, integrated development approach with a focus on social equity to a policy that focuses on the control of women's fertility. The underlying rationale of family planning strategies is that procreation and raising children as responsible citizens and productive subjects in a market economy has to be scientifically reorganized with the help of state representatives in the form of health professionals.[1]

The success of fertility control depends on the systematic and regular use of contraceptives which needs responsibly acting women and men who adhere to physicians' prescriptions and counseling and do not rely on information and advice by

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[1] For a critical analysis of the history, objectives, strategies and approaches to family planning as well as the underlying concepts and related interests of major players in family planning interventions in Egypt see Ali, K.A. 2002 as well as Bier, L. in a research paper on the history of discourses and approaches to birth control and family planning which was published on the Internet at www.ucis.unc.edu/

uninformed and uneducated family and community members. Donor interventions have thus pushed for women's self-understanding as free individuals who share responsibilities with their husbands on an equal basis within the nuclear family and for a new relationship with the state and its representatives.

Similar to family planning, discourses on FGC have focused on women's health and women's free choices as individuals. They are rooted in international narratives on women's bodies, individual autonomy and freedom of choice and are embedded in international notions of universalized rights and laws that produce atomized citizens who shift their allegiance from kin, communities and local power networks to the state. Development interventions in the area of family planning and FGC rely heavily on changing behavior patterns through modern behavior modification techniques such as counseling, media campaigns and modules in adult education classes.

These interventions have persistently pushed for changing social aspects of sexuality and reproduction that are perceived as obstacles to achieving the objectives of international development and modernization agendas. It can be assumed that decades of campaigns in the areas of family planning and FGC have not only had a direct effect on family planning and FGC but also on gender perceptions and gender practices in a broader sense. Including family planning and FGC in the qualitative part of the study can thus provide interesting insights as to how donor-driven development policies are one factor within broader tendencies of socio-economic and socio-cultural change as relevant for gender questions.[2]

The results of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews have been analyzed with instruments of discourse analysis. The analysis aims at identifying the basic tenets of gender perceptions and the frameworks of reference that Egyptians refer to, either in order to hold on to tradition or in order to justify change. Understanding these mechanisms in different social contexts can provide orientation for gender-sensitive development projects to support tendencies of change in a knowledgeable and responsible way.

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[2] For an analysis of different approaches to FGC eradication see for example Abdel-Tawab and Hegazi, Population Council, 2002

3 OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S STATUS IN EGYPT

3.1 The Legal and Constitutional Framework[3]

The current Egyptian constitution that was issued in 1971 grants Egyptian women a number of rights. Articles 8 and 40 prescribe equal rights and opportunities for all citizens regardless of their sex, origin, language, religion or belief. Articles 18 and 20 of the constitution, articles 3 and 15 of the Education Law 139/1981, revised by Law 233/1988, and article 54 of the Child Law 12/1996 grant Egyptian boys and girls equal rights to education. Article 14 of the constitution stipulates that public office is a right for all citizens. Article 13 gives all citizens the constitutional right to work, without discrimination between men and women. Articles 10 and 11 impose an obligation on the state to protect mothers and children as well as to reconcile between women's duties towards their families and their work in society. The Government of Egypt has also ratified the CEDAW in 1981, however with a couple of reservations on some of the articles of the convention, most notably article 16 concerning gender equality in all matters relating to marriage and the family and article 2 which prescribes the abolishment of all discriminatory elements from existing laws, regulations, customs and practices. Article 2 has only been accepted on condition that compliance does not run counter to Islamic Sharia'.

The constitution stipulates that the principles of Islamic Sharia' are the most important source of legislation in Egypt. Most laws in Egypt do not touch on provisions of the Sharia'. However, Family and Personal Status Law constitute the part of the Civil Code which is most directly derived from the principles of Islamic jurisprudence. The concerned laws include a number of articles that clearly discriminate against women according to international notions of equality before the law. In international conventions and human rights instruments, equality is considered to be *absolute equality* as opposed to the Sharia's notion of *relative equality*. The notion of *relative equality* is based on the concept that women and men are biologically different and should therefore have essentially different but complementary roles in society which should be equally validated. Men's privileges in some areas are thus not perceived as discrimination but as a consequence of the particular responsibilities they have towards their wives and children as well as towards the Islamic *umma* (community of believers) as a whole.

A Muslim man can, for example, be married to up to four women at the same time whereas women have to be monogamous. According to mainstream interpretation of religion, however, this right is not absolute but conditioned with the equal treatment of all wives in every respect, a condition that many scholars believe to be unattainable. Therefore, they advise Muslims not to marry more than one wife.

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[3] Information in this section has been obtained from public newspapers, the website of the National Council of Women, a paper prepared by the prominent Egyptian lawyer, Mona Zulficar,(no date) that compared Egyptian law with the CEDAW, a Gender and Development Information Kit prepared by Halla Shafey on behalf of the DAG Sub-Group on Gender and Development (no date), the unpublished version of a publication of Essam Fawzi (meanwhile published by Zed Books/London 2004) and the website of the organization *Women Living Under Muslim La*w, www..wluml.org/english

Divorce can be initiated by men without resort to the judiciary whereas women have to endure costly and lengthy procedures in courts.[4] They have to prove that the husband has violated his legal obligations, e.g. does not provide for his wife and children, is absent for a prolonged period of time or has inflicted serious physical or psychological harm on his wife. Law 1/2000, a recent amendment of the Personal Status Law grants women the right to divorce even against their husband's will and without specific reasons. However, women have to pay back the dowry and everything they have received as presents during their marriage.[5] The Personal Status Law that governs marriage and divorce is derived from the Sharia and applies to Muslims, mixed marriages and marriages between non-Muslims of different religious denominations (e.g. a Copt married to a protestant). Others are subject to the rules of their respective religious sects.

Inheritance is another area where women do not enjoy the same rights as men. The respective provisions in Law 77/1943 that apply to Muslim and non-Muslim Egyptians alike are quite complicated and vary, for example, according to whether or not the couple had children and whether at least one child is male. As a principle, however, Muslim women are only entitled to half the share of their male counterparts, which is justified by men's responsibility to provide for their wives and children as well as for their female relatives if they are in need.

Until recently, women who are married to foreign husbands could not pass on their nationality to their children whereas Egyptian men married to foreign women could.[6] This had serious implications for the children of foreign fathers because they could not enjoy free education and health care, had to obtain work permits and were excluded from political participation. Until recently, women needed also written consent of their husbands to be able to obtain a passport and to travel abroad.[7] This has often denied women the right to work abroad or travel for any other purposes.

Provisions to protect women from violence are scattered in several laws and have long been criticized by many NGOs as insufficient. Women's and human rights NGOs have started to initiate campaigns against domestic violence, including rape by husbands.

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[4] Women have the possibility to include the right to divorce themselves at any time and without resort to a court in the marriage contract (as opposed to the Khula' provision that still involves a judge). This right is called *'esma* and is rooted in Islamic Sharia. However, many women are not aware of that possibility. In addition, granting a wife an 'esma is considered to be an indicator for a man's weakness, a reputation which many women believe would reflect negatively on themselves since a woman who chooses a weak husband is viewed with pity

[5] This provision is called *Khula'*. Although it is an Islamic institution which is based on sayings attributed to the prophet Mohamed (hadith), it has been vehemently contested by conservatives. A Khula' divorce is difficult to obtain for many women because of the high costs attached to it. Many women who have considerably contributed to furnishing flats and purchasing household goods have written the respective items in their husband's name in order not to compromise his reputation as provider. In case of a Khula' divorce, they have no legal right to retain these goods

[6] The law has recently been amended so that Egyptian women married to husbands with most non-Egyptian nationalities can now pass their citizenship on to their children. However, there are still exceptions and further amendments to the law are still under discussion

[7] The requirement to present the husband's written consent was based on a decree of the Minister of Interior which was recently revoked by the Constitutional Court on the grounds of discrimination

Although rape (only outside marriage) is strongly punished with death penalty, the law contained a loophole that had particularly humiliating and destructive effects for rape victims. Until recently, charges against a rapist who proposed to marry the victim were dropped; otherwise he could face death penalty. Consequently, many rapists married their victims, often encouraged by her family on the grounds that this was the only way to restore the family honor and protect the victim from heavy social stigmatization. The respective article 291 of the Penal Code was heavily criticized by women's and human rights organizations and was finally removed in April 1999.[8]

However, the Penal code contains other articles that discriminate against women, notably article 274 that provides that adultery by the wife in any place is penalized by imprisonment of up to two years while article 276 provides that the husband is only be penalized if he commits adultery in the marital home and only by imprisonment of up to six months. Article 237 provides that if a husband finds his wife in a state of adultery and kills her immediately, he will be sentenced to imprisonment for only up to three years while article 234 provides that wives who commit the same crime face imprisonment with hard labor for three years up to a life time. Women are also not recognized on the same footing with men as witnesses in court. The weight of women's testimony is only half that of men, i.e. two women have to make the same statement to be regarded equal with the testimony of one man.

On the positive side, Egyptian working women enjoy considerable support by the law. The Labor Law grants them at least six weeks of maternity leave. A working mother can take additional unpaid leaves for up to two years for a maximum of three times during her employment. However, many employers in the private sector are reluctant to employ women, partially because of these entitlements, or they try to circumvent the law by not issuing full-time legal contracts.

By law, women have a separate financial status and full control over their assets regardless of their personal status. If they marry, they retain their maiden name. Under Law 62/1976 that governs financial support and alimony and applies to Muslims and non-Muslims alike, women are entitled to be financially maintained by their husbands regardless of their own income and assets which they are not obliged to spend for their families. On the other hand, article 11 of the Personal Status Law 100/1985 gives men the right to suspend financial maintenance in case their wives stop obeying them or leave them without a legal basis. In such a case, the husband can obtain a court order to summon his wife back to his house, even with the help of the police.

The amendment of the Personal Status Law - Law 1/2000 - provides that newly married couples can include legally binding agreements in their marriage contract regarding a number of issues that have caused disputes in many previous marriages. Examples are the wife's vocational education, work after marriage, traveling abroad and a simpler option of divorce at the wife's request.

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[8] The way for the amendment of the law has been paved by the Grand Mufti of the Republic who has issued a statement in October 1999 that declared marriages between rapists and their victims as "null and void" in Islam. He has also declared that rape victims are entitled to have their hymen restored (tarqiya) by a physician to "restore their virginity", see for example Cairo Times, Vol. 3 Issue 5, 28 April – 12 May, 1999

3.2   Women's Public Representation and Power

The constitution of 1956 gave women in Egypt the right to vote and stand for elections. The first People's Assembly (Egypt's Lower House of Parliament) included two women, i.e. women held 0.57% of the seats. Today, almost 50 years later, still only eight or 1.8% of the 454 seats are occupied by women. The Upper House of the Egyptian Parliament, the Shoura Council, with 264 members includes 15 women, i.e. female representation is limited to 5.7%. The main obstacles to women's participation are their lack of financial resources to run an election campaign, lack of support of political parties, popular reservations against women's participation in politics, lack of trust in women's capacities as political leaders as well as lack of skills and knowledge to compete with male candidates.

Women have worked for a long time in clerical and administrative jobs in the judiciary and its sub-systems and occupy around one third of these positions.[9] However, women were long denied the right to become judges or public prosecutors. This was rationalized by conservative socio-cultural interpretations of religion maintaining that women are too emotional to objectively assess judicial cases and hand down verdicts, in particular in certain biological conditions such as pregnancy or menstruation. Although the law did not exclude women from being judges, the first female judge was only appointed in January 2003, followed by the appointment of three other women judges shortly afterwards.

A large number of women is working at the lower levels of the executive and public administration system where salaries tend to be extremely low. Although still not truly representative, the percentage of females in high administrative posts in the executive system has reached 34.6% in 2002, up from 15.3% in 1996.[10] The present Cabinet (maglis al-wuzara') that is formed by 34 ministers includes only two females, the Ministers of Social Affairs and International Cooperation. Women's representation in the Cabinet is thus limited to 5.9%.

The highest representation of female employees is found in the Ministries of Social Affairs and Information. The number of women occupying high managerial positions in media and television is larger than that of men. The post of Head of the National Television has been held by a woman for the past 20 years and seven out of the ten national television channels have female directors or deputy directors. 36% of writers and journalists are female and two thirds of magazines are directed by women, however, only three women are editors in chief for magazines and there is no single editors in chief for any newspaper.[11]

The share of females among registered voters was only 37.4% in 2003. Currently, a woman holds the post of Deputy Speaker for the People's Assembly. However, women

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[9] Badran, 1997, p. 33

[10] National Council of Women, 2004, p. 12

[11] Ramsis Farah, 2002, p. 42, based on CAPMAS population survey 1996

are only represented with 2.2% in the People's Assembly and 5.7% in the Shoura Council, the two national legislative bodies.[12] No woman has ever held the office of governor, city or district council or dean of university. Women's employment in the police and security forces is only symbolic and only in the past elections did a woman manage for the first time to become a head of a local council and another to become a village head. Only 3.2% of the seats in governorate councils, 0.7% of village, 1.7% of city, 1.0% of merkaz and 4.5% of district council seats are occupied by women.[13] Interestingly, rural women hold 12.5% of high posts in political organizations as opposed to only 1.4% of urban women.[14]

In the public sector, women occupy only 1-3% of leadership positions, although their total participation in the public sector amounts to around 12%. Women's participation in political parties is minimal. They do usually only play a role in the parties' women's committees. Their representation in higher committees and decision-making bodies does rarely exceed 2%, except for the Labor Party where women reached 6% in the executive committee in 1997.[15]

Women constitute 17% of the members in professional syndicates.[16] Few women are able to become members of the boards of syndicates, labor unions and cooperatives. During the period of 1955-1995, only one or two women sat on the boards of the important Journalist Union and the Union of Lawyers. Women are only represented in four labor unions at the national level[17] and in 1999 only 621 or 3% women were elected to trade union committees in the governorates.[18] Women's representation in the more than 17,000 NGOs is somewhat higher. Female membership in NGOs accounts for around 35% but women's percentage in boards was limited to 18% in 1997 and 15% - 18% in subsequent years.[19] Many NGOs in rural areas as well as NGOs formed by migrants in the big cities do not allow female membership altogether. Women who occupy senior or board positions in NGOs tend to be from a middle to upper class background.[20]

Representation of women in decision-making bodies, particularly at the higher levels, is thus far too low to grant women any real weight and major influence in formal decision-making processes, in addition to the fact that authoritarian rule seriously obstructs political participation in any respect. However, this does not mean that women are entirely powerless. Women's NGOs have increasingly entered into advocacy campaigns for women's rights and have had some success. Their influence can be felt, for example, in public debates about the Personal Status Law and the Nationality Law regarding issues such as divorce, alimonies and the right of Egyptian women to pass their

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[12] National Council of Women, 2004, p.3 and p. 12

[13] Shafay, op.cit. (no date), booklet 2, p. 26

[14] Ramsis Farah 2002, p.5

[15] Badran 1997, pp. 37-38

[16] National Council of Women, 2004, p.12

[17] Badran 1997, p.37

[18] National Council of Women, 2004, p. 12

[19] National Council of Women 2004, p. 12

[20] Badran 1997, p. 34

citizenship on to their children from non-Egyptian fathers. NGOs have also managed to pressure the state into facilitating women's access to identity and voters cards[21] and to revive a law that allows for a pension scheme for workers without stable jobs, which is particularly important for the large number of women who work in the informal sector.

A series of studies conducted during the 1990s has also pointed to women's participation in informal networks. They argue that by incorporating unrelated individuals, households and families across different classes and neighborhoods, these networks do eventually aggregate the interests of the masses. They are believed to function as major avenues for informal participation and de facto though limited influence of poor, lower and lower middle class Egyptians on higher level decision-making processes.[22] Women and the poor in Egypt are thus by no means entirely powerless. However, they are largely excluded from formal arenas of decision-making. The authoritarian rule which characterizes the political culture in Egypt - not only in politics but also in civil society - works against women's influence and representation. Tendencies of women's marginalization or exclusion from decision-making power in the public sphere are further reinforced by conservative currents in society that have gained more ground during the past decades.[23]

3.3   Women's Participation in the Labor Force and Access to Resources

The Egyptian labor market is characterized by large gender disparities. Less women than men are part of the labor force, women tend to work under less secure conditions, in lower positions and with lower payment and are less often employers or self-employed. Their share as wage workers, workers in the informal sector and government employees is relatively higher than that of men. The economic activity rate of Egyptian women is estimated at 17.0% (17.8% in urban and 15.5% in rural areas), compared to 60.5% of males. The percentage of females to males is estimated at 27% and the percentage of females to total labor force at 21.4%. With only 15%, female activity rates in Cairo are lower than average.[24] The last Labor Force Sample Survey (LFSS) in 1999 counted 18.2 individuals in the Egyptian labor force (15-64 years), 3.9 million of whom were women. Female and rural labor grew faster than average with the latter reaching 57.5% in 1999.[25] Female official unemployment rates are considerably higher than those of men, i.e. 19.4% versus 5.1%.[26]

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[21] Many poor women in Egypt do not have birth certificates or identity cards which excludes them from political participation but also from many government services. An increasing number of women's NGOs has raised the issue during the 1990s and the newly established National Council for Women has launched a national campaign in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Local Development to facilitate women's access to identity cards

[22] See mainly Singermann, 1997

[23] For an overview of Islamic discourses, state reactions, participation of women in Islamic discourses and impacts of these discourses on women see, for example, Kandiyoti 1991 and Badran 1996

[24] Ramsis Farah 2002, p.3

[25] CAPMAS, Labor Force Sample Survey, 1999

[26] WB/ NCW 2002, p. 64

The participation of females in economic activity is certainly underestimated since it is assumed that large numbers of female workers in agriculture and the informal sector are not captured by standard enumeration methods.[27] NCW estimates, for example, that 88% of women working in the private sector are working on an informal basis.[28]

An Egyptian survey on the transformation of the labor market used extended labor force definitions that include, for example, employment in subsistence agriculture. Female participation was thus found considerably higher as in the LFSS, i.e. 46% versus 21.2% (56.6% versus 17.7% in rural and 33% versus 25.5% in urban areas).[29] According to the LFSS, employed females exceed 3 million, their share in total employment amounted to 18.7% in 1999. The government is the most important employer of women covering 40% of female employment, in urban areas even 60%. The female share of government employees is 28%. The most important government jobs for women are offered in education, health and clerical work.[30]

In terms of employment sectors, women are mainly employed in agriculture (32% of total employed females), education (22.4% and 30% in urban areas), public administration (10.8%) and manufacturing (9.9%). Two thirds of females are agricultural workers (31.5%), professionals (20.7%) and technicians (14.3%). The remaining third is employed in sales and services as well as clerical work. In urban areas, the percentage of professionals reaches more than 30% and that of technicians exceeds 20%. By contrast, male occupation is divided into roughly one third of professionals, one quarter of agricultural workers, one quarter of production workers and artisans and 20% other jobs. Women are thus more concentrated than men in certain sectors. Men are more often employed as professionals, less often in agriculture and more often in industry. They are also more often entrepreneurs.

More than 20% of working females are non-wage workers (work for families), almost 2/3 are wage workers, compared to only 60% of males who are more often than women self-employed or entrepreneurs. Only 8% of working women are self-employed and 6% are employers compared to 12.4% and 18.3% respectively of their male counterparts. Figures indicate significant changes in rural areas during the period of 1996-1999 with a considerable increase of wage workers and corresponding decrease of non-wage workers and self-employed women.[31]

Women's wages tend to be considerably lower than those of men - particularly for workers - and reach on average 78.4% of male wages.[32] Salaries of low ranking government jobs, many of them occupied by women, are also very low and sometimes barely cover the additional costs of transportation and food related to keeping the job.[33]

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[27] CAPMAS, Labor Force Sample Survey, 1999

[28] National Council of Women, 2004, p.21

[29] Assaad, 1999

[30] CAPMAS, Labor Force Sample Survey, 1999

[31] WB/ NCW 2002, p. 66 - 72, based on the LFSS 1999

[32] CAPMAS, Employment, Wages and Hours of Work, 1999

[33] Information on discrimination against women in the labor market is also included in Worldbank 2004(a), pp. 100-124 (a)

A number of studies have, therefore, questioned the assumption that female employment automatically leads to more autonomy for women as a result of greater earning power. Arlene MacLeod, for example, argues that decreasing purchasing power undermines the economic rationale for women's work and may eventually lead to a loss of power for many women.[34] She elaborates that rising consumer expectations after the Open Door Policy starting in the 1970s, combined with the constantly increasing costs of living and the commercialization of many services have pushed many women into the labor force. This is particularly true for women from traditional working class or lower middle class backgrounds who believe in promises of upward mobility as a result of consistent efforts. These families are struggling hard to attain or maintain middle class status.

However, according to MacLeod, women's participation in the labor force comes at a price. Working women have less time to spend for their traditional tasks that include income saving activities as well as shoveling subsidized goods and other resources to the household that can be accessed through networks with relatives, neighbors and friends. Women's income that could in the past be used to buy supplementary consumer goods which gave the family the prestige of the middle class, such as automatic washing machines, refrigerators or gold-plated furniture, is now often needed to complement the husband's income to provide for basic necessities such as housing, food and expenses for children's education. The result of women's work is, therefore, often ambiguous. While working women bring in cash income, their working status causes the household also to lose some of its resources. Consequently, while getting access to new prestige and benefits, women are also losing part of their traditional power base.

Recent studies have pointed to the fact that structural adjustment policies have negatively affected female participation in paid work outside of government and have also reduced employment opportunities for young women in the civil service without increasing job opportunities in non-governmental sectors. The gender gap in earnings has widened, too, which has been partially attributed to the intensification of women's domestic burdens as a result of increasing commercialization of services.[35]

No data has been accessible on women's ownership of assets such as buildings, housing units, valuable tools and machinery, vehicles and cash savings. A recent study maintains that property ownership is not very common for Egyptian women except if they inherit. If property is bought, it is usually registered in the name of the husband or the father of a woman, even if she has provided all or part of the money out of her own funds. Women's request to write property in their name would run counter to prevailing traditions and would be interpreted as a sign of mistrust or disrespect.[36] Managers of registered banks are reported to have confirmed that women's rate of involvement as borrowers or even account holders is very low, whether as individuals or representatives of commercial companies. This reflects women's comparatively low

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[34] MacLeod in Singermann and Hoodfar 1996, pp. 28-50

[35] See, for example, Assaad and Arntz, 2004

[36] WB/ NCW 2002, pp. 8-9

involvement in economic activities and the decision-making process as well as high female illiteracy rates.[37]

Existing data on women's access to and control of agricultural land, the major natural resource in Egypt, indicates great disparities between men and women but also among regions. According to the CAPMAS population census of 1996, females account for only 3% of all landholders. The latest Agricultural Census of 2000 indicates women's share with 5.7% (7.3% in Lower Egypt, 3.87% in Upper Egypt and 4.6% in frontier governorates).[38] Gharbiya (10.4%) shows the best results for women in Lower Egypt, Kafr El Sheikh (4.7%) the worst. In Upper Egypt, Luxor in the governorate of Qena (11.6%), Beni Suef (5.8%) and Aswan (5.6%) figure best for women and Assiut shows the least favorable results.[39] The average size of women's landholdings is smaller and their access to loans lower than those of their male counterparts. The average size of male landholdings is 2.4 feddan, as compared to 2.0 feddan for female landholdings.[40] The percentages of female to male borrowers range between 4% for long-term loans and 30.5% for short-term loans.[41]

3.4   Selected Gender-Relevant Indicators

3.4.1   Women's Health

Maternal mortality rates, fertility rates, contraceptive use and female genital circumcision (FGC) are widely used as indicators for women's health in Egypt. Although considerable progress has been reached in reducing the maternal mortality rate over the past decades, it is still relatively high. According to the Egypt Human Development Report (EHDR) 2003[42], 60.7 women die per 100,000 life births. The EHDR indicates large regional and inner-city differences. In Manshiet Nasser, a poor informal area in Cairo, maternal mortality rates are as high as 62.0 compared to the posh district of Maadi with only 42.4. With 85.6, Qena in Upper Egypt shows a much higher maternal mortality rate, the rate in Gharbiya in Lower Egypt stands at 54.7 and in El Arish City, it falls to 31.8.[43]

According to the Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) 2000, fertility has declined from an average of 5.3 births per woman in 1980 to 3.5 in 2000, however, with large regional differences from 3.1 in urban governorates to 4.7 in rural Upper Egypt. Fertility rates are highest in the age group (25-29) for urban and (20-24) for rural areas, indicating that rural women tend to marry earlier than women in urban areas.[44] The EHDR reports the average age at first marriage with 26.0 for Cairo, 27.2 for Alexandria,

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[37] WB/ NCW 2002, p. 9

[38] Ministry of Agriculture/ Economic Affairs Sector, Agricultural Census 1999/2000

[39] WB/ NCW 2002, p. 89-92

[40] Ramsis Farah 2002, p. 43

[41] WB/ NCW 2002, p. 92

[42] The EHDR is published by the National Institute of Planning and UNDP

[43] EHDR 2003

[44] EDHS 2000

22.5 for Qena, 23.9 for Gharbiya and 26.1 for the frontier governorates that include El Arish.[45] According to the EDHS, 56% of Egyptian women resort to family planning with only 2% of them relying on traditional methods.

The most widely used contraceptive is the IUD (36% of currently married women), followed by the pill (10%) and injectables (6%).[46] The use of contraceptives is positively related with education, women's paid labor and number of children a woman already has. It is most widespread in urban governorates, followed by urban and rural Lower Egypt and is the lowest in urban and rural Upper Egypt.[47]

FGC is still prevalent among women in all geographic areas in Egypt. According to the EDHS 2000, 97% of ever married women aged 15-49 are circumcised. There seems to be a tendency that FGC prevalence may decline, although relatively slowly. This is, for example, indicated by the fact that only 75.2% of urban and 89.9% of rural women aged 12-19 years are circumcised and that only 81% of ever married women aged 15-19 years declared that they have already circumcised a daughter or intend to have their daughters circumcised.[48] Only 75% of this age group think that the practice should continue. Data of the EDHS suggests also that urban women with high educational levels and working women are less likely to have their daughters circumcised. Despite the fact that a decree of the Ministry of Health prohibits FGC to be performed by health professionals, there is a steady tendency of medicalization of the practice.[49]

Although there are no accurate statistics available on violence against women, the issue receives increasing attention as a serious problem for women's physical and mental well-being. One of the few studies on domestic violence found that 35% of ever married women in the age group of 15-49 years have been beaten at least once since their first marriage, mainly by their husbands. 28.5% of them had to seek medical attention or suffered from injuries.[50] Wife battery is ground for divorce and imprisonment in Egypt. However, many women do not report cases of domestic violence to the police and even if they do, they often accept reconciliation attempts of the police, the judiciary and their families.[51] An Egyptian practicing lawyer, Amira Bahey Eddin, has analyzed actual court cases and cases reported in the press and found that the judiciary tends to discriminate against women in cases involving

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[45] EHDR 2003

[46] EDHS 2000. Various NGOs and researchers have pointed to high rates of infections due to IUD and to other health problems related to use of contraceptives. Some of them have heavily criticized practices of family planning programs that do not provide sufficient counseling and care to women, particularly poor women who can often not afford travel and other expenses related to regular check-ups that are crucial for avoiding infections and other health problems related to contraceptive use. It has been argued that problems are largely due to the fact that the family planning program focuses on fertility control rather than on women's free choice, an approach that favors contraceptives which depend less on women's understanding and proper use. Large pharma firms have also been reproached to use Egypt as a test field for new and non-secure contraceptive methods. See for example, Ali, K.A., op.cit., 2004, various chapters

[47] Ramsis Farah 2002, pp. 16-17, see also El Zanaty & Associates, 2003 for further analysis of EDHS data, pp. 43-56

[48] See also El-Gibaly et al. 1999

[49] EDHS 2000, see also El Zanaty & Associates, 2003 for further analysis of EDHS data, pp. 99-106

[50] El Zanaty et al., Cairo 1995, quoted from WB/ NCW 2002, p. 34. There are two more known studies

[51] Zaalouk, no date

violence. Men who seriously hurt their wives tend to receive lower punishments than women who try to beat their husbands without causing any serious injuries.[52]

NGOs and human rights groups report that women in prison, female street children, orphans and working children as well as girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to violence and are often subjected to gender-specific forms of violence such as sexual harassment and assaults, rape and humiliation with strong sexual connotations.[53] Crimes committed against women in the name of honor are declining but do still exist, particularly in Upper Egypt, the Egyptian countryside and some informal areas in the large cities with many rural and Upper Egyptian migrants.[54]

3.4.2 Girls' Education

Although the situation has improved during the past years, there are still considerable gender gaps in education in Egypt. They are most significant concerning literacy which is in general comparatively low. Still, more than half of the Egyptian women are illiterate. The overall illiteracy rate is 39.9%, with 29.0% for males and 50.2% for females. Illiteracy is particularly widespread among rural females and women in some of the large informal areas in the big cities. Rural female illiteracy stands at 63.2%, compared to 33.8% for urban females.[55] In rural Upper Egypt the percentage of illiterate females exceeds 70% in all governorates with the exception of Giza, Aswan and Luxor.[56] Female illiteracy in Manshiet Nasser, a large squatter settlement in Cairo which has been included in this study, stands at 60.5%.[57]

According to the EHDR 2003, gross enrolment of girls in basic education reached 89.7%, in primary school 89.9%, in preparatory school 89.1%, in secondary school 69.2% and in tertiary education 29.4%. Gender gaps become obvious in the females-as-%age-of-males ratio which is 93.2% in primary, 91.9% in preparatory, 94.9% in secondary and 91.2% in tertiary enrolment. The literacy ratio of females as %age of males stands at 63.4%, i.e. for every 3 literate men one can find less than two literate women.[58]

The Government of Egypt has taken a couple of measures to increase girls' education during the past decades, many of them in cooperation with international donors. According to the NCW, it has established, for example, 2,649 one-classroom schools for girls by 2002 that host altogether 55,315 female students as well as 201 community schools by 2001 with predominantly female students., These schools have reportedly

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[52] Bahey Eddin 1993

[53] See, for example, Center of the Rights of the Egyptian Children, 20/3/2004, the report of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 2001, pp. 17-29, EOHR 2002 and El Nadim Center 2003

[54] See for example Mohamed Sa'id in El Wafd newspaper, 24/10/1998 and the report of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 2001

[55] CAPMAS population census 1996

[56] Ramsis Farah 2002, p. 14

[57] EHDR 2003, p. 49

[58] EHDR 2003, figures refer to the year 2000/01

increased female enrolment by 35% between 1991 and 2003.[59] Other initiatives include the Girl-Friendly School Program and the Girls' Education Initiative that was launched by NCCM and the Community Participation Component of the Education Enhancement Program which is implemented through governorates with funds from the EC and the WB. Since 1996, the Ministries of Labor, Culture, Housing, Health and Local Development have implemented a series of vocational training programs that targeted women in particular.[60]

3.4.3   Female-Headed Households and Poverty

The rate of female-headed households (FHHs) is widely used as a proxy of female poverty. The underlying assumption is that women's access to cash income and assets is restricted compared to males, among other as a result of lower average levels of education and advanced training, career breaks due to child birth, lower social status and discrimination in inheritance. The estimated numbers of FHHs in Egypt vary considerably according to definition. Most studies assume that widowed or divorced women who live in separate households without male breadwinners are female heads of households. They are supposed to be the main breadwinners and decision-makers in the family. The Labor Force Sample Survey (LFFS) 1999 estimates the rate of FHHs at 16.5% (16.7% in urban and 16.2% in rural areas). With 20.2% (in rural areas even 23.3%), Qena – one of the focus areas of this study - has the second highest rate of FHHs.[61]

Many women's NGOs have contested the prevailing definitions of FHHs. Iman Bibars, for example, maintains that women can be de facto household heads in case their husbands are more or less permanently absent, unable or unwilling to work, or otherwise not available to provide and decide for the family and represent it towards the state and the community. These men may be unemployed or casual workers, prisoners or migrants, drunks or drug addicts or married to another wife. She argues that prevailing definitions reflect the fact that many women carry the same burdens and responsibilities as men but lack the same recognition and respect. On the other hand, male relatives of women who live alone with their children may have taken over responsibilities of the former husband so that it can be questioned whether the household is really headed by a woman. In view of the complexity of the subject, Bibars suggests to define FHHs as those where women are the sole or major provider and responsible for the family's livelihood, represent the family legally and socially in the community and carry the main family responsibilities inside and outside the household.[62] She mentions that some studies using similar broader definitions have found a much higher incidence of FHHs, in urban areas up to 30%.[63]

It is widely assumed that FHHs are particularly vulnerable to poverty. A number of studies have pointed to the negative influence of structural adjustment policies on

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[59] National Council of Women 2004, p. 6

[60] For details see National Council of Women 2004, p.7

[61] LFSS 1999

[62] Bibars, 2001, pp. 41-57

[63] Ramsis Farah 1997, quoted in Bibars, 2001, p.1

women. They found that women were more than men affected by lay-offs as a result of the privatization of large public sector companies and are more directly affected by the erosion of long-term subsidies on food as a result of structural adjustment programs pushed by the IMF and the World Bank since the beginning of the 1990s. Poor urban neighborhoods are particularly vulnerable to changes in the economy since low-income households in the city depend largely on wages and cash income because they have to buy their food requirements in the market.[64] Only 33% of FHHs in urban areas and 37% in rural areas participate in the labor force whereby self-employment without employing others (e.g. street vendors) is the most prevalent income source for unskilled women with no or little education who cannot find any job elsewhere. The rest, i.e. 45.9% in urban and 40.6% in rural areas, depend largely on income transfers from relatives, state pension schemes or welfare programs, NGOs and charity organizations.[65]

The individual FHH cannot automatically be labeled as poorer than MHHs. FHHs tend to be smaller in size, have higher per capita income and expenditure and lower individual per earner ratios. However, Human Poverty Indices (HPI) are clearly higher for women than for men in all regional categories. Heba Al Laithy has calculated the HPIs for women with 21.2 versus 20.4 for men in urban governorates, 31.6 versus 25.8 in Lower Egypt, 44.9 versus 36.3 in Upper Egypt and 35.8 versus 29.9 in frontier governorates. [66] An analysis of data of the Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey (HIECS) 1999/2000 revealed that women constitute 50.1% of the poor which exceeds their share in the overall population by 0.9 percentage points.

