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الشرائح التقديمية التالية هي ملكية خاصة بالمؤلفين ، ويتم توفيرها في هذا الموقع كخدمة عامة . يرجى عدم نسخ أو توزيع و إعادة نشر هذه الشرائح دون الحصول على إذن كتابي من المؤلفين المدرجين .

لمزيد من المعلومات الرجاء الإتصال بـ : familyresearch@qf.org.qa

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*The Arab Family in an Age of Transition:
Challenges and Resilience*

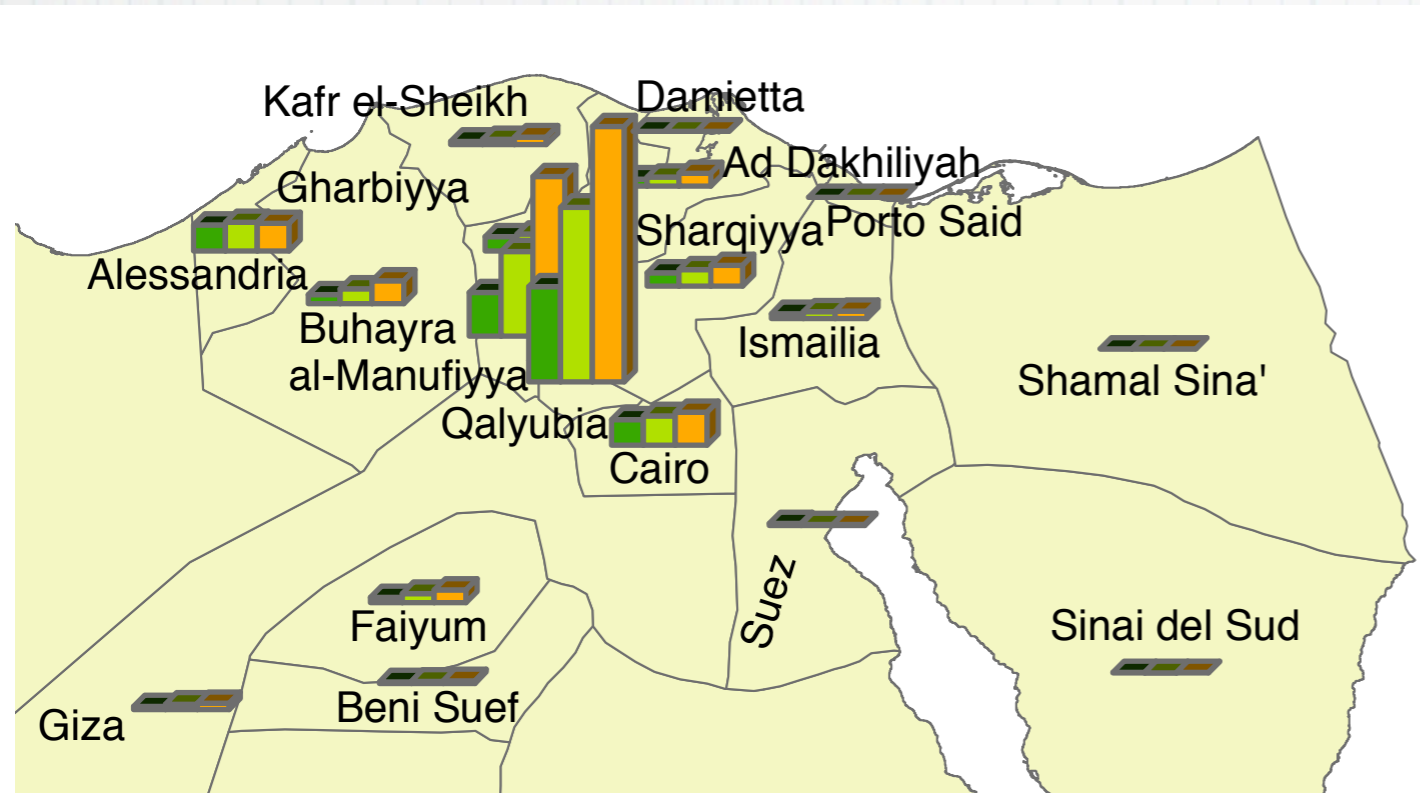
*"Marriage with an Absentee":
marital practices in an era of great mobility*



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Case Study/1

EGYPTIAN MIGRATION TO ITALY



Migration trend to Turin, 2002-2013



MULTI-SITED research in Turin (Italy) and the governorates of Monufiyya and Qalyubiyya (Egypt).

EGYPTIAN MIGRATION:
* male-dominated phenomenon
* rural-urban flow

Case Study/2

A “PATRIARCHAL CULTURE OF MIGRATION”

PATRIARCHAL CULTURE OF MIGRATION:

Culture of migration in which the fault line between “potential migrants” VS “potential non migrants” overlaps with the gender division



“potential migrants”

men

VS

=

VS

“potential non migrants

women

Which kinds of transnational families?