18.7% of women in urban areas fall below the lower poverty line as opposed to 18.2% of men. The ratio for rural areas is 21.6% versus 21.0%. Respective percentages of men and women who fall below the upper poverty line are 46.3% and 45.8% for urban and 52.9% versus 51.6% for rural areas respectively.[67] This confirms the findings of most poverty studies that poverty in Egypt is shallow, i.e. that a high percentage of the population is clustered around the poverty line which means that they are particularly vulnerable to changes in the economy and labor markets. The figures conceal, however, the considerable variations within urban governorates which is particularly distorting for Greater Cairo and Alexandria where the bulk of the country's rich and wealthy families are living. Several studies assume that, in absolute terms, the incidence of poverty and ultra-poverty[68] is much higher in informal and other types of poor urban areas than in any other category.[69]

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[64] See, for example, Assaad and Arntz (no date), Worldbank April 2004 (b), Nassar 1999, Al Laity et al., 2003 and Singermann / Hoodfar, 1996

[65] Al Laithy (no date), pp. 29-31

[66] Al Laithy (no date), pp. 31-33

[67] Quoted from Al Laithy (no date), pp. 10-11

[68] *Lower poverty line* means that *all* household expenditures are equal to the food poverty line which is set as the cost of a normative 'basic needs' bundle of goods determined on the basis of calorie requirements and consumption patterns of the poor. *Upper poverty line* means that *food* expenditures are equal to the food poverty line. Those who are below the food poverty line are considered as "*ultra-poor*" since they are not able to satisfy their minimum nutritional needs even if they would spend all their income only on food

[69] Assaad and Rouchdy 1999, p.17, Datt et al. 1998, Table 3 and following pages

Although higher education does by no means guarantee higher earning opportunities, almost all poverty studies confirm that poverty is strongly correlated with educational attainment with an even stronger correlation for females than males. The bulk of the poor in general but particularly of poor women has only attended primary school or did not go to school at all. The probability of being poor while maintaining any other variable at national mean values ranges, for example, on average from 25% for males and 24% for females in urban areas with no education to 10% of those with secondary education and above.[70] The LFSS found that altogether 87.3% of all female household heads are illiterate or semi-illiterate. As far as regional gender disparities are concerned, female poverty incidence follows largely the same pattern as the aggregate one, with higher poverty measures for females than for males.[71]

3.5   Socialization and the Construction of Gender Roles

Prevailing tendencies in international discourses that essentialize Arab or Islamic societies and (perceived) gender relations have done much harm and distort the view for the multiple ways of being Muslim, Christian or secular Arab and Egyptian. In recent years, many Egyptian and Arab feminists have contested prevailing clichés and gender stereotypes in their own societies as well as in international academic and development circles. Leila Ahmed, for example, has shown that the fact that women and gender relations have been placed at the center of Islamic debates about social, cultural and political alternatives dates back to colonial discourses. Colonialists used references to women's alleged oppression in society to justify occupation in the name of civilizing backward and oppressive Arab societies. She argues that the close connection that is drawn today between women and culture is a relatively recent development and was only possible as a result of these colonial discourses since resistance against the colonizers and post-colonial powers has internalized colonial arguments and articulates itself by reversing them. [72] This historical legacy together with contemporary international discourses on "Islam and the West" is seen by many Arab feminists as an obstacle to Arab women's advancement and empowerment today.

Others have pointed out that traditions and customs are often confused with religion in popular culture which is reflected in public discourses about Islam and gender such as in the case of FGC, the Khula' divorce or the questions of whether women can become judges and whether or not husbands have the right to use violence to force their wives into obedience.[73] Male dominated Islamist discourses, on the other hand, have been criticized on both secular and religious grounds. A number of social scientists and Islamic feminists have spent much effort to prove that many rationales used by Islamists are not inherent in religious texts but are a reflection of male dominance. They argue that gendered power structures determine who has the power to define and enforce

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[70] Al-Laithy, no date, p. 24

[71] Al-Laithy, no date, pp. 10-14

[72] See Ahmed, L., 1992 and 1994

[73] Known for this line of argument in the Egyptian context is, for example, the sociologist Hoda Zakariya who has also participated in numerous panel discussions on Egyptian television

dominant interpretations of religious texts.[74] Some of them embrace the principle of equity as opposed to equality, meaning that differences in rights and responsibilities are permissible for both sexes while preserving the principle of overall equality.[75] Others refuse to refer to religion, fearing that this leads again to a denial of women's rights on the ground of cultural relativism. They opt instead for purely secular approaches to redefine women's and human rights in the light of changing socio-economic realities in contemporary Arab and Muslim societies.[76]

Bearing the above in mind, it can be said that gender relations are being constantly re-negotiated in Egypt, as they are in any other society. They have to respond to changing socio-economic realities and are influenced by and influence the diverse and often contradicting trends in public discourses and collective practices. These vary in turn according to class, region, generation, personal experiences and ambitions and other factors. Analyzing opinions and practices of adolescents can be an important indicator to detect deep-rooted perceptions of gender roles and gender relations. Although the process of socialization is ongoing throughout people's life time, adolescent years are believed to be crucial in constructing people's selves and shaping their basic social and political orientations and world views. [77]

One of the most important studies on adolescents in Egypt is a nationally representative sample survey among 9,128 adolescents aged 10-19 and a sample of their parents that the National Population Council has conducted in 1997 under the auspices of the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population. [78] The survey analyzed adolescents' perceptions about gender roles, based on information such as views about spouse selection, obligation of wives to defer to their husbands, decision-making in the family and distribution of roles and responsibilities among spouses. The survey revealed that an overwhelming majority of both boys and girls included in the sample support traditional patriarchic perceptions of gender relations.[79] They conceive of gender roles as complementary with both sexes collaborating on different grounds in the family and in society as a whole. Men's roles are mainly perceived as those of providers for the family and actors in the public sphere whereas women contribute as wives and mothers and adopt predominantly supportive roles, rather than independent or leadership roles.

These views are reflected in preferences of boys and girls regarding the qualities they expect from their future spouses. Preferences fit well with the ideals of high levels of role segregation in marriage relationships. Although the majority of both boys and girls are convinced that a wife "needs her husband's permission in everything", most girls turned out to be much less conservative in their responses to specific questions.

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[74] Well known as a representative of this group in the international context is, for example, the Moroccan sociologist Fatma Mernissi

[75] One of the prominent representatives of this group in Egypt is, for example, Heba Raouf, a professor of political science at Cairo University

[76] The most prominent representative for this group in Egypt and also well known internationally is the Egyptian psychologist and writer Nawal El Saadawi

[77] Mensch et al. 2003, p. 14

[78] Population Council, 1999

[79] For additional analysis of the adolescence survey see Mensch et al. 2000 and 2003

Significantly more girls than boys, for example, prefer sharing of decisions concerning household spending or childbearing and do not think that wives have to accept their husbands' opinion or defer to him. Interestingly, the survey analysis reveals that gender-role attitudes were not significantly or consistently linked to any common socio-economic variable such as education, socio-economic status of the family or regional background. In some cases, education was even positively related to more conservative attitudes. This confirms earlier findings in a sample of married women who were interviewed for the EDHS.[80]

The main institutions of socialization in Egypt are believed to be the family, the school and the media. Peer groups seem to have a much lesser influence than, for example, in Western countries.[81] Recent research has argued that although schooling increases girls' autonomy and freedom of movement, schools are not a place for challenging conservative attitudes and promoting a stronger and more independent role for women. On the contrary, traditional gender role messages conveyed by teachers and text books tend to reinforce conservative notions about gender relations and gender roles.[82] The influence of media is more diverse. Television serials and soap operas, cinema, newspapers and magazines as well as satellite TV and Internet convey contradictory messages and role models. Their impact on socialization has till to be investigated in depth.

There is also not much research available that focuses on intra-familial relationships and their influence on the reproduction of gender perceptions and gender roles. Suad Joseph has, for example, conducted an in-depth study of the often neglected brother-sisters relationships and their crucial role in constructing gender identities and gender roles.[83] She has argued that the relationship between brothers and sisters who are strongly connected to each other in a complex relationship of love/care and power/control are a "critical vehicle for the socialization of males and females into culturally appropriate gender roles".[84] According to Joseph, these dynamics shape what she calls *connective identities* through which persons see themselves as part of another. As a consequence, masculinity and femininity are not expressed as articulations of individually felt needs in relation with the other sex but by enacting the respective learnt gender roles. The construction and practice of the individual's role as a man or a woman and the constant reproduction of gender divisions become a question of identity.

Patriarchic attempts to constantly reproduce traditional notions of gender roles are thus not only based on material interests to retain power and access to resources. This can explain the fact that basic tenets of the gender paradigm - such as the central position of the family in society, men's primary role as protector and provider and women's primary role as nurturer as well as women's chastity as an expression of family honor -

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[80] See Mensch et al. 2003, pp. 16-17

[81] Mensch et al. 2000, pp. 4-5

[82] For an analysis of text books and teaching methods see for example, Wassef 1996 and Ibrahim and Wassef 2000, taken from Mensch et al. 2003

[83] Joseph in Hopkins and Ibrahim 1997. The empirical part of the study was conducted in Lebanon. However, the main results are assumed to be valid for a wider range of Arab societies

[84] Joseph in Hopkins and Ibrahim 1997, p.236

are often the more defended the more they become out of reach due to social change and deteriorating economic conditions. The authors of the adolescent survey have discussed this issue in some detail. They argue that traditions seem to provide a sense of security and orientation and expect that in the absence of real alternatives that are based on better economic opportunities, men and women will continue to cling to traditional values and gender arrangements.[85]

4   RESULTS OF THE STRUCTURED SURVEY

4.1   Profile of the Sample

The sample includes 400 respondents, half of them males and half females. With 15.3%, the total number of Christians is somewhat higher than the estimated national average of roughly 10%. The highest percentage of Christians in the sample is found in the governorate of Qena in Upper Egypt, the region with the highest concentration of Christians. Respondents in El Arish are all Muslim since the original Bedouin society in Sinai is exclusively Muslim. With 8.7%, the representation of Christians in the sample in urban governorates is probably slightly lower than their overall percentage, whereas the percentage of Christians in Gharbiya/ Lower Egypt is with 14.0% presumably somewhat higher than their overall representation in the governorate. Details are shown in the tables below:

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Sex and Religion

Sex	Muslim		Christian		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	165	41.2	35	8.8	200	50
Female	174	43.5	26	6.5	200	50
Total	**339**	**84.7**	**61**	**15.3**	**400**	**100**

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[85] See Mensch et al. 2003, p.17

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Sex, Region and Religion

Religion	Urban Gov.		Gharbiya		Qena		El Arish		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Muslim male	68	45.3	41	41.0	31	31.0	25	50.0	165	41.3
Muslim female	69	46.0	45	45.0	35	35.0	25	50.0	174	43.4
Subtotal Muslim	*137*	*91.3*	*86*	*86.0*	*66*	*66.0*	*50*	*100*	*339*	*84.7*
Christian male	7	4.7	9	9.0	19	19.0	--	--	35	8.8
Christian female	6	4.0	5	5.0	15	15.0	--	--	26	6.5
Subtotal Christian	*13*	*8.7*	*14*	*14.0*	*34*	*34.0*	*--*	*--*	*61*	*15.3*
TOTAL	150	100.0	100	100.0	100	100.0	50	100	400	100.0

As elaborated in Section 2.3 above, quota have been introduced to capture differences according to socio-economic status, education, region and the rural/urban divide. The geographic selection of sample implementation areas was taken as a proxy indicator for socio-economic status since the selected areas show different and distinct socio-economic features. Manshiet Nasser in Cairo is labeled as *Cairo lower* (poor and lower income area) , Maadi and Zamalek as *Cairo upper* (upper middle and upper class area) and Sidi Bishr and El Mandara Bahary in Alexandria as *Alex middle* (lower middle and middle class area). Cairo and Alexandria together form the category *urban governorates*. Gharbiya and Qena include both urban and rural areas. The combination of Gharbiya urban and Qena urban forms the category of *provincial urban* whereas rural areas in Gharbiya and Qena combined form the category of *rural*. Details of the distribution of the sample according to the above mentioned categories are found in the tables below:

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents According to Sex, Class and Areas

Geographic Area	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cairo poor/lower	25	12.5	25	12.5	50	12.5
Cairo upper middle/upper	25	12.5	25	12.5	50	12.5
Alexandria lower middle/middle	25	12.5	25	12.5	50	12.5
Subtotal Urban Governorates	*75*	*37.5*	*75*	*37.5*	*150*	*37.5*
Gharbiya provincial urban	15	7.5	15	7.5	30	7.5
Gharbiya rural	35	17.5	35	17.5	70	17.5
Subtotal Gharbiya	*50*	*25.0*	*50*	*25.0*	*100*	*25.0*
Qena provincial urban	37	18.5	33	16.5	70	17.5
Qena rural	13	6.5	17	8.5	30	7.5
Subtotal Qena	*50*	*25.5*	*50*	*25.5*	*100*	*25.0*
El Arish	25	12.5	25	12.5	50	12.5
TOTAL	200	100.0	200	100.0	400	100.0

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents According to Sex, Class, Area and Religion

| Geographic Area | Muslim | | | | Christian | | | | Total | |
| | male | | female | | male | | female | | | |
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cairo poor/lower	23	13.9	24	13.8	2	5.7	1	3.8	50	12.5
Cairo upper middle/upper	21	12.7	21	12.1	4	11.4	4	15.3	50	12.5
Alexandria lower middle/middle	24	14.5	24	13.8	1	2.9	1	3.8	50	12.5
Subtotal Urban Governorates	*68*	*41.1*	*69*	*39.7*	*7*	*20.0*	*6*	*23.1*	*150*	*37.5*
Gharbiya provincial urban	13	7.9	12	6.9	2	5.7	3	11.5	30	7.5
Gharbiya rural	28	17.0	33	19.0	7	20.0	2	7.7	70	17.5
Subtotal Gharbiya	*41*	*24.9*	*45*	*25.9*	*9*	*25.7*	*5*	*19.2*	*100*	*25.0*
Qena provincial urban	21	12.7	23	13.2	16	45.7	10	38.5	70	17.5
Qena rural	10	6.1	12	6.9	3	8.6	5	19.2	30	7.5
Subtotal Qena	*31*	*18.8*	*35*	*19.1*	*19*	*54.3*	*15*	*57.7*	*100*	*25.0*
El Arish	25	15.2	25	14.3	0	0	0	0	50	12.5
GRAND TOTAL	165	100.0	174	100.0	35	100.0	26	100.0	400	100.0

Roughly one third of the respondents were unmarried and lived together with their parents, one third were heads of household and slightly less than one third were spouses of household heads. The bulk of the respondents, i.e. 46.4%, were between 26 and 40 years old, 30.8% between 18 and 25 years and 22.8% between 41 and 60 years old. Details are shown in the following tables:

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents According to Position in the Family

Position of Respondent in the Family	Number	%
Household head	134	33.4
Spouse of household head	129	32.3
Child of household head	131	32.7
Spouse of child of household head	3	0.8
Grandchild of household head	2	0.5
Parent of household head	1	0.3
Total	**400**	**100.0**

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents According to Age

Age Bracket	Number	%
18 – 21 years old	57	14.3
22 – 25 years old	66	16.5
Subtotal 18 – 25 years	*123*	*30.8*
26 – 30 years old	79	19.8
31 – 40 years old	107	26.8
Subtotal 26 – 40 years	*186*	*46.4*
41 – 50 years old	85	21.3
51 – 60 years old	6	1.5
Subtotal 41 – 60 years	*91*	*22.8*
Total	**400**	**100.0**

The overwhelming majority of households were reported to be headed by males. Only 27 respondents lived in female headed households, i.e. 6.8%, which is only about half

the national average. However, figures are based on self-categorization and it is known that respondents tend to report households that are de facto headed by females as male headed households, for example if the woman is married but the husband has migrated, is seriously and permanently ill, handicapped or in prison, has abandoned his wife or married a second wife.

The highest percentage of female headed households was found in Qena (9.0%), followed by urban governorates (8.7%). Only one household in El Arish (2.0%) and four households in Gharbiya (4.0%) were reported as being headed by females.

Polygamy among Muslims was found an exception in the sample. Only one man in Qena and one in El Arish were married to more than one wife, representing 0.5% of all and 0.6% of Muslim households. Nine households or 2.2% were headed by men without wives. Only one of them was divorced, the others were widowers (together 2.4% of ever married male household heads). This could be interpreted as an indicator that men tend to marry again quickly after they lose their spouses. Details on household heads are shown in the following table:

Table 7: Distribution of Male/Female Household Heads According to Area

Household Head is	Urban Gov.		Gharbiya		Qena		Arish		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male married to 1 wife	133	88.6	93	93.0	84	84.0	48	96.0	358	89.3
Male married to > 1 wife	--	--	--	--	1	1.0	1	2.0	2	0.5
Male widower	3	2.0	2	2.0	3	3.0	--	--	8	2.0
Male divorcee	--	--	--	--	1	1.0	--	--	1	0.3
Female married	--	--	--	--	2	2.0	--	--	2	0.5
Female widow	9	6.0	1	1.0	5	5.0	1	2.0	16	4.0
Female divorcee	4	2.7	2	2.0	2	2.0	--	--	8	2.0
Female abandoned	--	--	1	1.0	--	--	--	--	1	0.3
Oldest son	1	0.7	1	1.0	1	1.0	--	--	3	0.8
Total	**150**	**100.0**	**100**	**100.0**	**100**	**100.0**	**50**	**100.0**	**400**	**100.0**

4.2   Gender And the Family

4.2.1   Age and Kinship Relations Among Spouses

Altogether 258 (64.6%) of all respondents were ever married, 22 (5.5%) were engaged and 130 (30.0%) were never married. Findings suggest that women marry much earlier than men. 42.6% of ever married females had their first wedding at age 18 to 21, compared to only 11.1% of their male counterparts. The preferred age for men to marry seems to be in the age bracket of 26 – 29 years (31.6% of married male respondents).

Women married much more often below age 22 in rural areas and provincial towns (48.8% and 61.1%) than in urban governorates (44.7%). An overwhelming 90.3% of females in rural areas were already married at age 25, compared to 91.7% in provincial towns and 76.6% in urban governorates. Figures for their male counterparts who

married below age 26 were 43.9% in urban governorates, 56.2% in provincial towns and 23.3% in rural areas.

On average, Christian respondents tended to marry somewhat earlier than Muslims, however less often below age 18 (only 2.4%, compared to 5.6% of Muslims). Altogether 73.5% of Christians were married at age 25 (Muslims 61.9%). The figures below illustrate differences of age at first marriage according to sex and region.

FIGURE 1: AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE IN URBAN GOVERNORATES
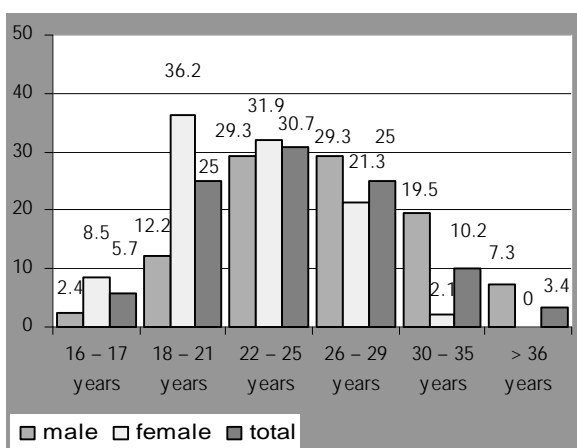
FIGURE 2: AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE IN GHARBIYA
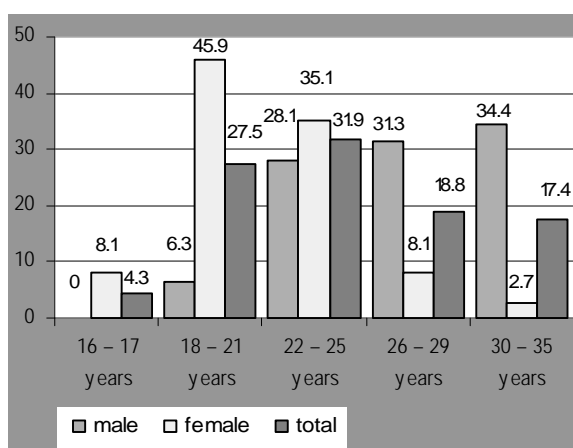
FIGURE 3: AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE IN QENA
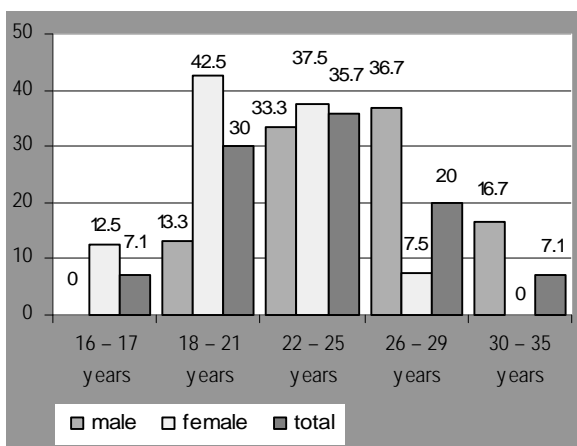
FIGURE 4: AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE IN EL ARISH
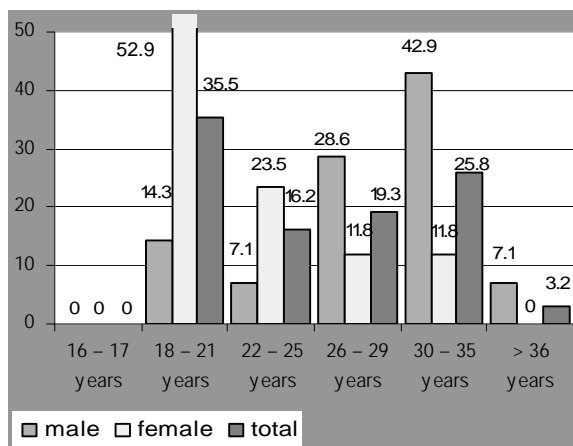
Figures within urban governorates are quite diverse. Most males in lower income areas married between 26 and 29 years (46.2%), most females (44.4%) between18 and 21 years. In middle and upper middle class areas, respondents were more equally distributed among different age groups. Both male and female respondents in upper middle and upper class areas tended to marry later than their counterparts in low and middle income areas. Most females in all areas were already married at age 25, i.e. 83.3% in low income areas, 84.7% in middle class areas and 62.5% in upper middle

class areas, compared to 53.9%, 42.8% and 35.7% respectively for males. All respondents in Manshiet Nasser were married at age 29 whereas 7.1% of males in upper middle class and 14.1% in middle class areas were already older than 35 years when they married. Details on age at first marriage in urban governorates are shown in the Table below:

Table 8: Age at First Marriage According to Class/Area in Urban Governorates

Age at Marriage	Cairo lower			Cairo upper			Alex middle			Total urban governorate		
	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T
16 – 17 years	7.7	11.1	9.7	--	--	--	--	15.4	7.4	2.4	8.5	5.7
18 – 21 years	15.4	44.4	32.3	--	25.0	13.3	21.4	38.5	29.6	12.2	36.2	25.0
22 – 25 years	30.8	27.8	29.0	35.7	37.5	36.7	21.4	30.8	25.9	29.3	31.9	30.7
26 – 29 years	46.2	16.7	29.0	28.6	31.3	30.0	14.3	15.4	14.8	29.3	21.3	25.0
30 – 35 years	--	--	--	28.6	6.3	16.7	28.6	--	14.8	19.5	2.1	10.2
> 35 years	--	--	--	7.1	--	3.3	14.3	--	7.4	7.3	--	3.4
N	13	18	31	14	16	30	14	13	27	41	47	88

Husbands were usually older than wives, only 7.0% of spouses were found at the same age. In 43.4% of all cases, the age difference was 1-5 years, in 39.1% between 6 and 10 years and 10.5% of all married respondents were married to a partner who was more than 10 years older or younger. Age differences of more than 10 years were mainly found in provincial towns (14.6%), followed by urban governorates (12.1%), rural areas (10.0%) and El Arish (7.1%).

Opinions of respondents regarding the ideal age for marriage suggest that early marriage is not a preferred option today. The overwhelming majority of men and women in the sample were convinced that for a girl it is best to marry between 22 and 25 years (opinion of 61% males, 66% females, 63.5% total) and for a man between 26 and 30 years (opinion of 70% males, 68% females, 69% total). Interestingly, women were more interested that girls marry before they reach age 26. Altogether 90.5% of both males and females thought that a girl should be married by age 25. By contrast, only 18% of males and 15% of females were convinced that a man should be married at the same age. In Upper Egypt, opinions of male versus female respondents did not differ much. In urban governorates, female respondents favored a higher age for women to marry than their male counterparts. In Lower Egypt, by contrast, it was men who were less in favor of women's early marriage. Details are shown in the tables below:

Table 9: Opinions on Best Age at First Marriage for Females According to Area

Preferred Age for Females	Urban Governorates			Gharbiya			Qena			El Arish		
	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T
< 18 years	--	2.7	1.3	--	4.0	2.0	--	--	--	--	--	--
18 – 21 years	36.0	17.3	26.7	18.0	26.0	22.0	28.0	22.0	25.0	36.0	32.0	34.0
22 – 25 years	58.7	77.3	68.0	62.0	48.0	55.0	66.0	68.0	67.0	56.0	64.0	60.0
26 – 30 years	5.3	1.3	3.3	20.0	22.0	21.0	6.0	10.0	8.0	8.0	4.0	6.0
Don't know	--	1.3	0.7	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
N	75	75	150	50	50	100	50	50	100	25	25	400

Table 10: Opinions on Best Age at First Marriage for Males According to Area

Preferred Age for Males	Urban Gov.			Gharbiya			Qena			El Arish		
	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T
< 18 years	--	--	--	--	2.0	1.0	--	2.0	1.0	--	--	--
18 – 21 years	1.3	2.7	2.0	--	2.0	1.0	--	--	--	--	4.0	2.0
22 – 25 years	21.3	8.0	14.7	16.0	18.0	17.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	20.0	12.0	16.0
26 – 30 years	69.3	74.7	72.0	66.0	48.0	57.0	70.0	70.0	70.0	80.0	84.0	82.0
> 30 years	6.7	13.3	10.0	--	--	--	16.0	--	16.0	--	--	--
Don't know	1.3	1.3	1.3	--	--	--	2.0	--	1.0	--	--	--
N	**75**	**75**	**150**	**50**	**50**	**100**	**50**	**50**	**100**	**25**	**25**	**400**

Among male respondents, the younger generation clearly preferred that women do not marry too early whereas differences were not very significant among female respondents in different age groups. Female respondents in general indicated the ideal age of marriage for women higher than their male counterparts. Only 58.3% of males above 40 years, for example, were convinced that it is better for a woman not to marry before age 22, compared to 76.8% females in the same age group. Only a minority of 1% supported women's marriage below age 18. Opinions on ideal age of marriage for males suggest that females would like men to marry earlier than men's own aspirations. This could be interpreted in different ways. Women may want less age difference and more equality in marriages than men. However, results could also reflect men's difficulties to fulfill the financial obligations implied in preparing for marriage and providing for a family. Details on preferences according to age groups are shown in the following tables:

Table 11: Opinions on Best Age at First Marriage for Females According to Age

Preferred Age for Females	18-25 years			26-40 years			41-60 years			Total		
	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T
< 18 years	--	2.7	1.6	--	--	--	--	4.7	2.2	--	2.0	1.0
18 – 21 years	36.0	21.9	27.6	20.6	25.0	22.6	41.7	18.6	30.8	29.5	22.5	26.0
22 – 25 years	60.0	67.1	64.2	67.6	66.7	67.2	47.9	62.8	54.9	61.0	66.0	63.5
26 – 30 years	4.0	6.8	5.7	11.8	8.3	10.2	10.4	14.0	12.1	9.5	9.0	9.3
Don't know	--	1.4	0.8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.5	0.3
N	**50**	**73**	**123**	**102**	**84**	**186**	**48**	**43**	**91**	**200**	**200**	**400**

Table 12: Opinions on Best Age at First Marriage for Males According to Age

Preferred Age for Males	18-25 years			26-40 years			41-60 years			Total		
	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T
< 18 years	--	--	--	--	--	0.5	--	2.3	1.1	--	1.0	0.5
18 – 21 years	--	4.1	2.4	1.0	--	0.5	--	2.3	1.1	0.5	2.0	1.3
22 – 25 years	30.0	9.6	17.9	9.8	9.5	9.7	20.8	20.9	20.9	17.5	12.0	14.8
26 – 30 years	68.0	74.0	71.5	74.5	67.9	71.5	62.5	58.1	60.4	70.0	68.0	69.0
> 30 years	2.0	11.0	7.3	12.7	21.4	16.7	16.7	16.3	16.5	11.0	16.5	13.8
Don't know	--	1.4	0.8	2.0	--	1.1	--	--	--	1.0	0.5	0.8
N	**50**	**73**	**123**	**102**	**84**	**186**	**48**	**43**	**91**	**200**	**200**	**400**

Most respondents married relatives or at least persons from the same village or neighborhood. Only in urban areas did a significant percentage marry a spouse who

was a complete stranger, i.e. 38.7%, as compared to 1.4% in rural areas and 4.4% in provincial towns. 13.6% of the respondents in urban areas married a first cousin, in provincial towns 14.7% and in rural areas 15.5%. Christians seem more often to marry a relative which could be explained with the smaller size of Christian communities. 47.6% of Christians as opposed to only 25.4% of Muslims were married to relatives and 23.8% Christians versus 13.8% Muslims were married to a cousin. Details about kinship relations among spouses in different areas are shown in the figure below:

FIGURE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF MARRIED RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO KINSHIP RELATION WITH SPOUSE
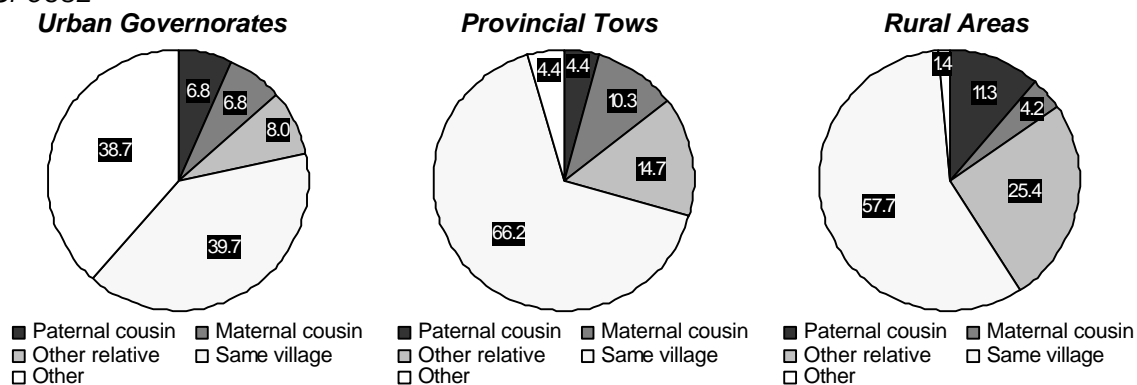
4.2.2   Opinions on Criteria and Circumstances to Choose Marriage Partners

Opinions on ideal marriage partners suggest that marriage among relatives is much less favored today than it used to be a generation before, at least for girls. Only 6.5% (7.5% male and 6.0% female) preferred that girls marry a relative. The youngest age group, i.e. those below age 26, was most receptive to the idea of a girl marrying a stranger. 28.5% in this age bracket thought that the most important issue is that the girl fees comfortable with her future spouse even if he is a stranger, compared to only 22.6% in the age group of 26-50 years and 19.8% of those above 40.

For 66.3% (65.0% male and 67.5% female), the most important issue was the reputation of the future husband, including 46.5% of both male and female respondents who pointed out that a good reputation has to be combined with the ability to provide for the family. The combination of both characteristics in a marriage candidate was most often desired in Qena, followed by urban governorates, El Arish and Gharbiya. The ability to provide for the wife was generally considered more important by men than by women, except for El Arish where 56.0% of women compared to only 36% of men thought that a good reputation alone is not enough but has to be combined with the ability to provide.

In terms of class, respondents from middle class areas in Alexandria were most concerned with husband's economic background. 70% of respondents in Alexandria as compared to only 38% in the poor area of Manshiet Nasser and 36% in the posh

districts of Maadi and Zamalek mentioned the ability to provide combined with good reputation as a prerequisite for marriage candidates of girls.

Feeling comfortable with the future spouse was on average considered much more important in urban governorates and Lower Egypt than in Upper Egypt and El Arish. Interestingly, however, when comparing answers of male versus female respondents, it turned out that males in urban governorates and Gharbiya considered it more important that girls feel comfortable with their future spouse than female respondents whereas in El Arish and Qena, areas that are generally considered as more traditional, women have put much more stress than men on the importance of understanding and agreement among future spouses. The following table illustrates regional differences in detail:

Table 13: Opinions on Ideal Marriage Partner for Girls According to Region

Ideal marriage partner is	Urban Gov.			Gharbiya			Qena			El Arish		
	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T
Cousin	1.3	2.7	2.0	12.0	6.0	9.0	6.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5
Other relative	1.3	4.0	2.7	--	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	8.0	--	2.3
Known w. good reputation	12.0	17.3	14.7	20.0	36.0	28.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	40.0	12.0	19.8
Good reputation can provide	49.3	46.7	48.0	34.0	30.0	32.0	60.0	58.0	59.0	36.0	56.0	46.5
A man she feels comfortable with	32.0	21.3	26.7	34.0	26.0	30.0	12.0	18.0	15.0	12.0	28.0	23.8
Religious man	--	1.3	0.7	--	--	--	4.0	4.0	4.0	8.0	8.0	1.0
Don't know	4.0	6.7	5.3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2.0
N	**75**	**75**	**150**	**50**	**50**	**100**	**50**	**50**	**100**	**25**	**25**	**400**

Social status and reputation obtained the highest scores and were generally considered as the single most important criteria for choosing marriage partners, although respondents could choose among a much wider range of criteria.

Love figured prominently in the age group between 18 and 30. With increasing age, perceptions changed and social status became predominant. Education followed as the third most important criterion. Personality was only ranked fourth among all age groups. Shared ideas about partnership in marriage did not figure prominently with males or females of any age. Contrary to widespread assumptions, appearance was only ranked fifth by males in the age group of 31-60 and even lower by females and younger males. Priorities indicated by respondents have been weighted and ranked.[86] Results of the ranking are shown in detail in the following table:

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[86] Respondents could choose among a number of options but could also add supplementary issues. Answers have been weighted, whereas the first priority was multiplied by 5, the second by 4, the third by 3, the fourth by 2 and the rest by 1. The weighted options have then been added up as a grand total. Individual choices have been calculated as percentages of the grand total to illustrate their relative weight as a fraction of all answers

Table 14: Most Important Criteria for Choosing Marriage Partners

Priority Criteria	Female 18-30		Female 31-60		Male 18-30		Male 31-60	
	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%
Love	1	**19.1**	3	15.6	1	**19.3**	2	15.0
Appearance	6	9.4	7	8.1	5	10.0	6	8.1
Social status and reputation	2	18.9	1	**20.1**	2	19.1	1	**21.9**
Economic situation of spouse	5	10.0	5	10.8	6	8.1	4	13.3
Education	3	13.2	2	16.9	3	14.6	3	13.9
Personality	4	11.9	4	14.0	4	12.8	4	13.3
Shared ideas about partnership	7	7.9	6	8.2	7	7.2	7	7.9
No disabilities/ health problems	9	4.4	8	3.4	8	5.0	8	3.6
Religiosity, morals and behavior	8	4.8	9	3.0	9	3.6	9	3.0
Other	10	0.4	--	0.0	10	0.3	--	0.0
Total		**100.0**		**100.0**		**100.0**		**100.0**

The overwhelming majority in urban governorates was convinced that young people should decide themselves whom they want to marry. Respondents in Cairo and Alexandria were least in favor of arranged marriages, regardless of class. In El Arish, by contrast, respondents preferred that families have the main say in who will marry whom – which is expected given the strong tribal influence.

Results according to age are somewhat surprising. Men in the youngest age group (18-25 years) turned out be much more in favor of strong family influence on choosing marriage partners than men in the age group between 26 and 40. The opposite was true for women who seemed to have become continuously less traditional over time. Only 54% of males between 18 and 25 compared to 69.9% of females thought that the couple should choose the marriage partner whereas percentages in the age group of 26-40 still reached 84.3% for males but only 58.3% for females. Only 50% of males and 51.2% of females above 40 thought that marriage is predominantly the decision of the couple.

The figures may suggest that after having become more progressive than previous generations, young men are now moving back towards more traditional ideas about marriage arrangements while women are becoming continuously less conservative the younger they are. Other results around the issue of marriage confirm this tendency. If opinions on marriage arrangements and getting to know the future spouse are taken as an indicator for gender relations, then women seem to have become more independent over time. The younger they are, the less they are in favor of arranged marriages and the more do they want to know their future spouse.

This issue became most obvious when comparing justifications for opinions on who should choose the marriage partner as well as opinions on the circumstances under which a couple should get to know each other. Regarding the first issue, most respondents subscribed to the opinions (1) "the couple knows best what is good for them" and (2) "marriage is a family issue, it should be a joint decision of the two families to ensure that the rights of both partners are protected". These two are the most opposite answers that respondents could choose. At least 75% of all sub-groups, in

most cases more than 90%, subscribed to one of the two options, indicating that opinions are highly polarized. 70.5% males versus 58.5% females did not want the family to interfere in decisions about marriage partners while 23.5% males versus 30% females wanted to give the family a decisive say.

Regarding the circumstances under which the couple should get to know each other, the two most opposite responses given were (1) "knowing each other before marriage is very important and the couple should be able to meet alone" and (2) "the couple should only meet in the girl's house to preserve her reputation" In almost all sub-groups, more than 50% of the respondents subscribed to one of these options, indicating a lesser but still remarkable degree of polarization. On average, women were more conservative than their male counterparts, except for the youngest age group in which women turned out to be less traditional than men. 23.3% women versus 20% men in the age group 18-25 claimed that a couple should be allowed to meet alone while 44% of young men versus 43.8% of young women preferred that the couple meets only in the house of the girl's family. Results are illustrated in the figures below:

FIGURE 6: REASONS FOR PREFERENCES OF WHO SHOULD CHOOSE MARRIAGE PARTNERS BY AGE
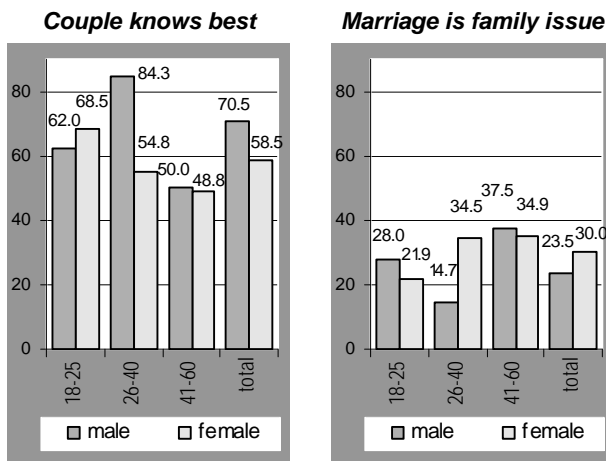
FIGURE 7: OPINIONS ON WHERE AND HOW THE COUPLE SHOULD MEET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BY AGE
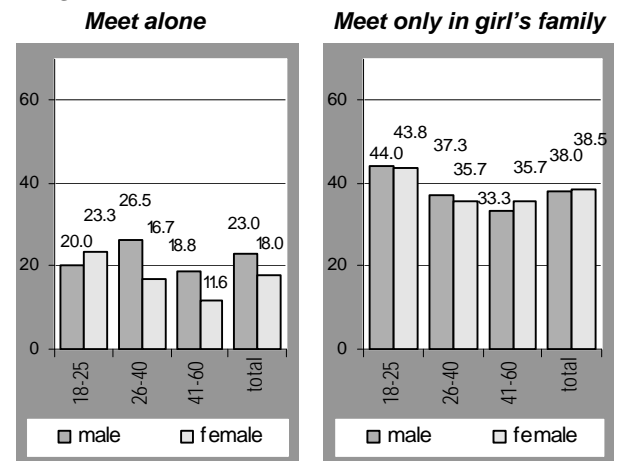
Results show significant differences according to region. Respondents in urban governorates were the least conservative concerning marriage arrangements, followed by Gharbiya, Qena and El Arish - with the exception of men in Qena who followed directly after urban governorates. 88% of men and 72% of women in Cairo and Alexandria but only 36% of men and 28% of women in El Arish thought that marriage candidates should take their decisions independently because they know best whom they want to share their lives with.

Only in urban governorates and Gharbiya did a significant percentage of respondents claim that the couple should have the possibility to meet alone. In Qena, almost no respondent would allow a couple to meet alone while in El Arish, 8% of women but not a single man would give their permission. More than half of the respondents in Qena, i.e.

58% males and 66% females, and 52% males versus only 48% females in El Arish thought that the only acceptable place to meet for a young couple is the house of the girl's family. Details are shown in the figures below:

FIGURE 8: REASONS FOR PREFERENCES OF WHO SHOULD CHOOSE MARRIAGE PARTNERS BY REGION
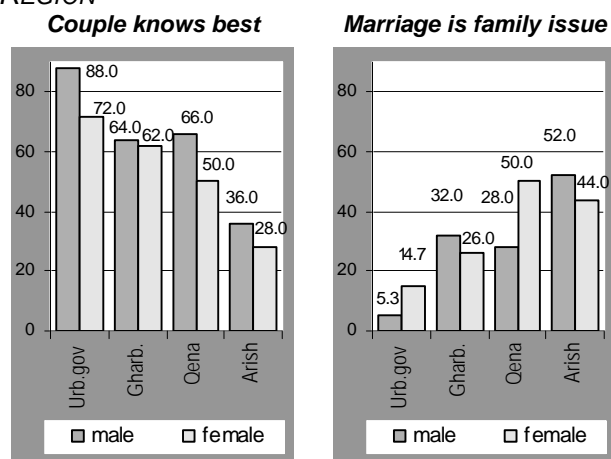
FIGURE 9: OPINIONS ON WHERE AND HOW THE COUPLE SHOULD MEET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BY REGION

Couple knows best

Marriage is family issue

Meet alone

Meet only in girl's family
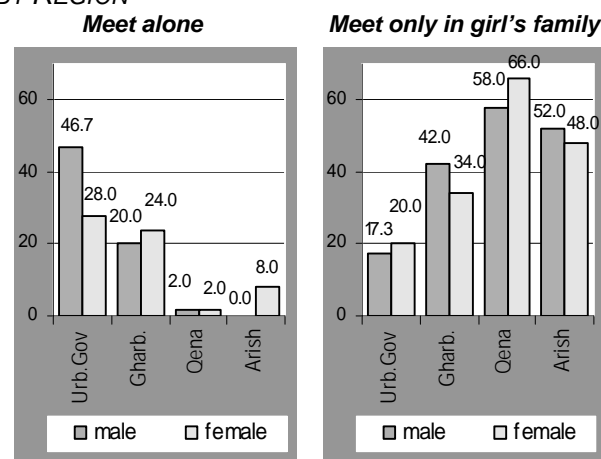
4.2.3 Number of Children

Almost all respondents, i.e. 98%, wanted or want children. 218 of them or 54.5% of the sample had already children. 37.6% of this group reported that the number and sex of their children is as desired, 9.2% of them wanted to have less children. Results do not indicated consistent gender preferences although respondents who had both boys and girls tended to favor males as further children. Those who had only boys preferred usually females and those who had only girls preferred males in case they would have another child. Out of the 290 respondents who wanted more children, 64.1% indicated that the sex of the child does not matter. Details are shown in the table below:

Table 15: Preferred Sex of Further Children

Has and wants children as follows	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Has no children wants boys	11	5.5	9	4.5	20	5.0
Has no children wants girls	3	1.5	3	1.5	6	1.5
Has no children but wants regardless of sex	86	43.0	62	31.0	148	37.0
Has boys wants girls	9	4.5	14	7.0	23	5.7
Has boys wants boys	2	1.0	--	--	2	0.5
Has boys wants more regardless of sex	8	4.0	7	3.5	15	3.8
Has girls wants girls	1	0.5	3	1.5	4	1.0
Has girls wants boys	6	3.0	10	5.0	16	4.0
Has girls wants more regardless of sex	6	3.0	5	2.5	11	2.8
Has both wants girls	3	1.5	4	2.0	7	1.8
Has both wants boys	11	5.5	15	7.5	26	6.4
Has both wants more regardless of sex	4	2.0	8	4.0	12	3.0
Has children, number+sex of children as desired	38	19.0	44	22.0	82	20.5

Has and wants children as follows	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Has children, wanted less than actual number	9	4.5	11	5.5	20	5.0
Has no children and does not want children	3	1.5	5	2.5	8	2.0
Total	**200**	**100.0**	**200**	**100.0**	**400**	**100.0**

The majority of respondents had between one and three children. More than one third wanted to limit the total number of children to two; another quarter to three children. However, a significant number of respondents wanted to have more than three children. 20.5% indicated the ideal number with four and 12% preferred even more than four children. Only a small minority of 2.0% wanted no children and 1.3% wanted only one child. Female respondents tended to prefer more children than males. While percentages of those who wanted two or three children are similar, i.e. 65.5% for men and 63.0% for women, female respondents preferred more often three children and males more often only two. Roughly one third of all respondents preferred more than three children (33% females versus 32% males) whereas more women than men wanted to have even more than four children. Details are shown in the figures below:

FIGURE 10: ACTUAL COMPARED TO DESIRED NUMBER OF CHILDREN
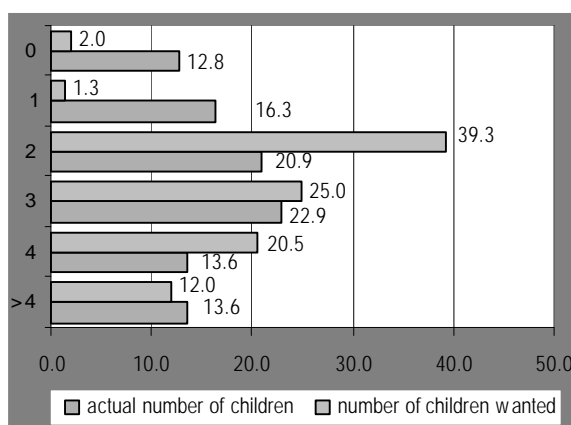
FIGURE 11: NUMBER OF CHILDREN WANTED ACCORDING TO SEX
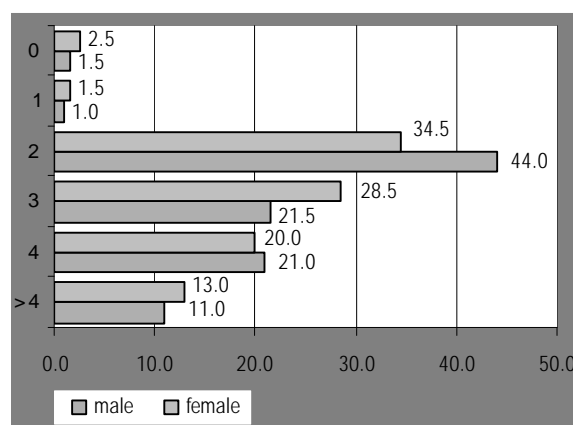
The preferred number of children was lowest in urban governorates, followed by Gharbiya, Qena and El Arish. More than half of the respondents in urban governorates, i.e. 57.4%, wanted only two children. The same number of children was also preferred by 46% of respondents in Gharbiya while 30.0% wanted to have three children. Respondents in Qena and El Arish preferred significantly higher fertility rates. For 31% in Qena, the ideal number of children was three, for 26% it was four children and 29% wanted more than four children. The majority of respondents in El Arish, i.e. 58%, indicated four children as the ideal number. Details are shown in the following table:

Table 16: Number of Children Wanted By Region

Number of children	Urban Gov.		Gharbiya		Qena		El Arish		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
0 children	5	3.3	1	1.0	2	2.0	--	--	8	2.0
1 child	2	1.3	3	3.0	--	--	--	--	5	1.3
2 children	86	57.4	46	46.0	12	12.0	13	26.0	157	39.2
3 children	34	22.7	30	30.0	31	31.0	5	10.0	100	25.0
4 children	14	9.3	13	13.0	26	26.0	29	58.0	82	20.5
> 4 children	9	6.0	7	7.0	29	29.0	3	6.0	48	12.0
Total	150	100.0	100	100.0	100	100.0	50	100.0	400	100.0

Christians tended to prefer larger families than Muslims. 40.1% of Muslims as opposed to 34.5% of Christians wanted only two children, 24.5% versus 27.9% wanted three and 22.4% versus 31.7% wanted more than three children. However, due to the uneven distribution of Christians among governorates, these numbers reflect also differences according to region. It is thus difficult to decide whether religion has any influence on preferences.

4.2.4   Conflicts and Disputes among Men and Women

Results suggest that disputes among husband and wife evolve predominantly around the issues of spending household resources (mentioned by 59%), followed by the way of raising children (40%), work and income of husband (27.3%), management of domestic tasks (27.3%), emotional negligence (24.5%), treatment of the spouse (22.8%), number of children (12%) as well as movements and behavior of husbands in public (11.5% and 9.8% respectively).

Other reasons mentioned all fell below 10%. Spending of resources was the single most often mentioned reason for dispute in all governorates and areas, except for Manshiet Nasser where the way of raising children prevailed as a source of dispute among spouses. This is somewhat striking since one would expect that in Manshiet Nasser, which is the poorest urban district all over Egypt (EHDR 2003), economic pressures would give more than anything else rise to tensions and disputes among spouses. Child raising as a source of marital problems figured also prominently in Gharbiya (57%). It would be interesting to know more about the nature of disputes around child raising but, unfortunately, results do not give any indications.

Emotional negligence was most often mentioned in El Arish (36%), upper middle class areas in Cairo (30%) and Manshiet Nasser (26%). Management of domestic tasks was a prominent issue in Qena (40%), Manshiet Nasser (34%) and Alexandria (28%).

Detailed results concerning the respective five most often mentioned reasons for marital disputes in different areas and regions are illustrated in the figures below:

FIGURE 12: MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED ISSUES LEADING TO DISPUTES AMONG SPOUSES
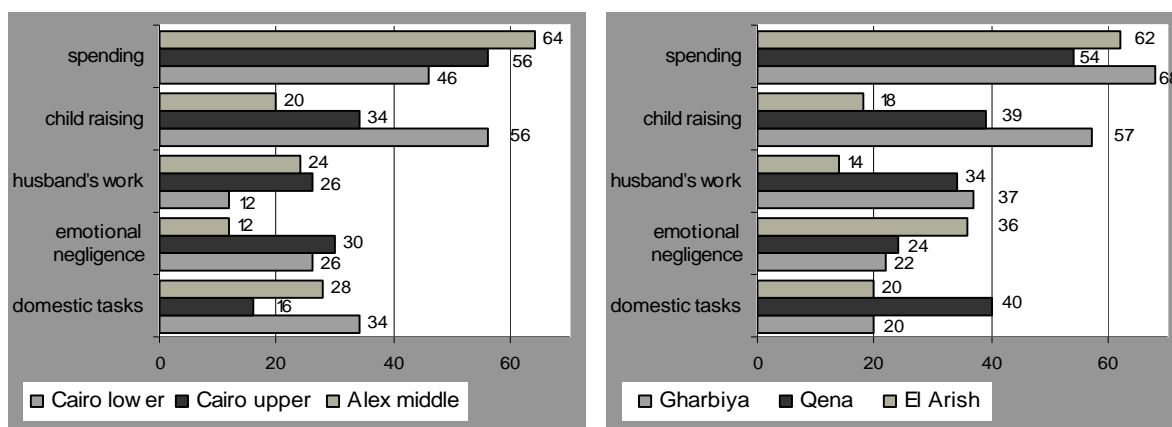
Results suggest that women prefer to turn to women for support and advice in case of disputes and men prefer to turn to men. Parents turned out to be the primary source of support for women (mothers mentioned by 47% and fathers by 32.5%), whereas males reported that they turn almost equally often to fathers (34.5%), sheikhs or priests (34%), close male friends (33.5%) and mothers (28%) with all other sources of support and advice being less important. Sisters were also reported as playing an important role for women (26%), while religious authorities (26.5%) were indicated as less important than for men but interestingly still more important than close female friends (18.5%). The relatively low importance of female friendships as a source of solidarity and support was somewhat striking.

Violence against women was condemned by the majority of respondents across all sub-groups. Two thirds of male (66%) and more than three quarters (76.5%) of female respondents did not accept wife beating under any circumstances. However, 32.5% males and 21.5% females did not object in principle, either because "wife beating is normal, all husbands do it" (5.0% males and 3.0% females) or they accepted it on condition that it is "not too hard" (9.0% males and 5.5% females) or in case the wife "neglects her domestic duties" (11.5% males and 7.0% females), "leaves the house without permission" (4.5% males and 3.5% females), "does not obey the husband" (13.5% males and 4.5% females) or in case of "indecent dress or behavior" (8.0% males and 3.5% females). [87] The responses show remarkable gender differences. Female respondents were considerably more reluctant than men to agree to violence as a means of punishment for women who act against traditional notions of gender roles that assign women sole responsibility for domestic tasks and require them to obey their husbands in every respect.

Except for Manshiet Nasser, women were clearly more opposed to violence than men. Violence against women was most accepted in Qena where only 34% of men but almost double as many women, i.e. 64%, objected to wife beating under all circumstances. There was also a striking difference between males' and females'

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[87] multiple answers were possible so that percentages don't add up to 100.0%

opinions in middle and upper class areas in Cairo and Alexandria. Only 76% (Cairo upper) and 68% (Alexandria) of men refused violence as opposed to 84% and 96% respectively of women. This could be interpreted as a strong indicator of tension between men and women.

Among respondents below age 26, differences in opinion between men and women were much less significant. Interestingly however, the acceptance of violence increased among women the younger they were whereas the opposite tendency could be observed when comparing different age groups of males.

Education was a factor, however, only to a limited extent. While only 64.4% of illiterates and those who did not complete primary education objected to wife beating as a matter of principle, the percentage increased to 72.6% for those with secondary education and above. The following table shows percentages of those who condemned wife beating under all circumstances according to different background variables:

Table 17: Condemnation of Wife Beating According to Sex, Areas, Age and Education

Sub-Group	% M	% F	Sub-Group	% M	% F
Cairo lower	92.0	72.0	18-25 years	70.0	71.2
Cairo upper middle/ upper	76.0	96.0	26-40 years	66.7	77.4
Alex middle	68.0	84.0	41-60 years	60.4	83.7
Gharbiya	76.0	78.0	Uneducated		64.4
Qena	34.0	64.0	Basic		66.7
El Arish	72.0	76.0	Secondary + > secondary		72.6

Divorce is the ultimate means to solve serious disputes among spouses if no reconciliation is feasible. Awareness of the legal framework and social acceptance of possibilities to divorce are, therefore, important for gender relations. The Personal Status Law that regulates divorce in Egypt was amended in January 2000 and has brought a number of improvements for women. Although the law was widely publicized, only 67.5% of female respondents as opposed to 81.0% of males were actually aware of the law. The highest awareness levels were found in urban governorates. In Manshiet Nasser, for example, 100% of male respondents reported to be familiar with the law and also 100% of women in Maadi and Zamalek.

One of the most important articles of the law concerns the newly introduced possibility for women to initiate divorce according to the so-called Khula' provision that is based on Islamic Sharia'. However, only 34.0% of all female and 46.5% of all male respondents were familiar with Khula' regulations, and 30.5% of females and 36.5% of males knew about it but were not familiar with the details. The fact that more men than women were aware of the Khula' divorce is not too astonishing since Khula' has spurred a heated debate in public. It was particularly contested by males who raised concerns that women would now take advantage of easier divorce in large numbers.

Awareness of the Khula' divorce varied considerably among regions. In urban governorates and El Arish the percentage of males who were familiar with the respective article in the law was significantly higher than that of females. 72.6% of all

male respondents in urban governorates knew details about Khula', compared to only 53.6% of females. In El Arish, percentages were much lower, i.e. 20.0% and 8.0%. In Gharbiya and Qena, more women than men were familiar with details, i.e. 57.8% males and 58.3% females in Gharbiya and 28.1% males versus 33.3% females in Qena. Details are shown in the following table:

Table 18: Awareness of the Khula' Divorce By Region

Awareness of Khula' provision	Urban Governorates			Gharbiya			Qena			El Arish		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Familiar with details	72.6	53.6	63.4	57.8	58.3	51.6	28.1	33.3	30.4	20.0	8.0	48.9
Knows about but not details	26.0	40.6	33.1	40.0	33.3	33.0	65.6	54.2	60.7	60.0	32.0	40.7
Not aware of provision	1.4	5.8	3.5	2.2	8.3	4.4	6.3	12.5	8.9	20.0	60.0	10.3
N	**73**	**69**	**142**	**45**	**36**	**91**	**32**	**24**	**56**	**25**	**25**	**329**

Interestingly, illiterate respondents were more aware of details related to the Khula' provision than those with basic or secondary education, i.e. 55.2% versus 31.6% and 29.1%. With 61.2% Khula' was best known among those with a higher education. Christians - who are subject to Islamic law in case Christian spouses belong to different sects - are also aware of the Khula' divorce. Only 8.1% did not know about the provision, less than their Muslim counterparts with 10.6%.

Of those who were familiar with the law, significantly more women than men had a positive opinion on Khula'. 58.5% of women agreed with the law, compared to only 39.5% of men. 39.5% females as opposed to 27.0% males were convinced that Khula' improves the situation of women whereas 12.0% women versus 10.0% men thought that the law is still not fair because the costs involved make Khula' prohibitive for many women. By contrast, 35.0% of male but only 10.5% of female respondents were convinced that the law endangers the Egyptian family because women will now easily seek divorce in case of marital problems.

4.3   Education and Socialization

4.3.1   Schooling and Vocational Training

Results on the educational level of the respondents cannot be generalized since the sample was too small and not truly representative. They highlight the educational profile of the sample and give some indications of tendencies in connection with the results of opinion questions on education.
In urban governorates, more male than female respondents were found illiterate whereas in all other regions percentages of illiterate females exceeded that of illiterate males by at least 100%. No respondent in the posh districts of Maadi and Zamalek was illiterate or has dropped out after completing basic education. More women than men completed secondary school but female respondents had less often than males the chance to enjoy higher education, except for Manshiet Nasser and El Arish where figures were equal. The highest percentage of respondents who were illiterate or could barely read and write was found in El Arish (20% females and 8% males), followed by provincial towns (18.7% females and 5.7% males) and rural areas

(13.5% females and 6.3% males). Details on the educational levels of respondents in the sample are illustrated in the figures below:

FIGURE 13 A: EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF RESPONDENTS IN URBAN GOVERNORATES

Cairo - Manshiet Nasser

Cairo - Maadi/ Zamalek

Alexandria
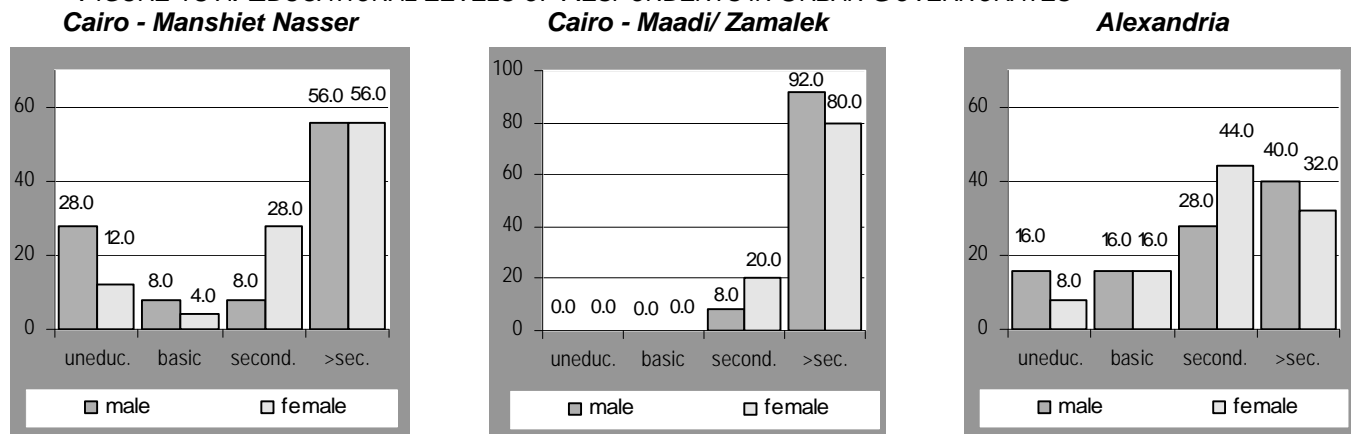
FIGURE 13 B: EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF RESPONDENTS IN DIFFERENT REGIONS

Gharbiya

Qena

El Arish
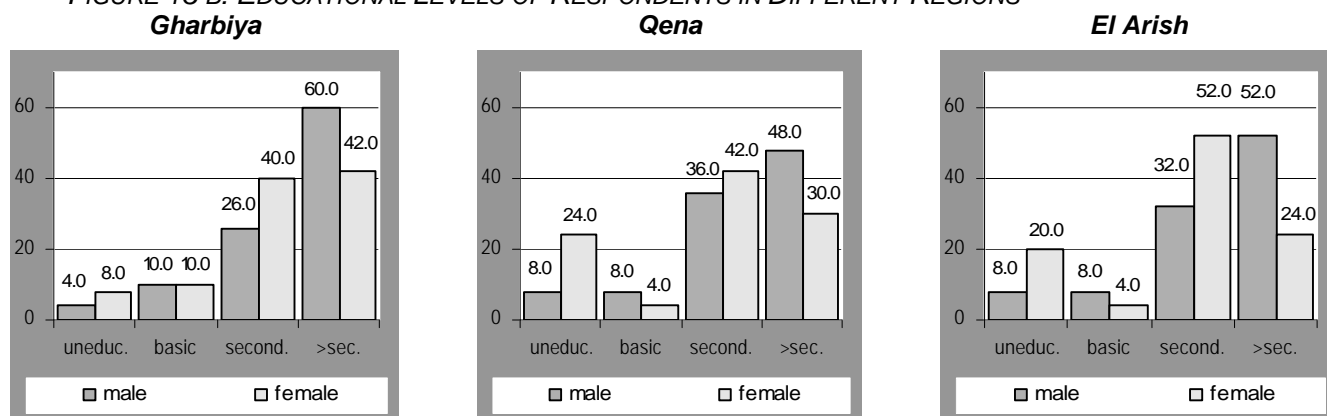
91.7% of all respondents or 87% of those who were not enrolled in school at the time of the survey had never received any vocational training. Of those who had, most worked as apprentices, either with craftsmen, in workshops or factories or in commercial and service establishments. The majority of men were trained in industry, the majority of women in commercial and service establishments. Training institutes played a very minor role and the number of trainees in these institutes did not exceed the number of those who participated in skills training courses organized by NGOs. Details on involvement in vocational training are shown in the table below:

Table 19: Vocational Training According to Type and Sex

Type of Vocational Training	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Apprentice in workshop/ w. craftsmen	6	31.6	3	21.3	9	27.2
Apprentice in factory (> 15 workers)	3	15.8	--	--	3	9.1
Apprentice in commercial establishment	2	10.5	1	21.4	6	18.2
Apprentice in service establishment	4	21.1	5	35.7	8	24.2
Trainee in training institute	3	15.8	2	14.3	5	15.2
Vocational skills training by NGO	3	15.8	2	14.3	5	15.2
Other types of vocational training	2	10.6	1	7.1	3	9.0
N	19		14		33	

4.3.2 Opinions on Children's and Girls' Education

Respondents were asked for their opinions concerning children's and girls' education. Although the overwhelming majority of respondents, i.e. 90.0%, were convinced that boys and girls should have the same right to education, there was still a sizable minority that favored boys versus girls in education. Opinions varied among men and women and across governorates. In urban governorates and Qena, women were more supportive to girls' education than men. 96.0% females versus 89.3% males defended equal rights to education in urban governorates and in Qena 96.0% females versus 86.0% males. In Gharbiya, percentages reached 84.0% and in El Arish 92.0% for both males and females. Details are shown in the table below:

Table 20: Opinions on Children's Education According to Sex and Region*

Opinions on Children's Education	Urban Gov.			Gharbiya			Qena			El Arish		
	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T
Same rights to education for boys and girls	89.3	96.0	92.7	84.0	84.0	84.0	86.0	96.0	91.0	92.0	92.0	92.0
Preference of boys if tight family budgets	4.0	4.0	4.0	14.0	6.0	10.0	26.0	22.0	24.0	8.0	16.0	12.0
Wives should not have higher educ. than husbands	1.3	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	2.0
Good education for girls to support husbands	4.0	1.3	2.7	8.0	12.0	10.0	2.0	8.0	5.0	8.0	16.0	12.0
Girls should be educated to help children in school	0.0	2.7	1.3	2.0	8.0	5.0	2.0	14.0	8.0	4.0	16.0	10.0
Don't know	4.0	0.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
N	75	75	150	50	50	100	50	50	100	25	25	50

*respondents could choose more than one option

Interestingly, Christians were somewhat less in favor of equal rights to education and more willing to give boys preference in case of tight family budgets. Only 86.9% of Christians versus 90.6% of Muslims subscribed to the opinion of equal rights in education. 18.0% Christian versus 10.0% Muslims thought that boys should be privileged in case of economic constraints and 1.6% Christians versus only 0.3% Muslims were convinced that wives should not be better educated than their husbands. However, it is difficult to generalize these results in view of the small size of the sample. The higher the education of respondents, the more they were in favor of equal education for girls. Only 75.6% of illiterates and those who did not complete primary school defended girls' right to equal education compared to 86.7% of those who completed basic education, 91.3% of those who completed secondary education and 92.9% of those who hold higher than secondary school diplomas.

Aspirations of parents for their children were generally quite high and seem to be somewhat unrealistic. 74.8% of all respondents indicated that they expect their oldest daughters to continue their education beyond secondary school while 81.0% expected the same for their oldest sons. Women were only slightly less ambitious with 73.1% hoping that their daughters and 80.1% hoping that their sons achieve educational levels beyond secondary schools. Figures for male respondents reached 76.9% and 82.2% respectively. Increasing the chances of children to improve or at least maintain their current socio-economic status was the single most often mentioned reason by both men and women (57.3% versus 43.2%), followed by the personal aspirations of children (21.4% versus 27.7%). In 65.1% of all respondent households with children at school age, decisions on children's education were made jointly by the children's parents, in 15.1% by the father alone and in 6.2% by the mother alone.

4.3.3   Agents of Socialization

Mass media is an important agent of socialization. Almost 100% of all respondents reported to have a TV set at home or regular access to TV with neighbors and relatives. 56% indicated that they have satellite TV at home and 5.8% reported that they watch satellite TV regularly at friends, relatives or in public places. Roughly one third (31.3%) had access to internet, 42% reported to read newspapers on a regular basis but only 20.8% mentioned that they read magazines.

Cultural activities play a less direct but also important role in socialization and the formation of opinions. In this respect, social and family events turned out to be the single most important cultural activity for all social groups. 73.0% in urban governorates, 71.4% in provincial towns, 97.9% in rural areas and 91.3% in El Arish attend these events at least once every two months. In urban governorates, cinema turned also out to be a favored cultural activity. 64.3% of all respondents visit a cinema at least once every two months. Theatre visits and lectures or public discussions were also reported to play a role in urban governorates (28.75 and 13% respectively).

Males turned out to have more diverse sources of information on gender issues than females. 44.1% of women below 31 and 39.3% of women above 30 reported that they obtain most of their information from parents and relatives, particularly females. Figures for their male counterparts were 31.2% and 28.3%. TV and radio, peers and friends as well as religious institutions were also indicated as important for both males and females whereas only 3.9% of women below 30 mentioned that they depend on mosques or churches as a major source of information. Among all groups, peers were most important for young women (14.0%), however, they seem to loose much of their importance when women grow older. With 9.9%, peers played a remarkably lesser role for women above 30 than in any other group. This may indicate that gender issues are not too often key subjects of discussion among older women, which can limit the potential to build up female support and solidarity networks. Books and the Internet were reported as primary sources of information on gender by 5.0% and 3.6% respectively of young males below 30 as opposed to 3.3% (books) and 2.4% (Internet)

of their female counterparts in the same age group. Details are shown in the figure below:

FIGURE 14: MOST IMPORTANT SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON GENDER ISSUES

females 18-30 years   **females 31-60 years**   **males 18-30 years**   **males 31-60 years**

females 18-30 years	females 31-60 years	males 18-30 years	males 31-60 years
■ mother	■ mother	■ mother	■ mother
■ father	■ father	■ father	■ father
■ other relativ es	■ other relativ es	■ other relativ es	■ other relativ es
■ peers and friends	■ peers and friends	■ peers and friends	■ peers and friends
■ TV + radio	■ TV + radio	■ TV + radio	■ TV + radio
■ w ork place	■ w ork place	■ school	■ w ork place
■ school	■ mosque/church	■ mosque/church	■ mosque/church
■ print press	■ print press	■ print press	■ print press
□ other	□ other	□ other	□ other

4.4 Economic Activities and Reproductive Labor

4.4.1 Work and Employment

Altogether 85.5% of male respondents were involved in paid economic activities as opposed to only 45% women. However, results show that there are huge differences concerning women's paid labor among different regions. In urban governorates, only 25.3% of female respondents occupied paid jobs, as compared to 72% in Gharbiya, 48% in Qena and 44% in El Arish. The latter percentages are significantly higher than the national average (see section 3.3) since a broad definition of working has been used that includes all forms of part-time paid labor without setting minimum hours for the classification as working.[88] Women in rural areas were more often involved in paid labor than in urban ares. Women with secondary school degrees showed the highest rate of female paid labor. Details on women's working status are shown in the figures below:

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[88] The definition of working included the following options: *one or more economic activities* (employed, entrepreneur or self-employed), *housewife + working*, *student + working*, *military service + working*, *retired + working* (part-time paid labor included). Part-time paid labor was not restricted to a minimum of working hours to enter the category of working. The definition of non-working was *only housewife*, *only student*, *only military service*, *retired not working*, *not able to work* (ill, handicapped etc.), *unemployed*, *new entrant into the labor market* (first time job-seeker)

FIGURE 15: WORKING STATUS OF FEMALES ACCORDING TO REGIONS, RURAL/URBAN, RELIGION AND EDUCATION

by Region

by Rural/Urban

by Education
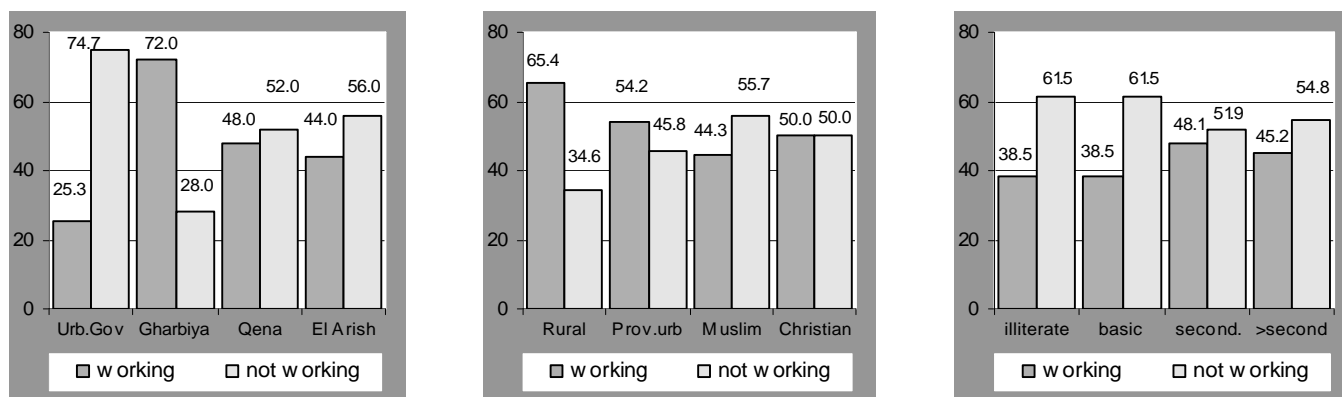
Most working respondents were employed as government employees, i.e. 47.3% of working males and 61.2% of working females. 8.2% of economically active males but only 3.3% of their female counterparts were entrepreneurs and 11.1% of males versus 2.2% of females were self-employed. 6.7% of females worked in home production but only 2 women were found to work in family enterprises.

85.5% of working women indicated that they have always worked while 7.8% stopped working after getting children and 6.7% resumed work again after children grew up.