- * Marriage - Migration (nuclear families existing at the time of migration: e.g. a married man decides to emigrate)
- * Migration - Marriage (families formed during migration: e.g. a single migrant returns to his country of origin to get married)

Aims of the presentation

In this presentation I focus on the second type of family, investigating:

- * the value of transnational marriages for migrants;
- * the value of transnational marriages for Egyptian women who choose to marry a man living abroad;
- * organizational and ritual aspects of transnational marriages;
- * sociale consequences of transnational marriages.

Min-na w-'aley-na: seeking a wife in the country of origin/1

Transnational marriages: the most widespread form of family formation among migrants



What are the roles of and relationships between the migrant and the family of origin in the organization of these marriages?



Are the Egyptian men living in Italy more dependent or more independent than their peers who live in Egypt?

Min-na w-'aley-na: seeking a wife in the country of origin/2

Transnational *gawāz taqlīdy*:

"When a man comes home to get married it means that the family has sought a wife. This kind of control that families have on the lives of migrants reveals a confidence in family that goes beyond the borders and distance. Anyone who is abroad puts the choice of who will be his bride into the hands of his family."

Egyptian cultural mediator

Transnational marriages allow the involvement of the family to be maintained and are symbolic moments in which migrants consolidate ties with their family.

Min-na w-'aley-na: seeking a wife in the country of origin/3

"I came to Italy in '92 and only went back to Egypt once after four years without thinking about marriage. When I was able to put something aside, **my mom and my sister said to me:** 'Look, now you are big you have to get married.' I did not know anyone in Egypt because I had been away for so many years and I said, 'See if you can find a girl from good family.' For me, the first thing was that she be educated, so we would have the same mentality, and religious, which means that she should wear the veil and cover her body. They said: 'The girl you're looking for is here! She is the daughter of 'Ustēz Mahmoud who lives above us'. **My mom and my sister spoke to them** and they agreed to hold the engagement party in the summer.

When I went to Egypt we got engaged. **I talked to her dad** and we decided that one year later we would do the marriage contract. I only had a thirty-day holiday and I wanted to split it into two times: fifteen days to do the marriage contract, then I would go back to Italy to apply for family reunification and then, when the invitation was ready, I would return in Egypt to furnish my house. That's what happened: a year later she received a visa to come to Italy. In July, I went to Egypt, we had a wedding party and we stayed at our house for two weeks and then we came to live in Italy and since that day we have been together *al-ḥamdu li-llāh.*"

Mohammed

Min-na w-'aley-na: seeking a wife in the country of origin/4

Migration interacts with marriage practices giving rise to some trends:

- * on one hand the economic independence of men who live abroad can translate into greater autonomy of choice;
- * on the other hand, the physical absence, often prolonged, pushes migrants to lean more on the family, strengthening the position of the parents with regard to the marriage choice and organization of the event;
- * the relationship between migration and marriage is a causal relationship: young people migrate in order to marry;
- * the use of modern means of communication gives rise to a combination of both traditional and new elements.

Min-na w-'aley-na: seeking a wife in the country of origin/5

khuṭba is- sālūnāt -> *khuṭba in-net*

salon engagement -> internet engagement

“Nagla told me that her engagement had been organized via the internet by some 'aqarīb [relatives] who had arranged a meeting on "Yahoo! Messenger" between her and Nasser. Since neither of them had an internet connection at home, Nagla was visiting her brother while the young man was at a cybercafe in Turin. The presence of her brother and other relatives around the woman recreated the environment of the *sā lūn*, where young people who meet are never left alone. "The call was short-lived because the connection was weak and in Egypt it comes and goes", Nagla told me. She accepted the engagement proposal and got to know the man by telephone; the marriage was celebrated during his next holiday in Egypt.”

The *khuṭba in-net* practice underscores the role of the family in organizing a marriage, while the man's visits determine the timing of meeting, engagement and celebration.

Marriage with an Absentee

Women's point of view:

- * Marriage *'ayy kalām* VS marriage with a migrant
- * (Supposed) social and economical mobility
- * Marriage -> Mobility

From *khutba in-net* to transnational *dukhla*/1

Through Mohammed's case we saw that:

Migrations restructure the calendar of engagements and marriages



Which relationship between mobility and the ritual form of traditional marriage?