4.4.2   Reproductive Labor

Reproductive labor encompasses mainly tasks that are related to care giving and household maintenance as well as management and subsistence production. Results clearly show that most of these tasks are the responsibility of women regardless of whether they were working in the labor market or not. Food preparation, cleaning the house and washing clothes were overwhelmingly indicated as the principal task of women, mainly the wife of the household head (90% in urban governorates, 96% in Gharbiya, 90% in Qena and 98% in El Arish). In 5.5% of households covered by the sample, other females were responsible for cooking, cleaning and washing. Only in 2.8% of the households did husbands and fathers share these tasks with their wives and daughters. Men in El Arish (6%) and Qena (4%) were somewhat more willing to support their wives than those in urban governorates (2%) and Gharbiya (1%). Only in one family in Qena and one in El Arish were male children reported to help their mothers in food preparation, washing and cleaning. 1.3% of respondent households, all in urban governorates, had a domestic servant who fulfills these tasks.

Some men in respondent families adopted responsibility for child care and caring for the sick and elderly. Altogether 9% of all respondents reported that these tasks are the principal responsibility of the father or husband in their family. Since this percentage is higher than that of divorced or widowed male household heads (together 2.3%), it can

be assumed that the rest are actively supporting their wives who might work, be ill, on migration or otherwise not able to fulfill these responsibilities.

Only in urban governorates and Gharbiya was shopping for food and daily consumables reported to be a task that is predominantly carried out by women (71.4% and 77.0% respectively). In Qena and El Arish, 60% and 52% respectively of all respondents indicated that males do usually purchase these items. In 14 households in urban governorates and 3 households in Gharbiya, a domestic servant was responsible for shopping.

Maintenance tasks such as repairs of electricity, plumbing etc. were mainly taken care of by men who do not necessarily do the job by themselves but are responsible to call the plumber, carpenter or at least the bawab. However, in 7.3% of all respondent households in urban governorates, in Gharbiya in 13.0%, in Qena in 6% and in El Arish in 14%, wives or other female household members were predominantly in charge of these tasks. The distribution of domestic tasks (main responsibility) among household members is illustrated in the figure below:

FIGURE 16: DISTRIBUTION OF REPRODUCTIVE TASKS AMONG HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS89

| cooking, cleaning, washing | child care, care for sick | daily shopping | household maintenance |
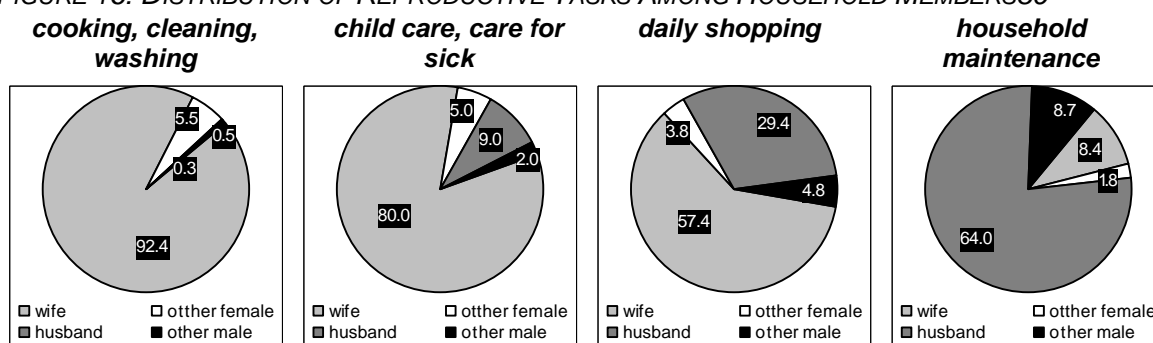
Subsistence food production and to a lesser extent animal husbandry played an important role in Gharbiya and Qena. All households in Qena and 53% of all households in Gharbiya indicated that they produce at least part of their food by themselves. 37% of respondents in Qena, 19% in Gharbiya, 8% in El Arish and 2% in urban governorates reported to be involved in animal husbandry. Men were only exceptionally occupied with these tasks.

In 10.3% of respondent households, fathers or brothers were reported to have the main responsibility to help children with their studies, and in 21.2% mothers were mainly responsible and in 4.5% sisters. 34% of respondents' children in Gharbiya, 16% in Qena and 10% in El Arish had to cope in school without any assistance while 20% in urban governorates, 29% in Gharbiya, 40% in Qena and even 60% in El Arish had private tutors to complement their studies in school.

Husbands were more often reported to take ill family members to the doctor than wives, (52.4% versus 33.4%). In Gharbiya and Qena, three quarters of all households

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89 missing percentages are either domestic servant or unclear

indicated that men are responsible for medical care while in urban governorates and El Arish, almost half of the respondents reported that women are in charge. Applying for official documents was predominantly perceived as the task of the household head (83.5%), in most cases a man. Only in urban governorates did a significant percentage of respondents (29.5%) indicate that every family member is in charge of applying for him- or herself. Application for utilities was by 95.6% of all respondents reported to be the principal responsibility of the household head.

4.4.3 Opinions on Women's Paid Labor

The most striking result concerning opinions on women's paid labor was the gender difference. 36.8% of male respondents but only 11.2% of females thought that women should not work. By contrast, 26.4% of females but only 17.6% of males supported the opinion that a woman should be free to work whenever she wants. In poor and middle class areas in Cairo and Alexandria, 40% of men did not want women to work at all compared to only 16% in upper middle and upper class areas. Only 24% of female respondents in Manshiet Nasser, 16.0% in Alexandria and 4% in Maadi and Zamalek shared this opinion.

Outside urban governorates, the difference was even more striking. In rural areas, 28.0% of all respondents thought that women should not work in the labor market, followed by 23.3% in urban governorates, 20% in urban governorates and only 4.0% in El Arish. In Gharbiya, 44.0% of male respondents as opposed to only 6.0% of females shared this opinion. In Qena, 28% males and 18.0% females were of the same opinion. In El Arish, no male but 8.0% females objected to women's paid labor. 33.3% of male respondents but no single female in provincial urban areas were convinced that women should not work. Women were more in agreement with men concerning opinions that women's work should not be at the expense of child care and domestic tasks. Detailed results are shown in the table below:

Table 21: Opinions on Women's Paid Labor By Region

Opinion	Urban Gov.			Gharbiya			Qena			El Arish		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Should not work	32.0	14.7	23.3	44.0	6.0	25.0	28.0	18.0	23.0	--	8.0	4.0
Not if children in school	8.0	8.0	8.0	2.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	12.0	8.0	8.0	16.0	12.0
Not if at expense of HH tasks	44.0	41.3	42.7	8.0	24.0	16.0	34.0	40.0	37.0	32.0	60.0	46.0
Only if income urgently needed	4.0	5.3	4.7	18.0	34.0	26.0	20.0	--	10.0	24.0	16.0	20.0
Can work if she wants	12.0	26.7	19.3	26.0	26.0	26.0	14.0	28.0	21.0	36.0	--	18.0
Don't know	--	4.0	2.0	--	4.0	2.0	--	2.0	1.0	--	--	--
Only self-employed w. husband	--	--	--	2.0	2.0	2.0	--	--	--	--	--	--
N	75	75	150	50	50	100	50	50	100	25	25	50

Results suggest that acceptance of women's work has increased over time. Only 15.4% of those above 40 years thought that women should be able to work if they want, compared to 19.4% in the age bracket of 26-40 years and 27.6% of those between 18 and 25 years of age. However, female respondents below age 26 defended women's right to work less often than males of the same age. In the other age brackets, women were more often than men of the opinion that women should be able to work if they want. The following table illustrates results in detail:

Table 22: Opinions on Women's Paid Labor By Sex and Age Groups

Opinion	18-25 years			26-40 years			41-60 years			total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Should not work	22.0	17.8	19.5	35.3	8.3	23.1	27.1	11.6	19.8	30.0	12.5	21.3
Not if children in school	10.0	6.8	8.1	2.9	9.5	5.9	6.3	11.6	8.8	5.5	9.0	7.3
Not if at expense of HH tasks	28.0	37.0	33.3	30.4	42.9	36.0	35.4	34.9	35.2	31.0	39.0	35.0
Only if income urgently needed	10.0	8.2	8.9	14.7	13.1	14.0	16.7	18.6	17.6	14.0	12.5	13.3
Only self-employed w. husband	--	--	--	1.0	1.2	1.1	--	--	--	0.5	0.5	0.5
Can work if she wants	30.0	26.0	27.6	15.7	23.8	19.4	14.6	18.6	15.4	19.0	23.5	21.3
Don't know	--	4.1	2.4	--	1.2	0.5	--	4.7	2.2	--	3.0	1.5
Total	50	73	123	102	84	186	48	43	91	200	200	400

Teachers, nurses and other care giving jobs were considered by both males and females as the most suitable occupations for women. 82.0% of males and 76.5% of females thought that women are fit to become teachers and 71.5% of males and 74.5% of females were convinced that women should work as nurses, kindergarten teachers or similar occupations. More males (35.5%) than females (27.5%) favored administrative jobs as suitable for women. Some respondents did also accept that women could become journalists (19% of females and 16% of males), lawyers (16% versus 16.5%), TV moderators (13.5% versus 10.5%), physicians (9% versus 10%) and shop vendors (10.5% versus 8%). However, less than 10% of both males and females would like to see women as drivers, factory workers, entrepreneurs, governors or district chiefs. Only 4% women versus 3.5% men would accept a woman as a judge and only 2.5% females versus 1% males as a politician.

By contrast, both sexes could imagine males in all sorts of jobs. Jobs with decision-making power such as governor/district chief, entrepreneur, politician and judge were those that yielded the highest percentages. Percentages of respondents who saw men particularly fit for these tasks reached 49% for males and 43% for females for

governor/district chief, 47.5% versus 43.5% respectively for entrepreneur, 42 43% versus 36% for judge and 43% versus 32.5% for politician, followed by lawyer with 34% versus 30.5%, administrative jobs with 37% versus 48% and physicians with 26% versus 21.5%.

4.5   Income and Assets

4.5.1   Sources and Control of Income

Results reveal that income from paid labor is not the primary source of subsistence for women. Altogether 75.0% of all female respondents depended mainly or completely on their parents, spouse or other relatives for their living. Only 17.1% could live off their income from economic activities, 5.5% had sufficient pensions and 1.3% could cover their expenses with income from rent of real estate. With 35% disposing of sufficient own income, women in Qena showed the highest degree of independence from the support of relatives. In urban governorates, the percentage of female respondents who reported to have sufficient independent sources of income to sustain their livelihoods reached only 16.1%, followed by El Arish with 20% and Gharbiya with 27%. Details are shown in the table below:

Table 23: Principal Source of Income/ Subsistence of Females by Region[90]

Principal source of income/ subsistence	Urban Gov.		Gharbiya		Qena		Arish		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Parents/ spouse pay	124	82.5	71	71.0	65	65.0	40	80.0	300	75.0
Economic activity	13	8.7	21	21.0	27	27.0	8	16.0	69	17.1
Rent of real estate	1	0.7	3	3.0	1	1.0	--	--	5	1.3
Pension(s)	10	6.7	3	3.0	7	7.0	2	4.0	22	5.5
Reg. support relatives	1	0.7	2	2.0	--	--	--	--	3	0.8
Irreg. support relatives	1	0.7	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	0.3
Total	150	100.0	100	100.0	100	100.0	50	100.0	400	100.0

Female respondents indicated a relatively high degree of control over their own income. Only 3.3% of them reported that the husband decides how his wife's income is spent. By contrast, 9.4% of husbands authorized their wives to spend the money they (the husbands) earn. However, more husbands than wives reported that they control their own income alone except in El Arish. Around one third of all couples covered by the sample indicated that they take decisions on spending the husband's income together as opposed to roughly two thirds who reported joint decision-making concerning the wife's income.

The regional breakdown of the results reveals that in Gharbiya and El Arish, wives have considerably more control over the incomes of their husbands than in urban governorates and Qena. Only in urban governorates, however, do more than half of women with own income, i.e. 68.4%, decide alone how to spend this money. Details are shown in the following table:

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[90] Married male respondents have provided information for their wives, non-married male respondents for their mothers so that the total number of females included in the table adds up to 400

Table 24: Control of Respondent's Income

Region	Husband's income			Wife's income		
contolled by	% husband	% wife	% both	% husband	% wife	% both
Urban governorates	51.5	3.2	45.2	0.0	31.6	68.4
Gharbiya	51.1	13.3	35.6	5.6	27.8	66.7
Qena	67.4	6.5	26.1	4.2	37.5	58.3
El Arish	38.9	27.8	33.3	0.0	45.5	54.5
Total	**54.4**	**9.4**	**36.3**	**3.3**	**33.3**	**63.3**

There are considerable differences according to class. In Manshiet Nasser, 72.7% of all males reported that they have exclusive control over their income whereas decisions about spending the wife's incomes were all taken jointly. No respondent in urban governorates indicated that husbands decide alone on how to spend their wife's earnings. In wealthy areas, most respondents reported that decisions on any income are taken together whereas in middle class areas in Alexandria, more than half of both male and female respondents indicated that they each spouse decides alone how to spend his or her income. In the posh districts of Maadi and Zamalek, only 22.2% of men had exclusive control over their income, in Alexandria 54.5%. Percentages for women's control over their own income reached 28.6% and 57.1% respectively in these same areas.

4.5.2   Inheritance

Inheritance is regulated by the Personal Status Law. Regulations apply to both Muslims and Christians. They are based on Islamic Sharia and are quite complicated. As a general rule, women inherit half of men's share.

Results revealed that 20.0% of females and 19.5% of males were not familiar with the details of the articles regulating inheritance. The majority of male respondents, i.e. 55.5%, as opposed to 47.5% of females were convinced that the higher share for men is justified on the grounds that men have to provide for women and children. 16.5% of females and 12.5% of males thought that women should get a fairer share since many women contribute to the family income today or are even main breadwinners. Only 8% of female versus 4% male respondents expressed the opinion that men and women should be treated equally in inheritance as a matter of principle. 6.5% women versus 7.0% men refused to discuss the issue on the grounds that inheritance rules are part of Islamic Sharia'. Details are shown in the table below:

Table 25: Opinions on Inheritance According to Sex

Opinion	Male		Female		Total	
	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%
Not familiar with details	39	19.5	40	20.0	79	19.8
Higher share is justified since men provide for women and children	111	55.5	95	47.5	206	51.4
Women should get a fairer share since they contribute to providing	25	12.5	33	16.5	58	14.5
Men and women should be principally treated the same	8	4.0	16	8.0	24	6.0
Inheritance rules are fixed in the Sharia and cannot be changed	14	7.0	13	6.5	27	6.8
Don't know	3	1.5	3	1.5	6	1.5
Total	**200**	**100.0**	**200**	**100.0**	**400**	**100.0**

Results about actual inheritance of respondents have to be treated with caution. Within the category of urban governorates, for example, the percentage of respondents who inherited assets from their parents was much higher in the poor area of Manshiet Nasser than in middle and upper middle class areas (44% versus 30% and 20%). This is astonishing since one would expect that respondents from wealthy families are more likely to inherit than those from poor families. Due to the small size of the sample, this fact can not be truly explained. Parents of respondents in Manshiet Nasser might have been older on average than those in wealthier areas so that transfer of property through inheritance might have already taken place whereas in wealthier areas, respondents might still wait for inheritance.

4.5.3 Access to Real Estate and Other Valuables

Results revealed that women have less access to assets than men. Although female respondents did more often than men own gold or jewelry and cattle, the value of their assets is probably lower than that of men who were more often owners of real estate. Almost as many women as men reported that they own buildings and land but less than half as many female as male respondents indicated that they own apartments. Most real estate was acquired through inheritance and women's share in inheritance is lower than that of men. 43.4% of males compared to only 31.8% of females were able to purchase real estate property with their own income. Cash savings and bank accounts were neither prevalent among men nor among women with women being even less likely to have an account in a bank. No female and only few male respondents owned valuable production tools or industrial machines and around 50% less women than men were found to be owners of cars and vehicles. Details are shown in the table below:

Table 26: Access to Assets According to Sex

Assets of Respondents	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Owner of land	22	11.0	24	12.0	46	11.5
Owner of building	19	9.5	18	9.0	37	9.3
Owner of apartment	57	28.5	22	11.0	79	19.8
Owner of shop/ workshop	13	6.5	4	2.0	17	4.3
Shared ownership of land	4	2.0	3	1.5	7	1.8
Shared ownership of building	4	2.0	3	1.5	7	1.8
Shared ownership of apartment	2	1.0	3	1.5	5	1.3
Machinery / valuable tools	3	1.5	--	0.0	3	0.8
Vehicle(s)	29	14.5	20	10.0	49	12.3
Gold or jewelry	11	5.5	44	22.0	55	13.8
Cash or savings account in bank	26	13.0	21	10.5	47	11.8
Cattle	3	1.5	6	3.0	9	2.3
N	**200**		**200**		**400**	
Subtotal owners of assets	*109*	*54.5*	*100*	*50.0*	*209*	*52.3*
No assets	*91*	*45.5*	*100*	*50.0*	*191*	*47.7*

4.5.4 Housing Conditions

Previous studies found that women put much emphasis on living in independent housing units and that many prefer to live in nuclear instead of extended families. This gives women more independence when they are married and a higher status in the

family. A woman who is "the woman of the house" (sitt al-beit) has her own domain whereas a woman who has to share space and/or resources with other married females does usually occupy a subordinate position vis a vis the older women in the household.[91]

11.8% of all families covered by the sample indicated that they live together with the parents of either the husband or the wife in the same housing unit. 29.2% occupied separate apartments in the house of parents or relatives and 59% lived in buildings without relatives. The highest percentage of couples who share housing units with parents was found in Qena (31%), whereas the overwhelming majority of respondent families in El Arish and urban governorates (76% and 70% respectively) occupied a separate flat in buildings without any relatives. Details are shown in the table below:

Table 27: Housing Conditions of Respondent Families According to Region

Family lives in	Urban Gov.		Gharbiya		Qena		El Arish		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Room(s) in housing unit of parents of HH	2	1.3	2	2.0	20	20.0	--	--	24	6.0
Room(s) in housing unit of parents of spouse of HH	3	2.0	4	4.0	11	11.0	5	10.0	23	5.8
Independent housing unit in house of parents of HH	16	10.7	12	12.0	11	11.0	2	4.0	41	10.2
Indep. hous. unit in house of parents of spouse of HH	3	2.0	16	16.0	4	4.0	5	10.0	28	7.0
Independent housing unit in house w. other relatives	21	14.0	15	15.0	12	12.0	--	--	48	12.0
Independent housing unit in house without relatives	105	70.0	51	51.0	42	42.0	38	76.0	236	59.0
Total	150	100.0	100	100.0	100	100.0	50	100.0	400	100.0

4.6 Gender and the Public Sphere

4.6.1 Participation in Public and Community Life

More male than female respondents reported that they participate in public and community activities except for donor-sponsored projects in which twice as many female as male respondents were involved. Gender differences were most significant in community service institutions (e.g. parent teacher councils, youth centers, cultural centers) as well as in religious organizations, political parties and professional syndicates, where men's participation exceeded that of women by at least 50%. Regional differences were quite significant. In Cairo, women's participation was higher than men's in all categories except for religious organizations and professional syndicates. However, compared to other governorates, overall participation rates were comparatively low.

In Gharbiya, female respondents were twice as often members of NGOs as men and equally represented in religious organizations and community service institutions. Although lower than that of men, their participation in political parties and professional syndicates was still higher than in all other governorates with the exception of women's participation in political parties that was the same as in El Arish. Overall participation rates in the other categories were, however, comparatively low. In Qena, results revealed higher than average participation rates for both male and female respondents

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[91] See, for example, Khafagy and Zaalouk, 1982 who have studied this phenomenon in the context of male migration to the Gulf States

in almost all categories with the exception of males' participation in NGOs and females' participation in community service institutions and political parties where El Arish showed the highest rates. Detailed results are shown in the table below:

Table 28: Participation of Respondents in Public and Community Organizations

Organizations	Urb. Gov.		Gharbiya		Qena		El Arish		Total		
	% M	% F	% M	% F	% M	% F	% M	% F	% M	% F	% T
NGOs, CDAs, CBOs	8.0	10.7	4.0	8.0	30.0	24.0	44.0	24.0	17.0	15.0	16.0
Religious organizations	12.0	9.3	16.0	16.0	36.0	30.0	20.0	12.0	20.0	16.5	18.3
Community service institutions	1.3	4.0	6.0	6.0	34.0	8.0	24.0	12.0	13.5	6.5	10.0
Donor-sponsored projects	0.0	2.7	0.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	1.5	3.0	2.3
Political parties	1.3	1.3	18.0	16.0	28.0	12.0	16.0	16.0	14.0	9.5	11.8
Professional syndicates	17.3	10.7	40.0	34.0	40.0	22.0	24.0	12.0	29.0	19.5	24.3
N	**75**	**75**	**50**	**50**	**50**	**50**	**25**	**25**	**200**	**200**	**400**

Overall participation rates of both males and females turned out to be quite high in many categories, particularly in Gharbiya, Qena and El Arish. Results should, however, be treated with some caution. High participation rates could be due to the fact that the respondents had been selected with the help of NGOs. The NGOs were requested to select interviewees within the quota agreed upon at random and among community members who have not been involved in NGO activities. However, the NGOs might still have focused on interviewees whom they know well and who might have been involved more often than average in public and community organizations.

Most families have encouraged the membership of both male and female respondents in public and community organizations. Interestingly, females enjoyed more support than males in Qena and El Arish, whereas in Gharbiya and urban governorates support was higher for males. Details are shown in the table below:

Table 29: Attitude of Family Towards Participation in Public and Community Organizations

Attitude of Family	Urban Governorates			Gharbiya			Qena			El Arish		
	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T	% M	% F	% T
Encourage participation	78.7	72.0	75.3	50.0	42.0	46.0	66.0	84.0	75.0	72.0	76.0	9.3
No opinion	14.7	16.0	15.3	42.0	36.0	39.0	24.0	8.0	16.0	16.0	12.0	1.8
Had to be convinced	2.7	2.7	2.7	8.0	16.0	12.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	8.0	0.0	0.5
Object	4.0	9.3	6.7	0.0	6.0	3.0	10.0	6.0	8.0	4.0	12.0	1.0
N	**75**	**75**	**150**	**50**	**50**	**100**	**50**	**50**	**100**	**25**	**25**	**400**

4.6.2 Opinions on Selected Problems that are Subject to Public Discussion

Opinions were requested on the most important social, political and environmental problems in Egypt today. In addition, respondents have been asked to indicate the most important problems of Egyptian men and women from their point of view according to priority. The respondents selected five answers for each question and ranked them according to priority. Answers have been weighted and calculated as percentages.[92]

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[92] Respondents could choose among a number of options but could also add supplementary issues. Answers have been weighted, whereas the first priority was multiplied by 5, the second by 4, the third by 3, the fourth by 2 and the rest by 1. The weighted options have then been added up as a grand total. Individual choices have been calculated as percentages of the grand total to illustrate their relative weight as a fraction of all answers.

There was a high level of agreement among male and female respondents of all age groups concerning the selection and ranking of the most important environmental problems in Egypt today. Water pollution and air pollution, followed by excessive use of fertilizers in agriculture and pollution of public space by garbage yielded the highest concern in all age groups regardless of sex and with no significant differences in preference. Other environmental problems mentioned include hygiene problems due to deficient sewerage, noise pollution and soil pollution. Details are illustrated in the figure below:

FIGURE 17: PERCEPTION OF MOST IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

| **Females 18-30 years** | **Females 31-60 years** | **Males 18-30 years** | **Males 31-60 years** |
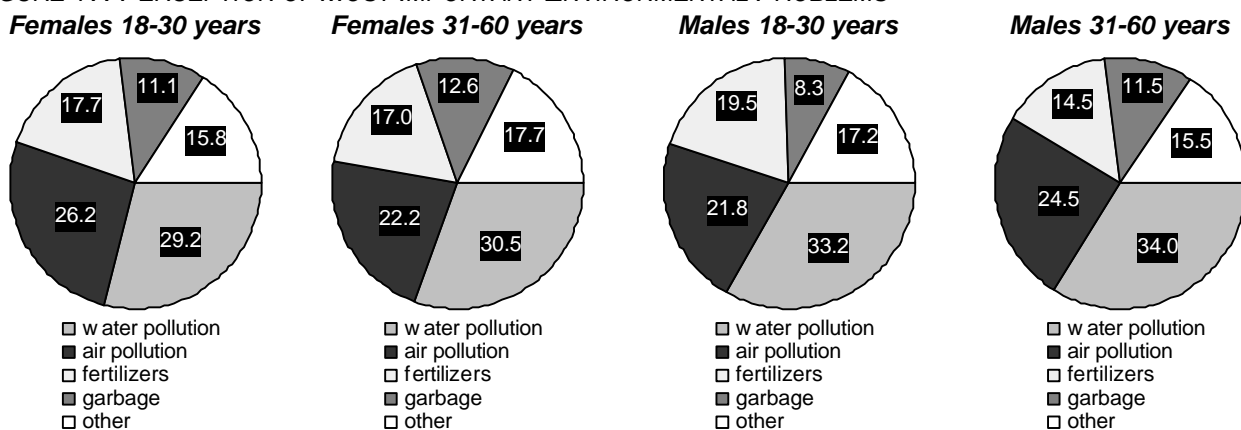
Respondents did also largely agree on the type and priority of the most important social and political problems in Egypt and elsewhere. All sex and age groups perceived unemployment and rising prices as priority problems, followed by poverty and family breakdowns. Wars and terrorism occupy the last place among the five problems that ranked highest, indicating that respondents are most concerned with problems that have a direct impact on their personal lives. Other problems mentioned include drug addiction, increase of violence and criminality, negligence of children, husband's migration, social indifference, deterioration of morals and population increase. Details are illustrated in the figure below:

FIGURE 18: PERCEPTION OF MOST IMPORTANT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS

Females 18-30 years   **Females 31-60 years**   **Males 18-30 years**   **Males 31-60 years**

□ unemployment
■ price increases
□ poverty
▨ family breakdow ns
▨ w ars + terrorism
□ other
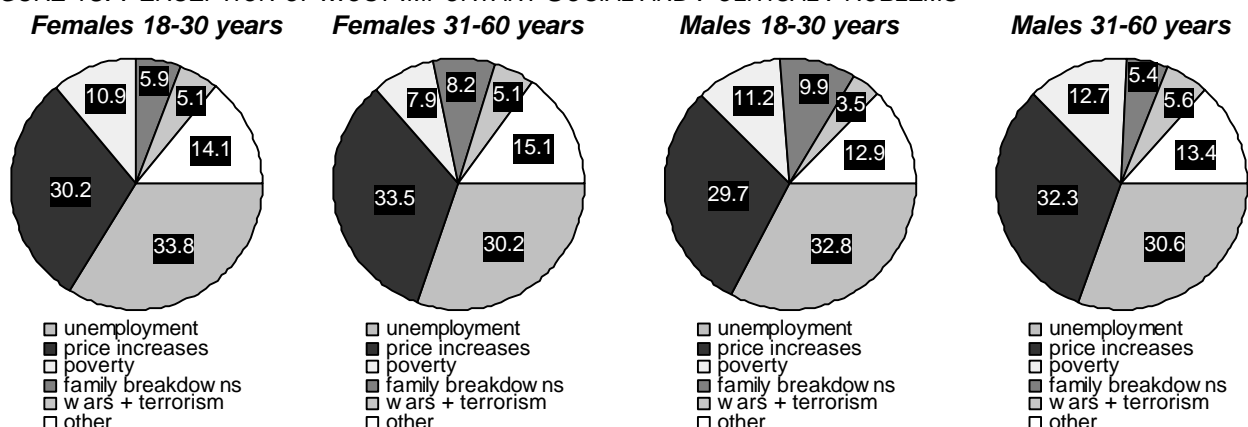
Respondents did not differ much concerning their perceptions of the most important problems of Egyptian women today. All sex and age groups agreed on the first four priority problems, i.e. finding a suitable marriage partner, high costs of marriage, not being able to realize personal ambitions and inability to meet the expectations of the spouse. Women tended to give more weight to problems related to realizing personal ambitions whereas men thought that the difficulty to live up to husbands' expectations is a bigger problem for women than women themselves think it is. This implies that women are less concerned with men than men assume they are.

One of the most significant outcomes was, however, the relatively high ranking of "feeling oppressed in marriage" among women between 31-60 years (weight 9.0 out of 100). This option was not selected by any other group as one of the five priority problems. Young men and women below 31 years mentioned harassment in the street and at work instead as one of the five most important problems for women. Men above 31 thought that unemployment is a major problem for women whereas women themselves did not assign priority to this issue. Other problems of women mentioned include restrictions of movement, raising of children and being overburdened with work. Details are illustrated in the figure below:

FIGURE 19: PERCEPTION OF MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS OF EGYPTIAN WOMEN TODAY

Females 18-30 years   **Females 31-60 years**   **Males 18-30 years**   **Males 31-60 years**

□ finding suitable spouse
■ high costs of marriage
□ realize personal ambitions
▨ meet ex pect. of spouse
▨ harrassment street/w ork
□ other

(Females 31-60 legend: ▨ oppression in marriage)

(Males 31-60 legend: ■ unemployment)
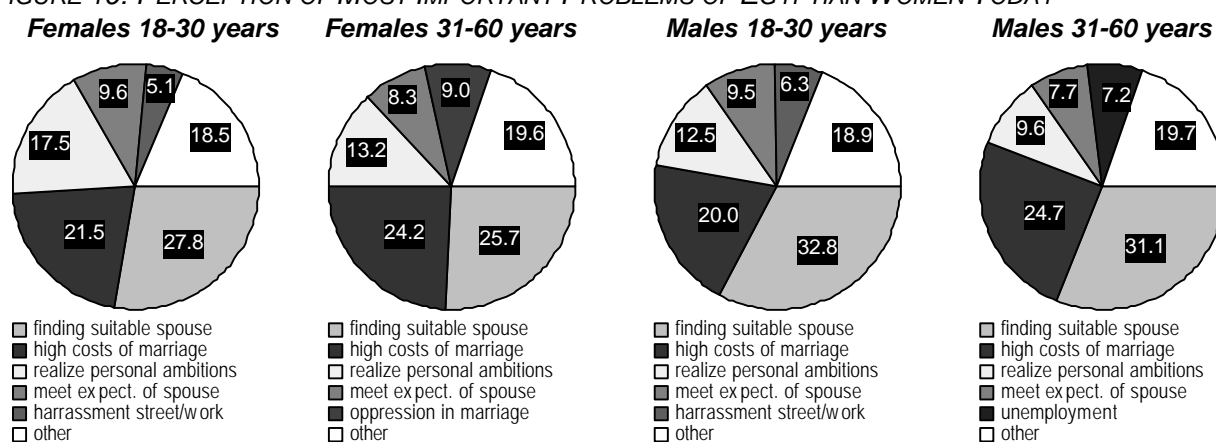
Male and female respondents largely agreed about the five highest priority problems of Egyptian men with no significant differences in ranking. With the exception of "feeling oppressed in marriage" and "harassment in the street/at work" that were not perceived as priority problems of males, respondents were convinced that the most important problems of men are similar to those of women. All age groups ranked "unemployment" and "high costs of marriage" higher for men than for women whereas "finding a suitable marriage partner" was given lower priority. Interestingly, males in the age group of 31-60 were to the same extent concerned with difficulties to meet the expectations of their wives as women were to meet their husbands' expectations. Women above 30 were not aware of this and assume that men are much less concerned with their spouse than they themselves are. Details are illustrated in the figure below:

FIGURE 20: PERCEPTION OF MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS OF EGYPTIAN MEN TODAY

| **Females 18-30 years** | **Females 31-60 years** | **Males 18-30 years** | **Males 31-60 years** |

- ☐ finding suitable spouse
- ■ high costs of marriage
- ☐ realize personal ambitions
- ▨ meet expect. of spouse
- ■ unemployment
- ☐ other
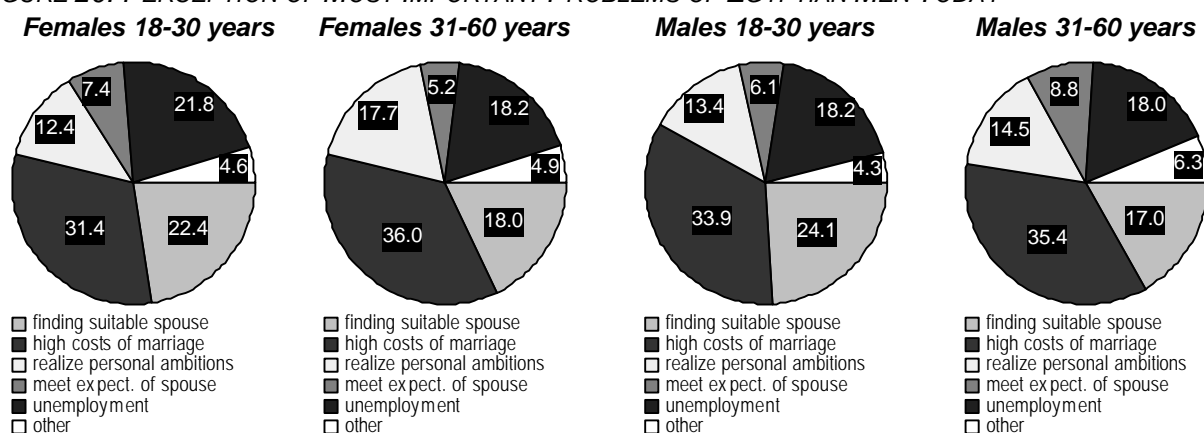
5   RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

5.1   Opinions on Critical Gender Issues

5.1.1   Gender Roles and Decision-Making in the Family

There was almost uniform agreement that men are the household head and ultimate decision-maker in the family. Their position and decision-making power was mainly derived from their role as provider, protector and representative of the family towards the outside world. Women and girls have put more emphasis on men's role as protector and ultimate responsible for the livelihood of the family, whereas men have emphasized the aspect of power and control. The term itself, *rab al-usra (the head of the family)*, is very strong. *Rab* means *lord*, *master* and also *God* and has the connotation of the absolute, i.e. the absolute patriarch. Only female participants mentioned the possibility that a woman can become *rabit al-usra*, a *female household head*, however, only in case of death or divorce of her husband. Males used the term *mo'ila* instead, i.e. *provider/ breadwinner*. Some women in Manshiet Nasser, Alexandria and Tanta insisted that even in this case, the woman's male relatives take over those responsibilities of her former husband that symbolize being the *rab*, i.e. protecting and representing the family towards the outside world and taking major decisions.

Women's principal roles were by most respondents perceived as those of nurturers, caregivers, educators and managers of family affairs inside the house. Many women emphasized the importance of mothers' responsibility for children's education (*tarbiya*, i.e. social, moral and psychological formation) as a task of importance of society as a whole. Interestingly, it was mainly uneducated women who quoted a well-known expression from the novel of a famous Egyptian writer, Ahmed Shawqi, in this context: "al-umm madrasa", i.e. the mother is a school. Women across focus groups insisted on the importance of women's contributions and the complementarity of gender roles in the family. A woman in Manshiet Nasser, for example, said: "A family is like a ship. The man is the captain, the woman is the leader and children are the employees. The ship cannot move without any of them."[93]

Women were, however, divided with regard to the significance of women's contributions for their status and right to share in decision-making. Some women insisted that men are "al-asas fil beit" (the basis of the house) because of their roles as providers and protectors, others attributed the same term to women on the grounds that women are the managers in the family and care for everybody's needs. Many, mainly female participants in different focus groups claimed that decisions in the family should be taken jointly by husbands and wives or the husband should at least discuss with his wife and take her opinion into consideration. Opinions about managing the household budget were divided with no clear regional or gender preferences. Most participants reported that husbands give their wives a budget to spend at their discretion for routine expenses "because they know the family's needs".[94] Larger spending decisions tend to be discussed jointly in urban areas whereas in Upper Egypt and El Arish men tend to take these decisions alone.