From *khutba in-net* to transnational *dukhla*/2

- * *fātiḥa*
- * *shabka*
- * *katib al-kitāb*
- * *gihāz*
- * *ḥenna*
- * *dukhla*
- * *ṣabāḥiyya*



How is the timing of these rituals restructured in the absence of the groom?



shabka



gihāz



henna
+

From *khutba* in-net to transnational *dukhla*/3

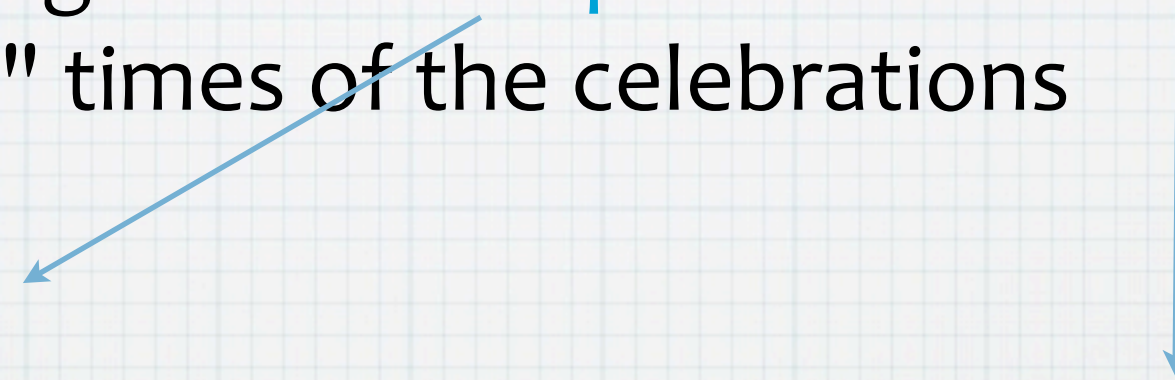
NORMAL CICLE OF LIFE FOR A NEW FAMILY

summer holiday: *fātiḥa* and *shabka*

next holiday: *katib al-kitāb*, *ḥenna*, *gihāz*, *dukhla* and *ṣabāḥiyya*

BUT

the demands of migrants can **expand** or **contract** the
"average" times of the celebrations



EX:

a young men who depart after the engagement but fail to earn the needed money or do not have a residence permit that allows him to leave Italy.

EX:

- overlapping of different phases to save time
- celebration by proxy
- transnational celebration

From *khutba* in-net to transnational *dukhla*/4

"A friend of mine did not do military service and cannot go back to Egypt, so they [his parents] sent him a wife from Egypt. They did the marriage in Egypt after he sent the marriage contract by way of the consulate. The wife could then apply for a visa and when she arrived here they celebrated the *dukhla*. Just imagine, he had never seen his wife and they had only spoken by phone and seen pictures of each other. She came with her wedding dress in a suitcase and had scarcely arrived when they did the *dukhla*."

Ayman

Newlyweds without 'arīs:

many ways of being a woman left behind/1

CAUSES:

- no immediate family reunification
- Egypt has not seen a proliferation of nuclear family homes as a result of the influx of remittances
- reproduction of the living model prevalent in the villages.

CONSEQUENCES:

In rural Egypt new housing arrangements, new forms of work, new access to mobility and new social disparities coexist with the reproduction of extended families and social hierarchy.

“Women left behind” is not an homogeneous group!

Newlyweds without 'arīs:

many ways of being a woman left behind/2

| | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ECONOMIC OUTCOME | “failed” migration | "maintenance" migration | successful migration |
| POLITICAL STATUS OF MIGRANT | illegal / emergence phase | temporary permits | residence card / citizenship |
| LIFE CYCLE STAGE | newlywed | wife with small children | wife with older children |
| RELATIONSHIP WITH FAMILY OF ORIGIN | geographical distance / rare visits | frequent visits | residence with family of origin |
| HOUSING CONDITIONS | <i>bēt il-‘ā’ila</i> | <i>bēt il-‘ā’ila</i> without inlaws | independent family |
| EXPERIENCE IN ITALY (woman) | never | temporary visits | returned after long period |

Do not reduce female *immobility* into a single category!

Is marriage with an absentee a migration strategy?/1

"My sister had had other boyfriends, but she did not want to stay in Alexandria because she had this dream of leaving Egypt. So when George arrived she agreed to marry him because he was living in Italy."

Mary

"I wanted to come to Italy, so when this man asked me to marry him I was happy"

Eman

It's a **MIGRATION STRATEGY** in the meaning that is a means to reach **INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY**.

Is marriage with an absentee a migration strategy?/2

- * To be a “potential wives of migrants” is the only possibility to migrate without breaking the social norms and cultural requirements.
- * A man who *bi'ish barra* [lives abroad] drives the dreams, desires and expectations and represents a new element in the choice of marriage for families and young women.

MARRIAGE WITH THE ABSENT: framework to explore how gendered lives influence women perception of mobility and their aspiration toward it.

Choosing to accept or to refuse a marriage proposal from a man who lives abroad, women are not just accepting or refusing that man, but they are embracing a collective dream and choosing a way of life.