5.1.2   <u>Women's Paid Labor</u>

It was widely acknowledged by both men and women that many women work today and that women's income has become an important contribution to the family budget. Many male and female participants, except in the posh districts of Maadi and Zamalek, agreed that women should only work if this is an economic necessity. Others across focus groups insisted that women's work should not be at the expense of their domestic tasks. Almost all participants, male and female, agreed that the ultimate decision about women's work should be left to the husband who has, however, only the right to prevent and not the right to push women into working. Both male and female participants claimed that decisions on women's work depend very much on whether or not a job is considered decent and respectable. Jobs that involve coming home at night, working in other people's homes or in remote places were widely considered as inappropriate for women. Jobs in offices and institutions were clearly preferred for educated women. Female participants in the posh district of Maadi mentioned a backward tendency among young men and women who are reportedly more opposed to women's work as a

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[93] Translation of: al-usra zayy safina, al-ragul al-qubtan, al-sitt al'qa'id wa al-awlad al-muwazzafin

[94] Translation of: 'ashan heya ta'raf ihtiagat al-usra, expression used by women in Alexandria, Manshiet Nasser and Qena and by men in Qena and Maadi

result of decreasing job opportunities for women in the public sector and inappropriate working conditions in the private sector.

Female paid labor means something different for men and women. Men focused on the functional benefits of women's work such as increasing a family's socio-economic status, improving a woman's skills to educate her children and decreasing her requests towards her husbands. Women across all focus groups stressed the positive effects of working on their personal development and their status vis a vis their husbands. They use, for example, expressions like "work allows her to realize her self", "widens her horizon", and "gives her self-confidence".[95] Women in Qena and Manshiet Nasser, in particular, stressed that women's work "gives her a personality" and lifts her out of the invisible sphere of the house as indicated by expressions such as: a working woman "feels her dignity", "proves her existence" enables her to "speak in front of the man and to deal with the community".[96]

Women in Manshiet Nasser, Alexandria and El Arish have pointed out how important it is for a woman to have her own income so that she is not obliged to ask her husband in case she needs money for personal purposes. This is particularly important when women want to spend money on their parents which seems to be a frequent issue of dispute. By supporting their relatives and caring for their friends, women strengthen their own networks of support which back them up in disputes with their husbands. As a woman in El Arish put it, "a woman with own income can visit, invite and give presents to people as she pleases",[97] which implies also greater freedom of movement. Some male participants insisted that working women are obliged to contribute to the family budget whereas females pointed out that women do in fact spend all or most of their income for the family, however, on a voluntary basis. Only few participants in Manshiet Nasser and Maadi were willing to give men a say in decisions on spending women's income.

Women's paid labor clearly represents a challenge to traditional concepts of gender relations and gender roles. Men, in particular, were very concerned about the potential of women's work to undermine their position in the family and community. At the same time, men feel the increasing burden or even impossibility of being the sole breadwinner and provider. Men in all focus groups except in Zamalek took a defensive position and felt compelled to justify their acceptance of women's paid labor, as indicated in various expressions meaning that "it is not a shame if women work".[98] Men's mixed feelings were particularly explicit in the poor urban area of Manshiet Nasser where one participant broke out in tears when talking about his inability to earn enough income to relief his wife from the burdens of work. Male participants in Manshiet Nasser and to a lesser extent also in Alexandria referred continuously to "kalam al-nas" (people's talk) as an obstacle to women's work – not mentioning that they are themselves part of these *nas*/people. People's talk about women's work - either in the sense that it is proof of

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[95] Translation of: al-'amal yasmah laha tahqiq thatha – yiwasa' afaqha – yiddiha thiqa fi nafsaha

[96] Translation of: bithiss bi karamitha – bitithbit wugudha – tiqdar titkalim 'uddam al-ragul wa tit'amil ma' al-mugtama'

[97]Translation of: tiqdar tizur wa tigamil al-nas bi rahitha

[98]Translation of: 'amal al-mar'a mish haram – mish 'eib in al-mar'a tishtaghal

men's not being able to provide or to question the respectability of women's jobs and movements outside the house - is thus being used as a pretext to justify men's opposition to women's paid labor. *Kalam al-nas* was also given as the reason for not allowing women to move more freely and for preventing girls to continue higher education or to meet with male peers, allegedly out of fear for girls' and women's reputation in the community.

Women in Manshiet Nasser were the most outspoken when talking about disputes in the context of women's work and household income. They were well aware of men's concerns that a woman might become "arrogant and disrespectful"[99] if the family depends to a large extent on her income. Men's fears are as much a problem for women as they are for men. Husbands are reported to be more obsessed with control, less patient and more often violent if they are unemployed, depend on casual labor or earn less income than their wives.

5.1.3 <u>Women's Education</u>

Both male and female participants agreed almost homogeneously that education is a must for both sexes and even more so today due to technological developments and the challenges of modern life. Illiterate men and women pointed to the importance of the practical aspects of education, i.e. to move around, read pharmaceutical prescriptions, fill in forms etc. With only three exceptions (males in Manshiet Nasser, Alexandria, El Arish), women and men emphasized the importance of girls' education.

Female participants mentioned that girls are often more motivated and perform better than boys in school. Participants in four focus groups[100] claimed that it is even more critical to educate girls because "men can work anything but girls have to have high-level certificates to be able to find decent jobs".[101]

The majority of participants across focus groups considered girls' education as an element of security to cope with crisis and as increasingly important in view of deteriorating economic conditions that render girls today much more vulnerable than their mothers a generation before. But economic constraints were also mentioned by both men and women as a major obstacle to education. A minority of both men (Manshiet Nasser, Qena) and women (Tanta, Qena) favored the preference of boys' education in case of tight family budgets, however, with different rationales. Women justified their opinion with boys' future obligation to provide for a family and men with boys' carrying the father's name and being his "sanad" (backing) and "'asab" (patrilineal extension). Some men in El Arish and Manshiet Nasser did only agree to women's education, particularly beyond basic education, if the school is close and gender segregated. Others in the same areas were willing to support girls' education to the highest possible level, even if this entails traveling.

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[99] Translation of tit'ali 'aley

[100] Females in Manshiet Nasser, Alexandria, Qena and a man in Tanta

[101] Translation of: al-bint lazim tit'alim 'ashan tila'i shughl lakin al-walad mumkin yishtaghal ay haga

Similar to opinions articulated in the context of women's paid labor, men tended to focus more on the functional aspects of girls' education whereas female participants emphasized the positive effects on women's personal development. However, the majority of participants of both sexes appreciated that education "opens a woman's mind", "strengthens her personality", "enables her to take the right decisions", "increases a woman's experience in life and gives her independence" and "enables her to confront problems and support her children in their education"[102]. Men added that educated women can save money, particularly for tutoring classes, and thus ease the financial burden on their husbands and that educated girls have less difficulties to find suitable husbands.

Both male and female participants across focus groups agreed that numerous marital disputes may arise if women are better educated than their husbands. Men would develop a sense of inferiority (naqs) and would always fear that the wife becomes disrespectful and tries to impose her opinion on him. The wife's higher education is no or less of a problem if a man can compensate for the lack of education with a good income and a strong personality and particularly if he is secure of his wife's love and understanding. The concept of love in marriage is relatively new and not considered a prerequisite by tradition. Emotional and mental proximity were, however, frequently emphasized as important elements to keep a marriage stable in times of crisis.

5.1.4 Women's Freedom of Movement

Interestingly, participants in all focus groups, both male and female, agreed that women and girls should enjoy freedom of movement as long as this does not lead to *inhiraf* (moral deviation). The interpretation of what *inhiraf* means in practice varied, however, considerably. While some participants across focus groups favored unrestricted freedom during day hours as long as women do not neglect their domestic duties, others agreed to girls'/women's leaving the house only if they have a socially accepted purpose such as education or visits to relatives. Female participants in the posh district of Maadi – although not all of them – articulated the most liberal opinions and males in Manshiet Nasser, Qena and Alexandria – although also not all of them – tended to be most restrictive. In Manshiet Nasser, El Arish and Qena, going out with boys was widely considered as suspicious or even *'eib* (shame) because girls would risk their reputation.

Many participants across focus groups were convinced that girls need to make experiences to cope with modern life but felt ambiguous about giving girls too much freedom. Both men and women mentioned the influence of modern media such as satellite TV and Internet which has increased acceptance of women's movements in public but has allegedly also spoilt the morals of many young men. As a consequence, girls were reported to face constant harassment and attempts to lure them into unacceptable adventures. Mothers across focus groups felt responsible to support and guide their daughters and stressed the importance of trust and monitoring. Many participants across focus groups except for men in Manshiet Nasser and Qena pointed

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[102] Translation of: yiftah 'aqlaha – yiqawwi shakhsiyetha ±yisa'idha takhud al-qarar al-sah – yizawwid khibritha fil hayah wa yiddiha istiqlaliya – yikhaliha tit'amil ma' al-mashakil wa tisa'id awladha fil-ta'lim

out that a good upbringing (tarbiya) is the best protection for a girl. Participants from posh districts pointed to the benefits of mobiles that allow for constant contact and immediate support in case of problems.

The majority of men in all male focus groups except in Maadi and interestingly also some women in Maadi and Manshiet Nasser insisted that women/girls have to obtain permission from the husband/father before they leave the house. In the absence of the father, the right to give permission can be delegated to the mother or a son. Most women in all focus groups agreed with men as far as girls were concerned but less so for themselves. The majority in all female focus groups except for Christian women in Manshiet Nasser and Qena pointed out that although they do ask for permission (*yista'zin* which means also: *excuse oneself*), this permission is considered as information rather than permission in a narrow sense. A woman from Alexandria said, for example, why should he say no, didn't I excuse myself , indicating that informing him is enough to maintain the form and a woman from Manshiet Nasser said "there is a difference between saying yes or no and between telling him for information.[103] A number of women complained about frequent disputes if they want to visit friends or family members. Female participants in Manshiet Nasser and Tanta reported that men also use their right to give or deny permissions to punish women in case of dispute.

5.1.5 Violence

In most focus group discussions, violence was referred to both as a symbol of men's power and strength, i.e. positive, and as destructive for social relations, i.e. negative. Almost all participants agreed that beating, name-calling and other insults as well as shouting and ironic remarks are violence. Other acts defined as violent behavior include preventing wives to leave the house, particularly if she wants to visit her family, preventing wives and daughters from working, depriving girls of education, stopping to pay for the household, threats with divorce, threats to be thrown out of the house, threats with beating, preventing women from meeting and talking with others, FGC and forcing a girl to marry a man whom she does not want.

Opinions on the question of whether or not violence is acceptable and if yes when exactly violence is justified were divided among both men and women in all focus groups. Women's opposition to violence was much stronger than that of men in all focus groups, however, not uniform. Even in the posh district of Maadi did a female participant only condemn violence "if it is unjustified". Some women in Manshiet Nasser, Qena and El Arish considered beating, only as violence if done without reason whereas a persistent refusal to obey was the most commonly mentioned justification. Unfortunately, results do not reveal what exactly participants consider as not obeying. Daughters argued vehemently against being beaten by their brothers whereas most young men insisted on their 'right' to discipline sisters, including the use of violence.

Many women across focus groups expressed deep feelings of injustice and bitterness by physical and non-physical violence used by husbands to "break her will", "not to give

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[103] Translation of: hayqul la'a leh mish ana ista'zintu? – fi farq ma bein yiqul ah aw la' wa ma bein aqul luh 'ashan ya'raf

her an opportunity to speak", "not to consider her opinion".[104] They complained that husbands "always blame her, exaggerate any problem and never blame themselves" and "escape their own obligations but burden women continuously with more responsibilities than they can cope with".[105] Women suffer from the "contemptuous looks" that men often demonstrate towards their wives "in order to feel like a man".[106] Many women articulated that they know but do not agree with the fact that men's sense of masculinity is so strongly connected with demonstrating power and superiority over women.

The majority of female participants across focus groups pointed out that the effects of violence are much stronger if committed in front of others (children, guests, relatives, neighbors etc.). Some did not even consider beating or insults in private as violence, as a woman from Tanta put it: "between me and him (violence) is not a problem but in front of people it is very humiliating.[107] A number of women pointed to the negative effects on the reputation and status of women and girls in the community if violence is committed in front of others. As a consequence, women who are frequently subjected to violence tend to isolate themselves in order not to risk that others become witnesses of their humiliation and powerlessness. Almost all female participants emphasized that "violence deeply affects the soul" of the victim (nafsiyitha), "decreases her self-confidence" and "causes serious psychological problems".[108] They reported strong feelings of enmity and hate towards violent husbands and were aware of the negative effects on children. Mothers who are subjected to violence tend to pass their constant tension on to their children, beating them frequently. Women mentioned also that boys who observe their fathers beating or humiliating their mothers are likely to adopt the same behavior later with their wives and that girls often develop strong feelings of enmity towards men in general.

Male participants in general tended to be much more self-centered and remain focused on the negative consequences for themselves rather than on the suffering of women. They were aware that violence leads to a "loss of respect" and ultimately to the "failure of the family". In Alexandria and Tanta, participants feared that violence may cause a wife to "loose her loyalty" towards her husband and to "betray him or run away".[109] Men in Manshiet Nasser and Qena pointed to the fact that violence can also be exerted by women against men, either because they explode or attack men physically but more often by resorting to more subtle means of humiliation with words. Christians pointed out that the impossibility of getting divorced tends to make some Christian men more reluctant to use violence and Christian wives more enduring.

Women were divided as to how to deal with and protect themselves against violence. Some female participants, particularly in El Arish and Tanta, put the main blame for

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violence on women who do not behave properly or do not know how to handle a husband and please him sufficiently. They claimed that a woman should be diplomatic in order not to provoke him and try to escape any situation that could lead to violence. However, all female focus group included some participants who insisted vehemently that women should take a strong position against any form of violence from the very beginning of their marriage. Some women in Manshiet Nasser raised the issue of women being accomplices by either encouraging brothers or husbands to use violence against girls and by not supporting each other against men's violent behavior.

Many women expressed considerable frustration and lack of hope that men would ever change when it comes to violence as a means to impose obedience on women. This was articulated in expressions like the following: "men are like this, it's in their nature" (women in Manshiet Nasser) or "there is not a single woman in our society who does not know violence, regardless of education" (woman in Alexandria). [110] Women in Manshiet Nasser and Qena reported cases of excessive violence e.g. beating with boots, sticks, hoses and plates, sometimes resulting in injuries that had to be cured in hospital. They mentioned that occasions leading to violence in these areas are frequently related to food (not good enough or not ready in time), women's leaving the house without permission or women raising their voices or being stubborn in disputes about any issue. In these cases, violence is clearly used to impose patriarchic gender roles, either in the context of women's duty to provide services to men or of men's claims to superiority and control over women.

5.1.6 Reproductive Health

Family planning was considered important by the overwhelming majority of both male and female participants. Some men (Manshiet Nasser and Tanta) and women (Maadi and Alexandria) agreed only to spacing children (tanzim) as opposed to fertility control and prevention of pregnancy (mana'). Almost all participants mentioned economic reasons and the costs of children's education as their primary concern, closely followed by concerns for women's health. Women in Manshiet Nasser related family planning to fears of divorce. They pointed out that women have to care for their health to remain attractive and some mentioned that men may threaten women with divorce either because they take or don't take contraceptives, depending on husbands' wishes. Both women and men across focus groups were divided concerning who should decide on family planning. The majority favored joint decisions while some men and women left decisions on childbearing to husbands and other, only female, participants insisted on family planning being the decision of women. Opinions were also divided concerning decisions on FGC. The majority of female participants favored discussions between spouses but wanted that women have the last word. Most men preferred that decisions are taken jointly whereas implementation is left to mothers and female relatives. This is astonishing since FGC has traditionally been the domain of women who just informed their husbands but did not discuss. It seems that men want to be involved since FGC has in fact become a question of yes or no, i.e. an issue for a real decision.

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[110] Translation of: al-rigala kidda, da taba'ithum – ma fish sitt fi mugtama'na ma ta'rafsh il-'onf bi ghad aal-nazar 'an al-ta'lim

FGC turned out to be the most controversial issue in focus group discussions. An exception was the focus group with younger, mainly unmarried men who did not seem to be particularly interested in the subject. Opinions as to whether FGC should be performed were divided in all focus groups except for El Arish where all males and all but one females defended FGC. Although previous studies emphasized the decisive role of women for the continuation of this practice, opinions of female participants were very divided and many felt uncertain about "the right decision" (al-qarar al-sah). Arguments used to defend FGC focused on the necessity to "tame a girls' sexual desire" (tahzib al-shahwa), "tradition and customs" ('adat wa taqalid), religion, protection of girls' reputation and the honor of the family and fears that uncircumcised girls would not find a husband.

Women in particular, were very concerned about their responsibility to guide their daughters into happy marriages. Many of them felt uneasy with FGC but were reluctant not to perform the operation out of fear that their daughters would not find a suitable husband. A number of participants referred to cases where husbands sent their wives back after the wedding night because they were not circumcised. Religion was both used to defend and to reject FGC. Interestingly, many Christian but also some Muslim participants labeled FGC as "haram", i.e. prohibited by religion, while other Muslim participants insisted that FGC is a must in Islam. A number of participants referred to the West as a negative role model with FGC being one crucial instrument to prevent girls from following Western customs and "walking with open hair"[111] (timshi 'ala hall sha'raha), i.e. being too easy with men.

Influence of TV and media were mentioned as major sources of information that left participants with uncertainty. Many referred in this context to health hazards of FGC but also to negative psychological consequences and the danger of frigidity. The latter was an issue in all female focus groups in urban governorates with some women fearing that frigidity could cause men to marry a second wife. A number of women reported that they had already circumcised one daughter but were reluctant to circumcise their younger sisters. Many wanted to consult physicians for advice and leave the decision to them. Girls seemed to remember their own experiences and fears. Some of them opted quite vehemently for abandoning FGC because of health hazards and psychological trauma involved.

Some male participants in Alexandria and Qena argued that FGC has become more necessary than ever to protect the young generation's morale in the face of deteriorating economic conditions that have increased age at first marriage so that legitimate sexual relations are considerably delayed. Opinions among women as to whether FGC is a must in general or whether it should be performed only if the girl needs it"[112] were divided across all female focus groups. The largest number of women who were opposed to or reluctant to perform FGC was found in Maadi. However, even in Manshiet Nasser did a female participant label FGC as "mutilation" (tashwih) and

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[111]Translation of: timshi 'ala hall sha'raha

[112] Translation of: law il-bint mihtaga

some women in Qena were particularly concerned about the negative psychological consequences. Many women were convinced that a good upbringing (tarbiya) is today the best protection for girls because it is increasingly difficult to really control the young generation's movements and behavior.

5.2   Summary Analysis and Interpretation of Selected Aspects

It is striking how little the background variables of class, education, age, region and religion matter in gender issues, at least regarding norms and traditions. No variable was significantly and consistently related to specific gender perceptions and attitudes. Variations are mainly variations in degree rather than qualitative differences. Opinions of how to interpret the commonly shared basic tenets differed, in fact, on almost any issue. However, diversity tended to be larger within the same focus group than across focus groups - with the exception of the gender variable. The results suggest that individual differences such as personal life experiences and the diversity of personal cultural and religious orientations are often more important than class, age, region, religion or even education. Translations of norms into practice reflect to a certain degree different living conditions, particularly according to class and region, but gender was definitely found the strongest denominator of difference. The following paragraphs try to highlight and interpret the most pronounced particularities and shared perceptions among the different focus groups.

5.2.1   Men and women

Although men and women did at the surface subscribe to similar perceptions of gender, a more in-depth analysis reveals considerable tension between the sexes which can in fact be interpreted as an indicator for ongoing processes of re-formulation and re-negotiation of gender relations and gender roles. Women in all focus groups demanded more recognition and respect from their husbands and wanted to be regarded as partners. They favored complementarity of roles on equal footing. A woman in Maadi invoked a somewhat confused image of democratic division of power where men play the role of the central power and women are the executive, however with democratic participation in decision-making, i.e. the legislature. A woman in Manshiet Nasser drew the image of a ship that can only sail if all passengers cooperate with the man being the captain, his wife the chief of staff and children the employees.

Both women and men emphasized men's dominant role within the family. Male's prominent position and power is mainly derived from their role as breadwinners and their greater freedom in public which enables them to accumulate more life experience. However, changing socio-economic realities have challenged men's capability of being the sole provider and have increased women's access to education and work. While women experience these changes with great ambiguity as both a chance and a heavy burden, men feel challenged in their masculinity which is in its patriarchic interpretation tied to their power of exerting control over women. It is thus easier for them to allow women to work and go to school than to share decisions and support their wives in domestic tasks. Helping working women with household chores seems to be out of

question for most men and is also not expected by women, although women clearly articulate the heavy burden of fulfilling double or triple roles. This indicates that women's and men's work are a manifestation of gender identities with men's work being connected with prestige and power and women's domestic tasks being a symbol of dependency and powerlessness. It is, therefore, much more acceptable for women to transgress into the sphere of dominance and power than for men to lower themselves to the sphere of subordination and weakness.

In the face of eroding traditional roles, men have an interest in finding arguments that do not require fulfillment of traditional responsibilities and still justify their claims to superiority whereas women have an interest in insisting on these same responsibilities even if they are willing to share part of them. This becomes very apparent in focus groups with younger, mostly non-married participants. Both sexes of the younger generations are well aware of the challenges of modern life to traditional gender roles. Young people from low income strata, in particular, face more difficulties than the parent generation.

5.2.2   Young, unmarried males and females

Unmarried women are afraid of the uncertainties they have to expect in marriage due to risks of unemployment, low income or divorce. They are willing to trade potentials of increased freedom and independence against less vulnerability by accepting subordination under male dominance. Unmarried women in Manshiet Nasser agreed that "the man is the household head even if the mother works because he is responsible for the family's needs and protection and he is the role model".[113] They made it, however, very clear that men's leadership position comes at a price. One girl said, for example, that men who claim superiority but are not up to traditional responsibilities "are useless" and another made it clear that the man has to offer something in exchange for the recognition of his dominant role: he cannot just "care for himself only and spend his money on himself without caring for the family and enjoy himself but not let the family enjoy itself, too".[114] Girls insist that men should share decisions with their wives, recognize her important role and treat her as a

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[113] Translation of: al-ragul rab al-usra hatta law al-umm tishtaghal 'ashan howa al-mas'oul 'an ihtiagat al-usra wa himayetha wa howa al-qudwa

[114] Translation of: ma lush lazma – mish yihtam bi nafsu bass wa yisrif al-fulus 'ala nafsu wa ma yihimush al-usra yimata' nafsu bass wa ma yimata'sh al-usra

partner. This was articulated, for example, as follows: "husband and wife have to take decisions together and be like one hand"[115] and the husband should "be respectful and tender with his wife and should not humiliate her only because he brings the money".[116]

Young men in Manshiet Nasser were concerned with defending male's superior status and their privileges vis a vis their sisters. They labeled the man as "the wise", "the guide who shows us the right way and steers us away from danger", "the man is the one who has the power" or even "the man is everything".[117] Masculinity is thus linked to dominance, wisdom and power. This dominance and power has to be maintained. The majority acknowledged women's importance as household managers and partners of their husbands. They were willing to discuss decisions, however, they insisted that men would have the last word, i.e. male's dominance and superiority remains unquestioned. Where girls accept men's dominance only conditioned with their role as providers, young men justify male superiority with reference to patrilinear customs and traditions: "men are the basis of the family according to customs and traditions" and "it is the boy who carries the name of his father… he is his backbone and patrilineal extension" but "the name of the father dies after the girl marries".[118]

This line of argument is also used by young men to claim preference vis a vis their sisters in education. A father should invest in his son since the son is his extension and increases his social status and prestige whereas the girl is only temporarily part of the family and becomes a member of her husband's family upon marriage. Many young men in Manshiet Nasser claim to have a say in decisions about their sister's education and movements. Some conditioned girls' and women's work and education with proximity of schools and workplace and with gender segregation. Control over women's time (not too late), space (not too far) and conditions of movement (not mixing with males, not going out if father is at home) are thus crucial expressions of males' power over women. Some young men seemed to be even more concerned with controlling their sisters' movements than their fathers. They referred to the dangers of modern life that "spoils the morals of the young generation" and claimed that "the son sees things that the father can sometimes not see".[119] This suggests that peer groups function as an extension of the family rather than as a stimulator of rebellion and reinforce established norms and traditions– if only in discourse.[120]

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[115]Translation of: al-zog wa al-zoga lazim yakhdu al-qarar ma' ba'd wa yikunu id wahda

[116]Translation of: yikun muhtaram ma' zogtu wa hineyin mish 'ashan yigib al-fulus yihin zogtu

[117]Translation of: al-hakim – al-murshid illi yirshid ila al-tariq al-sah wa yimna'na min al-khatar – al-ragul howa al-sulta – al-ragul howa kullu shey'

[118]Translation of: al-ragul huwa al-asas fil-usra tibqan lil-'adat wal-taqalid – al-walad yahmal ism waldu, howa al-sanad wal-'asab – al-bint ba'd al-zawag ism abuha yimut

[119]Translation of: yibawwaz al-akhlaq – al-ibn yishuf hagat illi al-ab ahyanan ma yiqdarsh yishufha

[120]See, for example, Mensch et al. 2000

5.2.3 Shared foundations among men and women

Although both married and unmarried women challenged men's claims to unconditioned dominance, they have themselves internalized patriarchic notions of gender. These are based on the interdependency and connectivity of gender identities, which means not only that masculinity is linked to power over women but also that a woman's status is largely defined by the strength of her husband. In order to increase and maintain the husband's strength, a wife has to become an accomplice of her husband in exerting control over females in the household and even over herself. This explains, for example, why mothers tend to adopt the role of the father and act differently from their usual way as mothers if husbands are absent for a longer time.[121] The role of the father is here a *structural* and not a *functional* role. In order to maintain and reproduce the patriarchic *structure* of the family, the crucial position of the father/patriarch cannot be left in a vacuum but has to be filled, either by the mother or an elder son. This is expressed in the statement of a male participant in Manshiet Nasser who claims that "the brother has a role to play in beating his sister because he is the deputy of his father".[122]

However, women and children are equally aware of the father's structural role and symbolic importance. Several female participants have, for example, mentioned that the absence of the father due to long working hours is a problem because, as a woman from Alexandria put it: "the presence of the father is important to teach children what is right and what is wrong… and because children learn moral principles from the father".[123] This implies that although women perform the role as educators in day-to-day life and do also impose disciplinary measures, the figure of the father is needed as a higher level authority with a symbolic value that is indispensable for the reproduction of the patriarchic system. A woman from Maadi referred explicitly to the wife's duty to enact the husband's delegated authority in case of his absence: "the husband's absence is a problem but when husband and wife cooperate on the same grounds, children know that it is his word which is the first and the last, even if he is not available"[124]

As long as patriarchic foundations of gender relations are not challenged by changing socio-economic realities, they do not need justification. However, if compliance with traditional gender roles becomes increasingly difficult, existing privileges as well as new behavior patterns have to be justified. It is mainly religion and customs that are invoked to provide these justifications. Religion has been used to claim both change and perpetuation of established norms. FGC, for example, has been defended but also condemned in the name of religion. The same applies to violence against women where

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[121]This phenomenon was first studied in the framework of research on labor migration of Egyptian men to the Gulf states. See, for example, Khafagy/Zaalouk 1982 and Abou Seoud Khattab/El-Daef 1982

[122]Translation of: al-akh luh dor fi darb ukhtu la'inu khalifat abuh

[123]Translation of: lazim wugud al-ab 'uddam al-atfal 'ashan yi'alimhum al-sah wal-ghalat… la'in al-tifl biyit'alim al-akhlaq min al-ab

[124]Translation of: al-mushkilla heya 'adam wugud al-zog wa lakin law fi musharka beinu wa bein zogtu 'ala nafs al-asas al-awlad ya'rafu in al-ra'y al-awal wa al-akhir lil ab hatta fi ghiyabu

participants quoted the same Koranic verse, once to justify and once to reject men's right to discipline women by resorting to violence.

5.2.4 Regional and class differences

It is in this context that regional and class differences become most pronounced. Reference to custom and tradition was stronger in Upper Egypt, Manshiet Nasser and El Arish whereas highly educated middle and upper middle class participants in Maadi, Zamalek, Alexandria and Tanta referred more often to religious discourses. Women in Maadi and Alexandria quoted, for example, a famous preacher, Amr Khaled, who has considerable influence on urban middle and upper middle classes, to support their position against FGC. Participants in Tanta seemed to be most influenced by patriarchic discourses of modern Islamist currents (see section below). Gender tensions seemed to be greatest in Manshiet Nasser and Qena where the erosion of men's role as the sole provider touches on the very foundations of the family's existence and violence seems to be more widespread. Girls' education is less of a question among the educated and women's freedom of movement seems to be most liberally interpreted in rural and urban upper middle class areas (in rural areas because women are always under the eyes of the community and in upper middle class areas because means of protection are greater).

Urban, educated middle class participants perceived themselves in general as more progressive than rural or lower class Egyptians which is, however, not always true. Women in Manshiet Nasser and Qena, for example, were quite aware and outspoken about men's exploitation of tradition, religion and violence to impose a degree of power that women do not consider legitimate any more. On the other hand, only women in Maadi and Tanta described themselves as "intellectually inferior" (naqisat 'aql) and the strongest dispute about whether women can become household heads emerged among male participants in Alexandria. The terminology does sometimes differ but the normative content is very similar. Whereas middle and upper middle class participants, for example, preferred the term of *haram* to refer to inappropriate practice, *'eib* was more widely used among rural and lower class participants. The first term has a religious connotation, the latter is more connected to tradition but both imply an absoluteness which is beyond history and social change. Participants from the posh districts of Maadi and Zamalek referred to FGC as *tagmil* (beautification) whereas most others called the operation *tahara* (cleaning), both implying control of girls' sexuality.

5.2.5 Tribal society

Reference to customs and tradition was strongest among participants in El Arish, which is not surprising in view of the strong influence of Bedouin and tribal elements. Tribal communities can only function if shared traditions regulate communal life and enable a tribe to act as a collective body. Any contest of patriarchic traditions would challenge the whole tribal system and represents a danger to tribal society and strength. This became very clear in discussions around FGC where almost all participants refused to even think about abandoning the practice because of its symbolic importance for the

reproduction of tribal society. A female participant said, for example: "the only thing that we will never stop is adhering to our inherited customs and traditions".[125] Against this background, women in El Arish did not question the principle of male dominance and authority in any respect. On the other hand, they appeared to be very strong and self-confident regarding women's ability to cope in life and manage all sorts of crisis and hardship, a fact for which they claim respect. They referred to a number of examples where women raised their children alone, never depended on anybody for support and performed their duties "better than 20 men".[126]

Apparently, the state's continuous PR campaigns against FGC have reached El Arish but remain at the surface. The state seems not to have exerted the same effort as in other regions, fearing the risk of running into conflict with local customs and tribal leaders. The arrival of state and development agencies' discourses around FGC became apparent when participants referred to arguments that FGC is not prescribed by religion as well as to concerns for women's health and rights to sexual fulfillment. A female participant said, for example, that frigidity is "the best that can happen to a woman since it teaches her how to avoid moral deviation". A male participant mentioned that the fact that women in Saudi Arabia (a country that claims to be particularly religious) are not circumcised does even emphasize the necessity of FGC since – according to his opinion - everybody knows that Saudi women are mostly loose (munhalla) and forget their morals as soon as they arrive in Egypt. Given the fact that inhabitants of El Arish have only rarely the opportunity to meet Saudi tourists, this statement is somewhat strange and almost certainly not based on observation. The opinion was, however, supported by the whole focus group which indicates that the penetration of state and development discourse, even if only at the surface, induces Egyptians to look for justifications and to rationalize traditional practice.[127] In the case of El Arish, arguments used in anti-FGC campaigns have been taken up but reversed, an indicator that state discourses did not penetrate tribal society deeply.

5.2.6 Muslims and Christians

The findings of focus group discussions revealed no significant or consistent differences according to religion. Christians pointed several times to the impossibility of divorce among Christians. However, this was both brought up as an explanation for spouses being more careful with each other and as an explanation for spouses running quickly into confrontation. In the first case, spouses want to preserve a good atmosphere in a relationship they have to live with all their life long, in the second case, spouses were sure that whatever degree a conflict may reach, it will never lead to the other's leaving him/her. Concerning FGC, many Christian participants pointed out that the practice has no basis in the Bible. On the other hand, both Muslims and Christians practice FGC as a prevalent custom and some Muslim participants have even justified their rejection of FGC with religious arguments. Islam can, therefore, not be considered as an obstacle

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[125]Translation of: al-haga al-wahida in ihna mish hanbatalha heya al-'adat wal-tawalid in ihna warathnaha

[126]Translation of: ahsan min 'ashreen ragil

[127]Translation of: al-burud ahsan lil-sitt biya'mil laha 'effa

per se to abolishing FGC as Christianity includes nothing explicit that would actively promote Christian's abandoning the practice.

5.3 Excursus: Patriarchy and the Influence of Modern Islamist Discourse on Participants' Gender Perceptions

This section is based on a discourse analysis of participant statements. It provides also background information on some of the most important frameworks of reference that shape Egyptians' perceptions of gender today. These have been strongly influenced by political Islam which has gained considerable influence on public opinion during the past decades. Developing a basic understanding of how this influence works in connection with gender may be useful to determine both constraints and potentials of gender sensitive development projects.

5.3.1 Gender identities: who is he and who is she?

The most conservative notions of gender identities and gender roles are derived from two different frameworks of reference: culture and religion, whereas both are interpreted on strictly patriarchic grounds and are continuously confused in popular culture. Men and women are depicted as being essentially different. Men were labeled by participants in different focus groups as "al-a'qal", "al-ahkam" and "al-aqwa", i.e. the stronger, more rational and wiser sex or even *the* rational, *the* wise and *the* strong one per se, both in terms of physical but also mental strength and reason. Men's strength was also derived from the fact that they have the power to impose their will and resort to violence at any time to prevent women from breaking out of obedience (*yukhrugu 'an al-ta'a*). Women, on the other hand, were often labeled as weak and dependent, controlled by emotions and not capable of rational decisions and of taking their lives into their own hands. Consequently, men have the role as provider, protector and representative on behalf of women and children whereas women are assigned the role of nurturers, caregivers and educators.

Women have internalized patriarchic notions of gender. This became obvious in numerous expressions. Many women referred to themselves, for example, as "we/ihna" but to men as "he/howa". In these statements, women are a weak, collective 'self/we'. The man, on the other hand, is perceived as the 'other', the man as such, the ultimate patriarch, an independent individual in his own right. Women as a collective mass of dependent creatures need the strength and protection of men for their social existence. Many focus group participants labeled men as "sahib al-qarar", i.e. the *masters* of decisions. This implies that their word is well thought through and every single word counts: "al-ragul luh kilma", i.e. the man has a word (singular!) and "al-ragul howa ragul fi kilmitu", i.e. the man is a man through his word whereas women "bitaa' kalam", i.e. utter endless streams of words (plural!) and are "ghaghi kalam", i.e. produce foam with words. Fears that educated or working women may challenge men's authority and decision-making power were also frequently articulated with reference to the power of the word, for example in the following statement of a man in Alexandria: "the woman (here: singular!) who spends money for the household imposes her word (singular!),

takes control over the life and controls/usurps the decision".[128] This implies that these women transgress the limitations imposed by nature or god and seize a power that is not legitimately theirs.

5.3.2 Islamists and the equation of gender, sex and nature

Islamist discourses have contributed to spread the idea of an essentialist nature of gender distinctions. Quotes from religious texts are often invoked with the intention to underline the alleged absoluteness of gender difference and to justify the imbalance of power derived from this difference. Radical Islamists maintain that women are deficient and weak in reason and believe. They claim that this alleged weakness and deficiency of women[129] is a question of nature and can, therefore, not be changed as one of the influential contemporary Egyptian Islamists, Montasser Al Zayat, has pointed out: "the woman has a nature that cannot be changed, the woman is the woman and her role has to be confined to caring for her husband and fulfilling his needs and the needs of her children".[130]

The interpretation of religion along this line follows largely a set of patriarchic tenets of extremist Islamist currents that gained ground during the past decades and weakened the more liberal interpretations of Islamic thinkers from the beginning of the century. Hassan Al Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brothers has, for example, pointed out that "since God created the woman with her own opinion and will, she has the right to practice this and nobody can tell her how to dress, where to go and how to behave".[131] Representatives of more recent currents of political Islam refer to older but very influential texts, most prominently Abul Alaa' Al Mawdoodi and Abdul Rahman Ibn Al Jawzi Al-Khalil. They focus on women's bodies and the related limits and taboos ascribed to them. Women are described as essentially sexual creatures that represent a danger to the order of the *umma*, the Islamic community, while their reproductive functions are necessary to guarantee the umma's continuation. The image of the woman as the temptress and the idealization of women as mothers are based on a dichotomy of characteristics used in many religious texts, such as muqaddas /mudannas (sacred/profane) or maghroub/mamnua' (desired/forbidden).[132]

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[128] Translation of: al-sitt illi bitisrif bitmashi kalamha, tisaytar 'ala al-hayah wa tithakkim fil-qarar

[129] Islamists have a problem with the historic fact that women have played a prominent role in early Islam. They have actively participated in discussions of the prophet with the community, have owned and managed property, participated in developing Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and spreading of Islam (da'wa) and have even taken actively part in wars, e.g. as nurses. Mamdouh Ismail, for example, the founder of the Sharia Party (Hizb al-Sharia) has solved this problem by claiming that women have fulfilled these roles only in their older ages, i.e. after having lost their attractiveness and thus their dangerous nature. Interview on 25/5/1998 with Essam Fawzi, a social scientist who has done extensive research on Islamist thought and the development of Islamist organizations

[130] Translation: al-mar'a laha tabi'aitha la taqbal al-taghir, al-mar'a heya al-mar'a yanhasir dorha fi ri'ayet al-ragul wa al-qiyam 'ala ihtiagatuh wa ihtiagat atfaliha (quote of Montasser Al-Zayat in an Interview with Essam Fawzi on 25/5/1998)

[131] Hassan Al Banna, 2002, p.14

[132] These images are also found in texts of the Judaeo-Christian tradition as well as in texts of the Greek philosophers. Muslim and Christian scholars have also exchanged accuses as to which religion has the stronger misogynist tradition. See, for example, the internet discussion lead by Sherif Abdel Azeem and Anthony Wales, published at www.submission.org and www.answering-islam.org.uk

5.3.3   The sexualization of women's bodies and social existence

Radical Islamists focus on the woman as a temptress and women's power to seduce. Ibn Jawzi, for example, refers to women as "ka'in shirir" (mean creature), "ka'in shaytani" (devilish creature) "ka'in nar", (creature of hell), "ka'in mala'oun" (damned creature) and "ka'in jinzi", (sexual creature).[133] Al Mowdoodi says that women are all *fitna* (kull il-mar'a fitna) - the disruption of the social order - and "*'awra*" - an extension of men that is embarrassing and a potential source of shame.[134] In order to neutralize women's power to corrupt the believers and instigate *fitna*, women have to be kept under tight control. Women must constantly prove that they are respectable (*muhtarama*).

These ideas were reflected in focus group discussions about violence and FGC. Women from Tanta and El Arish, in particular, have emphasized that women deserve respect from their husbands – but only if they are respectable (*muhtarama)*: "if a woman is respectable, she will force the man to respect her" (female Tanta) and "it is a duty of women to respect him so that he does not humiliate her in front of others" (female El Arish).[135] The latter statement indicates how women prove their respectability: by giving due respect to men, i.e. by acknowledging his superiority and accepting their own subordinate role.

As statements around FGC quoted above illustrate, the notion of women's sexuality as potentially disrupting was also implied in rationales used to defend FGC. This notion is not new in the context of FGC but has been reinforced with the penetration of elements of radical Islamist discourse into popular culture. Previously, FGC did not need any justification; it was generally accepted on the grounds of tradition. With the emergence of new discourses focusing on women's health and women's rights, FGC has to be rationalized. Since religion can be used by advocates and adversaries of FGC alike. Defenders of the practice focus on women's sexual power which is not only considered stronger than men's but also potentially devastating. It must, therefore, be tamed and controlled.

This was expressed in many statements. A male participant from Manshiet Nasser maintained, for example, that "women's sexual desire is 99% higher than that of men… FGC reduces (that sexual desire) and protects young people from moral corruption (inhiraf)".[136] Although it is known that sexual harassment is mainly committed by males against females, participants considered women as the source of *inhiraf*. However, only male participants used the term *shahwa* that expresses women's sexual desire/power. The related verb *yashtahi* describes a degree of desire that leads to suffering and pain if it cannot be fulfilled. This desire that a woman can provoke in a man can cause him to

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[133]See Ibn Al Jawzi Al-Khalil, ahkam al-nisaa', Cairo no date, chapter takhwif al-nisaa' min al-zunub wa inuhunna akthar ahl al-nar, pp. 62-95

[134] Al Mowdoodi, kitab al-hegab, Cairo no date, pp. 132-133

[135]Translation of: al-sitt law muhtarama bitigbar al-ragil inu yihtarimha – min al-wagib 'ala al-sitt inaha tihtarimu 'ashan ma yihinhash 'uddam al-nas

[136]Translation of: shahwit al-sitt azyad min al-ragul binisbit 99% wa al-khitan yi'allil zalik wa yihmi al-shebab min al-inhiraf

act contrary to religion and tradition and is, therefore, considered dangerous and destructive.

There is another side of the same image as constructed by radical Islamists that does not grant women any sexuality in their own right.[137] It maintains that one of the main purposes of women's existence is to give men (sexual) pleasure, not in the sense of practicing her sexuality with the objective of mutual satisfaction but as a *property* of her husband (mamlouk lil-zog) with the duty to be always at his disposal so that he can *use her* for pleasure.[138] Sexuality is here not conceived as a physical, emotional and social exchange of two persons on equal footing but as an encounter of two essentially unequal beings at entirely different levels.

5.3.4   The fragmentation and re-arrangement of religious texts

Islamist discourses are largely confined to the symbolic sphere rather than related to concrete contemporary questions. As such, they have penetrated popular culture, particularly that of the middle classes. In terms of basic tenets, it is particularly the essentialist notion of gender as a question of nature and the idea of a God-given hierarchy between men and women that has influenced the perceptions of ordinary Egyptians. They have also adopted the Islamists' way of extracting and re-connecting fragments from different verses in the Koran without reference to their context and of mixing them with *ahadith* (sing. *hadith* = sayings ascribed to the prophet). Two expressions have gained particular prominence in this respect: "al-rigal qawimun 'ala al-nisaa'", i.e. men are superior to/responsible for women and "al-nisaa' naqisat 'aql wa din", i.e. women are deficient in reason and religion. The first is a fragment of a verse in the Koran and the second is a hadith the authenticity of which has been contested by a number of Islamic scholars. The concept of *qawama* is mentioned in the Koran in the context of providing, i.e. conditioned with responsibility, and does not mean superiority per se or absolute superiority.

These two expressions have been used by many male and female participants across focus groups to refer to men's superiority over women. A number of male participants quoted the fragment of the Koranic verse in the context of decision-making, women's work and girls' education. Males in Alexandria and Tanta quoted the verse in its context of men's responsibility as providers [139] A male participant in Luxor, however, changed the verse to point out that men are also intellectually superior.[140] A number of female participants have referred to the same verse without any context. Some mixed it with the above mentioned saying of the prophet to rationalize women's subordinate position and alleged inferiority in reason.

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[137] It has to be pointed out that most scholars of mainstream Islam throughout the centuries do not agree with the extremely patriarchic interpretations of many modern Islamists. On the contrary, women are even granted a right to physical and emotional satisfaction within sexual and human marriage relationships. For an analysis of the construction of sexuality and gender in Islamic thought and tradition, see for example, Mernissi 1987

[138] Translation of: wa takun musta'idda la tamata'uh biha…(quote of Ibn Al Jawzi, op.cit, p. 70)

[139] Translation of: qawwimun 'an al-nisaa' bima sarafu

[140] Translation of: qawwimun 'an al-nisaa' bil-fikr

Many female participants subscribed, in fact, to the opinion that women are less objective or - as women from Maadi, Tanta and Alexandria put it – "controlled by emotions". As a consequence, they considered themselves less capable to "take the right decision".[141] As a female participant from Tanta pointed out, women cannot be blamed for their deficiencies: it is not a shame that she is weaker than the man because she is born like this .[142] No efforts have to be made and no change is possible within this perception but social conditions are absorbed within an eternal divine order. Another female participant from Tanta, a lawyer, tried even to quantify the percentage of women's reason: "women judge 80% by their emotions and only 20% by reason".[143] A female participant from El Arish elaborated how the little reason women have should be used: "a woman should be wise in dealing (with men) and should consider men's conditions" and a woman from Qena claims that women should "avoid any problems and cater to their husbands' needs in order not to provoke him".[144]

5.3.5   Making use of multiple discourses

The fact that male and female participants within the same focus groups adopted different and often contradicting positions on many issues - and sometimes even the same person on the same issue but in another context - illustrates how it is possible to use multiple fragments from different discourses. Another fact, i.e. the fact that participants referred to the same frameworks of reference to defend diverse and sometimes even opposite opinions reveals that they deal with these reference frameworks quite flexibly. All the fragments used were continuously mixed and re-arranged. They were combined with references to personal experience and lessons learnt from reality. This can be interpreted as a sign of deeply felt uncertainty but also of dynamic and change. This dynamic may include new chances for the re-negotiation of gender roles and the gradual re-adjustment of imbalances in gender relations.

5.4   Results of In-Depth Interviews

Five persons have been partners in in-depth interviews:

(1) a 39 year old sheikh [145] in a mosque in Tanta with a degree from Al Azhar University[146] and employed by the Ministry of Awqaf (religious foundations),

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[141] Translation of: al-mar'a bitsaytar 'aleyha al-'atifa – takhud al-qarar al-sah

[142] Translation of: mish 'eib inha tikun ada'f min al-ragul, heya makhluqa kidda

[143] Translation of: al-sitt bithakkim bi 'atifitha binisbit 80% wa 20% bass bi 'aqlaha

[144] Translation of: tikun hakima fil-ta'amul wa ti'addar zuruf al-ragul – tiba'd 'an al-mushkilla wa tira'i ihtiagatuh

[145] A sheikh is responsible for a mosque. He calls for prayer, delivers the Friday prayer and often provides religious advice to the community. Mosques that are registered with the Ministry of Awqaf (religious endowments) have sheikhs who are appointed by the Ministry and have received a formal specialized education in Al Azhar University

[146] Al Azhar is the oldest university in the Islamic world and enjoys considerable prestige. Al Azhar mosque is affiliated to Al Azhar university and the Sheikh Al Azhar is one of the highest religious authorities. Since the nationalization of Al Azhar in the 1950s, he is appointed by the President

(2) a 64 year old sheikh in a mosque in Qena, with a degree from Al Azhar university and employed by the Ministry of Awqaf. He is also a trusted community leader who is frequently invited to reconcile in family and other community disputes,

(3) a 65 year old Christian retired employee of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Qena who is also an activist in an NGO and a national federation of women's NGOs and has participated in the preparation and implementation of many donor-funded development projects. This interviewee is quoted below as (SocAff/NGO),

(4) a professor in the Higher Institute of Social Services, a faculty that trains social workers,

(5) a female journalist who was responsible for several years for the woman's page of Al Ahram, the second largest daily newspaper in Egypt.

Assuming that the in-depth interviews reflect more or less the gender perceptions of any average representative of institutions with influence on socialization and the formation of public opinion, findings suggest that agents of socialization in Egypt tend to reinforce mainstream conservative notions of gender. The central concerns of all interviewees were the preservation of the family and the morally correct behavior of its individuals. All interviewees perceived the role of men and women as complementary, whereas the woman was conceived as complementary to the man (SocAff/NGO). Men are supposed to be the ultimate responsible for the family's livelihood and representation in public while women should mainly be in charge of children's upbringing and domestic affairs. All interviewees supported women's work and contribution to the household income. The two sheikhs said even that women have a *duty* (wagib 'aleyha) to work and support their husband in case of tight family budgets. This represents a deviation from traditional interpretations of religion where women cannot be obliged to provide for themselves or their children. The possibility of taking over traditional responsibilities of the other sex does not only apply to women. Men were also encouraged to support their working wives with household chores (sheikh Qena, Soc.Aff/NGO, Prof.).

Gender roles are thus clearly defined in terms of principal responsibilities while gender-specific tasks can be interchanged to a certain extent. This is justified with economic necessity (all), women's own aspirations (journalist) and development needs of the country where women's work is required as a productive force (SocAff/NGO). In addition, certain positions can allegedly only be filled with women, such as kindergarten teachers and teachers for girls in school, nurses, physicians for females (all). Women's biological and social constitution define the limits of jobs that are considered suitable for women (not too late, not at the expense of her principal responsibilities, not in jobs where mainly men are working) and her role in public (not if against Sharia', not at the expense of family's needs).

Opinions of what this means in concrete terms were quite diverse. None of the interviewees objected to women becoming governor or minister while opinions differed on whether women can become a judge. The sheikh in Tanta, for example, objected vehemently to the idea of female judges on the grounds that "women are not capable of forming an objective opinion on any issue… they are controlled by their emotions and

do not use reason to form an opinion…".[147] Girls' education was strongly supported focusing on its functional role to enable women to better fulfill their tasks of educating the new generation. Interestingly, it was the female journalist who set limits to women's education (not to the level of master or PhD because this would be at the expense of the family).

The relatively flexible interpretation of gender roles does not necessarily give women more decision-making power. Although all interview partners held that spouses should discuss all important issues, women were supposed to recognize men's ultimate decision-making power, even in issues that concern predominantly their own lives such as women's work and family planning. The sheikhs justified their position by religion that was interpreted to demand women's unconditioned obedience (ta'a) on the grounds that women are the responsibility of men and men will be held accountable for the behavior of their dependents in front of God on the Day of Resurrection. The other interviewees did not question men's principal superiority in decision-making but demanded women's active participation. Reason and conviction were considered as central elements of the decision-making process.

As representatives of state-controlled or state influenced institutions, the interviewees adopted the official positions on specific issues such as the Khula' divorce, the importance of family planning and FGC. An exception is the opinion of the two sheikhs on FGC that contradicts the official policy of Al Azhar, the most important religious institution in Egypt. Although they readily accepted the Khula' divorce as an Islamic institution, both sheikhs defended FGC quite vehemently. They maintained that FGC is a religious duty and even more necessary today to prevent moral deviation in view of delayed marriages. This clearly contradicts the Fatwa (religious expert opinion) that the state appointed Mufti[148] has issued against FGC. The Mufti has argued that FGC is only referred to in a contested *hadith* (saying of the prophet) and not mentioned in the Koran and that no human being is entitled to change what God has created, i.e. cut part of the body. Although educated in Al Azhar and employed by the Ministry of Awqaf (religious foundations), the sheikhs condemned the official position on FGC and suspected a conspiracy of the West to spoil the morals of Arabs and Muslims – an indicator for the penetration of elements of anti-state Islamist discourse into mainstream religious institutions. The sheikh in Qena was more moderate and demanded not to cut too much in order to preserve girls' physical and psychological integrity which signifies that Islamist discourse is mixed with arguments used in state and development discourse (women's health and women's rights).

The numerous fragments taken from different discourses and frameworks of reference produce multiple layers of arguments that are often inconsistent or even contradictory. Other interview partners condemned FGC quite vehemently, labeling the practice as violence against women (SocAff/NGO) and an expression of backwardness and

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[147] translation of: al-mar'a gheir qadira 'an takween ra'y 'an mawdua' mu'ayyan... 'atifitha tihkumha wa la tistakhdim al-'aql fi takween ra'y 'an ay mawdua'

[148] The Mufti is one of the highest religious authorities in a Muslim country. He issues religious expert opinions (*fatwa*) on important political, social or other issues. Although fatwas are not binding by law or religion, they have considerable influence on many religious Muslims. Since the 1950s, the Mufti is appointed by the President in Egypt

ignorance that allegedly prevails only in the South of Egypt (professor). The interviewees presented themselves as modern and enlightened by distancing themselves from the "backwardness and ignorance" of those Egyptians who are "still confined to the limits of outdated traditions". They perceived their own role as that of awareness-raisers and contributors to the formation of a modern and enlightened society. However, critical elements of these same norms and traditions
that they have labeled as outdated and unmodern were reflected in their own statements.

The journalist, for example, maintained that the amendment of the Personal Status Law encouraged women to become more hostile towards men. She accused women of compromising the well-being of their families too easily by taking advantage of the new possibilities for women to initiate divorce. She maintained also that instead of granting women the right to retain the family apartment in case of divorce, it would have been better to leave the apartment to men and provide emergency housing for women by the state or NGOs so that women think twice before they seek a divorce. While having adopted the rights-based discourse of international development agencies, the Christian NGO activist and former employee of Social Affairs still perceived women as being complementary to men and not vice versa and he, too, saw limits to women's activities in public on the grounds that women's primary role is caring for the family. The professor strongly condemned violence against women as an abuse of men's power, however, he did not question this power in principle and agreed to men's right to frighten their wives (yikhawifha) if necessary in order to force her into obedience.

The interviews suggest that the representatives of institutions that contribute to the formation of public opinion are struggling as all other Egyptians to reinterpret inherited norms in the light of rapidly changing socio-economic conditions, starting with one's own experience and the promotion of one's own interests. In doing so, the interviewees - as everybody else - refer to fragments of different discourses, namely those of the state, international development agencies and political Islam. None of these discourses has achieved hegemony, even among employees in institutions that have the explicit objective to promote certain positions such as state media, state-controlled mosques or donor-funded NGOs. The findings suggest that agents of socialization in Egypt tend to reinforce the basic tenets of the prevailing normative system while acting as agents for competing discourses when it comes to translate these norms into practice, however, only as long as these discourses do not contradict personal experiences, convictions and interests.

6   CONCLUSION

The subject of this study, i.e. the social and cultural diversity in Egypt as related to gender, has many facets. Much has been written before about gender questions in Egypt and a number of previous studies already provide valuable information on gender indicators. Some of the main findings of these studies have been summarized in the literature review in section 3. With the structured survey (section 4), focus group discussions and in-depth interviews (section 5), this study tried to add some new aspects by focusing on the effects of socio-economic change on gender relations. The presentation and analysis of the results showed that gender relations in today's Egypt are quite complex and fluent and are influenced by multiple socio-economic, political and cultural factors. Tendencies of change follow different directions and are often multi-layered and contradictory. It is, therefore, difficult to come to a simple conclusion. The following paragraphs try to structure conclusions following the outline of the objectives of the study as defined in section 2.1, i.e. (1) to pinpoint cultural norms as relevant for gender, (2) to analyze the main effects of socio-economic change on gender relations, (3) to identify tensions between gender relevant norms and practices as well as (4) to analyze mechanisms to cope with change and its effects on gender roles.

6.1   Cultural norms and gender relations

The literature review and the results of focus group discussions showed that prevalent notions of gender in Egypt depict men as the stronger sex that bears the principal responsibility for the physical reproduction of the family, including adult women. The patriarchic structure of family and society give men considerable power over women and assign women primarily the role of supporters, nurturers and caregivers. The public sphere, wage work and decision-making are thus predominantly considered the domain of men while the family home, children and reproductive labor are the domains of women. The normative framework for the construction of gender identities and gender roles is widely shared among all social groups in Egypt, regardless of gender, class, age, education and religion. It is derived from cultural as well as religious sources that are frequently mixed and confused in popular culture across all social strata.

The literature review showed that legislation in Egypt reflects patriarchic interpretations of religion and culture as well as traditional social practice and includes a number of discriminatory elements against women, particularly in the Personal Status Law and the Penal Code. These provisions are justified with reference to Islamic Sharia and its notion of complementary gender roles which are based on equity as opposed to equality which is frequently argued to be an alien concept to Egyptian culture.

Three discourses have today an important influence on public discussion about gender relations and gender roles. *Modern Islamist discourse* has penetrated popular culture and tends to reinforce conservative notions of gender as being rooted in the essentially different nature of men and women. Gender is thus more or less equated with sex, i.e.

perceived as a question of biology and nature that cannot be changed. *International development discourse* has introduced a set of rights-based notions of gender that aim at gender equality and challenge to a certain extent traditional gender stereotypes. *Official state discourse* has incorporated elements of both Islamist and international discourses. While it competes with the Islamists about legitimacy and influence on the popular masses, the state depends also to a certain extent on international donors and uses elements of the international discourse to further its own political and development objectives. The results of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews revealed that public figures as well as ordinary Egyptians have picked up elements of all three discourses and use them interchangeably to justify both patriarchic traditions and new forms of gender practices.

6.2   Gender practices in the light of changing socio-economic conditions

The results of all parts of the study revealed that in practice rapidly changing socio-economic conditions have eroded traditional gender roles and have caused considerable uncertainties among both men and women. It becomes increasingly difficult for men to fulfill their traditional roles as sole providers for the family so that the basis for their claims to superiority and power over women has weakened considerably. Women in turn, have increasingly ventured into the public sphere. Many have access to higher education and some have even managed to occupy public positions with considerable decision-making power.

Almost half of the female respondents of the structured survey indicated that they work for income and many shoulder with their husbands the burdens of providing. Quantitative and qualitative results revealed that many men involve their wives in decision-making, young couples seek new forms of partnership and parents are conscious that gender segregation and tight restriction of girls' freedom of movement are increasingly unpractical in the face of the influence of modern media and communication technology. Results showed also that economic considerations have a significant impact on gender practices. Women's income is needed to increase household resources; economic constraints may curtail girls' chances to equal education, increase the age at first marriage, limit the desired number of children and lead to tension and disputes among spouses.

The results allow for some distinctions according to the background variables of this study, particularly gender, region and class. Results of the structured survey show, for example, that female respondents married earlier than men, earlier in rural than in urban areas and earlier in poor than in middle class and wealthy areas. Similar patterns were found for arranged marriages, education and the number of children. Respondents in Upper Egypt, rural and urban lower income areas showed a higher acceptance of arranged marriages and tended to be less educated and have more children than respondents in other areas. However, opinions on the family's influence on marriage arrangements and possibilities of the couple to know each other before marriage were highly polarized across social groups. Similar polarizations became obvious concerning the issue of violence against women where only gender was found to be a decisive

variable of difference. Results on violence obtained from the structured survey contradict results of focus group discussions to a certain extent. Statements of participants in focus group discussions suggest that violence is much more widespread than what was indicated by respondents of the structured survey.

In many cases - particularly concerning opinions on gender roles, women's status and decision-making in the family -, differences could not be attributed consistently to region, socio-economic status, level of education or religion. This applies to results of the structured survey as well as to results of focus group discussions. This is not withstanding the fact that there were clear variations as to how certain shared norms are translated into practice since practice reflects significant socio-economic differences. Wealthy, educated urban women have certainly much more freedom of movement than illiterate poor rural women. However, the basic notion of men's right to control women's movement was widely shared among all social groups. In general, gender turned out to be the most pronounced variable of difference regarding both parts of the study. Results showed a clear overall tendency across social groups that women want to have more decision-making power and more control over their lives.

In some cases, however, women turned out to be more conservative than men. In in-depth interviews, for example, it was the female journalist who articulated the strongest opposition to changes in the law that make it easier for women to initiate divorce. Moreover, Islamist notions of women's inferior status were found among both men and women in almost all focus groups and particularly - but not only - among educated respondents with urban, middle and upper middle class backgrounds. The same is true for strong arguments in favor of more recognition of women's contributions to the well-being of the family and more partnership in marriage that were also voiced in all focus groups. Women with Upper Egyptian, lower class and rural backgrounds were sometimes more outspoken in this respect than urban, middle class and upper middle class women. It would thus be too simple to say that education, socio-economic status and the rural/urban divide are per se decisive determinants of women's status and choices in life.

6.3   Tensions between norms and practice

Results of focus group discussions showed that traditional norms and values did not loose their importance. However, traditional practices that were previously followed without any need for justification are now being challenged by socio-economic change but also by the penetration of new discourses into public discussion and popular culture. As a consequence, these practices must now be rationalized and justified. This applies to men's claims to power and women's subordination in general but also to concrete practices such as FGC.

Women's work turned out to be one of the most contested issues, presumably since it undermines the economic basis to men's claims to superiority. Results of the structured survey indicated the percentage of female respondents who work for income in Gharbiya, Qena and El Arish almost double as high as or even higher than in urban

governorates. However, results obtained from opinion questions in the structured survey indicated also that the strongest objection to women's paid labor is found among men in exactly those areas where percentages of working women were the highest. Female respondents across social groups were much more in favor of women's work than their male counterparts. Results of focus group discussions showed that women put emphasis on the positive effect of work and income on their status, personal development and self-confidence whereas men focused on the functional benefits of women's work for the well-being of the family.

Results of focus group discussions showed that patriarchic values enjoy still a high degree of hegemony in popular culture across social groups – at least at the normative level. Both genders have internalized patriarchic norms and women's position in the family and community is to a considerable extent linked to men's status. This causes women to become accomplices in the reproduction of the patriarchic system and weakens the possibility to build up solidarity networks among women who want to break out of tradition and control.

In some cases, norms were found ahead of practice, most prominently in the areas of education, family planning and women's' freedom of movement where opinion questions in the structured survey and focus group discussions contradicted data obtained from other parts of the survey or previous studies. The above mentioned areas have been addressed by numerous development projects and their slogans have been repeated in focus group discussions. However, the translation of new norms that have been introduced by the state and development agencies into practice is not necessarily in accordance with what development experts hoped for. Although most interviewees in this study subscribed, for example, to the slogan "al-bint zay al-walad", i.e. "girls are equal to boys", results showed also that girls' freedom of movement is still seriously restricted and boys are still privileged in education and socialization.

6.4 Coping mechanisms and the re-negotiation of gender relations

The results of focus group discussions illustrated that women and men experience gender relevant social change in different ways. Results of the literature review and the structured survey showed that, in general, women have less control of their income than men, a smaller share in inheritance and less access to assets. Many remain dependent on their husbands for subsistence, even if they work. Most working women fulfill double and triple roles and bear thus the main burden of the practical aspects of socio-economic change. Focus group discussions revealed, nevertheless, that women appreciate the positive effects of work for their personal development and self-confidence.

It seems easier for women than for men to transgress into the domains that have traditionally been reserved for men (at least in theory) - i.e. the domains of power – than it is for men to accept this and to adopt in turn some of the responsibilities that are traditionally considered as "women's jobs" and that signify women's position within the domain of subordination. Men have difficulties to acknowledge women's changing roles

and subscribe to new forms of partnership on more equal terms. Men's status and self-confidence depend more than that of women on their ability to fulfill their traditional gender roles, i.e. those of providers and patriarchs within the family and community. In popular culture, the construction of masculinity is intrinsically linked to acting out these roles which means for men not only that they have to provide but also that they have to uphold and demonstrate their ability to exert power over women. This becomes increasingly difficult the more the very basis of that power is eaten up. Claims to power and control can thus only be sustained by resorting to violence. Results of the structured survey and focus group discussions show that violence against women is in fact found among all social strata and is frequently used as a sanctioning mechanism if women act counter to their traditional roles.

Results of focus group discussions suggest that Egyptians prefer not to challenge culture and tradition explicitly but to explore socially accepted ways of breaking out of traditions that have come into conflict with their own aspirations and the requirements of modern life. While both genders still hold on to tradition, men and women are in fact engaged in a constant process of re-negotiating roles, status and access to resources and decision-making power. Traditional norms are in fact continuously changed and state, development and Islamist discourses provide a rich pool of arguments that can be alternatively used to justify all sorts of opinions and behavior. As illustrated by focus group discussions, Egyptians take fragments of all of these discourses, mix and re-arrange them continuously and develop thus new rationales to justify changing behavior at the individual as well as the collective level. This leads often to ambiguity and contradictions and reflects considerable tension among conflicting norms, between norms and practice, among men and women and between different interest groups in society that all strive for influence and power and the domination of public discourse. Gender relevant development projects can only be successful if the constraints, fears and concerns of different actors are understood and taken into consideration.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1:   Structured questionnaire
Annex 2:   Framework of analysis for the structured survey
Annex 3:   Guidelines for the focus group discussions & individual interview sheet
Annex 4:   Concept for the qualitative study and instructions for the
                   implementation of focus groups
Annex 5:   Guidelines for in-depth interviews
Annex 6:   Field Operation Manual
Annex 7:   Field survey timetable

1   Basic Information on the Interviewee and His/Her Family

0101	0102	0103	0104	0105	0106	0107	0108	0109
Sex	**Re-ligion**	**Position of interviewee in the family**	Household head is	**Age of inter-viewee**	**Personal status of** interviewee	**Age at marriage** _only those who were ever married_	**Spouse is**	**Spouse is**
1 = male 2 = female	1= Muslim 2= Chris-tian	1= head of household 2= spouse of household head 3= child of household head 4= spouse of child of household head 5= grandchild of household head 6= parent of household head 7= other	1= male married to 1 wife 2= male married to >1 wife 3= male widower 4= male divorcee 5= female widow 6= female divorcee 7= female abandoned 8= female other 9= male other	_Indicate age and age bracket_ 1= 18-21 2= 22-25 3= 26-30 4= 31-40 5= 41-50 6= 51-60	1=below age of marriage 2= never married 3= engaged 4= married 5= divorced 6= widow(er) 7= separated from husband/ wife	_Indicate age and age bracket_ 1= < 16 2= 16-17 3= 18-21 4= 22-25 5= 26-30 6= 31-35 7= 36+	1= paternal cousin 2= maternal cousin 3= other relative 4= from same village/ district 5= other	1= 1-5 years older 2= 6-10 years older 3= 11-15 years older 4= 16-20 years older 5= > 20 years older 6= same age 7= 1-5 years younger 8= > 5 years younger
				age		age		
				Age bracket		age bracket		

2   Educational Levels of and Vocational Training

0201	0202	0203	0204	0205	0206	**0207** **Analysis**
Schooling	**Educational level of interviewee**	**Reasons for non-enrollment or dropping out***	**Vocational Training of interviewee**	**Kind of Vocational Training***	**Educational level of spouse (married)/ father (unmarried) of interviewee**	**Educa-tional level of inter-viewee com-pared to spouse/ father is**
1=never enrolled 2=drop-out before secondary school exam 3=currently enrolled 4=finished education	_(last exam if schooling completed or dropped out - current level if still enrolled)_ 1= illiterate 2= read &write 3= primary 4= Preparatory 5= technical secondary 6= general secondary 7= higher institute (2years) 8= higher institute (4years) or university 9= post graduate	1= no school in vicinity 2= costs of education 3= failure in exams 4= ill treatment in school 5= early marriage 6= was needed to work in the household 7= was needed to work in family enterprise 8= needed to work with income 9= child was not interested in education 10= father didn't encourage education 11=mother didn't encourage education 12= other (indicate)	1= training completed 2= currently trainee 3=drop-out 4= never received any vocational training	1= apprentice in workshop 2= apprentice in factory (> 15 workers) 3= apprentice in commercial establishment (shop, marketing company…etc) 4= apprentice in service institution (office, medical clinic. etc) 5= trainee in other training institution 6= vocational skills training by NGOs 7= other	_(last exam if schooling completed or dropped out - current level if still enrolled)_ 1= illiterate 2= read &write 3= primary 4= Preparatory 5= technical secondary 6= general secondary 7= higher institute (2years) 8= higher institute (4years) or university 9= post graduate	1= higher 2= lower 3= same

3 Productive Activities of Interviewee

0301	0302	0303	0304	0305	0306	0307
Current employment status of interviewee	**Current principal economic activity of interviewee**	**Scope of principal economic activity**	**Period of work**	**Work of spouse**	**Income of interviewee spent for**	**Decisions to spend income of interviewee made by**
1= one economic activity	1= state employee	1= full-time job	1= has always worked (stable or temporary jobs)	1= works full-time in stable job	1= mainly for personal needs of inter-viewee	1= only by interviewee
2= >1 economic activity	2= white-collar employee in private factory/ commercial establishment/ service institution	2= part-time job	2= works until will have children	2= works part-time in stable job	2= mainly for family	2= interviewee + spouse/ parents
3= only housewife	3= skilled worker	3= tempo-rary job	3= works since children grew up	3= works in non-stable jobs	3= equally for personal needs + family	3= only spouse/ parents
4= housewife + working	4= unskilled worker		4= has never worked	4= does not work because housewife	4= other (indi-cate)	4= other (indicate)
5= only student	5= worker in agriculture	4= seasonal job	5= other	5= does not work because unemployed		
6= student + working	6= free-lance professional (e.g. doctor, lawyer etc.)					
7= only military service	7= entrepreneur	5= not appli-cable		6= does not work because not able to work (ill, handi-capped or other)		
8= military service + working	8= self-employed					
9= retired not working	9= works in family enterprise without payment			7= does not work because does not want to work		
10= retired + working	10= works in family enterprise with irregular payments					
11= not able to work (ill or handicapped)	11= works in family enterprise with regular payments					
12= below/ above working age	12= street vendor/ dalala etc.					
13= below/above working age but working	13= domestic servant					
14= unemployed	14= home production					
15= new entrant into the labor market (first time job-seeker)						

4 Income, Assets and Housing Conditions of Interviewee (questions 0404 + 0406 removed)

0401	0402	0403	0404	0405
Principal source of income/ means of subsistence of female interviewee or wife of married male interviewee / mother of non-married male interviewee	**Assets of interviewee***	**Source of land + real estate assets***	**Inheritance**	**Family lives in**
1= parents/ spouse pay for all needs	1= owner of land	1= inherited	1= share according to the law	1= room(s) in housing unit of parents of household head
2= economic activity	2= owner of building	2= bought from own income	2= share more favorite than the law	2= room(s) in housing unit of parents of spouse of household head
3= rent of real estate	3= owner of flat	3= other (indicate)	3= share less favorite than the law	3= independent housing unit in house of parents of household head
4= pension(s)	4= owner of shop/ workshop	4= no assets	4= inherited but does not know the law	4= independent housing unit in house of parents of spouse of household head
5= regular support from relatives	5= shared ownership of land		5= no inheritance	5= independent housing unit in house with of other relatives
6= irregular support from relatives	6= shared ownership of building			6= independent housing unit in house without relatives
7= charity support (mosque/ church/ NGO etc.)	7= shared ownership of flat			7= other (indicate)
8= other (indicate)	8= machinery/ valuable tools			
	9= vehicle(s)			
	10= gold or jewelry			
	11= cash or savings in bank			
	12 = cattle			
	13= other (indicate)			
	14= no assets			

5 Responsibility for Domestic Tasks

0501	0502	0503	0504	0505
Food preparation , house cleaning, washing of clothes is principal task of	**Who shares in these responsibilities?**	**Child care + care for sick & elderly is principal task of**	**Shopping of food + daily consumerables is principal task of**	**Maintenance of housing unit is principal task of**
1= mother/wife	1= mother/wife	1= mother/wife	1= mother/wife	1= mother/wife
2= father/ husband	2= father/ husband	2= father/ husband	2= father/ husband	2= father/ husband
3= female children <18	3= female children <18	3= female children < 18	3= female children < 18	3= female children < 18
4= female children 18+	4= female children 18+	4= female children 18+	4= female children 18+	4= female children 18+
5= male children < 18	5= male children < 18	5= male children < 18	5= male children < 18	5= male children < 18
6 male children 18+	6 male children 18+	6 male children 18+	6 male children 18+	6 male children 18+
7= daughter(s) in law	7= daughter(s) in law	7= daughter(s) in law	7= daughter(s) in law	7= daughter(s) in law
8= son(s) in law	8= son(s) in law	8= son(s) in law	8= son(s) in law	8= son(s) in law
9= grandmother	9= grandmother	9= grandmother	9= grandmother	9= grandmother
10= grandfather	10= grandfather	10= grandfather	10= grandfather	10= grandfather
11= domestic servant	11= domestic servant	11= domestic servant	11= domestic servant	11= domestic servant
12= other (indicate)	12= other (indicate)	12= other (indicate)	12= other (indicate)	12= other (indicate)

6 Other Household-Related Activities

0601	0602	0603	0604	0605	0606
Animal husbandry is principal responsibility of	**Subsistence food production is principal responsibility of**	**Helping children in studies is principal responsibility of**	**Accompany sick family members to the doctor is principal responsibility of**	Apply for official documents (birth certificates, licenses etc.) is principal responsibility of	**Apply for services (electricity, telephone etc.) is principal responsibility of**
1= mother/wife	1= mother/wife				
2= father/ husband	2= father/ husband				
3= female children < 18	3= female children < 18				
4= female children 18+	4= female children 18+	1= father	1= mother/wife	1= male household head	1= male household head
5= male children < 18	5= male children < 18	2= mother	2= father/ husband	2= female household head	2= female household head
6 male children 18+	6 male children 18+	3= sister	3= female children	3= spouse of male household head	3= spouse of male household head
7= daughter(s) in law	7= daughter(s) in law	4= brother	4= male children		
8= son(s) in law	8= son(s) in law	5= private lessons	5= other (indicate)	4= other (indicate)	4= other (indicate)
9= grandmother	9= grandmother	6= other			
10= grandfather	10= grandfather	7= no assistance			
11= domestic servant	11= domestic servant				
12= other	12= other				
13= no animal husbandry	13= no subsistence food production				

7 Activities of Interviewee in the Community and Public Life

always indicate highest level

0701	0702	0703	0704	0705	0706	0707	0708	0709
CDAs + NGOs 1= board member 2= involved in charity activities 3= involved in community development activities 4= involved in organizational activities 5= involved in administrative activities 6= involved in other activities 7= inactive member	Religious **organiza-tions*** 1= involved in charity activities 2= involved in organiza-tion of festivities 3= involved in religious aware-ness activities 4= involved in other activities	**Commu-nity service institu-tions*** 1= member of board of youth club 2= member of PTA (parent-teacher council) 3= member of other community service institution (indicate)	Participation in activities of donor agencies* 1= donor-sponsored project implemented by Egyptian govern-mental agency 2= donor-sponsored project implemented by Egyptian NGO 3= project implemented by foreign NGO 4= project implemented by foreign governmental agency 5= other (indicate)	**Political parties** 1= inactive member 2= active member 3= holder of position 4= elected member of local popular council 5= elected member of governorate / city council 6= other (indicate)	**Professio-nal syndicates** 1= position in syndicate 2= elected representati ve in professional syndicate 3= active member of professional syndicate 4= inactive member of professional syndicate	**Savings clubs** 1= organi-zer + admi-nistrator of savings club(s) 2= ordinary member in savings club(s)	**Cultural activities: regular visits (at least once every 2 months av.) to*** 1= cinema 2= theatre 3= discos 4= private or public parties 5= social and family events (weddings, subu'a, etc.) 6= lectures, public discussions etc. 7= other events (indicate) 8= no cultural activities	**Attitude of family** 1= encourage participation 2= no opinion 3= had to be convinced 4= do not agree 5= other

8 Children and Children's Education

0801	0802	**(0803) Analysis**	0804	0805	0806	0807	0808
How many children do you have? *Ask for number of male and female and calculate the total*	**How many children do/did you want to have?** *Ask for number of male and female* *Fill in **only Total** if sex does not matter*	*Has no children* 1= wants boys 2= wants girls 3= wants more regardless of sex *Has boys only* 4= wants girls 5= wants more boys 6= wants more regardless of sex *Has girls only* 7= wants girls 8= wants more boys 9= wants more regardless of sex *Has both* 10= wants girls 11= wants more boys 12= wants more regardless of sex 13= wanted less children 14= number and sex of children is o.k.	**Children's education*** 1= boys and girls should have the same rights to education 2= if family resources are not sufficient, boys should be better educated since they have to be breadwinners later 3= girls should not be better educated than their husbands since this creates problems 4= girls should be educated to be better able to support their husbands 5= girls should be educated to be able to help their children in school 6= other (indicate) 7= don't know	**What edu-cational level do you realis-tically expect for your oldest girl?** *Aspirations within the means of the family, no dreams* 1= no education 2= read + write 3= basic education 4= secondary education 5= above secondary education 6= don't know 7= not applicable	**What edu-cational level do you realis-tically expect for your oldest boy?** *Aspirations within the means of the family, no dreams* 1= no education 2= read + write 3= basic education 4= secondary education 5= above secondary education 6= don't know 7= not applicable	**What is the most important reason for your aspiration?** 1= chances of children to maintain/improve social and economic status 2= increase possibility of children to cope in life 3= personal aspiration of children 4= performance of children in school 5= other (indicate) 6= don't know 7= not applicable	**Decisions on children's education are principal responsibil ity of** 1= father 2= mother 3= father + mother together 4= other (indicate) 5= no children at school age
M | F | T | M | F | T							

9 Marital Problems and Socialization

0901	0902	0903	0904	0905
Most important reasons for disputes between spouses*	**Whom do you turn to for advice in case of problems in marriage (married) / with your family (non-married)?***	**Wife beating is in your opinion***	**Access to media***	**Indicate the 5 most important sources of information that shaped your opinion on gender-related issues and put a circle around the most important**
A married respondent answers for him/herselve, others based on observations in the family 1= work/income of husband 2= work/income of wife 3= spending of resources 4= number of children 5= way of raising children 6= management of domestic tasks 7= movements of husband and behavior in public 8= movements of wife and behavior in public 9= dealing with spouse in public 10= dealing with spouse at home 11= emotional negligence 12= other (indicate)	1= mother 2= father 3= sister 4= brother 5= uncle 6= aunt 7= grandmother 9= grandfather 9= mother-in-law 10= father-in-law 11= close male friend 12= close female friend 13= Sheikh/ priest 14= counselor of gama'iya shara'iya 15= counselor of other NGO 16= other (indicate)	1= normal, all husbands beat their wives 2= allowed but not too hard 3= allowed if she does not perform her duties towards her husband and family properly and timely 4= allowed if she leaves the house without her husband's permission 5= allowed if she does not listen to her husband's orders even after several warnings 6= allowed if she does not dress decently and behave properly in public 7= not acceptable under no circumstances 8= other (indicate) 9= don't know	1= Radio at home 2= TV at home 3= satellite dish at home 4= video at home 5= access to satellite TV in home of relatives + friends 6= access to satellite TV in public places (e.g. coffeeshops) 7= computer with access to internet at home, shared with other family members 8= own computer with access to internet at home 9= access to internet in internet café 10= access to internet in home of friends or relatives 11= access to internet at school/university/work place 12= newspaper 13= magazines	1= mother 2= father 3= sister(s) 4= brother(s) 5= other male relatives 6= other female relatives 7= female peers and friends 8= male peers and friends 9= school 10= work place 11= TV + Radio 12= press 13= books 14= Internet 15= mosque/church 16= traveling abroad 17= other (indicate)
				13=

10 Opinions Concerning Crucial Gender-Sensitive Issues: Women's Paid Labor

Interviewees chose answers according to their opinion (= several answers possible!)*			
1001	1002	1003	1004
Women's (paid) work	**Which of the following jobs do you consider suitable for women?***	**Which of the following jobs do you consider suitable for men?***	**Control of income**
1= women should not work outside the house 2= women should not work as long as they have children below school age 3= women should only work outside the house if this is not at the expense of their domestic tasks 4= women should only work if their income is urgently needed for the family 5= women have always the right to work if they want 6= don't know 7= other (indicate)	1= teacher 2= care-giving activities (nurse, KG teacher etc.) 3= administrative jobs 4= shop vendor 5= driver 6= factory worker 7= construction worker 8= entrepreneur 9= physician 10= lawyer 11= judge 12= journalist 13= TV moderator 14= governor/ district chief 15= politician	1= teacher 2= care-giving activities (nurse, KG teacher etc.) 3= administrative jobs 4= shop vendor 5= driver 6= factory worker 7= construction worker 8= entrepreneur 9= physician 10= lawyer 11= judge 12= journalist 13= TV moderator 14= governor/ district chief 15= politician	1= the husband should decide how to spend his own and his wife's income 2= the wife should decide how to spend her husband's and her own income 3= husband decides how to spend his and wife decides how to spend her income 4= the husband should decide alone how to spend his income and together with his wife how to spend her income 5= all decisions should be taken by husband and wife together 6= other (indicate) 7= don't know
	Put circles around numbers	*Put circles around numbers*	

11 Opinions Concerning Crucial Gender-Sensitive Issues: Choosing Marriage Partners

1101	1102	1103	1104	1105	1106	1107
Who should choose the marriage partner? 1= the couple 2= the young man + the girl's father 3= the young man + the girl's family 4= the girl's and the young man's family 5= other (indicate) 6= don't know	**Reasons for answers given under 1101** 1= the couple knows best what is good for them 2= the girl might be too romantic and the marriage might fail 3= the couple might be too emotional and the marriage might fail 4= marriage is a family issue, it should be a joint decision of the 2 families to ensure that the rights of both partners are protected 5= other (indicate) 6= don't know	**Ideal marriage partner for girls is** 1= cousin 2= other relative 3= partner from known family with good reputation 4= anybody with good reputation who can provide well for the girl 5= anybody whom she feels comfortable with 6= other (indicate) 7= don/t know	**Chose and rank the 5 most important criteria for choosing marriage partners according to priority** 1= appearance 2= love 3= social status and reputation of family 4= economic situation of spouse and his/her family 5= education 6= personality 7= shared ideas about partnership in marriage 8= no disabilities or health problems 9= other (indicate)	**Knowing each other before marriage is** 1= very important and the couple should be able to meet alone 2= is important but the couple should only go out alone after official engagement 3= the couple should only go out together with other family members to preserve girl's reputation 4= the couple should only meet in family house to preserve girl's reputation 5= other (indicate) 6= don't know	**Best age for marriage of females** 1= < 18 2= 18-21 3= 22-25 4= 26-30 5= > 30 6= don't know	**Best age for marriage of males** 1= < 18 2= 18-21 3= 22-25 4= 26-30 5= > 30 6= don't know
			9=			

12 Opinions Concerning Crucial Gender-Sensitive Issues: Personal Status Law

1201	1202	1203	1204	1205
Divorce under the new Personal Status Law *Ask interviewees about the law and rate their aware-ness of the most important provisions as follows:* 1= not aware that there is a new law **2 ➜ Khula' provision** 2a= familiar with details 2b= knows about but not familiar with details 2c= not aware of provision **3➜ Urfi marriage** 3a= familiar with details 3b= knows about but not familiar with details 3c= not aware of provision **4➜ Witnessing and documentation of talaq** 4a= familiar with details 4b= knows about but not familiar with details 4c= not aware of provision **5➜ Wife's right to travel** 5a= familiar with details 5b= knows about but not familiar with details 5c= not aware of provision **6➜ Imprisonment of husbands refusing to pay maintenance** 6a= familiar with details 6b= knows about but not familiar with details 6c= not aware of provision **7➜ New marriage contract** 7a= familiar with details 7b= knows about but not familiar with details 7c= not aware of provision	**Opinion on provisions of the law** 1= not aware **2 ➜ Khula'** 2a= agree 2b= disagree 2c= don't know **3➜ Urfi marriage** 3a= agree 3b= disagree 3c= don't know **4 ➜ witnessing…** 4a= agree 4b= disagree 4c= don't know **5 ➜ right to travel** 5a= agree 5b= disagree 5c= don't know **6 ➜ imprison-ment of husband..** 6a= agree 6b= disagree 6c= don't know **7 ➜ new contract** 7a= agree 7b= disagree 7c= don't know	**General opinion on divorce under the Khula' provision** 1= not aware of the provision *only those who are aware:* 2= the law improves the situation of women who are stuck in an unbearable marriage 3= the law is still not fair since women have to renounce many material entitlements 4= the law is a danger to the family because many women are too emotional and break up too quickly 5= other (indicate) 6= don't know	**Opinion on the principle in Islamic inheritance law that women inherit only 50% of males' share** 1= not aware of the provisions of the law *only those who are aware:* 2= fair since men have to provide for women and should therefore have a larger share in inheritance 3= not fair since many women share today the responsibility to provide for the family 4= not fair since men and women should be equal in every respect 5= other (indicate) 6= don't know	**Opinions on Issues Related to Personal Status Regulations for Christians** **1➜**Coptic church does not allow divorce except in case of *Zina*, but law allows divorce of Christians in 9 cases: 1a= church is right 1b= law is right 1c= divorce should be according to civil law only 1d= not aware of law **2➜** Muslim woman cannot marry Christian husband 2a= agrees with law 2b= disagrees 2c= not aware **3➜** Christian widow cannot not inherit Muslim husband and vice versa 3a= agrees with law 3b= disagrees 3c= not aware **4➜** The new PS Law allows Christians of different churches to divorce under Muslim Law 4a= agrees with law 4b= disagrees 4c= not aware

13 Opinions Concerning Miscellaneous Issues

try to avoid "don't know" and use this option only if you do not find any way to stimulate articulation of an opinion

1301			1302			1303			1304		
Choose and rank the 3 most important environmental problems* 1= water pollution 2= air pollution 3= noise pollution 4= soil pollution 5= hygiene problems due to sewerage deficiencies 6= insufficient garbage collection 7= use of fertilizer/ pesticides and chemicals in food production that are detrimental to men's health 8= other (indicate) (9= don't know)			**Choose and rank the 3 most important social + other problems*** 1= unemployment 2= price increases 3= poverty 4= family breakdowns 5= drug addiction 6= increase of criminality 7= increase of violence 8= environmental problems 9= wars 10= terrorism 11= other (indicate) (12= don't know)			**Choose and rank the 3 most important problems of Egyptian women today?*** 1= finding a suitable marriage partner 2= high material demands for marriage 3= being not able to realize personal ambitions 4= losing one's job and being not able to provide for the family 5= being not able to meet wife's social and material expectations 6= feeling oppressed in marriage 7= restrictions of movement 8= harassment in the streets or at work 9= other (indicate) (10= don't know)			**Choose and rank the 3 most important problems of Egyptian men today?*** 1= finding a suitable marriage partner 2= high material demands for marriage 3= being not able to realize personal ambitions 4= losing one's job and being not able to provide for the family 5= being not able to meet wife's social and material expectations 6= feeling oppressed in marriage 7= restrictions of movement 8= harassment in the streets or at work 9= other (indicate) (10= don't know)		

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The main objective of the study is to provide an in-depth insight into gender and socio-cultural diversity in Egypt. It is assumed that gender perceptions and gender practices vary according to sex, age, class, region and religion. Differences according to sex, region and religion will be investigated for all relevant questions. Results will, therefore, be broken down according to the following:

- Sex
  - Male, female
- Area
  - Cairo, Alexandria, Gharbiya, Qena, El Arish
  - Urban governorates, provincial urban, rural, El Arish
- Religion
  - Muslim, Christian

Differences according to class will be illustrated for all relevant questions. They will be captured by comparing results among the three different areas covered in the urban governorates of Cairo and Alexandria where class differences are most pronounced. The three areas covered in urban governorates include a poor/lower income area and an upper middle/upper class area in Cairo as well as a lower middle/middle class area in Alexandria.[1]

- Class
  - Cairo poor/low income
  - Cairo upper middle/upper income
  - Alexandria lower middle/middle class

Differences according to age will be captured mainly in opinion questions and questions related to issues where significant age differences can be assumed such as access to media and information. Correlations will be made with three different age groups:

- Age
  - 18-25 years
  - 26-40 years
  - > 40 years

Some questions will be correlated with educational levels, e.g. to check whether education has an influence on the family size or opinions concerning crucial gender issues. Additional correlations will be made to check the influence of other factors. Results on women's working status will, for example, be correlated with men's working status to check whether the latter has an influence on the

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[1] see also the Rationale for the Questionnaire, the Sampling Methodology and the Concept for Focus Groups

former. If necessary and depending on the results, more correlations mayt be added later.

The results of multiple correlations will be combined in tables (one for each question) as illustrated in the list of correlations and the sample table below. They will form the main basis of analysis and documentation and will be attached to the final report as a substitute for frequency tables.
A list of correlations follows below:

CORRELATION TABLES

0101	sex X areas
0102	religion X areas
0103-0109	correlated with sex, areas and religion
0201 – 0207	correlated with sex, areas and religion
0301 – 0307	correlated with sex, areas and religion
0301	working females X educational level of working females
0301	working females X educational level of spouse of working females
0305	working status of females X working status of males
0401 – 0405	correlated with sex, areas and religion
0401	source of income of females X personal status/position in the family of females
0501 – 0505	correlated with sex, areas and religion
0601 – 0606	correlated with sex, areas and religion
0701 – 0709	correlated with sex, areas and religion
0801 – 0808	correlated with sex, areas and religion
0804 – 0808	correlated with age groups
0804	correlated with educational level of interviewee
0901 – 0904	correlated with sex, areas and religion
0905	correlated with sex and areas
0903 + 0904	correlated with age groups
0903	correlated with educational status
1001 – 1004	correlated with sex, areas and religion
1001 - 1004	correlated with age groups
1001 – 1004	correlated with educational level of interviewee
1101 – 1103	correlated with sex, areas and religion
1101 – 1103	correlated with age groups
1104	correlated with sex, areas and age groups
1105 – 1107	correlated with sex, areas and religion
1105 – 1107	correlated with age groups
1201 – 1204	correlated with sex, areas and religion
1201 – 1204	correlated with age groups
1201 – 1204	correlated with educational level of interviewee
1301-1304	correlated with sex, areas and age groups

MODEL TABLE FOR RESULTS OF QUESTION WITH 7 OPTIONS

Area	Sex	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cairo poor/lower	Male														
	Female														
	Subtotal														
Cairo upper middle/upper	Male														
	Female														
	Subtotal														
Alexandria lower middle/middle	Male														
	Female														
	Subtotal														
Subtotal Urban Governorates	Male														
	Female														
	Total														
Gharbiya provincial urban	Male														
	Female														
	Subtotal														
Gharbiya rural	Male														
	Female														
	Subtotal														
Subtotal Gharbiya	Male														
	Female														
	Total														
Qena provincial urban	Male														
	Female														
	Subtotal														
Qena rural	Male														
	Female														
	Subtotal														
Subtotal Qena	Male														
	Female														
	Total														
El Arish	Male														
	Female														
	Total														
GRAND TOTAL	Male														
	Female														
	Total														
GRAND TOTAL	Muslim														
	Christian														
	Total														
Subtotal provincial urban	Male														
	Female														
	Total														
Subtotal rural	Male														
	Female														
	Total														

Focus Groups Discussions Guidelines

II   Gender Roles In The Light Of Changing Socio-Economic Conditions

1a   Who is in your opinion responsible to provide for the family and who is responsible to care for the household and the family? Why?

1b   Do you think that it is today still possible that the husband is the sole provider for the family? How do changing economic conditions influence men's and women's roles?

1c   What kinds of problems do occur in such a situation (problems for men and problems for women)?

2a   What do you think about women's work? Give reasons for your opinion?

2b   Who should take the decision if a woman wants to work?

2c   Who should take the decision about how the money she earns is spent?

3a   Do you think a good education is important for girls? Why or why not?

3b   Do you think girls' education is today more important than in previous generations? Why or why not?

3c   Do you think girls should have the same education as boys? Why or why not?

3d   Do you think it is a problem if a wife has a higher education than her husband? Why or why not?

4a   Many people think that it is more important for women and girls to move more freely in public so that they learn more and are better able to cope with crisis and the requirements of modern life. Would you agree with this opinion? Why or why not?

4b   Where do you think should women's and girls' movements be restricted and why?

II   Violence Against Women

You might want to use the term " ??T? in Arabic instead of " ? ?"

5a   What do you consider violence and why?

5b   What do you think about the following acts if they are carried out by a husband against his wife or a father or mother against his/her daughter or a brother against his sister? Are they justified?

Why and when or why not?

- **Ironic remarks and insults in private**
- **Insults in public**
- **Name-calling**
- **Slapping in the face or tearing of hair, ear etc.**
- **Beating the body with hands**
- **Beating the body with feet**
- **Beating the body with sticks, belts etc.**
- **Threaten to beat**

5c   What effects do different forms of violence have on a person? Try to answer based on your own experience or based on experiences of close friends or relatives that you witnessed and shared

III   Reproductive Health And Female Genital Circumcision (FGC)

6a   Do you think that it is necessary today to use contraceptives and plan the number of children and the time when you get children? Why or why not?

6b   Who should take decisions about family planning and the use of contraceptives?

6c   Do you think that FGC is necessary? Why or why not ?

6d   Who should take the decision whether a girl is circumcised ?

Information Sheet for Individual Participants in FGs

Code Number (digit for area/digit for focus group serial number/digit for participant)

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│  /    /  (
└──────────┘
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* = more than one answer possible

Sex	male ☐	female ☐		
Age	< 18 ☐	18-25 ☐	26-35 ☐	35+ ☐
Religion	Muslim ☐	Christian ☐		
Personal status	never married ☐	ever married ☐		
Children	yes ☐	no ☐		
Educational attainment	< basic ☐	basic ☐	sec. ☐	> sec. ☐
Employment status (ES)	currently working ☐	currently not working ☐	never worked ☐	
ES of spouse	currently working ☐	currently not working ☐	never worked ☐	
Family income	< LE 500 ☐	-1,000 ☐	-5,000 ☐	> 5,000 ☐

Who provides for the family?   *h/f = husband/father*   *m/w = mother/wife*

f/h alone ☐   f/h + m/w ☐   m/w alone ☐

f/h + children ☐   m/w + children ☐   f/h+m/w+children ☐   other ☐
_____

Who takes decisions about spending income of participant?

not applicable ☐   participant ☐   spouse/family ☐   joint decision ☐

Who helps in the household?*

none ☐   h/f ☐   daughters/sisters ☐   sons/brothers ☐   other ☐ _____

Do you have to ask for permission if you want to leave the house?

no ☐   f/h ☐   m/w ☐   f/h or m/w ☐   other ☐ _____

Were you ever subjected to one of the following?*

verbal insult in private ☐   verbal insult in front of family members ☐   verbal insult in public ☐

ironic remarks that diminish your self-confidence ☐   name-calling ☐

slapping in the face ☐   tearing your hair or ears that it hurts ☐   beating body w. hands ☐

beating body w. feet ☐   beating using sticks, belts etc. ☐   beating w. injuries ☐

threatened with beating up ☐   threatened to be thrown out of the house ☐   thrown out of the house ☐

sexual harassment ☐   serious sexual assault ☐   rape ☐

preventing from eating ☐   other ☐ _____   no ☐

How often?

Once ☐ _____

> once but not regularly ☐   _____

regularly ☐

By whom?*

father ☐   husband ☐   mother ☐   wife ☐   brother ☐

sister ☐   father-in-law ☐   mother-in-law ☐   uncle ☐   aunt ☐

grandfather ☐   grandmother ☐   male cousin ☐   female cousin ☐

other relative ☐   neighbor ☐   colleague ☐   stranger ☐

How did the experience affect you?

_____

_____

_____

Concept for Focus Group Discussions

General Objectives:

- Obtain in-depth insights, i.e. understand the how and why of gender-related perceptions and practices as indicated in the questionnaire
- Obtain information about perceptions and practices which could not be covered by the questionnaire due to their sensitivity

Specific Objectives:

- identification of tensions between prevailing normative perceptions and beliefs and the requirements of changing socio-economic realities as well as related discrepancies between norms and practice
- identification of coping mechanisms in case prevailing norms and perceptions contradict strongly felt personal and collective needs and aspirations
- identification of solidarity and control mechanisms that promote or constrain attempts to change gender-related norms and/or practices
- identification of perceptions of the "self/we" and the "other", particularly in the context of claims for loyalty, lines of dependency and solidarity networks that are relevant for gender issues. The perception of who is when perceived as the being part of the "we" and when part of the "other" defines potential areas of gender issue-related dispute and conflict as well as potentials for social change (both at the normative and the practice levels) and mobilization of support and solidarity when trying to break with established norms and practices in case they come into conflict with felt needs and changing social reality

The results of this layer of analysis are relevant for development assistance since they identify potentials and obstacles to enhance women's status in the private and the public sphere and to explore appropriate ways to support tendencies of social change that may lead to a better adaptation of gender roles in accordance with the changing needs of both men and women as a result of rapidly changing socio-economic conditions.

Development assistance is always an intervention and never neutral. Gender issues are particularly sensitive in view of the emotionalized public discourses about "Islam and the West" inside and outside the Arab and Islamic world. Culture and social practice, on the other hand, are not essentialist cornerstones of society but are subject to continuous change. In today's Egypt, the dynamics of change are very pronounced and complex.

Individual who try to break out of the framework of established social norms and practices and particularly those who play pioneering roles in social change have to bear consequences, both positive and negative. Development assistance contributes to a change of framework conditions and offers chances for those who are looking for support to their own aspirations of change. However, if development projects do not understand the tensions and imbalances between norms and practice as well as the dynamics of change, they are likely to fail, miss opportunities for affirmative action or produce unintended negative results.

Based on the above mentioned objectives, the following issues are proposed for focus group discussions:

Proposed Issues for Focus Group Discussion:

(1) Gender roles in the light of changing socio-economic conditions
- men's sole responsibility to provide for the family and women's sole responsibility for the household and the family
- restrictions of movements of women and girls and behavior in public
- education of children
- decision-making within the family regarding expenditures, women's work and women's participation in public life

(2) Violence against women
- what is considered violence (pre-defined list + rating)
- felt effects of violence
- normative opinions on justification of violence

Gender roles are one of the core areas where socio-cultural norms and values manifest themselves and violence is the ultimate instrument to impose those norms. They are thus intertwined and mutually dependent. Violence is not possible without a normative system justifying it and imbalances in power relations, i.e. in the possibility to realize one's aspirations and satisfy one's needs, cannot be maintained without resorting to violence.

The incidence of violence tends to increase when normative systems come into conflict with changing socio-economic conditions. Gender roles are at the center of the normative system in Egypt. They have a decisive influence on the daily routines, social relations and behavior patterns of both sexes. Changing socio-economic conditions produce new needs which may contradict the prevailing value system that prescribes certain gender roles. The degree of acceptance of the possibility to use violence is an important factor that co-determines an individual's option to break out of the framework of accepted social practice and the underlying normative system.

The preparedness to tolerate or even use violence is acquired throughout the process of socialization and the degree of individual and collective acceptance of violence co-determines the probability of its use. The knowledge about the possibility to use or be subjected to violence in order to maintain existing power relations is deeply engrained in the sub-consciousness of both sexes. Women, in particular, will always consider the possibility of being subjected to violence when thinking about deviating from the path of socially accepted practice, if only at the level of the sub-conscious.

The investigation of gender roles and violence and the relationship between them as well as tendencies of change can shed light on core elements of the gender question in today's Egypt. As the interview guidelines show, the complexity of the subject has been reduced by concentrating on a number of relevant issues. It is expected that the analysis of these issues within the framework elaborated above will produce

sufficient information to allow for conclusions that are relevant for the objectives of this study.

Remark:

Reproductive health and FGC are important issues that could not be covered by the questionnaire. They are, nevertheless, not proposed to be included in the qualitative study since the existing data and information is considered to be sufficient. The final report will contain a review of the most important studies regarding reproductive health and FGC and will thus provide the needed information.

Methodology:

Focus groups (FG) will be restricted to 7-9 participants. Less participants would not produce sufficient dynamic in the discussion and more would be unmanageable for moderation and in-depth recording.

The organizers will rely on previously established contacts and may seek facilitation by NGOs to mobilize participants. However, participants will be chosen among those who have not been intensively involved in development projects before to make sure that results are as far as possible representative for the average population.

The research team is made up of two principal researchers (male and female) who have many years of extensive experience in PRA techniques and research all over Egypt as well as two research assistants (male and female) who have also participated in a number of PRA research exercises and who will receive further in-depth training (see below). FG discussions with female participants will be implemented by the female researchers and male FG discussions by the male researchers.

The principal researchers will direct the discussions, i.e. manage time, stimulate articulation of opinions, direct the discussion to focus on the agreed upon issues etc. The research assistant will record the contents of the contribution and attribute each contribution to a particular individual. In doing this, he/she will use the numbers that will be assigned to each participant prior to the start of the discussion.

Both researchers will take short notes of non-verbal information during the discussion. Immediately after the discussion, these notes as well as additional remarks and comments will be recorded systematically. Remarks and comments will refer, for example, to subjects that have been debated with high voices and emotional involvement, subjects that have caused participants to change their opinion during the discussion or verbal information that contradicts practices as observed by the researchers.

The researchers interpretations based on their experience is considered to be a valuable complementary source of information. The moderator will, however, direct the discussion strictly neutral without expressing any opinion and without asking suggestive questions. The reports will strictly distinguish between records of participants' contributions and interpretations and comments of the researchers.

All participants in FG discussions will be required to answer to some standardized questions individually after group discussions in order to capture individual experiences and opinions which participants may not want to disclose in front of others (see individual questions, group questions and the Format to be used by the researchers to record answers)

Each focus group discussion will last for 2 hours, in addition to ¼ hour for registration and a break of ¼ hour. Collecting individual information after the discussion will take roughly ½ hour. The total time for a FG discussion will thus be 3 hours.

Venues for FG discussions may be NGO premises, health centers, youth or cultural centers, schools or other appropriate places. The participants will be offered drinks and snacks.

Instructions for Focus Group Discussions Implementation

Objectives of the Focus Group Discussions

Keep the main objective of the focus group discussions in mind: we want to study what people think and what people do in real life and we want to investigate contradictions between the two, i.e. the level of social norms and values (؟؟؟ ؟؟ ؟؟؟ ؟؟؟؟؟؟؟؟) and the level of practice (؟؟؟؟؟؟ ؟؟؟). We want to understand how people cope with social and economic change and what they do if reality needs new ways of acting which may contradict traditional norms (؟؟؟؟؟؟ ؟ ؟؟؟).

We want also to understand the issues that create conflicts between an individual and his/her family, neighbors or colleagues and we want to know what shape these conflicts take. Where do individuals try to break out of the existing framework of socially accepted behavior and where do they get support? In this context we want to investigate also the issue of violence. When is violence used and why? What do people consider to be violence and what do they think about it? And what do people feel if they experience violence?

We know that what people think, feel and do may be very different and we want to understand the main features in people's life that influence their way of thinking, feeling and acting. That is why we want to record each contribution and indicate who says what. This is also why we want to collect personal information with the data sheet for each individual. If we compare statements and opinions with the social and economic background of different participants, we may be able to understand the most important factors that shape people's opinions and way of acting.

Below you will find a chart that illustrates the concept for the analysis of the results of the focus group discussions.

General Instructions for Implementation

Give a brief introduction explaining the purpose of the study: the results will be used to design gender-sensitive development projects supported by JICA as a foreign donor. JICA wants to make sure that these projects benefit Egyptian men and women and in order to do so JICA must understand the concerns, experiences and opinions of different social groups of Egyptians, both men and women. Only by understanding the Egyptian context is it possible to design projects according to

Egyptians' needs and not according to the experiences of people coming from a foreign country and another culture.

Make participants feel that their contributions make a difference and that it is important to be as open and accurate as possible. Try to create an atmosphere of trust and assure all participants that their opinions and information on their personal life is kept strictly confidential and is only used anonymously and exclusively for the study purpose.

You should cover all issues tackled in the guidelines. However, you are free to change the series of questions or shift the focus in order to stimulate vivid discussions and give particular attention to issues that are obviously of special interest to the respective participants. Identifying issues of special interest is in itself important information.

You may provoke to stimulate articulation of diverse opinions, but don't voice your personal opinion. In case there are important issues which are not raised by the participants but which you know are relevant to be covered, you may say for example "there are people who say… what do you think about this statement?"
Indicate that you are interested and appreciate all contributions (for example by nodding with the head to encourage shy participants).

Try to be as attentive as possible to capture non-verbal messages, the tone of a statement (i.e. very emotional indicating that the issue affects a person deeply or aggressive indicating that the issue might be "fresh" and the person has had disputes about the same issue in her personal life etc.). These observations are often more revealing that explicit verbal statements and represent important information.

Manage your time and try to stick to the 2 hours. When preparing yourself, bear different options in mind to be able to react to different scenarios during the FG discussions. Remember our pre-test: In this case, the discussion was lively and participants were quite outspoken. It was possible to cover all questions in a relatively short time, i.e. less than 2 hours. In this case, it is useful to ask for more examples from participants' personal experience. When recording, you can concentrate in this case on particularly expressive quotes instead of just recording the series of contributions in case they are repetitive.

Specific Instructions for Individual Issues

Try to **understand the family profile** of the participants. Bear in mind that the family is not necessarily a nuclear family but can be composed in very different ways. You could, for example, start a focus group discussion by asking the participants to give a *brief* introduction to their family (who, how old etc.). This could also be a warming-up exercise.

Regarding both **decision-making and violence** please bear in mind that **older sons** do sometimes play a stronger role than the husband/father. They might take many decisions in case the father is frequently absent, old or ill. It is also known that many girls are subject to tight control of their brothers which may involve different degrees of violence.

Regarding the issue of **violence**: Please note that **men can also be subjected to violence**, particularly if defined in a broader sense, i.e. violence as a direct or indirect coercive mechanism which may include, for example, psychological pressure, insults, frequent ironic remarks indicating that he is not "a real man" etc. (remember our discussion)… Try to discuss and capture these issues.

Recording: Please take at least 15 minutes in a quiet atmosphere after each focus group to sit down together and discuss your observations. Take notes and record what has attracted your attention. Bear our main objective in mind and do also record you impressions and comments related to this objective.

Please remember:

As agree in our meeting on October 18, 2004, we will meet again twice – once on October 26 after completion of focus groups in Greater Cairo and once on November 8 after completing implementation of all focus groups. In these meetings we will have the chance to elaborate orally what you have recorded and documented in your reports, particularly information related to your observations and "reading between the lines". Please take notes for these meetings so that you do not forget any information.

Keep notes clear but simple so that recording does not consume too much time.

Normative and Value System (النظام القيمي – منظومة العادات والتقاليد)

→ which are the prevailing norms and values concerning gender-relevant issues and gender roles? (differences according to class, region, religion etc.)

→ which of these norms are changing, where and how and for whom? are there new norms emerging? which new norms and for which issues? are there different norms for the same issue which may be contradictory?

→ which are the most important elements that have a changing influence on traditional norms and values?

→ who plays an important role in socialization (التربية والتنشئة) and who has a decisive influence on preserving old or shaping new norms?

| Where are tensions / conflicts between norms and practice? | Which support and solidarity networks are available for support if a person wants to break out of traditional norms and practice? |

Relationship – Mutual Influence

→ how does practice influence norms and values and how do norms and values determine practice?

How are contradictions between norms and practice justified?

Which mechanisms of force are used to enforce compliance with traditional norms and adherence to socially accepted behavior?

Where do people try to break out of traditional norms? Who tries to break out? When? Why? How?

Who exercises force to enforce compliance? When? How? Why?

Practice (مستوى الممارسة)

→ how are gender roles practiced today, particularly concerning the division of labor in the family (income generating economic activities and domestic tasks), decision-making within the family, education, freedom of movement, participation in public and community activities (differences according to class, region, religion etc.)

→ where has practice changed from one generation to the next and how?

→ which are the most important factors that influence and change peoples' practices?

→ which social groups are most under pressure to adapt to changing socio-economic conditions?

Format to Record Results

1. Contributions and Contributors

Use roughly the same format as the one for recording (Annex 3) but written on the computer. Insert space between different questions and sub-questions

Find a formulation for each statement that best expresses the content and tone of the contributions

Quote expressive articulations and indicate who made the quotation (coded)

2. Observations Regarding Individual Sub-Questions and Questions

Examples for observations to be recorded (only if applicable):

(1) Issues that stimulated particular interest, heated discussions, contradictory opinions etc…

(2) Issues that were of little interest to the participants

(3) Issues on which participants agreed largely and quickly

(4) Influence of the discussion on opinions, e.g. if participants changed their opinion during the discussion

(5) Indication of participants who participated most prominently or did not participate at all

(6) Observation of differences in contributions according to age, education or other determinants

(7) Obvious contradictions in contributions of an individual participant

(8) Remarks if statements made by participants contradict the experience of the researcher. In this case, it must be indicated that the remark constitutes a subjective comment of the researcher

(9) Remarks on the known background of a participant or any other known or observed information that is relevant to interpret his/her contribution

(10) Degree of sensitivity of questions as reflected in the readiness or hesitation of participants to participate in the discussion and to refer to personal experiences

(11) Anything else that attracted your attention

Observations are to be recorded at 4 levels:

- after sub-questions (e.g. 2b)
- after a set of sub-questions (e.g. after the observations regarding sub-question 1c before starting with 2a)

- at the end of the first set of questions (on gender roles…) and the second set of questions (violence against women)
- at the end of the report with regard to the whole focus group discussion

The latter should include observations and comments regarding the general atmosphere within the focus group, the interaction among participants, their reaction to the researchers, the degree of openness or fear to disclose personal information etc.

Example of a Record of Sub-Question 1a:

1c	What kinds of problems do occur in such a situation (problems for men and problems for women)?

2	4	1	3	Many women start to treat their husbands with less respect and do not listen to him anymore
5	7			

8	2	7	1	Men are afraid that people do not look at them anymore as real men, particularly if they live from the wife's salary
5	4	6		

Remark: All contributing participants agreed on this statement. (7) and (1) said that the danger of stigmatization diminishes because too many men have experienced this problem in recent years

5	8	4	2	If the man is unemployed or earns little money and the family depends on the wife's income, the man tries to prove that he is still the man by increasing control of women, e.g. forbid her to go out etc.
3				

Remark: Participants 2 and 4 expressed sympathy for the men's dilemma while participants 3 and 5 and 8 were furious about men's behavior. "Instead of being grateful that I support him and make sure that he does not loose his face in public, he makes my life even more difficult by throwing all his tension on me…" (8)

Overall Remarks to Question 1:

The issue received great interest and it became obvious that five of the participants have had to cope with periods where men were unemployed, sick or did not earn sufficient income. The situation seems to have caused considerable stress in their families.

Format for Recording During Focus Group Discussions

Serial No. of Question	Participant Codes				Contents of Contributions

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS WITH PERSONALITIES WHO HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON SHAPING OPINIONS CONCERNING GENDER ISSUES

Objectives:
In conducting these interviews with representative public figures we try to capture some aspects related to the formation of individual and public opinion in Egypt. The interview partners are either part of the communities where we implement our study or they have an influence that stretches into these communities.

Approach:
The following four questions mark the areas that we want to cover in the interviews. Within these areas, you are given much flexibility concerning what you ask and how you ask. You will find instructions under each question that indicate what we want to find out with the respective question. Read the instructions carefully and bear them in mind when asking the respondent for clarifications, elaborations etc.

You will also find a check list attached that is organized around different issues. It is neither comprehensive nor compulsory. Read the check list carefully before the interview. Understand it as a guide and a matrix that you have in mind when moderating the interview and recording statements and observations. You are not obliged to follow the check list and you may include other issues depending on the direction that the interview takes and your own assessment of what is relevant in view of our objectives.

1   QUESTIONS

Q1   What are in your opinion the most important gender issues today in Egypt?

Instructions for Q1:
Record issues as they are mentioned and include observations that indicate which issues are of particular concern to the respondent, either because of personal experience, experience with his audience or because they imply a conflict between different frameworks of reference (e.g. religious institutions, tradition, official state policy etc.)

After the respondent has finished, ask him/her about specific gender issues that he/she have not mentioned, i.e.

- Women's paid labor
- Education
- Women's role in public
- FGC
- Personal Status Law, particularly the Khula' division

Depending on the answers of the respondent and the general direction of the interview, you may decide by yourself which issues to cover in-depth and which issues to leave if they do not provoke a "rich" response. Bear our overall concept in mind.

Q2   How do you understand your role as a public personality with influence on the formation of public opinion concerning gender issues?

Q3   How do you execute this role?

Instructions for Q2 and Q3:
Ask the question and record the response as it is. Depending on what your interview partner says, ask for elaborations and clarifications.
In doing so, try to understand the respondent's perception of his/her self and his/her position in society, as well as the respondent's perception of his/her audience(s).
Try to understand also the respondent's notion of the "map" of institutions that shape public opinion regarding gender issues in Egypt today as well as the respondent's understanding of his/her position within this setting.

Q4   What are the sources of your knowledge on gender issues and what are the principles based on which you form your own opinion?

Instructions for Q4
Ask the question and record the response as it is. Depending on what your interview partner says, ask for elaborations and clarifications.
In doing so, try to understand the respondent's own personal and professional background, education, socialization and career opportunities, exposure to ideologies, travel experiences and exposure to external influences.
If possible, try to capture his/her motivations and "hidden interests" when subscribing to certain opinions and sources of knowledge (The respondent may, for example, want to increase his/her career opportunities or position within the community or the respondent may want to justify important events in his/her life that became known to the public.)

2   Check List

Gender Roles and Gender Disputes

- *Notion of men's and women's role in the family*
  - division of labor and responsibilities (provide for the family, domestic and care-giving tasks)
  - decision-making within the family
  - notion of partnership between spouses and perception of spouse relationships within the extended family
- *Women's role in public*
  - women's contributions to public and community life
  - women's representation in decision-making bodies, professional jobs, syndicates, the arts and the intellectual life
  - women's freedom of movement
- *Areas of conflict and disputes*
  - impact of changing socio-economic conditions on needs and gender roles
  - personal status law, particularly the Khula' provision and the related public discourse
  - construction of gender roles as opposed to gender roles in the West

Women's Paid Labor

- *Compatibility of women's work with domestic tasks*
  - work only if not at the expense of women's domestic tasks, i.e. before children are born, after children reach school age, only part-time etc.
  - impact of women's work on division of tasks among family members?
- *Decision-making about women's work*
  - who takes decisions
  - according to which criteria (economic reasons, women's self-realization, etc.)
- *Labor markets for men and women*
  - are there distinctions of what is considered suitable work for men and women?
  - positive/negative effects of an increase in women's work (e.g. importance of female perspective in certain jobs or opinion that female labor increases men's unemployment etc.)

Education

- *Factors that may influence decisions on children's education*
  - preparation for different gender roles
  - economic constraints that do not permit same opportunities to both sexes
  - performance in school and personal ambitions of children
- *Objectives of education? Differences according to gender?*
  - chances in labor markets

- awareness, culture, life skills
- being better able to manage family and support children in education

FGC

- ***Pro or contra and reasons, based on***
  - based on religion
  - tradition/culture
  - official state policy
  - human rights

Women's Role in Public

- ***Importance***
  - Where important
  - Why important
- ***Restrictions***
  - Where restricted
  - Why restricted

Respondent's Understanding of His/Her Role

- ***Self-image***
  - representative of religious institution
  - representative of state institution
  - representative of civil society
  - educator and contributor to socialization
  - advisor
  - ……

- ***Objectives***
  - educate and raise awareness about legal, medical and other scientific issues related to gender
  - draw public attention to crucial gender issues and stimulate discussions
  - contribute to public discourse and formation of opinions concerning contested gender-relevant issues
  - promote opinion/policy of public institution (e.g. state, Al Azhar, NGO community etc.)
  - increase religious awareness and promote behavior in accordance with religious teachings
  - preserve traditional values or promote "moral" behavior
  - …….

- ***Execution of role***
  - dissemination of information and knowledge
  - presentation of diverse opinions and moderation/ stimulation of discussions
  - preaching or lecturing
  - individual or collective counseling

- mediation in conflicts
- …….

Sources of Knowledge

- ***Education and socialization***
  - school, university (Egyptian, foreign, religious, abroad etc.)
  - family profile
  - area of origin
  - professional career
  - …….

- ***Access to knowledge***
  - media (print, TV, Satellite, Internet – religious, state, foreign, specialized, etc.)
  - reading and research (religious, scientific, foreign, etc.)
  - training (where?)
  - conferences, workshops, events etc.
  - mouth-to-mouth (who and how?)
  - …….

Japan International Cooperation Agency

Study on Gender and Cultural/Social Diversity in Egypt

Field Operation Manual

October 2004

NSCE
North **S**outh **C**onsultants **E**xchange
Professionals in Sustainable Development

1. Background

The results of this gender study are relevant for development assistance since they identify potentials and obstacles to enhance women's status in the private and the public sphere and to explore appropriate ways to support tendencies of social change that may lead to a better adaptation of gender roles in accordance with the changing needs of both men and women as a result of rapidly changing socio-economic conditions.

Development assistance is always an intervention and never neutral. Gender issues are particularly sensitive in view of the emotionalized public discourses about "Islam and the West" inside and outside the Arab and Islamic world. Culture and social practice, on the other hand, are not essentialist cornerstones of society but are subject to continuous change. In today's Egypt, the dynamics of change are very pronounced and complex.

Individual who try to break out of the framework of established social norms and practices and particularly those who play pioneering roles in social change have to bear consequences, both positive and negative. Development assistance contributes to a change of framework conditions and offers chances for those who are looking for support to their own aspirations of change. However, if development projects do not understand the tensions and imbalances between norms and practice as well as the dynamics of change, they are likely to fail, miss opportunities for affirmative action or produce unintended negative results.

Based on the above-mentioned objectives, the following issues are tackled in the questionnaire:

(1) Gender roles in the light of changing socio-economic conditions
- men's sole responsibility to provide for the family and women's sole responsibility for the household and the family
- restrictions of movements of women and girls and behavior in public
- education of children
- decision-making within the family regarding expenditures, women's work and women's participation in public life

(2) Violence against women
- what is considered violence (pre-defined list + rating)
- felt effects of violence
- normative opinions on justification of violence

Gender roles are one of the core areas where socio-cultural norms and values manifest themselves and violence is the ultimate instrument to impose those norms. They are thus intertwined and mutually dependent. Violence is not possible without a

normative system justifying it and imbalances in power relations, i.e. in the possibility to realize one's aspirations and satisfy one's needs, cannot be maintained without resorting to violence.
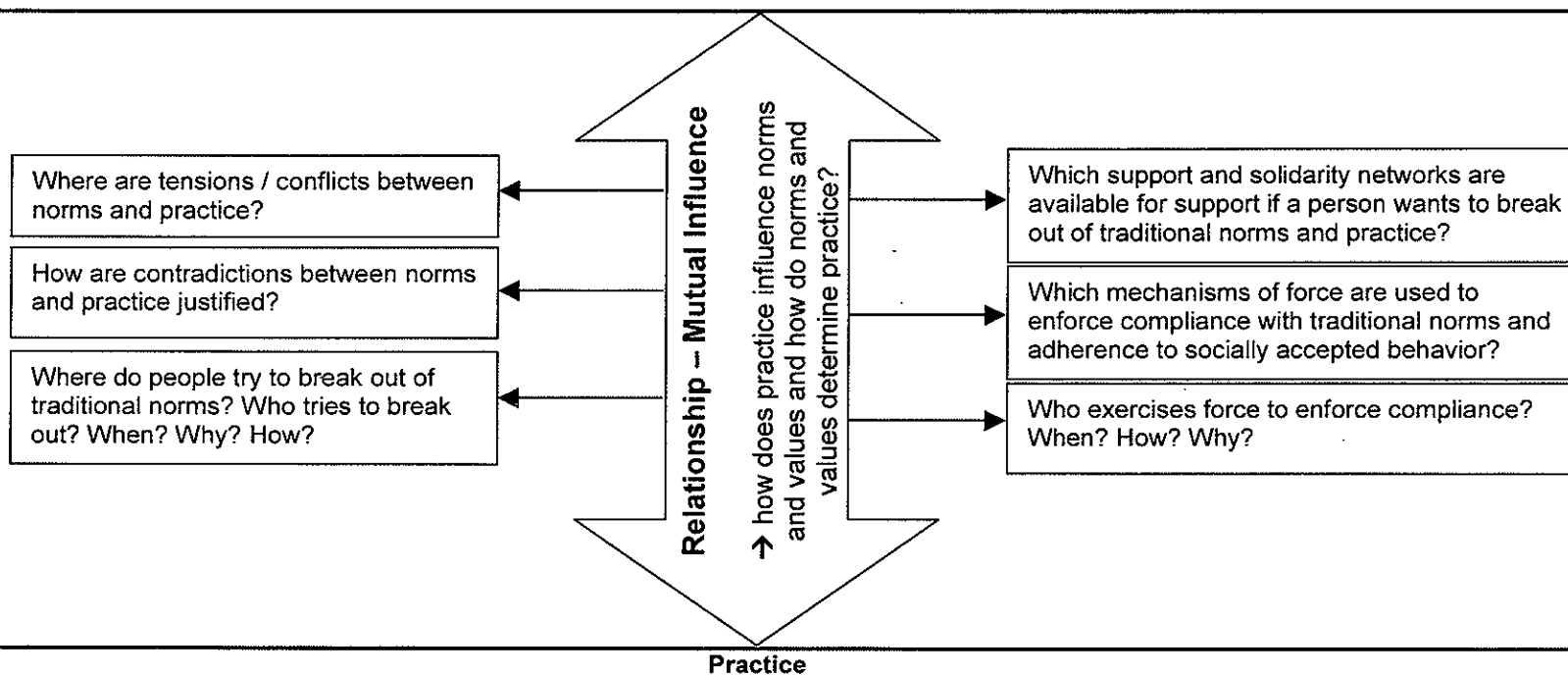
The incidence of violence tends to increase when normative systems come into conflict with changing socio-economic conditions. Gender roles are at the center of the normative system in Egypt. They have a decisive influence on the daily routines, social relations and behavior patterns of both sexes. Changing socio-economic conditions produce new needs which may contradict the prevailing value system that prescribes certain gender roles. The degree of acceptance of the possibility to use violence is an important factor that co-determines an individual's option to break out of the framework of accepted social practice and the underlying normative system.

The preparedness to tolerate or even use violence is acquired throughout the process of socialization and the degree of individual and collective acceptance of violence co-determines the probability of its use. The knowledge about the possibility to use or be subjected to violence in order to maintain existing power relations is deeply engrained in the sub-consciousness of both sexes. Women, in particular, will always consider the possibility of being subjected to violence when thinking about deviating from the path of socially accepted practice, if only at the level of the sub-conscious.

The investigation of gender roles and violence and the relationship between them as well as tendencies of change can shed light on core elements of the gender question in today's Egypt. The complexity of the subject has been reduced by concentrating on a number of relevant issues. It is expected that the analysis of these issues within the framework elaborated above will produce sufficient information to allow for conclusions that are relevant for the objectives of this study.

Normative and Value System

→ which are the prevailing norms and values concerning gender-relevant issues and gender roles? (differences according to class, region, religion etc.)
→ which of these norms are changing, where and how and for whom? are there new norms emerging? which new norms and for which issues? are there different norms for the same issue which may be contradictory?
→ which are the most important elements that have a changing influence on traditional norms and values?
→ who plays an important role in socialization ((التربية والتنشئة) and who has a decisive influence on preserving old or shaping new norms?

Where are tensions / conflicts between norms and practice?		Which support and solidarity networks are available for support if a person wants to break out of traditional norms and practice?
How are contradictions between norms and practice justified?	**Relationship – Mutual Influence** → how does practice influence norms and values and how do norms and values determine practice?	Which mechanisms of force are used to enforce compliance with traditional norms and adherence to socially accepted behavior?
Where do people try to break out of traditional norms? Who tries to break out? When? Why? How?		Who exercises force to enforce compliance? When? How? Why?

Practice
→ how are gender roles practiced today, particularly concerning the division of labor in the family (income generating economic activities and domestic tasks), decision-making within the family, education, freedom of movement, participation in public and community activities (differences according to class, region, religion etc.)
→ where has practice changed from one generation to the next and how?
→ which are the most important factors that influence and change peoples' practices?
→ which social groups are most under pressure to adapt to changing socio-economic conditions?

2. Rationale for the Design of the Questionnaire

The design of the questionnaire is based on standard information to be collected in quantitative socio-economic research as well as known results of previous gender-relevant studies and experiences in the field.

Following an in-depth review of available literature, a detailed framework of analysis will be designed at a later stage which will include correlations of different variables based on hypothesis derived from results of previous studies. More correlations may be added after the results of this study are available.

The following paragraphs give a summarized explanation for the design of the different sections of the questionnaire:

1   Basic Information on the Family of the Interviewee

Gender, sex, religion, age and personal status of the interviewee as well as his/her position in the family are all influential factors determining gender perceptions and practices

Age at marriage, age difference and kin relationsh1ips between spouses tend to have an important influence on the social status of women in the family, the relationship between spouses and the influence of the extended family on the relationship of the couple

2   Educational Level and Vocational Training of the Interviewee

Schooling and education have a decisive influence on socialization and shaping of gender-related perceptions and practices. It co-determines access to gender-relevant information and the way this information is absorbed

Educational attainment and the acquisition of vocational skills co-determine a person's chances regarding work and employment. Many studies have proven the strong correlation between low educational attainment as well as lack of marketable skills and poverty

Non-enrollment and dropping out as well as reasons given can be interpreted as proxy indicators for the parent family's socio-economic status. Gender-disaggregated results can also provide information concerning prevailing perceptions and practices regarding girls' education and gender roles

Previous studies suggest that women's status vis-à-vis her husband and her family increases in case her educational attainment is higher than that of her father/husband. Correlations with other questions, e.g. the degree of her freedom of movement or her influence on choosing marriage partners will reveal information on the importance of educational attainment for women's choices

3   Productive Activities

Questions provide information on the interviewee's employment status and economic activities which can be used as proxy indicators for the family's socio-economic status as well as women's economic independence. The latter is a crucial factor that co-determines her status within the family and the community as well as her decision-making choices

Questions on the work of spouses give further information on women's work (in case the interviewee is male), the importance of women's work as a contribution to the household budget and women's control over resources (if the interviewee is female)

4   Income, Assets and Housing Conditions of Interviewee

Sources of income/means of subsistence and assets of the interviewee are important determinants for his/her social status and decision-making choices

The question on inheritance may reveal information on discriminatory practices against women in inheritance (in addition to structural discrimination embedded in the law)

Information on the location of the family's housing space provides an important indicator for the degree of women's independence and decision-making power within the household and the family but also available support and solidarity networks

5   Responsibility for Reproductive Activities
and

6   Other Household-Related Activities
and

7   Activities of the Interviewee in the Community and Public Life

Questions provide information on gender roles, gender-based division of labor within the household and gender differences regarding activities and the community

8   Children and Children's Education

Questions reveal preferences regarding the number and sex of children, important determinants that shape decisions concerning children's education as well as potential discriminatory practices regarding girls' education

9   Marital Problems and Socialization

Given the fact that the law and prevailing social traditions give husbands considerable control over women's choices, marital problems are an important indicator for imbalances and power struggles in gender relations. The kind of persons who are asked for advice will provide information on support and solidarity networks that may protect and support women to gain more influence and control over their lives but also to mediate if men are, for example, no longer able to fulfill their expected traditional roles

Answers to the question on wife beating as one of the most prevailing forms of domestic violence will provide information on perceptions regarding its prevalence and acceptability. Disaggregations according to gender and age as well as correlations with educational status and productive activities will give interesting insights as to how far these factors influence the acceptance of refusal of violence as a means of imposing control and curtailing women's choices

Exposure to traditional as well as to new sources of information outside the family such as Satellite TV and Internet plays an increasingly important role in shaping an individual's gender perceptions, personal aspirations and behavior patterns. Responses can be correlated with perceptions on gender issues to define the influence of the respective sources of information

10   Opinions Concerning Crucial Gender-Sensitive Issues: Women's Paid Labor

Questions provide information about social perceptions and traditions underlying decisions concerning women's right to work. They provide also information on how far women have control over their income and can thus increase their decision-making power

Responses can be disaggregated according to gender and age and will thus give a picture on different perceptions of the two sexes and tendencies of social change among generations

11   Opinions Concerning Crucial Gender-Sensitive Issues: Choosing Marriage Partners

Marriage is for both sexes one of the most important milestones in their life. It is a crucial co-determinant of social status, development opportunities and material and emotional well-being. Influence on choosing marriage partners, age at marriage and criteria based on which spouses are chosen as well as discrepancies in expectations of the two sexes are thus important factors that determine each sex's potentials of personal development within the institution of the family

Disaggregating answers according to sex and age will give important insights into imbalances in perceptions and expectations as well as tendencies of social change regarding gender roles and the social function of the institution of marriage

12   Opinions Concerning Crucial Gender-Sensitive Issues: Personal Status Law

The Personal Status Law provides the legal framework that regulates marriage relationships and inheritance. It is perceived more than any other law as being based on the principles of the Sharia. Proposed or implemented amendments of the Personal Status Law have defined more than once a decisive area of power struggle between different political and ideological currents in society. The law has been treated in public discourse as one of the key expressions of society's interpretation of culture and religion and public discussions have had an important influence on men's and women's perceptions of their self and the other in gender relations

Recent amendments include crucial elements which increase women's chances to enhance their status in marriage and break out of oppressive marriage relationships. The degree of awareness of the provisions of the law and the subjective opinions concerning its social consequences co-determine changes in power balances within spousal relationships as well as the degree to which women are able to benefit from legal amendments in their favor

Although Christian marriage and inheritance issues are regulated by separate personal status regulations, the recently amended Personal Status Law can be applied to Christians, too, (in divorce cases and when drafting the marriage contract) if they belong to different churches. A number of Christians have resorted to this possibility since Christian personal status regulations make divorce extremely difficult for both sexes. Christian interviewees are, therefore, equally asked to answer to all questions in this section. Interviewees of both religions are also requested to answer questions that restrict inter-religious marriage and inheritance

Inheritance as part of the Personal Status Law co-determines women's access to assets and discriminates against women. This is justified by the prevailing interpretation of Islamic tenets on the ground that men have the sole responsibility to provide for the family. Answers to questions on inheritance will provide information as to how far the rapidly changing socio-economic reality is reflected in opinions on the just distribution of assets

13   Opinions Concerning Miscellaneous Issues

Questions will provide information as to how far gender and age have an influence on the perception of major social, environmental and other problems of our time

Questions on the main problems of the two sexes will reveal discrepancies in perceptions of the self and the other and their respective concerns. Detecting this

kind of discrepancies (implied in these and a number of other questions) is important to trace tendencies of social change, imbalances in gender relations and potential areas of gender conflict

3. Instructions for the Enumerators (Implementation of Structured Survey)

1   Specific Instructions and Definitions of Terms Used in the Questionnaire

Bold + italic fonts: instructions
Normal font: definitions

Please record "other" only if you are sure that the answer does not fit into one of the categories

In opinion questions, avoid to record "don't know" and resort to this option only if you are sure that the respondent does really not have an opinion

all	** = more than 1 answer possible*	
0103	Head of household	the main decision-maker and the one who represents the family outside
0104	Female abandoned	Still married but the husband has de facto left the family and does not live with them
0107	*Please indicate exact age and age group*	
0202	*If schooling completed or dropped out Ú record highest certificate – if still enrolled Ú record current level*	
0202	Read & write	Has dropped out of primary school, attended literacy classes or otherwise learnt to read and write
0207	*This is not a question to ask. You yourself give the answer based on responses under 0202 and 0206*	
0301	Economic activity	Job with salary as worker/employee or shop/workshop/enterprise/other with income
0301	Working age	Working age in Egypt is between 15 and 64 years
0302	White-collar employee	Administrative, planning and supervisory tasks
0302	Entrepreneur	Owner of company with employees/workers
0302	Self-employed	Skilled worker (electrician, plumber etc.) or driver with own car or owner of small shop or workshop without workers/employees (family members, apprentices and workers who work only temporarily might work in the workshop)
0302	Home production	Produces products for company or individuals at home against payment
0303	Part-time job	Works permanently but not the whole day or only some days per week

0303	Temporary job	Written contract or oral agreement for limited period of time
0303	Seasonal job	Works only during certain periods per year, e.g. during harvest in agriculture
0401	*If respondent is female Ú answers for herself – if married male Ú refers to his wife – non-married male Ú refers to his mother*	
0404	*If respondent has inherited Ú ask first if he/she knows the law of inheritance. If he/she does not know Ú choose option No. 4, if he/she knows Ú choose among No. 1 - 3*	
0405	Housing unit	Can be a room or a flat but both without inside facilities that are used by others, i.e. a room in a flat with another family living in another room and both use the salon and the kitchen together is not an independent housing unit. However, a single room whose inhabitants use outside WC together with others is an independent housing unit
050x + 060x	*Mother/wife: If respondent is married female Ú say <u>yourself</u> – if non-married female or male Ú say <u>mother</u>* *If respondent is married male Ú say <u>wife</u>* *Husband/father: If respondent is married female Ú say <u>husband</u> – if non-married female or male Ú say <u>father</u>* *If respondent is married male Ú say <u>yourself</u>*	
0505	Maintenance of housing unit	For example caring to repair broken pipes, painting, fixing toilets etc.
0602	Subsistence food production	For example baking bread or growing vegetables for family's consumption
070x	*A person may be involved in more than one NGO, professional organization etc. If he/she holds positions in several organizations of the same type, please record only the highest ranking position*	
0801	*Ask for the number of male children and the number of female children and calculate the total*	
0802	*Ask for the number of male and female children the respondent wants and calculate the total. If sex does not matter Ú only indicate the total*	
0803	*This is not a question to ask. You yourself give the answer based on responses under 0801 and 0802*	
0805 *0806*	*Make sure that the respondents give realistic answers, i.e. no dreams but what the respondent aspires taking the means of the family and ambitions of the child into consideration*	
0901	*Ask married respondents to answer based on their own marriage experience* *Ask non-married respondents to answer based what they observe in their parent's relationship, if not applicable because parents died or respondent is not aware of parents' relationship Ú ask them to refer to observations of other couples they*	

	know well
0902	*Married respondents Ű refer to problems with spouse* *Non-married respondents Ű refer to problems with family*
1201	*For you to understand the provisions of the law: see the separate section below where each provision is explained*
1202	*Skip this question and choose option 1 if the respondent is not aware that there is a law (in this case you have already selected option 1 under question 1201)* *If a respondent was not aware of individual provisions of the law (in this case you have chosen 1c, 2c,3c… Xc for the respective provisions under question 1201) Ű don't ask for the provision under question 1202. Choose options don't know under 1202 only if the respondent knows about the provision but does not have an opinion on it*
1203	*Skip this question and choose option 1 if the respondent is not aware that there is a law (in this case you have already selected option 1 under question 1201)*
1204	*Ask both questions regardless of whether the respondent is Christian or Muslim*

2   Information on Law No. 1/2000 concerning Personal Status
(relevant for questions 1201 – 1203)

The following are among the most important provisions of the law. They contain changes of provisions included in the previous Personal Status Law.

(1)   Divorce according to the Khula' provision

§ 20: Right of wife to get divorced even against the will of her husband on condition that she renounces all her legal financial rights and returns the dowry to her husband. Non-financial rights such as custody for small children are maintained. Divorce under the Khula' provision is final and cannot be revoked by the husband.

(2)   'Urfi marriage

§ 17: It is now possible to obtain a legal divorce for an 'Urfi marriage. The law does not provide any legal protection of rights for 'Urfi marriages.

(3)   Witnessing and documentation of talaq

§ 21: If the wife maintains but the husband denies that he has divorced his wife or if the husband maintains but the wife denies that he has divorced her, she can now call witnesses. If the witnesses confirm what she says, the law considers her statement valid.
If the husband divorces his wife without witnesses, the law does not recognize the divorce.

4. Checklist of Interviewing

"DOs"

Interviewers should ALWAYS:
- Speak clearly and use correct grammar in the language of the interview;
- Read fluently;
- Record verbatim answers in that language;
- Recall responses long enough to record them accurately;
- Perform several tasks simultaneously: read questions, record answers, follow instructions;
- Judge nonverbal and verbal cues of respondent to know when to administer reinforcement and
- clarification; and
- Exercise self-discipline and regulate verbal and nonverbal behavior in order not to improperly
- influence responses. Be neutral.

Interviewers are also expected to:
- Initiate and maintain a conversation with a stranger;
- Respond professionally to unexpected questions and situations;
- Remain neutral by keeping individual opinions out of the interview process;
- Motivate reluctant respondents to participate in the interview;
- Deliver the questionnaire in a flowing, conversational manner that reflects self-assurance
- and ease with the task of interviewing;
- Probe incomplete responses in an unbiased manner for more useful results; and
- Clarify contradictory responses.

"DON'Ts"

Interviewers should NEVER:
- Get involved in long explanations of the study, such as trying to explain sampling in detail;
- Deviate from the study introduction, sequence of questions, or question wording;
- Try to justify or defend what they are doing;
- Interview someone they know;
- Falsify interviews;
- Improvise;
- Suggest an answer or agree or disagree with an answer;
- Try to ask questions from memory;
- Rush the respondent;
- Patronize respondents;
- Dominate the interview;

- Let another person answer for the intended respondent;
- Turn in a questionnaire without checking it over to be sure every question has been asked and its
- answer recorded; nor
- Change the wording or sequence of the questions.

5. Steps of interviewing

Introduce the Interview
• Introduce yourself by full name and identify the sponsor of the survey.
• Explain the purpose of the survey, what kind of information is being sought, and how it will be used.
• Verify that the right person has been reached.
• Stress the confidentiality of the interview, the voluntary nature of the respondent's participation, the approximate length of the interview, and the fact that the respondent will have the opportunity to ask questions.
• Ask permission to proceed with the questions.

Ask Interview Questions
• Ask each question exactly as written.
• Listen actively to determine what is relevant.
• Record the answers in the boxes and other spaces provided for each question.
• Probe to increase the validity, clarity, and completeness of the response.
• Avoid any unnecessary or overly enthusiastic reinforcement, such as, *"Oh, that's very good!!"*
• Never suggest an answer.

End the Interview
• Thank the respondent. Tell him or her again how important the information is that he or she has provided; that it will help the program to understand better its beneficiaries and how to serve them.
• Answer any questions or concerns the respondent may have about the interview or the content of the survey.

Conduct the Post-interview
• Proofread the completed questionnaire to find and correct errors, clarify handwriting, and add clarifying notes.

6. Structured Questionnaire

7. Answers Sheet

__= more than 1 answer possible Ú separate code numbers with + signs__

__** = must be more than 1 answer__

No. Of Question	Code Number		If the respondent chooses "other" Ú indicate
0101			
0102			
0103			
0104			
0105	age	age bracket	
0106			
0107	age	age bracket	
0108			
0109			
0201			
0202			
0203 *			
0204			
0205 *			
0206			
0207 analysis			
0301			
0302			
0303			
0304			
0305			
0306			
0307			
0401			
0402 *			
0403 *			
0404			
0405			
0501			
0502			
0503			
0504			
0505			

No. Of Question	Code Number					If the respondent chooses "other" Ú indicate
0601						
0602						
0603						
0604						
0605						
0606						
0701 *						
0702 *						
0703 *						
0704 *						
0705						
0706						
0707						
0708 *						
0709						
0801	male		female		total	
0802	male		female		total	
0803 analysis						
0804 *						
0805						
0806						
0807						
0808						
0901 *						
0902 *						
0903 *						
0904 *						
0905 *(5)	⬭					
1001						
1002 *						
1003 *						
1004						
1101						
1102						
1103						
1104 *(5)	XXXXX	XXXX	XXX	XX	X	
1105						
1106						

No. Of Question	Code Number							If the respondent chooses "other" Ú indicate
1107								
1201 **								
1202 **								
1203								
1204								
1301 *(3)	XXX		XX		X			
1302 *(3)	XXX		XX		X			
1303 *(3)	XXX		XX		X			
1304 *(3)	XXX		XX		X			

Summary of structured survey implementation

Governorate	No. of Questionnaires	Areas
Cairo	100	Mohandessen Nasar City Manshiet Naser Dar El-Salam
Alexandria	50	El-Raml El-Ibrahimia El-Mandra
Qena	100	Arment El-Hella Mataena Rezigat Maragha Awlad Sheikh Esna
Gharbia	100	Tanta Zafeta
North Sinai	50	El-Arish

Summary of Focus group discussions

Cairo

1. Female

Date	PRA team	Venue	Time	No. of participants	Features of the group
24/10/04	Affaf / Omnia	Manshia Naser	11.00 am.	8	unmarried 18-25 years poor/ lower income Muslims + Christians
25/10/04	Affaf / Omnia	Manshia Naser	11.00 pm.	8	married 25-35 years poor/ lower income Muslims + Christians
25/10/04	Affaf / Omnia	Nasr City	7.00 pm.	9	married & unmarried 30-50 years upper middle/ upper class Muslims + Christians
10/11/04	Affaf / Omnia	Manshia Naser	7.00 pm.	11	married and unmarried 25-40 years poor/ lower income Christians

2. Male

Date	PRA team	Venue	Time	No. of participants	Features of the group
22/10/04	Ahmed / Islam	Manshia Naser	10.30 am.	8	unmarried 17-30 years poor/ lower income Muslims + Christians
22/10/04	Ahmed / Islam	Manshia Naser	1.00 pm.	8	married 30-67 years poor/ lower income Muslims
24/11/04	Ahmed / Islam	Zamalek	7.00 pm.	6	married and unmarried 22-40 years upper middle/ upper class Muslims

Alexandria

1. Female

Date	PRA team	Venue	Time	No. of participants	Features of the group
29/10/04	Affaf / Omnia	El-Mandra	1.00 pm	8	married and unmarried 18-40 years lower middle/ middle class urban areas Muslims

2. Male

Date	PRA team	Venue	Time	No. of participants	Features of the group
29/10/04	Ahmed / Islam	Sidi Beshr	1.00 pm	9	married 25-40 years middle class - urban areas Muslims

Gharbia

1. Female

Date	PRA team	Venue	Time	No. of participants	Features of the group
1/11/04	Affaf / Omnia	Tanta	1.00 pm	9	Married and unmarried 18-35 years provincial town lower, lower middle and middle class Muslims

2. Male

Date	PRA team	Venue	Time	No. of participants	Features of the group
1/11/04	Ahmed / Islam	Tanta	1.00 pm	6	Married and unmarried 25-40 years provincial town lower, lower middle and middle class Muslims

Qena

1. Female

Date	PRA team	Venue	Time	No. of participants	Features of the group
5/11/04	Affaf / Omnia	Esna	11.00 pm.	9	Married 25-55 years large village Christians
5/11/04	Affaf / Omnia	Esna	2.00 pm.	9	Married 20-55 years large village Muslims

2. Male

Date	PRA team	Venue	Time	No. of participants	Features of the group
5/11/04	Ahmed / Islam	Armant	1.00 pm.	9	Married and unmarried 20-50 years large village Muslims + Christians

North Sinai

1. Female

Date	PRA team	Venue	Time	No. of participants	Features of the group
3/11/04	Affaf / Omnia	Al-Arish/	11.00 pm.	12	married and unmarried 20-50 years Large village lower, lower middle and middle class Muslims

2. Male

Date	PRA team	Venue	Time	No. of participants	Features of the group
3/11/04	Ahmed / Islam	Al-Arish/	11.00 pm.	7	Married and unmarried 18-35 years Large village lower, lower middle and middle class Muslims

Summary of in-depth interviews

Date	PRA team	Venue	Time	Interviewee	Features of the interviewee
511/04	Ahmed	Qena	7.00 pm.	Wafiq	Priest
6/11/04	Ahmed	Qena	7.00 pm	Mohamed	Sheikh
9/11/04	Affaf / Omnia	Nasr City	7.00 pm	Dr. Hassan Said	Professor of Social Science
10/11/04	Ahmed	Tanta	7.00 pm	Gamal	Sheikh
21/11/04	Affaf / Omnia	Cairo		Amina Khafagi	Newspaper & Media Editor